

## **BOLOGNA PROCESS TEMPLATE FOR NATIONAL REPORTS: 2005-2007**

**Draft:** 12 April 2006

### **Notes:**

The deadline for submitting National Reports is **Friday 15 December 2006**.

BFUG members are encouraged to consult other stakeholders about the contents of their National Report.

Please complete your National Report in English using this template and return it to the Secretariat by email. Your report should not exceed **20 pages in length**, using Times New Roman font size 12. Where appropriate, please include precise web references to legislation or other documentation. For any topic where there has been no change since 2005, please refer to your National Report for the Bergen conference.

Please attach your country's action plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications.

National Reports will be posted on the Bologna website in their original form.

Information from National Reports will form the basis of the Stocktaking Report to be presented to Ministers when they meet in London in May 2007.

This template has three sections:

- A. Background information on your Higher Education system
- B. Main stocktaking questions, including scorecard elements
- C. Current issues in Higher Education.

Elements that will inform the scorecard element of stocktaking are clearly indicated in the template.

Information for the stocktaking, including the scorecard element, will also be drawn from the Eurydice survey "Focus on the Structure of Higher Education in Europe". These elements are also indicated in the template. Please use your National Report to supplement, but not repeat, your country's input to the Eurydice survey.

### **A. Background information on your Higher Education system**

#### **Details**

Country	Holy See
Date	15 December 2006
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### **Main achievements since Bergen**

1. Describe the important developments relating to the Bologna Process, including legislative reforms, since Bergen.
<p>As most of the necessary legislation for implementing the Bologna-Reforms have already been in place there have been no new laws since Bergen.</p> <p>For the moment, international groups of expert experts are working on two documents: the study of philosophy and the study of religious education. After consultation with the relevant stakeholders, the new legislation should be put in place in 2007 or 2008.</p> <p>There have been numerous international and bilateral contacts (on various levels) to increase cooperation of the Holy See with other national systems of HE.</p> <p>The Official Bologna Seminar in March/April 2006 was the largest event of this kind ever to be organised by the Congregation for Catholic Education.</p>

### **National organisation**

2. Describe any changes since Bergen in the structure of public authorities responsible for higher education, the main agencies/bodies in higher education and their roles.
<p>Please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• whether higher education institutions (HEIs) report to /are overseen by different ministries</li> <li>• how funds are allocated to HEIs</li> <li>• areas for which HEIs are autonomous and self governing.</li> </ul>
<p>There have not been structural changes concerning the responsibilities of the competent authorities.</p> <p>With very few exceptions, the Holy See has no direct competence or responsibility for funding its institutions which, applying the principle of subsidiarity, are usually sustained by local dioceses, religious orders, regional or national Bishop's.-conferences, foundations etc.</p> <p>In some European countries the ecclesiastical HEIs, as integrate parts of Universities, are state-funded.</p> <p>Always to be taken into account is the complexity of the Holy See's HE-system and the significant regional autonomy for many issues of HE Institutions which operate in nearly all European countries under very different conditions. The Congregation for Catholic Education is working on suitable methods that will provide an overview, including the use of relevant statistical data.</p>
3. Describe any changes since Bergen to the institutional structure

Please include:

- the number of public/private HEIs
- are there different types of institutions delivering higher education (i.e. academic/professional, university/non-university etc.)
- the number/percentage of students admitted in academic session 2006-2007 to each type of institution
- the extent to which different types institutions are covered by the same regulations.

The answer would mostly correspond to the report from 2005.

5 new Faculties have been erected during this period.

As these institutions operate in various countries with different legal systems at the moment no exact overall-data is available. Work is in progress to set up a common European Data-Base for all HEIs of the Holy See.

There is a large number of institutions which, in the past, have not been considered as complete HEIs in the sense prescribed by the basic legal regulations (Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia christiana*, 1979) and were therefore not authorised to confer academic degrees by the authority of the Holy See. Since – following the principles of the Bologna Process – these institutions would now at least be able to grant Bachelor degrees, new regulations are being prepared to take into account their new academic status.

