

## **Report on the Eurodoc Meeting in Strasbourg 10th-13th of March 2005**

*Delegates from Denmark Maria Jensen and Tine Ejdrup*

The Meeting was divided in three parts

- General assembly of Eurodoc
- Workshops hosted by the different workgroups
- Lectures and panel discussions on different subjects of interest to young scientist

### **The General Assembly**

The General assembly was divided in two parts and took place on Friday (11/3) and Sunday (13/3)

In the first part the reports from the president, the board and the treasurer took place. Both were approved by the assembly. Also it was evident that there was a need for better information flow from the board and workgroups to the national delegates.

A short summary of Eurodocs main activities and achievements during the past year was presented. Eurodocs political influence is rising and the organisation grows bigger every year. Since last year Eurodoc has produced a “charter of supervision and training of Early Stage Researchers (ESR’s)”, which is already now being implemented in policies. Eurodoc is involved in the policy-making process regarding the implementation and development of the Bologna Process and research policies at EU-level. Eurodoc participated in the meeting “Doctoral Programmes for the European knowledge Society” in Salzburg, february 2005, and strongly influenced the conclusions and recommendations (a paper that will be included in the draft of the Bergen communique – for the Bologna process meeting in Bergen, May 2005). Eurodoc board members have attended meetings and conferences concerning higher education issues all over Europe. Some board members serve on advisory committees on EU reasearch and higher education policies.

The rest of the meeting was used on the evaluation and approval of the associations seeking membership of Eurodoc. The applicants were the national associations of Armenia, Estonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Russia. Of these six associations only four (Armenia, Estonia, Moldova and Russia) were accepted. This means that Eurodoc now consists of 21 associations spread across Eastern and Western Europe.

In the second part of the General Assembly the new board was elected. The new board now consists of the following seven members.

- President Francis Vella (France)
- Vice President Toni Gabadon (Spain)
- Secretary Christophe Van de Velde (Belgium)
- Treasurer Harpreet Singh (UK)
- Board member Sasha Jenko Kokalj (Slovenia)
- Board member Tine Ejdrup (Denmark)
- Board member Sandra Bohlinger (Germany)

Also new coordinators for the workgroups were either appointed or elected.

Unfortunately we were pressed for time and the discussion of future Eurodoc policies was moved to the council (which is the Eurodoc-org news group).

## **The Workshops**

During the meeting four workshops were held of which the Danish delegation attended two.

### *European Survey (attended by Tine Ejdrup)*

In this workshop we started the discussion of whether or not Eurodoc should try to organize a survey among the individual PhD candidates across Europe. There was a general agreement that this was a good initiative and would be something Eurodoc could use for future influence on policy making, since such a survey has never been made.

The discussion then continued with the how and the what. People agreed that this was something we could not do on our own, and the first job of the workgroup, should be to investigate the possibilities for funding of this project. So that we could get professional help, especially with the analysis of the collected data.

Also it was agreed that the theme of the survey should be how the Bologna process and the Lisbon resolution would affect the everyday life of PhD candidates. Also the workgroup would make a draft for the survey, which can then be discussed in a wider forum.

### *Career paths (attended by Maria Jensen)*

This workshop started with a summary of the activity in the “Professional future for doctoral candidates” workgroup during the past year. The workgroup, which has existed since the founding of Eurodoc, has reached a turning point. Until last year the group has mainly focused on gathering evidence of problems related to the present academic career structure and discussions about what may be changed. Now a first draft of a document suggesting a new career structure has been produced. The draft sketches an alternative career path to the traditional “PhD student – postdoc-associate professor-professor structure). Instead a structure with more levels, better defined duties and gained skills at each level, and more focus on transferrable skills was suggested. The draft formed the basis for the discussion during the workshop. There was general agreement about the suggested career structure being an improvement over present conditions, but some discussion about specific sentences. Some concerns were also raised regarding the evaluation between career levels (who will perform the evaluation, how will it be done, what will the focus be). The Professional futures workgroup will create a final draft within the next months based on the discussion and look into the evaluation issue.

The last two workshops were on *Supervision and Training* and *Administrative obstacles for young researchers*. No one from our delegations attended these workshops. The outcome of these workshops will be published in the Eurodoc 2005 proceedings.

## Lectures and panel discussions

The following opening lectures were given.

- Doctoral Programmes, The Bologna Process and the European Research Area given by Dr. Lesley Wilson (Secretary General – European University Association)
- Researchers' careers in the European Research Area given by Raffaele Liberali (European Commission, DG research, Director of Directorate D: The human factor, mobility and Marie Curie activities)
- Charter and code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers given by Dr. Alexandre Quintanilha (Chair of the External Advisory Group for Mobility of Researchers at the EC)

Dr. L. Wilson presented the work of the European University Association, one of Eurodocs partner associations working towards similar goals but from the universities' point of view. Raffaele Liberali gave a very thoughtful speech about the issues and problems faced by young researchers in Europe (mobility issues, short term contracts, funding structure). Last Dr. A. Quintanilha presented the brand new charter and code of conduct which was approved by the European Commission march 11<sup>th</sup> 2005. In general very interesting lectures, providing a good introduction to the different EC policies, affecting young researchers. In addition to that advice was given on how Eurodoc could influence the future of these policies. In general the European policy makers seem to be eager to get input from Eurodoc – we can only consider this as a big achievement.

The following Panel discussions took place:

- What types of mobility for PhD's (Chaired by S. Krstic (mobility workgroup)) the panel consisted of Dr. Barbara Sheldon (Humboldt foundation), Dr. Guntram Bauer (HFSP), Dr. Raymond Seltz (Secretary general – Euroscience) and Isabelle Le Nir (European Research coordinator for Groupe Schlumberger)

The discussion focused on the possibilities in the ERAMORE network (internet portal for researcher's mobility) presented by Dr. B. Sheldon, and on the requirements and possibilities for PhD candidates to develop a career in industry (inspired by I. Le Nir's talk about the non-academic jobmarket for doctoral candidates).

- Language, Science and Society: the Lingua Franca (Chaired by Dr. Helene Vassiliadou (Linguist, Universite Marc Bloch, Strasbourg). The panel consisted of Günter Kipfmüller (Mannheim Goethe Institute), Dr. Philip Campbell (Editor in Chief, Nature), Dr. Maryvonne Holzem (Sociolinguist, Universite Rouen), Katharina Neuser v. Oettingen (Elsevier Reader for psychology, astronomy and physics) and Dr. Ulrich Ammon (sociolinguist, Duisburg University)

General discussion about English as the "one and only" language in most research fields today. In particular some concern was aired regarding the cultural component of languages, meaning that word for word translations do not necessarily transfer the full context and meaning of words. Another concern focused on researcher's ability to communicate directly to the general public in their mother tongue if all research is done in English.

*All in all it was a very interesting and giving meeting. Maria is now involved with the career paths working group, while Tine is a member of the board.*