

## EURODOC 2005 QUESTIONNAIRE – LITHUANIA

### Part one

#### General questions and Discussion

1. There are no significant changes in the situation of PhD students in our country comparing with the last year situation.
2. We would like to improve the cooperation between different institutions that are responsible for PhD studies; to create information system on all important questions for PhD candidates. It is also important to make strategy of PhD studies in Lithuania more understandable. We would like to find more possibilities for financing of PhD studies and to make this process more clear. It is also important to involve Lithuanian governmental institutions in Bologna process more widely.
3. This year the hot topics essentially remained the same as the last year: “brain drain”, the reformation of the HE management system, the scientific publishing in Lithuania.
4. The main events organized by our association were as follows:
  - a) The cycle of public lectures "The art of giving a lecture".
  - b) Interdisciplinary summer school of PhD students: " Smithy of Ideas, Arlaviskes 2004".
  - c) Summer school for pupils interested in research: "LSYR summer 2004".
  - d) Conference: "Planning of academic projects".
  - e) Conference: "Mobility of Lithuanian Young Researchers. Opportunities. Difficulties. Perspectives."

Our association plans the following activities this year:

- a) To organize the cycle of public lectures “The secrets of public relations”.
  - b) To organize the interdisciplinary (possibly international) summer school for PhD students: " Smithy of Ideas 2005".
  - c) To organize the summer school for pupils interested in research: "LSYR summer 2005".
  - d) To do preparation works for the International Forum of Young Researchers Organizations (IFYRO) 2007, designed for stimulating the exchange of experience and collaboration between the NGO’s of Young Researchers.
5. The area of activities is defined in the charter of association. The official position (depending on the importance of the topic) is set up in by General meeting, by Board or by Chairman.
6. Our association did no PhD survey. We think that for our association it would be useful to have these data from other countries.
7. We would like to point out the level of the bureaucracy in the administration of the Framework Programs (for example in Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP6)). We consider the application procedures (including the application forms) overfilled, and subsequent assessments inefficient. We would like to see the application to corresponding programmes to be less expensive (in matter of the investment necessary for the preparation of the applications) and the subsequent assessment (including evaluation of the applications, signing the contracts, transfers, ...) more quick and defined.

#### Bologna Process and Lisbon Strategy

8. This question hasn’t been discussed within our association.
9. We have no concrete official position on this topic at the moment. We expect the decrease of differences in the systems of different countries (and we hope it to be beneficial for our members), but at the same time we expect visible changes only after several years.
10. Lisbon Strategy does not affect the real policy of recruitment of young researchers. There are discussions, but there is no real policy oriented to the achievement of Lisbon Strategy.

## **Labour Conditions**

11. PhD candidate status in Lithuania is a student.

The advantages are: PhDs get all the discounts that are applied for students (e.g., 50 percent discount for interurban bus service); PhDs do not pay social fees, therefore the take-home stipend is higher.

PhDs do not pay social fees, therefore the disadvantages are: 4 years of PhD studies are not counted in the record of service (what is important when calculating the amount of the pension); the PhD students get the minimum financial support for childbearing.

12. There were several discussions on that topic. The general decision is that there are advantages and disadvantages for each status (student and employee). Our association has no defined position on that topic and do not force any changes.

## **Supervision and Training**

13. We have the official regulations (both governmental and institutional) concerning the process of organization of PhD studies and obtaining the PhD degree. The terms concerning the supervision and training are included in these regulations. There is no any concern or action related to the Eurodoc supervision and training Charter.

14. PhD candidates must pass not less than 3 exams (the sum of exam credits must be not less than 20). There must be not less than two (in some institutions - not less than three) examiners (the supervisor or the consultant of the PhD candidate can be one of them) that are indicated in the PhD's individual study and research program. The order of exams depends on the institution and is more or less described in the Regulations of Doctoral Studies of that institution. Exams vary in style in different subject areas and institutions E.g., all the exams in Vytautas Magnus University have to be in written form, while in Lithuanian University of Agriculture oral form is accepted. The length of exams also varies, however usually it takes 1.5-3 hours. The criteria for grading are highly subjective however the minimum mark for passing the exam is 7.

