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EURODOC ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026

EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS AS AMBASSADORS FOR SCIENCE AND SOCIETY



JUNE 24-25, 2026



BUDAPEST, Hungary



SEMMELWEIS
UNIVERSITY 1769



Association of Hungarian
PhD and DLA
Candidates

euodoc

The European Council of Doctoral
Candidates and Junior Researchers

**EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS
AS AMBASSADORS FOR SCIENCE AND SOCIETY**

EURODOC ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026

The Eurodoc Annual Conference 2026 is organised by the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc) and the Association for Hungarian PhD and DLA Candidates (DOSZ) hosted and co-organized by the Semmelweis University (SE).

**Contact Information:
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Rue d'Egmont 11
Brussels**

The Eurodoc Conference 2026 “Early Career Researchers as Ambassadors for Science and Society” takes place on 24–25 June 2026 in Budapest, Hungary, bringing together early-career researchers, Eurodoc member National Associations, and key stakeholders from across Europe.

This year’s theme highlights the growing role of early-career researchers not only within academia, but also in shaping the relationship between science and society. The conference explores how ECRs engage in academic governance, contribute to stronger and more connected research communities, and take part in promoting scientific understanding beyond academia.

Organised by Eurodoc in collaboration with the Association of Hungarian PhD and DLA Candidates (DOSZ), and hosted at Semmelweis University, the conference builds on a strong commitment to supporting and connecting ECR communities across borders.

DOSZ “Community for Science” welcomes the Eurodoc community to Budapest to continue building connections and supporting early-career researchers across Europe.

Over two days, the conference offers a space for dialogue, exchange, and active participation, encouraging attendees to share experiences, present good practices, and engage with peers and stakeholders. The programme will include a mix of keynote contributions, panel discussions, workshops, and short presentations by early-career researchers.



EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS AS AMBASSADORS FOR SCIENCE AND SOCIETY

EURODOC ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026

ORGANIZERS



The European Council of Doctoral
Candidates and Junior Researchers

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

website: eurodoc.net



Founded in 1994, the Association of Hungarian PhD and DLA Candidates (DOSZ) is the largest and one of the oldest organizations representing doctoral candidates and early-career researchers in Hungary. Guided by its motto, “Community for Science,” DOSZ works to strengthen advocacy, academic community-building, and scientific cooperation at both national and international levels. The organisation represents more than 10,000 doctoral candidates through its university networks, scientific departments, and international ambassador programme, while actively contributing to higher education and research policy discussions in Hungary and across Europe.

website: <https://dosz.hu>

HOST INSTITUTION



SEMMELWEIS
UNIVERSITY 1769

Semmelweis University is a leading institution of higher education in Hungary and the Central European region within the area of medicine and health sciences. Its main commitment is the integrity of education, research and healing, which makes the more than 250-year-old Semmelweis University an internationally recognized center of knowledge. As a specialist university, it holds a unique place within the country.

Semmelweis University - More than 250 years in the service of health

The brochure is [available in PDF format](#)

Inspiring educational environment, future-proof technologies

A truly international community, programs are offered in three languages (Hungarian, English, German). The number of our students is almost 16,000 and is constantly growing. A third of our students come from 5 continents of the world with the aim of continuing their studies with us at the University's six faculties. Semmelweis University is an employer of more than 14,000 employees and is involved in higher education vocational training, specialist postgraduate training, higher education vocational training, the cultivation of the next generation of scientists, and nurturing talent.

Patient care at the highest level

In addition to teaching, Semmelweis University is the largest provider of health care services in Hungary. Even though practical teaching takes place at the university's clinics and hospitals, they provide the highest quality patient care services at the same time. Most of the departments cater for the most serious cases and patients requiring complex treatment, thus making the university a national health care provider.

Research focusing on knowledge and innovation

Research, development, and innovation comprise an important part of the University's three-fold mission. The target of research at the university are early diagnostics and therapy, disease prevention and active ageing. Many of its professors are members of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, with close collaboration between the two institutions in numerous areas. The University organises international conferences and is represented on numerous international scientific boards. Its academic reputation is well-regarded around the world.

SPONSOR



BIOTRONIK is a global medical technology company headquartered in Berlin, Germany. Founded in 1963 by Max Schaldach and Otto Franke, the company began with the development of the first German implantable pacemaker and has since grown into an international provider of advanced medical devices and therapies.

The company focuses primarily on cardiovascular and neuromodulation solutions, including cardiac rhythm management, remote patient monitoring, electrophysiology, vascular intervention, and spinal cord stimulation technologies. Its product portfolio includes pacemakers, implantable cardioverter-defibrillators, cardiac monitors, leads, external monitoring systems, and electrophysiology solutions.

BIOTRONIK operates in more than 100 countries and develops and manufactures its products in innovation centers in Germany, the United States, and Singapore. The company places strong emphasis on quality, safety, reliability, and patient-centered innovation.

Over the past six decades, BIOTRONIK has built a reputation for engineering life-changing therapies that support the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of heart disease and chronic pain. Its mission is closely linked to improving patients' quality of life through reliable, technologically advanced medical solutions.

CONFERENCE VENUE

Semmelweis University, Department of Pathology and Experimental Cancer Research
H-1085 Budapest, Üllői út 26, Hungary.

The venue is situated in the heart of Budapest, close to the university clinics and within walking distance of the recommended accommodation. It is easily accessible by public transport, including the metro, making it convenient for both local and international participants.

The Department of Pathology and Experimental Cancer Research is one of the historic academic institutions of Semmelweis University and is widely recognised as one of Europe's leading pathology centres, combining long-standing scientific traditions with innovative research, education, diagnostics, and molecular oncology.

