

eurodoc Newsletter

Issue #21, March 2017

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

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Dear Readers,

Eurodoc is pleased to present you our latest issue of the Newsletter, which was prepared by the Doctoral Training Working Group. This issue is aimed, especially, at the doctoral training and career development of ECRs.

The topic was chosen due to crucial significance, value and quality of doctoral training in higher education and research policies both on European and national level. Moreover, a number of PhD holders in Europe has been increasing for last two decades, that lead to diversifying of their career paths inside and outside academia. Junior researchers need to be sufficiently prepared not only for academic career, but also for the academic and non-academic labour market as well. Formal education and training should equip doctoral candidates with broad range of skills which opens doors to personal fulfilment and professional development, social engagement, active citizenship and employment.

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!

The Evolution of Doctoral Education

Nowadays, PhD candidates represent not only an institution's finest students, but they are also the ones most likely to become tomorrow's word leaders and highly skilled people able to adapt to unforeseen changes [1]. This is caused by rapid changes in society, including the development of information and communication technology, the growing production of knowledge, increasing international competition, technological evolution, as well as changes in the occupational structures and in the contents and organization of work [2]. In the last two decades, PhD graduates expanded and they are expected to make effective contributions on the global stage. A consequence is that doctoral programmes have to do much more than preparing doctoral candidates only for the academic field.

An international agreement is that PhD should contribute to knowledge through original research. However, there is an increasing broad range of careers in other

sectors (including business, industry, the non-profit sector, and government) and across international settings. These careers require PhD training of particular skills and competences that can be transferred from academic to other professional settings, and from one professional setting to other skills that enhance graduates' employability, their ability to manage their own careers, and their sense of responsibility for making contributions to society. Skills acquisition and development are essential for the performance and modernization of labour markets in order to provide new forms of flexibility [3].

According to ten basic principles, known as Salzburg principles, the doctoral training must meet the demands of employment market wider than academia. Universities must assume responsibility for ensuring their doctoral programmes are designed to meet new challenges and include appropriate professional career development opportunities. Doctoral candidates should be



Source: http://www.chemistryviews.org/details/education/8272011/Doctorate_Holders_Steer_Your_Career.html

recognized as early-career researchers who are making key contributions to knowledge creation. This requires a new innovative structure of doctoral programmes which offer various types of transferable skill

acquisition, interdisciplinary, (geographical and intersectoral) mobility, innovation, entrepreneurship, and international collaboration [4].

References

- [1] [The Continuing Evolution of the Research Doctorate](#)
- [2] [EURODOC policy papers](#)
- [3] [New Skills Agenda for Europe](#)
- [4] [Salzburg recommendations II](#)

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Key features and best practices of Doctoral training in Finland



In Finland, the number of doctoral graduates has tripled over the past twenty years. In 2015,

1881 doctoral degrees were performed in the country (see Figure 1 for evolution of doctoral degrees in the last ten years). In Finland, the right of a university to grant degrees is regulated by law. The Finnish law also states the requirements for each doctoral candidate. These laws (see below) must be taken into account in all the steps leading to the completion of the doctoral degree. According to Decree Statute 21 § of the Government Decree on university degrees (effective since 1.8.2005) and Government Decree 1039/2013 (unofficial translation), a person who has completed doctoral training has:

- Become well-versed in his/her own field of research and its social significance
- Gained knowledge and skills needed to apply scientific research methods independently and critically, and the ability to produce new scientific knowledge within his/her field of research

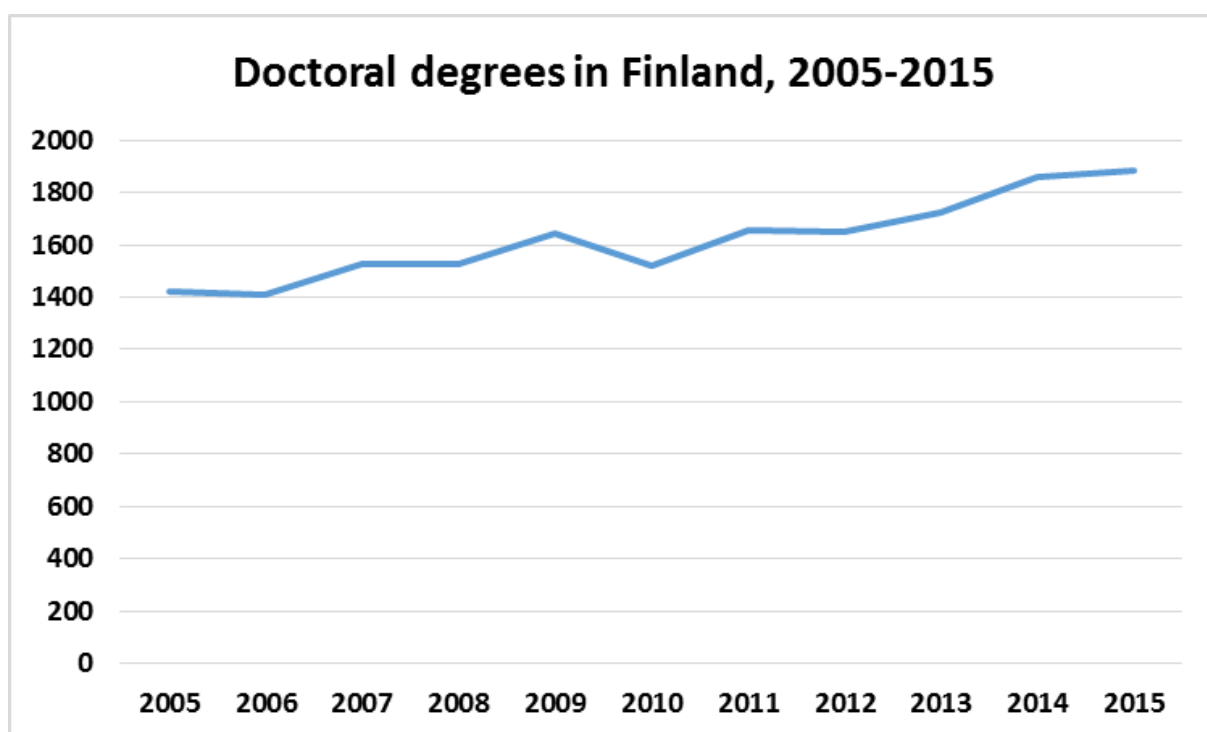
- Become conversant with the development, basic problems and research methods of his/her own field of research
- Gained such knowledge of the general theory of science and of other disciplines relating to his/her own field
- of research as enables him/her to follow developments in them
- Acquired sufficient communication, language and other related general skills required for posts of high expertise and international collaboration [1]

As for the funding issue, Finland chooses for a combination of setting general rules for doctoral education in the legislation and lump-sum funding for doctoral training. Here a new law prescribes that doctoral candidates have to enrol at their institutions and that institutions need to have a structural framework for doctoral education in place.

Universities, on the other hand, are free to decide how the structural framework is organised and how funding for doctoral education received from the Ministry of Education will be spent. The primary role of doctoral training is to ensure both the development of capacity-building and

knowledge-based repertoire, which allows for professional careers in various positions. For this purpose, the graduate school system was created in the 1990s. The focus was on high and highly successful research areas. On the basis of the Salzburg principles (2005) and subsequent recommendations (Salzburg II 2010), a doctoral school study group established by the Academy of Finland started to renew the structures of the doctoral schools. The aim was that graduate students would be on a more balanced

footing with each other and that each post-graduate student was going to study in a structured doctoral education and training. As a result of the universities' reform, universities have at least one doctoral school, with their respective doctoral programmes, and each doctoral candidate belongs to one of those schools. Further, universities are supposed to cooperate with each other; thus, starting from the 1990s, several doctoral schools' networks have been established [2].