## Partnership

4. Describe the structure which oversees the implementation of the Bologna Process in your country.

Please include:

- the membership and role of any national Bologna group (for example policy committee, promoters' group)
- the membership and role of students, staff trade unions, business and social partners in any national Bologna Group.

The answer mostly corresponds to the report from 2005. In addition to the special international Committee which meets regularly in Rome, during the last biennium many national local Commissions or single experts (in most cases related either to the HEIs or the national Bishop's conferences) support the implementation of the Bologna Process in their countries.

5. Describe the arrangements for involving students and staff trade union/representative bodies in the governance of HEIs.

Please include:

- precise references (preferably with web links) to any legislation (or equivalent) in place to ensure students and staff are represented on HEI governing bodies
- the role of students in the governance of HEIs
- the role of staff trade union/representative bodies in the governance of HEIs.

The involvement of students in the HEIs is prescribed in Art. 34 of the Apostolic

Constitution *Sapientia christiana* and must be specified in the statutes of the various HEIs. (Regional, legal and cultural diversities among European countries where ecclesiastical HEIs are present makes it necessary to grant as much as possible flexibility in this concern).

The involvement of local Bishops as the future “employers” of the students and their responsibility for professional formation has significantly increased in most countries where ecclesiastical HEIs are present.

In most of these countries students of ecclesiastical HEIs are well organised and represented, even if their involvement was not always known to the Congregations for Catholic Education. Attempts have been undertaken during the last biennium to get a more precise overview of the existing bodies of student representation, and projects have been launched to bring together these bodies on various national or/and international levels.

In many countries there exist associations of Catholic University teachers, which include those teaching in ecclesiastical and non- ecclesiastical HEIs.

6. Describe the measures in place to ensure the co-operation of business and social partners within the Bologna Process.

This question does not correspond to the specific situation of ecclesiastical HEIs.

## B. Main stocktaking questions, including scorecard elements

### Degree system

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle.

7. Describe the progress made towards introducing the first and second cycle.

Please include:

- the percentage of the total number of students below doctoral level enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2006/07.

Most of what was said in the report of 2005 is still valid.

A course structure based on **three main cycles** has been in existence and definitely defined for all programmes since the promulgation of the legislative document ‘Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia christiana* in 1979. This three-cycle structure therefore existed prior to the Bologna Process. To enrol in a Faculty in order to obtain an academic degree, one must have the same qualification which would be necessary to permit enrolment in a civil university of one’s own country or of the country where the Faculty is located. Nobody can be admitted to the second and third cycle unless first having obtained the previous academic degree.

Given the special situation of a number of ecclesiastical HEIs which are also linked to other national HE systems, during the last three years problems have arisen because of the different (national) ways of applying the three-cycle structure in relation to ecclesiastical HEIs. The Holy See insists on the fundamental unity of its degree structure

in every country. In some cases, the Bologna Process has made comparing academic degrees more difficult than previously. These problems should be resolved when the respective countries and the Holy See have drafted their National Qualifications Frameworks.

The length of the three cycles generally corresponds to 3+2+3 years. The Faculties of Sacred Theology, Canon Law and Philosophy follow special norms established in the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia christiana* because of their particular nature and importance to the Holy See. The periods of study for Sacred Theology are 5+2+at least 1. In 2007, legislative measures are being planned to change the first cycle of Philosophy from two to three years.

( Eurydice )

#### Stage of implementation of the third cycle

8. Describe the progress made towards implementing doctoral studies as the third Bologna cycle.

Please include:

- the percentage of 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle students following structured doctoral programmes
- the normal length of full-time doctoral studies
- the elements that are included in doctoral study programmes, e.g. do they include taught courses or independent research only?
- the supervisory and assessment procedures for doctoral studies
- are doctoral studies included in your country's qualifications framework and are they linked to learning outcomes?
- are interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills integrated in doctoral studies?
- are credit points used in measuring workload in doctoral studies?

