

The Official Newsletter of  
*The European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers*

For more information on Eurodoc visit [www.eurodoc.net](http://www.eurodoc.net) or make an inquiry at [board@eurodoc.net](mailto:board@eurodoc.net).

Dear Readers,

we are pleased to present you with Eurodoc's October newsletter, aimed at informing Eurodoc members and other interested parties about recent activities by the Eurodoc community.

The last period was marked by the election of a new board which legally took office in June 2015. The board has set its goals and priorities for the year 2015–2016: Eurodoc will pursue the goal of ensuring the recognition of the value and the purpose of the doctorate, will continue the activities for the second Eurodoc Survey, and its support for collaborations between its national members. Furthermore, actions to increase awareness of why the activities of doctoral candidates and junior researchers qualify as professional activities will be continued, contributing to a better recognition through adequate working conditions.

Following the triannual release schedule, you can expect the new issue in February/March. Until then, keep us informed, and think of Eurodoc!

Edited by the Board of:

*The European Council of  
Doctoral Candidates and  
Junior Researchers*

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## Contribute to the newsletter and promote your activities!

The Eurodoc Newsletter editorial board welcomes any contribution from our member associations and from partner associations or external organizations. We especially encourage our members to send us short reports on events organized by their associations or any national news that may be interesting to others.

If you are organizing an event or taking part in discussion/actions concerning PhD candidates and junior researchers in your country, please write a story about it and get the whole Eurodoc community familiar with your activities!

## Eurodoc board 2015–2016

You are welcome to contact the whole board at [board@eurodoc.net](mailto:board@eurodoc.net).

President	<i>Margaux Kersschot</i>	Belgium	<a href="mailto:president@eurodoc.net">president@eurodoc.net</a>
Vice-president	<i>Carole Chapin</i>	France	<a href="mailto:vicepresident@eurodoc.net">vicepresident@eurodoc.net</a>
Treasurer	<i>Clemens Nyffeler</i>	Switzerland	<a href="mailto:treasurer@eurodoc.net">treasurer@eurodoc.net</a>
Secretary	<i>Miia Ijäs</i>	Finland	<a href="mailto:secretary@eurodoc.net">secretary@eurodoc.net</a>
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Member	<i>Sanjin Marion</i>	Croatia	<a href="mailto:board@eurodoc.net">board@eurodoc.net</a>
Member	<i>Ewelina Pabjańczyk-Wlazło</i>	Poland	<a href="mailto:board@eurodoc.net">board@eurodoc.net</a>

## Eurodoc administration 2015–2016

**Secretariat-Coordinator:** *Claudia Dobrinski*

### Working group coordinators

<b>Gender equality:</b>	Jonas Teuwen, Ludovic Garattini	<b>Interdisciplinarity:</b>	Giedrius Gecevicus
<b>Mobility:</b>	Kinga Maslon	<b>Open Access:</b>	Ivo Neto
<b>Finance:</b>	Fabian Faller	<b>Governance:</b>	Wolfgang Müller

## Increased funding and funded years for the Hungarian Doctoral candidates



Marcell Gáspár, DOSZ.

After more than 20 years, the PhD/DLA programs are being reformed in the Hungarian higher education system. The Association of Hungarian PhD and DLA candidates (DOSZ) has prepared a comprehensive proposal document, positively supported by the State Secretary for Higher Education, including the noticed problems with workable solutions related to the effectiveness of the ongoing PhD/DLA programs. In the present 3-year system, only 25% of doctoral candidates

reach the level of PhD or DLA degree, and the required necessary average time is more than 7 years for them. As reasons for prolonged graduation, the lack of competitive funding and the overoccupation of supervisors and doctoral candidates are generally mentioned. Due to the low level of funding, doctoral candidates often need to take a part-time job besides their PhD/DLA training and this steals their time from research.

