

# Eurodoc Annual Conference 2024

June 4 & 5 in Ljubljana

**Towards a United European Research Area:  
The Ljubljana Process and Beyond**

What has the EU's vision of a  
European research area meant for early  
career researchers across Europe?



UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI  
University of Ljubljana



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA  
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION,  
SCIENCE AND INNOVATION



Centralna tehniška knjižnica  
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United Nations  
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Library Information Systems and  
Current Research Information Systems  
Regionalni center za knjižnične  
informatijske sisteme in informacijske  
sisteme o raziskovalni dejavnosti



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## Eurodoc Conference 2024

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Almost a quarter of a century ago, the EU put forward the vision of a united European research area, a vision that was reinvigorated in 2018 with the new ERA policy programme. With many achievements, the efforts of the past decade however seem to have failed to significantly close the gap between the EU-13 and the EU-14. Taking note of the developments in our academic systems over the past 20 years, this year's annual conference will shed light on the still existing imbalances within the EU, such as uneven brain circulation, and discuss possible leverage points for the work ahead to make the vision a full reality across Europe.

What has the EU's vision of a European research area meant for early career researchers across Europe? This conference brings together researchers and European policy makers to discuss sustainable research careers, the Widening Program, brain circulation and much more.

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The Eurodoc conference is an annual conference focusing on the conditions of early career researchers (ECRs). It is organised in collaboration with Eurodoc and one or more of Eurodoc's member organisations.

The 2024 two-day conference will be held on June 4th and 5th at the Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

"The Eurodoc Conference 2024 – Towards a United European Research Area: The Ljubljana process and beyond" is organised by Eurodoc and the Young Academy of Slovenia (Mlada akademija), with support of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of Slovenia, the University of Ljubljana, the Central Technical Library (CTK), and by the Institute of Information Science (IZUM).

The conference takes note of the developments in our academic systems over the past 20 years and provides the framework to address further existing imbalances. This includes an uneven brain circulation within the EU, but goes far beyond that in the existing disparities between member states. As the efforts of the past decade do not seem to significantly close this gap between the EU-13 and the EU-14, the topic is very timely and relevant.

The conference will consist of a mix of panel sessions, short talks and keynote speakers. In conjunction with the event, Eurodoc will organise a special session on the state of Ukrainian academia.

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## About the Organisers

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The European Council of Doctoral  
Candidates and Junior Researchers

Eurodoc, the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers, is a grassroots federation of 24 national associations of early career researchers (ECRs) from 22 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.



The Young Academy of Slovenia (Društvo Mlada akademija, MA), formerly the Society of Young Researchers of Slovenia (Društvo Mladih raziskovalcev Slovenije, DMRS) was established in 1995. It is a non-profit, voluntary association of doctoral students and early career researchers. The main aims of the association are encouraging quality in Slovenian higher education, striving for a higher quality of postgraduate studies, promoting and improving conditions for Slovenian science and research, improving the work conditions of young researchers, popularising basic and applicative research and innovation activities, and, of course, bringing together our members. We strive for a generationally responsible research and higher education policy in Slovenia, and for meritocratic criteria of work, rewards, and promotion in all areas of higher education and research activities.

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## About the Supporting institutions and sponsors

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**UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI**  
**University of Ljubljana**

The University of Ljubljana is the oldest and largest higher education and scientific research institution in Slovenia, founded in 1919. Today, it is attended by around 40,000 students and employs more than 6,000 teachers, researchers, assistants, and professional and administrative staff at 23 faculties and three art academies. The main building, the academies and many faculties are located in the city centre. The newer university buildings are located on the outskirts of Ljubljana, giving the university and its students an old-world feel in the city.



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA  
**MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION,  
SCIENCE AND INNOVATION**

The Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation focuses on the quality development of higher education, the transfer of knowledge into practice for the development of society as a whole, and the creation of a stimulating environment for research and innovation. Our goal is for Slovenia to become a country of knowledge, science and innovation and to be recognised as such around the world.



Centralna tehniška knjižnica  
Univerze v Ljubljani

The Central Technical Library (CTK) at the University of Ljubljana is an academic library that provides students and staff of the University of Ljubljana with informational and library services from fields of technological and natural sciences. We provide these services also to students and staff of other academic institutions as well as to the members of other organizations and companies. Our services are based on professionalism, quality, user friendliness and modern technology. In cooperation with other libraries and information systems, our library provides our users access to information and materials from all the world.



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
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informatijske sisteme in informatijske  
sisteme o raziskovalni dejavnosti



The Institute of Information Science is a public institution established by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia as an information infrastructural service for Slovenian science, culture and education. The activities of IZUM are mainly engaged in the development and operation of the COBISS system and services, which represents the core of the library information system in Slovenia and of library information systems in some other countries linked in the COBISS.net network.

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## Organising Committee

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**eurodoc**

The European Council of Doctoral  
Candidates and Junior Researchers



**MLADA  
AKADEMIJA**

**Aleksandra Lewandowska**

**Gledson Emidio**

**Hannah Schoch**

**Pil Maria Saugmann**

**Sebastian Dahle**

**Ana Slavec**

**Jure Mravlje**

**Majda Pavlin**

**Matja Zalar**

**Maya Petek**

**Neja Bizjak**

**Tinca Lukan**

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## Conference Venue

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The Eurodoc conference will be held at the Faculty of Law, nestled within the vibrant capital city of Slovenia, Ljubljana. The faculty is accessible via bus routes and bicycles and is a mere 10-minute walk from the main Railway and Bus Station, which offers regular bus connections to Jože Pučnik Airport. Situated beneath the iconic Ljubljana Castle and at the end of the renowned Dragon Bridge, attendees will be immersed in rich history and a dynamic atmosphere.

Ljubljana, hailed as a green city and a former recipient of the European Green Capital award, boasts an array of captivating attractions, from Ljubljana Castle to the iconic Triple Bridge and the historic Preseren Square, named after Slovenia's esteemed poet. Tivoli Park, the city's expansive green lung, offers a serene retreat, while the alternative cultural hub of Metelkova City provides insights into vivid street art and diverse nightlife.



**Conference venue:** Faculty of Law, located in front of the Dragon Bridge.

# Conference Programme

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**Tuesday, 4 June** Day 1

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12:00-13:00 Registration

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13:00-13:05 Opening  
**Hannah Schoch** Eurodoc

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13:05-13:30 Welcoming speech  
**Gregor Majdič** Rector, University of Ljubljana

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13:30-13:45 Greetings from the organisers  
**Sebastian Dahle** Eurodoc  
**Jure Mravlje** Young Academy of Slovenia

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13:45-15:15 Panel **Brain Circulation**  
**Moderator: Maya Petek** Young Academy of Slovenia  
**Amanda Crowfoot** European University Association  
**Celine Peroni** European Commission  
**Boštjan Markoli** University of Ljubljana  
**Norbert Bencze** DOSZ

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15:15-15:30 Coffee Break

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**15:30-17:00**    **Panel Research Excellence**

**Moderator: Hannah Schoch** Eurodoc  
**Maria Leptin** European Research Council  
**Lidia Borrell-Damian** Science Europe  
**Miro Pušnik** Central Technical Library  
**Jure Mravlje** Young Academy of Slovenia  
**Pil Maria Saugmann** Eurodoc

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**17:00-17:30**    **Plenary**