Students can enrol in a doctoral programme after having earned the corresponding second-cycle degree in their field of study. A working group composed of University Rectors, Deans of Faculties and other experts has begun to draft a strategy for a future reform of ecclesiastical doctoral programmes. Presumably such changes will lead to even higher standards in research and expertise in subject matter.

No one can obtain a doctoral degree unless properly enrolled in a Faculty, completing the course of studies prescribed by the Statutes, and successfully passing the required examinations or tests. A requisite for obtaining a doctorate, furthermore, is a dissertation that makes a significant contribution to the area studied, written under the direction of a qualified professor, publicly defended and collegially approved; at least the principal part of the dissertation must be published.

The doctorate is the academic degree which enables one to teach in a Faculty and is therefore required for this purpose. The academic degrees which are required for filling

various ecclesiastical positions are to be stated by the competent local, regional or universal ecclesiastical authority.

Already most doctoral programmes are structured to include further courses of specialisation in the subject as well as a dissertation.

The study curriculum for the Faculty of Sacred Theology in the third cycle, lasting a suitable period of time, brings scientific training to completion, notably through the writing of a doctoral dissertation. The relatively short time limit (minimum 1 year) in which a doctorate can be earned in Sacred Theology has its reasons both in the duration of the first and second cycle (together 7 years) as well in their structure, where some constitutive elements of qualifications necessary for the doctorate are already transmitted. In some national systems (for example, Germany and Austria), where more elements of the second cycle are already required in the first cycle, due to the respective national legislation and tradition the possibility exists to begin doctoral studies immediately after having obtained the theological *Baccalaureate* (which in some countries according to their national legislation, is considered as a second-cycle degree). Any requirements of the second cycle which were not fulfilled can be fulfilled at the beginning of the third cycle.

Interdisciplinarity is an essential dimension for Theology and other ecclesiastical studies. Special attention is given to this aspect in every doctoral programme. Normally the doctoral thesis is also evaluated by academics of different disciplines.

In some doctoral programmes ECTS credits are already being used.

(Scorecard and Eurydice )

Access<sup>1</sup> to the next cycle

9. Describe the arrangements for access between the first and second cycles and second and third cycles.

Please include:

- the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to the second cycle
- if appropriate, the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to the third cycle
- the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to both the second and third cycles
- the percentage of second cycle qualifications that give access to the third cycle
- specify any first cycle qualifications that do not give access to the second cycle
- specify any second cycle qualifications that do not give access to the third

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<sup>1</sup> Access as defined in the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Access: the right of qualified candidates to apply and be considered for admission to higher education.

cycle.

- specify any examples where bridging courses are necessary to transfer between cycles in the same subject area
- any measures planned to remove obstacles between cycles.

For the time being and following the current legislation (Sapientia christiana) only those institutions which award academic degrees in all three cycles, are considered full HEIs (“Faculties”). All of their first cycle degrees give access to at least one second cycle degree and all second cycle degrees give access to at least one doctoral programme. Specialised institutions (“Institutum ad instar Facultatis”) offer only second and third cycle programmes for students who have earned a corresponding first cycle degree in another Faculty. (usually in a different country).

A legal framework for other HEIs which have not always been considered as full academic Institutions will be provided according to Bologna standards. Their regulations will establish conditions for access to second and third-cycle programmes. At the moment, the specific institution has to assess the qualifications OF a student coming from these institutions.

The first cycle in Theology which also includes a basic qualification in Philosophy has a minimum duration of 5 years. It can be understood as general study among the sacred disciplines and therefore gives access to second cycle studies of different specialisations.

(Scorecard and Eurydice )

#### Implementation of national qualifications framework

10. Describe the stage of implementation of the national qualifications framework to align with the overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA<sup>2</sup>.

Please include:

- the stage of development of your national qualifications framework (for example: has your national QF been included in legislation or agreed between all relevant stakeholders; has a working group been established; have national outcomes-based descriptors of the main types of qualifications been prepared)
- the extent to which your national qualifications framework is in line with the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA
- the role of stakeholders in the development of your national qualifications framework.