Source: Education Statistics Finland (2017)

In terms of best practices at the local level, as a result of the reform of doctoral training, and the implementation of the University of Oulu Graduate School, examples of good practice in doctoral training were collected throughout the university. There was initially some resistance towards the Graduate School among students and supervisors as they feared losing traditional rights that have been related to their status. Most of this has been resolved as all participants now see the benefits of the Graduate School [3]. At the University of

Eastern Finland, in 2016, the Enhancing Working Life Connections in Doctoral Education project, is a joint initiative by five Finnish universities. The goal is to expand and diversify the opportunities for doctoral candidates to find employment outside the traditional academic careers with the overall objective to enhance their employment prospects. The project supports doctoral candidates in finding employment in positions that are relevant to their expertise already during their studies. Particularly, models are developed for internships,

research cooperation, and working life collaboration. The content-related development of doctoral training will be carried out in collaboration between the

partner universities, and connections will be established to regional companies [4].

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- [3] <http://jultika.oulu.fi/Record/isbn978-952-62-1084-1>
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From PhD to job market:

Transforming doctoral training with the SAF21 model

European doctoral training is faced with problems such as long PhD completion time and high rates of dropout, which consistently range from 35 to 65 % [1]. Poor supervision, lack of relevant skills and lack of structure are among the main reasons for attrition [2]. Moreover, the employment landscape shifted significantly in the last decade and now fewer than 30% of doctoral graduates work in academia or in research and development related jobs [3]. The training programme of early stage researchers (ESRs) has to acknowledge this development and address skills and competencies that will prepare ESRs for careers in multiple sectors [4].

In order to address these problems, and following the seven EU principles for innovative doctoral training [5], the European Training Network [SAF21](#) - Social Science Aspects of Fisheries for the 21st Century (an EU funded Marie Skłodowska-Curie project that started in 2015 and hired 10 PhD candidates at academic and non-academic institutions) has proposed an innovative doctoral training model that comprises the following six pillars:

The logo for SAF21 consists of the letters 'SAF' in a light blue color, followed by a vertical line, and the number '21' in a light green color.

1. Development of a Personal Career Development Plan (PCDP). Individual expertise, skills, and competencies that need to be developed, both for the successful completion of the individual, personalised doctoral project, and for later use in a scientific or professional career have been identified for each SAF21 ESR within 6 months following their recruitment. These skills, expertise, and competencies served as a basis for the development of each individual PCDP. This plan is thought to be a means of integrating the local and network training to create useful and individually-tailored training paths. The PCDPs are evaluated and modified at least once a year by the ESR and her/his supervisors taking into account the achievements of the ESR and the evolution of her/his career objectives. Developing PCDPs additionally

facilitates self-reflection as well as practising core competencies such as personal effectiveness, research governance, career management and research impact.

2. Network-wide training in project specific scientific education and research training (i.e. topics related to the interdisciplinary study of fisheries as socio-ecological complex adaptive systems).

3. Network-wide training in core transferable skills. Departing from the conventional PhD training programmes where training transferable skills are left to the initiative and good will of the supervisor, the training component of the PhD programmes run by the SAF21 network include mandatory training in a core group of transferable skills (e.g. ethics of science, grant writing). These core skills will give the SAF21 ESRs work competencies that are relevant for a broad job market, although the specific skills they need may vary across sectors. This core group of transferable skills was selected based on the results of recent studies about tools for supporting career development and research [6, 7]. In addition, training in intercultural communication sets the basis for successful international mobility.

4. Secondments (i.e. temporary transfer of each ESR to another partner in the network). Through the mechanism of secondments, the SAF21 doctoral candidates are exposed to three different work sectors (i.e. academia, fisheries industry, science communication through entertainment facilities). The schedules for secondments are developed based on each ESR's needs of knowledge, training, skills, and competencies.

5. Local training according to individual ESR needs. This local training completes the network-wide training by offering a large range of theoretical and practical scientific

training activities, as well as training in transferable skills. These activities will allow the ESRs to complement and expand both their original background and the one acquired through network-wide activities. They also have the chance to practice their own research methodologies in a work environment different from the one they are taking their PhD in.

6. Training and practice in science communication using a wide variety of platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, personal blog).

In addition to these six pillars, the SAF21 doctoral training model is encouraging the SAF21 ESRs to participate in local, national and international young researchers associations, such as Tromsø Doctoral Candidates (at University of Tromsø – The Arctic University of Norway), the Marie Curie Fellowship Association, the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (EURODOC). This involvement in young researcher associations allows the ESRs to interact with other early career scientists in a different setting and to broaden their networks.

Based on the experience accumulated by implementing this training model during the first two years of the SAF21 project, it can be said that enthusiasm, perseverance, sufficient financial means and collaboration across sectors is the winning combination for keeping up the enthusiasm and motivation in any doctoral program. The members of the SAF21 network hope that fulfilling this training will increase the ESRs' rate of successful international, intersectoral and interdisciplinary mobility and, consequently, enhance their employability.

Acknowledgements:

The SAF21 project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Framework Programme Marie Skłodowska-Curie (MSC)-ITN-ETN programme (project 642080): 2015 - 2018.



Early stage researchers of the SAF21 European Training Network (www.saf21.org)

From left to right, upper row: Alexander Holdgate (Plymouth University, UK; University of Tromsø, Norway; SAF21 intern), Ixai Salvo Borda (CETMAR, Spain), Kristinn Nikulás Edvardsson (University of Iceland, Iceland); middle row: Cezara Păstrăv (Matis, Iceland), Shaheen Syed (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK), Luz K. Molina (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK), Rannvá Danielsen (Syntesa, Denmark), Charlotte Weber (University of Tromsø, Norway); lower row: Theodora Sam (University of Tromsø, Norway), Lia ní Aodha (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK), Samaneh Heidari (Utrecht University, The Netherlands), Melania Borit (University of Tromsø, SAF21 Coordinator).

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Doctoral training and career opportunities in the Italian academic system:

A story of decline and missed opportunities

In recent years, regulatory policies have deeply reshaped the organisation of the Italian doctorate and postdoc. With the aim to know how these changes are reflected in the daily experience of thousands of young researchers, last October ADI (Associazione dottorandi e dottori di ricerca italiani) presented the 6th edition of our yearly national report on doctorate and postdoc in Italy. Data were collected from institutional sources both at national (universities, government reports, National Institute of Statistics - ISTAT) and European level (Eurostat).



