



Completed National Reports and National Strategies for the Social Dimension should be sent to the Bologna Secretariat by email (secr@bologna2009benelux.org) no later than

1 November 2008.

PART I

BOLOGNA PROCESS TEMPLATE FOR NATIONAL REPORTS: 2007-2009

Notes:

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

Please complete your National Report in English using this template (shaded areas) and return it to the Secretariat by email. Where appropriate, please include precise web references to legislation or other documentation. Please add comments as appropriate under each question to describe the current situation. Please try to keep text brief, while aiming to answer all questions comprehensively.

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 April 2009.

Details

Country	MALTA
Date	28 OCTOBER 2008
BFUG member (one name only) Position	DR. JOACHIM JAMES CALLEJA CEO, Malta Qualifications Council Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport
Email address	james.j.calleja@gov.mt

Contributors to the report	Ms. Veronica Grech, Registrar Designate, University of Malta; Dr. Angele Attard, Policy Advisor Quality Assurance, Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport; Mr. Jacques Sciberras, CEO National Commission for Higher Education; Mr. Raymond Farrugia, Registrar Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology; Ms. Roberta Avellino, President Kunsill Studenti Universitarji; Ms. Bernardine Mizzi, Principal St. Martin's College
----------------------------	--

1. Main developments since London 2007

Please describe the important developments relating to the Bologna Process, including legislative reforms and changes in institutional structures, since the London meeting in 2007.

The main developments since London 2007 have been the harmonisation of postgraduate, second cycle, qualifications awarded by the University of Malta, and the setting up of the Malta Qualifications Framework which included the Dublin Descriptors for a common higher education area. The National Commission for Higher Education has taken a number of initiatives to ensure that Quality Assurance becomes an integral part of Malta's Higher Education system. Through the Maltese National Agency, the European Union Programmes Agency, a campaign has been conducted to promote mobility for Higher Education students through the Erasmus Sectoral Programme. Through such campaigns there was a slight increase in the number of mobile teachers and students especially from the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology and the Insitute of Tourism Studies.

2. Partnership

Please describe the structure which oversees the implementation of the Bologna Process in your country.

In May 2008, the Minister of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport reconfirmed the appointment of the BFUG coordinator and appointed a number of Bologna Experts to oversee the implementation of the Bologna Process in Malta. The set-up is currently being supported by the European Union Programmes Agency. The Bologna Experts group represents all Higher Education Institutions in Malta both public and private. The Bologna Experts have designed an intensive programme of activities, partly funded by the European Commission, for the National Teams of Bologna Experts and involving teachers, administrators and students from all HEIs.

- a) Does your country have a national working group for Bologna follow-up ¹
- | | | |
|--|---|-----------------------------|
| | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|---|-----------------------------|
- b) Does your national Bologna follow-up group include representatives of
- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Ministry | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rectors' conference | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Academic staff | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Students | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Staff trade unions | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| National Quality Assurance Agency | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Employers | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Other (please specify) Private Higher Education Institutions and Malta's Higher Education and Vocational College (Note: Regarding 'Rector's Conference': as there is only one university in Malta there is no Rector's Conference but the University is represented in the follow-up group.)

- c) Does your country have a Bologna promoters' group²
- | | | |
|--|---|-----------------------------|
| | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|---|-----------------------------|
- d) Does your national Bologna promoters' group include representatives of
- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Ministry | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rectors' conference | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Academic staff | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Students | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Staff trade unions | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| National Quality Assurance Agency | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Employers | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
- Other (please specify) Private Higher Education Institutions and Malta's Higher Education and Vocational College

Please add any additional comments if necessary:

¹ A group that develops policy proposals for implementing the Bologna Process

² A group that supports/advises HEIs on implementation of the Bologna Process

The new Bologna Experts group is highly representatives of HEIs in Malta and although trade union and employers associations are not directly involved in the group there is constant consultation with such groups particularly in activities organised by the BEs.

DEGREE SYSTEM

3. Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle

a) Please describe the progress made towards introducing the first and second cycles.

The Maltese educational system provides for the first and second cycle in higher education. As a matter of fact, such a system has been established for many years at the University of Malta. The duration of Bachelor's degrees is three or four years, with the exception of three professional courses which last five years but are still considered as first cycle qualifications.

The second cycle leads to the award of a Master's Degree after a period of one to two years. Applicants must hold a recognised first cycle degree. The University of Malta has recently approved new harmonised regulations for postgraduate awards which provide for the admission of applicants with first cycle degrees awarded with any classification, under certain conditions, including the successful completion of a preparatory programme.

The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) are proposing to introduce degree programmes in 2010.