Widespread consultation of institutions, various stakeholders and experts are examining what will be necessary for adopting the National Qualifications Framework of the Holy See, in any case before 2010.

With the Holy See’s Circular Letter IV (30 October 2006) questionnaires had been sent out to all HEIs of the Holy See, to all responsible local Bishops (as the local ecclesiastical authority and future employer of students), to Bishops’ conferences (as

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<sup>2</sup> A Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA: <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/>

regional authorities) and to a number of Catholic Universities not governed by the legal framework of *Sapientia Christiana*. Other stakeholders, including students, are also involved in the present discussions and preparations.

A commission of international experts accompanies the work of the Holy See, which in some areas has been delegated to HEIs with regard to their specialisations.

11. What measures are being taken to increase the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications?

Please include where possible:

- the percentage of first cycle graduates who found employment after graduating in 2005/06
- the percentage of first cycle graduates who continued into the second or third cycles in 2005/06
- the extent to which this is expected to change in 2006/2007.

Given the complexity of ecclesiastical HEIs which operate in most European countries and in very different situations exact and comparable data is not yet available, although progress is being made in this regard.

The great majority of students are enrolled in programmes (e.g. Theology) where graduates with a Bachelor's degree are fully employable. Apart from those students who drop out for other reasons, nearly all students who are enrolled in baccalaureate programmes that are specialised and do not lead to employability would continue their studies in the second cycle.

In some Theological Faculties (e.g. in Austria, Germany, Italy, Poland, the Netherlands and Spain) more professional orientated bachelor programmes of 3 years duration have been or will soon be introduced.

## Quality assurance

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

National implementation of the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA<sup>3</sup>

12. To what extent is your national system of QA already aligned with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA?

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of the national quality assurance system in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA
- any action that has been taken to ensure that the national quality assurance system is in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA
- any action planned to ensure that the national quality assurance system is in line with the standards and guidelines for QA in the EHEA.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.enqa.net/files/BergenReport210205.pdf>



At present the tasks of a national agency responsible for external **quality assurance** (evaluation) in higher education are largely fulfilled by an office of the Congregation for Catholic Education. This office exercises its responsibility on a comprehensive level according to the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia christiana* as well as the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus* (1988). An internal study undertaken during the last year by a commission of international experts showed that in a great number of Faculties the present legislation and practice are already de facto aligned with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA.

Nevertheless a formal alignment will be put into practise in 2007.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of development of external quality assurance system

13. Describe the quality assurance system operating in your country.

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of your external quality assurance system
- the scope of your external quality assurance system: does it operate at a national level; does it cover all higher education<sup>4</sup>
- which of the following elements are included in your external quality assurance system:
  - internal assessment
  - external review
  - publication of results
- whether procedures have been established for the peer review of the national agency(ies) according to the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA.

Already in 2005 preparatory work began in order to establish an independent agency of the Holy See for external quality assurance, one which will follow the ENQA criteria and will work in collaboration with other national agencies in Europe. The agency plans to start its work in 2007. For the time being the question being discussed is how the future “national Agency” will be able to act in various European regions with very different academic cultures and legislations.

Therefore during the academic year 2006/07, in selected geographical areas of Europe,

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<sup>4</sup> higher education: all types of courses of study or sets of courses of study, training or training for research at the post secondary level which are recognised by the relevant authorities as belonging to a country’s higher education system.

pilot projects of somewhat independent “regional commissions” which will be co-ordinated by a Commission of international experts, set up by the Congregation for Catholic Education, will be launched and will receive their own statutes *ad experimentum*. These “regional commissions” or “working groups” will be composed of international and local academic experts, stakeholders, as well as representatives of students and employers.

The quality assurance system of the Holy See already covers all HEIs under its jurisdiction and is working at a national and international level (given the specificity of the Holy See as transnational provider of HE).

