

Doctoral Programmes in Europe

Nice 7/9 december 2006



WG5: International collaboration and mobility: How much and when?

I. Topic

WG5 will explore the various trends and dimensions of the increased mobility and internationalisation of doctoral education concentrating on the questions of how much mobility should there be at doctoral level, how it should be organised and what is the most appropriate timing.

II. Starting Point

International collaboration and mobility as well as inter-disciplinary and intersectoral mobility is seen as a very important instrument contributing to achieving the goals of the EHEA and ERA as well as the objectives of Lisbon strategy. Mobility is a central issue for the Bologna Process and its value is also emphasised in EC's "European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers".

As far as doctoral education is concerned, the Salzburg Recommendations state that "Doctoral programmes should seek to offer geographical as well as interdisciplinary and intersectoral mobility and international collaboration within an integrated framework of cooperation between universities and other partners".

III. Issues for discussion

Mobility is an integral part of doctoral education at many universities. It helps doctoral candidates to enhance their research experience. However, there are still many obstacles (legal, administrative, financial, personal and cultural) limiting both geographical and intersectoral mobility throughout Europe. In addition, geographical mobility is expensive and can have an impact on the length of doctoral studies. It is not easy for a doctoral candidate to finish doctoral studies within 3 or 4 years and to spend a period of study abroad as well. The question of the recognition of periods spent abroad or in different sectors of activity also needs to be taken into account not least as the value of international and intersectoral mobility is not always acknowledged either by the universities or by future employers.

At the same time mobility in the third cycle should be seen as a part of a broader internationalisation of doctoral education, which includes not only mobility of individual doctoral candidates but also other forms of interinstitutional cooperation and international collaboration (such as using new technologies in international collaboration, developing

joint doctoral programmes at European level or internationally, organising international workshops and conferences). Internationalisations of research and of universities themselves are very important aspects to be considered in this context (more international academic staff within university faculties, with increased use of English language for coursework and supervision etc.).

IV. Workshop Outcomes

- Areas of consensus
- Areas for further discussion