**Jure Gasparič**  
Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of Slovenia

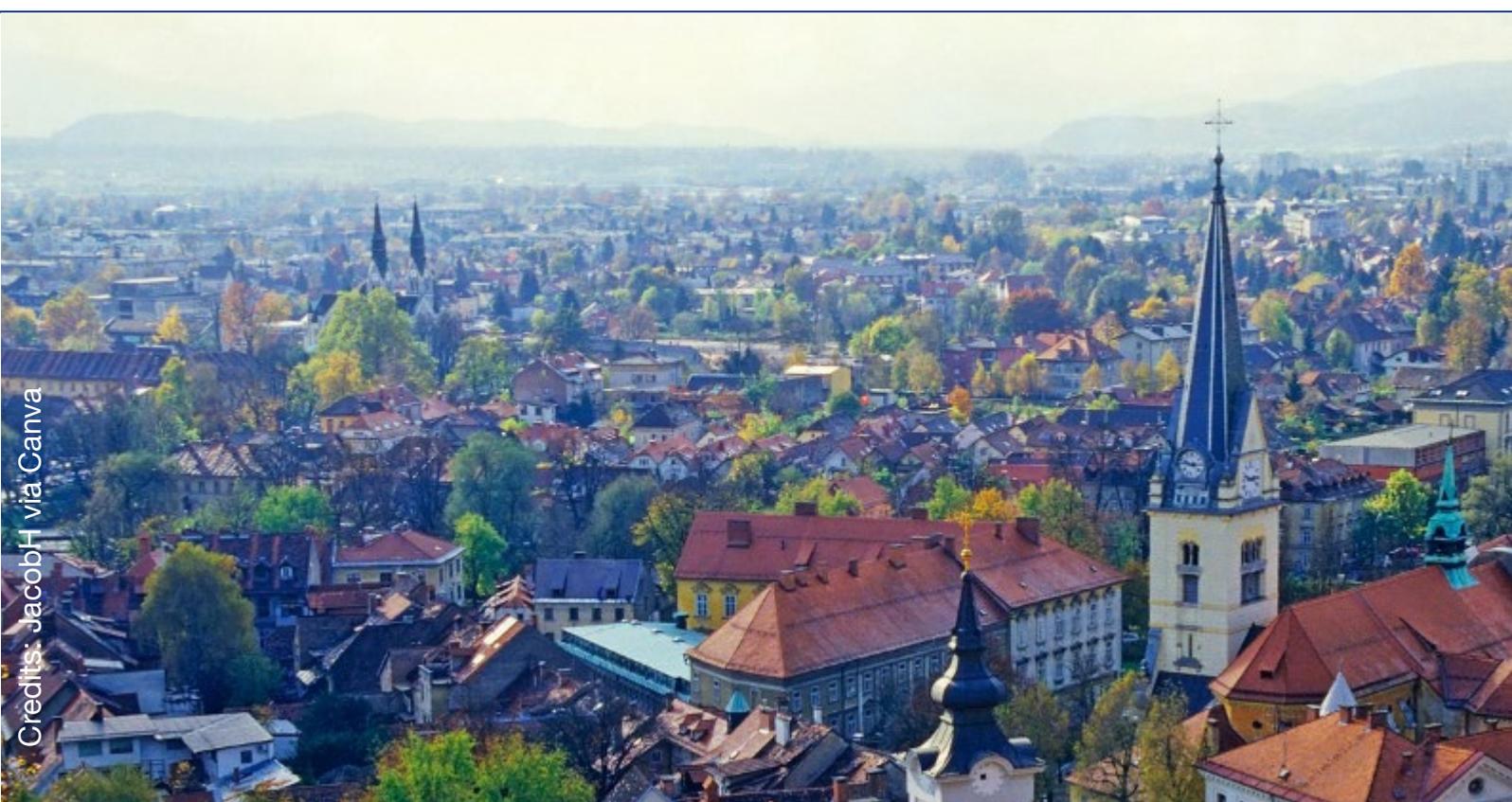
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**17:30-17:45**    **Closure Day 1**

**Sebastian Dahle** Eurodoc  
**Hannah Schoch** Eurodoc

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**19:00**            **Conference Dinner**



# Conference Programme

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Wednesday, 5 June

Day 2

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08:30-09:15 Registration and coffee

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09:15-09:30 Opening **Day 2**

**Sebastian Dahle** Eurodoc

**Hannah Schoch** Eurodoc

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09:30-10:10 Plenary **The QUALITY of research work in Europe: WHY and HOW we need to better promote young researchers careers in Europe?**

**Manuel Heitor** Instituto Superior Tecnico

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10:10-10:30 Coffee break

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10:30-12:00 Panel **The Widening Programme**

**Moderator: Nicola Dengo** Eurodoc

**Manuel Heitor** Instituto Superior Tecnico

**Luisa Henriques** Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, FCT

**Mike Bunard** University of Primorska / Innorenew CoE

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12:00-13:30 Lunch

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13:30-13:50 Short Talks **NA Inputs**

**Joanna Smolarczyk** Polish National Association

**Filippo Andrei** Associazione Dottorandi e Dottori di Ricerca in Italia

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**13:50-15:20**    **Panel Sustainable Research Careers**

**Moderator: Gledson Emidio** Eurodoc

**Martin Andler** Initiative for Science in Europe

**Dean Korošak** University of Maribor

**Nicola Dengo** Eurodoc

**Ana Slavec** University of Primorska & Mlada Akademija

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**15:20-15:40**    **Coffee break**

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**15:40-16:10**    **Plenary**

**Klemen Miklavič**

Deputy director, Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency

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**16:10-16:30**    **Short Talks NA Inputs**

**Topias Tolonen-Weckström** Swedish National Union of Students

**Rawand Ben Brahim** DOSZ

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**16:30-17:30**    **Panel Academia in Ukraine**

**Moderator: Sebastian Dahle** Eurodoc

**Translator: Larysa Makaruk** Young Scientists Council

**Signe Ratso** European Commission

**Denys Kurbatov** Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

**Alisa Sukhikh** Young Scientists Council

**Oleksandr Prokhorchuk** Young Scientists Council

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**17:30-18:00**    **Conference Closure**

**Sebastian Dahle** Eurodoc

**Hannah Schoch** Eurodoc

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## PLENARY SPEAKERS

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### **Jure Gašparič**

State secretary, Ministry for Higher Education, Science and Innovation of Slovenia

Jure Gašparič studied history at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, where he obtained his PhD in 2006. He is a research counsellor at the Institute for Contemporary History in Ljubljana and editor of the main Slovenian scientific journal in the field of contemporary history, *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* (Contributions to Contemporary History), and a member of several editorial boards. He regularly participates at international scientific meetings and publishes in national and international scientific publications. He was Director of the Institute and Head of the Scientific Research Division from 2019 to 2020 and State Secretary for Science and Higher Education at the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport from 2020 to 2021. He was appointed in 2023 as the State Secretary at the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation.



### **Gregor Majdič**

Rector, University of Ljubljana

Prof. Dr. Gregor Majdič is Full Professor of Physiology at the Veterinary Faculty, University of Ljubljana, and Full Professor of Physiology at the Faculty of Medicine in Maribor. He graduated from the Veterinary Faculty at the University of Ljubljana in 1992, where he also obtained his master's degree in 1994. He received his PhD from the School of Medicine at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland in 1996. He then worked abroad for another three years as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Texas, Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, Texas, USA. He was the vice-dean of the Veterinary Faculty at the University of Ljubljana from 2013 to 2021, and has been leading his research group since 2002.

