

Stipendiatororganisasjonene i Norge's Newsletter

June, 2022

Research Theft / #PleaseDontStealMyResearch

Following the lead of our Danish counterpart-organization, PAND, SiN has been investigating research theft in Norway. While this is a very ephemeral problem to measure, as is the case with many illegal or immoral topics, SiN believes that it is one worth addressing.

In collecting personal stories from researchers in Norway, both early-career and well-established, we learned that undeserved co-authorship, role inflation in authoring, or outright theft has occurred in the past, and, as it would seem, continues to this day.

SiN is, very negative to the idea of research theft, and we want to make it clear that this is not a practice we think all established researchers participate in. Rather, we would tend to see it as a cultural issue, simply "the way of doing business" that researchers could follow along with because it's how they learned. Regardless of the reasons, SiN believes that this practice harms early-career researchers, as they tend to be more easily exploited.

We are currently working on a position statement, as well as collecting personal stories of research theft to bring attention to and keep attention on this issue.

If you, or someone you know, has been a victim of research theft, please feel free to contact SiN (styret@stipendiat.no) or our President (leder@stipendiat.no). We will of course keep anything you tell us confidential, unless given express permission to share it, in which case we will keep all personal data anonymous.

Eurodoc AGM



On June 10th and 11th, the European Council for Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc) held its Annual General Meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania.

Two delegates from SiN attended, our President, Nicolas Gibney, and our Eurodoc Liaison, Friederike Schäfer. Over the course of two and half days, SiN's representatives mingled with delegates from some of Eurodoc's 29 member organizations and discussed how Eurodoc would be run in the coming year.

Among the highlights were the election of a new Eurodoc Board, headed by Oleksandr Berezko, from Ukraine, as well as a new Secretariat and Advisory Board for the organization. Regrettably, no candidates from Norway were interested in running for the open positions, but in the future SiN would always encourage motivated researchers at our member organizations to run.

Over the course of the two days, SiN's delegates did their best to represent the interests of Norwegian researchers in Eurodoc, with our delegation having the highest participation in asking questions and suggesting changes. Following some concern surrounding the Eurodoc accounts, SiN suggested that before the next Eurodoc AGM, the accounts should be audited by an external party, as is done with our own accounts. This could help Eurodoc with their stated aim of attracting more external funding.

This AGM capped off a very eventful year for Eurodoc, not only did the organization step up to help Ukrainian students affected by the war, but this was also a year in which a majority of the Secretariat resigned and Eurodoc was forced to go on with reduced capabilities.

We in SiN wish all the best to the new Eurodoc board, and hope to catch up with them again next year a bit closer to home in Uppsala, Sweden.

Mental Health Survey

Regrettably, there have been unforeseen delays in gathering and publishing the results of our long-awaited follow-up survey on mental health amongst PhDs during the Covid-19 pandemic.

As it stands now, the data collection is finished, all that remains is to organize it for visibility, summarize the results, and publish them on our website. Given the impending summer vacation season in Norway, we hope to have this done by early August.

Forskningsdagene

SiN is very pleased to announce our first (at least since the pandemic) in-person event for all PhDs and postdocs from all over Norway. We will be holding three sessions at this fall's Forskningsdagene (Research Days). As currently planned, our sessions will focus on union membership for early-career researchers, a panel debate on diversity and internationalization, and opportunities within and outside of academia for PhDs and postdocs after completing their education.

While the dates remain undetermined, our events will be held over three days to give participants more opportunity to attend, and will be held at the University of Oslo.

We look forward to seeing you all there!

Forskningsrådet Board Changes

In what was widely regarded as an unprecedented move, Ola Borten-Moe, the Minister for Research and Higher Education, replaced the entire board of the Research Council of Norway on May 12th, 2022 because of what he claimed was a "critical economic situation".

SiN has made our position on this change very clear - we are very much against it. In interviews and on social media, SiN's president, Nicolas Gibney, criticized the decision, pointing specifically to promises which had been made by the Stoltenberg government which appear to have been broken by this move. Pointing specifically to the highly vaunted "tillitsreform" or Trust Reform, Nicolas pointed out that this move by the minister sends a clear message that there will be less trust and more micro-management in higher education - seemingly the opposite of what was promised.

This change also significantly increases uncertainty among researchers at all levels in Norway, particularly given the Research Council's role in funding so many of them. Such a sudden and drastic change creates uncertainty at all levels and fundamentally will make Norway a less attractive place to conduct research or complete a PhD or postdoc position.

Future of SiN

One of the key tasks of the board is to lead SiN into the future, and make sure the organization is equipped to face the challenges of representing early-career researchers in

Norway for the foreseeable future. While the number of PhDs and Postdocs that SiN represents has been dropping for some time, largely due to the rapid growth of institutions without a SiN-affiliated local organization, researchers at two institutions have expressed a strong interest in forming their own local organizations and becoming affiliated with SiN. This would represent a change in the downward trend of SiN's representation, and we hope that the interest shown is the beginning of a trend of growth for SiN.

SiN also has a number of exciting events coming up during the Fall Semester of 2022, not least of which is our Annual General Meeting (AGM). While the dates and location have yet to be set, it's never too early to ask yourselves whether your local organization would be open to hosting the AGM. In the interest of decentralizing SiN, the board is especially interested in local organizations not based in Oslo or Bergen, given the recent AGMs held in these cities.

It's also never too early to ask yourself if you could see yourself running for a SiN board position at the AGM! While it can be challenging, being a board member of SiN gives you a great opportunity to represent your colleagues at the national and international level - as well as being a great experience.

Anyone interested in hosting the AGM or running for a board position is free to contact the board to learn more about the process, though more detailed information about both the AGM and elections will be sent out closer to the AGM itself.