



# Stipendiatororganisasjonene i Norge

The Association of Doctoral Organisations in Norway

Annual report  
2022

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## Executive Summary

The Association of Doctoral Organisations in Norway (SiN), is a nationwide umbrella organisation for doctoral interest organisations at Norwegian higher education institutions. SiN works to promote the interests of PhDs and postdocs in Norway, by functioning as a network for its member organisations and representing them on matters of mutual interest at the national level and international level.

SiN consists of a board that is elected from the persons represented by its member organisations and meets approximately once a month. Since the board members are spread across the country, the organisation does not have a visiting or a postal address. Communication with and within the board mainly takes place via e-mail and video conferencing, although meetings in person are arranged wherever possible, to strengthen collaboration. For the 2022 board period, the SiN board consisted of nine board members from six member organisations (2.1). The board's activities, however, are structured to promote the interests of all member organisations. In 2022, SiN had ten approved members, one affiliated member, and three aspirant members, who collectively represent about 90% of all PhDs and postdocs (full-time equivalent) in Norway (3.1 and 3.2).

SiN is a non-profit, voluntary and independent organisation, and is not affiliated with any trade union. SiN focuses in particular on quality researcher education with regards to supervision and training, stable funding, diverse career development opportunities and perspectives, and healthy working conditions. Safeguarding and improving these does not only benefit individual temporary scientific employees, but also Norway's competitiveness in a global academic community. Improving and developing doctoral education in Norway is a continuous process in which SiN collaborates with other relevant institutions in the sector such as the Ministry of Education and Research (KD), Universities Norway (*Universitets- og høyskolerådet*, UHR), the Research Council of Norway (*Norges forskningsråd*, NFR), the Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research (*Komiteé for kjønnsbalanse og mangfold i forskning*, KIF), the Young Academy of Norway (*Akademiet for yngre forskere*, AYF), national trade unions, and Eurodoc (the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers). To achieve its aims, SiN works in a variety of ways, through formal representation in external bodies, consultation statements, working group surveys and reports, and participation in various discussion forums (4.1 – 4.5). For the 2022 board period, these activities were targeted towards internationalisation of academia in Norway, welfare and mental health of PhDs and postdocs in Norway, the lingering effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on researcher education, the supervision process for PhDs, and the government's plans for research and higher education.

These activities were targeted towards topical issues and policy developments in 2021-2022, such as researcher recruitment and career development; proposed changes in the academic career structure, assessment, and promotion; the government's long-term plan for research and higher education; the national elections and formation of the new

government; the debate on internationalisation in academia; and not least the severe impact covid-19 has had on research throughout the past one and a half years.

In addition to advocating for the interests of our member organisations nationally and internationally, SiN functions as a network for its member organisations, and as a channel for conveying important information of interest to temporary researchers. To this end, SiN invites member organisations to quarterly meetings, distributes a quarterly newsletter, maintains a Slack channel for local leaders of doctoral organisations, and regularly provides updates on Facebook and Twitter (4.6).

In the 2022 board period, SiN held eight board meetings, three quarterly meetings and sent out three newsletters to member organisations (4.1). Throughout 2022, SiN participated in 8 meetings of UHR-Forskning, 4 meetings of KIF, and 6 meetings of Eurodoc. SiN and its representatives additionally participated in Eurodoc's Annual General Meeting held in Vilnius, Lithuania, as well as the 2022

Forskerutdanningskonferansen (Researcher Education Conference), held at Oslo Met. Throughout 2022, SiN published, in consultation with its members, a position statement on internationalisation, and provided input to four consultations for the Ministry of Education and Research, and replying to UHR and Eurodoc surveys. SiN also signed on to Eurodoc's Manifesto for Early Career Researchers along with other national associations.

In a follow-up to the initial survey data published on Mental Health and Well-being, SiN published the results of a follow-up survey designed to measure changes in mental health and well-being among PhDs and post-docs between the beginning and the presumed end of the Covid-19 pandemic.

SiN has continued its outreach efforts to potential member organisations, with talks being given at 3 universities, which resulted in 2 new applicants for SiN membership at the 2022 AGM. SiN further continued pushing for greater recognition by participating in 8 interviews with various Norwegian newspapers, as well as publishing two opinion articles on current topics in academia. To further raise SiN's profile, representatives hosted a keynote on the pandemic's effects on researchers, as well as a discussion about internationalisation for early-career researchers at the Forskerutdanningskonferansen, participated in a panel debate at the University of Stavanger, and a panel discussion on careers for young researchers at the OECD.

SiN receives funding from the Ministry of Education and Research. In 2022, the amount of subsidy received was NOK 260,000 (5.1). SiN also receives membership fees totalling NOK 2000 per member organisation per year. The income of SiN is spent on the operation of the organisation - including costs in connection to representation, board meetings, workshops and the Annual General Meeting (AGM) - as well financial compensation for the board, at a level that is decided by the AGM. As a consequence of the lifting of pandemic-related restrictions, SiN was able to participate in many more in person conferences and meetings. Due to this, travel costs increased compared to 2021, though many conferences covered travel expenses. The largest share of the 2022 budget was thus spent on the AGM, which was held on 26th November at the University of Agder in Kristiansand, as well

as on compensation for the board. Board workload was significantly increased compared to 2021 due to the large number of conferences and presentations attended, as well as the increased efforts around outreach to media and potential member organisations. As with previous years, SiN relies on external funding, in conjunction with membership fees, to maintain current activity levels.

