

## **PART ONE**

### **General questions and Discussion**

**1.** In the last period the precarious situation of the PhD candidates and junior researchers, the way they are regarded by other social groups and political parties and the government, has become better known and due in great part to FJI there is a continuous push towards a more decent situation. The change of government in Spain brought lots of hopes for a quicker change, but so far the electoral promises for improving the researchers' working conditions have not been kept. The major changes have come from some of the regional governments (e.g. Cataluña, Aragón) or certain universities (like the University of Valencia), where more of the so-called 2+2 hybrid systems (two years of grant followed by two years of contract with full employee rights, after the completion of the DEA) have been implemented. This system of funding applies only to PhD candidates of these regions funded by the governments of these provinces, but not to those funded by other institutions (i.e. the central government). It has been tried to adapt some of the grants so that they comply with the Grant-holder charter established last year ([http://noticias.juridicas.com/base\\_datos/Admin/rd1326-2003.html](http://noticias.juridicas.com/base_datos/Admin/rd1326-2003.html)). In general, this has led to an increase of the monthly allowance up to around 1100 euros and the inclusion of many PhD candidates in the Public Health Insurance System along 2003, albeit just with a very basal contribution to the social security system and no unemployment benefits. These are only small steps towards the still far goal of employee status for PhD candidates and a coherent researcher career.

It must also be noted that due to the diversity of funding programmes for PhD candidates, something that FJI considers positive but insufficient, these regulations affect only a fraction of the whole ESR population in Spain.

**2.** FJI fights for an employee-status, looking forward to a regulation of the working conditions of PhD candidates, recognition of their work with contracts for all the period of the thesis work, labour rights, including parental leave, unemployment benefits, pension rights, sick leave, subsidies in case of accidents while working, representation at the governing bodies of their institutions, reduction or suppression of interruptions in their career development (increase job stability and future prospects), minimum need of paperwork, support candidates selection upon their professional skills, and quality research.. Junior researchers should have the possibility of designing their career path in a flexible way where mobility should be encouraged. Some of these demands are compiled in a document produced by the FJI which defines how we think about the researcher's career. The document is available in English at: <http://www.precarios.org/docs/CIenglish.pdf>; and in our manifesto: <http://www.precarios.org/docs/manifesto.html>

**3.** All these problems are nowadays under discussion. There is the consciousness that there are important changes to be made in order to increase the research level in our country. These changes should be both qualitative and quantitative. But the need for changes is quite different for researchers as for politicians. Two of the principal matters for discussion are the working conditions of PhD and the changes to make to meet the Bologna Process agreement

**4.** FJI works towards its goal of improving researchers' working conditions in different fronts throughout the year. There are contacts with different official

institutions and political parties to push for changes, the press releases are regularly elaborated to denounce unfair or unbearable situations and remind politicians of their promises and commitments (<http://www.precarios.org/prensa.html>), and figures about the heterogeneous situations of PhD candidates are gathered as long as it is possible. Demonstrations are organised when the situation seems to be stagnant. Information on the demonstrations, on the most recent remarkable activities of FJI and news related to PhD candidates and junior researchers can be periodically found in the "Gacetas", our newsletter together with a lot of humour. These newsletters can be downloaded at "<http://www.precarios.org/gaceta/>". In addition to the day-to-day work, FJI organises an annual conference where the different member associations and working workgroups meet together, review achievements, revise goals, functioning and strategies. The conference organised this year will take place in Valencia, the 3rd and 4th of March. More information on this meeting can be found at <http://www.precarios.org/jornadas/index.html>.

5. Our area of activities is defined in our statutes and by agreements in the general assemblies. Official positions are reached after open consultation in national and local mailing lists; each member association through their delegates may express his/her opinion (in the general assembly or in a specific mailing list). The positions to be defended are previously agreed through open discussions in the different mailing lists.

6. FJI has made several surveys but good figures of the actual situation are difficult to be obtained from them, as the situation of PhD candidates is incredibly diverse and these surveys are but of limited scope, most relevant is the study on scientific productivity of ESR: <http://www.precarios.org/docs/productividad1.2.1.html>.

Effort is now being made in gathering information about the different funding entities and the working situation they impose. We have performed some surveys, though. The lack of data is a great problem in Spain, and we often have most accurate information than the Ministry itself (they ask us sometimes for data). For example, the actual number of PhD candidates in Spain is unknown, with data dispersed over universities and research centres. Eurodoc contribution could indeed be very useful.