In the new system, the PhD/DLA programs would have a 2+2 year structure. The earnings of doctoral candidates would be increased by 50% in the first two years, and if they successfully pass the comprehensive exam at the end of the second year, they could get another two-year funding with a double salary compared to the present system. Within the comprehensive exam their knowledge in their selected research field and their advancement in the doc-

toral research, including their publication activity would be evaluated. Additionally, those who successfully defend their dissertation would be rewarded with a bonus financial support. Social security issues (e.g. pension) are also planned to be solved within the reforms, and the document also extends to the better quality assurance of PhD programs. The proposals have been finalized in accordance with the professional organizations concerned in doctoral programs e.g. Ministry of Human Capacities, Hungarian Accreditation Committee, Hungarian Doctoral Council, Rectors' Conference, Hungarian Academy for Sciences, and National Council of Student Research Societies. The planned reforms should get to the Government's table by October 10, 2015.

*Marcell Gáspár*

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## Eurodoc Annual Conference and General Meeting 2015



Eurodoc delegates and administration.



Conference opening ceremony.

The 2015 Eurodoc Annual Conference took place in the city of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, between April 27th and 28th and was co-organised by the Romanian Society of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Rodoc). The conference "Empowering Young Researchers in Europe: Engagement and Participation" brought together representatives from NGOs across Europe to discuss what they are doing to support early stage researchers. Invited external speakers and Eurodoc members presented how they are dealing with the issues that affect them, and the projects they are working on. The conference provided an opportunity for sharing ideas and exchanging good practice.

The conference was followed by the Annual General

Meeting during which Eurodoc's projects, strategic aims and goals for the upcoming year were discussed. A new board was elected, and legally took over on June 1, 2015. The names and contact details of the new board members are published in this newsletter. We encourage our members to stay active and in contact with the Eurodoc board and secretariat throughout the year, until the next conference and AGM take place in Luxembourg, April 2016.

Once again we wish to thank the local organizing committee Rodoc for the excellent work they did in organizing the event!

*Eurodoc board*

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## Survey analysis of the state of doctoral training in Serbia — the views of PhD candidates

A survey on the state of doctoral programmes in the Republic of Serbia in 2014 was conducted by the Association of PhD Candidates and Young Researchers of Serbia (Doktoranti Srbije). Doktoranti Srbije is a national association of PhD candidates from both state and private universities in Serbia. As a national organization representing all PhD candidates and young researchers Doktoranti Srbije became member of Eurodoc in 2011. During the Eurodoc AGM in Vilnius, Lithuania. The association maintains contact with more than 1,200 doctoral candidates from almost every university in Serbia that has PhD programmes. The largest number of contacts, which can be seen through surveys conducted since 2010, come from the three largest state universities, which also have the largest number of accredited places in doctoral studies: the University of Belgrade, University of Novi Sad, and the University of Nis.

The first survey on the state of doctoral studies in Serbia was launched in 2010 as our response to, and an attempt to draw attention to, the problems that PhD candidates are facing, especially those who are studying under the so-called new Bologna PhD programs. The survey had a very good response rate right from the start: in 2010 we surveyed 335 doctoral candidates, in 2011 567 doctoral candidates, 625 doctoral candidates in 2012/13, and in 2014 we surveyed 447 doctoral candidates. It is important to mention that in 2011 and 2012/13 we had support from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, who forwarded our survey to all doctoral candidates receiving state stipends from the Ministry. It is thus clear that our survey reached the best doctoral candidates at all universities in Serbia and that the results would certainly be more alarming with a larger sample.



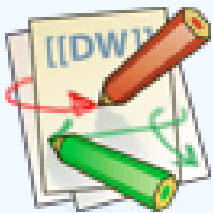
Presentation of the Survey.

The results of the survey conducted by Doktoranti Srbije can be found on the website of the organization, [www.doktoranti.org.rs](http://www.doktoranti.org.rs) or directly using this [link](#). Through these survey results it is possible to see how some questions have been added and some have evolved over time. The first survey conducted in 2010 was modelled on a survey conducted by the University of Zagreb in 2007 and 2008 for their internal needs. We owe special gratitude to the former vice rector of the University of Zagreb and present chairperson of EUA-CDE prof. dr. Melita Kovačević.

*Igor Salak, Slobodan Radicev*

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## Announcing the new EurodocWiki



The Eurodoc administration would like to announce the opening of the new official [Eurodoc Wiki](#). The aim is for the wiki to foster the day to day workings of the Eurodoc administration and working groups, and offer a centralized place

where all Eurodoc members can find useful information.

