

Defining Junior Researchers and Challenges They Face

Emanuele Storti



EURAXESS seminar 'Make international researchers love you'

Eindhoven University of Technology
14 February 2018

eurodoc

The European Council of Doctoral
Candidates and Junior Researchers

emanuele.storti@eurodoc.net
<http://www.eurodoc.net>

Outline

- Eurodoc as a Stakeholder
- Defining ‘Junior Researchers’
- Issues for Junior Researchers
- Policy for Junior Researchers



eurodoc

The European Council of Doctoral
Candidates and Junior Researchers

emanuele.storti@eurodoc.net
<http://www.eurodoc.net>

Eurodoc as a Stakeholder



eurodoc

The European Council of Doctoral
Candidates and Junior Researchers

emanuele.storti@eurodoc.net
<http://www.eurodoc.net>



Eurodoc as a Stakeholder

Eurodoc: European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers

- Federation of 32 national associations for early-career researchers (ECRs) in Europe
- Registered non-profit organisation established in 2002 & based in Brussels
- Run exclusively for & by ECRs in Europe on member fees and in voluntary capacity

eurodoc

The European Council of Doctoral
Candidates and Junior Researchers

emanuele.storti@eurodoc.net
<http://www.eurodoc.net>



Eurodoc as a Stakeholder

Our main goals

- (1) Represent ECRs on matters of education, research & career development in Europe
- (2) Advance the quality of doctoral programmes & standards of research activity in Europe
- (3) Share information, organise events, join debates & shape policies for ECRs in Europe
- (4) Establish & promote cooperation between national associations for ECRs in Europe

eurodoc

The European Council of Doctoral
Candidates and Junior Researchers

emanuele.storti@eurodoc.net
<http://www.eurodoc.net>



Eurodoc as a Stakeholder

Develop policy on topics for ECRs

- Career Development
- Employment Status
- Interdisciplinarity
- Mobility
- Research Integrity
- Doctoral Training
- Equality
- Mental Health
- Open Science
- Research Quality

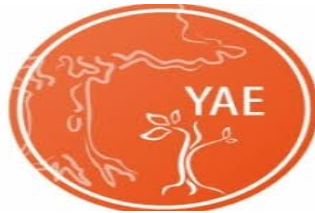


eurodoc

The European Council of Doctoral
Candidates and Junior Researchers

emanuele.storti@eurodoc.net
<http://www.eurodoc.net>

Eurodoc as a Stakeholder



eurodoc

The European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers

emanuele.storti@eurodoc.net
<http://www.eurodoc.net>



Defining 'Junior Researchers'



eurodoc

The European Council of Doctoral
Candidates and Junior Researchers

emanuele.storti@eurodoc.net
<http://www.eurodoc.net>

Defining ‘Junior Researchers’

Researchers who have been awarded a doctoral degree and are engaged in a **temporary and defined period of advanced, not yet fully independent research**, either in academia, in the public or in the private sector



eurodoc

The European Council of Doctoral
Candidates and Junior Researchers

emanuele.storti@eurodoc.net
<http://www.eurodoc.net>

Defining ‘Junior Researchers’

Overlaps with and distinction from similar terms:

- **Experienced Researchers** (European Charter & Code): researchers who hold a doctoral degree or four years of research experience
- **R2 Recognised Researcher** (European Framework for Research Careers): PhD holders or equivalent who are not yet fully independent
- **“Postdoc”**: researchers in their first years after their doctoral degree. Mostly used for researchers on a fixed-term contract in academia



Issues for Junior Researchers

- Working conditions:
 - Precariousness or even lack of employment
 - Inappropriate and unattractive working conditions
- Career development:
 - Insufficient career development support
 - Non-standard career paths
- Barriers to mobility



Issues for Junior Researchers

- **Precariousness or even lack of employment:**
 - fixed/short-term precarious positions are increasingly common (sometimes abuse of temporary contracts)
 - repeated periods of unemployment
- **Inappropriate and unattractive working conditions:**
 - lack of access to research infrastructure
 - insufficient integration in existing networks
 - inequality of opportunities for men and women
 - unsatisfied demand for career planning security



Issues for Junior Researchers

- **Insufficient career development support:**
 - mentoring or further training opportunities are often missing
 - transparent, realistic and fair recruitment criteria need to be a standard throughout Europe
- **Non-standard career paths:**
 - imbalance of career demands and private needs (e.g. family duties, caring work vs. mobility demands and job insecurity, dual career couples)
 - non-standard career paths are rarely acknowledged for promotion
 - lack of institutional acknowledgement and representation