## 2. Board

### 2.1 — Board Composition

The board for 2022 was elected on the 27th of November 2021 at the University of Bergen, and consisted of:

- **President:** Nicolas Gibney (NHH)
- **Vice President:** Sanja Mrksic Kovacevic (UiS)
- **Treasurer:** Yauhen Yakimenka (UiB)
- **Communications Officer:** Johanne Berge Kalsaas (UiB)
- **UHR Representative:** Chris Magnussen (UiB)
- **Webmaster:** Andrea Vallejo Vargas (NMBU)
- **Event Officer:** Anna Piterskaya (UiO)
- **Social Media Manager:** Siamak Karimi (NTNU)
- **Eurodoc Liaison Officer:** Friederike Schäfer (NTNU)

On 26 November 2022, the board for 2023 was elected, which currently consists of:

- **President:** Ole Kristian Dyskeland (NHH)
- **Vice President:** Regina Paul (NTNU)
- **Treasurer:** Zihao Wang (UiS)
- **Communications Officer:** Nicolas Gibney (NHH)
- **UHR Representative:** Friedrike Schäfer (NTNU)
- **Webmaster:** Yucong Ma (UiS)
- **Event Officer:** Anum Masood (NTNU)
- **Social Media Manager:** Jareef bin Martuza (NHH)
- **Eurodoc Liaison Officer:** Dimitris Polychronopoulos (USN)

### 2.2 — Board term

The board for 2022 was elected for a period of 12 months, from the 1st of January 2021 until the 31st of December 2022. Following the decision of the 2020 AGM, the 2022 AGM was to be held in November or December, and therefore the AGM in 2022 was held on November 26, with the handover to the new board in January 2023, at the transition meeting.

## **2.3 – Gender balance**

Of 9 elected board members in November 2022, 3/9 were female and 6/9 were male. Female participation in the board was therefore 33%. This is a decline from the previous years, where the gender balance has been more equal. SiN strives to keep gender balance in the board approximately equal, but the realities of the annual general assembly eventually determine board composition.

## **2.4 – Working Environment**

All board meetings in 2022, apart from the AGM, were held digitally through Zoom. In addition to the AGM, SiN board members have met locally for work meetings and participation in conferences, which are described in more detail in Section 4.

## 3. Member Organisations

### 3.1 – Regular members

At the start of the 2022 board period, SiN had ten member organisations, who represent about 10,000 or 88% of all active doctoral agreements in Norway. Using the most up-to-date numbers available (2021) we present the membership numbers from HK-dir's database for statistics about higher education on PhD agreements ("PhDs enrolled") and Statistics Norway<sup>1</sup>'s summary of number of employees in groups "Research fellow" (for PhDs) and "post.doc" (for Postdocs):

Name	Institution	PhDs enrolled	Research fellows	Postdocs
DION	NTNU – Norwegian University of Science and Technology	3080	1836	378
UiODoc	UiO – University of Oslo	3000	1199	570
UiBDoc	UiB – University of Bergen	1525	689	243
TODOS	UiT – The Arctic University of Norway	970	584	140
SoDoC	NMBU – Norwegian University of Life Sciences	510	257	88
UiSDC	UiS – University of Stavanger	475	278	70
UiADoc	UiA – University of Agder	410	242	37
PhD-forum	OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University	395	232	22
NHHDoc	NHH – Norwegian School of Economics	140	103	35
NIHSPO	NIH – Norwegian School of Sport Sciences	65	NA	NA

### 3.2 – Affiliate memberships

In addition, there is a growing number of inter-institutional doctoral organisations or research schools in Norway, with members from different higher education institutions. To allow these organisations the benefits of national cooperation, SiN plans to allow these organisations to join the shared communication platforms of the network as 'affiliate members'. While not having the same formal rights and duties of regular members that are tied to a single institution, affiliate members share many of the same interests and concerns and are therefore valued partners for dialogue and knowledge exchange. The possibility for affiliate membership (at a reduced membership fee) was formally approved

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<sup>1</sup> In statistical series 13515: "R&D personnel (head count), by educational institution, position, contents, year and sex"



at the AGM on 27 November 2021. Prospective members include the IBA-PhD, the PhD association of the National Graduate School in Infection Biology and Antimicrobials; KLM Tek, the association for temporary employees at the Oslo University Hospital; as well as recently started organisations at Nord University, and BI Norwegian Business School.

### 3.3 – New member organisations

In 2022, one new organisation applied for membership in SiN. USN Stipendiat og Postdoktor Organisasjon (USN SPO) was formed during 2022, and submitted an application for regular membership to SiN. Their application was considered at the 2022 AGM and USN SPO was accepted. USN SPO reported the following membership number:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>PhDs enrolled</b>	<b>Postdocs</b>
USN SPO	USN - University of South-Eastern Norway	306	19

SiN continues to reach out to doctoral organisations in Norway who are not yet connected to SiN, and to advise PhDs at institutions who do not yet have a doctoral organisation, and who wish to organise themselves.

## 4. Activities

### 4.1 – Board meetings and quarterly meetings

SiN has held eight regular board meetings from January 2022 until November 2022. These were all held online. Not counting board members who resigned or were on leave, attendance was always higher than 67% and averaged around 89% which is significantly higher than in 2021 where the attendance rate was 75%.

Date	Type	Attendance
24.01.2022	Board meeting	100%
28.02.2022	Board meeting	89%
28.03.2022	Board meeting	100%
25.04.2022	Board meeting	89%
30.05.2022	Board meeting	89%
20.06.2022	Board meeting	67%
29.08.2022	Board meeting	89%
26.09.2022	Board meeting	89%
31.10.2022	Board meeting	55%
12.12.2022	Board meeting	50%

To facilitate dialogue with our member organisations between the Annual General Meetings, SiN started hosting quarterly meetings with the Presidents of local organisations at 3-month intervals. Following each Quarterly meetings, a newsletter was sent out summing up the most important discussion points and items for follow up. In the board period 2022, the Quarterly meetings were held on the following dates:

Date	Type	Attendance
29.02.2022	Quarterly meeting	SiN board, UiBDoc, NHHDoc, DION, OsloMet, TODOS, UiSDC
31.05.2022	Quarterly meeting	SiN board, UiBDoc, DION, NIH, OsloMet, UiADoc, TODOS, UiODoc, UiSDC
30.08.2022	Quarterly meeting	SiN board, NHHDoc, UiBDoc, OsloMet, SoDoc, DION, TODOS, UiADoc, UiSDC, UiODoc

Between the first Quarterly Meeting and the last, engagement among member organisations rose from 6 participants to 9 participants. This can be partially attributed to communication issues surrounding the first Quarterly Meeting, which resulted in some members receiving the invitation on a very short notice, but this was remedied for the

subsequent meetings. We hope to retain the high level engagement at the AGM and throughout the next board terms.

