

# PROCEEDINGS

The Open and Flexible Higher Education Conference 2013

Hosted by the FIED and the UMPC in Paris



"Transition to open and on-line education in European universities"

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## Rosa de Annamaria Silvana

### Complementary on-line and face-to-face structured training activities in a joint networked international doctorate.

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#### Abstract

This paper illustrates how structured and networked training approach has been integrated by an international joint doctoral program, selected as “an excellent Innovative Doctoral Program with important impact” within the 2013 People-ITN call, after previous selection in the 5<sup>th</sup> F.P.

Built on the experience of both the European/International joint PhD in Social Representations and Communication, awarding a recognised joint degree since 1996 (<http://www.europhd.eu>) and the EU approved So.Re.Com. THEmatic NETWORK (<http://www.europhd.eu/SoReComTHEmaticNETWORK>), headquartered at the *state of the art* Social Representations and Communication Research Centre and Multimedia Lab of Sapienza University of Rome, this SoReComJointIDP includes 8 universities, 2 private companies and 1 public research institute in 8 European countries (AT, CH, CZ, ES, FR, IT, RO, SE), and 6 universities in United States, Canada, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico and China.

It includes:

- a) an integrated physical and virtual campus, where world-class scientists and early-stage-researchers cooperate face-to face and on-line “for” and “by” research;
- b) multiple supervision in different countries;
- c) individual mobility for early stage researchers for secondments;
- d) collective international mobility of trainees and teaching staff during International Summer Schools and Winter/Spring Sessions of Lab meetings;
- e) worldwide access to common dedicated web platform, as tool for documentation, networking, training and a personalized web-space for monitoring trainees’ progress by the three tutors and the members of the International Jury, who are given access to the on-line evaluations of the full report on the thesis and the short article. It also allows trainees to rate and provide feedback on training activities.

**Keywords:** networked joint international doctorate, integrated face-to-face training and open distance learning, SoReComJoint-IDP

## 1. Introduction: The need for internationalization of doctoral training in the globalised scenario.

It is well known that political integration and global socio-economic processes have created the need for new generations of researchers and policy makers capable of working in different cultural settings and who have the necessary skills to analyse and resolve social policy problems in a trans-national perspective.

In an educational and research market that is increasingly globalised and interdependent, the diffusion of innovative institutional advanced research training networks represents an opportunity for improving scientific cooperation around the world. In Europe - challenged by the rapidly evolving global scenario, the European Commission, national ministries, universities, university and professional associations and bodies, working from different interlocking perspectives (local, regional, national, supranational, global) and in different historical and economic political contexts (prosperity, financial progress or crisis, political agreement or conflict, job creation or unemployment, technological development or gaps, etc.) have contributed to the process of reform in European higher education and continue to regulate the speed of its implementation and consolidation as well as its prospects. Some of the priorities recommended by the 2009 Leuven inter-ministerial Communiqué for enhancing international openness are of particular interest for doctoral education, following the *Salzburg I and II principles* and the *European Council for Doctoral Education's* advices. These priorities include that: a) Joint degrees and programs as well as mobility windows should become more common practices; b) the number of people with research competence should increase; c) doctoral programs should provide high quality research and increasingly be complemented by inter-disciplinary and inter-sectoral programs. In addition, public authorities and institutions of higher education should make the career development of early stage researchers more attractive.

However, as stated in the announcement of the “*Excellence in European Doctoral Education (ExEDE) Conference*”<sup>69</sup>, “Excellence in European doctoral education is cited by the EU, national governments, funding and quality agencies, employers and universities as a key priority now and for the future. While the Salzburg II recommendations and numerous reports from European organisations set out in general terms the key elements of doctoral training, there are few examples of how these principles and concepts can be translated into innovative practice, particularly at an institutional scale.” (retrieved from <http://exede.eventbrite.co.uk/>, October 31 2013). On the basis of experience and expertise gained in creating and leading the first international joint doctorate (the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations and Communication<sup>70</sup>), – which since 1992 has been approved by the European Commission (DG-Education and Culture and DG - Research) as well as by the Ministries for Scientific Research and Higher Education in many EU

