

eurodoc

Newsletter #3 · August 2008

Eurodoc, the European Council of doctoral candidates and young researchers, is pleased to send out its first Newsletter after the 2008 Annual Conference and General Assembly which took place in Fribourg (Switzerland) this April (this page). Since April, Eurodoc representatives have been present at many important conferences and events, see the summary in this issue (pages 4 and 6). Eurodoc and its 32 member organisations strive to achieve its goals with the help of its various working groups covering such aspects as career development and mobility. There is also a survey

group which will soon launch a Europe-wide survey for young researchers all across Europe, the first of its kind (see later in this newsletter). Eurodoc also remains closely involved in the developments doctoral education is currently undergoing.

In 2008 the General Assembly has formulated concrete goals for 2008/2009. The external focus areas are “Mobility”, “Career Development” and the Eurodoc survey, whereas the internal Eurodoc work will be focused on funding issues and improving our current website.

In this issue, we are focusing on our latest achievements and representative activities to give you an overview of the current activity level in Eurodoc. Many Eurodoc representatives were in Barcelona at European Science Open Forum (ESOF) 2008 and a short report on the ESOF topics can be found in this Newsletter issue (page 6). We also address a recent action clarifying Eurodoc’s view in the bursaries vs. working contracts issue (page 5).

The next issue of the Eurodoc Newsletter will be sent out in December, after the conference in Rennes (page 5).

EURODOC CONFERENCE 2008

Fribourg Conference 2008

This year’s Eurodoc Annual Conference and General Assembly took place between 2nd and 5th of April 2008 in the city of Fribourg, Switzerland. This major European gathering of young researchers and policy makers was co-organised by CSWM, the scientific collaborators of Fribourg University, and Actionuni, the Swiss Researchers’ Association.

The conference focus was *Excellence in Research – the Young Researcher’s Perspective*, and featured a large number of experts from various areas of politics, science and educational administration, higher education, and private companies including Mauro Dell’ Ambrogio, State Secretary for Education and Research of Switzerland, Jaques Neiryck, Nationalrat, member of the

Swiss National Parliament, Daniel Höchli, Director of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), Detlef Niese, Novartis, and Katrin Maes from the League of European Research Universities (LERU). In roundtables and workshops, delegates and participants discussed policy recommendations on *Attracting excellent researchers, Massification of Higher Education and Research Excellence in Europe, The European Charter for Researchers and The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and Research Excellence*. The conference finished with a round table on the question *Which working conditions do young researchers need?*

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Contacts and Imprint

The European Council for Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers
c/o Focus Research
63, Bd du Triomphe
1160 Brussels – Belgium

Contact the board at board@eurodoc.net.
Visit us at <http://www.eurodoc.net/>
Editors: Jan Holeček, Stephan Kurz

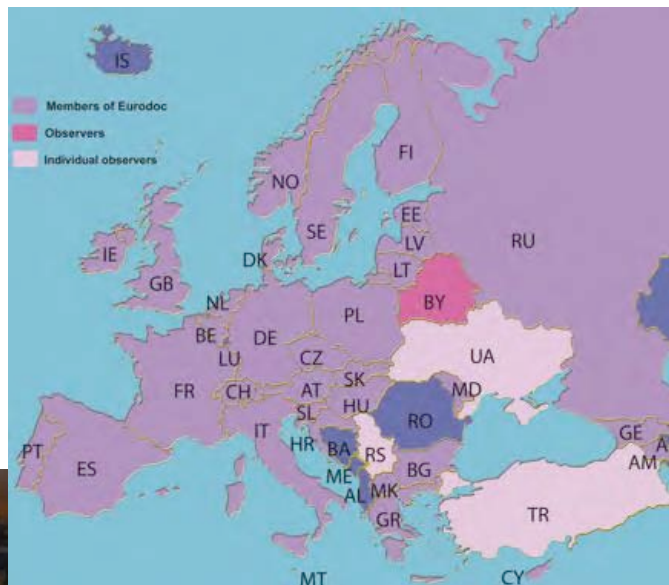
The General Assembly addressed, among other matters, enlargement of Eurodoc and election of the new board. Four organisations from Cyprus, Finland, Georgia and Macedonia were admitted as new members and an organisation from Belarus was granted observer status. Now, Eurodoc consists of a total of 32 countries as full members and 3 more as observers.

