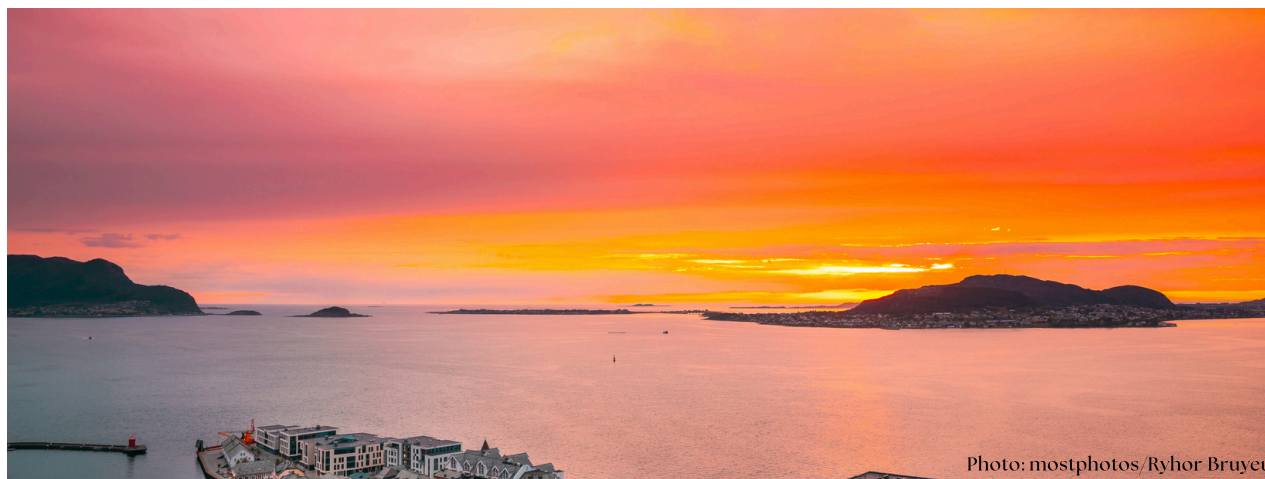


Newsletter



May 2025



Greetings from the president

Dear, member organisations.

It has been a while since our last newsletter in December. At the AGM last November it became clear that you actually are the most important value in SiN as an organisation. Because of you as local organisations, we in SiN have the power to represent temporary scientific staff at a national level. But in order to do this in the best possible way possible, we need contact with you and make a sense of community for temporary scientific staff in Norway. However, what interferes with this aim is the lack of time and the effort we put into representing temporary scientific staff at different levels. The compensation varies a lot, from those getting compensated through extra time in their contract to those not getting any compensation at all.

When looking at the Norwegian student organisation (Norsk studentorganisasjon) and local student democracies, they are often paid with regular salaries for representing students without having to take exams. It is not necessary that the organisations for temporary scientific staff should look exactly like the organisations for students, but I think we should be a little more similar to ensure that temporary scientific staff are properly represented on all levels, without reducing the time and energy devoted to doing our own research too much. We are working on the task, and our survey about the compensation is an important part of this. If you have not answered the survey yet, please let us know, and we will send you an invite. In the meantime, I think we all need to support each other and do the best we can to represent representative scientific staff without being delayed and get enough time to write our dissertation and other research activities.

Karl Henrik Storhaug Reinås

Introducing our board

Karl Henrik Storhaug Reinås



I joined SiN because I am passionate about advocating for better conditions and making a community for temporary scientific staff in Norway. After having served as a Head of governmental relations, and written a bunch of consultation statements, I thought it was time to take my engagement even further and work on the betterment of the conditions for temporary scientific staff as a president.

When I am not working on SiN matters, I am taking a PhD in health education at the Department of Education at the University of Oslo. I am writing about the communication among patients and health care professionals, and will use video recordings as a tool to explore how interactions between patients and health care professionals can be used to elicit learning, coping of illness, agency for one's own health and increase the overall health literacy. This is done through ethnographic field work with the use of person-centered care as a framework.

