

EURODOC SUMMIT FOR EARLY STAGE RESEARCHERS
PRESS RELEASE
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Eurodoc members will meet this year at the mid-term mandate to host a European Summit for Early Stage Researchers. The event will take place in Strasbourg, France on 29-30 September 2011. The first day will feature an internal event where members representing doctoral candidates and junior researchers from many European countries will meet to collaborate on a pool of motions, policy papers, and other ongoing projects. This intensive work will be followed by a public presentation of the results of the Eurodoc Survey on doctoral candidates. The survey presentation is scheduled for 30 September at 13.30 and will take place in the European Parliament.

Eurodoc Survey I (Authors: Gülay Ateş, Karoline Holländer, Nadia Koltcheva, Snežana Krstid, Filomena Parada helped by numerous Eurodoc volunteers) is one of the first cross-national large-scale studies on the situation of doctoral candidates in Europe. This report, unique in its scope, is an excellent means of identifying important issues affecting early stage researchers. This investigation intends to deliver relevant information and trends in doctoral training which can be used by institutional staff involved in the scientific career process as well as by policy makers at both a national and European-wide level.

Eurodoc Survey I was conducted from 2008-09. The final report analyses the current situation of more than 7,500 doctoral candidates in 12 countries (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden). The report intends to answer two central questions: a) what is the actual situation concerning present employment, social benefits, and working conditions of doctoral candidates and junior researchers; b) what are the differences regarding models of doctoral education across Europe. The topics include qualification requirements, career paths, funding schemes, models of training and supervision, working conditions, expected and achieved results of scientific work, and mobility. With this survey Eurodoc aimed to back political decision-making with sound data.

Some issues that will be pinpointed during the summit in Strasbourg include:

Funding: A high proportion of doctoral candidates still do their research without receiving appropriate funding. Existing national funding systems are not always sufficient, thus increasing research difficulties and decreasing living standards.

Working Conditions: In nearly all of the 12 countries respondents have a period with a specific amount of maximum time for completing their doctorate. In addition a relatively large proportion of doctoral candidates do not have the right to use their own findings, although the European Charter of Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers refers to this matter in its "Contractual and Legal Obligations." Regarding maternity/paternity leave of absence large differences exist across countries concerning the possibility to put a contract on hold and to receive pay while on leave. Interestingly, the pressure to postpone having children appears to be the highest in the most well-known "family friendly" countries.

Mobility: Findings demonstrate that the majority of doctoral candidates are still not going abroad, though their motivational reasons to travel are quite clear and focused. One of the reasons for this may be that there is not enough funding available and when presented, it is often difficult to get. Transparency and the availability of exchange programmes should be increased both at national and international levels in order to effectively foster mobility.

One of the most important conclusions of the Eurodoc Survey I is that, in most European countries,

doctoral candidates should have more opportunities to conduct research at a European level in order to actively contribute not only to their personal development but also to the Knowledge Society.

The public presentation of the Eurodoc survey in Strasbourg will be an opportunity for key ERA and EHEA stakeholders, including European Commission, LERU, ESF, ISE and others, to discuss and comment on the results. Therefore, Eurodoc welcomes key stakeholders and anyone interested in the issues of doctoral candidates and junior researchers in Europe to attend the public presentation of the survey. Please register your interest on our website at <http://www.eurodoc.net/strasbourg/registration>

Eurodoc is The European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers. It was established in 2002 in Girona, Spain.

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