Already the office of the Congregation works together with other higher authorities such as national boards and local representatives and stakeholders. The specific responsibilities and respective procedures of the Congregation concern the verification of necessary standards at the moment of erection or approval of institutions or at the beginning of their academic activity; the examination of all study programmes offered by these institutions as well as any changes in them; the examination of the qualifications of all full-time research and teaching staff, and the evaluation of the internal quality assurance.

The status of an institution is evaluated every three years by means of a self-evaluation leading to a detailed report drafted by local Church authority (a 5-year interval will be preferred in future). At present the key criteria which this report must address are: academic and scientific activity of teachers and their scientific publications; main events such as congresses and symposia; teaching activity, students, pedagogical means and structures, economic situation, affiliated bodies or institutions, general conditions and major issues for the future. A special commission of international experts has begun preparatory work to draft a revised schema for the self-evaluation of every Faculty.

A model for a common procedure for internal evaluation for all HEIs of the Holy See was proposed in the Circular Letter III of 2005 for testing it in practice. HEIs are to communicate their observations to the competent office of the Congregation.

The internal assessment of the HEIs is externally reviewed on two different levels: firstly, on a local or regional one by the respective office of the local Church authority; secondly on an international level by the competent office of the Holy See.

Publication of the results is currently limited to the HEIs themselves and to selected stakeholders. Only in particular cases, where the common good of the Church and the (future) students was at stake, have the local ecclesiastical authorities (as competent body) made the results public in a general way.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Level of student participation

14. Describe the level of student participation in your national quality assurance system.

Please include:

- whether students are included in the following aspects of quality assurance:
  - the governance of national agencies for QA
  - as full members or observers in external review teams
  - as part of the decision making process for external reviews
  - in the consultation process during external reviews (eg arrangements for external reviewers to consult with students)
  - in internal evaluations.

The participation of students in the internal evaluation process, according to the current legislation is granted by the statutes of the Institutions.

On the level of the external QA plans for the future Agency include student representatives among the experts of the advisory board. They are also to be included, where appropriate, in the pilot projects. Following the national legislation of the countries where the Holy See has its Faculties, forms of student collaboration can regionally differ from each other. Discussions are taking place to decide whether the involvement of students in a more centralised or in a more regionalised setting would be more appropriate and effective.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

### Level of international participation

15. Describe the level of international participation in your national quality assurance system.

Please include:

- whether there is international participation in the following aspects of quality assurance
  - the governance of national agencies for quality assurance
  - the external evaluation of national quality assurance agencies
  - teams for external review
  - membership of ENQA
  - membership of any other international network.

The Agency of Holy See is not yet a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). It is planned that the future Agency will apply for ENQA membership. Initial consultations with representatives of ENQA took place in September 2006. Collaboration with other agencies or networks of agencies, even outside Europe, will be necessary due to the international character of the Holy See and the institutional (concordatary) cooperation in certain countries.

By its very nature all carried out by the Holy See and its bodies and institutions is at the highest possible level, international. Due to the fact that by law our administrative work has to be done in at least 7 European languages, it is not usual that more than one or two experts of the same nation or language are working in the same commission, working team or office.

### Recognition of degrees and study periods

(Scorecard and Eurydice )

### Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement

16. Describe the stage of implementation of the Diploma Supplement in your country.

Please include:

- the percentage of students graduating in 2007 who will receive a Diploma Supplement
- which of the following apply to Diploma Supplements issued in your country:
  - issued in a widely spoken European language
  - free of charge
  - automatically
  - correspond to the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format.

The Holy See's decision to adopt the **Diploma Supplement** (DS) was taken in 2004, upon joining the Bologna Process. It is to be issued in both English and the language of the study programme. With Circular Letter III of 2005, issuing the DS free of charge at the request of students was made obligatory for all HEIs of the Holy See.

Further circular letters of the Congregation for Catholic Education to all its HEIs serve as a means of **follow up** for the correct implementation of ECTS and the DS.

Due to the different countries and situations of the HEIs of the Holy See, exact data about the implementation at the grassroot level is not yet available. With Circular Letter IV (30 October 2006) questionnaires have been sent to all HEIs so that the Congregation will receive reliable information about the present state of implementation of the diploma supplement to all students free of charge.

