

## **Slovak PhD Students' Association (ADS)**

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### **Report on Activities**

#### **Activities in 2003 and 2004**

##### **March 2003**

- Communication with The ministry of Education of the Slovak republic about amendment to the act on universities; the aim was to push our proposals through amending to paragraphs concerning postgraduate students.
- Attendance at brainstorming meeting in Brussels organised by The European Commission (Directorate General Science) focusing on conditions of young researchers in Europe (March 19, 2003).
- Communication with The ministry of Education about working time of postgraduate students. Communication with The ministry of Finance concerning the postgraduates' right to use reduced-fare tickets in Bratislava urban traffic.

##### **April 2003**

- Communication with management of the Slovak university of technology (SUT) on the incorporation of SUT doctoral students into ADS.
- Attendance at common working appointment of the management of the University of Žilina (UŽ) and internal doctoral students of the UŽ. These students have become a collective member of ADS.
- The Ministry of Education in the proposal to the amendment of the particular paragraphs concerning doctoral students accepted basic items proposed by ADS, particularly a transparent status of doctoral student as a student. ADS has worked on asserting the suitable stipend amount of internal doctoral student. The Ministry of Education, according to minister Fronc's formulation in SME newspaper, proposed a monthly stipend amount of 9 000 Slovak crowns. On the contrary, ADS proposed double amount of a minimum wage or 75 per cent of average wages.

##### **May 2003**

- Preparation and distribution of ADS posters.

##### **June 2003**

- ADS reworked objections to the amendment, including international recommendation for making PhD research and study more effective, a list of selected achievements of Slovak PhD students and a comparison of Slovak PhD salaries with PhD salaries in other countries. According to this comparison Slovak PhD students belong to young researchers with the lowest earnings in Europe.
- Participation on public discussion with the management of the Ministry of Education, rectors and the chairman of the council committee, F. Devínsky, at The Faculty of Management, Comenius University (June 26, 2003).
- Objections of ADS, originally included in the proposal of The Ministry of Education, were eliminated in the interdepartmental discussion. Our proposal was submitted to discussion in the Slovak National Council (SNC).
- Appointment with prof. Devínsky and appointment with dr. Čaplovič in SNC, discussion about the amendment and about modification of particular paragraphs concerning PhD students. Both members of parliament supported ADS endeavour. D. Čaplovič (a vice-chairman of the Committee for education) promised to submit the draft bill to discussion of the committee.
- The discussion on amendment was delayed.

### **October 2003**

- Appointment with V. Béreš, an MP, and his assistant P. Pénzeš, who assured supporting the bill of ADS.
- ADS, in co-operation with HPC (Human Partnership Society), University of Žilina and University of Trenčín submitted a grant application form for the project called “The return of university graduates to regions”. The project was submitted in terms of a grant scheme for supporting human resources and financed by Phare. The purpose of the project is to motivate graduates to return to regions they come from and to found small business firms and trades. The project should be carried out by means of lectures, seminars, practices and consulting centres.
- Discussions with Comenius University about identification cards issuance and rewards for supervisors. Discussions with CKM 2000 concerning ISIC cards issuance. Contacts with the management of SAV (Slovak Academy of Sciences) concerning rewards for supervisors.
- Science Next Wave, organisation of the young European researchers, contacted ADS. Science Next Wave plans expansion of its contacts and activities in the field of a “career” in academic and non-academic sphere, and searches for volunteers.
- Preparation of an analysis of the conditions of Slovak students in Czech republic for the publication IVO “Slovakia 2003. The complex information on society”.

### **November 2003**

- The Slovak National council approved of the Amendment to the Act on Universities (131/2002). ADS with the help of D. Čaplovič and support of his colleagues from various political parties managed to push through the clause that PhD stipend – from January 1, 2004 – is not regarded a salary. It means PhD. students do not pay taxes from their stipend. At Council D. Čaplovič presented an extensive challenge for improving conditions of PhD students (November 11, 2003).
- A letter to The President of Slovak republic including request for audience.
- ADS as a partner organisation of Eurea submitted an application form for a grant in the project “The improvement of development and management of projects in regions Podunajsko, Teplička, Ponadvažsko and Severný Liptov”. The project was submitted in terms of a grant scheme of a local and regional development.
- Election of the ADS board of directors and controller.

### **January 2004**

- Meeting of ADS board
- Ministry of Education published a proposal of new notice on stipends for PhD students. Stipends shall be increased for about 3000 – 4000 SKK per year (80 - 100 EUR) Today Slovak PhDs. receive approx. 200 EUR per month.
- Presentation in the Slovak radio – almost 3 hours on air discussion with the director of the Section for science and technology of the ministry of Education and deputy head of University of Žilina. Presentations of young Slovak researchers in Slovak radio shall be broadcasted every month during 2004 in order to improve the knowledge of results and working conditions of young scientist. This is a part of the State program for young scientists lead by UŽ. ADS submitted a list of proposed young scientists and PhD. students.
- Negotiations with the management of the Slovak university of technology (SUT) that is also included to the State program for young scientists. ADS shall participate at the evaluation of Slovak legislative that refers to young scientists.
- Elaboration of ADS standpoint to the payment of fees by Slovak students that shall include also PhD students. Communication of the standpoint to Slovak media
- ADS information campaign followed by marked growth in the number of new ADS members.

**February 2004**

- Negotiations with Slovak Academy of Sciences, Ministry of Education and doctoral students regarding the payment of taxes from the stipend of full time PhD students. A contrariority between two acts caused that in January many University and all SAS PhD. students had to pay tax from their stipend
- February, 26: Ministry of Education informed ADS that the Ministry sends a regulation to Universities and SAS. According to the regulation February stipends should be free of tax. Ministry of Education also informed that Ministry of Finance opposes the proposal of new notice on stipends for PhD students. Negotiations with Universities and SAS shall start next week.

**Permanent activities of ADS**

- Information and advisory services for PhD students.
- Co-operation with EURODOC and other organisations.
- Evaluation of a public inquiry.
- Involvement of PhD students from other workplaces.
- Actualisation of a web site (Slovak and English version).