[VENUE GOOGLE MAPS LINK](#)



PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

DAY 1, JUNE 24TH

TIME	SESSION
08:30 - 09:00	Registration
09:00 - 10:00	Official Opening and Welcome Speeches
10:00 - 10:45	The Fifth Freedom and the ERA Act Keynote Speech
10:45 - 11:15	Coffee Break
11:15 - 12:30	Mobility as the Human Infrastructure of the Fifth Freedom Panel Discussion
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch
13:30 - 14:00	Academic Freedom as the Foundation of Research and Democracy Keynote Speech
14:00 - 15:15	Mobility, Careers and Wellbeing: Evidence from Europe to Hungary Panel Discussion
15:15 - 15:45	Coffee Break
15:45 - 16:15	Policy Tools for the ERA Act Keynote Speech
16:15 - 16:45	Closing the Day

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

DAY 2, JUNE 25TH

TIME	SESSION
08:30 - 09:00	Registration
09:00 - 10:00	Challenges of International Research Communities Presentations
10:00 - 10:45	ECRs in Academic Governance I. Presentations
10:45 - 11:15	Coffee Break
11:15 - 12:30	ECRs in Academic Governance II. Presentations
12:30 - 13:15	Lunch
13:30 - 14:15	Building Strong ECR Communities I. Presentations
14:15 - 15:15	Building Strong ECR Communities II. Panel Discussion
15:15 - 15:30	Closing of the conference
15:30 - 16:00	Coffee Break
16:00 - 17:45	Workshops
19:00 - 21:30	Castle Guided Tour + Reception

Conference Programme

Semmelweis University, Department of Pathology and Experimental Cancer Research

DAY 1 - WEDNESDAY JUNE 24TH

08:00 - 09:00 Registration

09:00 - 10:00 Official Opening and Welcome Speeches

Opening remarks and welcome addresses by stakeholders, representatives of Eurodoc, DOSZ, and Semmelweis University.

- **Péter Hermann** - Vice-Rector for Educational Affairs, Semmelweis University
 - **Enikő Kubinyi** - Deputy State Secretary, Ministry for Science and Technology
 - **Gábor Takács** - National Doctoral Council
 - **Nicola Dengo** - President, EURODOC
 - **Péter Vámosi** - President, DOSZ
-

10:00 - 10:45 Keynote Speech 1.

Thomas Sturm, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB)

This opening keynote lecture will provide the conceptual and political frame by examining the Fifth Freedom - the "freedom of knowledge". It will explain the meaning and rationale of the Fifth Freedom, and discuss how the free circulation of researchers, ideas, data, methods, education and innovation remains incomplete in Europe, despite decades of work on the European Research Area. The talk will connect the Fifth Freedom to the practical realities facing early career researchers: fragmented national systems, barriers to cross-border mobility, uneven recognition of qualifications and experience, problems with funding mobility, and other difficulties for research careers across borders and sectors. It will also raise the question of whether the Fifth Freedom should be understood not only as a policy goal, but as a right that requires enforceable conditions and institutional commitment.

10:45 - 11:15 Coffee Break

11:15 - 12:30 Panel Discussion**Mobility as the Human Infrastructure of the Fifth Freedom****Speakers**

- **Edina Szilárdi** - Tempus Public Foundation
- **Béla Fiser** - MCAA Hungary Chapter
- **Magali Weissgerber** - Eurodoc
- **Jakub Orłowski** – Polonium Foundation

Moderator

- **Anna Taraczközi**, DOSZ

This panel explores researcher mobility from complementary perspectives, going beyond the notion of mobility just as an individual opportunity, but also as a core infrastructure of the European Research Area. Panelists will discuss how funding schemes, national agencies, diaspora networks, alumni communities and ECR organisations can make mobility more accessible, transparent and sustainable. The discussion will consider practical barriers such as recognition, visas, social protection, family support, grant portability and access to reliable information, while also asking how mobility can support brain circulation, inclusion, regional cohesion and long-term knowledge exchange rather than reproduce inequalities

12:30 - 13:30 Lunch

13:30 - 14:00 Keynote Speech

Pil Maria Saugmann, Eurodoc

Academic Freedom as the Foundation of Research and Democracy

This keynote will place academic freedom at the centre of the conference theme. If ECRs are to act as ambassadors for science and society, they need the freedom to ask questions, pursue evidence, communicate results, participate in public debate and contribute to institutional life without fear of reprisal. Academic freedom is both institutional and individual. Universities and research organisations need autonomy from undue political, commercial or ideological interference, but individual researchers also need protection. ECRs are often particularly vulnerable because of dependence on supervisors, short-term contracts, funding insecurity, unclear employment status and limited participation in governance. Academic freedom also connects to mobility and the fifth freedom. Mobility is meaningful only if researchers can move into environments where their rights are protected. Open science is meaningful only if researchers can share knowledge responsibly and safely.

14:00 - 15:15 Panel Discussion**Mobility & Careers: Perspectives from Europe to Hungary****Speakers**

- **Gillian Golden**, Reico, OECD
- **Luke Incorvaja**, European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)
- **Karolina Eszter Kovács**, Hungarian Young Academy, Hungary
- **Karl Kilbo Edlund**, Eurodoc

Moderator

- **Attila Csomós** DOSZ

This panel focuses on the relationship between mobility, research careers and innovation ecosystems, bringing together European, international and Hungarian perspectives on how mobility shapes opportunities, risks, wellbeing and long-term career development for early-career researchers. The discussion will address what available data can tell us about mobility patterns, career progression, employment conditions, intersectoral pathways, precariousness and mental health, while also asking where evidence remains incomplete or too fragmented to guide policy. Panellists will examine whether mobility is recognised as meaningful career development or treated as an expectation without sufficient support, and how researchers can be better equipped with entrepreneurial, innovation and leadership skills while preserving excellence in research. The panel will also explore how institutions, funders, policy bodies and ECR organisations can translate evidence and lived experience into fairer career frameworks, responsible research and innovation practices, and actionable reforms at European, national and local level.

15:15 - 15:45 Coffee Break**15:45 - 16:15 Keynote Speech**

Magda de Carli, European Commission, DG Research and Innovation

Policy Tools for the ERA Act: From Principles to Implementation

The larger community of researchers looks ahead to the policy tools that may be expected in the ERA Act and related European Research Area reforms, with particular attention to how they could affect early-career researchers. How will European-level instruments move from broad principles to implementation mechanisms? A multi-level endeavour that covers coordination, monitoring, benchmarks, mutual learning, guidance for Member States, structured stakeholder involvement and measures addressing mobility, career attractiveness, skills, research assessment and working conditions. The session will help participants understand what to expect from the ERA Act and what role is expected by early-career researchers organisations to play in the process.