If you are a member and would like to use the [Eurodoc Wiki](#), feel free to register at the [web site](#). An administrator will confirm your account within 72 hours.

## Open Access and Early Stage Researchers: Challenges and opportunities



Eurodoc and Foster are organizing a Webinar about Open Access and the opportunities raised for early stage researchers in a more open educational environment.

The event is taking place on **6 November, at 11.00h CET**, and is free and open to everybody.

If you are curious about Open

Access and want to know the best opportunities for your research and future career, join us in this webinar. You can also start posting doubts or questions on social media, using the following hashtags: #OpenByDefault and #OpenSci4Doc

For more informations and the detailed program, please click [here](#). To learn more about FOSTER and their activities regarding Open Access, Open Data, Open Education and Open Science, please visit this [link](#).

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## The Open Access Button



The Open Access Button is a browser bookmarklet which registers when people hit a paywall to an academic article and cannot access it. To find more about it, visit [www.openaccessbutton.org](http://www.openaccessbutton.org):

## The Challenges and Perspectives for Junior Researchers in Ukraine in 2014/2015

Education and science reforms are considered as the most successful and Europe-oriented transformations in modern Ukraine, even in complicated political and economic conditions. Law on Higher Education was adopted last year, which aimed at changing academic reality and operational framework of higher education, and to improve academic career conditions as well. Packages of legal acts to implement the law and new Law on Scientific and Research Activities are being drafted and widely discussed on the different levels and in different communities of academic stakeholders, and among young researchers as well.



Iryna Degtyarova presenting young scientists at the Polish-Ukrainian-German Rector's Meeting, Warsaw, 15th December 2014.

The new Law on Higher Education has also brought a number of amendments for junior scientists, which are related to doctoral training, PhD thesis preparation and PhD degree awarding processes, changes in Scientific Councils functioning, and conditions of the research activities in general. It also refers to some alternations in the academic career development, making it more competitive and based on a quality of research results, thus more demanding for early-stage-researchers to climb up the professional academic career ladder. Nevertheless, no positive changes were introduced in financial guarantees for younger academic staff, and together with economic difficulties, which caused currency instability, it resulted in further decrease of salary in academia due to transfer rates from Euro to US dollars. This challenging situation can affect the ongoing ageing of academic staff and massive academic migration (international and inter-sectoral mobility, transfer to business, etc.), and community engagement and academic leadership are crucial factors to revitalize the situation and prevent

such trends.

We should say, that current period of transformations within the system of higher education and in the academic community can be characterized by open public dialogue between the state and groups of academic stakeholders, and by development of academic leadership and public/community responsibility. Major changes occurred to the national association of junior researchers in Ukraine – the Young Scientists Council. First, it changed its legal status: it was established in 2012 as an independent collegial advisory body at the State Agency on Science and Innovations of Ukraine, and was not directly connected with the main decision-makers at the Ministry, but due to systemic reforms and liquidation of this Agency, YSC was reestablished as an advisory body for the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. It is very important, that the members of YSC represent different regions and types of academic institutions in Ukraine – higher education institutions subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, branch universities which belong to state agencies (the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Administration of the President etc.), some research institutions of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, as well as research and development organizations in companies. This approach presents the most important value, which is to take into account interests of all junior scientists. YSC is operating according to the RMU Statute (approved in 2012, reapproved in 2015) and YSC bodies are: the Chairman, the 1st Vice-Chairman, 2nd Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Board Members and



At the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, YSC Board Meeting with the Maksym Stricha, Vice-Minister of Education and Science, discussing strategic priorities of YSC and cooperation with the Ministry.

Associated Members. The Board Members come from different regions and types of institutions, which prevent lobbying some personal interests while policy-making activities.

Now YSC in Ukraine operates according to two priorities, focused internally and externally: 1) to strengthen and integrate the junior researchers community in our country, to protect their rights, lobby their interests and act on behalf of them; 2) to act as an important and academic stakeholder with other interested groups on the national arena of education and science policy-making, as well as internationally.



At the Ukrainian Parliament Verkhovna Rada, delegation to the Parliamentary Hearings on the Law of Higher Education, 2014.