Minutes from all board meetings and quarterly meetings can be found on the SiN website<sup>2</sup>.

## 4.2 – Representation in external bodies

### Universities Norway, UHR

Each year, SiN has a delegate in the working committee of the research section of Universities Norway (UHR-forskning), which consists of representatives of each member institution. The section meets 1-2 times a year, and the committee 4-6 times a year. In addition, UHR hosts an annual conference. During the 2021, SiN attended the following UHR meetings:

Date	Meeting
12 Feb.	Working committee
7 April	Working committee
10 May	UHR-forskning biannual meeting
31 May	Working committee
17 Sept.	Working committee
3 Nov.	Working committee
7 Nov.	UHR conference
8 Dec.	UHR-forskning biannual meeting

### Eurodoc

SiN is a member of the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers, as one of 29 national doctoral organisations from 26 different countries in Europe. Due to the postponed SiN AGM in 2020, the SiN board was not able to attend and appoint a delegate to the Eurodoc AGM, thus a new position on the SiN board 2022 was the position of the Eurodoc Liaison Officer. The motivation to add this position to the board was to enhance the communication between SiN and Eurodoc, which has seen a decline over the past years. The tasks included screening of all the incoming emails from Eurodoc, forwarding relevant information to the board and the communication team for further national distribution.

From 17 July 2021 until the AGM, Bikal Ghimire was the formal contact point for Eurodoc. On 27 November, Friederike Schäfer was elected Eurodoc liaison officer at the AGM, and she started in this capacity in January 2022.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://stipendiat.no/documents-2/documents/>

On the international level, SiN participated in the 20th Eurodoc anniversary celebration meeting, in the three national association meetings organised by Eurodoc, an ad hoc meeting on Russian attack on Ukraine, Eurodoc’s AGM, and the KRECon conference. The dates and topics of these meetings are summarised in Table 1. For the Eurodoc AGM the annual questionnaire was answered. Two delegates, the Eurodoc Liaison Officer and SiN’s president, attended the Eurodoc AGM in person in Vilnius, Lithuania. SiN also participated in Eurodoc’s survey on *Ending gender based violence in academia*.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Type of Meeting</b>	<b>Topic</b>
2nd Feb.	online	20th anniversary of Eurodoc	Celebration of Eurodoc
28th Feb.	online	1st national association meeting	Eurodoc statutes and internal regulations
28th Feb.	online	extraordinary meeting	Eurodoc meeting on Russian attacks on Ukraine
10th, 11th Jun.	Vilnius, Lithuania	Eurodoc AGM	Reports of the board, budget for the new year, Eurodoc statements, statutes and internal regulation changes, elections of the new board
6th Sept.	online	2nd national association meeting	Working groups, Gender equality plan & Ukraine task force & public European Medicines Infrastructure
tbd	online	3rd national association meeting	Statutes & internal regulations
9th - 12th Nov	Prague, Czech Republic	KRECon conference 2022	Enhancing Research Careers, Focus session on Open Science

**TABLE 1.** SiN representation on the international level

In November, the Eurodoc liaison officer participated in the two-day KRECon conference 2022 on the topic Enhancing researchers careers in Prague, Czech Republic. On the day before the conference, Wednesday 9th of November, a focus session was held on the Open Research Europe (ORE) project organised by Eurodoc. Discussion points in this session included new approaches to research data management in ORE, open peer review and involvement of early career researchers, and ORE and the reform of research assessment. The key points of this discussion will be summarised in the following weeks

and then published through Eurodoc. Participation in the KRECon conference strengthened the ties between SiN and Eurodoc. Further, an interview of SiNs Eurodoc liaison officer is planned in December since such an official position is unique among Eurodoc's national associations. Last, SiN will participate in summarising the key points from an earlier discussion this year among Eurodoc national associations in a Eurodoc document on multilingual publications on research output.

The Eurodoc Liaison Officer commented on a total of eight consultations on a variety of topics. Details are found in Table 2. Further, SiN followed the call from Eurodoc to endorse the manifesto for Early Career Researchers, which was formed under the scope of the 4th Gago Conference on European Science Policy, which was jointly organised by Ciência Viva, Initiative for Science in Europe (ISE) and the CNRS.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Document owner</b>	<b>Topic</b>
4th March	Eurodoc response to RMU open letter	Eurodoc condemns Russian aggression against Ukraine
25th March	European Commission	R1-R4 Profile examples for all sectors of activity of researchers
14th April	European Commission	Draft on agreement on reforming research assessment
25th May	Eurodoc statement	Mental health of early career researchers
20th May	Eurodoc statement	Academic freedom
11th July	joint statement of Eurodoc, Marie Curie Alumni Association, Young Academy of Europe, International Consortium of Research Staff Association, Global Young Academy	Statement on the EU Council conclusions on Research Assessment and the Implementation of Open Science
5th Oct.	Les Femmes Chef d'Entreprises Mondiales (FCEM)	Covid-19 impact on women
13th Oct.	Joint letter by Eurodoc, International Consortium of Research Staff Associations, Marie Curie Alumni Association, Young Academy of Europe	Joint Open Letter to Mariya Gabriel on Supporting Ukrainian Academia
tbd	Eurodoc	Sustainability Strategy for the Open Research Europe (ORE) project

tbd	Eurodoc	Multilingual publication of research output
tbd	Eurodoc	Interview on SiNs position of the Eurodoc liaison officer

**TABLE 2.** SiN's participation in writing and commenting on international documents and articles

### **National body for PhD education within teacher education**

In December 2020, SiN appointed two PhD-representatives to the new national body for PhD education within teacher education ("Nasjonalt fagorgan for PhD utdanning innen lærerutdanning"), as requested by UHR-Lærerutdanning. These representatives are currently doing a PhD in the field of teacher education. In 2022 the SiN representative was Chris Magnussen (UiBDoc).