He was elected full visiting professor at the University of Zagreb and has given guest lectures at numerous universities around the world, including the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), University of California San Francisco (UCSF), Yunnan University in China, and Kyoto University in Japan. He is very active in communicating science to the public, has written more than 90 popular science articles and regularly participates in radio and television programmes on science. For this work he received the Delo newspaper award for the best popular science article and the Prometheus Award of the Slovenian Science Foundation for merits in the promotion of science. In 2017, RTV Slovenia made a documentary about his research in the series *My View of Science*.

He was elected the Rector of the University of Ljubljana, for a period from 1st October 2021 to 30th September 2025.



**Klemen Miklavič**

Deputy director, Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency

Klemen Miklavič is Deputy Director of the Slovenian Research And Innovation Agency. He obtained both his university diploma, followed by a research degree in social sciences, at the University of Ljubljana. His career has been dedicated to the reforms and modernisation of higher and vocational education, quality assurance, qualifications, university governance, equity and access to education and the relation between higher education and the world of work. His curriculum also includes academic and professional research experience, mainly at the University of Ljubljana, the University of Oslo (Norway) and the University of Deusto (Spain). For one mandate he also served as Mayor of Nova Gorica, a border town that in 2020 won the assignation of the European capital of culture 2025 together with the Italian town of Gorizia.



**Manuel Heitor**

Full Professor, Instituto Superior Técnico

Manuel Heitor is a professor at Instituto Superior Técnico, the engineering school at the University of Lisbon, and the current Chair of the Commission Expert Group of the Interim Evaluation of Horizon Europe. He served as Minister for Science, Technology and Higher Education for the Government of Portugal in 2015-2022 and as Secretary of State from 2005 to 2011. Manuel Heitor served as the deputy-president of IST from 1993-1998. Since 1995, he has been a research fellow at the University of Texas at Austin's IC2 Institute. He was a founding member of the S&T Council of the International Risk Governance Council, IRGC and of Globelics: the Global Network for the Economics of Learning, Innovation, and Competence-building Systems. He founded in 1998 the IST's Center for Innovation, Technology and Policy Research, IN+, and coordinated the IST's doctoral programs in "Engineering and Public Policy" and in "Engineering Design and Advanced Manufacturing". He was a visiting scholar at Harvard University in 2011/12 and in 2023 and a visiting professor at New York University in 2022/23. Manuel Heitor holds a Ph.D. from Imperial College London in combustion research (1985) and did post-doctoral training at the University of California, San Diego. He has published over 130 scientific articles and supervised over 40 post-grad students. In 2022 he received the Honorary Doctor in Science and Technology from Carnegie Mellon University and was nominated "IST distinguished Professor". He is a Honorary Member of the European Academy of Cancer Sciences, a Corresponding Member of the Royal Academy of Engineering, Spain, and a Foreign Member of Serbian Academy of Engineering.

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## SHORT TALKS - SPEAKERS

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### Aleksandra Lewandowska

Doctoral Candidate, Eurodoc Delegate from Poland

General Board Member of the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers and representative of Eurodoc in the Bologna Follow-Up Group (EHEA); International Cooperation Representative of the Polish National Association of Doctoral Candidates where previously served as a Board Member (2022); Research Assistant, Doctoral Candidate and Member of the Legal Clinic at University of Bialystok, where previously served as an Ombudsperson for PhD Candidates' Rights. Her research is focused on the neuropsychological factors modulating empathy and antisocial behavior.



### Joana Smolarczyk

Doctoral Candidate, Eurodoc Delegate from Poland

Joana Smolarczyk is a representative of the Polish National Association of PhD Candidates on the Council of the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange. Vice-President of the Doctoral Forum of Medical Universities. Vice-president of the Doctoral Forum of Medical Universities in Poland. PhD Candidate at the Doctoral School of the Medical University of Silesia in Katowice. Doctor undergoing medical specialty training in psychiatry. Participant of many international projects and internships. Winner of Fellowship Award for the 119th Annual Meeting of the Japanese Society of Psychiatry and Neurology 2023.



### Filippo Andrei

Research fellow, Eurodoc delegate from Italy

Filippo Andrei obtained his PhD in Sociology and Social Research at the University of Trento in March 2024 with a thesis entitled "Unveiling the Shadows: A Cognitive Approach to Understanding Social Influence Strategies for Establishing Social Order in Darknet Markets." His research focuses on the cognitive mechanisms that create and hinder cognitive biases in the digital world. He also investigates how social and cognitive structures influence decision-making. Since February 2021, he has been active in ADI, where he was the coordinator of the Trento branch from 2021 to 2022, and since October 2022, he has been part of the national board and the ADI delegate in Eurodoc.



**Rawand Ben Brahim**

Doctoral Candidate, Eurodoc Delegate from Hungary

Rawand Ben Brahim is a dedicated advocate for human rights, currently pursuing a Ph.D. in International Relations and Security Studies at Corvinus University of Budapest, focusing on the rebuilding process in post-conflict zones. She is one of only eight members of the Expert Group on Youth Rights, passionately advocating for a UN Convention on the Rights of Young People. Additionally, she serves as the human rights advisor to the Mediterranean Youth Foundation and is an Engso Youth Young Delegate of social inclusion, working across European and MENA region countries to promote human rights. She also has extensive experience writing, managing, and facilitating Erasmus+ and Council of Europe projects. In the Association of Hungarian PhD and DLA Candidates (Doktoranduszok Országos Szövetsége, DOSZ) formerly serving as the DOSZ ambassador of Tunisia (2021-2022), Rawand is now the chair of the DOSZ International Committee for a second term, facilitating scientific cooperation and moderating DOSZ events.



**Topias Tolonen-Weckström**

Doctoral Candidate, Eurodoc delegate from Sweden

Topias Tolonen-Weckström is a doctoral candidate in Mathematics at Uppsala University, Sweden. His research interests include stochastic control, optimal stopping time problems, game theory, and stochastic differential equations in general. He represents doctoral candidates in Sweden at national level and is currently the chairperson of the Doctoral Committee in SFS, SFS-DK. He has previously served as chairperson for the Doctoral Board at Uppsala University, and prior to his doctoral studies he was employed as a policy advisor for the Student Union of the University of Helsinki.

# PANEL DISCUSSION

## Brain Circulation

Tuesday, 4 June 2024

13:45-15:15 CEST

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## Description

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Brain circulation across Europe shows tremendous imbalances in-between member states, which manifests in a net brain drain from EU-13 countries and a net brain gain towards EU-14 countries. However, the picture is more nuanced. For example, the immigration numbers for Slovenia exceed the emigration by ca. 70%, which equals close to 1% population growth by migration alone every year<sup>1</sup>. However, there is a net loss of the most highly educated cohorts nonetheless, with significant variations across fields and other characteristics. A deeper analysis and more nuanced discussion is thus required on a country-by-country basis, to ensure effective mitigation measures to achieve more balanced migration patterns. Based on previous research insights, the policy focus in Slovenia as a particular case example has evolved from mitigating the consequences of brain drain<sup>2</sup> to the development of strategies for an effective mobility for scientific excellence<sup>3</sup>. Correspondingly, high-level measures need to be aligned in a more nuanced fashion to better balance intra-European migration streams, in order to counteract Mathew effects that aggravate existing disparities between member states. The panel aims to discuss insights on origins of existing disparities, obstacles to yield a more balanced brain circulation, and best-practice examples of measures achieving an enhanced attraction and retention of research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents into Widening countries.

