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Welcome to the 10th Annual Eurodoc conference held in Vilnius, the Centre of Europe!

This year Lithuanian Society of Young Researchers (LSYR) has had the opportunity to organise the anniversary Eurodoc conference in Lithuania. LSYR, officially registered as an association in 2003, joined Eurodoc in 2004. However, the roots of LSYR date back 2001 when a group of PhD students was trying to solve some specific issues. Now, we are the representatives of the young generation of researchers in Lithuania and we have a pursuit of scientific excellence as our vision and mission. We have implemented many projects and various activities. These are some of them: Researchers' Night 2010, annual summer schools for pupils interested in research and the contest "The best PhD thesis of the year". LSYR contributes to the improvement of Lithuanian higher education and research system by actively participating in various interest working groups.

Lithuania is a small country and has the only way – to invest into scientific competence. It is being done. The research funding has increased during the last years. The reform of Lithuanian higher education and research system was launched in 2009. The state has been increasing the competitive R&D funding since then. We strongly support the reform and see the competitive research funding as an important instrument fostering fruitful development of the research based innovations. On the other hand, we intently observe the processes of the reform. We follow transparency and effectiveness of measures and take actions if something goes wrong. We discuss publicly with all stakeholders to find the best solution.

We gather in Vilnius to discuss the situation and future of the new generation in science through the prism of traditions. I would like to ask several questions that we can discuss during the conference. Does it become a tradition to carry out a research to make a publication and not to properly solve an actual scientific problem? Do we apply rules that lead to scientific excellence and if not how we can change them? Are there so many differences in nature of carrying out research in academy and business? There are a lot of issues and challenges that will be faced by researchers in the near future. Some of them are the challenges for the young researchers in Framework Programme 8. Let's look at it in a more global manner. LSYR supports the Commission Communication's initiative in simplifying the implementation of the Research Framework Programmes, providing serious and creative measures in dealing with the bottlenecks faced by the FP participants. However, we draw attention to and raise concerns regarding some issues which, if not rectified, could create obstacles. LSYR strongly believes that the objectives of the programme concerning lifelong learning could be achieved by relating more to the voluntary associations such as non-governmental, not-for-profit organisations and associations. Therefore, the inclusion of these kinds of bodies should be promoted also during the period of rule setting. There is a need to ensure equal opportunities for participation of diverse research institutions regardless their size and balance sheet; this is especially important for smaller and less economically developed EU countries where research organisations are often small and financially weak.

I believe that the hard working organisational committee has provided you with favorable conditions to discuss the conference topics and share your experience having in mind the 2020 vision for ERA.