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69 The “*Excellence in European Doctoral Education (ExEDE) Conference*” (28th-29th November 2013, Edinburgh, U.K.) has been organised by the University of Edinburgh and Aarhus University which are working together on a collaborative project to discuss, develop, pilot, evaluate and share practice around a series of interrelated work packages, addressing a number of key themes surrounding excellence in European doctoral education including support, supervision, employer engagement, employability and mobility. <http://www.au.dk/en/doctoralexcellence/doctoralexcellence/exede/>

70 <http://www.euophd.eu>

countries<sup>71</sup> - we are committed to disseminate the vision (and to share its related best practices) that the Networked Joint International Doctorate represents a key tool for the internationalisation of doctoral education within and outside Europe's borders, arguing that one of the main reasons to participate in a joint program for research training is to establish synergies and maximize complementarities of expertise, not to homogenise programmes into one worldwide formula for doctorates. In previous articles (de Rosa, 2008a, 2010b, 2010c, 2011c), we have developed some theses presenting the *new forms of international cooperation in doctoral training*, distinguishing *internationalisation* and the *International Doctorate* as two distinct models that share the same goal of internationalisation for doctoral training that for the past 10 years has been promoted by the Bologna Process, most especially after the 2003 Berlin Communiqué. A joint doctorate commits institutions to integrate all aspects of the programme, making it something more and different than an additional certificate for international mobility or *co-tutelle*. Among the various routes possible for the future of doctorates in Europe and across the world, a structured international programme based on networking, multiple joint supervision, common rules for recruitment, training and evaluation and providing physical and virtual mobility can be seen as one of the responses to doctoral trainees' demands to overcome their isolation and the limitations of the individual "apprenticeship" model. In the era of the network society, innovative networked joint doctoral programmes open to international cooperation are one way to meet early stage researchers' need for research training and for supra-disciplinary research teams co-operating at the global scale. In this paper - in line with the three key scopes of the [The Open and Flexible Higher Education EADTU Conference 2013](#),<sup>72</sup> promoting *innovation, international curriculum collaboration and leadership* in the process of modernisation of the European Higher Education system by combining traditional teaching and technology-enhanced learning - we will illustrate how structured and networked training approach has been integrated by the *European/ International Joint Ph.D. in Social Representations and Communication*.

## **2. The European/International Joint Doctorate in Social Representations and Communication: a visionary Idea that became an Institution recognised as "best practice".**

The *European/International Joint Doctorate in Social Representations and Communication*, born in 1992 from a visionary idea fully implemented in 1996, represents a case study on institutional innovation through a networked joint doctoral programme, that has anticipated the doctoral education, showing how a "wild" idea became an institution recognised as "best practice" in a progressive changing "*esprit du temp*" (de Rosa, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2009a, 2009b, 2010b).

Following a long history of institutional recognition within the multiple scenarios of European Commission, Ministries of Higher Education and Research, Universities, also including previous selection as the largest Marie-Curie Multi-Partner organisation in social sciences in the 5<sup>th</sup> F.P.<sup>73</sup>, the last step is the top evaluation of the **SoReComJoint-IDP** (obtaining a mark of 98,80/100) as "an excellent Innovative Doctoral Program with important impact", selected by the European Commission as the best Innovative Doctoral Program among 1175 proposals presented within the 2013 Marie Curie - People – ITN call of the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Program. This currently represents the best

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71 For its long history of institutional recognition, see: [http://www.europhd.eu/html/\\_onda01/02/00.00.00.00.shtml](http://www.europhd.eu/html/_onda01/02/00.00.00.00.shtml)

72 "Transition to open and on-line education in European universities" (Paris 24th-25th October 2013), <http://conference.eadtu.eu/42-the-open-and-flexible-higher-education-conference-2013>

73 [http://www.europhd.eu/html/\\_onda01/09/00.00.00.00.shtml](http://www.europhd.eu/html/_onda01/09/00.00.00.00.shtml)



external evaluation for any doctoral program in Europe, replacing the action of Erasmus Mundus for the joint doctorates

The SoReComJoint-IDP is coordinated by the single participant, the Sapienza University of Rome (Italy), Europe's largest university as well as Italy's finest university in a world-wide ranking of universities. In addition to the project coordinator, this IDP includes a training network of 16 associated partners (13 universities, 2 private companies, 1 public research centres with intensive and extensive cooperation with the private sector) in 8 European countries (Austria, Czech Republic, France, Italy, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland) and in 6 extra-European countries (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, Mexico, United States)<sup>74</sup>. This large and diversified training network provide unique opportunities for interdisciplinary research training that responds to the needs of both academia and private companies (see Figure 1)..