The theses are an official publication.

15. There are 3 possibilities to obtain PhD degree: via PhD student supported by government, via self-supported PhD student, via preparation of PhD thesis on your own and subsequent defense at some university.

We have no other doctorates than the research one.

16. There are governmental institutions (Lithuanian Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, Science Council of Lithuania), which monitor the research standards and supply licenses for the PhD programs and rights to establish PhD defence committees. There are formal requirements (set up by Government) for institutions, supervisors, advisors, and members of PhD defence committees. Not less than once in 5 years the Science Council of Lithuania has to evaluate the situation of the doctoral studies in the institutions. The Lithuanian Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education on the basis of the Science Council of Lithuania (it is a State budget institution) request organises expert assessment (peer review), accumulates and publishes information about the quality of that activity and offers suggestions about its improvement.

Rules of quality assessment for institutions of research and higher education:

<http://www.skvc.lt/old/wwwskvc/en/rules.htm>

## **International mobility**

17. There are several sources of funding for the mobility of researchers in Lithuania. First of all, there are governmental agreements with the foreign countries and governmental programmes that are coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Science. These programmes are for full-time students at different levels, for PhD students as well. The other source of funding is foreign

governments, where grants and scholarships are coordinated by the Embassies or Cultural Departments of those countries: e.g. the Fulbright programme administered by the American Cultural Centre. Also there are institutional agreements between universities and different exchange programmes. For example, the largest university in Lithuania, Vilnius University has the following statistics:

- 71 bilateral cooperation agreements for mobility, 20 projects in 4<sup>th</sup> Framework, 19 projects in 5<sup>th</sup> framework and 5 projects in COST programme in the period of 1993-2003. Vilnius University also has 120 bilateral agreements in the Socrates/Erasmus programme and participated in the 6<sup>th</sup> framework with 8 contracts. In Leonardo da Vinci programme it coordinates 2 experimental projects and 3 student mobility projects, and 2 staff mobility projects.

There are possibilities to get funding from the Lithuanian State Science and Studies Foundation, which exists now for 10 years and which promotes young researcher mobility. Recently, it became a member of the European Science Foundation.

Finally, the EU schemes (such as Marie Curie Action program) may be used.

18. It is difficult to measure the level of awareness. While talking to PhD colleagues it is visible that with the help of internet, as well as quite active international offices (in some institutions) the awareness about the existence of exchange programmes is quite high. Nevertheless, concrete possibilities of such programs and terms of application are not understood properly.

19. It is difficult to evaluate the popularity of different grants and scholarships, since there is no compiled statistics on this question. However, looking at one of the most active International Relations offices, that one of Vilnius University, as well as building on the information compiled by Educational Advising Centre, the websites of Ministry of Science and Education, Lithuanian State Science and Studies foundation as well as LSU and ULMF, it is possible to indicate certain current trends. The European scholarship schemes are dominant among national researchers. Here the role of the Lithuanian State Science and Studies foundation is increasing. The important mobility facilitators (especially for staff mobility) are bilateral institutional agreements, thus university international offices are very important in this respect. Foreign governments are also active in promoting their national scholarship schemes, e.g. German DAAD programme, Italian, French staff mobility and training programmes.

20. There are governmental grants for study and research visits and summer school training, offered by the Ministry of Science and Education. Universities are slowly introducing courses in English. E.g., there are 220 courses in English at the largest Lithuanian university, Vilnius University. In principle, foreign students and/or students from the EU member states can get grants for PhD programmes.

21. The legal system of Lithuania does not foresee the joint degree programmes. Nevertheless, there are examples of similar programmes based on bilateral agreements between universities. For example, "Sandwich" programme between Kaunas University of Technology (Lithuania) and Umeå University (Sweden). The idea is: half of the year to spend in home university, next half in another university. Half of the requirements for PhD student should be fulfilled in one university, another half in another university. The thesis is defended in both universities.

