

Eurodoc Letter to BFUG Secretariat

30 March 2020

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Object: Follow-up on Eurodoc request to become a consultative member of BFUG

Dear Mr Latero, dear Luca,

With this letter, we would like to revive our request to the members of BFUG to change the current status of the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc) from 'partner' to 'consultative member' of BFUG in order to raise the voice of doctoral candidates within the EHEA policies.

About Eurodoc

[Eurodoc](#) is a grassroots federation of 28 national associations representing doctoral candidates and/or postdoctoral researchers in 26 countries across Europe. Eurodoc was established in 2002 and is based in Brussels. As representatives of doctoral candidates and junior researchers at the European level, we engage with all major stakeholders in research and innovation in Europe, including the European Commission, Council of Europe, European University Association, ScienceEurope, OECD, etc.

Main aims

According to its [Statute](#), the main goals of Eurodoc are:

- to represent doctoral candidates and junior researchers at the European level in matters of education, research, and professional development of their careers;
- to advance the quality of doctoral programmes and the standards of research activity in Europe;
- to promote the circulation of information on issues regarding young researchers, organise events, take part in debates, and assist in the elaboration of policies about higher education and research in Europe;
- to establish and promote cooperation between national associations representing doctoral candidates and junior researchers within Europe.

We think that doctoral candidates should have a stronger voice within BFUG, because

- the Bologna Process recognises three higher education cycles whereby the third cycle (EQF level 8) rests on the research and therefore is fundamentally different from the first and second cycle,
- doctoral candidates in Europe have various legal statuses ranging from students to full employees of their respective institutions both across and within countries,
- doctoral candidates are underrepresented in the development of EHEA policies,
- doctoral training belongs to both the systems of higher education and research, having its particular place in EHEA and ERA,

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- quality of doctoral programs should be ensured through implementation of the key European documents on doctoral training: [The Salzburg I Principles](#) (2005, Bologna Seminar), [The Salzburg II Recommendations](#) (2010, EUA), [Innovative Principles for Doctoral Training](#) (2011, EC), [Taking Salzburg Forward](#) (2016, EUA).

The 3rd cycle should acquire more attention at the ministerial level and needs to be reevaluated within Bologna, considering the latest transformations in the systems of higher education and science, new trends in university performance and research policies; including research assessment, open science, ethics and research integrity, mental health, graduate tracking and career development of doctoral candidates, etc.

Eurodoc could contribute to EHEA to focus more on transferable skills, i.e. skills learned in one context that are useful in another, including open science skills. Doctoral candidates are facing a diverse employment landscape that is becoming increasingly intersectoral, international, and interdisciplinary. Transferable skills and competencies are thus very important to increase the employability of early career researchers and to support their diverse career paths.

Eurodoc supports the willingness to increase doctoral mobility and stands for policies that encourage and facilitate the mobility of all kinds; geographical (international) mobility, intersectoral, inter-institutional mobility and virtual one. Interdisciplinarity should also be considered as a form of mobility between disciplines. We advocate for increased attention and equal opportunities for all minority groups and underprivileged doctoral candidates or others whose background might place them in less advantageous financial situations, i.e. first generation students and doctoral candidates.

Eurodoc sees it can best represent the voice of doctoral candidates on a European level. Being granted a consultative member status, Eurodoc wishes to play a more active role in shaping the Bologna Process from the perspective of early career researchers (ECRs) in the third cycle and doctoral candidates could contribute building a stronger bridge between EHEA and ERA. Eurodoc believes that the input provided by ECRs could greatly improve the future vision of EHEA.

Looking forward to hearing from you! Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions!

Kind regards,

Eva Hnátková



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Annex:

Some recent Eurodoc contributions

- [Diversity and Inclusion: Eurodoc's commitment for ECRs with disabilities](#) (2020, Eurodoc)
- [Eurodoc contribution](#) to the European Commission Stakeholder Consultation on the Report by the Expert Group on the Future of Scholarly Publishing and Scholarly Communication (2019, Eurodoc)
- [How doctorates vary across Europe, from the perspective of doctoral candidates](#) (2019, Eva Hnatkova, Eurodoc for EUA-CDE Doctoral Debate)
- [Safeguarding the mental health of doctoral candidates in Europe](#) (2019, Mathias Schroijen for EUA-CDE Doctoral Debate)
- [ERAC opinion on the future of the ERA](#) (2019, ERAC)
- [A Joint Declaration on Sustainable Research Careers](#) (2019 MCAA, Eurodoc)
- [Identifying Transferable Skills and Competences to Enhance Early-Career Researchers Employability and Competitiveness”](#) (2018, Eurodoc)
- [Representing early-career researchers](#) (2018, Eurodoc)
- [A balancing act - Mobility and career development](#) (2018, Eurodoc)
- [Early career-researchers and mental health](#) (2018, Eurodoc)
- [Open science for early-career researchers](#) (2018, Eurodoc)
- [EURODOC contribution to the European Research Area](#) (2017, Eurodoc)
- Etc.