The associated partners have close institutional and scientific relations with the coordinator, as they are all members of the European PhD on Social Representations and Communication and of the SoReCom THEmatic NETwork. Their participation in the project is essential because they ensure a wide range of complementary paradigmatic, methodological and thematic options offered by international and cross-sectoral research teams within and outside European borders. They perform vital tasks such as co-tutoring activities (ensuring the multi-paradigmatic and multi-methodological approach to the research training), hosting ESR for secondments and providing valuable training modules during the project's foreseen scientific events.

The inclusion of the 6 extra-European partners is also important for several reasons, among which: a) attracting to Europe the best researchers in this scientific field from abroad; b) promoting and developing Europe's excellence in this field; c) contributing to the expansion of this European field of excellence in countries where the penetration of the Social Representation theory is still weak (mainly China and the USA); d) cross-fertilising the European research training environment, thereby improving the multi-cultural exchange of EU and non-EU recruited research fellows from different academic traditions and cultural backgrounds. These extra-EU partners are already involved in research programs in common thematic areas. They thus contribute to disseminating in their countries and contexts the paradigmatic models and methodologies in social representation mainly developed in Europe; strengthen the leadership of European research in this field; and increase the attractiveness of European research institutions abroad.

The SoReComJointIDP is built on the sound experience of both the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations and Communication, awarding a recognised joint degree since 1996 (<http://www.euophd.eu>) and the EU approved So.Re.Com. THEmatic NETwork, a "network of networks" that promotes co-operation between academic, professional research and commercial institutions and facilitates the dissemination of scientific results throughout Europe and around the world (<http://www.euophd.eu/SoReComTHEmaticNETwork>) (de Rosa, 2006, 2009a, 2009b) (see Figure 2).

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74 [http://www.euophd.eu/html/\\_onda01/10/00.00.00.00.shtml](http://www.euophd.eu/html/_onda01/10/00.00.00.00.shtml)



Figure 1. The So.Re.Com. Joint Innovative Doctoral Program institutional network



Figure 2. The So.Re.Com. THEmatic NETWORK at a glance on global scenario

It is headquartered at the **state of the art Social Representations and Communication Research Centre and Multimedia Lab of Sapienza University of Rome**, led by Annamaria Silvana de Rosa, founder of both the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations and Communication and of the So.Re.Com. THEmatic NETWORK. Located at the University of Rome Sapienza, the state-of-the-art *Research Centre and Multimedia Lab* is a fully equipped high-tech facility that is the nerve centre of the *European/International Joint PhD programme in Social Representations and Communication*, the training structure of the wider *So.Re.Com. THEmatic NETWORK*. Recently (2012) transferred from its previous historical location opposite Campidoglio (Piazza d'Ara Coeli, 1 - Rome) to another larger wonderful location in the very heart of Rome at the top of Aventino Hill (Piazza Cavalieri di Malta, 2 - Rome) overlooking the capital's historical archaeological and artistic-architectonic centre, it guarantees technical support for training and management activities, including real-time interactive exchanges with all participants and partner institutions and a vast network of other similarly equipped research centres around the globe.

The European PhD joint doctorate has been established on the basis of an inter-institutional agreement signed by their rectors and of E.C. contract agreements. In its role as co-ordinator, diplomas are issued by the University of Rome Sapienza with the signature of the rectors/presidents of the universities, which jointly confer the degree. This *joint doctorate* is recognised by all network universities as well as having been approved by E.C. DG-Research (T.M.R., High Level Scientific Conferences, Marie Curie Actions Series of Scientific Events), E.C. DG-Education and Culture (Erasmus Socrates Advanced Curriculum Development, Intensive Programs, Teaching Staff Mobility, Thematic Network), the Italian Ministry for Universities and Research under the Internationalisation of the Higher Education System programme, French and Italian ministries responsible for higher education under the Vinci Programme and by the European University Association and US-EU Commission for Fulbright-Schuman award.