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<sup>1</sup> Latest data for 2022 according to SURS: <https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/Field/Index/98>

<sup>2</sup> See the policy recommendation from 2022: Mitigating the consequences of brain drain and strengthening the mechanism of brain circulation: <https://isim.zrc-sazu.si/en/programi-in-projekti/mitigating-the-consequences-of-brain-drain-and-strengthening-the-mechanism-of>

<sup>3</sup> See the ongoing project “Effective mobility for scientific excellence in Europe” <https://isim.zrc-sazu.si/en/programi-in-projekti/effective-mobility-for-scientific-excellence-in-the-european-research-area-the>

## **SPEAKERS**

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### **Amanda Crowfoot**

Secretary General, European University Association

Amanda Crowfoot has been Secretary General of the European University Association – the collective voice of Europe’s universities, with around 900 members – since January 2020. She is responsible for implementing the Association’s strategic plan, acting as an ambassador for its members, and leading a Secretariat of over 40 staff members.

Amanda previously served as Director of Science Europe, the association representing major public research funding and performing organisations in Europe. As Science Europe’s first Director, she was responsible for establishing its office in Brussels in 2012, as well as developing and implementing its policy agenda. From 2001 to 2012, Amanda worked at the UK Research Office – the Brussels office of the UK research councils – first as a European Advisor and then as Director of the Office. In these roles she worked closely with universities in the UK and beyond, assisting them in accessing EU funding and defining their strategies for European engagement. With a background in linguistics, Amanda taught and researched at several UK universities, and was Projects Manager at the Centre for Research and Policy in Disability at Coventry University.



### **Boštjan Markoli**

Vice rector, University of Ljubljana

Prof. Dr. Boštjan Markoli is a full professor in the field of physical metallurgy at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Engineering. He is engaged in the characterization and development of new metallic materials. In the 1990s he perfected his skills by collaborating with the Technical University of Munich in the development of alloys for the Airbus 320 and the Audi A6. In 2010 he was a visiting researcher at NTNU in Trondheim, Norway, as a Norwegian Government Fellow, and as a Fulbright Fellow he worked at the University of California, Berkeley. Currently, he works on an EIT project for commercialization of novel quasicrystalline Al-alloys used in electro automobiles production. As a member of the board for metallic and non-metallic materials at the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry he is in close contact with valuable stakeholders for the HEI evolution. As Vice-Rector for internationalization and quality he was involved in preparation of new Eutopia More project together with other team members from across Europe. He publishes the results of his research in prestigious scientific and professional publications, regularly participates in international scientific meetings and is a member of international professional associations.



**Celine Peroni**

Directorate-General for Education and Culture, European Commission

Celine Peroni is Policy Officer at the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions unit at the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the European Commission. She joined the European Commission in 2013 and the Directorate-General for Education and Culture in 2015. She is currently responsible for the framework programmes evaluations, aspects related to talent circulation and widening, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Seal of Excellence, as well as cooperation with ASEAN, Korea and Japan.



**Norbert Bencze**

Association of Hungarian PhD and DLA Candidates

Norbert Bencze, PhD, is a presidential commissioner responsible for the Ambassador System at the Association of Hungarian PhD and DLA Candidates (Doktoranduszok Országos Szövetsége, DOSZ). Norbert completed his PhD in Applied Linguistics focused on educational development, currently lives in the Netherlands. Under his coordination, a new presentational system for international PhD candidates in Hungary, the DOSZ Ambassador System was created, which in the academic year 2024/2025 will have representatives from 41 countries, working in five working groups, with many projects to promote integration and scientific cooperation. Besides the Ambassador projects, he is responsible for other international projects at DOSZ, among others for building the networks of the Hungarian research diaspora in Europe. As a doctoral student council president, the vice-president of DOSZ and as an education expert took part in drafting, implementing, and reviewing curriculum, educational and institutional policies and strategies on the different levels of the university and in inter-university, national and international projects. As an evaluator of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee, he participated in the accreditation of several universities and doctoral schools in Hungary, as well as in academic quality assurance projects coordinated by the Committee.

## **MODERATOR**

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### **Maya Petek**

Research associate, University of Maribor, Slovenia  
Vice president, Young Academy of Slovenia

Maya Petek, PhD, started her undergraduate studies in Chemistry in the United Kingdom with support by Ad Futura studentship and stayed on to complete her PhD in Biochemistry at the University of Cambridge. In 2021, she moved to the University of Maribor as a postdoctoral researcher interested in mass spectrometry.

In Young Academy of Slovenia, Maya is interested in improving career development and sustainability in academia for all participants.

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# PANEL DISCUSSION

## Research Excellence

Tuesday, 4 June 2024

15:30-17:00 CEST

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## Description

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The term Research Excellence appears to be ubiquitous in academia. It is identified as a main assessment point for research proposals (e.g. as one of three criteria in Horizon Europe proposals<sup>1</sup>) and as an intrinsic value of scientific research. Excellence is also a major goal post researchers strive to achieve, albeit one that is often assessed in terms of narrow metrics of performance and scientific outputs, such as by journal impact factor or quartile per publication). To a large extent, contenders in discussions on Research Excellence seem to fall into two categories: those who understand excellence narrowly as an extended quality term and those who understand excellence as multidimensional, integrating many different aspects of research<sup>2</sup>. One of the frameworks for excellence most often referred to is the UK's, which has begun to seemingly define excellence as a matter of quality: "The [Research Excellence Framework] REF is the system for assessing the quality of research in HEIs in the UK,"<sup>3</sup> but goes on to define its main criteria as research staff numbers, research outputs, research impacts, research environment, the number of doctoral degrees awarded, and research income, while also factoring in Equality, Diversity, and Interdisciplinarity. Nonetheless, there appears to be increased consensus among research communities that for better science and academic work, we should part from the term's stem core definition of "surpass[ing] in accomplishment or achievement"<sup>4</sup>. This shift acknowledges that for much of the work of researchers in higher education institutions – which often includes supervision, teaching, leadership skills, public outreach – we crucially need a strong foundation of good and highly capable personnel. Such a shift would equally acknowledge that while excellence is commonly made a necessary criterion for all researchers, the majority of researchers cannot excel beyond their cohorts average.

The complexity of excellence is well reflected in the debate on the fragmentation of the European Research Area. As Ewa Kocinska-Lange, director of the Brussels office of Poland's National Centre for Research and Development, notes in a recent statement:<sup>5</sup> "This is not a discussion about a lack of excellence [...] We just think that excellence should be uncovered across all of Europe." This also exemplifies how the definition of excellence or the selection of aspects and criteria in the evaluation of excellence impacts outcomes. In the worst case, it induces imbalances and stimulates Mathew Effects for some, while it may turn unconscious biases into self-fulfilling prophecies for others. It is thus important to explicitly turn plurality and diversity into an intrinsic value in the understanding and implementation of research excellence. This takes effort and cannot be achieved by taking easy shortcuts<sup>6</sup>. However, it presents the opportunity to ascend from fragmentation into a prosperous diversity that truly fosters highest scientific standards for the joint advancement of knowledge and the benefit of society without inducing or exacerbating imbalances with its correlated socio-economic losses.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/experts/standard-briefing-slides-for-experts\\_he\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/experts/standard-briefing-slides-for-experts_he_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Summary Report: Workshop on Research Excellence (2023) ([link](#))