The new President of Eurodoc is Karoline Holländer, a doctoral candidate in Germany doing her PhD thesis on *Paying professors by performance*. As newly elected president, Karoline will work to further strengthen the position of Eurodoc as the voice of Europe's

doctoral candidates and young researchers and as a well-recognised stakeholder in both European Research Area and European Higher Education Area.

You will find more about all new board members on page 3.

Wolfgang Eppenschwandtner and Jan Holeček



Above: Eurodoc map 2008, new members being Cyprus (CY), Finland (FI), Georgia (GE) and Macedonia (MK).



Left: Delegates enjoying their well-deserved dinner after a long day during the conference in Fribourg.

EURODOC SURVEY

We will Survey You!

This autumn, Eurodoc is going to launch the long-awaited Europe-wide survey on the situation of doctoral candidates and young researchers. The survey will provide us with data allowing us to compare all aspects of doctoral education, training and supervision, and the conditions of young researchers across Europe. This has not been able to be done before due in part to incomplete data sets or to too narrow surveys.

A broad range of aspects concerning doctoral candidates and young researchers will be covered. The topics include qualification requirements, career paths, funding schemes, models of training and supervision, working conditions, expected and achieved results of scientific work and mobility. The survey will also collect supplementary socio-demographic data such as gender, family status and social background.

Distribution of the survey in individual countries will be primarily conducted by Eurodoc member organisations. However,



Eurodoc will be very grateful to all institutions and individuals that help to spread the survey among doctoral candidates and young researchers.

The survey comes in two forms. A closed form incorporates unique anonymous identifiers distributed to the target group, which ensures that only the target group will participate in the survey. Unfortunately, the closed form is not feasible in all countries and hence a half-open form of the survey has been introduced, in which anyone can anonymously register and get an identifier.

We have had a lot of help with the survey from the International Centre for Higher Education Research (INCHER) in Kassel, Germany to whom we are very grateful. INCHER will also help us, along with delegates and other experts, to evaluate the data.

Eurodoc will organise a series of events to evaluate the survey and to present the results which will culminate with a conference on the results of the survey in late 2009 or early 2010.

Do not miss the opportunity to take part in this Europe-wide survey! Eurodoc would also be grateful for help in distributing the survey.

Jan Holeček and Karoline Holländer

Get Acquainted with the Eurodoc Board 2008–2009

Karoline Holländer (President, Germany)

Karoline graduated in 2001 with a Master in International Management from Flensburg University. She started her scientific career at the Danube University in Krems (Austria) in further education research and quality management. As a project worker, director events and managing director she was part of the founding and development process of an agency for public affairs and event management. Since June 2008 she is working for the TU Munich as Manager for Research Training, taking care of skills development of doctoral candidates. As an elected Eurodoc President she will focus on the improvement of organisation, keeping contact with existing partners, acquisition of new members, taking care of changes of the statutes (liabilities) and further support of workgroups actions.

Paulo Jorge Neves Silva (Vice-president, Portugal)

Paulo graduated in Agronomy in Azores. He was awarded his PhD in Biochemistry at Imperial College (London). In 2003 he returned to Portugal for a post-doc position at the University of Lisbon. Paulo was elected as a Board member of the national association of early stage researchers ABIC. In 2006 he became a post-doc scholar at Penn State, USA, and at present his scientific interests are related with bio-energetics. At Penn State Paulo also became a co-founder of the PSPS (Penn State Post doc Society) that was officially founded in June 2007. The driving force for Paulo in his activity is the gap between promises and actions from the politicians in the governing boards.