The Chairman and delegates appointed by the Young Scientists Council have become the members of different working groups at the Ministry, in the Parliamentary Committee on Science and Education to work on the legislation amendments and documents to implement new Law on Higher Education. Approximately 15 opinions and proposals to legal acts were sent in 2014/2015.

One of the recent activities is preparing the article for the Draft Law on Science and Research Activities dedicated to the Council of Young Scientists as a body of academic self-government in the Universities, which particularly stands for its 3-level structure: National YSC, Regional YSCs and YSCs in HEIs and RIs. However, this norm (as it actually was before in the acting Law in Science) is contradictory to the Law on Higher Education (Art.41) saying about the “Scientific association of students (cadets), doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers/habilitation and young researchers (up to 35)”, and a lot of universities are hurrying to restructure the councils of young scientists into the “Scientific associations...” uniting them with students. Due to the principles of academic autonomy, we cannot interfere into the internal issues of the universities, so we continue to work over the changes in other acts, which enable and empower young researchers to save their

separate organizations within the academic institutions. The legislation process is ongoing, and lobbying for this article is still active.

Strengthening the junior researchers academic community is very challenging without systemic changes in the research funding system and higher education institutions financing schemes. We strive for raising the issue of challenges and perspectives of academic career development for young scientists in Ukraine and put it onto political agenda. The number of junior researchers is decreasing (from 40232 in 2012 to 33 304 in 2014, in 2015 is still decreasing due to the annexation of Crimean universities and HEIs from the war-affected region of Donbas), not to mention the numbers of academic migration abroad that is rising recently. We consider this situation as a major challenge for national higher education and science, and what is more - as underestimated by the central government and university authorities. In spite of the new law, which created more favourable conditions for academic mobility and career development in Ukraine after obtaining academic degree abroad, the academic reality is not so optimistic. One of the recent challenges and threats for junior faculty staff was the conscription, and it took a lot of efforts from the Parliamentary Committee to convince the Parliament and the President to adopt the law on dismissal from the military service for researchers and academic teachers. And YSC played one of the key roles in the process of public debates and development of documents on this issues, as we sent a lot of statement letters and opinion to the state authorities, so we consider it also the victory of the junior scientists community.

Once the Central Government (agency responsible for state awards and prizes) decided not to cancel granting money for Cabinet of Ministry awards to junior researchers prize-holders, YSC considers it a violation the interests of junior scientists. After number of appeals to the Parliamentary Committee, their appeals to the Government and Ministry, hopefully this issue will be solved shortly after adopting necessary changes to the State Budget.

One of the biggest achievements of national authorities in education and science is that Ukraine joined Horizon 2020 as associated partner, and now Ukrainian research units and scientists, junior as well, can take part in grant applications and be one of the 3 main consortium partners and have more rights and possibilities to get funding for research, and to improve our research facilities, laboratories, research and development centres as well. All of the above have brought European perspectives of the research career development to Ukrainian scientific community.

## Democratization

Political crisis has become also an opportunity for researchers to be more courageous with research ideas, be more open with expressing their position, be less indifferent but more engaged and active as a part of civil society (new fields of activity – social and local community engagement, volunteering, new partnerships and cooperation in the field of democracy and civil society building). We experience greater patriotism among academic community, especially in students and junior academic fellows (some of them, who was granted the Prize of the cabinet of Ministers, decided to give all the money to the charity and volunteers).



Hearings in the Parliamentary Committee on Science and Education on the new draft law "On scientific and research activities".

In 2015 with the support from the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, YSC has started All-Ukrainian initiative "Research project evaluator from young researchers community to expertise projects submitted to the state grant competition". Its aim is to find highly qualified junior researchers aged up to 35-40 years, who have the best achievements in scientific and international research activities, and engage them into the evaluation of the projects submitted by junior researchers for the state grant competitions (before there were 2 experts and no representatives from junior scientific community). For 2 weeks 598 scientists applied, YSC select only 320 dividing them onto 23 scientific disciplines, and sent the lists to the Ministry. It is for the first time in Ukraine, when experts are selected via open competition by the peers. This innovative method will also be used for selecting the experts for evaluation applications for other state research grant competitions.