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/excel>

<sup>4</sup> [https://2021.ref.ac.uk/media/1450/ref-2019\\_02-panel-criteria-and-working-methods.pdf](https://2021.ref.ac.uk/media/1450/ref-2019_02-panel-criteria-and-working-methods.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://sciencebusiness.net/news/research-and-innovation-gap/stakeholders-hit-out-danish-government-suggestion-widening>

<sup>6</sup> c.f. <https://erc.europa.eu/news-events/news/research-excellence-quo-vadis>

## **SPEAKERS**

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### **Maria Leptin**

President, European Research Council

Prof. Maria Leptin has been the President of the ERC since 2021 and chairs the ERC's governing body, the ERC Scientific Council. She is a biologist best known for her work on the mechanisms that allow a developing body to take on its correct shape. After her studies in mathematics and biology at the University of Bonn and the University of Heidelberg, Germany, Maria Leptin carried out her PhD research at the Basel Institute for Immunology, Switzerland. She then moved to the Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge, UK, became a group leader at the Max Planck Institute for Developmental Biology in Tübingen, and professor at the Institute of Genetics, University of Cologne. She spent extended research periods and sabbaticals at the University of California, USA, the École Normale Supérieure, Paris, and at the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, Hinxton, UK. Before her appointment as ERC President, Maria Leptin was the Director of the European Molecular Biology Organisation (EMBO) in Heidelberg, and a research group leader at the European Molecular Biology Laboratory. She is an elected member of EMBO, the Academia Europaea and the German National Academy of Sciences (Leopoldina). She is an Honorary Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences, a Foreign Member of the Royal Society and an international member of the US National Academy of Sciences.



### **Lidia Borrell-Damian**

Secretary General, Science Europe

Lidia Borrell-Damián is Secretary General of Science Europe, the association representing national public organisations that fund and perform research in Europe. She holds overall responsibility for the organisation's strategic development and implementation of action plans. Her areas of experience cover a wide range of R&I priorities, namely EU Framework Programme; European Research Area; research infrastructures; research ethics and integrity; research assessment processes; university-business cooperation; regional innovation; gender and diversity; Open Science; doctoral education; energy science policy. She holds a Doctorate in Chemistry (Chemical Engineering Specialty; Solar Energy) from the University of Barcelona (1995). She worked at the European University Association (EUA) during 2006-2019, serving the last five years as the Director for R&I. She was Director of Research at Universitat Pompeu Fabra, (Barcelona, Spain, 2003-2005). Formerly, she was a Visiting Scholar at the University of Western Ontario (London, Canada, 1999-2001) and at North Carolina State University (Raleigh, USA, 1997-1998). She was an Assistant Professor at the University of Barcelona from 1990-1998.



**Miro Pušnik**

Director, Central Technical Library

Miro Pušnik became Director of the Central Technical Library at the University of Ljubljana in 2009. He holds BA in Zootechnics and MSc on Scientific and Technical Informatics from the University of Ljubljana. Before his current position, he was Director's Adviser on digital libraries and electronic resources.

He led a project on setting up and operating the Digital Library of the University of Ljubljana. CTK is the central institution for consortia management and e-content acquisition in Slovenia. Their consortia are the largest in Slovenia, and probably one of the largest also in the region.

CTK is active in providing research infrastructure and services based on the principles of open science. Within the framework of the Action Plan for Open Science of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, CTK is part of the Support Centre for Open Science and is a promoter of the Citizen Science Network and Observatory in Slovenia. It is also leading the SPOZNAJ project, which aims to adapt public research organisations in Slovenia to operate according to the principles of open science.

Miro is the president of the National Council for Libraries of the Republic of Slovenia. In the past, he was a member of the COAlition S Leaders Group and a member of the EOSC Rules of Participation Working Group.



**Jure Mravlje**

Teaching Assistant, Biotechnical Faculty, University of Ljubljana  
President, Young Academy of Slovenia

Dr. Jure Mravlje is a Teaching Assistant at the Department of Biology, Biotechnical Faculty, University of Ljubljana. He graduated from Biology, completed two masters degrees (in Molecular and Functional Biology and as a Professor of Biology) and obtained his PhD at the Biotechnical Faculty, University of Ljubljana. He mainly teaches courses in Plant Biology and Plant-Microbe Interactions, and is also very active in the promotion and popularisation of science, especially among primary and secondary school students.



**Pil Maria Saugmann**

Eurodoc

Pil Maria Saugman holds a PhD in theoretical physics from Stockholm University. She is currently the vice president of Eurodoc. She represents Eurodoc towards the Council of Europe and was in March elected to the bureau of CD-EDU as one of two representatives of the European academic community. She is a co-chair of the CoARA working group on responsible use of artificial intelligence in research assessment (WG-ERIP).

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**MODERATOR**

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**Hannah Schoch**

Eurodoc

Hannah Schoch is the Secretary of the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc) and has contributed to the Council's policy and advocacy work on a wide array of topics including academic freedom. Furthermore, she is co-president of Actionuni, the national midlevel academic staff association in Switzerland, and in that capacity has co-authored a number of political responses and policy inputs. She is completing her PhD in American Studies, with her research focusing on the intersection between aesthetics, culture, and democracy and works for the non-profit organisation Reatch! Research. Think. Change. in Switzerland as project manager for the Franxini Project and in that capacity facilitates interactions and knowledge exchange between science, politics, and society.

## PANEL DISCUSSION

### The Widening Programme

Wednesday, 5 June 2024

10:30-12:00 CEST

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## Description

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For the European Research Area, a major obstacle was identified early on already to be its fragmentation<sup>1</sup>, and the innovation gaps in the EU-13 countries<sup>2</sup>. This led to the creation of the Widening Programme and was discussed in 2008 in a green paper<sup>3</sup> following a public consultation as well as through a political partnership in 2008, termed the »Ljubljana Process«.<sup>4</sup> The Ljubljana Process set out to overcome the fragmentation and enhance the ERA through a common vision and effective governance of the European Research Area with the »ultimate aim of the Ljubljana Process is to establish “the fundamental role of ERA as a primary pillar for the Lisbon objectives and as an engine for driving the competitiveness of Europe”«. Recent studies indicate that the Widening Programme shows moderately promising results so far, as the Widening countries “edge up to the EU27 average”<sup>5</sup>. Overall however, and despite these promising results, the Widening programmes success remains limited, as ScienceEurope finds: “(...) though undoubtedly valuable, could not solve the challenge of asymmetric participation, including amongst the ‘widening countries’”<sup>6</sup>. Correspondingly, further actions to improve the Widening programme are called for by several organisations such as LERU<sup>7</sup>, and ISE<sup>8</sup>. Moreover, the European Court of Auditors finds that sustainable change and meaningful impact of the Widening programme strongly depends on national efforts and requires further adaptations in the overall policy agenda and discussion<sup>9</sup>. Despite particularly positive reports from some Widening countries that can serve as best practices<sup>10</sup>, there are very divergent calls from different EU member states, how to adapt and reform the Widening programme. While some are generally critical of the approach and call to move the Widening programme out from the Framework programme<sup>11</sup>, other member states suggest a stronger integration with a reframed focus<sup>12</sup>, or even recommend an increased funds for the Widening programme to boost its attractiveness<sup>13</sup>. The panel thus aims to touch on the different rationales, to take a look at best practice examples, and discuss how to build capacity with a revisited approach across different European funding sources in order to come towards an inclusive European Research Area.