7. Eurodoc should have, besides its statutes, a compilation of internal rules and guidelines, posted in the web, that specify how decisions should be taken, the function of delegates, deadlines when reports are expected, etc.

We think that there have been several claims for more transparency in EURODOC actions that should be attended to.

We feel that the participation of delegates during the whole year and not only around the conference is vital for Eurodoc. The board should assure that they remain active and when they are some time inactive, the board should seek a replacement from the member organisation that appointed them.

Eurodoc should try to find longer term funding, as it is risky to depend every year on the Socrates programme for financing our activities, this would mean that if one year our application is denied we will have many difficulties. In this sense funding for the annual meeting should be assured before the event.

Besides the discussion list (eurodoc at yahoogroups) it would be nice to have an on-line discussion board which organizes the discussions in threads. The idea of having a Eurodoc Newsletter to be sent to our partners should be re-taken.

## **Bologna Process and Lisbon Strategy**

8. It is largely unclear what the final situation will be, it is thought that the doctoral phase will be accessed after a master degree and probably be shorter (~3 years), but these aspects are still under discussion, it is unclear what the status of the PhD candidates will be. Some ideas can be read in the Spanish National Report for the Bologna Process: [http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/EN/national\\_impl/00\\_Nat-rep-05/National\\_Reports-Spain\\_050114.pdf](http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/EN/national_impl/00_Nat-rep-05/National_Reports-Spain_050114.pdf)

9. We see some positive aspects in including the doctoral degree on the Bologna Process, for instance an easier recognition of doctoral degrees. However we fear that this inclusion will pose difficulties for the recognition of PhD candidates as employees. In this respect, the recommendations given by the Salzburg Conference (Feb-2005) have been endorsed with some minor changes (see <http://es.groups.yahoo.com/group/precarios-estatal/message/18075>).

10. There have not yet been made important changes towards the follow up of the Lisbon strategy, and the whole society must be much more aware of the importance of the goals set by it. The changes made until now are small and slow, and it does seem that the implementation of this strategy has enough priority. The implementation of these proposals should be intensively encouraged by the EU.

## **Labour Conditions**

11. PhD candidates are mainly considered students. The advantages/disadvantages of this is mainly related to their relationship with the research and funding institutions. The "student" status gives social advantages under 26 years old for travelling, cultural and entertainment activities, as well as scholar security at the University they are enrolled in.

12. We think that the employee status automatically grants a framework providing all social security benefits and other rights enjoyed by workers. Student status is actually used as a means to provide lower salaries and poor standards of labour conditions.

## **Supervision and Training**

13. We believe the charter should be adopted. However, there is no action of the government or the universities in that direction. In Spain, supervisors enjoy utter freedom and their supervision quality is not assessed. When a problem arises between the supervisor and the PhD candidate, the latter is practically unprotected, as there are no regulations on supervision standards.

14. Doctoral examinations are conducted by 5 examiners (at least one foreigner for the European mention to the PhD degree), it consists of an exposition about 25 minutes long, after which the examiners do tell the PhD candidate the weaknesses and strong points during the question turn. Once the thesis is defended, it belongs to the university. Because there is no supervision of the doctoral candidate or the supervisor during the doctorate, the examination is an all or nothing test consisting of an exposition 25 to 40 min long, after which the examiners do tell the PhD candidate the weaknesses and

strong points during the question turn. However, at this point, the thesis is no further modified. There is no data on the subject, but we believe that the success rate is over 95%, in part because doctorates are enlightened in order to have the best thesis possible, but mostly, because there is a tradition of choosing friendly examiners (the examiners are selected by the candidate and the director). The test is conducted by 5 examiners (at least one foreigner for the European mention to the PhD degree) which do not adjust to any guidelines or criteria in order to approve the thesis or not. Once the thesis is defended, it belongs to the university.

**15.** All doctoral degrees are considered to be research doctorates, regardless the discipline they deal with. Differences may exist on the general requirements or the kind of research performed, but all of them should consist of an original piece of research work.