National YSC's work voluntarily and receive no remuneration for its activities, but has relevant competences and organizational framework to become a strong partner for policy makers, academic stakeholders and junior researchers in Ukraine, and to support them on their way to academic career and approaching excellence in research and development.

*Iryna Degtyarova, Yurii Krashchenko*

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## Open call: Want to become a member of the Eurodoc secretariat team?

Eurodoc announces an **open call for the following positions**:

1. **Coordinator** for *Policy Research Working Group*, and
2. **Coordinator** for *Employment and Career Development Working Group*

A Working Group coordinator coordinates the work that a WG jointly decides to get into. In addition, the coordinator always has a support team behind him/her: the secretariat coordinator, other WG coordinators as well as the board of Eurodoc. Eurodoc is all about teamwork!

If you have:

- An interest in the situation of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers,
- A will to improve this situation and some time to find for it,
- Openness and ability to work in a group and

motivate people you are working with,

- Openness and ability to work in an international environment,
- Commitment to the work in Eurodoc, and
- A will to develop many skills!

Please feel free to **send your application** to [board@eurodoc.net](mailto:board@eurodoc.net). In your email, you can include the following topics:

- Motivation for why you would like to be in this position and why you would like to work for Eurodoc,
- Possible previous experience in organizational work,
- Possible previous experience related to Policy Research or Employment and Career Development issues.

*Eurodoc board*

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## Bid to organise the Eurodoc Annual Conference and General Meeting 2017

Dear Eurodoc members,

We hereby call for bids to organise this event. Each year in springtime, Eurodoc holds an international conference for early stage researchers. The aim of this conference is to provide a framework for young researchers working in Europe to meet with European economic and political leaders and to engage in a fruitful discussion on the construction of the European Research and Higher Education Area. It is the most important Eurodoc event of the year and its organisation is one of Eurodoc's biggest projects.

As mentioned above, the event consists of two parts; the conference and the general meeting. The conference part should have an overall focus, on a topic of interest for young researchers and stakeholders. The Local Organizing Committee (LOC) will have main responsibility for the conference part. This part will cover about 1.5 days, after which the general meeting will commence. During the general meeting, Eurodoc members will decide upon Eurodoc's path for the coming year through workshop sessions, discussion of overall priorities, and election of a new board and secretariat. The Eurodoc board will have responsibility for the general meeting. The conference is organised by a Local Organising Committee (LOC) in cooperation with Eurodoc, namely the Eurodoc Board. The role of the LOC involves providing facilities and organisational help in preparation of and throughout the conference and funding. Eurodoc assists in compiling the programme, inviting speakers and also funding at a European level. During the organisa-

tional phase the LOC works closely with Eurodoc by means of mailing lists set up for that purpose. Previous conferences have been successfully held in Girona, Utrecht, Athens, Strasbourg, Bologna, London, Fribourg, Banská Bystrica, Vienna, Vilnius, Krakow, Lisbon, Budapest and Cluj Napoca. The 2016 Conference will be hosted in Luxembourg.

Organising the Eurodoc conference is a serious responsibility and will require a lot of work. However, we believe it is also very challenging and rewarding! It creates extra visibility of your national organisation in your country by means of inviting local policy makers and experts and establishing many important contacts. At the same time, it is a valuable experience for those directly involved and gives a great chance to further develop and prove your organisational skills. Please keep in mind that the deadline for submitting bids is 1st January 2016. In your proposal you could suggest an initial idea for the conference theme, budget and plan for funding. All bids will be evaluated and the board will make the final decision by the end of January 2016. The bid does not need to fix the dates for the conference, which can be agreed upon later. The conference is generally held around the end of March/ beginning of April.

Good luck with your application! We look forward to receiving your bid. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at [board@eurodoc.net](mailto:board@eurodoc.net). Together we can make sure that the next event is as successful as the previous ones!