I am passionately interested in politics in general, and sometimes I ask myself if I use too much time on it. Maybe I should have taken a PhD in political science, instead? For example, I watch the daily news (Dagsreveyen) and listen to the political debate programs Politisk kvarter and Dagsnytt 18 everyday, in addition to reading newspapers. Otherwise I love listening to podcasts, so you often find me hiking while listening to an interesting podcast.

Claire Degail - Vice president

I joined SiN to complete my experience with TODOS, the local organization for PhD candidates and postdoctoral researchers at the UiT the Arctic University of Norway. I wanted to get both perspectives of contributing to the wellness of PhDs and postdocs in my more immediate environment, and understanding how we can make the voices of early career researchers heard at a higher level.

I started working at the UiT three years ago and my doctoral research focuses on quality and parental satisfaction with Norwegian municipal services for children, with a special focus on child welfare services.

Beside academic work and associations, I like hiking to cabins, lakeside picnics when Tromsø's weather allows for it, board games evenings, yoga sessions and the heated indoor pool of the local swimming center.





Davit Gigilashvili - Head of Communications

It's a great honor and responsibility to be elected SiN's Head of Communications. I'm a postdoc at NTNU Colourlab and spent four years on the board of a local interest organization, DION, working to support early career researchers on issues from mental health to career development.

After those years, I realized two things: first, that real impact requires working at a higher level, as local organizations have limited political influence. SiN, as a national umbrella organization, is perfect for this. Second, local groups often work alone, though there's huge potential in sharing knowledge and efforts. The motto of my home country, Georgia, is "Strength is in Unity" - and I believe unity is key for us too. That's why I campaigned to create a platform for better cooperation among local organizations, which led to the idea of a shared Discord server (more about this later in the newsletter).

As Head of Communications, I also get to stay in close contact with the community, sharing news and updates through our channels. I manage our social media and website - so if you've ever wondered who's behind most of SiN's posts, it's me!

And a fun fact: I have time-space and grapheme-color synesthesia. For me, points in time have spatial locations, and letters, words, and numbers have colors. Maybe that's why I became a color scientist - who knows?



Fei Song - Treasurer

I'm thrilled to kick off my first term as SiN's treasurer after two busy and rewarding years with NTNU's DION. 2025 has already been a whirlwind—between January's transfer meeting, February's bookkeeping marathon (auditing and annual reports of 2024), and leading March's compensation survey, there's never a dull moment. Right now, I'm teaming up with Davit to draft an opinion piece—stay tuned for that!

Why SiN? Having seen the bumpy roads many PhDs and postdocs face, I believe change starts with speaking up—even when progress feels slow. Outside of board duties, my heart belongs to the ocean. Born in a coastal Chinese town, I developed a deep love for marine life, which led me to PhD in marine ecosystem sustainability with LCA. When I'm not buried in spreadsheets or coding, you'll find me reading, chasing good weather outdoors, or backpacking to far-off places.

Fun fact: I'm one of the rare souls who enjoys Swedish surströmming. Blame it on nostalgia—it tastes just like my hometown's fermented shrimp paste, a weirdly comforting cure for homesickness!



Kamil Piotr Szura - Head of Government Relations

My interest in advocacy and policy work grew naturally from a combination of personal experiences and a strong desire to help shape positive change. Coming from Poland, I've seen how important inclusive and fair governance is — especially for underrepresented groups. Being part of a broad movement for rights and equality at home gave me a lasting motivation to speak up and contribute where it matters.

After moving to Norway for my international master's at NTNU, I found a diverse and welcoming academic environment. I've made friends from all over the world, continued learning Norwegian, and built a strong sense of belonging in academia here. At the same time, I've become increasingly aware of the structural challenges early career researchers face: insecure contracts, a growing mismatch between expectations and support, and the risk of losing talent to other sectors.