**16.** ANECA examines periodically the quality of PhD programmes. One of the requirements are private interviews with PhD candidates (without any promoter/professor, etc, being present). Collaboration with industry and stays abroad were highly regarded at my department last meeting. There are also regional bodies for quality assessment. (See point 3.1 here: [http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/EN/national\\_impl/00\\_Nat-rep-05/National\\_Reports-Spain\\_050114.pdf](http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/EN/national_impl/00_Nat-rep-05/National_Reports-Spain_050114.pdf))

### **International mobility**

**17.** National PhD fellowships offer the opportunity of spending up to 6 months a year abroad in another research centre, depending on the grant (some grants do not allow more than 3 months per year). There is also the possibility of going abroad if your supervisor thinks it advisable through the institution's funding or specific research projects. There are also independent Foundations offering postdoctoral research grants to go abroad for a few months.

**18.** To our knowledge, except those who are granted a national fellowship, young researchers are not fully aware of exchange programmes until their supervisor alludes to them, though people's growing more and more aware now, after the first ones have left and come back to tell their experience.

**19.** The most popular grants and scholarships available to enhance mobility are: FPI (Researcher's trainingships) and FPU (University professor trainingship) from the Spanish Ministry of Science and Education, local scholarships of universities etc. Marie Curie ESR's fellowships.

**20.** There are some scholarships directed to foreign ESRs coming from Latin America, like Alban (<http://www.programalban.org/>), or from developing countries in general, like the AECI's scholarships ([www.becasmae.com/](http://www.becasmae.com/)), so that they may receive their PhD in Spain, and the Marie Curie fellowships, and the programmes of the Ministry for Education and Science for foreign visitors to perform research in Spain (): [http://wwwn.mec.es/univ/html/convocatorias/movilidad\\_profesores/resoluciones2004/res\\_230804\\_movilidad2004.pdf](http://wwwn.mec.es/univ/html/convocatorias/movilidad_profesores/resoluciones2004/res_230804_movilidad2004.pdf)).

Foreign students or students from EU member states thus can get a grant in Spain. However, most of the positions are only announced in Spanish and in restricted

media, where access is difficult for foreigners. Besides, most funding bodies require that the candidate be a resident in Spain at the moment of the application. Altogether, this makes the Spanish system not very open to foreign researchers living abroad.

**21.** “Joint degree programmes” are not very extended yet. What is now being implemented at a growing number of universities (Universidad de Zaragoza, Universidad Politécnica de Cataluña, Universidad de Granada, UNED, Universidad de Cantabria, Universidad de Jaén...) is the European PhD. Requirements may vary among different universities but they always involve: the presence on the examination board of an expert from a research centre in other EU country; a part of the PhD manuscript (normally, the abstract) written in other European language; and a research stay of at least 3 months in another research centre within the European Research Area.

### **Professional Future**

**22.** FJI agrees in general with the release of the European Researchers’ Charter and Code of Conduct for the recruitment of researchers, considering them a good initiative in the direction of the main goal of establishing a coherent researcher’s career development.

**23.** We believe that the adoption of the charter and code of conduct should be taken into account when providing European funds to research institutions (e.g. favouring the institutions that adopt these recommendations), so they acquire the compromise of accomplishing a minimum of good practises regarding recruitment and the professional status of researchers.

**24.** Our association believe that the contracts for accomplishing a PhD should have a duration according with the normal length of the research period, including the time for writing the manuscript and the public examination. Research projects should therefore fit to the allotted time. Under exceptional circumstances, an extension should be granted in order to complete the research.

Contracts for the rest of the positions should be stable enough for providing security and stability to the researcher but flexible enough to be opened to reviews and appraisals so that renewal should be dependant on productivity and performance of the researcher. These contracts should be on the line of open-ended contracts.

The assessment of research quality should ideally be done on a continuous base and not just at the end of the period. This should include as well the assessment of the quality of the supervision of the research project.

These and other ideas are commented in our Researcher’s Career Report, which may be found at: <http://www.precarios.org/docs/CIenglish.pdf>.

### **Gender Equality**

**25.** The recent inclusion of parental leave in some of the PhD grant programmes is positive in the sense of gender equality. However, most actions, like University child-care installations, are often not provided to PhD candidates just because they are not considered as employees of that institution.

**26.** In Spain, there is a majority of women among university students, this situation is reversed gradually along the scientific career, according to EU indicators.