16:15 - 16:45 Closing

Speakers

- Nicola Dengo, President, Eurodoc
 - Norbert Bence, Advisory Board Member, DOSZ
-

17:00 - 19:00 Free programme
Check-in to accommodation

DAY 2 - THURSDAY JUNE 25TH

08:00 - 09:00 Registration

09:00 - 10:00 Presentations 1.

Challenges of International Research Communities

Mostafa Moonir Shawrav, Marie Curie Alumni Association

Early Career Researchers as Policy Actors: Lessons from the Marie Curie Alumni Association and 30 Years of MSCA

1

This presentation will reflect on the importance of organised early career researcher communities in shaping research, innovation and higher education policy. Drawing on the experience of the Marie Curie Alumni Association and the broader legacy of 30 years of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, Mostafa Moonir Shawrav will discuss how researcher-led organisations can transform individual experiences into collective evidence, advocacy and policy proposals. The presentation will highlight the role of ECR organisations in debates on researcher careers, mobility, the fifth freedom, academic freedom and the future of the European Research Area, showing how alumni and ECR networks can act as bridges between researchers, institutions, funders and policymakers. (TO BE CONFIRMED)

Eszter Hegymegi, Loughborough University

Bridging Without Power? Early Career Researchers and the Tensions of Engagement Beyond Academia

2

Certain social issues cannot be, and should not be, studied in isolation, as they extend beyond disciplinary boundaries. These complex topics are frequently addressed through projects involving early career researchers (ECRs). At the same time, such research does not remain confined to academia, as it engages with communities, services, and policy contexts. Research outcomes are assessed in relation to their societal impact. Despite these expectations, there is limited guidance on how ECRs can meaningfully enact engagement in practice, particularly within complex social settings. Drawing on a design-led PhD within homelessness support services, this paper reflects on the role of the ECR as a societal ambassador. The research involved collaboration with service providers and governmental bodies, using creative methods, including storytelling and co-design, to explore the role of emotional home in pathways out of homelessness and to develop a practice-oriented tool. Through this process, the ECR operated as a facilitator, translator, and mediator between academic knowledge, service provision, and lived experience, working across disciplinary and institutional boundaries. This presentation argues that ECRs are positioned in roles of high responsibility for engagement, while holding limited institutional power to shape how this engagement is supported or recognised. This positioning creates tensions between expectations of impact and navigating institutional constraints, time pressures, and differing stakeholder priorities.

While this bridging role is increasingly valued, it remains under-supported, partly because it is most often undertaken by those in early career positions. By foregrounding these tensions, the presentation contributes to current discussions on ECR engagement and impact. It calls for greater recognition of the relational and translational work undertaken by ECRs, and for institutional structures that more adequately support engagement beyond academia.

Laura Alzmeter Laura, Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE)

Between formal access and practical barriers: international doctoral students' participation in Hungarian academic governance

3

Doctoral candidates play a critical role in university governance, yet their participation, particularly that of international early career researchers (ECRs), remains unevenly understood. This study examines how doctoral candidates in Hungary access and experience opportunities for engagement in institutional decision-making, with a specific analytical emphasis on international PhD candidates. Using a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, quantitative data from doctoral candidates across seven universities were complemented by interviews with representatives of four doctoral candidate unions. The findings reveal that, although governance structures formally provide equal access to all doctoral students, participation is shaped by practical barriers that disproportionately affect international researchers. Survey responses indicate limited awareness of representative roles, inconsistent communication, and the predominance of Hungarian-language information channels. Interview data support these patterns: union leaders describe low visibility of representative bodies, uneven bilingual practices, and structural constraints, such as scholarship regulations, that reduce the feasibility of participation for international students. At the same time, both data sources highlight that international doctoral candidates demonstrate strong willingness to engage and participate actively in academic events when communication is inclusive and accessible. The study argues that strengthening English-language communication, enhancing institutional support mechanisms, and addressing incentive disparities are essential to enabling meaningful doctoral-level participation. By situating international PhD candidates' experiences within the broader doctoral governance landscape, the research provides evidence for developing more equitable and effective participation practices in Hungarian higher education.

Moderator

Aleksandra Lewandowska, Eurodoc

10:00 - 10:45 Presentations 2.**ECRs in Academic Governance I.: ECRs and Society**

Costanza Marini, Giuseppe Maistrello; ADI, Italy

Advocates for ECRs or Ambassadors for Science and Society? ADI and the Italian case**1**

Doctoral candidates play a critical role in university governance, yet their participation, particularly that of international early career researchers (ECRs), remains unevenly understood. This study examines how doctoral candidates in Hungary access and experience opportunities for engagement in institutional decision-making, with a specific analytical emphasis on international PhD candidates. Using a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, quantitative data from doctoral candidates across seven universities were complemented by interviews with representatives of four doctoral candidate unions. The findings reveal that, although governance structures formally provide equal access to all doctoral students, participation is shaped by practical barriers that disproportionately affect international researchers. Survey responses indicate limited awareness of representative roles, inconsistent communication, and the predominance of Hungarian-language information channels. Interview data support these patterns: union leaders describe low visibility of representative bodies, uneven bilingual practices, and structural constraints, such as scholarship regulations, that reduce the feasibility of participation for international students. At the same time, both data sources highlight that international doctoral candidates demonstrate strong willingness to engage and participate actively in academic events when communication is inclusive and accessible. The study argues that strengthening English-language communication, enhancing institutional support mechanisms, and addressing incentive disparities are essential to enabling meaningful doctoral-level participation. By situating international PhD candidates' experiences within the broader doctoral governance landscape, the research provides evidence for developing more equitable and effective participation practices in Hungarian higher education.