Brigita Serafinavičiūtė (Secretary, Lithuania)

Brigita obtained her Doctoral degree in Environmental science and Ecology at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania, in cooperation with the Lithuanian Forest Research Institute in 2007. She was chairwomen of the Lithuanian Society of Young Researchers (LJMS) in 2005–2006 and is currently vice-chairwomen. In 2007 she was a Eurodoc member at the EC Expert Group *Realising a single labour market for researchers*. In June 2008 Brigita became a scientific

secretary and member of the Science Council of Lithuania. Being Eurodoc Board member she is taking over the duties of the secretary and is interested in European science policy issues.



2008 board members in the order mentioned, clockwise starting with Karoline, top.

Jan Holeček (Treasurer, Czech Republic)

Jan studied physics and computer science in Brno, Czech Republic, and received his Master in 2005. Since then Jan is pursuing his PhD in theoretical computer science at Masaryk University in Brno. He worked as a research assistant at the University of Stuttgart in 2006 and currently holds a similar position at the Institute for Theoretical Computer Science in Brno. He has been a student representative for several years, currently being the President of the Student Chamber of Academic Senate at his faculty. In addition to the obligations he has as Eurodoc's treasurer, Jan wants to focus on continuity and knowledge preservation in Eurodoc.

Stephan Kurz (Board member, Austria)

Stephan studied German Literature, Mass Media and Communication Science in Vienna and Konstanz. He specialised in the fields of bibliography, typography, script and writing systems and editing. In 2006, he was an Austrian Eurodoc delegate, in 2005 and 2007 he was elected as a doctoral candidate's representative at the University of Vienna. In 2006–2007 Stephan worked for Vienna University Library as a Project Manager for a European digitisation project. Since October 2007, he is working on his PhD thesis at Vienna University's Institute for German Studies. As a Eurodoc board member, Stephan focusses on both internal and external communication issues.

Aurélien Lamy (Board member, France)

Aurélien received a Master in Algebra, Arithmetic and Algorithmic at the University of Caen, France. After having obtained a Master in Business Management, he is now preparing his PhD in the field of learning and knowledge management. In 2006–2007 Aurélien was the Vice-president of the French Confederation of Young Researchers. Later he became a French Eurodoc delegate and as an elected Eurodoc Board member Aurélien wants to focus principally on organisational and strategic issues.

Dmitri Teperik (Board member, Estonia)

Dmitri has received a Master in the field of biomedicine at the University of Tartu, Estonia, in 2006. He also worked for the Estonian Ministry of Defence as a Chief Expert of Research and Innovation and is a Head of the Board of the Estonian Academy of Young Scientists. Dmitri was a Board member of Eurodoc and Enlargement Officer from 2007 to 2008 already, and the area of his current responsibilities includes searching for new potential member organisations as well as mapping existing member organisations and keeping in touch with them.

Representing Eurodoc April–July, 2008: A Review of Eurodoc Activities

19 July, Barcelona (Spain)

European Science Open forum (ESOF) 2008
Panel discussion on “Concrete career perspectives in the EU for researchers” with Karoline Holländer as a panel member;
Panel discussion on “Working in science or politics – or both? Young scientists’ success stories” chaired by Karoline Holländer, Brigita Serafinavičiūtė as a panel member
See a separate article on page 4.

3–4 July, Edinburgh (UK)

UKCGE European Conference 2008 on the Impact of Bologna on Doctoral Education in Europe
Presentation at workshop “Mobility – Opportunity vs. Reality” by Karoline Holländer

The conference focused on changes and developments of doctoral education in the past years and visions of the British Graduate Schools for future development in the context of the Bologna Process. Speakers presented perspectives for researchers in Europe and trends in various areas of doctoral education: quality of supervision, quality assurance at all stages of doctoral programmes, different funding schemes, and mobility as a topic at all stages of researcher careers.