([http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/science-society/women/wssi/downindi\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/science-society/women/wssi/downindi_en.html))

There was an overall 41.4% (in 2002) female representation in academic research (only 24.8% in industry, in the same year 2002). However, when these numbers are broken down by category, representation is seen to vary from 51% at the early stages to just a 17% at the senior levels of research career (principal researchers, department directors). This fact shows that there is obviously a “leaky pipeline” in terms of women and research. Also, regarding governing bodies of universities, women are largely under represented. In 1999, women comprised 1.6% (1/61) of University chancellors and 9.8% (6/61) of vice chancellors. The tendency is positively changing, though rather slowly.

## PART TWO : FIGURES

1. Only universities can award a PhD degree. Therefore, even though the research may be performed in a different research institution, there must always be a final examination at the university and the degree is awarded by the university. Links related with 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle and other postgraduate studies are: [http://noticias.juridicas.com/base\\_datos/Admin/rd778-1998.html](http://noticias.juridicas.com/base_datos/Admin/rd778-1998.html) and [http://noticias.juridicas.com/base\\_datos/Admin/rd778-1998.html](http://noticias.juridicas.com/base_datos/Admin/rd778-1998.html), respectively.

2. The number of PhD candidates is difficult to estimate due to the different ways of funding and that quite a few of those who inscribed themselves in the university doctoral programmes do not intend to obtain the doctoral degree, but just want to complete the courses included in doctoral programmes. A previous estimation sets the number of PhD candidates at about 61,300. More updated data should be hopefully soon published under the address: <http://wwwn.mec.es/mecd/jsp/plantilla.jsp?id=21&area=estadisticas>.

[Ref.: Valcárcel Cases, M. 2002, Estudio sobre el Doctorado en las Universidades Españolas: Situación Actual y Propuestas de Mejora, Proyecto EA-7079, Córdoba]

Data of the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística: sección "educación universitaria"* ([http://www.ine.es/inebase/menu3\\_soc.htm#7](http://www.ine.es/inebase/menu3_soc.htm#7)) on the number of students enrolled on doctoral programmes are shown below:

Academic year	Number of PhD students enrolled
1997 - 1998	61,985
1998 - 1999	64,472
1999 - 2000	64,293
2000 - 2001	62,530
2001 - 2002	65,600 (33,493 female students)

3. 64% of the enrolled PhD candidates are under 30. As the minimal qualification to enter a PhD programme is to have a University second-level (4-6 years: *licenciatura/ingeniería*) the average entry age is around 23-26 years old.

4. The average age to defend PhD is 28-30, but we lack data also on this. Data collected on the number of PhD defended from 1996 to 2001 are shown in the following table.

Academic year	Number of PhD defended (*)
1996 - 1997	6,140
1997 - 1998	5,931
1998 - 1999	5,984
1999 - 2000	6,408
2000 - 2001	6,380 (2,901 female)
2001 - 2002	no data available

(\*) [source: Anuario Estadístico de España 2004(Educación), INE:  
[http://www.ine.es/prodyser/pubweb/anuario04/anu04\\_3educacion.pdf](http://www.ine.es/prodyser/pubweb/anuario04/anu04_3educacion.pdf)]

5. Nominal length is 3 years, the time for which funding is provided by funding bodies is usually 4 years. However, the rule is that the PhD's defence is most usually done after those 4 years are completed. Unfortunately, we lack general data. Therefore, the mean average of the duration of the doctorate is about 4.5 years but the trend is that the duration time is increasing (see Fernández Esquinas, M. 2000, *Tesis Doctoral*, "Recursos Humanos y Política Científica: La Formación de Investigadores en el Plan Nacional de I+D", Universidad Complutense de Madrid). An idea of the normal duration of a PhD may be found in the study: <http://www.iesam.csic.es/doctrab2/dt-0408.pdf>.

6. 54.8% of the PhD candidates that complete their PhD manage to do it within the allotted time period (source: González de la Fe, T., Pérez Yruela, M., Fernández Esquinas, M. 1996, "La formación de investigadores en el Plan Nacional de I+D: Una aproximación evaluativa, Gestión y Análisis de Políticas Públicas"). See also the answer to the next point below.