Doctoral training

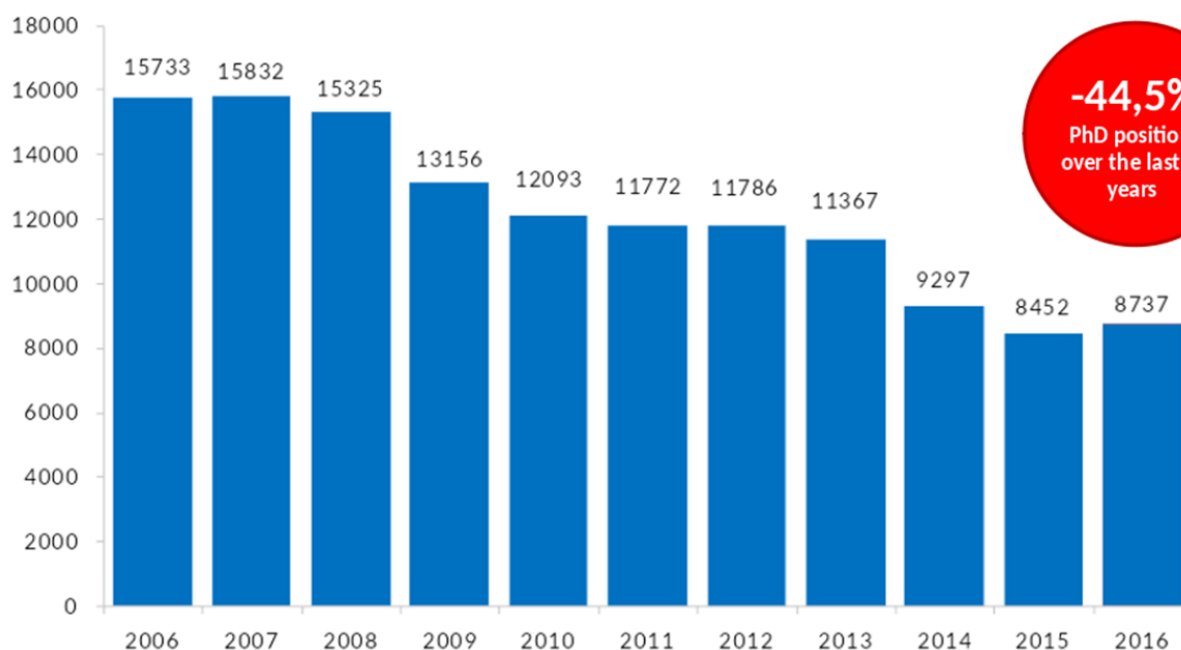
For what concerns the doctorate, collected data confirm a phenomenon already identified during previous investigations: a sharp drop (by 44.5%, from 15733 to 8737) in the number of PhD positions, occurred over the last 10 years and in particular since 2008, when a reform of the public administration imposed deep cuts to university budgets. The impact of this contraction, however, has been highly uneven from a geographical

perspective, with universities in the South struggling more than the others in financing doctoral and postdoctoral positions. This consolidates a trend that worsens the already critical condition of Italy, which in 2012 was placed at the bottom of the European ranking for the number of doctoral candidates per 1,000 inhabitants. This year the report was integrated with the outcomes of a survey on doctoral studies, aimed to gather information on actual living and working conditions of PhD candidates in Italy. The survey, available both in Italian and English, was submitted to 62 Italian public and private universities in February 2016. Thanks to the collaboration between the 22 local offices of our organisation and doctoral offices of Italian universities, we received 5 246 completely filled surveys (corresponding to the 15 % of the entire doctoral population) from 65 universities (90 % of the total). Results show that 60.6 % of PhD candidates is under 30 years of age and started a PhD right after a Master's degree. More than 65.7 % of the respondents work in the same university where they graduated. In most cases, they are the first to pursue this path in their family. Finally, it is important to highlight that Italian regulations state that PhD candidates are students; as such, they cannot benefit from the rights granted to all workers. Nevertheless, they have to pay for social security contributions.



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Source: Rapporto ANVUR 2013, Rapporto ANVUR 2016, VI Indagine ADI

Number of PhD positions in Italy (2006-2016)

The survey definitely shows a lack of information among our Italian colleagues about research and mobility funds they can apply for: 56.4 % of the interviewed just ignore how to have access to them. Moreover, although Italian regulations do not prevent in principle the possibility to have a non-academic job during a PhD, in many cases the incompatibility is arbitrarily stated by PhD supervisors. This heavily damages non-funded PhD candidates: 14.4 % of them must pay fees to attend their courses without the possibility to look for a job. Furthermore, their international mobility is actually very limited, despite their initial expectations about a research stay abroad.

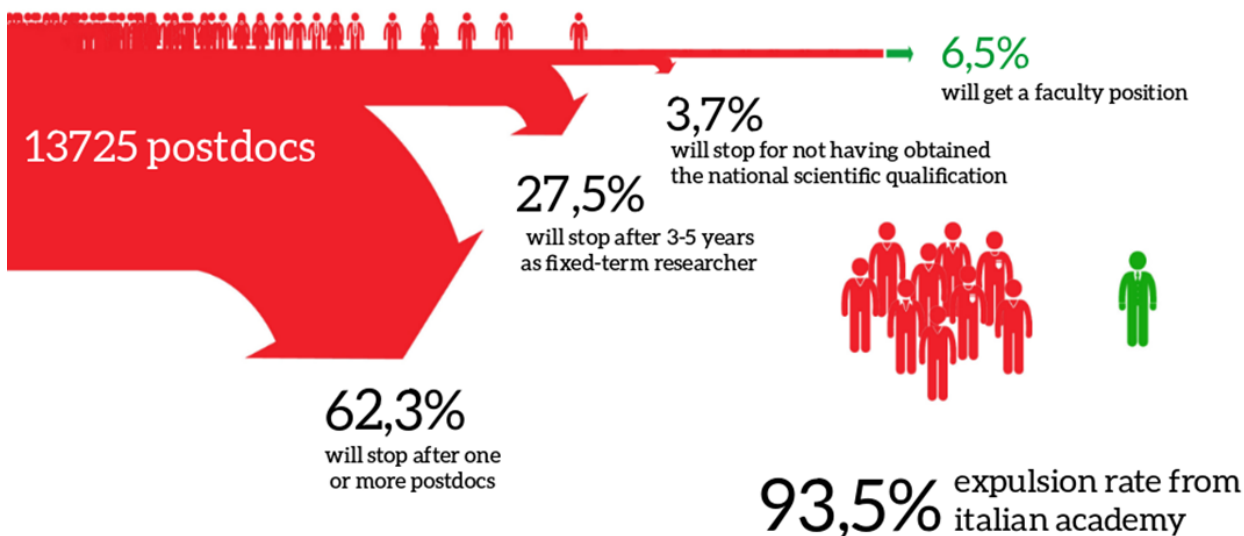
Career opportunities for junior researchers

As for job opportunities after the doctorate, according to the last reformation of the University, junior researchers can reach a permanent position only as associate professors, after a path lasting up to 12 years after the doctorate. This may include one or more postdocs (up to 6 years), fixed-term

assistant professorship (up to 5 years), and a tenure-track position (3 years) which requires a national scientific qualification at the end.

