

PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD

By INGVILD BERGOM LUNDE

Dear members,

When we published our last newsletter three months ago, when we were still finding our footing in our board positions. Now we are more comfortable, have gotten to know each other better in the board and we have gotten to know the member organizations better.

Our biggest and saddest news going into the summer holidays is that the government has gone against all unison advice from the higher education sector as well as advice from the Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education skills, and they passed the Norwegian language requirement law. We have already given an interview, and written an opinion piece about this together with the Academy for Young Researchers. To learn more about the Norwegian language requirement and what else we have done since our last newsletter, please read below. In the autumn we plan to work on changing or lobby for good solutions to the Norwegian language requirement law, make engagement around the SiN elections, see how SiN can position itself in regard to the Movement for the Free Academia, represent in more meetings, work on the survey and whatever may appear as important issues to address.

In the meantime we hope all of our members take a well-deserved summer break and energize for the autumn. We are looking forward to work together again after summer, and our next quarterly meeting will be on the 16th of September at 18 o'clock. We hope to see you there! (invitation link will follow). In the meantime, make the most out of your summer! All the best from Ingvild and the rest of the SiN-board.

Norwegian language requirement law passed

Despite a unified higher education and research sector advising against the Norwegian language requirement law and the Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Research advising that the government change the proposed language requirement law from a requirement to a right, the government decided as the first country in the world to pass the law. Ingvild has already criticized this in an **interview in Khrono** together with the Minister of Research and Higher education, and has written an opinion piece together with the Academy for Young Researchers in *Aftenposten* (Nye språkkraver sløsing med skattebetalernes penger (aftenposten.no). Karl-Henrik, Claire and Ingvild wrote an opinion piece in *Khrono* (**Skulle ikke du bli stipendiatenes statsråd, Oddmund Hoel?**) asking who will pay for the language requirement. In the next quarterly meeting we will discuss what further actions we will take on the matter.

SiN survey

We have gotten great feedback from several representatives of our member organisations on this years survey, both in

our quarterly meeting, in a separate meeting and via email. We really appreciate this feedback. We will not send out the survey before the summer, and aim to send it later summer/early autumn.

The EuroDoc conference and annual general meeting



The Eurodoc 2024 Conference and Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, from June 4-7, brought together early-stage researchers to discuss key issues and elect new leaders.

The conference kicked off with opening remarks from Eurodoc Secretary Hanna Schoch, emphasising a pan-European vision. Keynote speaker, Gregor Majdič, Rector of the University of Ljubljana, warned of potential cuts in academic research funding due to increases in defence budgets. There was a panel discussion on brain circulation and research excellence featuring Amanda Crowfoot from the European University Association and Maria Leptin of the European Research Council. Discussions focused on enhancing career flexibility, addressing salary gaps, and

supporting researcher mobility.

The second day included a plenary session with Manuel Heitor from Instituto Superior Técnico, who highlighted the quality of European research and young researchers' career promotion. Panels addressed the financial challenges of PhD candidates and sustainable research careers. A session on academia in Ukraine featured European Commission representatives and Ukrainian researchers and scientists, discussing support strategies for Ukrainian institutions.

The conference was followed by the AGM, which opened with the appointment of meeting officials and voting for new board members. SiN's EuroDoc Liaison Officer, Dimitris Polychronopoulos, represented Norway at the AGM. Pil Maria Saugmann was elected President, Nicola Dengo as Vice President and Manca Lunder as Treasurer. The meeting reviewed financial inconsistencies from 2023 and discussed project profitability and transparency. Statute changes were introduced, including written decision-making for the board and the appointment of a Procurator. Croatia joined Eurodoc, while Turkey, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Georgia were removed as observers. The meeting approved annual goals and the proposal that the Eurodoc 2025 Conference be held in Copenhagen, Denmark.

The Eurodoc 2024 Conference and AGM included significant discussions on researcher mobility, sustainable research careers, and the financial health of Eurodoc projects. The event concluded with the election of new board members and the approval of annual goals, setting a the foundation for the incoming board, most of whom are existing experienced EuroDoc board members.

National phd portal

SiN has for several years lobbied to promote a national PhD portal for courses at PhD-level similar to what Denmark has. There are currently discussions about implementing such a portal by central actors in the sector, and SiN president 2022 Nicolas Gibney published an opinion piece

in Khrono, which SiN President 2023 Ole Kristian Dyskeland and Ingvild also signed.

Communication with SiN and between local organisations: Continue to use Slack!

We want to thank all of our member organisations for the valuable feedback you give us during or between our quarterly meetings. It helps us in the SiN-board understand what is important for PhDs, postdocs and early career staff. Claire (sekretaer@stipendiat.no) is the main contact for member organisations, but we are all here to get feedback from you. We also still encourage the local organization to continue to use the slack channel to get in touch with the other member organisations – it is a great way for you to get support and share experiences! Based on a question from one of the member organisations whether we could move our communications from Slack to Teams, we did some research into it. We decided that we will still use Slack. This is due to Teams having challenges in adding people from outside institutions as well as being dependent on the employment of current board members, so it is difficult to transfer the Teams channel to the next board. If you have problems with your Slack access, please **register** your Slack-account as a non-profit organisations, in that way you will have free access to Slack.

Quarterly Meetings

This semester, we organized two quarterly meetings with representatives from

various local organizations to discuss a range of important topics. The agenda included discussions on extending short-term leave and introducing new language requirements. We also explored potential collaborations between SiN and other organizations, such as OFF (Organisasjon for Ferske Forfattere).

In addition to these topics, we focused on several internal matters. These included the election of future SiN members, enhancing communication between local organizations and SiN, and conducting surveys to gather insights on the PhD experience.

SiN in media

The editor of The Research Ethics Magazine in Norway joined the Gothenburg-symposium where the Movement for a Free Academia was established. She wrote a **feature story** of the establishment and how the manifesto outlining the vision of an alternative academia built on care and trust was written during the weekend of 5-7th April 2024. During this symposium, Ingvild and Maria Toft held a joint keynote entitled “The Yearning of Something Else – The Perspective from Young Scientists”, and the aim of the movement is to create a more compassionate and creative academia. This is a hope for reducing the high mental health risks associated with being a PhD candidate. Read the arguments for the national PhD portal **here**. Signed by SiN President 2022, 2023 and 2024. **In an interview** with Khrono about the now passed English language requirements, the Minister of Education and Higher Research Oddmund Hoel states that “- We need a major change in practice to preserve Norwegian professional language, and it is naive to believe that this will happen if Norwegian language training continues to be voluntary.” SiN president Ingvild Bergom Lunde states that she is very disappointed with this: “Requiring temporary international employees to take 15 credits in Norwegian without allowing them to extend their period of employment or reduce their workload is a stress

factor that can delay their doctorate," [she] calls it a form of discrimination in relation to the requirements imposed on Norwegian research fellows. - "It goes against an inclusive working environment. "We know that most international researchers want to learn Norwegian, and we would

have liked the regulations to state that PhD candidates were entitled to Norwegian language training, but that it was not a requirement." Together with the leader of the Academy of Young Research in Norway Feroz Mehmood Shah, Ingvild wrote an **opinion piece** in Aftenposten explain-

ing why the new language requirements is a wasteful use of the taxpayers' money. Karl-Henrik, Claire and Ingvild wrote an **opinion piece** in Khrono asking who will pay for the language requirement.