*Eurodoc Board*

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### Representing Eurodoc

**Eurodoc was officially present at these events:**

*Conference "Attract, train and keep global talents – the cultural factor", Tromsø, 15 October (Carole Chapin)*

*SuperProfdoc meeting in Dublin, 29-30 Sept. (Carole Chapin, John Peacock, Claudia Dobrinski)*

*ESU back to school reception, Brussels, 29 Sept. (Margaux Kersschot)*

*European Universities of Technology Conference, Espoo, 18-19 Sept. (Miia Ijäs)*

*DOSZ Summer Camp in Pécs, 28-30 August, face-to-face board meeting*

*UNIKE Summer School, Porto, 29 June-3 July (Filomena Parada, Iryna Degtiarova)*

*A new start for Europe, Opening up to an ERA of Innovation, Brussels 22-23 June (Margaux Kersschot)*

*General meeting Confédération des Jeunes Chercheurs, Nancy, 13-14 June (Carole Chapin, Anis Amokrane, Emeline Lesmanne)*

*ESAA Kick Off Event, Brussels 12-13 June (Margaux Kersschot, Carole Chapin)*

*Inprodoc #2, Université de Lille, 9 June (Carole Chapin)*

*MSCA Conference, Riga, 28-29 May (Wolfgang Müller, Ludovic Garattini)*

## Survey results of over 1200 young researchers in Croatia

During March this year the Young scientist network of Croatia (MLAZ) conducted an online survey between doctoral candidates who attend or have recently attended (after 2010) doctoral programs at University of Zagreb. The university of Zagreb holds around 52 % of all doctoral programs in Croatia from which around 1200 doctoral candidates participated in the mentioned online survey. The survey was anonymous and could be completed only once by each participant. Questions covered different fields like: doctoral programs, teaching and scientific work, social status and the perspective for employment in private/public sector or academia. The goal of the survey was to pinpoint (detect) weak spots in the young researcher system in Croatia and afterwards discuss them with relevant stakeholders, e.g. the Ministry of science, higher education and sports, the University rectorate and the Union of Research and Higher Education Employees of Croatia.



Round table discussion organized by Young scientist network of Croatia and European movement Croatia NGO.

To put the current situation in perspective, we may take a look at [Croatia's Research and Innovation performance in the EU](#). We notice that Croatian R&D intensity projections for 2000–2020 show a difference in R&D trends and targets in respect to EU targets. This can be correlated with the economic recession, with which Croatia is still struggling after a six year period. Low investments in science and higher education have also caused the University of Zagreb ranking on the Shanghai list to drop below the 500th place since 2012. Until this year there have not been any reforms or attempts towards rectifying this problem in science and higher education.

Survey participant profile is: 62% female gender and around 70 % participants are from 28 to 39 years old. Around 56 % of participants are employed by the university (43 %), public institutes (13 %), while others work

in public sector (18 %), government (6 %), private sector (13 %) or are unemployed (7 %). Roughly we can say that expenses of doctoral programs (which range from 500 to 2250 euros per semester) for one third of participants is covered by the Ministry of higher education and sports, for the second third is paid by the employer, while the rest of participants individually pays the expenses. To put this into perspective, the average wage in Croatia is 750 euro, very similar (or slightly higher) than the wage of PhD assistant in Croatia. We also examined the attitude of participants on their satisfaction with doctoral programs was examined through following questions: Rate your satisfaction the general quality of doctoral program, the applicability of the knowledge acquired at the doctoral programs for scientific work / teaching activities / entrepreneurial activity. They could rate their satisfaction on mentioned questions from extremely unsatisfactory (1) to extremely satisfactory (5). Roughly 50 % of participants are satisfied with the general quality of their doctoral program and the applicability of the knowledge acquired at the doctoral programs for scientific work and teaching activities. Only 19 % of participants are satisfied with applicability of the knowledge acquired at the doctoral programs for entrepreneurial activity. Around 40 % of participants are satisfied with accessibility to scientific journals (online journal bases) in Croatia.



Guests at the round table: the Vice Minister for Science, Education and Sports of Croatia; the president of the Union of research and HEI staff; and the vice-rector for research of the University of Zagreb.