Now, during my PhD in Environmental Biotechnology at UiS, I joined SiN as a Head of Government relations to make a difference where it matters most — in shaping the rules, policies, and systems that affect our everyday lives as researchers. With a strong interest in geopolitics and history, and a deep commitment to making academia more equal and inclusive, I want to help ensure that Norway continues to attract and retain global talent. My goal is to represent the voices of early career researchers where the important decisions are made — in legislation, funding frameworks, and institutional policy — and to help make Norwegian academia an even better place than it already is.

And now a fun fact: I'm currently on day 2,245 of my Duolingo streak — which means I've practiced my language skills every single day for over six years.



Naheeda Hamza - EuroDoc Liaison Officer

I am a PhD Fellow at the Institute of Health and Society, University of Oslo, originally from India. As EuroDoc Liaison Officer, I see a great opportunity to foster collaboration, share best practices across national networks, and ensure that the perspectives of young researchers are heard at both the national and European level. I believe in the power of collective advocacy to bring about meaningful change in research culture and policy.

In addition to my role as EuroDoc Liaison Officer to the SiN, I also work as Vice President at UiODoc. Since joining UiODoc as a member in 2023, I have felt a strong need to contribute to this initiative, addressing the challenges faced by PhD candidates, PostDocs, and other temporary staff.

Serving at both SiN and UiODoc presents a valuable opportunity to support and advocate for my peers. And when I'm not deep into research, you'll probably find me recharging in nature, enjoying quiet conversations with the trees and skies

Strategy of SiN

In the board of SiN we are currently six people. This has both benefits and drawbacks, in that we can work more effectively with fewer people involved, but that there also will be less people to distribute the work on. And it is exactly in this dilemma you can play an important role. There are oftentimes meetings and events that are happening across the country where SiN and you as local organisations could have very important perspectives. I as a president and the rest of the board try to attend as many meetings as possible, but if we should have attended all possible meetings, we would not have time left to do our own research. Therefore we hope that you, both on your own initiative and by invitation from us, can attend meetings, so that we can make a strong voice for temporary scientific staff in Norway.

As Kamil has written, there are several consultations we are invited to answer. In our quarterly meetings we will often invite you to give your opinion on what we should write and other times we will reach out to you by email. For example the new white paper about the research system in Norway has discussed the dimensioning of the PHD education. See [here](#). We have been concerned that this will be a downscaling in the offering of temporary academic positions. If this will be the case, it will mean that less people will get the opportunity to take the highest education in Norway and it will be harder to recruit talents. One of the main tasks for SiN, will be to ensure that the provision of PhD and other temporary research positions in Norway will not decrease and rather, even better, will be increasing.

As proof of the pay-off from advocating for better conditions for temporary scientific staff, we were really pleased to see that the new minister for research and higher education, Sigrun Aasland, now will remove the new Norwegian courses requirements for temporary scientific staff. We are not against temporary scientific staff learning Norwegian per se, but in the pressed and hectic period of being on a temporary contract it should be up to the individual to decide what will better benefit own career and be doable within the allotted time to do the research one is required to. I think it is time to celebrate, that actually stamina and hard work on advocating will give great results in the end. Thank you for your engagement, without your feedback it would not have been possible for us to make this clear voice towards the authorities.

Eurodoc Updates

Naheeda Hamza, EuroDoc Liason Officer

SiN continues to play a pivotal role in representing Norwegian PhD candidates and postdoctoral researchers within the European research community through its active participation in Eurodoc, the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers. SiN serves as Norway's national representative in Eurodoc, advocating for the interests of early-career researchers (ECRs) across Europe. In 2024, SiN delegates attended the Eurodoc Annual General Meeting (AGM) and conference, contributing to discussions on topics such as mental health, research funding, and international mobility.

Looking ahead, the Eurodoc Conference and AGM 2025 are scheduled to take place in Copenhagen, Denmark, hosted at the IT University of Copenhagen (ITU). The conference, themed "Breaking Barriers: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in Academia," aims to address persistent inequalities in academic settings and explore strategies for fostering inclusive research environments.