Our SoReComJointIDP research training programme focuses on a **supra-disciplinary area of the social sciences**, and in particular of Social Psychology, inspired by the Social Representations Theory, one of the most important theories of the social construction of knowledge. Founded by Serge Moscovici (honorary programme director of the European PhD on Social Representations and Communication) in 1961, the study of social representations, originally specifically European, is currently a multilingual, worldwide discipline with a substantial body of literature (Moscovici, 1961/1976, 2000, 2012, 2013; Farr and Moscovici, 1984; Jodelet, 1989, 2009; de Rosa, 2008b, 2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2013, 2013a, 2013,b; Almeida, Trindade and Santos, 2011; Galli, 2012 among others). It involves leading scholars from both social psychology and the social sciences: sociology, anthropology, education, economics, linguistics, semiotics and communication and media studies. Contrary to the

fragmentation of traditional social science disciplines, the field of Social Representations represents a unifying meta-theoretical perspective on the social construction of knowledge and its relation to socially situated practices. Consequently, the SoReComJointIDP project is open to trans-disciplinary and multi-methodological research approaches (experimental and field work). Studies of “what” people know – and “how” it relates to the social groups to which they belong and to the media – are concerned with the social construction and representation of a particular object (e.g. health-illness, environment, new technologies, politics, economics, European integration and enlargement, minority groups, immigrants and racism, human rights, etc.) and how its related scientific theories are transformed into everyday knowledge. The "objects" studied have a strong societal impact and important practical applications in political, economic and social spheres.

Consistent with its larger goal to promote Joint European/International doctorates as a strategic tool for enhancing the global attractiveness of the European Higher Education and Research Area, the specific **objectives of the So.Re.Com.Joint-IDP** are to:

- Provide doctoral training in the field of Social Representations by structured training-through-research in an internationally recognised networked research environment. From the optic of social psychology, it offers a starting point for interdisciplinary dialog as well as an expert forum on the theoretical redefinition of problematic issues and methodological strategies within the specificities of different disciplinary approaches and their applicative value in different organizational and institutional contexts;
- Directly and systematically incorporate a select number of small/medium private enterprises from different countries (France, Italy, Sweden) into the SoReComJointIDP training activities.
- Make research careers more attractive via cooperation between academia, public research centres, and small and medium sized companies that have common research interests and complementary training activities;
- Involve internationally recruited, trained, and monitored early-stage researchers in cooperative trans-national research led by a multigenerational community of scientists, to be catalysts for expertise both in and outside Europe;
- Promote European excellence beyond the boundaries of the European Union. The enlargement to partners from six extra-European countries (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, Mexico and USA) represents an effort to disseminate European excellence worldwide, beyond the EU's borders, in synergy with well-reputed scientists and research centres in some non-EU countries of great strategic value for the expansion of the scientific field led by European scientists. The goal is to attract the best early-stage researchers from abroad, encouraging them to undertake their research training in Europe, also in view of closer integration of the European employment market, thus rendering our private sector much stronger in this period of globalization and high competition with extra-European companies.
- Offer - via *one integrated contract* - activities that until now have been funded by several different contracts (Human Mobility Capital, Training Mobility Researchers, Marie Curie Multipartner Organisation Site and Marie Curie Actions) supporting international physical and virtual mobility for early-stage research fellows, International Summer Schools, International Lab Meetings, and international mobility for teaching staff.

### **3. A physical and virtual networked international joint doctoral campus offering complementary on-line and face-to-face structured training activities.**

The *unique combination of a European/International Joint doctoral programme and a scientific network with industry partners* is, in fact, **an integrated physical and virtual campus** where world-class scientists from academia and the public and private sectors and early-stage-researchers cooperate face-to face and on-line “for” and “by” research, coming together to learn, share, create

and disseminate knowledge. We offer a progressive system for training early stage researchers through active research. Research training takes place in international environments, both academic and in industry, and includes specifically designed intensive didactic “stages” in multilingual and multicultural settings. This includes access to the specialised SoReCom “A.S. de Rosa” physical and @-library, meta-theoretical analysis of the literature on Social Representations and Communication, tutoring and co-tutoring for research projects, active participation in International Lab meetings and International Summer Schools, advanced training in multi-methodological qualitative and quantitative design, software for statistical data analysis and results visualization, e-learning activities via interactive video-conferences, training in complementary skills, scientific networking, and active participation in international conferences, etc.