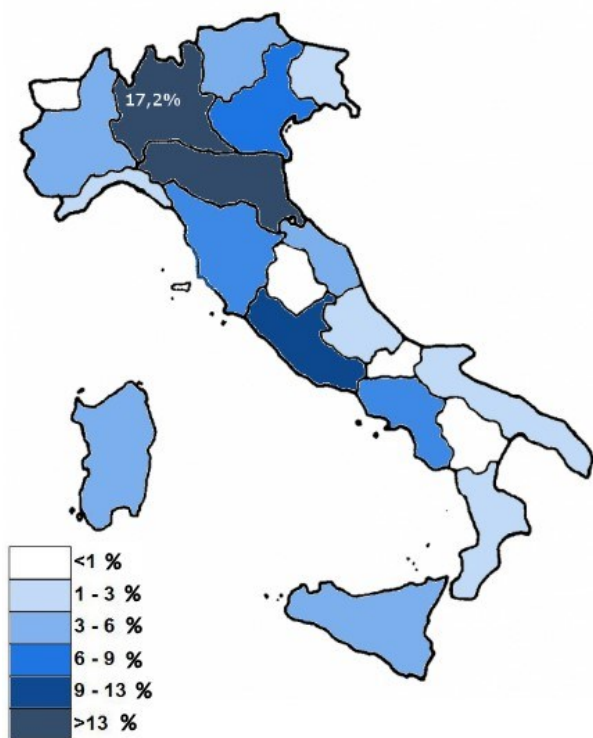
In last years, a large part of calls for assistant professors was concentrated in only a few universities, mostly located in central and northern regions that are characterised by stronger connections with industrial networks. Data show also evidence of a process of increasingly selective concentration of open positions and funding opportunities in the most application-oriented fields of study, which are able to easily attract external investments, at the expense of basic research and social sciences that should be properly supported by public investments.

This trend has been accompanied by the almost total annihilation of long-term perspectives of stabilisation for junior researchers. Yearly recruitment rates of fixed-term researchers recorded between 2010 and 2016 are in fact much lower than the average yearly rate of recruitment of



Source: rapporto ANVUR 2016, MIUR, ADI

Academic job prospects for postdocs in Italian universities



Share of tenure-track positions in Italian regions

For further details, please visit

<https://dottorato.it/content/vi-indagine-adi-su-dottorato-e-post-doc>

researchers prior to 2008. As a consequence, the Italian academic system has overall lost more than 10 thousand permanent positions in this time span.

The Italian "tenure-track" is thus a way to downsize the effects of linear cuts to budgets and of the recent freeze on staff turnover on the weakest component of the academic community. This trend results in a high expulsion rate from Italian universities for junior researchers: according to our projection, in the coming years, only 6.5 % of those who are currently pursuing a postdoc will be able to access a permanent position in Italian academia. This can be avoided by a massive campaign of recruitment for junior researchers and by a radical reformation of recruitment policies. ADI is actively working to put these fundamental issues on the political agenda.

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Perspective of doctoral education in the Czech Republic: *National PhD forum at Tomas Bata University in Zlín*

Student Chamber of Council for Higher Education Institutions (SK RVŠ) in cooperation with Tomas Bata University in Zlín, Czech Republic, organized in term 20-21 October 2016, the 2nd national PhD forum "Doktorandi 2.0". This event was aimed as a platform for networking and discussion about doctoral issues of PhD candidates with important representatives of Czech education policy, including Mrs. Katerina Valachová (the Czech minister of education, youth and sports).

SK:RVŠ

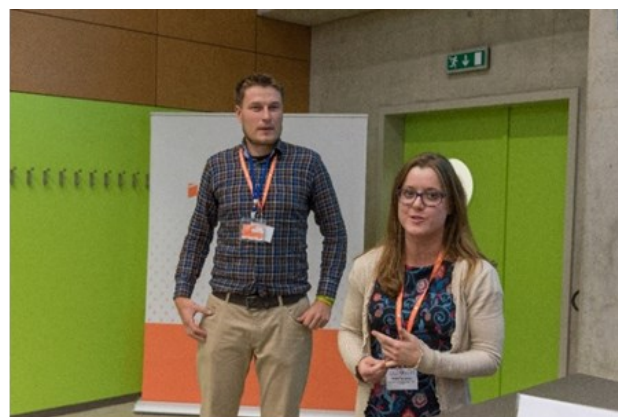
STUDENTSKÁ KOMORA RADY VYSOKÝCH ŠKOL
STUDENT CHAMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF HEIs

What are the benefits of PhD holders for society? Is the number of PhD candidates in the Czech Republic (CZ) adequate (nearly 25,000 PhD candidates in CZ)? How to increase their employability outside the academia? These and many other questions were discussed on the first day during the panel discussion with the topic "Perspective of doctoral education in the Czech Republic". The questions reacted to the changing situation in the last twenty years when PhD candidates in the Czech Republic increased from 5,000 to nearly 25,000.



Eva Hnátková in the panel discussion

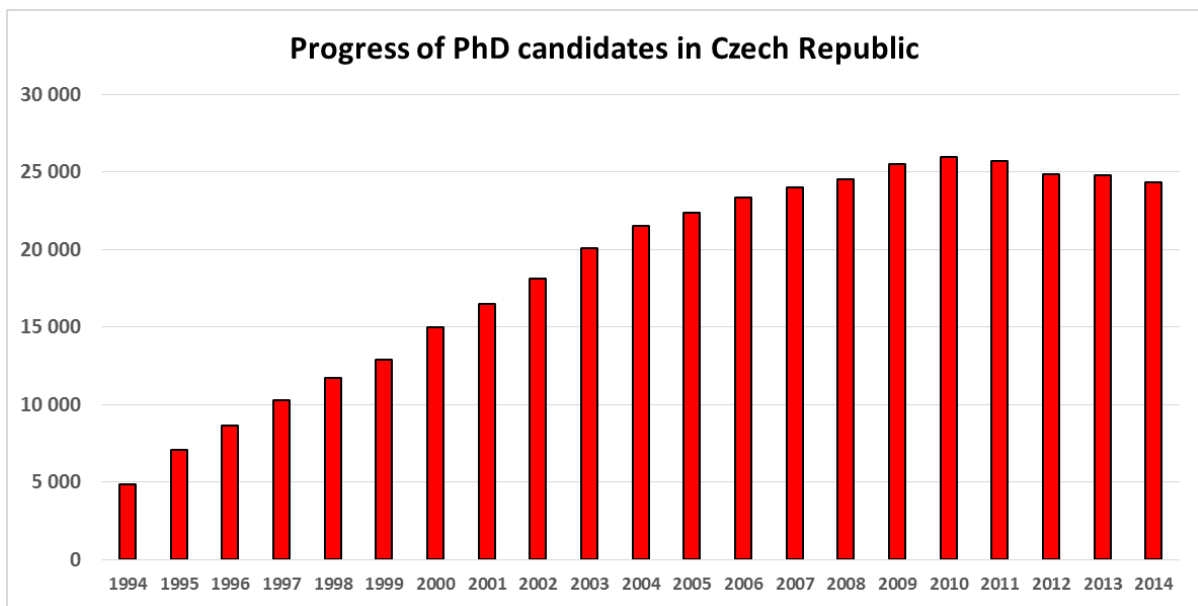
(Members of SK RVŠ / Committee for PhD degree)



Martin Papež and Blanka Pančíková

In the past, the majority of PhD holders remained in academia, but nowadays only small percentage can do so, while the structure of doctoral education remains the same. Currently, the structure of PhD training should be innovated to improve skills and employability of PhD holders. In

addition, another important task in the Czech Republic is that stipends for PhD candidates, which are paid by government, are too low. PhD candidates have other opportunities as well, for example of internal grants at universities. However, if their project for internal grant fails and they do not have



Source: Ministry of Education Youth and Sports (MŠMT), CZ

other income from other projects, then comes the question of how to survive with an average stipend for PhD candidate of average 275 euro/month. Fortunately, the minister

Kateřina Valachova expressed support in the case of doctoral stipends and, since January 2017, the negotiations regarding the two-fold increase of stipends started.