Private Higher Education Institutions (which are representatives or franchises of overseas HE institutions) also follow the two-cycle system and degree programmes are designed on such a system.

b) Please give the percentage of the total number of all³ students below doctoral level enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09.

Total number of all students below doctoral level	Number enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09 ⁴	% of all students enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09
9732	9732	100%

c) Please add comments which accurately describe the current situation regarding implementation of the two cycle system in your country:

Higher Education Institutions in Malta, both public and private follow the two-cycle system which is well established in Malta's Higher Education context.

4. Stage of implementation of the third cycle

Please describe the progress made towards implementing doctoral studies as the third Bologna cycle.

Please include:

³ "All" = all students who could be involved in 2-cycle system i.e. NOT those in doctoral programmes and NOT those in short HE programmes. *NB Students of ALL study fields are taken into account*

⁴ If countries have more recent data available after November 1, they can provide an update but no later than January 15, 2009

- the percentage of doctoral candidates following structured doctoral programmes including both taught courses and independent research
- the normal length of full-time doctoral studies
- other elements⁵ apart from independent research that are included in doctoral study programmes
- the supervisory and assessment procedures for doctoral studies
- information on whether doctoral studies are included in your country's qualifications framework and linked to learning outcomes
- information on whether interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills are integrated in doctoral studies
- information on whether credit points are used in measuring workload in doctoral studies.
- Information on the status of the doctoral students (students, early stage researchers, both)

- 0%
- 3 years
- none - only by independent research
- regular supervision by a principal supervisor appointed from among the members of the academic staff of the University of Malta; a co-supervisor or adviser may also be appointed if the research is of an interdisciplinary nature. A Faculty Doctoral Committee chaired by the Dean meets once a year to review the progress of each doctoral student. Assessment of doctoral candidates is through an examination of the thesis and by means of an oral examination by a Board of Examiners composed of experienced academics and always including an external examiner from another university.
- doctoral programmes are included at Level 8 in the Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning but as yet such programmes are not based on Learning Outcomes
- yes but on a case by case basis depending on the area of study
- no
- they are considered as students.

⁵ E.g. taught courses in the chosen discipline, other taught courses, teaching activities (if these are required as part of doctoral studies), etc.

5. Relationship between higher education and research

a) Please describe the main trends in the role of higher education institutions in research in your country.

HEIs are working towards a more integrated approach between research and the Nation's Economic and Social priorities. Research is increasingly becoming industry focused with particular attention to a number of key policy areas such as medical science, IT, hospitality, education and financial services.

b) Please outline any measures to improve co-operation between higher education institutions and other private and public institutions that undertake research. Please include:

- percentage of GDP spent on research
 - from public funds
 - from private funds
- total annual national research expenditure (expressed in national currency)
 - from public funds
 - from private funds
- percentage of research carried out in higher education institutions (in terms of funding)
- details of the funding mechanisms for doctoral students in your country

AA:

Percentage of GDP spent on Research:

- From public funds: 0.24 %

- From private funds: 0.44%

Total annual national research expenditure (expressed in national currency)

- From public funds: 12.8 million Eur

- From private funds: 22.3 million Eur

The large majority of national research is spent in higher education insitutions. There is only a minimal negligible percentage not spent in higher education institutions.

Funding mechanisms for doctoral students: These are mainly in the form of a scholarship scheme, for which students compete, and if accepted for a scholarship at the university of Malta, the University receives an amount of money to cover their costs, and the students receive a grant to cover their fees and personal expenses.

Cooperation between HEIs and other private and public insitutions that undertake research is in the process of establishing a more structured dialogue.

- c) Is there any tracking system to follow the further career of doctoral graduates?
Yes No If Yes, please specify:

The University of Malta conducts tracer studies every two years to be able to follow the career paths of its graduates and in 2008 it launched an alumni association which aims at tracking the career progression of all its graduates, including doctoral graduates, among its other activities.

6. Access⁶ and admission to the next cycle

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

6.1 Access and admission between the first and second cycles

Please indicate:

- a) the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to the second cycle

100%

- b) any first cycle qualifications that do not give access to the second cycle (please specify)

None.