(Scorecard)

#### National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention

17. Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementing documents<sup>5</sup> of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Please include:

- whether your country has ratified the convention (including depositing ratification instrument at either CoE or UNESCO)
- whether all appropriate legislation complies with the legal framework of the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents
- which of the following principles are applied in practice
  - applicants' right to fair assessment
  - recognition if no substantial differences can be proven
  - demonstration of substantial differences, where recognition is not granted
  - provision of information about your country's HE programmes and institutions
- whether you have a fully operational ENIC
- any action being taken to ratify or fully implement the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents.

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<sup>5</sup> Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition (2001); Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees (2004); Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education (2001)

Concerning the ratification of the Lisbon Convention and the related basic legal framework, everything seems to be in place and is working quite well.

A lot remains to be done regarding the provision of information about our HE programmes and institutions. Some fundamental changes in the distribution of competences in the administrative bodies of the Holy See will be necessary (e.g. the responsibility for a proper web-site as forum for providing information), a process which usually takes some time to be implemented.

During 2006 the Congregation for Catholic Education has begun its work to reorganise the ENIC-work of the Holy See. The responsible official participated at the annual informal meeting of German-speaking ENICs and at two events organised by the Council of Europe, where those responsible for ENIC had been contacted. Since then the Holy See has been integrated into the ENIC-list server and in some cases has already been able to provide help to other ENICs. A fruitful collaboration has been established with the Italian, the Austrian and some other ENICs. Gradually the fact of the growing ENIC work of the Holy See is becoming known to institutions and other interested parties.

Without doubt, the ENIC-work will be among the priorities of the work of this Congregation during the next two years.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

#### Stage of implementation of ECTS

18. Describe the credit and accumulation system operating in your country.

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of ECTS in academic year 2006/2007
- the percentage of first and second cycle programmes using ECTS in academic year 2006/2007
- how any other credit or accumulation system in use relates to ECTS: is it compatible with ECTS; what is the ratio between national and ECTS credits.

A decision to adopt **ECTS** was taken along with that to become a member of the Bologna Process. The system was legally established in 2004 and is gradually being implemented. With Circular Letter III of 2005 (12 July 2005) the adopting of ECTS was made obligatory for all HEIs of the Holy See.

The Holy See is, in nearly every case, a cross-border provider. Therefore, the best practice of other national systems has to be taken into account. At this point, ECTS is established for credit transfer. The question of credit accumulation is still under debate.

Due to the complexity of our HE system and a significant regional autonomy in certain issues of HE Institutions which operate in nearly all European countries under very different conditions, the Congregation for Catholic Education is still working on suitable methods that will provide an overview of relevant statistical data. It would be impossible to list here the different data about the implementation of ECTS in all European countries one by one – and besides this, the different methods of collection would lead to inconsistent overall results.

With Circular Letter IV (30 October 2006) questionnaires were sent to all HEIs requesting reliable information about the present state of implementation of ECTS at the grass-root level.

19. Has your country produced a national plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications? If so, give a brief description of the plan and attach a copy.

Academic degrees in sacred sciences are all issued in the name and under the authority of the Holy See. Therefore full international recognition of such degrees is already a matter of fact. Due to the specificity of sacred sciences there are very few cases which create serious problems of recognition. The greater part of these problems concern the denomination of institutions and programmes, which in some countries use the same wording but are substantially different.

An explicit “national action plan” has not yet been drafted but the question is addressed in the context of the reorganisation of the ENIC-office and ENIC-work of the Holy See.

## Lifelong Learning

Recognition of prior learning

(Scorecard)

20. Describe the measures in place to recognise prior learning, including non-formal and informal learning.

Please include:

- the stage of development of any procedures or national guidelines to recognise prior learning
- a description of any procedures or national guidelines for assessing prior learning as a basis for entry to HE
- a description of any procedures or guidelines for allocating credits as a basis of exemption from some programme requirements.