Involvement of doctoral candidates in teaching at an institution of higher education was also investigated and for 38 % participants teaching is a part of their job, 9 % do it as part-time and 6 % do it voluntarily. Survey results indicate that most of participants work over their maximum norms (according to the last regulations because currently there is no signed agreement between

union and Ministry of science, higher education and sports) and only 18 % of them are paid for the overtime work done. Norms are defined as 150 (225) teaching hours per semester for doctoral candidates (postdocs). Around 15 % percent of respondents were doing up to 300 hours of teaching per semester, something that is well above the norm for a full professor. Also a few participants report teaching up to 900 hours. Individual responses indicate that their faculties are forging teaching documents to show a much lesser involvement. From the academia 27 % of participants have been doing research in a research facility abroad for more than one month, while in case of public and private sector only 13 %. Most of participants (86 %) find their scientific work creatively fulfilling and that is probably one of the reasons why 81 % of participants does scientific work in their own spare time. When asked which employment career participants consider most plausible for themselves considering current situation in Croatia 37 % consider staying in academia, 16 % in public sector, 13 % in private sector, 13 % going to work abroad, 8 % consider unemployment and 7 % consider opening their own firm.

Survey results have shown that an improvement in doctoral programs is needed and currently the National agency for science and higher education is working on a full reevaluation of all doctoral programs in Croatia that will ensure and improve quality of doctoral programs. For example, Croatia has over 127 doctoral programs for 4.3 million inhabitants. The overburdening of doctoral candidates in terms of university teaching is alarming and that is why in the next few months more people will be employed at universities by the Ministry of higher education and sports. One of the things that still has to be addressed is how to facilitate and make available international working experience for doctoral participants. We believe that the survey results and the discussion with relevant parties at national level has speeded up changes in our higher education despite lack of financial support at the national level. This is clearly evident in the current reforms in the young researcher system, facilitated by our national association, aimed at the flexibility of employment for 1300 young researchers.

*Fabio Faraguna*

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## The 16th Eurodoc Annual Conference and General Assembly in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg



View on the Alzette river in Luxembourg City, downtown city part Grund.

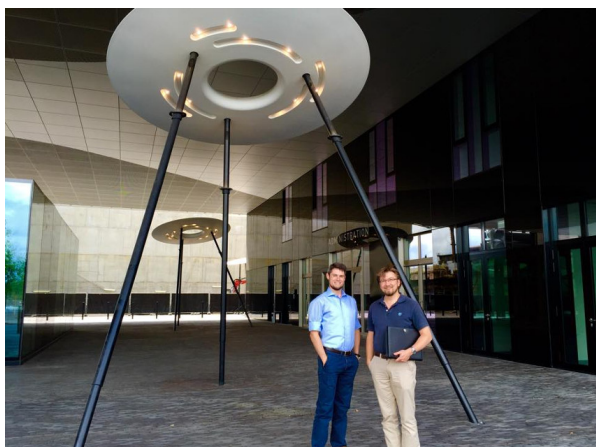
The training of early stage researchers has undergone many changes over time. While it is common to solely perform a project-related thesis some decades ago, doctoral schools have prospered in recent years and PhD candidates are brought to further develop their transferable skills. LuxDoc, Luxembourg's young researchers association, is hosting the 16th Eurodoc Annual Conference and General Assembly between the 20th and 23rd April 2016. As the main topic for the "Eurodoc 2016 - Luxembourg", it was decided to focus on the future

of early stage researchers' training. Critical issues will be discussed in a number of plenary sessions and workshops: What should be in-/excluded in the training of PhD candidates in the future? What are the main goals of early stage researchers' education? To what extent and on which scale should the training be standardized?

**luxdoc**  
Luxembourg's Young Researchers Association

Luxembourg is located in the heart of Europe. As one of the smallest European countries, Luxembourg plays nonetheless a very special role in Europe. For instance, Luxembourg hosts important European institutions (e.g. European Parliament, European Commission, Court of Justice of the European Communities). The small size of Luxembourg promotes the multicultural and multilingual education. The University of Luxembourg is a young university, which was founded in 2003. It is recently spotted in the Top 200 universities worldwide due to its fruitful development over the past years in innovative research. The 16th Eurodoc Annual Con-

ference will allow sharing the celebration of the 10th anniversary of doctoral training in Luxembourg.