More in details the **key aspects of the didactic formula and training structure** include:

- **Tutoring and co-tutoring triadic system (multiple supervision in different sectors and countries):** all the Early Stage Researchers recruited for the SoReComJoint-IDP and funded for the 3-years entire doctoral training work closely with the project leader and inserted in a group of already trained early stage researchers and post-docs working on an ongoing research project built up over two decades with an enormous effort of work team coordination and assessment by the project leader with the aim to take stock of the scientific field developed in more than 50 years (de Rosa, 2000, 2001, 2013, 2014). The research trainees are in contact with other tutors at the main host institution and with scientists at the institutions chosen for their secondment located in different European and extra EU countries. Taking into account the thematic affinity and areas of expertise, co-tutors also belong to private sector or other socioeconomic actors, so that most of the enrolled researchers receive supervision and didactic feedbacks from a non-academic specialist, thus ensuring a high involvement of the extra-academic sector into training activities.
- **Structured international mobility of both research trainees and teaching staff at the individual and collective levels**, by taking into account that international mobility is only a tool, not a goal in itself. It is just one of the requirements for a European doctorate, and in and of itself is not sufficient.
  - Individual research trainees are required to relocate abroad and work at host institutions for their secondments (**individual mobility**).
  - **Collective mobility** involves all tutors and a restricted number of other research trainees (enrolled or in the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations and Communication or in other doctoral programs at the partner Universities or even outside the network) selected for some of the training activities and is achieved during the intensive International Summer Schools and Lab meetings (winter, spring and summer sessions).
- **Integration of physical and virtual international mobility** (see de Rosa and Picone, 2007).
- **Infrastructure and dedicated facilities** at the coordinating university and network universities, including a common web site, allow for flexibility between face-to-face and open distance learning interactive contexts and innovative practices adopted for teaching, tutoring and co-tutoring, network management: worldwide access to common dedicated web platform, as tool for documentation (including access to the specialised SoReCom physical and @-Library, and web-auditorium interactive system (de Rosa, 2014), networking, training and a personalized web-space for monitoring trainees’ progress by the three tutors and the members of the International Jury, who are given access to the on-line evaluations of the full report on the thesis and the short article (de Rosa and Picone, 2007). It also allows trainees to rate and provide feedback on training activities.

- **Learning by doing in face-to-face and on-line learning interactive contexts:** Research trainees engage in scientific activities either individually or in small and medium teams and in different contexts to acquire transferable general skills, such as: presenting their research progress during International Lab Meetings and International Summer Schools, use of the web-auditorium, organising small seminars, participating in international conferences, advanced training courses for different statistical software packages, writing joint papers, participating in international networking, planning and updating the on-line timeline work chart, cooperating in meta-theoretical analysis of the specialised literature on Social Representations and Communication, managing data derived from the large bibliographic inventories, contributing to the development of the specialised SoReCom “A.S. de Rosa” @-library created by the SoReCom Joint IDP program director (de Rosa, 2014), etc.. The need for developing both core and wider employment related skills is driven by the goal of making research training of greater relevance for a wider variety of careers both in and outside academia, and internationally and globally more attractive.
- **Vocational Training Modules** supplied by the private sector to provide the research trainees with specific professional skills they wouldn't have experienced in a classical academic context
- Each early researcher and experienced researcher recruited has a **personal career development plan**, which includes a research training contract, time management work chart, IPR agreement, etc., in line with the principles set out in the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct. Such career development plans will also be reviewed by experts from the private sector, in order to monitor the progresses made from an extra-academic point of view, and to evaluate the level of employability of the young researcher.
- Research at network sites employs a wide range of **both quantitative and qualitative methodologies**, including experimental, observational and non-verbal work, survey research and interviews, focus groups, image-based and textual tools, and specific techniques to obtain data from the various asynchronous and interactive Internet and web environments.