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<sup>1</sup> EUR 22840 – The European Research Area: New Perspectives - Green Paper: 04.04.2007 ([link](#))

<sup>2</sup> Overcoming innovation gaps in the EU-13 Member States. <https://doi.org/10.2861/797728>

<sup>3</sup> EUR 23327 - Results of the Public Consultation on the Green Paper “The European Research Area: New Perspectives” <https://doi.org/10.2777/97114>

<sup>4</sup> Archived website by the European Commission, introducing the Ljubljana process ([link](#))

<sup>5</sup> Science|Business 2023 Here’s what the first two years of Horizon Europe look like in numbers ([link](#))

<sup>6</sup> Science Europe Response to the Public Consultation on Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe’ <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7664436>

<sup>7</sup> LERU key messages for the current and future European R&I Framework Programmes [https://www.leru.org/files/LERU\\_statement\\_EU-FP\\_consultation\\_2023-02.pdf](https://www.leru.org/files/LERU_statement_EU-FP_consultation_2023-02.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> ISE’s Main Recommendations for Horizon Europe and FP10 <https://initiative-se.eu/2024/01/16/ises-main-recommendations-for-horizon-europe-and-fp10/>

<sup>9</sup> ECA Special Report 15/2022: Measures to widen participation in Horizon 2020 were well designed but sustainable change will mostly depend on efforts by national authorities ([link](#))

<sup>10</sup> Portugal’s experience could inspire Widening countries in their strengthening research systems ([link](#))

<sup>11</sup> Science|Business Axe the European Institute of Innovation & Technology and move missions and Widening out of Horizon Europe successor, Danish government says ([link](#))

<sup>12</sup> Science|Business Stakeholders hit out at Danish government suggestion that Widening measures be moved out of Framework Programme 10 ([link](#))

<sup>13</sup> Helmholtz calls for more attractive Widening programme in Framework Programme 10 ([link](#))

## **SPEAKERS**

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### **Manuel Heitor**

Full Professor, Instituto Superior Técnico

Manuel Heitor is a professor at Instituto Superior Técnico, the engineering school at the University of Lisbon, and the current Chair of the Commission Expert Group of the Interim Evaluation of Horizon Europe. He served as Minister for Science, Technology and Higher Education for the Government of Portugal in 2015-2022 and as Secretary of State from 2005 to 2011.

Manuel Heitor served as the deputy-president of IST from 1993-1998. Since 1995, he has been a research fellow at the University of Texas at Austin's IC2 Institute. He was a founding member of the S&T Council of the International Risk Governance Council, IRGC and of Globelics: the Global Network for the Economics of Learning, Innovation, and Competence-building Systems. He founded in 1998 the IST's Center for Innovation, Technology and Policy Research, IN+, and coordinated the IST's doctoral programs in "Engineering and Public Policy" and in "Engineering Design and Advanced Manufacturing". He was a visiting scholar at Harvard University in 2011/12 and in 2023 and a visiting professor at New York University in 2022/23.

Manuel Heitor holds a Ph.D. from Imperial College London in combustion research (1985) and did post-doctoral training at the University of California, San Diego. He has published over 130 scientific articles and supervised over 40 post-grad students. In 2022 he received the Honorary Doctor in Science and Technology from Carnegie Mellon University and was nominated "IST distinguished Professor". He is a Honorary Member of the European Academy of Cancer Sciences, a Corresponding Member of the Royal Academy of Engineering, Spain, and a Foreign Member of Serbian Academy of Engineering.

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**Luisa Henriques**

Senior Policy Advisor, FCT Board

Lúisa Henriques holds a PhD in socioeconomics of innovation from Mines-ParisTech and in Economics from ISEG, University of Lisbon. She is a Senior Policy Analyst and Advisor to the FCT's Board. She is the co-sponsor of Action 4 on Attractive and Sustainable Research Careers from the ERA Policy Agenda (2022-2024), in the ERA FORUM, a high-level group of the European Commission.

She participated in Mutual Learning Exercises of the European Commission, Policy Support Facility of Horizon Europe, one in Foresight for R&I, and the other devoted to Research Careers. She is a member of the advisory board of the Secure project. Previously, she was a Counsellor and Coordinator for Research and Space at the Portuguese Permanent Representation to the EU (2015/2021) and Coordinator for Research and Space during the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU (2021). She was also the chair of the Research Working Party, Research Working Party and Atomic Questions, and Vice-Chair of the Space Working Party.

Luisa Henriques is an experienced R&D manager and has had managerial positions at FCT/JNICT, being responsible for funding national and structural programmes for R&D until 1999 and coordinating ERA-NETs and other transnational research schemes until 2008. She launched the Studies and Strategies Unit at FCT (2012-2015). She was co-coordinating the design of the national Smart Specialisation Strategy and was responsible for the SWOT Analysis of the Portuguese Research System.

She worked at the JRC – IPTS in Seville, European Commission, as a researcher and policy analyst working in the field of ERA and the EU Framework Programme, (2008-2012). She has authored and co-authored research articles in peer-reviewed journals and policy reports and participated in several research projects.

She has extensive experience in international cooperation participating in many groups at the European and OECD levels, namely, she was a delegate to OECD's CSTP and TIP (2012- 2015) and in the EU, like the ERA rationale high-level group of the EC (2008).



**Tanja Vertelj**

Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of Slovenia

Mag. Tanja Vertelj currently heads, under the authority of the Minister, the Science Division within the Directorate for Science and Innovation at the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation. The Science Division deals with systemic aspects of the formulation and implementation of scientific research and innovation policy, such as the preparation of legislation. Since 2020 she has also been a member of the Programme Committee and the national contact point for Widening Participation and Promoting Excellence. She has worked for many years in the field of planning and implementation of actions funded by the European Cohesion Policy, having held senior management positions for 13 years in different ministries, Ministry for public administration, Ministry for education, science, sport and culture and at the Ministry of education, science and sport. She has also been involved in the planning of measures financed by the Recovery and Resilience Plan. In the light of her experience, she also deals with synergies between different sources of funding in the field of science and research and is involved in the programming of the new EU 10th Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.



**Mike Bunard**

University of Primorska / InnoRenew CoE

Michael (Mike) Burnard, PhD is the Deputy Director of Strategic Development at the InnoRenew CoE – a private not-for-profit research institute based in Izola, dedicated to researching sustainable building solutions based on renewable materials and helping companies across the value chain implement them. Mike also leads the Health research department that focuses on providing positive health outcomes in buildings, rather than just limiting harm. He is an Associate Professor at the University of Primorska where he teaches in the Sustainable Built Environments and Data Science Master’s Degree programmes as well as the Renewable Materials for Healthy Built Environments PhD programme. Mike is also a Professor of Practice in Sustainable Wood Construction and Healthy Living Environments at the University of Helsinki, where he supports related research topics, network development, and research strategy. Mike enjoys linking interdisciplinary teams in developing and improving new solutions for sustainable buildings that support the health and wellbeing of occupants.



**Sebastian Dahle**

Assist. Prof., University of Ljubljana  
President, Eurodoc

Dr. Sebastian Dahle is President of the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc). Among his activities for Eurodoc, he is the chair of the Working Group for Early- and Mid-Career Researchers at the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA). He works as a scientific associate and assistant professor at the Department of Wood Science and Technology, Biotechnical Faculty, University of Ljubljana. Further, he leads the Plasma Center at the Biotechnical Faculty, which was established in 2019. Besides the academic activities, Dr. Dahle is shareholder of the Plasma Green GmbH, a start-up company that is the outcome of a technology transfer he led in Germany.