Diego Millan Berdasco, Universidad Camilo José Cela, Spain

Not-So-Good Practices: What Survey Data Reveal About PhD and Postdoctoral Conditions in Spain

2

In 2023, FJI/Precarios (the Spanish national association of Eurodoc) conducted two national surveys to assess the working, economic, and personal conditions of early-career researchers in Spain. The study collected responses from 1,499 PhD candidates and 1,099 postdoctoral researchers across a wide range of academic fields, primarily in public universities and research centers. The results reveal a research system strongly affected by economic precarity, job instability, and normalized overwork. PhD candidates typically earn around €1,100 net per month, a level that prevents most from saving and often from covering basic living costs, especially in large academic cities, leading to widespread shared housing. Both PhD and postdoctoral researchers report working significantly more hours than stated in their contracts, with overtime remaining largely unpaid. Career prospects are perceived as highly uncertain, with limited institutional support for long-term stabilization and frequent pressure to accept international mobility. These conditions have a clear impact on well-being: many respondents report impaired work-life balance, anxiety, and negative health effects. Overall, the surveys highlight structural problems in the Spanish research system and underscore the urgent need for policy reforms to ensure sustainable working conditions and viable career paths for researchers.

Eldar Veremchuk, Anna Kondratieva; YSC, Ukraine

Empowering Early Career Researchers in Ukraine: Good Practices from the Young Scientists Council at the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

3

The Young Scientists Council at the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine represents one of the largest coordinated networks of early career researchers (ECRs) in Ukraine, uniting more than 14,500 young researchers.

A central dimension of the Ukrainian model is the institutional inclusion of ECRs in governance and policy development. Members of the Council participate in Ministry working groups, consultative processes, and expert commissions related to doctoral education. Through these mechanisms, early career researchers contribute directly to shaping science policy rather than remaining only recipients of institutional decisions. The Council regularly prepares analytical recommendations and legislative proposals on behalf of the ECR community, promoting evidence-informed policymaking and strengthening the integration of scientific expertise into public administration.

The Council's activities extend far beyond institutional advocacy and demonstrate a strong connection between science and society. Some of the most illustrative initiatives are the Young Researchers Night in the Conditions of War, the Forum of Young Scientists' Councils, the Scholar Support Office and the Ukrainian Science Diaspora initiative.

An important feature of the Ukrainian experience is the combination of bottom-up community building with institutional support from the Ministry of Education and Science. The Union of Young Scientists' Councils and the national register of councils provide mechanisms for coordination and representation across institutions, while thematic working groups and national events create opportunities for peer support and collective advocacy. This hybrid model has proven particularly valuable under crisis conditions, allowing the ECR community to remain operational, visible, and socially engaged.

The Ukrainian case demonstrates that ECRs can act simultaneously as researchers, policy contributors, science communicators, and agents of societal resilience. In the context of war, institutional transformation, and European integration, the activities illustrate how coordinated support structures and active civic engagement can strengthen both the research system and its relationship with society. The experience offers a practical example of how ECR communities can contribute not only to academic development, but also to democratic governance, public dialogue, and national recovery.

Moderator

Magali Weissgerber, Eurodoc

10:45 - 11:15 Coffee Break

11:15 - 12:30 Presentations 3.

ECRs in Academic Governance II.: From Policy to Practice

Naheeda Hamza, SiN, Norway

ECRs in Academic Governance: Lessons from Norway and the Nordic Model of Democratic Participation

1

Early career researchers (ECRs) play a critical role in shaping the future of academia, yet their participation in institutional governance remains uneven across Europe. Drawing on the Norwegian higher education context and broader Nordic perspectives, this paper examines how governance structures, participatory traditions, and recent reforms influence ECR engagement in decision-making. Norway's academic system is historically rooted in collegial governance, emphasizing academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and shared responsibility. A defining feature of the Norwegian model is the institutionalization of democratic governance. University leadership has traditionally been elected through institution-wide voting systems involving academic staff, administrative staff, and students, ensuring broad legitimacy. ECRs, including PhD candidates and postdoctoral researchers, are embedded in this system and participate directly or indirectly in electoral processes.

National legislation also guarantees representation of employees and students on university boards, enabling ECR perspectives to be voiced through staff representatives, doctoral organizations, and trade unions. Recent developments reveal both opportunities and constraints. Advocacy initiatives such as the Movement for a Free Academia demonstrate growing resistance to managerial governance and highlight ECRs' role in defending academic freedom. However, shifts toward appointed leadership and increased centralization risk weakening democratic participation and limiting ECR influence. Nordic ECR perspectives further emphasize the importance of structured participation, collective organization, and transnational collaboration, while pointing to challenges such as limited reach, uneven engagement, and weak communication channels. This presentation argues that effective ECR participation requires more than formal representation; it depends on active inclusion, institutional support, and sustained collective action. It proposes three recommendations: reinforcing democratic governance mechanisms, institutionalizing stable ECR representation, and supporting grassroots and transnational ECR networks to strengthen both ECR agency and institutional legitimacy.

Madeline Jane Quill, Rachael Sarsfield Ryan; AMLÉ, National Student Engagement Programme, Ireland

Beyond Engagement: Towards Meaningful Representation of Early-Career Researchers in Ireland

2

How do we move beyond tokenistic engagement of early-career researchers in representative organisations and academic governance, and towards meaningful representation that gives ECRs real decision-making power, and a seat at the negotiating table? Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn (AMLÉ) is one of the three Eurodoc National Associations to operate as a student union, which is a reflection of the unique landscape and history of the Irish student movement. Many of AMLÉs constituent students' unions, and AMLÉ itself are more than 50 years old, and are complex organisations that have expanded significantly to include full-time paid officers, commercial and retail outputs, budgets numbering in the hundreds of thousands of Euros and much more. As these unions have evolved, so too have the needs of their members, and that is no more apparent with the unique challenge of representing ECRs, primarily doctoral candidates. Doctoral candidates pose unique representational challenges, being they can be isolated from the rest of the student population, are typically older in profile than their undergraduate counterparts, and have numerous academic responsibilities in research, teaching and administration. Many of the issues faced by Irish doctoral candidates today are also linked to their student status causing issues with a lack of employment rights, pay issues, conflict with supervisory teams and mobility issues, issues which students' unions are often poorly equipped to assist with. This often leaves doctoral candidates feeling like they have no chance but to fend for themselves, and self-advocate, if they feel the students' union does not represent them. This talk will cover some of the key work AMLÉ has been doing to increase the engagement and representation of doctoral candidates, the current status quo of postgraduate representation in Irish students' unions and higher education governance, and practical steps for representatives of ECRs to better their own representative strategies.

