



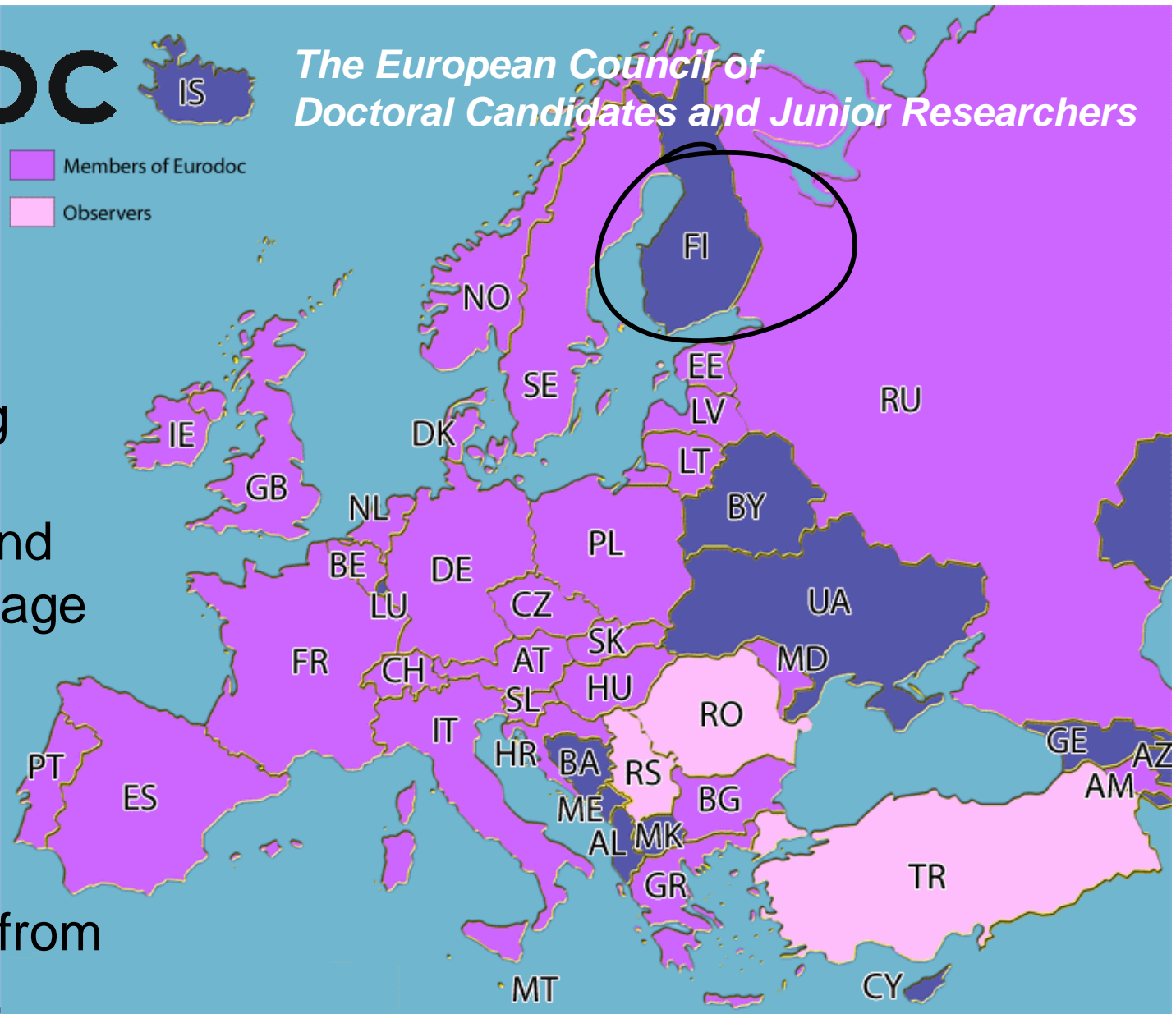
Views of young talents and established top researchers

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"Excellence Stems from People" International Research Policy Conference
27-28 August 2007, Turku, Finland

Members of Eurodoc
Observers

- ▶ 28 members
- ▶ Representing doctoral candidates and other early stage researchers
- ▶ No member organisation from Finland yet...



Excellence in Research

▶ Attracting excellence

- Interesting talent to start a PhD project

▶ Building excellence

- Developing transferable skills
- Building a motivating research environment

▶ Maintaining excellence

- Offering perspectives in both academia and industry
- Competing with the rest of the world

Attracting Excellence

Making it interesting to get a doctoral degree

- ▶ Doctoral research project is the first step of a researcher's career
- ▶ Doing a PhD is a job
 - Pay doctoral candidates an attractive salary
 - Give them full social security
 - Parental leave
 - Pension rights
 - Etc.
 - European Commission: Charter & Code
- ▶ Life after a PhD
 - Career options
 - Mobility between sectors, domains, nations
 - Good career options increase attractiveness of starting a PhD

Building Excellence

Developing transferable skills

- ▶ People working on their PhD learn more than just how to do research in their field: transferable skills
- ▶ 3 or 4 years of working experience
- ▶ This allows them to become
 - Better researcher in their own field
 - Researcher in another field
 - Or... to move away from research
- ▶ Key: improve awareness of transferable skills, not necessarily more courses
- ▶ The right skills, not more skills

Motivating research environment

- ▶ Thesis advisors are role models
 - Attitude towards research outside academia
 - PhD candidates are thesis advisors of the future
- ▶ Less dependency on only one member of senior staff
 - More feedback, more balanced
 - Minimise personal conflicts
- ▶ Less hierarchy; it's ideas that matter
 - More space for own ideas
- ▶ Producing knowledge vs. gathering knowledge
 - Creating something is stimulating
- ▶ Representation in institutional bodies

Maintaining Excellence

Career perspectives in academia

- ▶ Progress in career often depends on availability of money more than on research excellence
- ▶ Tenure track programmes
 - Give researchers influence on their career progress
- ▶ Long-term funding for universities instead of project-based
 - Give universities the option to hire talented researchers

Career perspectives outside academia

- ▶ Not everybody can/wants to stay in academia
- ▶ Not everybody can/wants to stay in research
- ▶ Obstacles to careers outside academia
 - Lack of recognition of doctoral degree
 - Working experience as researcher not recognized because employers see doctoral researchers as students
 - Both researchers and employers not aware of transferable skills
- ▶ Researchers have to be ready for alternatives

Europe and the rest of the world

- ▶ Europe trains more researchers than USA and Japan, but employs fewer
 - Gap between academic research and innovation
- ▶ Many governments plan to train even more researchers
 - When do we have enough researchers?
 - Is the labour market ready for more doctorates?
- ▶ Can Europe keep them here, and even attract talent to come?
 - Excellence attracts excellence
 - Excellent working conditions also attract excellence

An established top researcher

Nobel price winner Paul Nurse believes Europe is limited by the cult of the 'Herr doctor professor' who has to be deferred to at all times and whose influence and approval is critical to a young researcher's career.

In the United States, by contrast, the prospects for young scientists to stretch their wings are considerable. And it is that freedom that attracts so many of our own researchers.

Conclusions

- ▶ Excellence, indeed, stems from people
- ▶ Young researchers play a key role in Europe's knowledge-based economies
- ▶ To attract and maintain people for a career in research, good working conditions and promising career perspectives are needed
- ▶ Attracting, building and maintaining excellence are highly related and they all need attention

Thank you!

▶ Eurodoc 2008 conference:

March 2008, Fribourg, Switzerland

▶ For more information:

<http://www.eurodoc.net>

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