- c) any special requirements for access to a second cycle programme in the same field of studies: *please tick whether graduates must:*

sit entrance exam	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In some cases <input type="checkbox"/>
complete additional courses	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	In some cases <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
have work experience	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In some cases <input type="checkbox"/>

If the answer to the last point is yes, please specify what type of work experience is required:

Not applicable

- d) any further special requirements for access to a second cycle programme in the same field of studies

None

- e) to which students the above special requirements apply (*please tick*):

all students	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
holders of particular first cycle qualifications	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

⁶ Access as defined in the Lisbon Recognition Convention: "Access: the right of qualified candidates to apply and be considered for admission to higher education."

students of the same field coming from other HEIs Yes No

f) which of the requirements apply to students coming from other fields of studies (please tick):

entrance exam	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In some cases <input type="checkbox"/>
additional courses	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	In some cases <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
work experience	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In some cases <input type="checkbox"/>

6.2 Access and admission between the second and third cycles

Please indicate:

a) the percentage of second cycle qualifications that give access to the third cycle

99%

b) any second cycle qualifications that do not give access to the third cycle (please specify)

2 - Master of Business Administration and Master in Diplomacy

c) any measures planned to remove obstacles between cycles

none

7. Employability of graduates/ cooperation with employers

a) What measures are being taken to enhance the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications? Please include the most recent statistical data on the employment status of graduates of all cycles.

If your higher education institutions also provide professional bachelor programmes, please provide employability data for both types of bachelors separately

As Malta has been awarding Bachelor degrees for more than 30 years, graduates of the University of Malta with first cycle degrees meet no difficulties to find employment. Employers are used to employing first cycle graduates and there have not been any difficulties in this regard. This is also a result of cooperation and discussions with employers in devising new and updating current degree programmes and their direct representation on the Boards of the Faculties. The newly established Faculty of Information and Communication Technology is in direct response to the setting up of SMART City Malta which is attracting investment in I.T. projected at creating over 6,500 new jobs prevalently in the I.T. sector. Lately a diploma programme has been launched between MCAST and the Federation of Industry.

b) To what extent there is a dialogue in your country between higher education institutions and employers on:

- curriculum design, work placements and international experience
Significant Some A little None
- accreditation/quality assurance
Significant Some A little None
- university governance
Significant Some A little None

c) Are first cycle graduates able to pursue careers in the public service on an equal footing with other graduates?

Yes No In some cases

d) Have you aligned recruitment procedures and career structures in the public service to take account of the Bologna changes?

Yes No In some cases

If no, or in some cases only, please explain the current situation:

There was no need for any changes in procedures since Malta's graduates have been awarded Bachelor or Master's degrees for many long years.

8. Implementation of national qualifications framework

Please answer the questions below. Please add comments which accurately describe the current situation in your country.

a) Has the national qualifications framework been prepared⁷?

Yes No

Comment The Malta Qualifications Framework was officially launched in June 2007.

b) Does the framework or proposed framework include generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences?

Yes No

Comment At all the eight Levels of the Framework

c) Does it include ECTS credit ranges for the first and second cycle?

Yes No

Comment

d) Has the NQF been nationally discussed with all stakeholders?

Yes No

Comment Over a consultation period of eight months from November 2006 to June 2007.

If the answer to d) is No, please answer question e):

e) has a timetable been agreed for consultations with all stakeholders?

Yes No

Comment Not applicable

If the answer to d) is Yes, please answer the following questions:

f) Are all formal arrangements/decisions for implementing the framework in place and have the necessary formal decisions for establishing the framework been taken?

Yes No

Comment The Government of Malta set up in 2005 the Malta Qualifications Council to oversee the development of the Malta Qualifications Framework.

⁷ A national framework of qualifications compatible with the overarching framework of qualifications of the EHEA

g) How far has the implementation of the national qualifications framework progressed (***please tick one***)

- The framework is fully implemented. All qualifications have been added to the NQF through a QA procedure (e.g. accreditation)
- There is significant progress on implementing the framework
- The work of describing all qualifications in terms of learning outcomes and competencies has been completed
- There is a timetable for implementation and the work has started
- Work on implementing the framework has not yet started but a timetable for implementation has been agreed
- Work on implementing the framework has not yet started and there is no timetable for implementation

Comment Malta is one of the few member states that has established a National Qualifications Framework (EQF) based on the European Qualifications Framework and responding to the Dublin Descriptors and the descriptors of the EQF.

h) What is the stage of progress on the self-certification of compatibility with the EHEA framework ?

Completed Started, but not yet completed Not yet started

Comment

i) Has the self-certification report been published?

Yes No

Comment

Please add any additional comments if necessary:

Comment N/A

NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EHEA (ESG)⁸

9. Reviewing the QA system against the ESG⁹ and national support for implementation

a) Has your national QA system been reviewed against the ESG?

Yes No Not yet, but such a review is planned
(Please specify time) _____

b) If a review has been undertaken or is planned, please give further details of the review process.

