

## Final remarks

The number of research students has risen considerably in the countries included in this survey. Today there are about 12,600 doctoral students in Catalonia and 1,252 PhD's were awarded in 2004 (19 per 100,000 in the population). Finland has about 22,000 postgraduate students and 1,400 PhD's were awarded in 2004 (27 per 100,000 in the population). In Ireland in the institutes who participated in the study there are about 23,500 postgraduate students and 700 PhD's were awarded in 2004, while in Sweden there are about 19,200 postgraduate students and 2,700 PhD's were awarded in 2004 (30 per 100,000 in the population). This is a major joint commitment, both by the community and by the students themselves. Not least from the point of view of the community, there are great hopes of enhanced innovation and growth.

Even though there are many differences in the organisation and implementation of postgraduate programmes, a similar pattern emerges.

On the whole, the postgraduate students grade their programmes well, and the most positive are those studying in Ireland. On the other hand there is scope for improvement.

Postgraduate students do not feel that their studies help to develop their values to any great extent, and least in the mathematical, scientific and medical subject areas. The students' involvement in social development and their understanding of other groups of people are not enhanced by their studies. In a Europe where all countries place great faith in education both as a way of improving European competitiveness and providing democratic stability, postgraduate programmes are faced with a challenge. The intellectual leaders of a society undergoing transformation will be largely found in the groups that have completed postgraduate studies.

One common factor in all four countries in the survey was that the introductory programmes for postgraduate study did not function effectively and that students were offered very little opportunity to participate in the governance of their departments. Genuine influence could possibly engender creativity. Not unexpectedly, the questions about supervision revealed problems. Supervision is the cornerstone of postgraduate study while at the same time the dependency of the students is a sensitive issue. The postgraduate students have praised the model that has been developed in some Finnish graduate schools with supervision teams or boards of supervisors.<sup>14</sup>

The labour market situation for PhD's has an obvious impact on the postgraduate students. Concern about unemployment is particularly noticeable in Science, Mathematics and Computing as well as in other groups, particularly

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14. PhD Training and the Knowledge-Based Society: An Evaluation of Doctoral Education in Finland. Publications of the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council 1:2006

among the women. Firmer links between postgraduate programmes and the labour market outside higher education, together with support in planning careers would be valuable for many postgraduate students.