Salzburg Recommendations by Eurodoc: These are a set of guiding principles aimed at enhancing doctoral education across Europe, reflecting the shared commitment to improving the quality, structure, and recognition of doctoral training. Originally inspired by the Salzburg Principles formulated by the European University Association (EUA), Eurodoc has adapted and expanded upon these to represent the perspective of doctoral candidates and junior researchers. The Eurodoc Salzburg recommendations reflect a deepening understanding of what it truly means to support early-stage researchers in a modern academic landscape.

Eurodoc Working Groups (WGs):

Eurodoc organizes its work through a number of Working Groups, each dedicated to a specific area affecting doctoral candidates and junior researchers. These WGs actively contribute to policy, research, and advocacy initiatives:

- Mental Health WG

Focuses on improving awareness and institutional support for researcher well-being.

- Open Science WG

Promotes open access publishing, data sharing, and transparency in research methodologies.

- Career Development WG

Explores pathways inside and outside academia, providing input on policies for improving employability and skill training.

- Mobility and Internationalization WG

Addresses the challenges faced by international researchers and promotes cross-border collaborations.

- Doctoral Training WG

Works on improving the structure and content of PhD programs, aligning with the Salzburg Recommendations.

- Equality and Diversity WG

Aims to make academia more equitable and inclusive for underrepresented groups.

Each working group is composed of volunteers from national organizations like SiN (Norway) and collaborates to produce position papers, policy recommendations, and organize events or surveys at the European level.

Recent Initiatives and Positions

SiN has recently adopted several positions to enhance the academic environment for PhD candidates and postdocs. SiN supports the Gothenburg Manifesto, advocating for an academic culture grounded in trust, care, and integrity. Also, emphasizing the benefits of international collaboration, SiN advocates for policies that attract and retain international researchers in Norway. Through these initiatives and its active participation in Eurodoc, SiN continues to work towards improving the conditions and opportunities for early-career researchers in Norway and across Europe.

SiN at NARMA's Annual Conference

Our Head of Communications, Davit Gigilashvili, and advisory board member and former president, Ingvild Bergom Lunde, represented SiN at NARMA's Annual Conference in Lillestrøm. NARMA (Norwegian Network for Administration and Research Management) brings together people working in research management and administration to share experiences and strengthen collaboration — this year, with even Nordic colleagues joining the discussions.

Several important topics were covered, including export control and the balance between academic freedom and security. Clearer guidelines and faster processes are needed to reduce barriers for early career researchers. Regional cooperation across Europe and the Nordics looks set to grow.



Artificial Intelligence was another key focus. AI is already changing how research is conducted and managed, and AI literacy — using AI efficiently, ethically, and responsibly — may soon be a crucial skill for researchers at all stages.

Career guidance for doctoral candidates is gaining attention too. The Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills has launched [a framework for high-quality career services](#), helping researchers prepare for both academic and non-academic careers. Strengthening ties between academia, industry, and society is also high on the agenda.

SiN will continue to speak up for early career researchers at important fora.

Social Media and Discord

At SiN, we work hard to keep early career researchers in Norway informed about our activities, important events, and relevant developments in politics and media.

To do this, we maintain four main channels: our [website](#), [X](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#) — with Facebook and LinkedIn being the most active.

In addition to sharing news and good-to-know info, we've launched two social media campaigns on LinkedIn and Facebook:

- **#MeetTheSiNMemberOrgs** highlights the great work of our local member organizations, advocating for early career researchers at their institutions. We hope it brings them the recognition they deserve — and inspires others too.
- **#MeetTheSiNBoard** introduces you to the people behind SiN, both professionally and personally. If you're curious about who keeps SiN running, stay tuned!

We're also excited to announce the launch of our SiN Discord server!

It's a forum for direct communication between SiN and local organizations, as well as a place for member organizations to share ideas and strengthen collaboration. The server is invite-only. If you're a board member of a local organization or actively advocate for early career researchers, reach out to us at styret@stipendiat.no to join.