Outstanding scholars inspired by the Social Representation Theory working in various research fields and experts from the public and private sectors interested in the **applied value of such societal knowledge and the role of communication systems** are directly involved in the training process. Based on expertise and experience matured in running the European Joint Doctorate since its implementation in 1996 and on management skills proven in previous Marie Curie Multi-Partner organisation sites, they have jointly set the recruitment parameters for early-stage researchers, and participate in the training and monitoring activities.

**Private sector** is an integral part of the didactic structure, as they contribute to the programme by a) providing specific training modules, b) participating to the co-tutoring of the enrolled young researcher working in a thematic area (like environment) appropriate from the multidisciplinary perspective based on the combination of multiple expertise available in our extra-academic associated partners, c) stimulating research training projects with the academic partners to which the enrolled young researchers will participate and d) hosting early stage fellows for secondment periods. Industry/university cooperation has been in operation in the hard sciences for some time. However, collaboration within a research training network anchored in a European/International joint doctoral programme is an innovation for the social sciences and represents a path forward and a “win-win” situation for all involved.

**4. Scientific Documentation, International Networking and Research Training: the three main integrated pillars of the So.Re.Com Joint - IDP research environment**

The European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations and Communication Research Centre and Multimedia Lab is dedicated to research and training needs for both doctoral candidates and highly experienced researchers, individually or in cross-national research teams. Full-time staff is available during the workweek to provide assistance to users. It integrates three main research and research training pillars (see Figure 3):

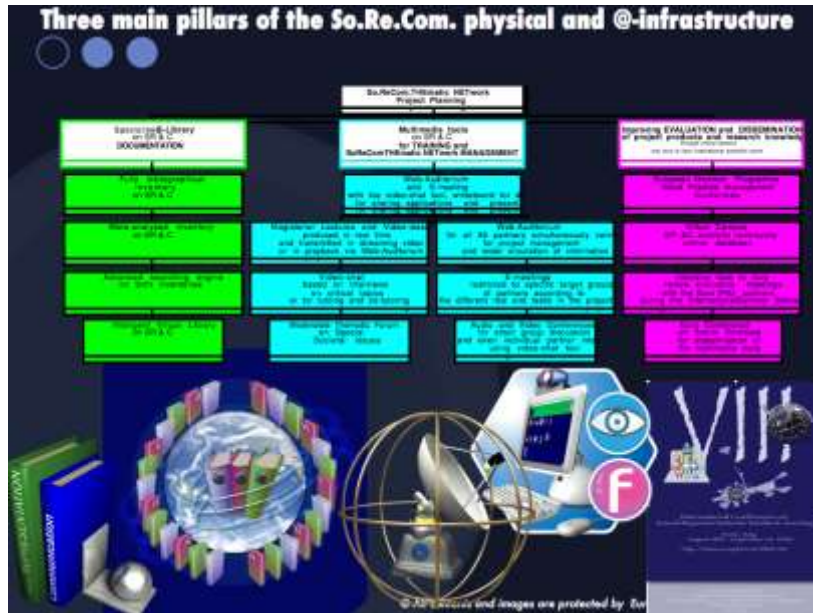


Figure 3. The three main pillars of the European/International Joint PhD on Social Representations and Communication integrated physical and @-Infrastructure

- **DOCUMENTATION** - The So.Re.Com. "A.S. de Rosa" @-library contains (see Figure 4):

- a *comprehensive bibliographical repository* of the literature on Social Representations, currently including almost 10000 references, and a vast and growing collection of bibliographic entries
- a *meta-theoretical analysed repository* of the literature on SR, currently including almost 3000 meta-analysed articles or book chapters;
- an *advanced search engine* hyper-linked with both above-mentioned *repositories*;
- an *Intelligent @-Library* specialising in S.R. & C. that currently holds more than 1000 texts available for online consultation and full text search, as well as hundreds of videos, courses and recorded interviews.