Edyta Mazur, W. Szafer Institute of Botany, Polish Academy of Sciences

Early career researchers and the path from involvement to recognition

3

Early career researchers are highly motivated to pursue a career in research, but their engagement in academic processes and research policy is constrained. Their input is often missing from academic processes, even though they are affected by matters such as career opportunities, access to research infrastructure and funding, mobility, mentoring and ongoing research support. In this presentation I will discuss the problem of being heard as an early career researcher, and the need to engage in academic governance. Drawing from the experience of being a researcher working in a multi-cultural and collaborative environment, I will reflect on the challenges of being heard as an early career researcher and communicating their needs, and being recognised as a legitimate voice in institutional conversations. These include the exclusion of early career researchers from decision-making mechanisms, top-down communication and the lack of representation of early career voices within research institutions. Equally, I will discuss how to improve representation, through participation in formal and informal networks, committees and working groups and learning communication skills that promote effective advocacy. The presentation will also explore how early career researchers can be not just beneficiaries of, but also contributors to, academic systems. Through experiences in research collaborations, mentoring and other professional interactions, I will demonstrate that being heard is not only the responsibility of the individual, but also of the institution. More involvement of early career researchers in institutional governance can help to create more responsive, transparent and sustainable research cultures.

Jindra Lavrenčíková, Alex Mičáň; European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc)

From Policy to Practice: ECR Perspectives on the Implementation of Doctoral Reform in Czechia

4

A recent amendment to the Czech Higher Education Act (2025) introduced significant changes to doctoral studies, including the establishment of a guaranteed doctoral income and adjustments to study conditions. These changes represent a substantial shift in the structure of doctoral education and the position of doctoral candidates. However, as the reform is being implemented across institutions, its interpretation and practical impact vary considerably. This contribution presents findings from a nationwide survey conducted by the Student Chamber of the Council of Higher Education Institutions, targeting individuals with direct experience of doctoral education. With more than 300 responses collected across Czech higher education institutions, the survey provides comprehensive insight into how the reform is translated into institutional practice and allows for comparison across institutions. Preliminary analysis of the data indicates substantial differences in the interpretation of guaranteed income, persisting inequalities between doctoral cohorts, and an increase in non-research-related workload. The data also suggest varying levels of transparency, communication, and institutional preparedness, as well as a potential shift of responsibility onto doctoral candidates.

These findings point to tensions between legislative intentions and everyday institutional practice. This study highlights how structured data collection can strengthen evidence-based advocacy and support ECR representation in academic governance. It further reflects on the role of ECR representative bodies in mediating between policy and practice and formulates recommendations for improving the implementation of the reform at both institutional and national levels.

Claudia S. Dobrinski, Thesis e.V., Germany

German Universities and HEIs – The “Hochschulurteil/Higher Education Act” from 1973 to the present: Governing Bodies, Joint Decision-Making, and the Role of ECRs and Research Employees.

5

The Bologna Process brought about profound changes in the German higher education system that continue to have an impact today. In addition to purely nominal, linguistic adjustments – such as the adoption of the title “PhD” or the traditional doctoral title “Dr.” – it also led to significant structural upheavals that, particularly in Germany, exposed the precarious situation of doctoral candidates and strengthened their position. With around 300,000 doctoral candidates, this also presents a wide range of developments, including milestones in best practices, but also a persistence of traditional structures and ways of thinking. This primarily affects the academic mid-level staff (including doctoral candidates, postdocs, research assistants, group leaders, tenure-track and junior professors) at universities. The external doctoral candidates are following suit. Almost silently, the scholarship system at major non-university institutions was changed from covering only two-thirds positions to covering up to full-time positions. Major research funding agencies, such as the Deutsche Forschungsgesellschaft (German Research Foundation), have since also set the pace for universities regarding contracts and supervision agreements for third-party funded projects. These agreements are truly a milestone for the legal status of doctoral students in Germany. Likewise the individual groups form doctoral candidates and postdoctoral councils are represented on the various university committees. German universities of applied sciences have also benefited enormously from the reforms, in many cases gaining long-overdue recognition in the areas of research and entrepreneurship. However, the 16 state-specific higher education laws in Germany vary widely and, for the most part, still perpetuate traditional hierarchies. The so-called “Higher Education Act” (“Hochschulgesetz”) of 1973 remains in force, which means that the professorial body clearly holds the dominant position and the majority of voting rights. How can early-career researchers assert themselves in this context? And is it possible to democratize the higher education system – to foster participatory, cooperative, and collegial collaboration?

Moderator

Karl Kilbo Edlund, Eurodoc

12:30 - 13:30 Lunch

13:30 - 14:15 Presentations 4.**Building Strong ECR Communities I.: Building Connections and Trainings**

Katarzyna Pawlak, Małgorzata Drabko, Abhishek Viswanath, Michał Winczek; KR D, Warsaw Doctoral Forum, Poland

From guests to stakeholders: empowering international doctoral researchers in ECR communities**1**

Across Polish doctoral schools, the number of international doctoral researchers has been steadily increasing, with the share of foreign doctoral candidates growing by over 40% between 2019 and 2024, even though the overall doctoral population declined[1]. In the academic year 2022/23, the internationalisation rate of the doctoral schools reached approximately 13%, with the researchers from India (18.3%), Ukraine(10,6%) and Iran (9.2%) forming the largest groups[2]. This reflects the broader European trends in the internationalisation of higher education. Despite this, many people continue to function as temporary “guests” rather than recognised members of Early Career Researcher (ECR) communities. This presentation draws on the everyday experiences from engagement with international doctoral researchers and doctoral self-governance structures in Poland. It shows how language barriers affect quality of life, access to information, and sense of belonging, often limiting participation beyond academic duties[3]. At the same time, international doctoral researchers face challenges related to the legal framework governing foreigners[4]. A key observation is their relatively low level of engagement in doctoral self-governance. The presentation seeks to understand the reasons behind this, including structural barriers, perceived temporariness, and limited institutional support[5]. Despite these challenges, international doctoral researchers contribute perspectives and cultural knowledge that support more open and diverse academic communities[6]. Focusing on doctoral self-governance bodies, the presentation examines strategies adopted to address these issues, from informal peer support to structured inclusion initiatives. It argues that empowering international doctoral researchers requires moving beyond formal inclusion towards practical, community-based approaches. Recognising them as stakeholders rather than guests is essential for building inclusive and resilient ECR communities.