### **Committee on Gender Balance and Diversity**

The Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity (Kif-komiteén) concluded its activities at a conference in Oslo on 11 November 2021, and is starting a new committee for the term 2022-2025. SiN has been invited to appoint two representatives who will represent the interests of PhDs and postdocs in this. New representatives in this committee will be appointed each year as the composition of the SiN board changes. Representatives for the year 2022 were Anna Piterskaya (main) and Johanne Kalsaas (deputy). Representatives elected for 2023 are Nicolas Gibney (main) and Ole Kristian Dyskeland (deputy).

## **4.3 – Consultations**

In 2022, SiN replied to the following national consultations from the Ministry of Education and Research (KD):

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Description</b>
10.10.2022	Tuition fees for non EU/EEA students	22/3898 Høring om innføring av studieavgifter for studenter fra land utenfor EØS-området eller Sveits
03.10.2022	Early-career Recruitment	Høring om plan for rekruttering og tidlig karriere
1.7.2022	Digital Transformation in Higher Education	22/02109 Høring – Handlingsplan og samstyringsmodell for digital omstilling i høyre utdanning og forskning
1.4.2022	Academic Freedom of Expression	22/1719 Høring NOU 2022: 2 Akademisk ytringsfrihet

18.03.2022	Financing of Universities and University Colleges	22/1447 Høyring av rapport frå ekspertutval om finansiering av universitet og høgskular
22.06.2022	New Universities Law	22/3062 Høring – Gunnlag for ny universitets- og høyskolelov

SiN has also actively contributed to surveys and reports issued by the Universities Norway Council (UHR):

Date	Topic	Description
19.02.2021	Handling of extensions for PhD students due to covid-19	Kartlegging av institusjonenes håndtering av forlengelser for ph.d.-stipendiater grunnet korona
16.06.2021	Academic career assessment	NOR-CAM – Veileder for vurdering i akademiske karriereløp
23.08.2021	Academic career structure	En helhetlig stillingsstruktur i akademia – rapport fra Stillingsstrukturutvalget

Finally, SiN has provided input on the Norwegian Research Council's planned efforts for recruitment in the early career stage:

Date	Topic	Description
06.12.2021	Researcher recruitment and early career	Innspill til plan for Forskningsrådets innsats for rekruttering og tidlig karriere

SiN strives to provide input on all plans, strategies and policy proposals affecting early career researchers in Norway, issued by national governments, councils and interest organisations. In doing so, SiN aims to give a fair representation of the interests of our member organisations, informed by formally adopted position statements. Where pre-existing positions are not available, SiN will always ask its member organisations for input in order to come to a balanced commentary. All consultation statements and input on surveys and reports can be found on the website<sup>3</sup>.

#### 4.4 – Contact with member organisations

SiN strives to connect and support doctoral organisations across Norway in their daily activities. Given the increasing number of doctoral organisations, both in Norway and as SiN members, it is no longer possible to include all member organisations in the SiN board. The partial representation of member organisations in the SiN board entails two risks: firstly, that SiN might lose sight of some of its members and therefore give a biased

<sup>3</sup> <https://stipendiat.no/documents-2/hearing-statements/>

representation; and secondly, that member organisations might lose informal ways to get in touch with each other and hence opportunities to learn from and support their peers.

These risks are partially compensated through the initiation of quarterly meetings in between the Annual General Meetings, which provide an opportunity for the SiN board to collect a diverse set of opinions as well as a meeting place for organisations to become acquainted. A balanced representation is also ensured by consulting member organisations on important policy developments, such as the covid-19 extensions; the academic career structure; and the government's long-term plan for research and education. To prevent lengthy processes for each new case that SiN is requested to give input on, and facilitate a fast response to media enquiries, SiN continued formulating concise position statements through a bottom-up process on a small set of broad topics. SiN's main position statement in 2022 was on the topic of internationalisation of the research sector in Norway. Beyond this, further positions are under considerations on such topics as research theft, supervision, and PhD-specific ombudsmen at universities. Current position statements cover quality in PhD and postdoctoral education, compensation for the effects of the pandemic and institutional support for the collective organisation of PhDs and postdocs, and the internationalisation of research in Norway. Future statements will be added, and it is SiN's ambition to add more detail and update these policies as the conditions and needs of our members change. SiN also plans to have all future statements available in both Norwegian and English, as well as translating the statements already posted. All adopted positions are formally adopted through a vote among our member organisations and published on our website<sup>4</sup>.

To strengthen information flow within our growing network of member organisations, SiN has also established a digital communication channel where the leaders of member organisations can exchange views and contact each other directly without mediation of the SiN board. In 2022, Slack was used as the tool of choice for these purposes – although this is not fixed and might change depending on preferences of the member organisations.

The platform is not used by SiN for formal communication. SiN continues to use email for all formal communication with its member organisations, including meeting invitations, newsletters and consultation processes, and keeps an updated database of contact points, including the leaders and general board email lists.

SiN also serves as a direct contact point for PhD students and postdocs across Norway and has, among other things, received questions about supervision, intellectual property, Norwegian language training, compensation for the effects of Covid-19, and what to do when experiencing harassment or bullying at work. In the event of such inquiries, SiN either responds directly or forwards the inquiry to the relevant member organisation or other partners.

In addition to serving the interests of our current members, SiN reaches out to doctoral programmes at higher education institutions that do not have a doctoral interest organisation yet, and offers support to those who might be interested in setting one up. In

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<sup>4</sup> <https://stipendiat.no/documents-2/resolutions/>



the board period 2022 SiN has been invited to give a presentation of our doctoral network to PhD students at Nord University, University of Southern Norway, and BI Norwegian Business School. Of the three, USN has applied for regular membership which will be considered at the 2022 AGM.

Further interest was expressed by KLM Tek, the association for temporary employees at Oslo University Hospital. The SiN board is positive to accepting KLM Tek as a member if they meet the three criteria set out in SiN's statutes.