- **NETWORKING:** Its advanced communication and research capabilities not only connect participants with the laboratory but also with the 3000 member world-wide SoReCom Thematic Network and other similarly equipped social science research centres both in and outside Europe. Its web-based system is highly flexible and easily adapted to provide support for long and short term training needs. The SoReCom THEMatic NETwork on-line virtual community includes:

members' personal and institutional contact information, "individual scientific profiles", and web-services like:

"news and calendar of scientific events",

multi-point interactive co-operative research tools,

on-line conference management system for participant registration, submission of abstracts, papers, power point presentations as well as symposia, thematic sessions, round tables, posters, abstract reviews, information for participants, editing and publishing,

SoReCom THEMatic NETwork @-NEWS;

newly designed management service for "Virtual meetings with authors or book presentations".

- **RESEARCH TRAINING:** The European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations and Communication and the So.Re.Com. Joint-IDP integrated "**Physical and Virtual Campus**" includes (see figures 5, 6, 7 and 8):

the research trainee's work-plan chart and timeline

European PhD on S.R. & C. Web-Auditorium multi-point web videoconference interactive system and face-to-face participation in the yearly International Summer Schools and Winter, Spring and Summer Sessions of the International Lab Meetings

guidelines for developing research trainees' skills in meta theoretical analysis of Social Representations literature and the use of bibliographic *repositories*

on-line video-lectures in streaming and face-to-face seminars and research workshops

interactive web-video-interviews with the protagonists in the scientific field

European PhD on S.R. & C. research trainees' personalized web inventory

Multiple supervision via face-to-face and distance tutoring and co-tutoring based on quality control and on-line monitoring system including: personalised access to

European/International Joint PhD in S.R. & C. research reports and on-line evaluation tools of trainees' research reports at the initial, intermediate and final stages

On-line tools allowing research trainees to provide "ratings", i.e. feedback on the virtual training activities and those involving physical mobility, etc.



Figures 5, 6 and 7. The research trainee's work-plan chart and timeline and @-learning kit



Figure 8. Quality control and on-line monitoring system for distance tutoring and co-tutoring tools

### 5. Conclusion: benefits and prospective developments in the MOOCs and OpenupED landscape

In summary, at the network level as well as at the level of individual universities, enterprises, and research centres belonging to the Marie Curie Initial Training Network briefly described in this paper, our So.Re.Com. Joint-IDP programme, as physical and virtual networked international doctoral campus offering complementary on-line and face-to-face structured training activities, guarantees as **benefits:**

- world-wide access to common web platform, as tool for information, documentation, networking and training;
- an on-line application process via a web registration system;
- selection of internationally recruited applicants by the European/International Joint PhD Recruitment board;
- structured and complementary on-line and face-to-face research training in an international environment (including training in transferable skills);
- intensive didactic stages in multicultural settings and attractive international co-operative research environment;
- multiple supervision via tutoring and co-tutoring by at least three tutors in three different countries;
- integration of structured individual and collective international physical and virtual mobility;
- personalised web-space for each research trainee with access restricted to the three tutors for evaluation including the thesis (full report and final article);
- a language policy and format for PhD dissertation;
- high tech infrastructure and Lab facilities, integrating the three main pillars for research: documentation, networking and training;
- training process assessment and quality evaluation system by jointly defined and on-line accessible tools and by joint Committee, like the European/International Joint PhD Executive Committee and Quality control board, the European/International Joint PhD Final Jury, etc. also including evaluators external to the network;
- officialisation of the degree;
- active integration in the world-wide SoReCom THEMatic NETWORK;
- enhancement of career prospects both in and outside academia thanks to strong partnerships with private enterprises and public research centres.

If in this paper we have briefly illustrated how structured and networked training approach has been integrated by the *European/ International Joint Ph.D. in Social Representations and Communication* driven by the three EADTU main goals of promoting *innovation, international curriculum collaboration and leadership* in the process of modernisation of the European Higher Education



system by combining traditional teaching and technology-enhanced learning, we wish to conclude this paper with some final consideration about the positioning of our networked international joint doctorate and **prospective developments in the MOOCs and OpenupED landscape.** It is evident that, if thanks to the complementary and synergic combination of face-to-face and online training supported by blended mobility has attracted a higher number of participants in our training events, not limited to the participation of the restricted number of doctoral research trainees admitted in our program and open to the contribution of invited professors and leading experts even from outside the network (see figure 9, 10, 11) and if most of the learning and teaching materials are worldwide available and can be download free of charge from the dedicated web portal as open educational resources, the target number of the applicants admitted each year for the *European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations and Communication* and those who have been awarded until now (2013) of the joint doctoral degree (see figure 10) is very far from the *massive scenario of the MOOCs and OpenupED landscape.*