Issues for Junior Researchers

- **Barriers to mobility:**
 - diverse recruitment practices and policies in the European research market
 - huge differences between national pension and social security systems
 - international mobility is not always being rewarded
 - societal ignorance of academic merits



Issues for Junior Researchers

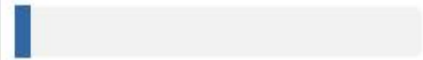
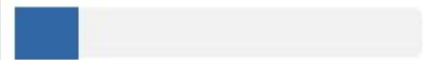
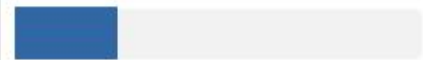
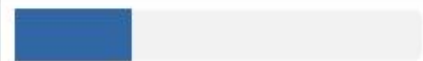
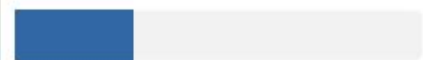
Survey “**Providing researchers with the skills and competencies they need to practise Open Science**” - Working Group on Education and Skills under Open Science

- 1277 respondents (80% from university)
- 85% of respondents would like to continue working as a researcher
- 66% of respondents are open to intersectoral mobility
- more than 35% have no clear ideas about their future career steps
- in most cases (>50%), no career development initiatives have been organised by respondents' institutions



Issues for Junior Researchers

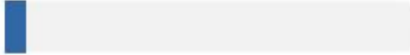

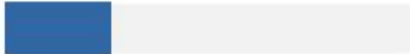
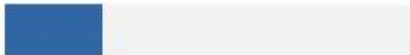
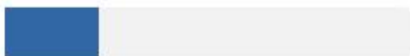
My institution provides adequate career development (via development plan):

strongly agree		44	3.45 %
agree		192	15.04 %
neutral		317	24.82 %
disagree		359	28.11 %
strongly disagree		365	28.58 %



Issues for Junior Researchers


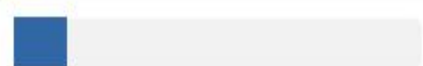
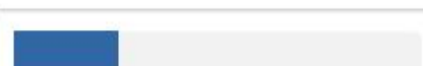
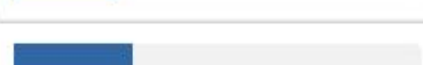

My institution provides adequate career development (via training courses):

strongly agree		61	4.78 %
agree		301	23.57 %
neutral		326	25.53 %
disagree		300	23.49 %
strongly disagree		289	22.63 %



Issues for Junior Researchers

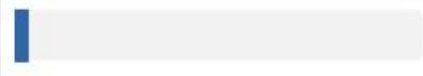
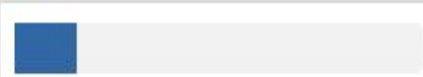
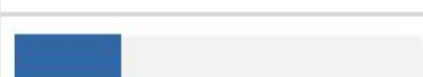
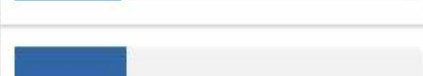

My institution provides adequate career development
(via career counselling):

strongly agree		39	3.05 %
agree		161	12.61 %
neutral		321	25.14 %
disagree		367	28.74 %
strongly disagree		389	30.46 %



Issues for Junior Researchers

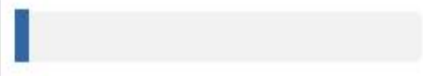
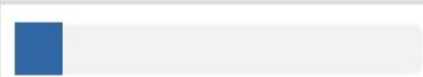
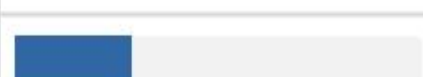

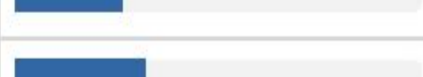
My institution provides adequate career development (via career mentoring):

strongly agree		39	3.05 %
agree		188	14.72 %
neutral		327	25.61 %
disagree		342	26.78 %
strongly disagree		381	29.84 %