National PhD forum at Tomas Bata University in Zlın, Czech Republic, 20-21 October 2016

Later, after panel discussions, there were space for short presentations - Euroaxess (mobility support), The Centre for International Cooperation in Education (DZS, international programmes), Doctoral Association in Slovakia (ADS), a newly formed Doctoral Association in Czech Republic (ČAD), Science Research Innovation Fair (interdisciplinary platform), ResearchJobs.cz (offering scientific positions), Open Access (Czech version of the original campaign [Think. Check. Submit](#), Funds for Support of Science Neuron (financial support for promising scientists), and so on.

On the second day, there were rounds of three workshops focused on soft skills such as rhetorical voice (rhetoric) and team cooperation. There were presentations of

initiatives related to doctoral candidates, e.g. portal ResearchJobs.cz, the Open Access publication concept, and prevention against getting trapped by predatory journals. At the end, Martina Dlabajová (Member of European Parliament) motivated the participants with a speech about her own way into the European Parliament and appeal to everyone to go for their dream.

This forum, which was attended by 65 participants from 15 HEIs is an ongoing project and the second year was deeper and more sophisticated than the first attempt. For the next year, we wish to attract more international PhD candidates and guests.

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The Baltic University Programme: *An international course of PhD candidates*

The Baltic University Programme, also known as BUP is a network of regular universities, as well as universities of technology, agriculture, culture, economics, and pedagogics throughout the Baltic Sea region. The main countries-participants are within the Baltic Sea drainage basin: Belarus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden and more marginally Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine, and Norway. The activities of the Baltic University Programme focus mostly on the different aspects of sustainable development and environmental protection in the mentioned region. There are, however, some major contributions to humanities and social spheres. The BUP strives to develop the interactions among universities and between



young scientists and society, to have strong local and international educational communities.

Back in October 2013, BUP organised the First PhD student Training with the announced title “*Interdisciplinary – Multicultural – International*”. This year was already the Fourth edition of the PhD candidates Training Course and was arranged in Rogow (Poland) by the Baltic University Programme in cooperation with the Lodz University of Technology and Hamburg University of Applied Science.



Participants of the 4th PhD student Training with Prof. Walter Leal

The training programme was built on an integrative approach and consisted of cycle course about the “Design thinking” methodology as a creative way to manage specific issues, methods of the results presentation and interdisciplinary research cooperation. Besides the workshops, every Training Course participant was offered the opportunity to consult their scientific projects individually with an international team of experts composed of senior

The main goal is to give young scientists from the BUP network’s countries the possibility to meet and discuss the emerging issues and challenges facing science with a focus on the sustainable development in an international, interdisciplinary and multicultural context. During the last edition, the participants represented 15 universities and had various academic backgrounds: nine of them were from the area of Environmental Sciences, eight from the area of Engineering, and six from the area of Economic and Social Sciences.



Workshop “Design thinking”

scientists in multidisciplinary research fields. It is necessary to consider that this training is for candidates who completed at least the first year of PhD studies. The registration form, preliminary PhD thesis presentation, summary of the PhD thesis, list of scientific achievements and supervisor’s recommendation are required to apply.

See you next year for the 5th Edition!

For more information, please visit the BUP website: <http://www.balticuniv.uu.se/>

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Kaunas University of Technology organises: *PhD Summer School for transferable skills development*

Kaunas University of Technology (Lithuania) is proud to announce that the second PhD Summer School will take place in the period 21-25 August 2017 at the Lithuanian seaside resort Palanga. The 2nd PhD Summer School is organised together with the University of Stavanger (Norway), and involving the members of the European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU). The outstanding lecturers will provide 3-day of high-level training on scientific writing, project proposals writing

and management, data management planning, and open access. The target group is 50 doctoral students

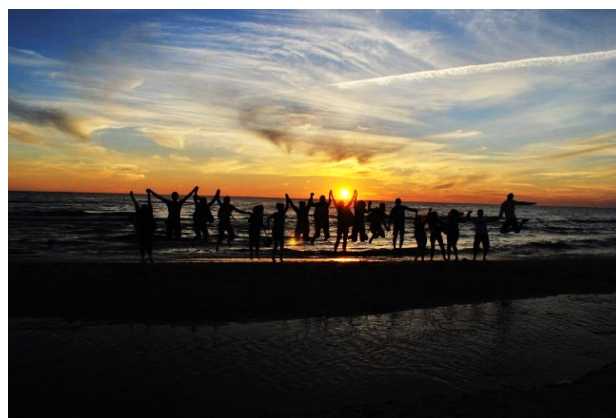
regardless of their study area. We are sure that motivated and talented PhD candidates from various fields of science will enjoy sharing, comparing and discussing their experiences not only during the classes but also in their free time.



Participants of the 1st PhD Summer school, 2016

Doctoral candidates can choose from a wide variety of summer schools. Most of them are focused on a certain fields of science or a particular topic that allows students to deepen their knowledge and skills in it, to share experiences.

Although writing research articles, doctoral theses and preparing project proposals is an important part of a study process for all doctoral students in all universities, there are not so many summer schools focusing on the developing the skills needed for these activities. Kaunas University of Technology decided to be one of those to help doctoral students to fill in the gap and to offer the opportunity to develop transferable skills.



After courses swimming in Baltic Sea

Kaunas University of Technology first PhD Summer School was organized in August 2016. A total of 43 doctoral students from 14 countries came to participate in the event at the Baltic seaside resort. The School aimed to develop essential skills needed for writing scientific articles, doctoral theses, and project proposals, to provide participants with good networking opportunities. The lectures at the three-day intensive course were delivered by speakers from the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom, Latvia, and Switzerland. Dr Lucie Boudova (Elsevier, Czech Rep.) delivered a lecture on how to write a good scientific

article. The workshops by Prof Dr Elina Gaile-Sarkane (Riga Technical University, Latvia) and Prof Dr Dietmar Grichnik (University of St. Gallen, Switzerland) on writing doctoral thesis and articles were delivered separately for the candidates from social sciences and humanities, and for those from technological, physical and biomedical sciences' study fields. Heidi Dyson (Next Level Innovation Ltd, UK) introduced the peculiarities of writing a good proposal for Horizon2020 research funding programme. Many new collaborations and friendships started in a friendly social environment.

Kaunas University of Technology first PhD Summer School was organized in August 2016. A total of 43 doctoral students from 14 countries came to participate in the event at the Baltic seaside resort. The School aimed to develop essential skills needed for writing scientific articles, doctoral theses, and project proposals, to provide participants with good networking opportunities. The lectures at the three-day intensive course were delivered by speakers from the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom, Latvia, and Switzerland. Dr Lucie Boudova (Elsevier, Czech Rep.) delivered a

lecture on how to write a good scientific article. The workshops by Prof Dr Elina Gaile-Sarkane (Riga Technical University, Latvia) and Prof Dr Dietmar Grichnik (University of St. Gallen, Switzerland) on writing doctoral thesis and articles were delivered separately for the candidates from social sciences and humanities, and for those from technological, physical and biomedical sciences' study fields. Heidi Dyson (Next Level Innovation Ltd, UK) introduced the peculiarities of writing a good proposal for Horizon2020 research funding programme. Many new collaborations and friendships started in a friendly social environment.