AA: The National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE) carried out a review of all aspects related to Quality Assurance within the Maltese further and higher education system. The NCHE came up with proposals and recommendations for changes to the current licensing, accreditation and quality assurance framework, following an intensive period of research into the current system, taking into account the local context and needs, the ESG and good practice in other countries. Following the formulation and official presentation of the proposals, the NCHE carried out a nation-wide consultation with institutions and stakeholders, and also consulted with EUA and ESU, and sought advice on the way forward from the European Commission and ENQA. In turn, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, based on the above-mentioned proposals and consultation, is in the process of considering a new legislation entitled 'Further and Higher Education (Licensing, Accreditation and Quality Assurance) Regulations' in which it will take on board the proposals made by the NCHE, particularly in light of its commitments to QA under the Bologna Process, with a view to providing for the genuine improvement of higher education provision in Malta, and an upgrading of national structures to ensure this. The legislation is due to be adopted by end-June 2009.

c) If a review process has been undertaken, did it result in any of the following:

Stakeholder consultation on changes required to the national QA system?

Yes No

The introduction of specific financial or other incentives aimed at improving the internal quality assurance processes in institutions?

Yes No

If Yes, please give details of these incentives:

AA: These are included in the budgetary requests for implementation of the NCHE proposals for a new licensing, accreditation and quality assurance framework. The proposals envisage that funding for internal and external quality assurance will be matched.

⁸ <http://www.bologna2009benelux.org/documents/Standards-and-Guidelines-for-QA.pdf>

⁹ ESG - Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

- Other measures

Yes No

If Yes, please outline these measures AA: Capacity building for institutions on implementation of internal QA procedures, and ongoing advice and information for institutions and stakeholders in their involvement in QA procedures.

d) If incentives and/or other measures have been introduced with the aim of improving the internal quality assurance processes in institutions, has any evidence of the impact of these changes been gathered?

Yes No

If Yes, please give details of how evidence of the impact of the changes was gathered, and of the main outcomes that it demonstrates

9.1. Internal quality assurance in higher education institutions

Describe the internal QA systems in place in your HEIs.

At MCAST, internal quality assurance is the responsibility of the Deputy Principal. In this capacity he develops policy and oversees its implementation across all institutes and across all programmes.

The Institute for Tourism Studies has a quality assurance policy which is under the direct responsibility of the Executive Chairman.

The University of Malta also has its own quality assurance policy which has been reviewed during the last two years.

Please comment in particular on the following aspects, giving references to relevant websites:

a) How many HEIs have published a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality?

All HEIs Most HEIs Some HEIs No HEIs

b) How many HEIs have arrangements in place for the internal approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards?

All HEIs Most HEIs Some HEIs No HEIs

Please describe what kind of arrangements are in place

At the University of Malta, a Programme Validation Committee has been established to monitor, review and recommend programmes for approval by Senate after taking into consideration human and financial resources, the strategic aims of the University, the country's requirements for graduates in particular fields and their employability. The Committee is supported in its work by an Academic Programmes Quality and Resources Unit staffed by full-time members of the administrative staff. Vocational colleges have also set up special units for Quality Assurance of vocational and training programmes at HE level.

c) How many HEIs have described their programmes in terms of learning outcomes?

All HEIs Most HEIs Some HEIs No HEIs

d) Are student assessments at HEIs designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes (based on published criteria) applied in a consistent way?

All HEIs Most HEIs Some HEIs No HEIs

Please describe how the above is achieved.

At MCAST, this is achieved through an internal and external verification system.

e) How many HEIs publish up to date, impartial and objective information about the programmes and awards offered?

All HEIs Most HEIs Some HEIs No HEIs

Additional information if necessary All HEIs in Malta have an interactive website which provides updated information on all programmes and systems including those related to quality assurance.

10. Stage of development of external quality assurance system

Describe the external quality assurance system operating in your country.

Please include:

a) the stage of implementation of your external quality assurance system

AA: External quality assurance is a long standing system in some of our HEIs, particularly those who offer programmes in collaboration with foreign higher education institutions or which lead to foreign qualifications - in this way their external QA processes are linked to QA agencies abroad. Such a process is normally coordinated by individual faculties and institutes within HEIs through a centralised system based on an agreed QA policy.

b) does your external quality assurance system operate at a national level;

Yes No

If **No**, please specify:

AA: The review carried out by the NCHE (see point 9a above) concluded that coordination of QA at the national level is currently weak, due to the current nature of external QA exercises as described in the previous paragraph - which has led to an ad hoc set-up of external QA procedures. The NCHE has proposed changes to the national licensing, accreditation and quality assurance framework at the national level - in order to continue to utilise the current external QA procedures where these are in place, and where these are carried out by a QA Agency which is recognised in Europe. It is envisaged that these will fall within the national framework, which will also provide for external QA procedures where these are not yet in place - for both public and private provision of higher education.