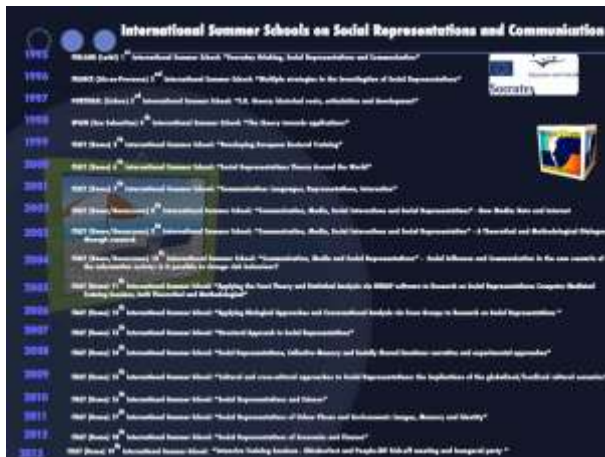


Figure 9. The multi-year series of International Summer Schools organised by the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations and Communication from 1995 to 2013 ( <http://www.europhd.eu/IntSummerSchools> )



Figure 10. The multi-year series of the International Lab Meetings organised by the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations and Communication from 2005 to 2013 ( <http://www.europhd.eu/IntLabMeetings> )



Figure 9. Participants and invited speakers in the multi-year series of International Summer Schools and Lab Meetings organised by the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations and Communication

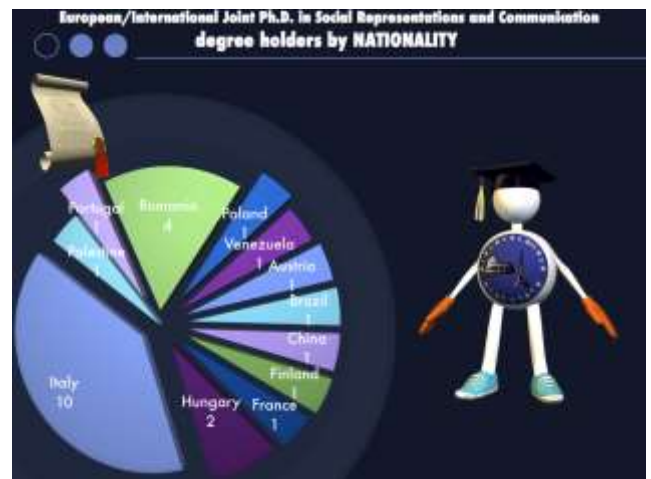


Figure 10. European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations and Communication degree holders by nationalities.

Despite the recent reform in doctoral education claims for a 'critical mass', it remains out of the scope and of the nature of the doctoral training – and in particular of our *European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations and Communication* - a numerical meaning of the critical mass as target of new recruited research trainees and candidates for awarding the joint doctoral degree, especially if we consider the “peak of inflated expectations” of MOOCs, as “gaining currency” entered in the arena of venture capital and mass marketing, more specifically designed at the level of the first two cycles of the higher education (Sharples, Mc Andrew, Welle, Ferguson, FitzGerard, Hirst and Gaved, 2013: 6; see also Glance, Forsey and Riley, 2013).

However prospective developments of our *European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations and Communication* – as well as of other doctoral programs especially those not restricted within the borders of traditional or canonical disciplines, but dealing with new supra-disciplinary fields – envisage the introduction of the MOOCs and *OpenupED landscape* as preparatory and propaedeutic courses aimed at:

- a) attracting better oriented and well informed applicants, introducing them into the scientific field even before their application process;
- b) improving development needs for lifelong learning among already educated professionals and policy makers;
- c) extending public awareness of the scientific field among scientist amateurs at large interested in developing knowledge about societal issues of hot relevance, shaping rewarding educational experiences also outside formal education.

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