The Kaunas University of Technology intends to organise the PhD Summer School annually. For those doctoral candidates who intend to deepen their knowledge in a particular subject, University offers 5 to 12 day long intensive courses in English.



More information available at

<http://ktu.edu/phd>

<http://ktu.edu/summerschool>
phd@ktu.lt

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Doctoral Workshop 2016 in Hungary

The Doctoral Student Association of the University of Pécs organised an international event called *Doctoral Workshop*, between November 25th and 26th, 2016. Our main goal was to provide an opportunity for cooperation between the instructors, students, and doctoral candidates of the University of Pécs. Furthermore, we wanted to prepare for the Erasmus and Erasmus+ programmes, and provide a chance to organise conferences and professional programmes. We aimed to represent current doctoral programmes in Pécs and, with the help of the workshops, we discussed some changes and practices that can improve them. Altogether, seven countries were represented in the workshop: Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia. A total of 38 participants were Hungarian and 42 of our guests came from abroad.



We specified three areas of focus for this event and the most important speech was delivered by *György Domány* from Gedeon Richter Plc. He talked about job opportunities for PhD candidates. We discussed which disciplines or professions require a PhD degree and what the prospective employers expect from the candidates. After the session, the participants shared their opinions about this topic and practices in their own countries. The next subject was **“The present and the future of doctoral training”**. We heard an interesting and informative speech from *Dr György Bazsa* from the University of



Debrecen. He has an extensive experience in this field since he is the founding president of the Hungarian Doctoral and Habilitation Council.

The theme of the first part of this session was the new Hungarian doctoral training and then the participants presented their programmes as well. In this part, we compared the different programmes, discussed some of the **“best practices”** and tried to improve the various kinds of doctoral training to solve problems.

The third part of the workshop was about the **“International cooperation opportunities”** held by Dr István Tarrósy (Director of Foreign Affairs at the University of Pécs). The University of Pécs has many partners to collaborate with and the aim is to improve this number. This session was a perfect platform to meet doctoral candidates from different universities and learn about their future plans, conferences, and research options. The closing of the workshop was about our plans. We intend to apply for the *Visegrád Small Fund*, and we are looking for partner universities to achieve it. The goal of this tender is to organise an event with the



Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia. Our long-term aim is to establish a partnership with all European countries.

Besides that, the participants agreed on establishing a conference series which will be held in different countries, starting with the first one in Pécs. We also aimed to form tender-partnerships in order to organise international events, and to set up an international database for novice researchers which would facilitate cooperation in international research projects and study abroad programmes. Altogether we think this Doctoral Workshop was a great start for PhD candidates to meet each other and get to

know different doctoral programmes and opportunities. We hope that in the future this workshop can expand each year and we can build an international doctoral community.



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European Forum of Young Innovators (EFYI) 2016:

Workshop 'What Future for a PhD Holder?'

The first meeting of the European Forum of Young Innovators (EFYI) took place in Łódź, Poland on 24 and 25 October 2016. The event aimed to bring together representatives from the worlds of science and business to discuss key issues affecting young innovators and focused on the theme 'From Idea by Transfer to Impact'. The conference was split

across two days, with the first day involving panel discussions with experts from science and industry, and the second day involving workshops for early-career researchers (ECRs).



Workshop "What Future for a PhD Holder?" (by Gareth O'Neill and Miia Ijäs)

Despite the cold and wet weather on the second day of the conference, many courageous ECRs braved the elements to attend the workshops. One of the workshops was given by Miia Ijäs and Gareth O'Neill



from Eurodoc on *“What Future for a PhD Holder?”*. This was in the form of a learning café, where the 25 or so participants were split into four groups and revolved around four different themes. Each group discussed each theme in turn and wrote comments on flip-charts that were left for the next group to reflect upon and develop. The initial two topics looked at the professional development of a doctoral candidate/junior researcher. The first theme *“Professional PhDs and their Skills in Future Academia”* was on current developments in academia and the skills ECRs want and need to develop themselves professionally. A whole list of skills was suggested including organisation and planning, problem solving, and working under pressure, being polite/friendly and ability to work in/lead a team, being flexible to changing situations and open to new ideas. This supports the European Commission's focus on better transferable skills courses. Although a lot of focus was given on transferable skills, the concluding remarks on the topic emphasised that the most important skill for any researcher continues to be his/her expertise in the subject field. One thing was clear: PhDs are

professionals and should be treated as such in the form of paid employment!

The second theme, *“Academics at the (Non-) labour Market”*, addressed the urgent need to prepare PhDs for life outside academia. (Perhaps surprisingly but showing a topical trend,) most of the participants wanted to work in the industry and supported initiatives to help ECRs be entrepreneurs and be involved in start-ups and spin-offs. Paid internships in the industry during the doctoral training and junior researcher stage were seen as a useful way to gain valuable experience and network in the industry at an early stage. All stressed that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) should develop paid internship programmes in collaboration with industry to train and support their PhDs/postdocs. This is indeed very necessary seeing as in Europe many ECRs must leave academia due to lack of academic positions and it also supports the European Commission's focus on better intersectoral mobility.

The final two topics dealt with the social/societal development of a doctoral candidate/junior researcher. The third theme



“Academics in Society” focussed especially on the issue on whether ECRs should be involved in Open Science. Most participants felt that their data should be made public, although in some cases the data might need to be anonymised or embargoed. They also

agreed that research should be made available in the form of open access publications and that this should be more supported and developed. This is good news for the European Commission's current push for Open Science. Valorisation using popular media was also seen as a useful and interesting way for ECRs to disseminate their work and to engage society at large. The general consensus was to be as open as possible to the public.

The final theme "*Work-life balance*" cut to the core of the happiness of ECRs. An academic career is very demanding, especially in the early stages, and the line between academic and private life often blurs. It is not surprising that recent research has shown that many ECRs suffer from

stress, anxiety, and even depression. The participants felt that the pressures on ECRs were indeed very high and that HEIs should take action so that the PhD/postdoc is manageable. Female and parents were seen as particularly vulnerable, and suggestions for improvement involved better gender equality policies and support for families at HEIs. In general, the participants agreed that a better work-life balance could be achieved by also staying active outside academia. Ultimately, it is also down to the ECRs themselves to decide and stand up for themselves. The workshop finished on a simple plea: take control of your own career and future!

For more information click [here](#).

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PIPERS project - Policy into Practice:

EURAXESS Researcher Career Skills for Career Development

"EURAXESS – *Researchers in Motion*" is a well-known and unique initiative organised by the European Commission of European Union as a reaction to the challenges which appeared on the way of the young researchers' careers development this century. EURAXESS is of a practical importance to establish a coordinated strategy to promote and facilitate top-quality research and successful careers for the young researcher as well as to support their mobility around Europe. Nowadays, besides the theoretical and practical knowledge in the research field, there is a strong necessity in acquiring transversal skills, i.e. project and scientific team management, communication, leadership, and marketing, etc. These abilities are recognised as fundamental to

provide a high quality of research and increase the young researcher employability. The key targets are to build a dialogue between the employer stakeholders and the research sector; to define and share good practices and training resources in the sphere of researcher career development.