13 June, Poznań (Poland)

Santander Group General Assembly
Presentation on “Education, research and professional development of the careers of doctoral candidates and junior researchers at the European level” by Stephan Kurz

Eurodoc was invited by Santander Group – a university network with partners from all over Europe who have their own (student and staff) mobility programme – to present its views on the current and possible future situation of doctoral candidates in Europe.

12–13 June, Berlin (Germany)

Bologna Seminar “Penalized for Being Mobile? National Pension Schemes as an Obstacle to Mobility for Researchers in the EHEA”
Karoline Holländer as a panel member

Mobile researchers are frequently penalised when moving jobs within Europe as pension systems within the EHEA are not compatible with each other. According to the Charter and Code documents, doctoral candidates and young researchers should be working on open-end contracts which provide them with social security and acquisition of pension rights. Discussions during this conference aimed into the directions of solutions like pension plan models for doctoral candidates, young researchers and researchers in the EHEA.

19–20 June, Ghent (Belgium)

Bologna 2020 Seminar: Unlocking Europe’s Potential
Participation of Karoline Holländer and Jan Holeček

The aim of the seminar was to contribute to the reflection process by providing some elements which could be integrated in a future Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) report. Unfortunately there was not much discussion on the third cycle of the Bologna Process. We were also critical to the way in which some views which were brought up in the workshops were changed when reported back to the main audience.

30 April, Cagliari (Italy)

Committee of the Regions’ Conference on Promoting research and innovation for regional development
Presentation on “Regions helping to make ERA the reality for young researchers in the EU” by Snezana Krstic

Eurodoc was invited to give a presentation on mobility issues from a regional perspective which focused on the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. This brought up the idea that junior researchers’ local organisations should be consulted as a valuable source of new ideas, and sharing views with local politicians and making them aware of the needs of younger researchers.



Karoline giving her presentation at ESOF 2008

1–3 June, Lausanne (Switzerland)

EUA Council for Doctoral Education Launch Conference
Participation of Aurélien Lamy

The European University Association started their own Council for Doctoral Education following the inclusion of the third cycle into the Bologna Process. The Launch Conference was the first in a series of events of high importance for Eurodoc, the next being a workshop on *Enhancing of Supervision, Professional Development and Assessment of Supervisors* that will take place in London in January 2009.

9 April, Wittenberg (Germany)

German Federal Ministry of Education and Research: Launch of information platform for perspectives in higher education for young researchers at the HoF Institute in Wittenberg, Germany
Participation of Karoline Holländer

The aim of the newly introduced information platform on the chances for junior researchers to make a career on the national and international level is to identify the possibilities and weaknesses of the system. Based on this, an improvement of the situation can be started at the national level.

Focus on Financing Schemes for Junior Researchers – Employment Contracts vs. Stipends

Eurodoc has been closely monitoring the progress that has been made with regard to financing schemes for junior researchers. Each year since 2005, Eurodoc has been asking its members, now 32 national organisations, about the current state of affairs concerning the researcher funding situation, changes in salaries, and other important issues related to efforts to comply with the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

Shortly after this year's Eurodoc Annual Conference in Fribourg, where the results of the annual internal questionnaire were vividly discussed, one of our member associations, The Netherlands Promovendi Netwerk (PNN) contacted Eurodoc about alarming tendencies to take a step backward in The Netherlands: The national legal situation had only some years ago been adopted to provide full employment contracts including social security for each and every doctoral candidate, hence creating a model of best practise in junior researchers' labour conditions on the European scale, something recognised – and advertised – as a good example not solely by Eurodoc. But, according to PNN's account, the current situ-



ation is on the verge of changing for the worse as some universities are advocating a step back to a system based on bursaries which lacks social benefits, and is considered by Eurodoc as a serious drawback on the recognition of junior researchers as professionals.