Mia Varkaš, IANUS Project, Horizon Europe

Understanding Training Experiences and Needs in MSCA Fellowships: Insights from Postdoctoral and Doctoral Network Fellows

2

Integrative MSCA Achievements and Networks for Unified Strategies (IANUS) is a research project that examines how Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) supports researchers' careers and how the programme can be improved. It explores what works well in MSCA projects, which challenges beneficiaries face, and how MSCA contributes to researchers' careers and collaboration. We conducted an online survey (N=1604) to capture the experiences of fellows, supervisors, and coordinators across major MSCA actions under Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe, focusing on fellows in MSCA Individual and Postdoctoral Fellowship and their training experiences and needs. For MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship (n=485) fellows, training priorities focused mainly on the adoption of new research methods and the acquisition of knowledge from other disciplines, while artificial intelligence, commercialization and software development were ranked lower and were less frequently offered in practice. For Doctoral Network fellows (n=378), priorities were broader, with a strong emphasis on intersectoral collaboration and research and innovation skills, alongside clear needs for grant writing, project management, and closer links with non-academic sectors. Both groups called for more interdisciplinary, intersectoral and strategically framed training that complements research excellence with grant writing, industry engagement, digital skills, and communication and leadership competences. These findings can inform the further development of the programme by highlighting the importance of fostering interdisciplinarity and strengthening intersectoral collaboration, with particular emphasis on training that equips researchers with the skills needed to engage effectively in such collaborative environments.

Iryna Yakovenko, Najat Dzaki, Keshi Chung, Madhusree Mitra; Umeå University, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden

Early career researchers and the path from involvement to recognition

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Postdoctoral researchers often experience a sense of isolation in academia, shaped by the temporary nature of their positions and by stipend-based employment that provides flexibility but lacks the security and benefits of work contracts. These conditions make it both easier to enter and more difficult to remain. Furthermore, a high-turnover environment challenges the development and continuity of support structures. In this context, building a strong, connected community is both challenging and very beneficial. The Umeå Postdoc Society (UPS) is a case study of a self-organized Early Career Researcher (ECR) network that has developed a structured and sustainable approach to representation, support, and community building. A main component of this model is a Board of Advisors composed of representatives from multiple faculties and departments. This board provides strategic guidance and a distributed financing mechanism, ensuring continuity of activities and enabling focused, effective communication between advisors and UPS while being exempt from the high communication load of UPS.

The presentation will sketch the organizational structure of UPS, with its activities and initiatives, including career development programs, networking events, and dialogue with university leadership. A highlight is also a recent initiative in which UPS data collection and advocacy supported the development of a pilot university career development program, demonstrating the potential of ECR-led organizations to influence institutional policy and practice. By sharing practical insights into self-governance, funding, and community building strategies, this contribution aims to provide a transferable model for strengthening ECR communities, enhancing participation in academic governance, and fostering sustainable career development support within academia, becoming increasingly important in the time of turmoil for science and the world.

Tanja Paneva, Katarina van Midden; MA, Slovenia

Best practice of the Young Academy of Slovenia: Mentor of the Year Award

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Mentoring is considered the pillar of doctoral studies. Mentoring affects the academic achievements as well as the overall well-being of doctoral candidates. Studies show that effective mentoring is critical for candidates' success and for defining the further path of early career researchers. Inspired by the Nature journal's mentoring awards, for 17 years the Young Academy of Slovenia organizes the Mentor of the Year event, to promote excellence and good mentoring practices among doctoral candidate supervisors across Slovenia. The event is widely acknowledged and recognized by higher education institutions in Slovenia and supported by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS). Over the years, the number of applications has been steadily increasing, from 32 applications in 2009, the first year the event took place, to a peak of 124 applications in 2017. In recent years, the average number is about 90 applications per year submitted by doctoral candidates nominating their mentors. The application form consists of open-ended questions referring to different stages of the doctoral studies journey. The assessment phase goes beyond evaluating academic achievements, but it also captures the mentor's contribution to candidates' work-life balance, and the mentor's role in providing inspiration, encouragement, and support for the overall personal growth of the doctoral candidate. Over time, the award has become prestigious making mentors honored to be nominated by doctoral candidates and win this valuable recognition for their work. Another testimony of the event's success is the inclusion of the Mentor of the Year award, representing a best practice from Slovenia, in the annex of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Supervision Guidelines prepared by the European Commission. We are looking forward to continuing the tradition of the Mentor of the Year Award, fostering and inspiring good mentoring practices that create nurturing and healthy academic environments where next generations of scholars and researchers can thrive and reach their full potential.

Moderator

Luka Savic, Eurodoc

14:10 - 15:15 Panel Discussion

Building Strong ECR Communities II.: Building Networks and Programmes

Speakers

- **Pil Maria Saugmann** - Eurodoc ValDem programme
- **Norbert Bencze** - DOSZ Ambassador programme
- **Gábor Kismihók** - PeerPower
- **Anna Sobocińska** - Polonium Foundation

Moderator

- **Rawand Ben Brahim**, DOSZ

Strong early-career researcher (ECR) communities are essential for representation, wellbeing, internationalisation, and the strengthening of academic values across Europe and beyond. This panel showcases four different initiatives and network structures that support ECRs through community building, cross-border cooperation, and targeted support programmes.

While the introduced initiatives differ in their geographical scope, organisational structure, and focus areas, they all contribute to strengthening researcher communities and creating opportunities for connection and engagement. The Eurodoc ValDem Programme focuses on academic governance, democratic values, and academic freedom; PeerPower addresses researchers' wellbeing and peer support; Polonium connects and organises Polish research communities living in diaspora; while the DOSZ Ambassador Programme supports the local integration and community involvement of international doctoral researchers in Hungary.

The discussion will explore different approaches to network-building, community organisation, and support structures for ECRs, highlighting how these programmes contribute to stronger, more connected, and more resilient research communities.