## **Professional Future**

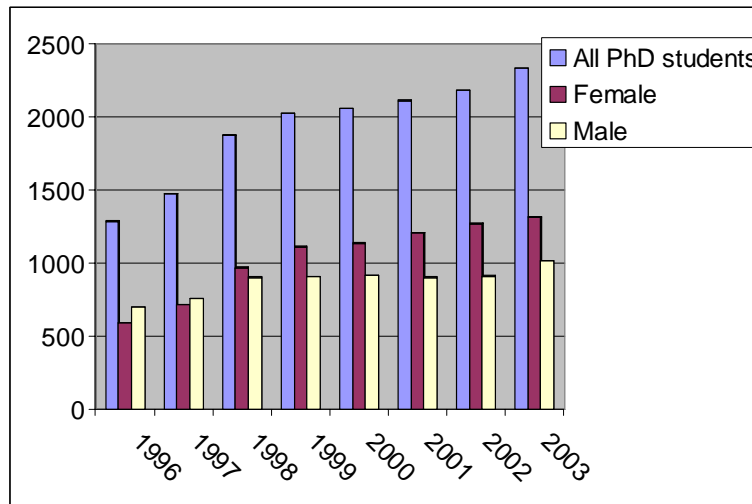
22. Yes, we are aware. We have no official opinion on these documents since we haven't discussed these documents within our association.

23. The recommendations should be introduced to the Science Council of Lithuania, published in the newspaper Mokslo Lietuva.

24. Our association thinks that different career paths and their comparability in academia and industry is very useful for PhD candidates, because it opens not only better professional future, but also gives new financial possibilities during the period of studies.

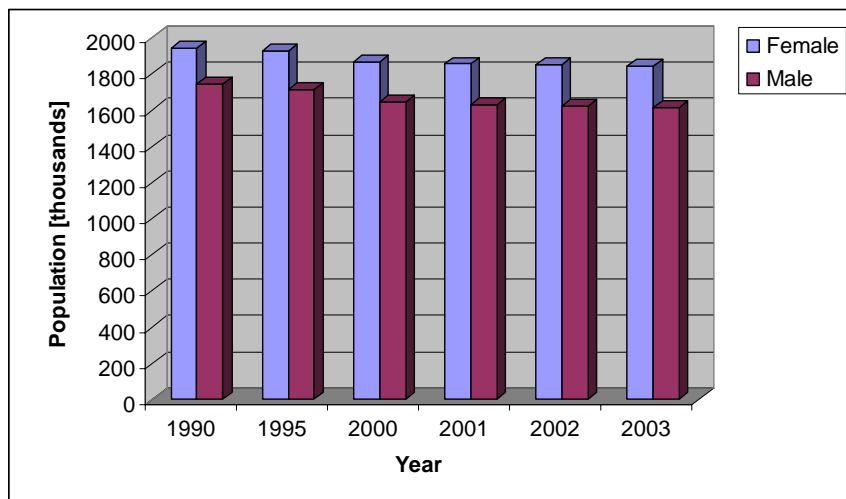
### Gender Equality

25. In Lithuania this kind of problem does not exist. For example, in humanitarian sciences the percentage of female and male PhD candidates is very similar. Natural reasons, e.g., the popularity of discipline between the genders, influences the percentage of female and male PhD candidates in other disciplines. However, the total number of female PhDs has been increasing during the last seven years (see Figure below, reference:



<http://www.std.lt/web/main.php?parent=295> )

and now there are more female PhDs than the male. This situation is not surprising, because there are more females than males in the overall Lithuanian population (see Figure below).



Reference: <http://www.std.lt/web/main.php?parent=848> .

26. The gender distribution in Lithuania is almost balanced between comparable positions in academia and other sectors. For example see table below.