Plans and broad consultation of institutions, various stakeholders and experts have begun in view of adopting the National Qualifications Framework of the Holy See – in any case before 2010. In this context also the questions of non-formal and informal learning are dealt with, especially in the international advisory commission of the Congregation for questions relating to the Bologna-process and in a process of consultation with people responsible for professional training parallel to and outside of the HE.

21. Describe legislative and other measures taken by your country to create opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education.

Please include:

- any flexibility in entry requirements
- any flexible delivery methods
- any modular structures of programmes.

As the question is related to the previous one, the same answer could be given here.

In German speaking countries HEIs of the Holy See, as a consequence of guidelines drafted by the regional ecclesiastical authorities in collaboration with this Congregation, most of the study programmes have been modularised.

## Joint degrees

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Establishment and recognition of joint degrees

22. Describe the legislative position on joint degrees in your country.

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of any legislation to establish joint programmes
- whether joint<sup>6</sup> degrees are allowed and encouraged in legislation
- whether joint degrees are allowed and encouraged in all three cycles
- an indication of the percentage of HEIs that have established joint programmes and are awarding nationally recognised degrees jointly with HEIs of other countries
- any action being taken to encourage or allow joint programmes.

All HEIs of the Holy See offer the same academic degrees. In some cases degrees are also awarded as double degrees of two national systems. Some degrees of the Holy See can only be obtained by studying in two or more different places or institutions.

In a majority of European countries the regional legal framework requests from those studying Theology in the first cycle to spend at least one year of study in another country.

Another similar thing would be “affiliations”: these are, in a certain sense, full functioning HEIs which enjoy the right to grant the theological bachelor-degree of other, more developed and autonomous HEIs. This praxis, which very often concerns European Faculties which grant their academic degrees through smaller institutions outside Europe, is one of the best ways to establish ecclesiastical HEIs in developing countries. At present there are about 160 affiliated HEIs in Europe, and another 180 outside Europe most of which are affiliated to European HEIs.

## C. Current issues in Higher Education

### Higher education and research

23. Describe the relationship between higher education and research in your country - what percentage of research is carried out in HEIs; are any steps being taken to improve the synergy between HE and other research sectors.

Per definition HEIs of the Holy See have as their first purpose: “through scientific research to cultivate and promote their own disciplines, and especially to deepen knowledge of Christian revelation and of matters connected with it, to enunciate

<sup>6</sup> a joint degree is a single degree certificate awarded by two or more institutions, and where the single degree certificate is valid without being supplemented by any additional national degree certificate.



systematically the truths contained therein, to consider in the light of revelation the most recent progress of the sciences, and to present them to the people of the present day in a manner adapted to various cultures” (cfr. Sapientia christiana, Article 3 § 1).

24. What percentage of doctoral candidates take up research careers; are any measures being taken to increase the number of doctoral candidates taking up research careers?

As has been answered in question 23, there is no distinction between academic and research careers. A great majority of ecclesiastical career which require a canonical doctorate will be found again in HEIs and therefore have also to be considered as “research-careers”.

### **The social dimension**

25. Describe any measures being taken in your country to widen access to quality higher education.

Please include:

- any financial or other measures to widen access in higher education amongst socially disadvantaged groups
- any measures in place to monitor the impact of policies to widen access to higher education, including results if possible
- any further measures planned, following evaluation of the widening access measures already in place.

Following the principle of subsidiarity and due to the specific, international situation of HE under the authority of the Holy See, most of these questions are dealt with on a local and regional level.

Building on a long and powerful tradition of social engagement which was reinforced by the first encyclical letter of Pope Benedict XVI (“Deus caritas est”:

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_enc\\_20051225\\_deus-caritas-est\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est_en.html)),

there are numerous initiatives and measures to assure that nobody will be excluded from higher education because of social or economic disadvantage. A lot of programmes promoting student mobility are sponsored by ecclesiastical organisations. The academic formation of a significant percentage of students worldwide is possible due to the engagement of the Catholic Church either by support for individuals who study in European Faculties or by providing higher education in less developed areas of the world. There are more than 4.000.000 students in Catholic universities around the world. The greater number of students supported by the Church or her organisations do not even belong to the Holy See’s HE sector, but are studying in national HE systems.

