

**EUA Conference “Research Training as a Key to a Europe of
Knowledge”
Maastricht, 28 – 30 October 2004**

**Summary of conclusions and recommendations of the Plenary sessions
and Discussion groups:**

The Maastricht conference was the last in the series of three EUA conferences in 2004 which focused on the social relevance of higher education and research for the development of the knowledge society. The Maastricht conference examined the future research training role of universities in Europe.

With the increased focus on the ambitious Lisbon and Barcelona objectives and new demands of the global knowledge-intensive labour market, universities need to play a key role in research & development, innovation, knowledge creation & transfer at regional, national, European, and international level. In the context of this development, university research training is the most important key to education of new generation of researchers. Doctoral training plays a crucial part in research training, but has to be supplemented by other forms of life-long research training to increase research capacity leading towards ambitious objectives.

Key issues discussed:

- What type of researchers do we need?
- How do universities respond to the new demands of the changing labour market?
- What university reforms (actions) are required in order to develop new policies, new organisation and management of research training, including personell, recruitment and career development strategies?
- What is the role of industry and university-industry collaboration in research training?
- How to attract young people to science?
- How to ensure sustainable career development for all researchers?

Conclusions:

1. Research training has to prepare new generation of researchers which will be highly competent in the professional field, but will also have much wider generic (transferable) skills: ability to learn, problem solving, analytical and critical thinking, writing and communication skills, team and project management, capacity to work in international teams, organisation skills, flexibility, etc. – researcher of the future has to be dynamic, open-minded, communicative and entrepreneurial.
2. Research/ doctoral training needs to be embedded into institutional policies and strategies. Each university has to develop its policy and regulations on doctoral programmes. Doctoral degree has to be awarded by the university (Rector) in order to increase the social value of the degree.
3. Doctoral programmes have to be reformed: there is a need for more structured and organised programmes that offer wide range of skills for wide range of careers.
4. Diversity of doctoral programmes in Europe is a strength that has to be protected, but it must be based on the quality assessment. New models of doctoral programmes have to be initiated, explored and supported (e.g. European model of research/ graduate schools; Professional doctorates; Industrial doctorates) if they fulfil high quality criteria.
5. In addition to doctoral training, other kinds of research training are needed – more life-long open and flexible research training for all categories of researchers.
6. University-industry cooperation has to be strengthened and built on mutual trust and openness, while realising the uniqueness and core mission of each party.
7. Research/ doctoral training needs internationalisation: more mobility, more joint programmes, bilateral or international cooperation and research-driven networks is the only way towards ambitious goals of becoming the most competitive knowledge based continent. Universities have to build/ provide institutional support structures and mechanisms for mobility (e.g. academic staff mobility offices).
8. Universities have to build career development strategies and to develop mechanisms to ensure that every researcher, irrespective of status, is treated as a respected member of the research community and all researchers know about their rights and duties (learning agreements or partnership contracts for doctoral candidates). Recruitment policies at each institution have to be transparent, internationally-open and equitable with the aim to ensure a sustainable career development of every researcher.

