

FOLLOW-UP OF THE CROATIAN NATIONAL REPORT SUBMITTED AT THE HELSINKI ORPHEUS 2007 CONFERENCE

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This is the first follow-up of the national report submitted at the Third ORPHEUS 2007 Conference: European PhD Programmes in Clinical Medicine, on the state of PhD programmes in Croatia. In Helsinki, we presented the effects of the first two conferences, especially of the Zagreb Declaration, on the PhD studies in the field of biomedicine and health in Croatia. Analysing the past we found that in the last decade, to our disappointment, 75 % of the theses did not result in any published scientific paper. After the first two ORPHEUS conferences and the agreements settled at the two symposiums in the Croatian Academy of Science and Arts, all four medical schools in Croatia accepted the Zagreb Declaration recommendations, making it impossible to obtain a PhD degree without having scientific papers published. The data from the Zagreb Medical School presented for the first time in this text show that above criteria led to a certain decrease in the total number of PhD theses, but a rising trend is evident in the number of theses based on the previously published three scientific papers in internationally recognised journals. However, because of the interest of PhD candidates in the PhD programmes was higher than the availability of competent mentors, etc., a number of young people are not able to complete the thesis according to the new, more rigorous criteria. At the same time, the demand for PhD holders and new faculty has increased because the “old baby boom generation” is stepping down and there are not enough established young leaders to take their place. Consequently, the schools are burdened with the growing responsibility of balancing between the demands of increasing the quality of PhD theses and vigorous faculty renewal expected in the coming years.