15:15 - 15:30 Conference Closing

15:30 - 16:00 Coffee Break

16:00 - 17:45 WORKSHOPS

19:00 - 20:00 Castle Guided Tour

Guided walking tour from the Chain Bridge up to Castle Hill, exploring the main historical sites of the Buda Castle district.

WORKSHOPS

Workshop 1:

Beyond the Hype. Using AI Responsibly in Research and Proposal Writing: A quick presentation of ASTRA, a IANUS project tool

Organisator and facilitator:

- Francesco Guaraldi, IANUS project
- Luka Kemoklidze, IANUS project

Description:

Artificial intelligence has moved from a peripheral curiosity to a central feature of research practice, yet most early-career researchers encounter it without structured guidance on what it can actually do, where it falls short, and how to use it without compromising their integrity or their work.

This session, delivered by Francesco Guaraldi and Luka Kemoklidze as part of the IANUS project funded under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, addresses that gap directly. Through live demonstration and hands-on engagement, participants will explore how large language models and AI agent workflows can support core research tasks: mapping literature and identifying gaps, structuring methodology, drafting and revising academic writing, and navigating the funding landscape -- including the preparation of competitive proposals.

A dedicated segment covers AI agents and multi-step tool chaining, reflecting the rapid shift from single-prompt interactions toward more complex, automated research workflows that researchers are increasingly expected to understand and critically evaluate. Responsible use is not treated as a separate ethics module but as a thread running through the entire session. Questions of data privacy, transparency, and academic integrity are addressed in context, grounded in the EC guidelines on AI in research.

The session also presents ASTRA, an AI tool developed within IANUS to support researchers in developing MSCA proposal ideas, alongside a limited offer of supported application review in cooperation with National Contact Points.

WORKSHOPS

Workshop 2:

From Research to Reality: Validating Your PhD Topic as a Startup or Spin-off

Organisator and facilitator:

- Roland Kovács, Kickdraft
- László Rém, Kickdraft

Description:

Many successful startups and university spin-offs start with strong research—but only a small fraction of research projects ever reach real-world impact.

This interactive workshop helps PhD students and researchers explore whether their research topic could become the foundation of a startup, spin-off, or innovation project. Rather than focusing on business plans or funding, we will focus on the most important early-stage question:

Participants will learn a practical validation framework used by entrepreneurs and innovation teams, then apply it directly to their own research topic using the Kickdraft platform.

Participants will learn how to assess the real-world potential of their research by identifying users and stakeholders, validating problems and assumptions, and determining whether an idea should move forward, pivot, or stop. By the end of the session, participants will have transformed their research idea into a structured innovation project, identified key assumptions, and created a validation roadmap for testing real-world demand.

Participants must bring a laptop and think about one topic to explore prior to the workshop.

Workshop 3:

Shaping Research Careers in Europe: From Frameworks to Advocacy Action

Organisator and facilitator:

- Sara Pilia, Eurodoc, SECURE2
- Agnieszka Zyra, Eurodoc, SECURE2
- Ádám Molnár, Bay Zoltan Nonprofit Ltd., SECURE2

Description:

This SECURE2 workshop is dedicated for representatives of national associations who want to take a closer look at how research careers in Europe are changing and what role they can play in this process. We will discuss the SECURE Research Career Framework, tenure track-like models, and findings from the SECURE2 Benchmarking Report, but the main focus will be on practical questions: which issues should be treated as priorities, who should be involved in advocacy work, and how to build strategies that are realistic and can lead to visible results. T

he workshop will combine group work, open discussion, and exchange of experiences, giving participants space to compare challenges, share different perspectives, and think together about how research careers can become more transparent, fair, and sustainable across the European Research Area.

Conference Contributors



Anna Sobocińska

CAO - Polonium Foundation

Dr. Anna Sobocińska is a Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) at the Polonium Foundation, Polish diaspora organisation with +10 years of history. Anna drives strategic growth, international partnerships, and the Foundation's "brain circulation" mission as Polonium Mentoring Coordinator. With a PhD in medical and health sciences, Anna brings a unique blend of scientific background and NGO leadership to the panel, bridging the gap between researcher development and global network building via community driven, grassroots initiatives.



Anna Taraczközi

Board member responsible for International Affairs - DOSZ

Anna Taraczközi is a PhD candidate at Ludovika University of Public Service, where her research focuses on the competitiveness of the Central and Eastern European region, with particular attention to innovation, development policy, and the role of EU funding. She has long been engaged in science and innovation policy, including several years of experience in Hungarian ministerial cabinets and at the European Commission. She serves as the board member for international affairs of the Association of Hungarian PhD and DLA Candidates (DOSZ), representing the organisation in bodies such as the Hungarian Rectors' Conference, the Hungarian Accreditation Committee, and EURODOC (the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers).



Attila Csomos

Board member - DOSZ

Attila Csomos, PhD is a research chemist working on fluorescent probe development at BrainVisionCenter Ltd. and as an assistant lecturer at Eötvös Loránd University. He is a member of the presidential board of DOSZ and has been the president of ELTE DÖK during his PhD. He finished his PhD in 2026 and continues his scientific career.



Béla Fiser

Chapter chair & associate professor - MCAA Hungary Chapter & University of Miskolc

Béla Fiser is currently working at the Department of Physical Chemistry, University of Lodz (Poland) and at the Institute of Chemistry, University of Miskolc (Hungary). He is a member of the Marie Curie Alumni Association and chair of the Hungary Chapter. He received his first PhD in chemistry from the University of the Basque Country (Spain). He is a keen supporter of science communication and believes that science is for everyone.



Gábor Kismihók

TIB - Head of Lab Learning and Skill Analytics

Dr. Gábor Kismihók is the Head of the Learning and Skill Analytics Lab at TIB in Hannover, Germany. His research focuses on the intersection of AI, education, and the labour market, including the development of the AI-driven learning platform, eDoer. He is a prominent advocate for proper academic conditions for early-career researchers. He was the Chair of the Researcher Mental Health Observatory (ReMO) COST Action and was the lead author of both the MCAA/Eurodoc Declaration on Sustainable Researcher Careers and the Researcher Mental Health and Well-being Manifesto.