Keep an eye on our social media — and spread the word! We've created a leaflet to help boost SiN's visibility online. Feel free to share it on your campus or with colleagues. You can download it [here](#).

News Media presence - Making SiN more visible

SiN mentioned in newspapers and academic media

Since the election of our current board in November 2024, Stipendiatorganisasjonene i Norge (SiN) has been mentioned in several newspapers. An important element of our media presence was the debate around the Norwegian language requirement for university employees. In 2024, it was announced that PhD candidates and postdoctoral researchers without Norwegian language skills would be required to reach an A2 proficiency level in Norwegian during their employment period. For permanent employees, a requirement to achieve B2 level was announced. The regulation was first [adopted in August 2024](#). A process was started to challenge the requirement legally with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) court. Following a government change, the ministry of higher education announced a will to remove [the requirement for temporary researchers](#), leading to a new hearing of the revised policy.

Below is a summary of mentions of SiN in news and academic media, without SiN being the main author of these articles:

December 2024:

- The new board [election and composition](#) of SiN was announced in December in Khrono.
- SiN was also mentioned in a [Khrono article](#) on the complaint submitted to the EFTA Surveillance Authority (ESA) about the Norwegian language requirements for international PhD candidates and postdoctoral researchers.

February 2025

- The discussion about the Norwegian language requirements for employees in Norwegian universities received media attention internationally. The case was picked up by Nature, in [an article discussing the EFTA complaint](#) where SiN was also briefly mentioned.

April 2025:

A Khrono article discussed [differences in financial resources available](#) to PhD candidates across various institutions and universities in Norway. The article mentioned the SiN president's observations about the risk of inequalities between PhD candidates.

Summary of the opinions pieces written by SiN and published in khronos

SiN has also written and published several opinion pieces in Khrono, the online newspaper for higher education and research in Norway.

- SiN president (Karl Henrik Storhaug) and vice president (Claire Degail) wrote an [opinion piece](#) expressing concerns about the language policy and approving Minister of Research and Higher Education Sigrun Aasland's suggestions to reconsider the 15-credit and A2 requirements for temporary university employees. In March, the Ministry of Education and Research drafted new regulations proposing to remove the language training requirement for temporary academic staff.

SiN wrote an [opinion piece](#) in response to the ongoing discussion about the University of South-Eastern Norway's (USN) proposed workplace conduct policy and politeness. SiN former president (Ingvild Bergom Lunde) and SiN current president suggested that respectful interactions in academia could help create supportive environments for early-career researchers, while maintaining academic freedom. We proposed a reformulation of the USN policy emphasizing leadership responsibility for promoting respectful interactions and preventing harassment in academic workplaces.