Being notified of this about-turn in execution of the national law, the Board and President of Eurodoc issued a letter to politicians and other stakeholders in charge, stating its stark concerns with these developments. Below, we give the letter almost in full length, also to clarify Eurodoc's position in the controversial issue:

EURODOC takes the opportunity to ... stress the importance of recognising doctoral candidates as research professionals and thus treating them accordingly. Professional researchers should not only be recognised as members of their respective faculties, but also be given proper employment contracts with social benefits ... Due to differences in the national legislation situation throughout Europe, this might not be possible in all member states of the European Union. Thus, in accordance with documents that have been approved by the European Commission as a recommendation – above all, the European Charter for Re-

searchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers – EURODOC is following a policy of constant improvement of the situation of doctoral candidates in Europe, whose goal it is to reach full employment status with a clear perspective of career paths for doctoral researchers instead of stipends or scholarships.

We strongly believe that this is the best way to deal with the challenges that Europe is facing in today's world-wide competition of knowledge-based societies, as it is the most attractive system for early stage researchers. Furthermore, judging from the information we regularly obtain from our member organisations, there are efforts not only on the European level, but also in national legislation to move in this direction.

Since 2005, EURODOC has seen the praxis of employing PhD candidates in The Netherlands as an European best practice example. Hence we take the liberty of expressing our concerns against developments in the opposite direction.

Eurodoc remains confident that the long term struggle for proper employment contracts for all junior researchers in Europe and – strongly tied to this – the development of transparent career path models is a common position of most national and European stakeholders.

Stephan Kurz

UPCOMING EVENTS: EURODOC IN RENNES

French Presidency Conference: Young Researchers Raise Their Voices

During the French presidency of the Council of the European Union, a conference focusing on junior researchers will be held in Rennes (France) on November the 20th and 21st, 2008.

Since the beginning, Eurodoc has been involved in the preparation of this event organised by the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research.

Since the early beginning, Eurodoc has been involved in the preparation of this event organised by the French ministry of higher education and research.

Thus, the discussions will address fundamental issues for young researchers such as careers, human resource policy and mobility. Furthermore, each Eurodoc member and observer organisation will appoint two repre-

sentatives to attend the conference and bring the voice of junior European researchers to the discussions.

This conference will demonstrate again how – through Eurodoc and alongside others stakeholders – young researchers are committed to building the future of research in Europe.

Aurélien Lamy

What Value does Your Doctorate Have?

On November 19th, right before the French Presidency conference, Eurodoc organises its own workshop on *The Valorisation of the Doctorate* in Rennes.

Unlike in academia, doctoral degrees are often not well-recognised in the private and public sectors. Eurodoc strives to raise awareness among potential employers of the particular skills doctoral graduates have and to counter the de-valuation of the doctorate that might result from massification of higher education across Europe. This workshop will con-

tribute to Eurodoc's continuing effort to increase the value of doctoral graduates across all fields who end up working outside of academia and often outside of research.

The workshop will start with a clarification of the very term "valorisation". Participants will be encouraged to identify the meaning and effects of valorisation on other trends in higher education like commodification, professionalisation of doctoral education and standardisation of requirements for academic careers within the ERA.

The workshop will feature policymakers as well as speakers from academia and industry including Paule Biaudet (University Pierre and Marie Curie), Lidia Borrell-Damian (EUA), Emmanuel Boudard (European Commission, DG Research), and Henry Edmundson (Schlumberger).

You are kindly invited to join this workshop and contribute your opinion. For the programme and further information on the workshop, check <http://www.eurodoc.net/>.

Erich Kofmel and Jan Holeček

Eurodoc at ESOF 2008

One of the biggest European events in science and science policy was held in Barcelona from July 18th to 22nd this year: the European Science Open Forum, organised every two years by Euroscience. Bringing together more than 4000 participants from all over the world and from various backgrounds, the third ESOF convention took place at venues in and around the Catalan capital's Conference Center, Fira de Barcelona. Of course, Eurodoc was present at this year's ESOF: Board members received invitations from Euroscience, some of us receiving grants. There were a total of 11 active Eurodoc representatives taking part and raising their voices in the numerous sessions and workshops.