7. According to some data, up to 87% of the PhD candidates that sign into a PhD programme do not finish their PhD. However, many apply to a doctoral programme before getting any funding, leaving after a year or two if they did not get any funding. We lack that on what is the percentage of successful PhD candidates that actually get some funding. (*Informe Bricall*, 2000, chapter IV, p. 253, <http://www.crue.org/informeuniv2000.htm>)

The DEA (Certificate on Advances Studies) is awarded after completing some courses and a research work, normally after the second year of the PhD programme. Another certificate may be issued once the theoretical courses are succeeded.

8. PhD candidates should be registered at a University department.

9. PhD candidates are considered as students, and they must pay fees unless the contrary is stated on their fellowship/contract/whatsoever. And this applies to everybody, foreigners and EU-citizens. Some PhD candidates, regardless of being considered as students, have to pay taxes.

10. We lack the knowledge of the ratios of the different types of funding. A variety of grants is available (and lately 2+2 systems combining grants and contracts). A compilation of them and the conditions they offer can be found at <http://www.precarios.org/docs/predoc.php>. Apart from these, there are PhD candidates working as assistant professors, combining the teaching labour with the research work. A previous study indicates that about 35% of the PhD candidates share their research tasks with work outside the university (source: Consejo de Universidades, Estadística

Universitaria 1994-1999). For example, in a department of Chemical Engineering, out of 33 PhD candidates registered in the three years of the doctoral programme, at least 10 doesn't have funding at the moment of writing this questionnaire, though about 4-6 are waiting for national fellowships)

**11.** The average stipend of the PhD candidates is around 800 - 1,000 euros. A comparison of the salaries offered by different grants can be found at "<http://www.precarios.org/docs/predoc.php>". Those funding-institutions who have decided to follow the Grant-holder Charter have recently increased the monthly stipend to about 1,100 euros. The national minimum salary was 490.80 euros/month in 2004 (source: <http://www.mtas.es/Guia2004/texto/13/13-2.html>) and as comparison it can be seen that a teacher of secondary education has a minimum salary of 1,588.96 euros with salary complements of about 400 euros increasing with the years of contract (see <http://www.fsie.es/noticias/files/A40951-40952.pdf>).

**12.** Only candidates from the above mentioned regions who implement a contract for the last 2 years can be said to have employee rights and duties.

**13.** Most PhD candidates, usually after the 2nd year (especially those performing their research work at universities) are given the opportunity to teach. This is often not compulsory and done on a voluntary basis. Most PhD fellowships are incompatible with other salaries and that includes teaching, so if they teach they are not paid in addition to their normal wages.

**14.** The amount of time spent on teaching is variable (e.g. 60 hours a year, as regulated in most public offers).

**15.** General data is not available. It often depends of personal agreements among the directors of the research group and industries whose activity is related to the research work performed by the PhD candidate.

**16.** Estimates for the temporary stays: Spanish PhD candidates going abroad ~30%, PhD candidates coming to Spain ~20%. Estimate for the Spanish PhDs going abroad for the complete duration of the PhD: <5%

**17.** The proportion of PhD candidates remaining in academia varies considerably through the different research areas. This ratio is larger in exact and natural sciences than in social sciences, and is bigger for PhD candidates at the university than at public research centres. These percentages go from about 30% to nearly 60% depending on the research areas. (Fernández Esquinas, M. (2000) *Tesis Doctoral: "Recursos Humanos y Política Científica: La Formación de Investigadores en el Plan Nacional de I+D"*, Universidad Complutense de Madrid.)

**18.** The Torres Quevedo Programme finances through subventions the contracts of R&D personnel, doctors or technicians (holding an university degree and at least one year of research experience) by companies, entrepreneurial associations and technological centres, within research and development projects and previous viability studies. (See: <http://www.mec.es/ciencia/torresq/>)

This Foundation also offers PhD fellowships pre and postdoctoral (e.g. 2 annual PhD fellowships funded by the Leonardo-Torres Quevedo at the University of Cantabria since 2001).

**19.** As an example of salary of young doctors employed under national research programmes, those within a Ramón y Cajal programme receive an annual stipend of 29,720 euros (<http://www.mec.es/ciencia/jsp/plantilla.jsp?area=cajal&id=3&contenido=/cajal/htm/convocatoriaRC.html>) and those within the Juan de la Cierva's programme get a minimum salary of 23,000 euros

**20.** FJI is a federation of 18 local organisations (2 more will join in the next assembly to be held in March), 12 of them are active associations with 714 members. (<http://www.precarios.org/federacion.php3>).