(From left to right) LuxDoc president Romain Decet and Eurodoc treasurer Clemens Nyffeler in front of the new University building in Esch-Belval

LuxDoc is currently in full preparation mode to make this conference a big success. It is an honour and privilege for LuxDoc to welcome as speaker at the Eurodoc conference, amongst others: Prof. Rolf Tarrach, former president of the University of Luxembourg and current president of the European University Association, Marc Hansen, Secretary of State for Higher Education and Research, as well as Dr. Marc Schiltz, Executive Head of the National Research Fund. Stay tuned for more details soon to be added on the website [www.eurodoc-lux2016.org](http://www.eurodoc-lux2016.org)! Save the date, LuxDoc is happy to welcome you next year in Luxembourg.

*Local organizing committee*

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## The 1st national meeting of PhD candidates in the Czech Republic.

# SK:RVŠ

STUDENTSKÁ KOMORA RADY VYSOKÝCH ŠKOL  
STUDENT CHAMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF HEIs

# DOKTORANDI

The first nationwide conference for PhD candidates in Czech history called “DOKTORANDI 1.0” was held on the grounds of Mendel University in Brno (September 24 - 25, 2015). The event was organized by the Student Chamber of the Council of Higher Education (SK RVŠ), which is the legally based representative body of all university students in Czech Republic, as well as a member of Eurodoc.

The main objective of the conference was to create a discussion platform for PhD candidates and other interested parts (professors, industry leaders and ministry) to define the main problems related to PhD study in Czech Republic. Based on the suggestions and information generated at conference, the SK RVŠ wants to forge a long-term position document, which it hopes will help to eliminate the biggest problems, as well as to urge PhD candidates to active participation in their solving.

The programme of the conference included two panel discussions which were closely related to the conference topic: “The Current Role of PhD Candidates at the University” and “Opportunities for PhD Candidates During Their Studies”, as well as three blocks of

seminars focused on specific areas, such as “Mobility and Internships”, “Position of Women in Science” and “Learning Opportunities in the Field of Teaching”. Several workshops were offered to participants in parallel to allow them a choice of the most preferable theme for them.



Discussion about PhD candidates and Eurodoc’s role.

The conference has also witnessed the establishment of The Commission for Postgraduate Education which

will focus on PhD candidates, accreditation and funding of research and its development. Long-term goal of the Commission is to improve the status of PhD programmes in the Czech scientific community as well as in the Czech society at large. One of the major problems that the Commission for Postgraduate Education and Creative Activities highlighted was the obligation of full-time students over the age of 26 to pay for their health insurance. According to the resolution of the SK RVŠ they should be exempt from those charges. Another was the extremely low financial support that does not cover the cost of living and other duties, which prevents PhD candidates from completing their dissertation in the standard timeframe, which is 3 or 4 years.

These are some of the speakers that have delivered a talk at the conference: Jan Fischer (chairman of the Higher Education Council of the Czech Republic and Vice Chancellor for Strategy Economics in Prague) Jan Konvalinka (Vice-Rector for scientific work of Charles University in Prague), Vladimír Sedlářík (Vice-Rector for Research and Development at Tomas Bata University in Zlín), Zdeněk Stuchlík (Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and Science at Silesian University in Opava) and many others.



Panel discussion and workshops for PhD candidates.

Among the speakers featured also post-docs and representatives of industries, such as Petra Špetlíková (HR Marketing specialist at ŠKODA AUTO), and Miroslav Palička (the co-founder of Smart Solutions, which was awarded the most innovative company of the year 2014).



Michala Dubská (Slovak PhD Students' Association), Martin Papež (chairman of The Commission for Postgraduate Education) and Eva Hnátková (delegate of SK RVŠ at Eurodoc), they met for the first time at Eurodoc 2015 conference in Cluj-Napoca.

In relation to gender issues in science, a speech was delivered by Kateřina Cidlinská (PhD candidate at the Department of Sociology at Charles University in Prague), who is a member of the National Contact Centre - Women in Science, and a coordinator of mentoring programme for secondary school female students interested in studying at technical universities. Slovak PhD Students' Association (ADS) from Slovakia, member of Eurodoc as well, were represented at the conference by Michael Dubská.

*Eva Hnátková, Tereza Křepelová*

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# eurodoc

*The European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers*

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