Gillian Golden

Senior Analyst and Project Manager - OECD

Gillian Golden is a senior analyst in the OECD's Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation and project manager of the Research and Innovation Careers Observatory, a joint OECD-EU initiative



Karl Kilbo Edlund

Secretariat coordinator - EURODOC

Before joining the EIT in 2017, Luke spent over ten years working on European Union (EU) affairs within the Civil Service of Malta, initially engaged at the EU Secretariat of the Office of the Prime Minister and subsequently posted to the Permanent Representation of Malta to the EU.



Karolina Eszter Kovács

Board member - Hungarian Young Academy

Karolina Eszter Kovács is a psychologist, associate professor at the Institute of Psychology at the University of Debrecen (UD), and board member of the Hungarian Young Academy. She earned her PhD in Educational Sciences in 2019 and completed her habilitation in Psychological Sciences in 2025 at the University of Debrecen. She is the founder and head of the Sport Persistence Research Group (UD). She is a member of the Hungarian Educational Research Association and the Hungarian Psychological Association. She has received several prestigious awards and scholarships, including the Academy Youth Award (2026) and the János Bolyai Research Scholarship (2023).



Kuba Orłowski

Polonium Foundation - Board Member, CBO

Kuba Orłowski is a computational neuroscientist and an enthusiastic advocate for researcher community building, currently based at University College Dublin researching deep brain stimulation. Kuba's own career path, spanning an Erasmus scholarship in the Netherlands, PhD programme in France and a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship in Ireland, has given him a profound appreciation for the challenges and rewards of being a mobile researcher. To help others navigate this journey, he joined the Polonium Foundation in 2022. Now serving on the Foundation Board, Kuba connects the Polish scientific diaspora while actively building connections with other international diaspora networks to foster broader, cross-border collaborations.



Luke Incorvaja

Innovation Officer - European Institute of Innovation and Technology

Luke is the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), Innovation Officer responsible for the implementation of its Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS), a key EIT instrument which aims at advancing the innovation performance of those countries in Europe, classified as moderate or modest innovators in the European Innovation Scoreboard.

Before joining the EIT in 2017, Luke spent over ten years working on European Union (EU) affairs within the Civil Service of Malta, initially engaged at the EU Secretariat of the Office of the Prime Minister and subsequently posted to the Permanent Representation of Malta to the EU.

Luke holds academic degrees in European Studies and International Relations.



Magali Weissgerber

General Board Member - EURODOC

After completing her PhD in France, Magali Weissgerber moved to Germany to work as a postdoctoral researcher at the German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research within the Horizon project wildE. Her main research topics are land-use changes and ecosystem restoration. She has been active in local, national, and European NGOs advocating for better living and working conditions for early career researchers since 2018. She is currently a General Board Member of Eurodoc and is particularly involved in topics related to research assessment, the mental health of early career researchers, artificial intelligence, and environmental sustainability.



Mostafa Moonir Shawrav

Executive Director - Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA)

Mostafa is a research innovation and policy expert with 15 years of experience across European academia, industry, and nonprofits, exemplifying "Triple i-mobility." As Executive Director of the MCAA, he leads policy, career development, and community building. He represents individual researchers and innovators at the ERA Structural Policy on Research Assessment and Knowledge Valorisation. He is a high-level expert for the EC's Foresight on Demand study on The Futures of Researchers' Careers, an MLE independent expert, and former Chair of the EU Science Diplomacy Alliance.



Nicola Dengo

President - EURODOC

Nicola Dengo is a Junior Assistant Professor at the University of Padova in Italy and the President of Eurodoc – the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers. His representative work focuses on research careers: he is Co-Chair of the COST Cross-Cutting Activity on Career Development for Young Researchers and a member of Structural Policy for Sustainable Research Careers of the Forum of the European Research Area..



Norbert Bencze

Secretary - EURODOC

Norbert Bencze is the Secretary at European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc) and a Presidential Commissioner responsible for the Ambassador System at the Association of Hungarian PhD and DLA Candidates (DOSZ). He completed his PhD in Applied Linguistics focused on educational development. Besides policy making processes, he participates in academic programme assessment as evaluation specialist of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee. He is committed to the development of international communities and to equitable opportunities in academia.



Pil Maria Saugmann

Advisory board member - EURODOC

Pil Maria Saugmann is an advisory board member of the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc). She holds a PhD in theoretical physics from Stockholm University. Her current research centers on the role of higher education in society as well as research ethics and integrity in the light of digitalization. She represents Eurodoc in the Council of Europe's conference of International NGOs and in the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU). She is a member of the Bureau of CDEDU as a representative of the academic community. She represents researchers towards the European Union in the ERA Forum. She contributes to Eurodoc's policy and advocacy work on a wide array of topics including academic freedom.



Rawand Ben Brahim

Hungarian NA Delegate - EURODOC

Rawand Ben Brahim is a researcher at Europe Strategy Research Institute at Ludovika University of Public Service, Budapest, Hungary, where her work focuses on the Mediterranean region and policy, EU strategic priorities, and European cooperation frameworks. Having completed her doctoral studies in International Relations and Security Studies from Corvinus University of Budapest, her research interests centre on peacebuilding, human security, and humanitarian intervention, with a regional focus on Africa and the Middle East. Between 2022 and 2025, she chaired the International Committee of the Association of Hungarian PhD and DLA Candidates (DOSZ) and since 2022, she has been serving as one of the Hungarian delegate to the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (EURODOC). Rawand's experience spans international project writing, management, and facilitation, particularly within European cooperation initiatives.



Thomas Sturm

ICREA Research Professor - ICREA & Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Thomas Sturm is ICREA Research Professor in philosophy at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and member of the Academia Europea. He works on Immanuel Kant, on theories of rationality and their applications in politics and education, and on science studies. With the European Citizen Action Service (ECAS) in Brussels, he advises the team of the EU Commissioner for Research on the 5th Freedom. Selected publications: "How Reason Almost Lost Its Mind: The Strange Career of Cold War Rationality (Chicago UP, with P. Erickson et al. 2013) and "Nationalism and populism: Emotions, reason, and the crisis in contemporary democracy" (ed., Routledge, 2026), and "The Fifth EU Freedom: Why and how to develop the "Freedom of Knowledge" (European Review, 2025).

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