c) does your external quality assurance system cover all higher education¹⁰

Yes No

If **No**, please specify which types of institutions or programmes are not covered by your external quality assurance system:

AA: To note - as explained above, the current external QA system is not entirely adequate, and has been reviewed by the NCHE in light of its inadequacy. The draft Further and Higher Education (Licensing, Accreditation and Quality Assurance) Regulations, currently being considered within the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, provides for external QA of all the higher education system, and the following questions will be answered in light of this imminent legislation, due to be adopted by end June 2009.

d) which of the following elements are included in your external quality assurance system:

- self-assessment report Yes No

¹⁰ 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.

- external review Yes No
- publication of results Yes No
- follow-up procedures Yes No

e) has a peer review of the national agency(ies) according to the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA already taken place

Yes No

If **No** is there a date set for the review? Yes (please specify date 2011) No

11. Level of student participation

From the following, please indicate all aspects of quality assurance in which students are involved:

- a) in governance of national agencies for QA. Yes No In some cases
- b) as full members in external review teams Yes No In some cases
- c) as observers in external review teams Yes No In some cases
- d) as part of the decision making process for external reviews Yes No In some cases
- e) in the consultation process during external reviews (eg arrangements for external reviewers to consult with students) Yes No In some cases
- f) in internal quality assurance (e.g. periodic review of programmes) Yes No In some cases
- g) in preparation of self-assessment reports. Yes No In some cases
- h) in follow-up procedures: Yes No In some cases

*Please add any additional comments, especially if students are **not** involved in any of the aspects:*

AA: Kindly note that, as mentioned above, although only some of these measures are currently in place, all of these are envisaged in the draft (Licensing, Accreditation and Quality Assurance) Regulations, due to be adopted by end-June 2009.

12. Level of international participation

In which of the following is there international participation in quality assurance

- a) the governance of national agencies for quality assurance Yes No In some cases
- b) the external evaluation of national quality assurance agencies Yes No In some cases
- c) teams for external review of institutions or programmes, either as members or observers Yes No In some cases
- d) membership of ENQA Yes No In some cases
- e) membership of any other international network Yes No If **Yes**, please specify:

AA: The Malta Qualifications Council is a member of ENQA-VET, and the University of Malta is a member of EUA.

Please add any additional comments, especially if there is no international involvement in any of the aspects:

AA: Kindly note these measures are envisaged in the draft Further and Higher Education (Licensing, Accreditation and Quality Assurance) Regulations, due to be adopted by end-June 2009.

As regards membership of ENQA, it is not envisaged in the draft regulations that the national QA agency has to be a member of ENQA - as in the ESG, the requirement is that it would be submitted to an external review and that it would have international links and affiliations. That said, the NCHE has been allowed participate in ENQA events, and has learnt a lot from ENQA on issues relating to the everyday issues faced by external QA agencies, about internal QA of the agency itself, and different combinations for programmes and/or institutional accreditation.

The NCHE has also cooperated extensively with EUA in the preparation phase for setting up a national QA agency which is in line with the principles of the ESG - the NCHE participated in EUA's Annual Meeting for experts of the EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme and has been allowed to observe an IEP evaluation taking place.

The cooperation with ENQA and EUA in this regard has been instrumental for all the preparation work needed to move forward with a revised national system for external QA.

RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND STUDY PERIODS

13. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement

Describe the stage of implementation of the Diploma Supplement in your country. Please include the percentage of all students graduating in 2009 who will receive a Diploma Supplement (if less than 100%, please explain)

The University of Malta is committed to issuing the DS to all its graduates automatically, that is without the need of a request and free of charge, by 2010.

The DS that have been issued so far are in full conformity with EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format.

In 2008 the DS was issued to about 50% of the students graduating in November/December 2008.

a) Is the Diploma Supplement issued to students graduating from:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| • 1st cycle programmes | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| • 2nd cycle programmes | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| • 3rd cycle programmes | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| • remaining "old type" programmes | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Not applicable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| • short higher education programmes | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | Not applicable <input type="checkbox"/> |

b) which of the following apply to Diploma Supplements issued in your country:

- issued in a widely spoken European language Yes No
 - *please specify the language* English
- issued free of charge for a fee
- issued automatically on request
- corresponds to the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format
- a national Diploma Supplement is used that is different from the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format

13.1. Use of Diploma Supplement for recognition of qualifications

Please describe the way in which the Diploma Supplement is used for the recognition of foreign qualifications (or studies). Please comment in particular on the following aspects, giving references to any relevant websites and documents:

a) The Diploma Supplement is used as the reference document when admitting holders of foreign qualifications to the second and third cycles.