## **4.5 – Working groups**

SiN started with working as a way to direct their efforts towards important topics in 2019, and has continued this way of working throughout 2020, 2021 and 2022. Given the large number of working groups in 2021, during Board Period 2022 the decision was made to reduce this number to three, covering Internationalisation, PhD Day events, and Mental Health and Well-being.

The Mental Health and Well-being Working Group continued its work, with a primary focus on the pandemic period. The working group on mobility and internationalisation was focusing on the important topic of internationalisation. A newly formed working group was tasked with organising the PhD Day. Furthermore, a new initiative emerged in 2022, and SiN formed a working group to address it in the best way possible by forming a Research theft working group.

### **Mental Health and Well-being**

This working group has been active since 2020 and shifted its focus to include the effects of the pandemic on early career researchers. In 2022, members of this working group were Chris Magnussen, Andrea Vallejo Vargas and Sanja Mrkšić Kovačević. This working group mobilised responses from SiN's member organisations on the handling of extensions for PhD students during the pandemic by their institutions. This survey was a follow-up of the initial COVID-19 survey conducted in 2021. The follow-up survey provided a general insight into extensions and working conditions throughout the pandemic, but it also focused on intangible effects such as mental health and well-being. The follow-up survey was used to compile a report on PhD and postdoc's experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was distributed to SiN members, as well as posted on SiN's website.

### **Internationalisation**

Given that internationalisation was currently being discussed in the public sphere at the end of 2021 and beginning of 2022, SiN formed a working group with the aim of producing a position statement on Internationalisation in the Academic Sector. This was completed and posted to our website in the first half of 2022. The working group was then disbanded.

The working group consisted of Nicolas Gibney, Yauhen Yakimenka, and Friederike Schafer. Working together, the group drafted a list of preliminary concerns and questions about internationalisation, both from their own experiences and from those mentioned in

the media and by colleagues. This was then drafted into a preliminary statement and shared with the SiN board. The statement was further refined by the SiN board before being shared with the local organisations. Local organisations had a 2-month comment period, during which SiN received a number of comments, some of which were included in the statement, others of which were discarded after consultation with the local organisation which submitted them.

The end result was a statement outlining the views of SiN and its members on internationalisation. This was the first SiN position statement to be published in both English and Norwegian.

### **PhD Day Events**

Following the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, the board of SiN decided to undertake physical events, linked with PhD Days, to raise the organisation's profile, and to provide additional benefits for our members. This culminated in the hosting of two events, a labor union breakfast where labor unions were invited to present themselves and the benefits of organisation to PhDs and postdocs, and a "Life after PhD" seminar where guests with PhDs from the public, private, and academic sectors were invited to speak.

The working group consisted of Anna Piterskaya, Siamak Karimi, and Johanne Kalsaas. Beginning at the transition seminar between the 2021 and 2022 boards, this group began to brainstorm what kind of events could be useful for SiN's members, as well as events which could be easily switched to online, given the ever-present uncertainty around COVID-19. The group undertook a survey of member organisations to gauge general interest, discover topics, and determine whether local organisations were interested in co-sponsoring events. The final slate of events were planned to be 3, Union Breakfast, Life After PhD, and a panel debate. Owing to budget constraints and uncertainty around financing levels, the panel debate had to be canceled. Despite this, the plans for the event were maintained, and it remains possible to hold it during 2023.

The two events which were held, were held at the end of September. The Union Breakfast was held in person at the University of Oslo in conjunction with UiODoc, and the Life After PhD seminar was held digitally, also in conjunction with UiODoc , to ensure maximum participation.

## **4.6 – Outreach**

In addition to formal representation and writing reports and articles, SiN strives to disseminate information and advocate for PhDs and postdocs by maintaining an active presence in the public arena. To achieve this, SiN attends major conferences in the field of higher education policy and research politics, gives invited presentations at conferences and higher education institutions, and publishes content on our website.

### **Mental health**

SiN has especially tried to raise awareness in various policy arenas (both local and national) of the vulnerable position of PhD students and postdocs in the academic

landscape, with high stress and uncertain working conditions that are only exacerbated by the pandemic.

Furthermore, SiN organised a COVID-19 follow-up survey in spring 2022, which provided insights into how PhD students and postdocs coped during and after the pandemic, with a special focus on mental health.

### **Conference Participation**

SiN participated in three conferences during the course of 2022. First was the Forskerutdanningskonferansen, where the SiN President gave a keynote address on PhD and Postdoc's experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic. Preliminary results of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Surveys were used to provide context for the presentation. At the same conference the SiN President participated in a panel discussion on international mobility for PhDs along with Dr. Alexander Hasgall from the EUA-CDE (European Universities Association - Center for Doctoral Education).

SiN was again invited to present at the University of Stavanger's PhD Supervisor / PhD Candidate-seminar on the 30th of September. The topic was on how to build a network as a PhD student. This was also used as an opportunity to discuss the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on PhD students.

On the 22nd of November, SiN's President participated in a panel discussion at the OECD's Global Science Forum Workshop. The topic at hand was job placement and career opportunities for PhDs, post-doctors, and other early-career researchers.

## **4.7 – Communications strategy**

The communication team has made a concerted effort to implement SiN's communication strategy in practice. The strategy was developed and integrated in the guidelines only during the previous board period, and there is still work to be done in establishing SiN as a strong voice for PhDs and other early-career scholars in the Norwegian public. Towards the end of the board period we have seen a debate about the public presence of SiN and The Young Academy of Norway (AYF) respectively, with some early-career scholars lamenting the fact that AYF, despite being a highly selective organ, is often presented as spokespersons for early-career scholars as such. While we acknowledge the tremendous value of AYF and their work, we read this recent debate as a strong signal that a broad and inclusive umbrella-organisation like SiN is sorely needed in the public conversation about Norwegian academia.

In our work to strengthen SiN's public presence and advocacy role, the board has made a conscious effort to improve information flows both with member organisations, and with the 'general public' of PhDs and postdocs in Norway. The former was done by consulting member organisations about public statements and (less time-sensitive) interview requests, promoting the activities of local organisations, while also encouraging them to engage with each other and SiN both publicly and in our internal communication platform (Slack). The latter was accomplished by highlighting current issues in Norwegian

academia on our online platforms (website, Facebook and Twitter), where anyone can follow us, engage with our content and provide us with useful comments.