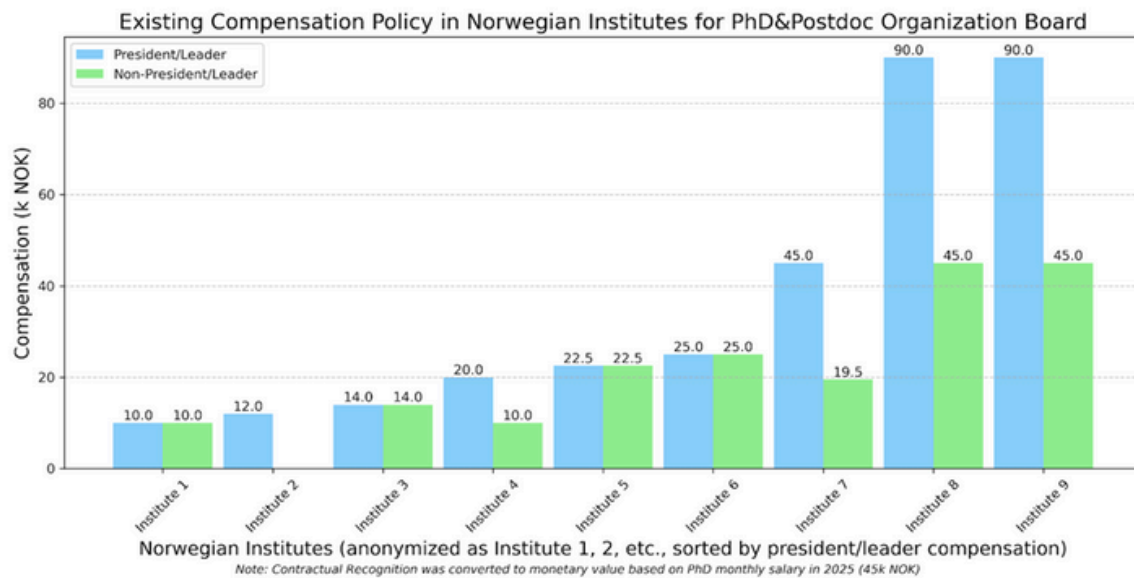
Compensation Survey

Fei Song, Treasurer

In March 2025, SiN conducted a compensation survey through Nettskjema, reaching out to local PhD & Postdoc organizations' boards across Norwegian institutes. We received responses from 13 institutes by the end of April, revealing that 4 currently have no compensation policy for the organization's board. Among those 9 institutes with compensation policies, two primary forms were identified: Contractual Recognition (such as contract extensions or counting board work as duty hours) and Monetary Benefits (including gift cards or additional funds for operational expenses "driftsmidler").

To enable a comparison between different compensation structures, we estimated the monetary value of Contractual Recognition based on today's PhD monthly salary (45,000 NOK). Board members reported dedicating between 100–300 hours per term to their roles, with compensation often tied to workload. The maximum compensation observed was 90,000 NOK for president/leader roles and 45,000 NOK for non-leadership positions, while the minimum reported was 10,000 NOK across all roles.

The survey also highlighted key challenges and preferences among board members. Many indicated that they work beyond expected hours and feel **undercompensated** for their actual contributions. Additionally, flexible compensation schemes—where board members can choose between different options—were highly desired. Respondents with access to such **flexibility** reported greater satisfaction. Lastly, **transparency** emerged as an area for improvement, as compensation details are often not publicly available. Many expressed interest in learning about other institutes’ practices to foster better benchmarks and policies.



Hearing statements and meetings with the Ministry of Higher Education

Kamil Piotr Szura, Head of Government Relations

The year began with the Kontaktkonferansen for forskning og høyere utdanning 2025, which I attended alongside SiN's president, Karl Henrik Storhaug Reinås. The event addressed key topics in research, education, and national security, with Norway's Prime Minister, Jonas Gahr Støre, as the featured speaker in one of the panels. It provided a timely backdrop for our work as the Ministry announced a coming review of PhD education in Norway.

Since then, I've joined two UHR-Forskning meetings as an observer, gaining valuable insight into national research policy and decision-making processes.

We've submitted several consultation responses (høringssvar):

- On the fagskole regulation, which SiN supports for bringing vocational education more in line with the university sector.
- On tenure-track employment rules, where we welcomed the removal of quotas and advocated for a more inclusive, flexible system that supports lifelong learning and international talent.
- We're currently working on a response to the proposed changes in Norwegian language requirements, supporting the removal of mandatory courses but recommending broader access to voluntary language training up to B1 level.

A highlight this semester was SiN's meeting with the Ministry of Education to discuss the future of PhD education. We gathered input from our member organizations and raised important issues like industry relevance, job market barriers, mobility pressures, and the undervaluation of PhD competence. Despite the change in ministerial leadership, our concerns were clearly acknowledged, and we have reason to believe that our perspectives will be taken into account in the upcoming policy process.

It's been an exciting start, and I look forward to continuing this work on behalf of early-career researchers across Norway.

Follow our website and social media channels.

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Don't hesitate to reach out to our email: styret@stipendiat.no