PIPERS project "*Policy into Practice: EURAXESS Researcher Career Skills for Career Development*" as a tool mechanism proposed for the young researchers from the European Union which helps to analyse their careers and professional development and to engage in a process of pursuing their ambitions. The main training within this project include four demonstration workshops and nine workshops entitled "*train the trainer*" to improve transversal (transferable) skills. It

resulted in a creation of an e-platform to estimate weak sides of the knowledge and

skills to improve and consequently to advance career development.



*Workshop on Public Engagement
(Warsaw, 23-24.06.16, by Agnieszka Jeske-Kaczanowska)*

The project was a long-term initiative which started in December 2014 and finished in October 2016. The PIPERS project evaluates the provided training effectiveness, through nine “train the trainer” workshops and four demonstration workshops. Further assistance for the researchers is furnished by the online self-assessment tool, which helps them to better manage/direct their career, by identifying both their strengths and their areas for improvement. PIPERS project joined together six partners and 15 third parties from the EURAXESS Service Network and academic and non-academic institutions in Europe and Israel. The project was led by British Council (UK) and other partners were the following: Fundación Española para la Ciencia y la Tecnología (Spain),



University of Durham (United Kingdom), Centre for Research and Technology Hellas (Greece), Mechanical Engineering Faculty of Univerzitetu U Nisu (Serbia), Sofiiski Universitet Sveti Kliment Ohridski (Bulgaria).

In June PIPERS project invited young researchers to Warsaw to take participation in one of the workshops which focused on interdisciplinary working, career development and public engagement. The speakers and mentors were Lowry McComb who is an independent consultant and trainer for academics and researchers from Durham University, and Dean Hogan, Placement Manager at Training & Development Office (AquaTT and Career Coach).

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Make a difference in the world: *Develop yourself as well as your research*

A PhD is about much more than research, it is about the professional development of researchers themselves as highly accomplished individuals who have much to contribute to research, society, and economy around the world. It is easy to forget in the day to day challenges of research that doctoral researchers are part of “*the research community (which) is linked to a much larger global framework involving the circulation of talent, results and discoveries among the various spheres of society* [1].” There are millions of researchers around the world, and numbers are growing rapidly, with most in the European Union, China and USA. The UNESCO report “*Towards 2030*” calls on countries, particularly developing countries, “*to substantially increase the number of research and development workers per 1 million people...*” [2].

Whilst there is convergence in ambition to increase the global research talent pool, there are differences in researcher experiences ‘on the ground’. Local circumstances can make a big difference to researchers’ career opportunities. In some countries, growth in the academic community is key. Where there is a shortage of academic careers, researchers need to consider a transition into employment in other sectors. So, what can



researchers do to navigate diverse and uncertain career options in a local and global context? The power is in the hands of researcher themselves; researchers should own, plan and manage their own professional development to be open to career opportunities as they arise.

Wherever they are situated, researchers need to know themselves so they can evidence their competencies to employers in and out of academia. A useful tool, for example, is the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) [3] which sets out the wide range of competencies of successful researchers and can be used to identify personal strengths, interests, and



Improving transferable skills through workshops and seminars, Vitae, UK

areas for further development. Researchers can use the RDF to inform choice and outcomes of training programmes, consider professional growth through informal as well as formal learning and provide evidence of competencies in preparing CVs.

Researchers' competencies have transformative potential in many careers. To address global challenges, for example, Geoff Mulligan (Innovation for International Development, Ramalingam & Bound, Nesta, 2016) concluded that individuals need the ability to collaborate, adapt, adopt and create, and handle data and evidence with a firm focus on results, reflecting core competencies of doctoral researchers. Transferable skills are research skills applied in different contexts, so understanding yourself well and being



able to translate your competencies into other contexts will help you to recognise a wide variety of career possibilities and to seize opportunities to make a difference that present themselves where ever you might be in the world.

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Postdoctoral researchers' in Europe: *Main challenges to employment*

Last October, Science Europe organised the Workshop "Researchers' Careers: Postdoctoral Schemes and Intersectoral Mobility Schemes". At the Workshop were publicly presented the findings and recommendations of the Working Group (WG) on Research Careers concerning the current situation for funding schemes in Europe aimed at postdoctoral researchers and intersectoral mobility. Presentations of the WG findings and recommendations were followed by panel discussions with key stakeholders, and by an open discussion with Workshop participants. The Workshop was attended by

representatives of both Science Europe members and other relevant stakeholders at the European level. Eurodoc was also represented at the Workshop.



Filomena Parada presenting at workshop

Postdoctoral researchers' challenges to employment: *Overview of the literature review in the report*

In recent years, higher education (HE) and research systems across the world went through an expansion, being the steady increase in the number of doctorate holders entering or trying to enter the labour market one of the most evident signs of such growth. However, this increase in the numbers of researchers at the postdoctoral level of their careers was not accompanied by a growth in the number of tenured positions, which have become lower than the demand. Thus, the postdoctoral level of a research career became a rather critical moment in researchers' employment pathways. Although available evidence is limited, the following two topics stand out in the literature: adverse labour market conditions and barriers to mobility.

Adverse labour market conditions

The lack or precariousness of employment, and the lengthening of training, as well as the unattractiveness of working conditions offered to researchers, are usually pointed out as the two main reasons allowing to describe the labour market as adverse. With the growth in the number of postdoctoral researchers, there was a growth in the number of precarious fixed-term positions offered to early career researchers (ECRs), and in the duration of the postdoctoral experience. It is common for doctorate holders who wish to pursue a research career to prolong the period of their postdoctoral training and to occupy multiple postdoctoral positions. These positions often are a bottleneck trapping postdoctoral researchers in temporary research or teaching appointments, and making it easier for them to accept employment in a job below their qualification level or unrelated to their doctoral degree. Nowadays, it is not uncommon for researchers to have begun their doctoral training more than 15 years ago, and hold a doctorate degree for more than 10 years before accessing a secure or quasi-secure position, or being awarded their

first important independent grant.

ECRs, especially those that are not yet fully independent (that is, researchers at the postdoctoral or R2 stage of their careers), quickly became a source of cheap labour and the object of opportunistic behaviours from supervisors and host institutions, who dismiss themselves of any responsibility regarding the future career of their staff or look only to the short-term benefits that may come from the use of this type of manpower. As shown by the Researchers' Report of 2013 and 2014 it is not unusual for R1 (that is, first stage researchers up to the point of the doctorate, specifically doctoral candidates) and R2 researchers to work with no contract at all. It is also not unusual for researchers without stable employment contracts to have little to no access to social security coverage (e.g., statutory/supplementary pension rights, healthcare, parental and unemployment benefits, sabbatical leaves). Although improving researchers' probabilities of finding a job, postdoctoral training does not seem to lead to higher remuneration. In addition, there are not only persistent differences in payment across areas of knowledge but also substantial differences in salary levels across countries in the EU-28. European higher education and research institutions also find it hard to compete with wage levels practised in some non-European countries, especially the USA.

Consequently, ECRs are rather unsatisfied with their situation and characterise as unattractive working conditions and career prospects, especially in the public sector. To instability, low salary levels and poorly defined rights and responsibilities, it is often necessary to add long working hours and limited autonomy in carrying out research projects. ECRs tend not to experience the same kind of treatment offered to more senior researchers when it comes to access to resources and opportunities, specifically (1) accommodation and access to facilities,

(2) housing and accommodation, as well as the support or resources that help ensure smoother relocation transitions for researchers' family members, (3) access to training budgets, conference funding and related occupational extras, (4) representation on email networks, websites and publicity material, (5) opportunities for (internal) promotion and progression (including pay).