We have worked to make our content accessible to Norwegian and international PhDs alike, by always publishing (as far as possible) in both Norwegian and English. We are aware that public debate on higher education in Norway is largely inaccessible to non Norwegian speakers, and the communication team has seen part of its purpose in trying to bridge this gap.

Finally, we have used our platforms to reach out directly to PhDs and postdocs in Norway for the purpose of information gathering, notably when we asked our followers to share their experiences with research theft as early-career scholars. We also had great success in asking our followers directly if anyone would be interested in contributing as speakers on our PhD-day, resulting in a truly crowd-sourced event.

#### 4.7.1 — Media coverage in 2022

The board (in particular the president) and communication team made it a priority to take an active part in public debate about Norwegian academia in 2022. We contributed to several stories by nation-wide outlets such as Khrono and Forskerforum. We also had success in getting our own press releases, position statements and op-eds published. Among the issues we addressed most frequently were internationalisation, research theft from early-career scholars, research, and career outlooks in Norwegian academia. Below is a selection of media coverage of SiN during the present board period:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vartdal, R. (2022, 07 April). Har startet kampanje mot forskningstyveri: - Jeg vet jeg skal klare dette. Khrono. Har startet kampanje mot forskningstyveri: — Jeg vet jeg skal klare dette (khrono.no). [Topic: The campaign against research theft has started – I know I can do this]</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arnesen, M. &amp; Tønnessen, E. (2022, 14 April). Visumgebyr skaper hodebry for stipendiater. Khrono. Visumgebyr skaper hodebry for stipendiater (khrono.no). [Topic: Visa fees cause headaches for PhD students]</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Schei, A. (2022, 05 May). Vurderer å starte #pleasedontstealmywork kampanje i Norge. Khrono. Vurderer å starte #pleasedontstealmywork-kampanje i Norge (khrono.no). [Topic: Considering starting a #pleasedontstealmywork campaign in Norway]</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gibney, N. (2022, 16 May). Internasjonalisering lønner seg. Khrono. Internasjonalisering lønner seg (khrono.no). [Topic: Internationalisation pays off]</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gjengedal, K. (2022, 17 August). Professor ønsker høgast mogleg generelle tillegg i lokale lønsforhandlingar. Forskerforum. Professor ønsker høgast mogleg generelle tillegg i lokale lønsforhandlingar (forskerforum.no). [Topic: The professor wants as much as possible general additions in local salary negotiations]</li></ul>

<p>Schei, A. &amp; Svarstad J. (2022, 07 September). Kritik mot rapport om gjennomførte doktorgrader. Khrono. Kritik mot rapport om gjennomførte doktorgrader (khrono.no). [Topic: Criticism of reports on completed doctoral degrees]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mikkelsen, S. (2022, 15 September). Skjevt maktforhold gjør at doktorkandidater slutter. Khrono. — Skjevt maktforhold gjør at doktorkandidater slutter (khrono.no). [Topic: Distorted power relations cause doctoral candidates to quit]</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mikkelsen, S. (2022, 03 October). Stipendiater etterlyser en nøytral mekler når samarbeid med veileder krasjer. Khrono. Stipendiater etterlyser en nøytral mekler når samarbeid med veileder krasjer (khrono.no). [Topic: PhD students call for a neutral mediator when cooperation with a supervisor crashes]</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fanghol, T. A. (2022, 18 February). <i>Stipendiatene ser på jobbmarked og internasjonalisering</i>. Khrono. <a href="https://khrono.no/stipendiatene-ser-pa-jobbmarked-og-internasjonalisering/662785">https://khrono.no/stipendiatene-ser-pa-jobbmarked-og-internasjonalisering/662785</a> [Topic: Plans of SiN's 2022-board]</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Schei, A. (2022, 8 May). Vurderer å starte #pleasedontstealmywork-kampanje i Norge. Khrono. <a href="https://khrono.no/vurderer-a-starte-pleasedontstealmywork-kampanje-i-norge/685956">https://khrono.no/vurderer-a-starte-pleasedontstealmywork-kampanje-i-norge/685956</a> [Topic: research theft]</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Schei, A. (2022, 12 October). <i>Regjeringen vil slutte å øremerke midler til stipendiater og postdoktorer</i>. Khrono. <a href="https://khrono.no/regjeringen-vil-slutte-a-oremerke-midler-til-stipendiater-og-postdoktorer/724603">https://khrono.no/regjeringen-vil-slutte-a-oremerke-midler-til-stipendiater-og-postdoktorer/724603</a> [Topic: Investment in research]</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rønning, A. O. (2022, 18 October) <i>Frykter frislipp vil bety færre stipendiater</i>. Forskerforum. <a href="https://www.forskerforum.no/frykter-frislipp-vil-bety-faerre-stipendiater/">https://www.forskerforum.no/frykter-frislipp-vil-bety-faerre-stipendiater/</a> [Topic: Investment in research]</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gibney, N. (2022, 27 October). <i>Vi trenger en nasjonal portal for doktorgradskurs</i>. Khrono. <a href="https://khrono.no/vi-trenger-en-nasjonal-portal-for-doktorgradskurs/728834">https://khrono.no/vi-trenger-en-nasjonal-portal-for-doktorgradskurs/728834</a> [Topic: PhD education]</li> </ul>

## 5. Future Plans

### 5.1 – Planned activities for 2023

The board of SiN for 2023 has a number of plans for their board term. Their goal is to facilitate contact with SiN's member organisations, increase SiN's visibility within Norway with new outreach and events, raise SiN's profile through position statements, consultation statements, and to increase the number of collaborations both within Norway and in Europe.

The board for 2023 intends to keep up the activity schedule of 2022, and still be a voice in the public debate on topics relevant for PhD students and postdocs.

In particular, the board has three special project groups that will work throughout the year. Given the dire financial situation SiN is with deficit spending and a lower than anticipated public grant for 2023 a working group will look into budgetary measures and alternative funding sources to keep the organisation able to operate into 2024 and beyond.

