

## **Bologna Seminar on “Doctoral Programmes for the European Knowledge Society” (Salzburg, 3-5 February 2005) – Conclusions on principles**

### ***Comments and Suggestions from the side of Early Stage Researchers:***

*Early Stage Researchers, many of them working towards a PhD or doctorate, were visibly represented in the discussions of the Salzburg Seminar. We want to thank the organizing bodies, the EUA and the respective Ministries of Austria and Germany for enabling this participation. We hope that also in the finalized version of the Salzburg Principles the viewpoint of Early Stage Researchers is represented like it was in the Salzburg discussions. Below we suggest some changes to the text according to remarks that were already made in the plenary discussion, not only by doctoral candidates.*

[...]

**i. The core component of doctoral training is the advancement of ~~research~~ new knowledge through original research. It is essentially 'training by, not training for research'**

At the same time it is recognised that doctoral training must increasingly meet the needs of a wider employment market than academia.

*Explanation:* Because the text presented in Salzburg has to be changed anyway, two keywords of the EUA Maastricht conference could be included, that were also mentioned in discussions throughout the Salzburg Seminar. Doctoral candidates contribute a considerable part of the advancement of knowledge, and the original contribution is a precondition of a dissertation.

**ii. Embedding in institutional strategies and policies:** universities as institutions need to assume responsibility for ensuring that the doctoral programmes and research training they offer are designed to meet new challenges and include appropriate professional career development opportunities. **Quality assessment is an indispensable part of all measures.**

*Explanation:* Although quality assessment is an integral and agreed part of the Bologna process, it is yet not mentioned in the principles. Here is a possible place to state its importance.

**iii. The importance of diversity:** a rich diversity of doctoral programmes in Europe, based on quality and sound practice, is a strength. **However, diversity should not be used as an argument to excuse an unacceptable inequity of conditions for doctoral studies or the delay of necessary reforms.**

*Explanation:* Early Stage Researchers in many countries feel the need for reforms of their training, stated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> conclusion of the EUA Maastricht conference. Like Guy Haug (DG Education and Culture) stated in the discussion, the principles should make clear that diversity is no excuse for inertia.

**iv. Doctoral candidates as early stage researchers:** should be recognised as professionals who make a key contribution to the creation of new knowledge. **They should be at least provided with basic social security that can be transferred when the researcher moves (namely pension rights). The overall goal should be to offer competitive salaries and conditions.**

***Explanation:** Working Group 'roles and conditions' agreed very much on employment status of Early Stage Researchers as a prerequisite for a vivid 'European Knowledge Society'. It was criticized that in some countries doctoral candidates are not even provided with basic social security, or that difficulties in obtaining or transferring these in / to other European countries is a major 'mobstacle'. However, the overall goal of employment should not encourage member states to restrict the accessibility of doctoral programmes.*

[...]

vii. **Duration:** doctoral programmes should operate within an appropriate time duration (three to four years **full time equivalent** as a rule).

***Explanation:** If at all a recommendation for a specific term is made, it should be clearly marked as full time research, as already Prof. Salinger pointed out in the discussion. Part time work for the dissertation is rather the status quo in many fields and countries as doctoral candidates workload comprises teaching, service duties or work outside academia or research. In Sweden, for example, working contracts are prolonged accordingly.*

[...]

ix. **Increasing mobility:** Doctoral programmes should offer **geographical as well as interdisciplinary and intersectoral** mobility and international collaboration within an integrated framework of cooperation between universities and other partners. **Obstacles should be removed and mobility in a broader sense facilitated, but not made compulsory. Mobility is not a goal in itself, but one of several means for increased international cooperation, that call for specific funding.**

***Explanation:** A certain kind of 'mobility ideology' puts pressure on the individual ESR unaware of its benefits for research or the personal situation. It should be made clear that mobility is not compulsory, but that international cooperation is to be enhanced through several means that prove to be useful under specific circumstances. International conferences, summer schools and the like contribute to the goal of mobility in a broader sense. This was clarified in the discussion from various speakers.*

x. **Ensuring appropriate funding:** the development of quality doctoral programmes and the successful completion by doctoral candidates requires appropriate funding.

***Suggestion:** If not above, then the necessity of social security, employment and competitive salaries for the whole duration of the doctorate should be stated.*

These suggestions have been discussed and positively endorsed by various participants of the Salzburg Seminar and representatives of ESR associations. Due to the tight deadline and the internal status of the principles this text (version of Thursday, 10 February, 23:00) is not an official statement of the respective organisations, but it is personally supported by the following:

Christian Siegler (Eurodoc board), Dagmar Meyer (MCFA), Deborah Alvarez (Netherlands), Dimiter Dimov (Bulgaria), Harpreet Singh (eurodoc board), Johannes Moes (Promovierenden-Initiative and PGDok / GEW, Germany), Snezana Krstic, Toni Gabaldon (Eurodoc) and the Spanish association of Young Researchers (FJI, [www.precarios.org](http://www.precarios.org)).

Added later: Inese Sviestina (Latvia).