Yes No

Comment It is easier to evaluate and to make a fair assessment of qualifications obtained by overseas applicants who present a Diploma Supplement.

b) Holders of foreign qualifications who present a Diploma Supplement in a widely spoken language do not have to provide official translations of their qualifications.

Yes No

Comment if the DS is in English

c) Holders of foreign qualifications who present a Diploma Supplement in a widely spoken language do not need to prove through other documents the validity of the qualifications in the awarding country (for further studies or employment in the non-regulated part of the labour market).

Yes No

Comment

d) Specific action has been taken at a National and Institutional level to enhance the use of the Diploma Supplement as a communication tool towards the labour market

Yes No

Comment Malta is moving towards the use of the Diploma Supplement as a communication tool towards the labour market.

14. National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention

Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementary documents¹¹ of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

a) Does appropriate legislation comply with the Lisbon Convention?

Yes No

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved: The Lisbon Recognition Convention was ratified by Malta on the 16th November 2005 and came into force on the 1st of January 2006. The dispositions of the Convention were transposed into the National Legislation on 21st November 2006 by means of Legal Notice 280 (2006).

b) Does appropriate legislation comply with the later Supplementary Documents:

i) Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition

Yes No

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved: Implemented through the Transposition of the Lisbon Recognition Convention into Maltese Legislation.

ii) Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees

Yes No

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved: Implemented through the Transposition of the Lisbon Recognition Convention into Maltese Legislation.

iii) Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education

Yes No

¹¹ 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)

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved: Implemented through the Transposition of the Lisbon Recognition Convention into Maltese Legislation.

c) which of the following principles are applied in practice

i) applicants' right to fair assessment

Yes No

If Yes, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level
Transparency of procedures.

ii) recognition if no substantial differences can be proven

Yes No

If Yes, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level
Through the provision of documentation to demonstrate comparability of awards.

lii) demonstration of substantial differences, where recognition is not granted

Yes No

If Yes, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level
in cases where no official documentation can be authenticated and presented.

iv) provision of information about your country's HE programmes and institutions

Yes No

If Yes, please describe how it is done in practice Through websites and the timely publication of programmes of studies.

v) do you have a fully operational ENIC

Yes No

If Yes, please describe the role of your ENIC in recognition and information provision a) nationally and b) internationally **ENIC Malta assists all learners in the recognition process by providing information on foreign institutions worldwide. In June 2008 Malta hosted the ENIC/NARIC General Conference.**

d) As additional information, please describe any actions to implement fully the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents.

The Malta Qualifications Council has been entrusted in August 2008 with the full implementation of the Convention in the Supplementary Documents.

15. Stage of implementation of ECTS¹²

Describe the implementation of ECTS in your country.

- a) Please include the percentage of the total number of higher education programmes¹³ in which all programme components are linked with ECTS credits
- 100% 75-99% 50-75% <50%

The percentage reflects the programmes at the University of Malta.

- b) Are ECTS credits linked with learning outcomes¹⁴ in your country? Please tick one:

No In some programmes In the majority of programmes
In all programmes

- c) If you use credit system other than ECTS, please give details of your national credit system:

Two HEIs have their own credit system which is compatible with ECTS and one HEI uses only ECTS,

i) is it compatible with ECTS? Yes No

ii) what is the ratio between national and ECTS credits?

National 1 : ECTS 2 (MCAST & ITS)

- d) Are you taking any action to improve understanding of learning outcomes?

Yes No

If Yes, please explain: Through direct contacts with the academic staff in HEIs.

- e) Are you taking any actions to improve measurement and checking of student workload?

Yes No

If Yes, please explain: Actions and assessment by the University Students Council are being carried out so as to assess the workload with regards to the respective weighting of ECTS. Furthermore, the ECTS/workload issue is also included in the Student Feedback Forms which students enrolled at the University of Malta are requested to fill in.

- f) Are you taking any actions to assist HE staff or other stakeholders in applying ECTS.

¹² Please refer to definitions in the ECTS User's guide,
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/guide_en.html

¹³ Except doctoral studies

¹⁴ Clarification: Learning outcomes in the form of knowledge, skills and competences are formulated for all programme components and credits are awarded only when the stipulated learning outcomes are actually acquired

Yes No

If Yes, please explain: By direct contact with all stakeholders including student unions, teachers and policy makers in HEIs through training seminars organised by the European Union Programmes Agency and the Malta Bologna Experts Team.

