

Eurodoc calls for immediate solutions to allow Hungarian doctoral candidates and early career researchers to participate in Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe programmes

Over the last few years, significant structural adjustments have been implemented in the administrative framework of Higher Education Institutions in Hungary. With only six exceptions, all Hungarian universities are now governed by public interest trusts.

The European Commission has stated that these changes shed doubt on the institutional autonomy of the universities. Thus, the Council of the European Union decided that such public interest trusts cannot have the status of contracting authorities and will therefore in many instances no longer be eligible to receive EU funds and to participate in EU programs such as Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe programs. Without the ability to participate in such programs, however, many of the Higher Education Institutions in Hungary will not be able to fund mobility and scientific collaboration programmes via Erasmus+ or Horizon Europe grants.

Programs like Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe are key for furthering the skills and competencies of students, teachers, and researchers in the Higher Education sector. They are designed to strengthen international collaborations. The opportunity to participate in such programs is paramount, particularly for doctoral candidates and early career researchers, as they allow them to gain international experience. The programs enable the individual doctoral candidate or early career researcher to strengthen their international network, experience another research environment, and be exposed to other research methodologies. Participation in such programmes enriches the scientific knowledge and cultural horizon of the doctoral candidates and early career researchers and thus contributes to a broader cultural as well as scientific perspective, which lies in the core of European values.

Exclusion from these programmes limits access to shared values and opportunities and the future development of young researchers. The measures taken are thus actively working against ideals of European integration.

The European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc) urges the Government of Hungary to readjust its decision such that the universities' institutional autonomy is guaranteed. At the same time, Eurodoc calls on the European Union to facilitate this readjustment and to continue to support the participation of doctoral candidates and early career researchers in such key programs as Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe.

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Eurodoc, the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers, is a grassroots federation of 25 national associations of early career researchers (ECRs) from 23 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.