Additionally, the board works on issues related to mental health and supervision. These two topics are the most pressing issues for many PhD candidates in Norway, where there doesn't appear to be any systematic thought for the role of PhDs as they often fall between the employee-side system and the student-side systems. We have started engagement with the UHR committee on supervision about this issue.

Lastly, the PhD degree is the deepest specialisation offered in the Norwegian education system, but it currently is targeted for a future career in the research sector. However, this is neither the only available path nor necessarily everyone's preferred outcome nor indeed the most likely path, as only 20% of graduating PhDs in Norway will find work in academia. SiN has started work to try and highlight the soft skills and other values PhDs have to business besides deep knowledge.

In terms of events, SiN is working with the local organisations on being involved in a greater number of locally organised events rather than doing national bigger events. We will try to bring more local debates upwards from the member organisations, as well as bring the national engagement of the SiN board downwards to the local organisations .

In terms of external collaborations, SiN plans to continue talks with its opposite numbers in Denmark (PAND) and Sweden (SFS-DK). Collaboration opportunities will depend on partner availability and ambition, but the board plans to take initiative in trying to organise joint pan Nordic events. In addition, Norwegian PhD researchers currently sit on the board and in working groups of Eurodoc; this situation should, inasmuch as possible, be maintained to give SiN a voice at the European level. Lastly, we will work to try and build deeper relationships with other young researcher groups such as Akademiet for Yngre Forskere.

SiN has a number of ambitious plans for 2024, and as such, will likely use a significant portion of its current equity. In order to operate to its fullest potential, both in 2024 and beyond, SiN will need higher levels of grants in the future. The 2023 budget is not

sustainable, and if the group is to be able to operate beyond the financial year, income will have to be increased.

For information: as of 01.01.2023, the equity of SiN is kr 151,151.33 and the total bank balance is kr 252,120.58

## 5.2 – Budget for 2023

The SiN board operates on the budget approved on the AGM the previous year, we present here the budget as approved by the AGM:

Incomes		Amount	Subtotal
<b>Membership fees</b>	Regular members	NOK 22,000.00	NOK 23,000.00
	Affiliate members	NOK 1,000.00	
<b>HKdir</b>	Subsidy	NOK 280,000.00	NOK 280,000.00
<b>Total income</b>			<b>NOK 303,000.00</b>
<b>Expeses</b>			
<b>Board work</b>	Compensation	NOK 117,000.00	NOK 182,400.00
	Taxation for board compensation	NOK 60,000.00	
	President's mobile	NOK 5,400.00	
<b>AGM</b>	Travel and accommodation	NOK 43,500.00	NOK 69,100.00
	Catering (lunch, coffee and snacks)	NOK 7,975.00	
	Dinner for board and delegates	NOK 10,875.00	
	Transition dinner for old and new board	NOK 6,750.00	
<b>Transition seminar</b>	Travel and accommodation	NOK 24,000.00	NOK 31,800.00
	Dinner	NOK 4,500.00	
	Lunch	NOK 3,300.00	
<b>EuroDoc</b>	Membership fee	NOK 3,000.00	NOK 6,000.00
	EuroDoc AGM	NOK 3,000.00	
<b>Representation &amp; conferences</b>	UHR delegate	NOK 8,000.00	NOK 23,500.00
	UHR conference	NOK 5,500.00	
	Other conferences*	NOK 10,000.00	

Incomes		Amount	Subtotal
<b>Events **</b>	PhD day	NOK 0.00	NOK 0.00
	Forskningsdagene	NOK 0.00	
<b>Other</b>	Website	NOK 500.00	NOK 17,100.00
	Bank fees	NOK 3,600.00	
	Accountant (auditor)	NOK 13,000.00	
<b>Total expenses</b>			<b>NOK 329,900.00</b>
<b>Balance</b>			<b>NOK (26,900.00)</b>

The 2023 SiN board has initiated a subcommittee to evaluate and plan for the organisation's financial situation. Without strengthening the revenue side of the organisation, its activity and engagement on behalf of PhD students and postdocs in Norway will not be sustainable.

### 5.3 – Continued need for funding

SiN's primary mission is to be the central representative body for PhD students and postdocs in Norway. As such we answer government consultations, engage with other bodies and committees, we represent PhD candidates and postdocs' voices in the national media, and we do advocacy on behalf of our members to improve or adjust public policy. We do so by being available where policies affecting our members are being discussed, and work to be proactive in the public debate. Conference attendance, and having people present in these fora constitute a significant cost for SiN. Our member organisations do tremendous work locally working with the PhD candidates and the institutions. As SiN keeps growing, encompassing more and more PhD candidates and postdocs, we find we are expected to provide more for our members. This could range from more position statements, to greater participation at conferences, to more physical and digital events organised for all PhD and post-doctoral researchers in Norway, and potentially in the Nordics.

SiN took a real hit in its activity repertoire during the Covid-19 pandemic and the 2022 board has attempted to increase the activity plan SiN supports in offering PhD candidates in Norway. However, given the organisation's financial situation, the 2022 AGM decided that bigger events such as PhD Day would constitute a financial risk to keep up in 2023. The 2023 board also had planned on attending events such as Arendalsuka to foster discussion with our partners and to promote the value of the PhD degree to civil society. The current funding does not allow SiN to be engaged in national events about the PhD student situation, nor for PhD students. Nor does it allow effective advocacy on behalf of the PhD students in arenas where other groups advocate for their stakeholders. We



thus wish to increase our ability to financially and administratively support to the local organisations.

Regardless of what SiN's members expect, as a growing organisation, the workload will continue to increase for SiN's board. In order to provide the best possible support to members, it would be unsurprising if the workload expected of the board exceeded the planned 800 hours per board period, as it has done for the past 3 board periods. The current compensation pot has been held constant for years, and we find that for many interested applicants, it is tough to motivate setting aside potential research time to do work for SiN at the current compensation rate. Especially among Norwegian candidates, have we noticed more and more choose not to be engaged, and we believe we will be able to work with public agencies and others with less friction when there are Norwegians on our board who speak the language and know the system's culture up front.