LIFELONG LEARNING

16. Recognition of prior learning

Describe the measures in place to recognise prior learning (RPL), including non-formal and informal learning (for example learning gained in the workplace or in the community).

a) Do you have nationally established procedures in place to assess RPL as a basis for access to HE programmes?

Yes No

If Yes, please specify: However the Malta Qualifications Council has published a draft policy on the recognition of prior learning for consultation purposes.

b) Do you have nationally established RPL procedures in place to allocate credits towards a qualification?

Yes No

If Yes, please specify:

c) Do you have nationally established RPL procedures in place to allocate credits for exemption from some programme requirements?

Yes No

If Yes, please specify: However, the University of Malta has provision for the admission, under certain conditions, of persons over the age of 23 years and who do not have the official admission requirements to be admitted to a first cycle programme. Other HEIs have embarked on a number of second cycle degree programmes in management and administration in which the RPL system is adopted.

d) To what extent are any such procedures applied in practice?

Comprehensively Some A little None

Please describe the current situation: The current situation is improving and it is expected that a National RPL system will be in place by 2010 at all levels of the Malta Qualifications Framework.

17. Flexible learning paths

Describe legislative and other measures taken by your country to create opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education, to encourage participation by under-represented groups.

The University of Malta adopted the 'maturity clause' mechanism to ensure a wider participation of under-represented groups at the University of Malta. The monthly stipend given to full-time undergraduates and to some postgraduate students also encourages under-represented groups to be more actively involved in higher education. All HEIs in Malta have a very wide part-time programmes in a various fields of studies.

a) Are there specific measures in place to promote flexible learning paths within the national qualifications framework?

Yes No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation All level descriptors in Malta's Qualifications Framework promote flexible learning.

b) Are there any measures to support HE staff in establishing flexible learning paths?

Yes No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation

c) Is there flexibility in entry requirements aimed at widening participation?

Yes No

Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between the three Bologna cycles The 'maturity clause' normally applies for entry into first cycle diploma and degree programmes.

d) Are there any flexible delivery methods to meet the needs of diverse groups of learners

Yes No

Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between different Bologna cycle Teachers in HE cater for a wide

range of participants irrespective of age and formal qualifications. In all HEIs in Malta, video-conferencing and e-learning is increasing being used.

e) Are there modular structures of programmes to facilitate greater participation?

Yes No

Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between different Bologna cycle All programmes are based on a modular system and the provision of a large number of part-time courses held in the evenings facilitates participation.

f) If possible, please provide any statistics on the results of measures taken to create opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education, to encourage participation by under-represented groups,

Data not available

JOINT DEGREES

18. Establishment and recognition of joint degrees¹⁵

a) Describe the legislative position on joint degrees in your country.

Are joint degrees specifically mentioned in legislation?

Yes No

Does the legislation fully allow:

i) establishing joint programmes?

Yes No

If No please explain what are the obstacles

ii) awarding joint degrees?

Yes No

If No please explain what are the obstacles

b) Please give an estimate of the percentage of institutions in your country which are involved in

i) joint degrees

75-100% 50-75% 25-50% 1-25% 0%

ii) joint programmes

75-100% 50-75% 25-50% 1-25% 0%

c) What is the level of joint degree/ programme cooperation in your country

¹⁵ A *joint degree* is a single degree certificate awarded by two or more institutions, where the single degree certificate is valid without being supplemented by any additional national degree certificate.

In the first cycle?	None <input type="checkbox"/>	Little <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Widespread <input type="checkbox"/>
In the second cycle?	None <input type="checkbox"/>	Little <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Widespread <input type="checkbox"/>
In the third cycle?	None <input type="checkbox"/>	Little <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Widespread <input type="checkbox"/>

d) In which subject areas/disciplines is joint degree/programme co-operation most widespread (please list if possible)?

The University of Malta has developed joint degrees with other universities in EU countries (since no other HEI in Malta awards degrees). The areas involved are Agribusiness, Early Childhood Education, Human Language Science and Technology, and Creativity and Innovation.

e) Estimate the number of joint programmes in your country

Four

f) Describe any actions being taken to encourage or allow joint programmes.

The University of Malta continues to promote for the development and delivery of joint programmes.

g) Are there any specific support systems for students to encourage joint degree cooperation?

The University of Malta enters into bilateral agreements with other universities as well as through the EC programme for joint degrees, the Erasmus Mundus programme which it manages. This programme supports and encourages students to participate in joint degrees as well as academics to participate in the development and delivery of these programmes.