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**MODERATOR**

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**Nicola Dengo**

Postdoctoral researcher, Università degli Studi dell'Insubria  
WG Research Assessment & Career Paths Coordinator, Eurodoc

Nicola Dengo is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Insubria in Como, Italy. He currently co-coordinates Eurodoc's Research Assessment & Career Paths Working Group and has previously served as a General Board Member and Skill Officer for Eurodoc. His activities focus on research careers, including research assessment, career paths, and transferable skills. Nicola has co-authored numerous articles and statements on these topics and frequently represents Eurodoc in interactions with European institutions, stakeholder organisations, and the media.

## PANEL DISCUSSION

# Sustainable Research Careers

Wednesday, 5 June 2024

13:50-15:20 CEST

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## Description

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Science has the power to drive advances in society and contribute to economic, technological, and social progress. Moving the world towards a more sustainable development path requires innovation, which again requires research. However, behind the scenes, the research ecosystem hides an unsustainable reality in the form of the precarious career prospects of researchers. Precarious working conditions for scientists are an issue that makes academic careers less attractive. Long hours of work, job insecurity, and deterioration of mental health are just some of the most outstanding among the many other issues present in the research system. Short-term contracts and the inability of research performing organisations in academia to absorb the highly trained workforce generate tremendous losses, with much of the most excellent talent leaving research careers. Thus it is crucial to improve the conditions of the scientific career through: promotion of stability for research careers, support of different scientific career pathways, building capacity and training for transferable skills, and support for mobility to and from other sectors<sup>1</sup>. In 2020, the Initiative of Science in Europe (ISE) released a report that advised the increase in funding for permanent positions in institutions, fair research assessment, and equity in grant evaluation. Other institutions also urge changes in research working conditions in several spheres<sup>2</sup>. In 2023, the Global Science Forum of the OECD completed a project to reduce the precarity of research careers through strategic planning and management<sup>3</sup>. In 2023, Eurodoc put forward recommendations for how to ensure high quality employment conditions for early career researchers<sup>4</sup>. All these recommendations together helped the European Commission to create a Council recommendation document, approved in December 2023, to support the researcher's work, whether in the public or private sectors<sup>5</sup>. The main aspects mentioned in the document are social protection measures for early researchers in particular, support for the mobility of researchers between sectors to provide them with cross-functional qualifications, and a preference for a more diverse science. Thereby, the EU Council recommendations provide a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents.

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<sup>1</sup> Kismihók, G. et al. (2019) Declaration on Sustainable Researcher Careers. Brussels: Marie Curie Alumni Association and European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers.  
[doi: 10.5281/zenodo.3082245](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3082245)

<sup>2</sup> Initiative for Science in Europe. (2020) Position on precarity of academic careers. Link accessed on 30.04.2024: <https://initiative-se.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Research-Precarity-ISE-position.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> OECD (2023) Research precariat. Link accessed on 30.04.2024: <https://www.oecd.org/sti/science-technology-innovation-outlook/research-precariat/>

<sup>4</sup> Davcheva, M., Rutkowska, J., Dahle, S., Pilia, S., Raczyńska, M., Rajab, H., & Saugmann, P. M. (2023). Setting high quality employment conditions for early career researchers. Zenodo.  
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8105629>

<sup>5</sup> European commission (2023) Proposal for a COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION on a European framework to attract and retain research, innovation and entrepreneurial talents in Europe. Link accessed on 30.04.2024: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legalcontent/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2023%3A0436%3AFIN#footnote11>

## SPEAKERS

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### **Martin Andler**

President, Initiative for Science in Europe

Martin Andler is a mathematician and historian of science. He is Professor Emeritus at the Université de Versailles St-Quentin (Paris-Saclay). His main domains of research are Lie theory in mathematics, and in history the development of mathematics in France since 1870. A graduate of École normale supérieure in Paris, he obtained his PhD (doctorat d'État) from Université Paris-Diderot in 1983. He has held positions as a CNRS researcher, before joining Versailles-St-Quentin University. He has held visiting positions as professor at MIT, Rutgers, and as visitor at IAS-Princeton. He was vice-president of the Société mathématique de France (1997-1999) and the founding president of Animath, the main mathematics outreach organisation in France (1998-2017). His interest in European policy issues led him to be Vice-President of Euroscience (2012-2018). Since 2017, he has been the President of the Initiative for Science in Europe.



### **Dean Korošak**

Vice rector, University of Maribor

Dean Korošak is a professor of physics at the University of Maribor in Slovenia, where he currently serves as vice-rector for research. He has a keen interest in applying statistical physics to social and biological systems, and also works in network theory and analysis. Beyond his scientific research, he is committed to improving the understanding of the complexities of academic research and promoting the responsible use of research metrics in the assessment of scholarly output.



### **Nicola Dengo**

Postdoctoral researcher, Università degli Studi dell'Insubria  
WG Research Assessment & Career Paths Coordinator, Eurodoc

Nicola Dengo is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Insubria in Como, Italy. He currently co-coordinates Eurodoc's Research Assessment & Career Paths Working Group and has previously served as a General Board Member and Skill Officer for Eurodoc. His activities focus on research careers, including research assessment, career paths, and transferable skills. Nicola has co-authored numerous articles and statements on these topics and frequently represents Eurodoc in interactions with European institutions, stakeholder organizations, and the media.



**Ana Slavec**

University of Primorska & Mlada Akademija

Dr. Ana Slavec is an assistant professor at the Faculty of mathematics, natural sciences and information technologies at the University of Primorska and a research associate at the InnoRenew CoE. She is a member of the supervisory board of the Young Academy of Slovenia (Mlada akademija).

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**MODERATOR**

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**Gledson Emidio**

Eurodoc

Gledson Emidio holds a PhD in Chemical and Process Engineering from the University of Strathclyde, Scotland, and has strong international and multidisciplinary experience. At Eurodoc, he is a project officer working on the Sustainable Careers for Researcher Empowerment (SECURE) project. Gledson is very interested in applying human-centred design to science support services. He served as the vice-chair of the Marie Curie Alumni Association from 2022 to 2024 and now works as a consultant for European-based companies and researcher-led associations.

## PANEL DISCUSSION

### Academia in Ukraine

Wednesday, 5 June 2024

16:30-17:30 CEST

## Description

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The full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia is continuing after more than two years. At the peak, there were more than 10 million refugees<sup>1</sup>. However, it should be remembered that the war has been going on since 2014.

Ukrainian academia has suffered just as the rest of society, numerous institutions saw their facilities and infrastructure destroyed, academics sought refuge either internally displaced or internationally, and after the 2022 full-scale invasion, 26 entire institutions have been displaced on top of those 18 which were displaced in 2014, already<sup>2</sup>.

The impact on Ukrainian academia has been enormous, as infrastructure is destroyed, refugee academics constitute a tremendous brain drain to the country, and the circumstances of displacement, frequent air raids, power outages, and also resulting economic hardships continue to burden researchers and educators.