The more funding we have, the more funding we can do. The general consensus from the studies on PhD candidate welfare shows that there are an excessive degree of mental health issues among the PhDs, and that the levels of stress and depression are critical. In 2023 we are working on systematising this knowledge and finding solutions to ease the mental burden many PhD candidates feel. With more funding we can follow that up and work closer with the local organisations and universities and do more outreach to make sure the candidates who are uncomfortable talking to their advisor, administrators or HR about their issues can be heard and represented.

SiN's output has also grown along with its membership. We refer to section 4 of this report to see what we managed in 2022, with more funding in 2024, we should be able to better represent the voice and be constructive in making Norway the best place for PhD candidates to work and study.

Incomes	Subtotal	
Membership fees	NOK	23,000.00
HKdir	NOK	340,000.00
<b>Total income</b>	<b>NOK</b>	<b>363,000.00</b>
Expeses		
Board work	NOK	200,000.00
AGM	NOK	50,000.00
Transition seminar (12 attendants)	NOK	30,000.00
EuroDoc	NOK	10,000.00
Representation & conferences	NOK	40,000.00
Events	NOK	30,000.00

Incomes	Subtotal	
Other	NOK	5,000.00
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>NOK</b>	<b>365,000.00</b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>NOK</b>	<b>(2,000.00)</b>

## 6. Accounts for 2022 / Årsregnskap 2022 (in Norwegian)

### 6.1 — Inntekter og utgifter

Ved årets inngang hadde SiN NOK 252 120.58 i egenkapital.

Note	Inntekter		
1	Medlemsinntekter	NOK	22,000.00
2	Offentlig tilskudd	NOK	260,000.00
	Innsamlede midler og gaver	NOK	869.17
	Diverse inntekter		
	<b>Sum inntekt</b>	<b>NOK</b>	<b>282,869.17</b>
	Driftsutgifter		
3	Reise- og møtekostnader	NOK	(111,804.77)
4	Seminarer og konferanser	NOK	(40,901.00)
5	Eurodoc medlemsavgift	NOK	(4,083.02)
6	Nettside	NOK	(481.25)
7	Banktjenester	NOK	(3,414.00)
8	Revisjonshonorar	NOK	(12,500.00)
9	Styrekompensasjon	NOK	(193,382.55)
10	Skatt for styrekompensasjon	NOK	(67,167.00)
11	Postboks	-	
12	Regnskapshonorar	-	
13	Skatt for regnskapshonorar	-	
14	Kontor Forsyninger	-	
	<b>Sum driftskostnader</b>	<b>NOK</b>	<b>(433,733.59)</b>
	<b>Driftsresultat</b>	<b>NOK</b>	<b>(150,864.42)</b>
	Finansinntekter og -kostnader		
15	Renteinntekter	NOK	0.00
	<b>Sum finansinntekter</b>	<b>NOK</b>	<b>0.00</b>

Note	Inntekter		
	<b>Årsresultat</b>	<b>NOK</b>	<b>(150,864.42)</b>
	Overføringer		
<b>16</b>	Avsatt til annen egenkapital	NOK	0.00
	<b>Sum overføringer</b>	<b>NOK</b>	<b>0.00</b>

## 6.2 – Eiendeler

SiNs eiendeler er:

Note	Eiendeler		
	Eiendeler	NOK	2,022.00
	Bankinnskudd	NOK	100,385.88
	<b>Sum inntekt</b>	<b>NOK</b>	<b>100,385.88</b>

Og av egenkapital og gjeld:

Note	Egenkapital		
<b>17</b>	Annen egenkapital	NOK	100,385.88
	<b>Sum inntekt</b>	<b>NOK</b>	<b>100,385.88</b>
	<b>Kortsiktig gjeld</b>		
	mottat tilskudd, ikke benyttet	NOK	0.00
	<b>Sum inntekt</b>	<b>NOK</b>	<b>0.00</b>
	<b>Sum egenkapital og gjeld</b>	<b>NOK</b>	<b>100,385.88</b>

Se noter til regnskapet som:

1. Medlemsavgift fra medlemsorganisasjoner – 11 stk. à kr. 2000
2. Tilskudd fra tildeler HK-dir
3. Utgifter i forbindelse med SiN generalforsamling 2022 og andre møter, herunder
  - Reiseutgifter for styremedlemmer og delegater
  - Måltider
  - Sosialiseringssarrangement

4. Deltakerutgifter for styremedlemer i forbindelse med UHR-Konferansen 2022 og overgangsseminar mellom gammelt og nytt styre
5. Årlig medlemsavgift til Eurodoc
6. Årlig kostnad for nettside
7. Administrasjonskostnader for bankkonto
8. Revisorkostnader
9. Kompensasjon for SiNs styremedlemmer
10. Arbeidsgiver-skatt for styremedlemkompensasjon
11. Gjelder ikke lengre
12. Gjelder ikke lengre
13. Gjelder ikke lengre
14. Gjelder ikke lengre
15. Ingen renteinntekt
16. Medlemsinntekster avsatt til egenkapital
17. Medlemsinntekster avsatt til annen egenkapital

## Signatures

*Ole Kristian Dyskeland*

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**President:** Ole Kristian Dyskeland (NHH)

*R Paul*

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**Vice President:** Regina Paul (NTNU)

*Zihao Wang*

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**Treasurer:** Zihao Wang (UiS)

*N. Gibney*

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**Communications Officer:** Nicolas Gibney (NHH)

*F. Schäfer*

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**UHR Representative:** Friedrike Schäfer (NTNU)

*Yucong Ma*

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**Webmaster:** Yucong Ma (UiS)

*Anum Masood*

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**Event Officer:** Anum Masood (NTNU)

*Jareef bin Martuza*

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**Social Media Manager:** Jareef bin Martuza (NHH)

*Dimitris Polychronopoulos*

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**Eurodoc Liaison Officer:** Dimitris Polychronopoulos (USN)