



*»To advocate for positive change in the policies, culture, and environment that affect the quality of training, well-being, and employment conditions of early career researchers«*



**eurodoc**  
The European Council of Doctoral  
Candidates and Junior Researchers

# Research Assessment fit for future(s)?

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# Overview

- Introduction.
  - Quick presentation of Eurodoc and myself
  - A questions for you.
- Research assessment in and of doctoral education and doctoral candidates
- CoARA from the Early Career Researchers perspective?
- The future(s) of research assessment
- Closing reflections

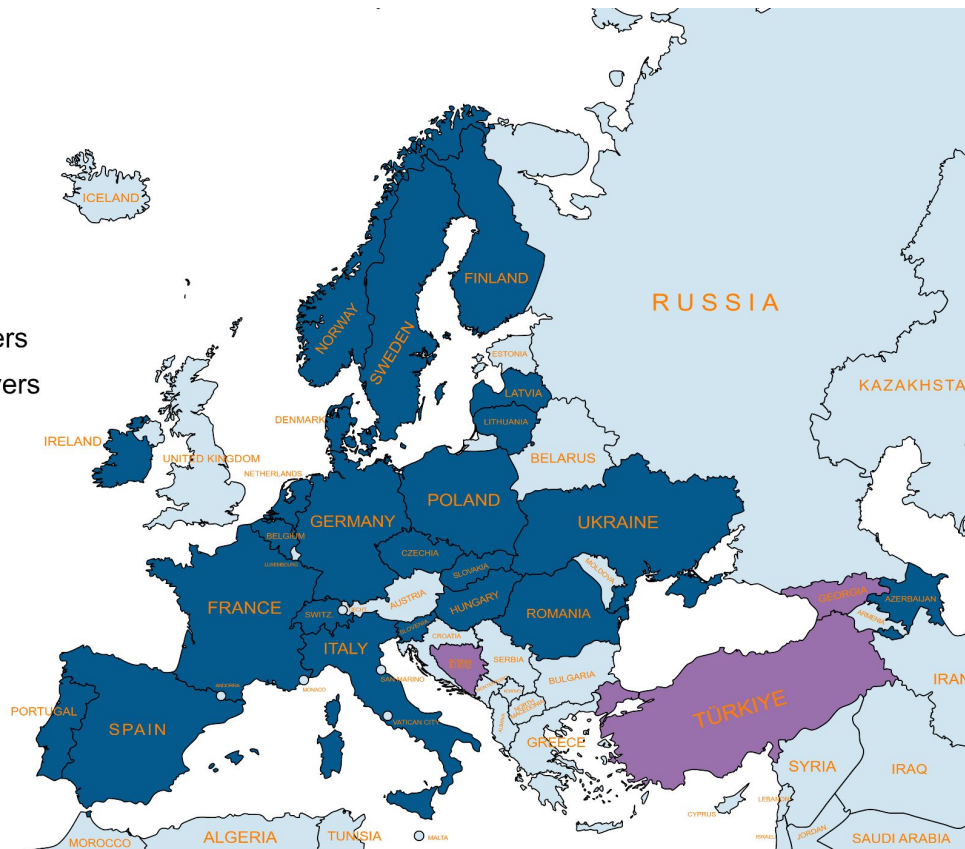


# About Eurodoc



## Eurodoc

- Members
- Observers



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- The European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (**Eurodoc**)
- grassroots federation of **26 national associations** of early career researchers (ECRs) from **24 countries across Europe**
- **established in 2002** and based in Brussels
- representative of **doctoral candidates** and **junior researchers** at the European level
- engages with **major stakeholders** in **research, higher education, and innovation** in Europe



## Pil Maria Saugmann (she/her)

- I have a PhD. I do research and I teach.
- I am in my 30s.
- I speak 4 European languages and read 2 more, I read a lot, listen to (pop and country) music, glass half full type, and play board games.
- I **need coffee** in the morning.
- I like to travel by trains and ferries.



# Disclaimers



**The question!**



## What is the 1-3 largest challenge we face in Europe?

- Something else
- Wars
- Over education
- Lack of competitiveness of Europe
- Cancel culture
- Lack of express trains between European capitals
- Generative AI
- Erosion of academic freedom
- Democratic backsliding
- Climate change





**What is the role of research and  
research assessment in this  
context?**



**What is the role of higher  
education?**



**To meet the challenges!**



# Doctoral education in Europe



# Doctoral education is a research education

- Doctoral education is a **research** education. Its aim is to educate researchers. Many of these will **leave** academia and many will remain.
- Doctoral education educates **researchers** for **society**. **Society** should be able to **trust** the academic institutions to do this job well.
- The research carried out by doctoral candidates must meet their field specific requirements not only when it comes to **methods** and **practices**, but also when it comes to research **ethics** and **integrity**.
- The education of doctoral candidates as researchers requires that they are embedded into **research environments** and have access to adequate **supervision**.