After the start of the full-scale invasion, the European community got together in all possible forms to support Ukrainians - not just by condemning the military aggression by Russia, but by providing help on all levels. It is noteworthy how Ukrainian refugees were welcomed and provided with accommodation, travel and work opportunities in Europe, and how scientists on the grass roots level came together to form initiatives like Science4Ukraine<sup>3</sup>. Additional funding schemes were provided for the refugees, such as the EU's MSCA4Ukraine programme<sup>4</sup>. Many organisations including Eurodoc have since advocated for the support needed for Ukraine's recovery and particularly, how crucial the research and higher education sectors are for the future of Ukraine<sup>5</sup>. With that, we are glad that our calls to the European commission for ongoing needs of support during<sup>6</sup> and after the war<sup>7</sup> have been heard and that after the first rounds of emergency funding<sup>8</sup>, the new Ukraine facility also explicitly includes funding to academia for research and higher education<sup>9</sup>. The implementation plan for the Ukraine Facility support programme takes a strategic approach and calls out necessary reforms as well as crucial economic sectors<sup>10</sup>. A big development was of course the association of Ukraine to the Horizon Europe framework programme<sup>11</sup>, including additional funding schemes for Ukrainian researchers,<sup>12,13</sup> and the opening of the Horizon Europe Office in Kyiv<sup>14</sup>.

On the Ukrainian side, the reforms for a better alignment with Europe as well as the European values and principles are in full swing, and even surpass in some aspects their Western European counterparts, as with the accreditation of Universities and Scientific institutions<sup>15</sup>. Despite all European support and Ukrainian efforts, tremendous obstacles remain in the present, while further needs can be extrapolated for the future already.

While many solutions will need to be found on the national level, it is clear that the European support for academia in Ukraine will be crucial, not just for their scientific sector, but also for their societal and economic future.

As such, this panel aims to first reflect on the measures and activities during the past two years and shine a light on the current status quo with both its obstacles and positive developments. The discussions will then elaborate on persisting shortcomings and needs, to discuss short and long term approaches for Ukrainian academia, both on the national and European level, with the aim to succeed with the full inclusion of Ukraine in the European Research Area and the European Higher Education Area.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/03/21/europe/ukraine-russia-conflict-10-million-refugees-intl/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/ejed.12581>

<sup>3</sup> <https://scienceforukraine.eu/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://sareurope.eu/msca4ukraine/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://eurodoc.net/news/2023/a-strong-research-and-higher-education-sector-is-crucial-for-a-sustainable-recovery-of>

<sup>6</sup> <https://eurodoc.net/news/2022/joint-open-letter-to-european-commissioner-mariya-gabriel-on-supporting-ukrainian-academia>

<sup>7</sup> <https://eurodoc.net/news/2023/eurodoc-president-writes-open-letter-to-european-commission-president-ursula-von-der-leyen>

<sup>8</sup> [https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/eu-assistance-ukraine/ukraine-facility\\_en](https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/eu-assistance-ukraine/ukraine-facility_en)

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ukrainefacility.me.gov.ua/en/>

<sup>10</sup> [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/ukraines-association-agreement-horizon-europe-and-euratom-research-and-training-programmes-enters-2022-06-09\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/ukraines-association-agreement-horizon-europe-and-euratom-research-and-training-programmes-enters-2022-06-09_en)

<sup>11</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/ua-opportunities>

<sup>12</sup> [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-allocates-additional-eu10-million-support-researchers-ukraine-under-horizon-europe-2024-04-18\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-allocates-additional-eu10-million-support-researchers-ukraine-under-horizon-europe-2024-04-18_en)

<sup>13</sup> <https://horizon-europe.org.ua/en/heo-in-ua/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://mon.gov.ua/news/mon-prezentue-noviy-pidkhid-do-otsinyuvannya-naukovikh-ustanov-ta-universitetiv>

## **SPEAKERS**

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### **Signe Ratso**

Deputy Director-General, DG RTD, European Commission

Signe Ratso is Deputy Director-General and a member of the Management Board of the Directorate General for Research and Innovation of the European Commission. She is the Chief negotiator for Horizon Europe Association. She is also responsible for Open Innovation and for citizens' engagement in research and innovation policy and for overall coordination on international cooperation.

Signe Ratso joined DG Research and Innovation as Deputy Director General in 2018. In this function her particular areas of responsibility included International Cooperation in Research and Innovation as well as R&I in Industrial Technologies and in the area of Transport until 2019. Before joining DG RTD she worked in different senior management positions in DG TRADE since 2006. From 2011 to 2018 she was Director for Trade Strategy, Analysis and Market Access in DG TRADE. Previously she was Director for WTO, legal matters and food-related sectors in DG TRADE, covering also covered OECD issues, export credits and export controls of dual use goods. After joining the Commission at the beginning of 2006, she held the post of Principal Adviser in DG TRADE for the first year.

Before joining the Commission Signe Ratso worked as Deputy Secretary General (from 1994 to 2005) at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications of the Republic of Estonia. In this position she was responsible for all EU-related issues in the following policy areas: trade and industrial policy, energy, transport, telecommunications, information society, internal market affairs. During Estonia's accession negotiations she was responsible for negotiating 6 economic chapters. She has two University degrees. In 1983 she graduated from Tartu University in Estonia as an English philologist, in 1993 in International Trade and International Economics.

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**Denys Kurbatov**

Vice-minister for research, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

Dr. Denys Kurbatov is Vice Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine. He has a university degree from Sumy State University, with the specialisation in “Electronic devices” and a postgraduate degree in Solid State Physics. In 2010, Dr. Kurbatov PhD in Physics and Mathematics with a specialisation in Solid State Physics. From 2011, he worked first as Deputy Head and shortly after as the head of the Research Department of Sumy State University. In 2023, he was appointed as Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine.

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**Alisa Sukhikh**

Young Scientists Council at the Ministry of Education and Science of *Ukraine*

Alisa Sukhikh is a Senior Researcher at the Institute for Digitalisation of Education of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine. She also serves as a Consultant for the Young Scientists Council at the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. In addition, Alisa is the Deputy Head of the Young Scientists Council of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine. Furthermore, she is the Coordinator of the Scholar Support Office, contributing to the advancement of educational and scientific initiatives within the country.

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**Oleksandr Prokhorchuk**

Young Scientists Council at the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

Oleksandr Prokhorchuk is PhD in pedagogy, associate professor of the department of social work and rehabilitation of the National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine, member of the council of young scientists at the Ministry of Education and Science.

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## **MODERATOR**

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### **Sebastian Dahle**

Assist. Prof., University of Ljubljana  
President, Eurodoc

Dr. Sebastian Dahle is President of the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc). Among his activities for Eurodoc, he is the chair of the Working Group for Early- and Mid-Career Researchers at the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA). He works as a scientific associate and assistant professor at the Department of Wood Science and Technology, Biotechnical Faculty, University of Ljubljana. Further, he leads the Plasma Center at the Biotechnical Faculty, which was established in 2019. Besides the academic activities, Dr. Dahle is shareholder of the Plasma Green GmbH, a start-up company that is the outcome of a technology transfer he led in Germany.

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## **TRANSLATOR**

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### **Larysa Makaruk**

Young Scientists Council at the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

Larysa Makaruk has a Ph.D in Linguistics. She is the Dean of the Foreign Philology Faculty at Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University, and she is a Member of the Young Scientists Council at the Ministry of Science and Education of Ukraine.

## Conference booklet, Eurodoc Conference 2024



The European Council of Doctoral  
Candidates and Junior Researchers

Eurodoc, the **European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers**, is a grassroots federation of 24 national associations of early career researchers (ECRs) from 22 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.

