

Press release – 24 September 2012

EUA Doctoral Week: New report examines changes in international PhD landscape

A new report published today (24 September) by the European University Association (EUA) examines how the provision of doctoral education is changing in a number of different regions across the world. The report is the outcome of a two-year EUA-led project that has examined and compared developments in doctoral education in three regions – East Asia, Southern Africa, and Latin America – and related the findings to changes taking place in Europe.

The report findings (from the project entitled ‘Cooperation on Doctoral Education between Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe – CODOC’) will be presented today at EUA Doctoral Week, which comprises a series of international events focusing on doctoral education, taking place from 23 to 27 September at the Swedish medical university, Karolinska Institutet. The report outlines that while there is diversity in terms of doctoral education provision across and within regions, there are a number of ‘areas of convergence’ between the regions. These include:

- **Discourse:** Doctoral education is becoming an increasingly important aspect of national research policies. Universities and governments worldwide view doctoral education more and more as a key element in strategies to develop knowledge societies.
- **Growth in the number of doctorates:** Although the different world regions studied have undertaken different levels of investment (in doctoral education), there has been a steady rise in all of them in the numbers of doctorates awarded in the last 10-15 years. It is also clear, however, within this context that a number of new ‘knowledge hubs’ are emerging (such as in Brazil for example), where governments are investing heavily in graduate education in order to boost research capacity. In Europe, this growth has been linked to the development of a European knowledge society and integrating research-trained staff in many different sectors. In the other regions studied, it has been fuelled by the wish to equip more university staff with doctorate degrees. The report stresses that in order to sustain this growth it will be necessary to build research and supervision capacity for doctoral education in universities.
- **Collaborations:** Despite growing international competition to develop research, the report finds that there is an increasing emphasis on building collaborations in doctoral education. All regions concerned with capacity building view collaboration (in the form of university partnerships or pooling of university resources) as the main way of building capacity. Likewise, some of the more research-intensive universities are collaborating with a wide portfolio of partners as they seek global presence and access to ‘natural laboratories’ – natural environments that are excellent for studying certain phenomena (The report outlines examples of different types of collaboration that were presented during the project, and some ‘guiding principles’ for engaging in cross-regional doctoral collaboration).

The full report: ‘Cooperation on doctoral education between Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe’ is available [here](#). It contains the main results of the surveys and workshops carried out during the project, and an overview of doctoral education developments in each of the regions covered by the project.

The CODOC project was carried out by a consortium of seven partners: (five university networks/associations) EUA, the Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA), the ASEAN University Network (AUN), the Inter-American Organization for Higher Education (OUI-IOHE) and the European Union-Latin America Observatory (OBREAL); (two European Institutions), the Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, Sweden, and the

Center for Development Research at the University of Bonn, Germany. It has been co-funded by the Erasmus Mundus Programme of the European Commission.

More information on EUA Doctoral Week is available here: http://www.eua.be/eua_doctoral_week.aspx

Ends.

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The European University Association, as the representative organisation of both the European universities and the national rectors' conferences, is the main voice of the higher education community in Europe. EUA's mission is to promote the development of a coherent system of European higher education and research.

Notes for editors

More information on the CODOC project is available here: <http://www.codoc-project.eu/>

The starting point for the CODOC project was the need to develop a new, global approach to doctoral education, taking into account the development of new means of communication and easier physical mobility, but also the need to build research capacity across the world to meet global challenges. In this spirit, the project attempted to examine and promote creative and mutually beneficial modes of collaboration to foster a more equitable global research community. For this purpose, the project looked at three world regions with developing, emerging and developed countries, namely East Asia, Latin America and Southern Africa. It compared how doctoral education was developing within these regions, and related the findings to developments in Europe.