

# AD FUTURA Science and Education Foundation The Vision of Knowledge

By Lidija Honzak

Through its activities, AD FUTURA strives to realise the goals of the Lisbon Strategy to enhance the scope of research work, creativity and innovation as well as to raise the level of technological development in Slovenia. As such, AD FUTURA encourages networking among people involved in education and research, and by providing financial support enhances the mobility of knowledge, ideas and people within the society. The foundation allocates its financial support to extraordinary researchers, faculty and secondary school students from abroad for the purpose of education and research in Slovenia. Part of the funds is also available to Slovene citizens for the purpose of acquiring additional knowledge abroad.

## Education and scientific cooperation of Slovene citizens abroad

The programme of financial support is intended to make studies possible



Dr Lidija Honzak,  
Director.

for promising Slovene students and researchers at eminent institutions abroad.

A new feature in 2005/06 is a scholarship intended for Slovene doctoral students in the fields of natural sciences and technology, which makes financial support available for research work at a

chosen foreign institution for a period of 3–4 months each year.

## Return of Slovene researchers and cooperation with companies

Slovene researchers who have worked abroad for longer periods of time are eligible for AD FUTURA funding in the process of reintegration into the Slovene research sphere.

AD FUTURA provides companies with 50% co-financing of scholarships and

help in finding suitable personnel, by which it influences employment policies for individuals who are important for Slovenia's technological and economic development.

## Education and scientific cooperation of foreign citizens in Slovenia

AD FUTURA is expanding the network of prominent foreign researchers and doctoral students involved in strategic research projects in Slovenia.

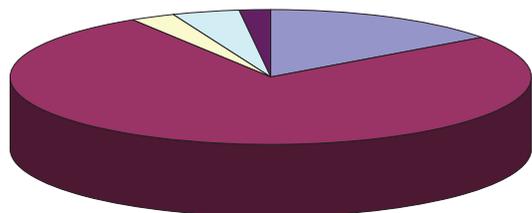
## Support of educational and research policies and information flow

By organising events like the annual Convention of Slovene Students Abroad and the Colloquium of Foreign Students and Researchers in Slovenia, and the online Club AD FUTURA, the foundation encourages the flow of information, facilitates international mobility and influences research and educational policies on national and international levels.

In May 2005, AD FUTURA hosted the European Forum for Early Career Researchers, which was attended by 150 researchers, predominantly from South-eastern Europe. In October, the foundation organised a European festival titled "Science in Film", which featured the best European TV and film productions with scientific content. The festival received an unexpectedly high degree of recognition and interest.

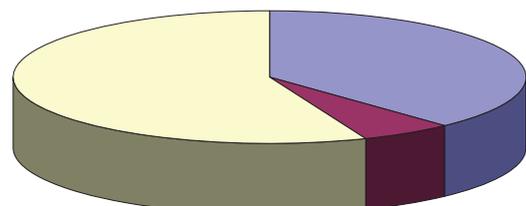
In 2006 AD FUTURA offered an award for the best doctoral dissertation in

### AD FUTURA scholarship recipients studying abroad since 2002



■ North America ■ old EU members □ new EU members  
□ non-EU countries ■ other countries

### Employment of Slovene AD FUTURA scholarship recipients since 2003



■ services ■ manufacturing/industry □ public service

In all calls for applications completed by the end of 2005, AD FUTURA has granted 360 scholarships for undergraduate and postgraduate studies to Slovenes abroad. The majority of scholars choose to study in Great Britain and the United States of America.

So far, 96 AD FUTURA scholars have completed their studies abroad, and no "brain-drain" effect has been seen, as 90% of these scholars return to Slovenia, whereby the majority find employment within the public or service sectors.

the fields of natural sciences and technology. Ten doctors of science will receive a one-year scholarship for research work abroad. The first ceremony will be held in November 2006, celebrating the fifth anniversary of AD FUTURA's activity.

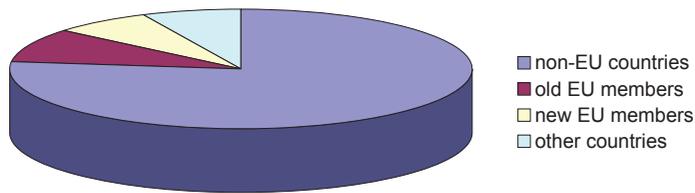
### What is AD FUTURA and what is its purpose?

AD FUTURA was established by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia five years ago with the purpose of supporting the training of individuals who will ultimately contribute to the development of Slovenia, mostly in the field of technology. AD FUTURA's primary activity is the funding and co-funding of students and researchers, which is the primary means of achieving the main goal – the support of first-rate scientists and researchers.

### What new features have been introduced by AD FUTURA in recent years?

The initial year of the scholarship programme was intended for Slovene students studying abroad. In the years to follow, the programmes and calls for applications expanded and by the second year we managed to attract foreign researchers and students. AD FUTURA has already granted a total of 340 scholarships. Last year we initiated a project offering 50% co-financing to companies interested in educating suitable personnel.

### Where do foreign AD FUTURA scholarship recipients come from?



By the end of 2005, 120 foreigners had received AD FUTURA funding. In most cases, they choose studies and research work in the natural sciences and technology. The majority of foreigners (78%) come from countries outside the European Union, mainly from Southeastern Europe.

At the same time we offered assistance in the search for such personnel and educational institutions abroad. We were surprised by the great interest companies showed in the programme. Mostly small and mid-size companies joined the program, which is entirely logical since large companies tend to have their own scholarship sources.

We have also been very successful at subsidiary activities such as networking and information flow. We organise various annual events, such as the annual Convention of Slovene Students Abroad and the Colloquium of Foreign Students and Researchers in Slovenia. It is important for people to communicate with one another, exchange experience and acquire information. Information can also be shared through the AD FUTURA online club, through which members receive weekly news and announcements about funding, education and research. Companies can use the club to attract people with

suitable educational backgrounds, which can be of great benefit for a company.

It is interesting that young people are aware of the fact that knowledge is their "ticket to the future", so they are themselves ready to invest in it. Accordingly, the student loans for studies abroad which we introduced last year and which is a first in Slovenia has been a great success. Loans are usually a solution for people who for some reason were not eligible for a scholarship or those who do not wish to be bound by the terms of a scholarship agreement.

### And a vision of the future?

We will continue to monitor Slovene national development strategies, which highly prioritises the development of technology. This activity, however, requires specialised personnel. We assess our programmes every year and analyse their effectiveness. This aids us in the creation of programmes tailored to the special needs of our clients. We also aim to contribute to the popularisation of science. As in all European countries, Slovenia has experienced a marked decrease of interest for studies

**AD FUTURA, Science and Education Foundation of the Republic of Slovenia, a public fund**  
Kotnikova 34,  
SI – 1000 Ljubljana  
<http://www.ad-futura.si>  
[info@ad-futura.si](mailto:info@ad-futura.si)

in the natural sciences and technology, and thus we believe it is of utmost importance to present science to the public and to generate interest in technical studies. Our vision of the future definitely includes the further expansion of both our financial and information support programmes.



Dr Janez Potočnik, European Commissioner for Science during the official opening of the European Forum for Early Career Researchers and the participants of the "Women in Science" workshop.