Number of lecturers at universities, thousands		The gender distribution, %	
Female	Male	Female	Male
4,1	5,2	44	56

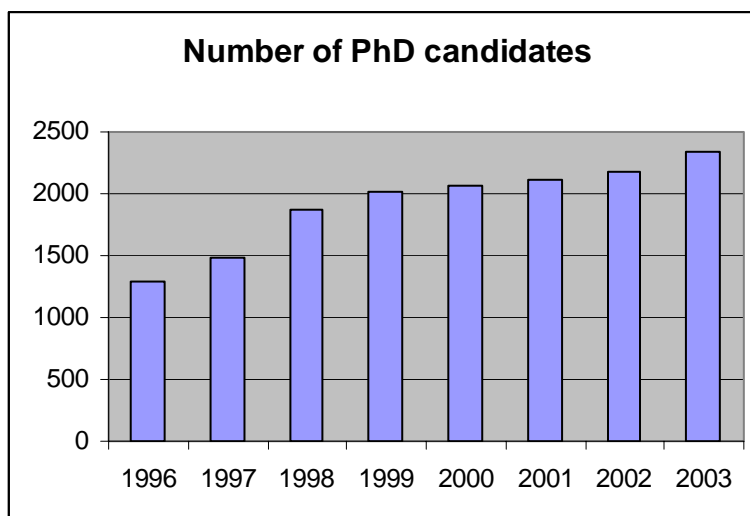
Reference: <http://www.std.lt/web/main.php?parent=850>

### Part two

1. Fourteen (14) universities have right to supply PhD degree. Some of them have these rights in cooperation with research institutes. Reference:

[http://www.lmt.lt/DOKUMENTAI/Kolegijos\\_nutarimai/V/N5-62priedas.doc](http://www.lmt.lt/DOKUMENTAI/Kolegijos_nutarimai/V/N5-62priedas.doc)

2. There are approximately 2300 PhD candidates in Lithuania. The total number of PhD candidates has been increasing during last seven years. This trend is indicated in the figure below:



Reference: <http://www.std.lt/web/main.php?parent=295> .

3. There is no official statistic on this topic. We assume that the average age of students entering doctoral programmes in our country is 26. The qualification for getting into a PhD programme is Master's degree.

4. 297 candidates defended their PhD last year in Lithuania (<http://www.lmt.lt/DISERTACIJOS/archyvas2004.php>). The total number of candidates defended their PhD has been increasing but we have no official data on this topic. The age of PhD candidates at the time of completion of their doctorate is about 30.

5. The official length of PhD programmes is not more than 4 years. The average active time approximately is 3 years. We have official part-time modes for PhD Programmes.

6. We have no statistics on this topic.

7. We have no statistics on PhD candidates who withdraw. There are no interim qualifications for those who do not complete their doctorates.

8. PhD candidates are registered at the universities (or in the research institutes in the case of joint PhD programme).
9. PhD candidates are considered students. Some of them are financed by government and don't have to pay fees. PhD students, which are not financed by government, have to pay the fees. The size of the fees depends on the university.
10. Almost all PhD candidates get funding from universities (90 percent.). The exception is extramural PhD candidates (10 percent). They have to find other possibilities of funding.
11. The stipend for the first year PhD candidates is 212 euro per month, and next three years the PhD candidates get 246 euro per month. Minimum salary in Lithuania is 126 euro. Average salary is 323 euro.
12. PhD candidates had workers rights and duties few years ago. Now PhD candidates have status of students.
13. All PhD candidates of universities have teaching duties (e.g., 240 ours per 4 years, but it depends on the university). They are not paid for that.  
PhD candidates belonging to the research institutes, which do not perform pedagogical activities and are carrying out only scientific researches, do not have teaching duties.
14. It is not regulated on the governmental level and depends on the university. E.g., in Vytautas Magnus University it is 240 ours per 4 years.
15. It depends on the study sphere of the PhD candidate (e.g., technical sciences have much more practical possibilities of collaboration as compared to the humanitarian ones), however the number of these cases is very small.
16. We have not statistics on this issue, but Lithuania is "brain drain" type country.
17. There is no official information on this question.
18. There is no information about the proportion of young researchers going to R&D departments in companies. There are no programmes provided by the government to support the employment of young researchers in the private sector.
19. The average salary of young doctors in academic sector is 353 euro. There is no information about the private sector.
20. There are 100 members in our organization. They are individuals. In our association we have members from almost all PhD awarding institutions.