

## Editorial

The editors of this special issue are two, but there are objectively three! The third is our colleague Saeed Paivandi (University of Lorraine). Our discussions on doctoral studies in Europe have emerged from an analysis of the dominant trends and the radical changes they are bringing about both in the higher education system in general and in the way doctoral studies are viewed and treated in particular, studies that are at the crossroads of the learning process and research activity. At the same time, however, it is also a time of preparation for future academics. Our discussions highlighted the multiplicity of the issue and the question arose as to whether we should focus on a general mapping of doctoral studies or on a single axis, such as the preparation of future academics. In the end, at this stage, we chose the former.

Having chosen the former, we are particularly pleased with the eight (8) texts included in this special issue. They provide us with an excellent range of axes to explore the topic of "doctoral studies" (in Europe). The texts come from Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

The analysis of the texts shows that research on doctoral studies can be developed along the following axes:

- The historical development of doctoral studies
- The European framework for the development of doctoral studies (and its interaction with the corresponding national system)
- The national framework for doctoral studies and its specific arrangements
- The analysis of statistical data on doctoral studies

- Experiences in the implementation of doctoral studies, with emphasis on the relationship between supervisor and candidate
- Training for integration into the academic profession
- Thematic analyses such as the impact of gender, studies by discipline (and their specific characteristics), international students and their recruitment policies, etc.

In more detail:

The paper *"Mieux comprendre le vécu des doctorants en Belgique francophone: synthèse d'un projet de recherche longitudinal interuniversitaire/A better understanding the Belgian experience of doctoral studies: a synthesis of a longitudinal inter-university research project"* is signed by Mikael De Clercq, Elodie Theis, Benoit Galand. This article summarises a Belgian project that examined the process of persistence in doctoral studies through qualitative and quantitative inter-institutional and longitudinal approaches.

Anaëlle Milon, Gaëlle Espinosa, Guy Lapostolle and Geraldine Suau present the paper *"Enjeux et limites de l'organisation de la formation des doctorants en sciences humaines et sociales en France. Le cas du LISEC (Laboratoire Interuniversitaire des Sciences de l'Éducation et de la Communication) au sein de l'Université de Lorraine"*. This article takes stock of a case study on the training of doctoral students in the human and social sciences at a French university.

The article *"Internationalising doctoral education: international PhD students' experiences of academic mobility in Germany"* is signed by Alina Boutiuc-Kaiser and Vasileios Symeonidis. The article explores the academic journeys of Indian and Chinese doctoral students in Germany and examines their perspectives on adapting to new learning methods, academic standards and socio-cultural norms from their home countries.

Georgios Stamelos, Andreas Vassilopoulos, Aggelos Kavasakalis and Assane Diakhaté propose the paper *"Doctoral studies in Greece within the European Higher Education Area: convergences and challenges"*. They examine the evolution of the framework for doctoral studies in Greece (and) in relation to the European Higher Education Area. At the same time, they examine the implementation of the legislative provisions at the institutional and departmental levels, highlighting convergences and divergences.

Elisa Chaleta and Carla Semedo present the text *"Doctoral studies in Portugal"*. They argue that since the implementation of the Bologna reform in Portugal, there has been a significant increase in the number of doctoral students due to the establishment of formal doctoral programmes. However, the increase in the number of doctoral students, especially women, is a cause for concern, as completion rates remain low.

The text *"The academic context of doctoral students in Spain: the case of EDFES"* by Diana Jareño-Ruiz and Pablo de-Gracia-Soriano. This article examines the regulation and development of doctoral studies in Spain, highlighting their importance in the construction of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA). The article presents a study of the Doctoral School of the Spanish Federation of Sociology (EDFES),

Petros Gougoulakis signs the paper *"Swedish Doctoral Training - Investing in Innovation, International Competitiveness and Growth"*. A milestone in Swedish postgraduate education is the 1969 reform aimed at increasing the efficiency of doctoral education. This paper outlines and analyses the historical development of doctoral studies in Swedish higher education, especially after the implementation of the 1969 reform, and presents the current regulatory framework/status of doctoral studies in Sweden.

The article by Loizos Symeou and Alexandros Heraclides is entitled *"Placing the Cyprus Higher Education Landscape on the Doctoral Map of Europe"*. The article argues that despite the small size of Cyprus and its young higher education system, the development of doctoral studies is impressive. The challenge for the Cypriot case is to harmonise the criteria for doctoral studies, which would help make the island an attraction for Europe and the Middle East.

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