## About doctoral education and democracy

- Doctoral education is a **research** education. Its aim is to educate researchers. Many of these will leave academia and many will **remain**.
- The **all education in Europe** has a **democratic mission**.
- Doctoral education **shapes academia**. Holders of the **doctorate** are the future academia and faculty. Thus doctoral education is a **focal point** in upholding the democratic mission of Higher Education.
- The **future faculty** should uphold academia as a **democratic space** and be able to facilitate **hard conversations**. It should **foster democratic culture** within its own institutions and in society.



## Two sides of the same coin

- Doctoral education **shapes academia**. Holders of the **doctorate** are the future academia and faculty. Thus doctoral education is a **focal point** in upholding the democratic mission of Higher Education and Research in Europe.
- Research Assessment of doctoral candidates happens many places. However, it is often intangible for most **doctoral candidates** and many other **researchers**.
- Doctoral education educates **researchers** for **society**. **Society** should be able to **trust** the academic institutions to do this job well.
- **Research assessment** of doctoral candidates and doctoral education should reflect the values the research and higher education and research sector.



# Research Assessment in and of Doctoral Education





## Research assessment in doctoral education

- Doctoral education is a **research** education. Its aim is to educate researchers. The PhD defence is an act of **research assessment**.
- The research carried out by doctoral candidates must meet their field specific requirements not only when it comes to **methods** and **practices**, but also when it comes to research **ethics** and **integrity**.
- The education of doctoral candidates as researchers requires that they are embedded into **research environments** and have access to adequate **supervision**.



## Research assessment of doctoral education

- The education of doctoral candidates as researchers requires that they are embedded into **research environments** and have access to adequate **supervision**.
- Doctoral education educates **researchers** for **society**. **Society** should be able to **trust** the academic institutions to do this job well.
- A PhD is a PhD is a PhD - or is it? The question of **automatic recognition** of the PhD degree.
- **Research assessment** of doctoral education is connected to the **quality assurance** of it.




# Research Assessment of and by Doctoral Candidates and ECRs



## Research assessment of ECRs

- Potential **doctoral candidates** and **other ECRs** are assessed when applying for positions.
- Doctoral candidates are assessed throughout their PhD and Postdocs are assessed when their current contract is prolonged.
- The research carried out by ECRs must meet their field specific requirements not only when it comes to **methods** and **practices**, but also when it comes to research **ethics** and **integrity**.
- A PhD is a PhD is a PhD - or is it? The question of **automatic recognition** of the PhD degree.

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# **Transparent and open assessment of ECRs and in and of doctoral education**



## The frameworks for Research Assessment

- **Where** and **when** does the assessment take place?
- **Who** does the **assessment**?
- **What** is the **framework conditions** they are assessed against?
- **Why** is it these **frameworks** **conditions**?
- **How** are the **framework conditions** that are used and **how and by whom** are the **framework** **conditions** **assessed**?



# The future(s) of research assessment



## Doctoral education shapes the future

- Doctoral education **shapes academia**. Holders of the **doctorate** are the future academia and faculty. Thus doctoral education is a **focal point** in upholding the democratic mission of Higher Education and Research sector in Europe.
- Doctoral education educates **researchers** for **society**. **Society** should be able to **trust** the academic institutions to do this job well.
- **Assessment processes** must live up to the **academic values**. Are the processes transparent and trustworthy - can they be reproduced?
- Ensure that assessment in and of doctoral education and of and by doctoral candidates and other ECRs is transparent and **aligned** with **Open Science** practices.





# Closing reflections



## The role of ECRs in the research community

- **Inadequate representation of ECRs** means that **problems pertaining specifically to ECRs are hidden**, that **ECRs are not trained in governance** though they will be the future senior staff, and that **ECRs are not acknowledged as an integral part of the academic and research community.**
- **The quality increases** when the *entire* academic community is involved, including doctoral candidates and other ECRs.
- **Academia** can **foster a democratic culture** within its own institutions and in society. Doctoral candidates and other ECRs must be included in the **academic and research community.**



## ECRs as part of the academic and research community

- **Meet** with representatives of ECRs **regularly**. At Institutional level. Ensure they have the **conditions** to **organise** and **self represent**.
- Make **legislation** and **regulation** that concerns transparent **transparent** and **easy** to find. This includes assessment processes and evaluation keys.
- Work jointly with doctoral candidates and ECRs on ensuring that assessment in and of doctoral education and of and by doctoral candidates and other ECRs is transparent and **aligned** with **Open Science** practices.
- Address together the question of how doctoral education should address **societal challenges**.



# EURODOC AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

## - for Values and Democracy in European Higher Education

- An ambassador program for and by ECRs starting in the late spring 2025
  - PART I – THE DEMOCRATIC CONTEXT OF HE IN EUROPE
  - PART II – EHEA FUNDAMENTAL VALUES
  - PART III – INSTITUTIONS, LEGISLATIONS, AND QUESTIONS OF ALIGNMENT





# Thank You!





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