Some of the largest student international organisations (e.g. the IMCS-Pax Romana founded in 1921 representing and supporting students in more than 70 countries worldwide <http://www.imcs-miec.org/web/>) and other ecclesiastical organisations have built up powerful worldwide networks of student support, representation and assistance.

The possibilities for access to education as such and to higher education in particular for women in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries had been promoted to a great extent by Catholic religious orders and organisations. Many of these orders and organisations are still continuing their work of enabling the disadvantaged to have access to higher education.

26. Describe any measures to help students complete their studies without

obstacles related to their social or economic background.

Please include:

- any guidance or counselling services and any other measures to improve retention
- any measures in place to monitor the impact of policies to improve retention, including results if possible
- any further measures planned, following evaluation of the retention measures already in place.

See answer to question 25

## Mobility

27. Describe any measures being taken to remove obstacles to student mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.

Please include:

- any measures to increase inward student mobility
- any measures to increase outward student mobility.

Mobility belongs essentially to the essence of HE of the Holy See. More than 70 % of the students and a significant part of staff of the “Pontifical Universities” in Rome, which make up nearly a third of HEIs of the Holy See in Europe, are not Italians. Mobility is also increased by the fact that due to the worldwide strategy and organisation of HE by the Holy See, different study programmes are – according to available resources – offered only in few places, but at the same time as a service for students from all over the world. In many cases the guidelines for formation and the profile of jobs request at least some time of foreign academic studies.

As the Holy See is a transnational provider, and all of the HEIs (besides 2) are outside the Vatican, a distinction between inward and outward mobility cannot be made.

On a local, regional or national level, many initiatives are in place to support student mobility, not only by sponsoring but also by providing structures of reception, integral human support etc.

28. Are portable loans and grants available in your country? If not, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of grants and loans.

The financing-system of HE under the competence of the Holy See makes it impossible to give an exact and reliable answer to this question due to the principle of subsidiarity.

29. Describe any measures being taken to remove obstacles to staff mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.

Please include:

- any measures to increase inward staff mobility
- any measures to increase outward staff mobility.

There are no obstacles for staff mobility which fall under the competence of the Holy See since the HEIs are located in states outside the Vatican. The Holy See tries to collaborate as much as possible with the host countries, concerning questions of visas etc.

## The attractiveness of the EHEA and cooperation with other parts of the world

30. Describe any measures being taken in your country to promote the attractiveness of the EHEA.

European HEIs of the Holy See are already (and by long tradition) the most attractive ones in the world. Due to this fact, the Holy See gives special emphasis to reinforcing European identity and values, which contribute on a high level to the attractiveness of European HEIs. The collaboration in the respective working group of BFUG and the organisation of a Bologna-Seminar in March/April 2006 addressed the same goals. As the Holy See has more intensive and numerous international contacts than any other Bologna member, it has already made many significant contributions on various levels.

### Future challenges

31. Give an indication of the main challenges ahead for your country.

As already mentioned in prior parts of the report the major challenges concern the (re)organisation of the ENIC-work, the further development of Quality Assurance related to the future agency of the Holy See, and the draft of the Qualifications framework.

Another major challenge arises from the necessary collaboration between two 'national' higher education systems (the one of the host country and the one of the Holy See): HEIs belong, in certain countries to both of them. In many cases, this collaboration is regulated by contracts of international law (concordats). The experience of recent years shows that it is not always easy to deal with two different ways of applying the common principles of the Bologna Process. Therefore this situation can be seen as test case for the functioning of the Bologna Process in practice. It can help to avoid illusions about an 'ideal Bologna Process', and offer worthwhile experience on how to settle problems arising at the grass-root level.

Completed National Reports should be sent to the Bologna Secretariat by email no later than **Friday 15 December 2006**.

Please remember to attach a copy of your national action plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications.

Bologna Secretariat  
April 2006