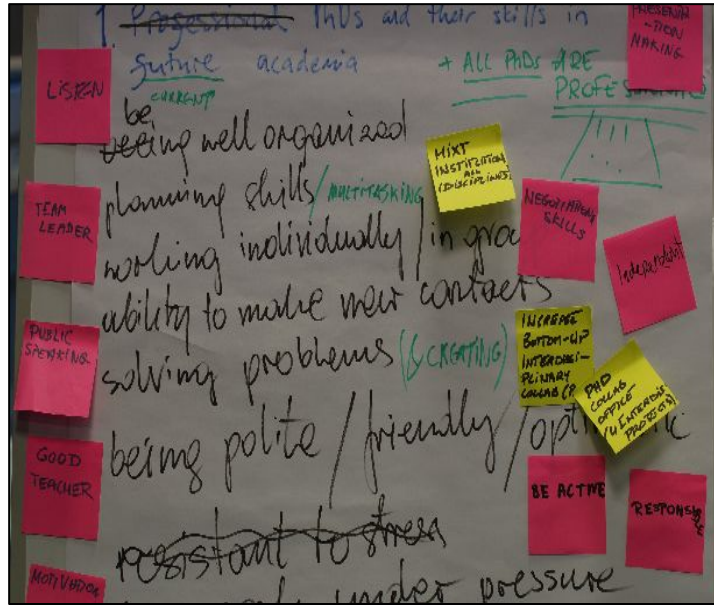
Issues for Junior Researchers

My institution provides adequate career development (via employer contacts):

strongly agree		39	3.05 %
agree		143	11.2 %
neutral		358	28.03 %
disagree		333	26.08 %
strongly disagree		404	31.64 %



Policy for Junior Researchers



Policy for Junior Researchers

- Be *explicit* about success rates in academia
- Offer broad career development *support*:
 - Make researchers *aware* of competencies
 - Offer transferable skills *training* for industry
 - Bring researchers in *contact* with industry
 - Offer temporary paid *placements* in industry
 - Offer *entrepreneurship* training & support
 - Track & involve *alumni* in mobility planning
 - Provide support to incoming foreign researchers
- Ensure representation of junior researchers in governing bodies



Defining Junior Researchers and Challenges They Face

Emanuele Storti

Thank you for listening!

eurodoc



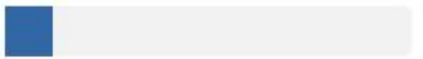
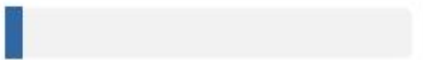
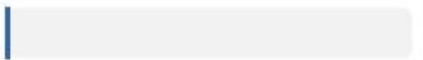
The European Council of Doctoral
Candidates and Junior Researchers

emanuele.storti@eurodoc.net
<http://www.eurodoc.net>



Issues for Junior Researchers

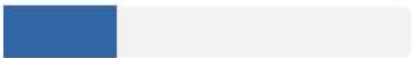
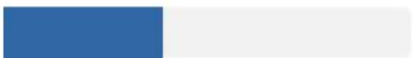
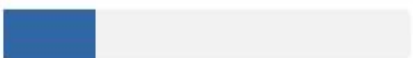
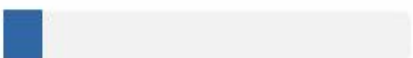
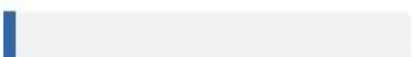
I would like to start/continue working as a researcher:

strongly agree		645	50.51 %
agree		433	33.91 %
neutral		142	11.12 %
disagree		46	3.6 %
strongly disagree		11	0.86 %



Issues for Junior Researchers

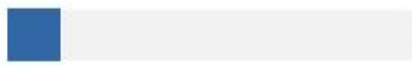
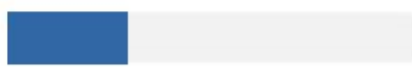
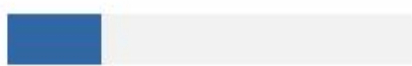
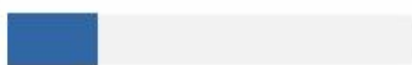
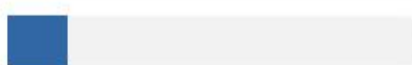
I would like to combine working both inside and outside academia:

strongly agree		352	27.56 %
agree		494	38.68 %
neutral		284	22.24 %
disagree		116	9.08 %
strongly disagree		31	2.43 %



Issues for Junior Researchers

It is clear to me what my future career options are:

strongly agree		158	12.37 %
agree		371	29.05 %
neutral		287	22.47 %
disagree		279	21.85 %
strongly disagree		182	14.25 %



Defining ‘Junior Researchers’

A broad definition, considers the diversity of experiences, backgrounds and career paths is useful to help retaining and resuming talented people in research.

No determinate time-frame:

- diversity of career structures and labour markets,
- any restriction does neither take into account
- breaks or stretched career paths or non-linear career steps