Eurodoc President Karoline Holländer was one of the speakers in the panel on "Concrete career perspectives in the EU for researchers" organised by Massimo Serpieri (European Commission, DG Research), following Eurodoc's focus on career paths of junior researchers in Europe. The session drew a lot of attention from young researchers, as it dealt with topics of great concern for many early stage researchers. Karoline also stepped in for former Eurodoc secretary Dunja Potočnik and chaired a session on "Working in science or politics – or both? Young scientists' success stories". Panelists Eric Buchlin (Marie Curie Fellows Association), former Eurodoc President Renzo Rubele and Eurodoc secretary Brigita Serafinavičiūtė succeeded in presenting ways of dealing – and succeeding – with multiple tasks from both the scientific and the policy-orientated field. The important Charter and Code documents were not only mentioned at this occasion. A whole session was devoted

to their promotion and to summing up the current developments in creating a quality-label for institutions who have successfully imple-

dustries as academics are sometimes seen as the main stumbling block in this process. Eurodoc as one of the considerable players on the European Research Area will continue its efforts connected to this issue. Research is always about co-operation and competition. Better and faster co-operation between the parties involved leads to more productive research; while fair competition is one tool to enable co-operation.

While other participants might have enjoyed their well-deserved 'Tapas with the Prof' sessions or spent some time in the beautiful city of Barcelona during lunch breaks, Eurodoc's board kept working hard. Our Spanish member FJI/Pre-carios had organised a meeting room in Barcelona University, where six out of seven board members (the seventh being in the US for his post-doctoral research) gathered to discuss the actions to be

taken in the next couple of months. Among other things, the board decided on the venues for two future Annual Eurodoc Conferences: The 2009 conference will take place in Banská Bystrica (Slovakia) jointly organised by Eurodoc's Czech and Slovak member associations, and in 2010 Eurodoc will meet in Vienna in March, having a conference in parallel to the ones of EUA, ESU, EURASHE, EI, and the Ministers' conference.

After going to a lot of interesting talks, after doing a lot of networking and a lot of Eurodoc working having been carried out, we look back on a successful event. And, perhaps even more importantly, we collected a lot of new input that will be transformed into future Eurodoc activities.

Stephan Kurz and Dmitri Teperik



The board at ESOF 2008 in Barcelona from left to right: Aurélien, Stephan, Karoline, Brigita, Jan (and Dmitri was taking the picture).

mented the Charter's principles. Eurodoc's ESOF participants also joined a wide range of sessions from the conference's scientific and outreach programmes, meeting up with partner organisations and individual stakeholders as well.

One of the most interesting and important topics highlighted during the forum was academia and industry co-operation on a European level. Technology transfer remains one of the largest challenges for the European academic community, whose goals are to shape a highly innovative knowledge-based society. As mentioned during ESOF, the problem is that Europeans invest heavily into knowledge production, but fail in turning this knowledge into revenue. In this respect European universities should be more collaborative with potential in-

CONTRIBUTE TO THE EURODOC NEWSLETTER!

It is always good to collect opinions: From the next issue onwards, the Eurodoc Newsletter will feature a corner with contributions from our readers. No matter if you are a doctoral candidate, a politician, a member of one of the other organisations involved with European research policy or just an occasional

reader who found one of the printed copies of our Newsletter in the university cafeteria: Do not hesitate to write down your thoughts in an article not exceeding 600 words and send it to board@eurodoc.net.

As long as your article is connected to a Eurodoc's activities, be it an important issue, a

reaction to Eurodoc or one of our policies or a request for Eurodoc to take up a particular issue, we will try to include it in our next newsletter.

Eurodoc's Newsletter is distributed to many readers from all across and outside Europe, so do not miss the chance to have your say!