Barriers to mobility

For decades, mobility (sectoral, institutional, geographical...) has been a dominant theme in the literature about research careers and in European policies. Mobility is considered fundamental for the development of an effective and competitive European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and European Research Area (ERA). However, important barriers to mobility persist and deep divergences exist at the national level, specifically in what concerns the (1) diversity of HE systems and labour markets across Europe, (2) diversity in recruitment practices and policies.

The diversity of HE systems and labour markets across Europe is reflected and impacts both on research policies and on the variety and the rigidity of existing administrative arrangements. It also makes it hard for researchers to knowledgeably compare (dis)advantages attached to each system of HE or research labour market. To date, many of the problems faced by researchers when moving or trying to move between EU countries have not been solved, specifically (1) research funding, including portability of research grants, (2) housing and accommodation, as well as the support or resources that help ensure smoother relocation transitions for researchers' family members, (3) bureaucratic procedures at the host institutions, (4) employment services and employment legislation, including portability of pensions, (5) immigration services and legislation. In addition, there are clear differences in income situations, including the social benefits attached to salaries, or job security researchers working or wishing to work in Europe have access to.

According to the MORE 2 report, when asked about their opinion on recruitment policies at their institution, 34 to 40 per cent of EU researchers in HE institutions referred being dissatisfied with the practised levels of openness, transparency and the degree of open-based recruitment. This is particularly true for ECRs: R1 researchers were the least satisfied with levels of openness; R2 researchers were the least satisfied with the levels of transparency and the degree of merit-based recruitment. Across Europe, recruitment procedures are very different and recruitment often relies primarily on personal interaction and networks. New applications or recruitment procedures aren't always independent from previous ones. Recruitment periods tend to be diverse across countries and institutions, and candidates to vacant positions find it hard to identify posts because they usually are not visible or widely disseminated in European-level portals such as Euraxess. In addition, (external) applicants often have to face barriers concerning: (1) the more tacit or implicit mechanisms underlying to recruitment procedures, and (2) inbreeding practices that tend to shape institutional arrangements directed towards the recruitment of researchers.

Conclusion

Although prominent, adverse labour market conditions and barriers to mobility are not the only challenges postdoctoral researchers face when trying to access (stable) employment. Gender inequalities and circumstances concerning individuals' institutional affiliation and networking opportunities, as well as the mentoring or supervision to which ECRs have access, the organisational climate of host institutions and the field of research, also contribute to accentuate differences in career prospects and advancement.

As highlighted by the Careers of Doctorate Holders' report, doctorate holders "*job-hopping*", the decrease of tenured academic positions in comparison to temporary or non-permanent ones, and the high rise in the number of doctoral awards allow to wonder

about the extent to which R&D systems are mature enough to create research positions that fully utilise doctoral degree holders' abilities. Hence, the problem Europe currently faces concerning postdoctoral researchers' challenges to employment appears to be the non- or misuse of a large mass of research and academic potential. Trends identified in the review of the literature and here highlighted seem to suggest that much.

Policy makers usually approach the creation of European research markets from the supply side of researchers, instead of considering the organisational strategies and institutional factors affecting these markets. Therefore, important questions like those concerning the effects recent increases and prioritisations of doctorate graduates' rates have on the functioning of existing labour markets, remain unanswered. Europe's and the European research community ability to overcome ongoing schisms in how HE systems and research labour markets are

organised and communicate amongst themselves will be fundamental for the resolution of many of the unanswered questions.

The following topics, which correspond to the main ideas coming out of the panel discussion that followed the presentation of the report on Postdoctoral Funding Schemes in Europe, could be a starting point for stakeholders' dialogue and collaborations around the topic: (1) it is important to clarify the meaning and identify an alternative expression to the term "*postdoc*"; (2) stakeholders (research funders and promoters, policy-makers, ECRs) must assume their responsibility and be made accountable when it comes to the career development of ECRs (R1, specifically doctoral candidates, and R2 researchers); (3) it is important to move from words to action, especially because we already have tools allowing us to take the step (e.g., Charter & Code, EC Memorandum Towards a European Framework for Research Careers).

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The ERASMUS+ Project SuperProfDoc

For the ERASMUS+ Project [SuperProfDoc](#), there is a consortium of 7 participants from the EU countries and one from the USA as international observers and benchmarking partners. At first Eurodoc was represented by John Peacock and since October 2016, Claudia Dobrinski (Eurodoc secretariat coordinator) is the contact person who coordinates the exchange and future data to be processed for Eurodoc members. Eurodoc is honoured for its support for data collection and evaluation. For the SuperProfDoc Survey Eurodoc has been given access to the Eurodoc members and their partners, Eurodocers are allowed to use the collected data and evaluate it according to our own questions. Until 31th January 2017 our members could participate

in the survey. The analysis of the survey results will be now carried out. These first results of the data collection will be evaluated in a workshop in Maastricht in April. Since the project runs until the end of September 2017, Claudia Dobrinski should accompany it to the end.



Background of the project:

Results published in 2010 (EUA and ERA) and 2011 (EUROSTAT) showed a growing group of so-called "Modern doctorate candidates": professional doctorates, industrial doctorates, practice based doctorates. Whatever you wish to call them, there is a huge range and ignorance of non-traditional doctorates available to researchers. These modern postgraduate candidates therefore have to expect and demand a different, tailored care. To define this new type of supervision the Project SuperProfDoc was initiated and it aims to ask, collect, verify and ultimately evaluate the framework conditions for this modern doctorate.

The main points of the project:

- Access best practice in the supervision/ advising of modern doctorates
- Identify the host/sponsoring organization's requirements from supervision (if any) and their contribution to it
- Develop a framework of practice (supported by training resources) suitable for modern doctorates
- Disseminate this best practice framework to all stakeholders
- Produce a sustainable impact on supervisory practice throughout the EU.

The description and understanding of the "modern" candidates was problematic, because it differs in the European countries. One question crystallized: Are these doctoral students organized?

The survey:

In order to capture as many and different types of modern doctorate candidates were scored points to a survey. Also the supervisors were consulted: "Are you a

doctoral candidate in a 'modern' doctorate (professional, industrial, EdD, EngD, etc.)? Are you a supervisor or an advisor in any of these doctorates?"

To round off the survey: Interviews

In addition to the survey interviews are conducted by the individual consortium members. According to current findings, these interviews nevertheless provide a much more accurate and complex picture of the current situation. Of course, responses and side-by-side statements appear that would have been too complex for a survey, but, on the other hand, also these statements were not (still) relevant or current in the compilation of the questionnaire.

Evaluation:

After the dual questionnaire "Survey - Interview", the evaluation criteria will now be elaborated, and the previous ideas will be adapted and verified: Is this modern style still so invisible and ignored? What interests do these doctoral candidates have, are they equivalent to those of Eurodocs? And, consequently, Eurodoc and thus also the NAs would have to accept and support themselves more?

Conclusion:

On the one hand, the pursuit of unification, or the comparability of the promotion practices in Europe, leads to a further diversity. On the other hand, these alternative paths of higher education must also be able to be evaluated and regulated, and their advantages as well as their disadvantages must be named or integrated accordingly. The power of the growing political role of the doctoral candidates should also be recognized - in many cases, they should be perceived more as an independent group, in all its diversity.

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