MOBILITY

19. Removing obstacles to student and staff mobility

a) What measures have been taken by your country both at governmental and institutional level to enhance student and staff mobility and overcome main obstacles?

Student inward mobility is on the increase whereas student outward mobility is static. An increasing flow of mobility in the labour market is also witnessed. Both inward and outward mobility across all levels of specialisation are occurring, and the flow and direction of mobility is often related to the stage of development of particular niches of economic and social activity in Malta.

At MCAST, a member of staff has been nominated by each of the nine institutes to serve as a focal point for students and staff interested in mobility programme participation. At the University mobility of staff and students is the responsibility

of the International and EU Office with the support of Erasmus Co-ordinators in the faculties.

b) Have arrangements for visas, residence and work permits been amended to enhance student and staff mobility?

Yes No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation: Malta facilitates in every way possible the mobility of students from all over the world.

c) Is there financial support for national and foreign mobile students and staff?

Yes No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation: Students and staff have the opportunity to be mobile to other countries through the financial support of the Erasmus Programme. The University of Malta also utilises its own internal funds to support staff in undertaking further studies or research abroad. Maltese students continue to receive their stipend whilst abroad as well as the SMART Card allowance in cash (a lump sum amount for students during each of their year of studies).

d) Are study periods taken abroad recognised?

Yes No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation: Students are encouraged to embark on study programmes abroad which can be matched to existing study programmes in their home institution. All approved studies under the Erasmus Programme are included in the students' transcript and contribute towards the final classification of the students' degree.

e) Is there accommodation for mobile students and staff?

Yes No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation: The University provides its own University Residence for overseas students. A number of flats and apartments around the University campus and near other HEIs are available at reasonable prices.

f) Have any measures been taken to increase outward student and staff mobility?

Yes No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation: Awareness campaigns are taking place to inform students and staff of such opportunities and advantages.

20. Portability of loans and grants

a) Are portable grants available in your country?

Yes No

If No, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of grants.

b) Are portable loans available in your country?

Yes No

If No, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of loans.

THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE EHEA AND COOPERATION WITH OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

21. Implementation of strategy

a) Describe any measures being taken by your country to implement the strategy "European Higher Education in a Global Setting"

Active participation in international fora and promotion of Malta as a destination for HE. The University of Malta is also seeking to establish joint programmes in partnership with US universities, where programmes are developed and delivered by academics from both partner institutions.

b) What has your country done to:

i) improve information on the EHEA outside Europe?

The European Union Programmes Agency has published a 'Living Out Guide to Malta' which includes information about HE, information about living and working in Malta and other general information to ease students' and teachers' stay on the Maltese islands.

ii) promote European higher education, enhance its world-wide attractiveness and competitiveness?

In October 2008, education and in particular HE was on the agenda of the Prime Minister's talks with the Premier of the China. Malta includes HE on the agenda of various bilateral talks with delegations both from within and outside Europe.

iii) strengthen cooperation based on partnership in higher education?

Bilateral agreements envisage sections on cooperation in education and in particular on exchanges of students and teachers in HE which includes also vocational training.

iv) intensify policy dialogue with partners from other world regions?

Malta constantly promotes dialogues with partners from other world regions on issues related to the EHEA including Malta's active participation in such development.

v) improve recognition of qualifications with other world regions?

The formal recognition of qualifications is becoming more flexible in order to ensure that all learning is validated and recognised according to the level of education the individual would have achieved. Malta is an active member of the ENIC/NARIC network.

c) What measures have been taken in your country to implement the *OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education*? Please describe.

AA: These have been taken into account when the NCHE formulated proposals for a new national licensing, accreditation and QA framework (see point 9 above). The draft Further and Higher Education (Licensing, Accreditation and Quality Assurance) Regulations, due to be adopted by end-June 2009 also reflect the UNESCO-OECD guidelines, as they are built on the same proposals.

d) Are the OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education applied to

i) cross-border provision of your education programmes?

Yes No

If Yes please explain in what ways the guidelines are applied

AA: It is envisaged that they will apply to cross-border provision of programmes, and this will be checked as part of the external QA exercise that the HEIs will be subject to.

ii) incoming higher education provision?

Yes No

If Yes please explain in what ways the guidelines are applied

AA: It is envisaged that they will apply to incoming higher education provision of programmes, and this will be checked as part of the external QA exercise that the HEIs will be subject to.

FUTURE CHALLENGES

22. Main challenges for higher education

Give an indication of the main challenges ahead for higher education and the Bologna Process in your country in the short and long term.

Short term challenges faced by Malta's higher education system

1. The University of Malta is trying to increase its research activities and towards this end it is tapping possible funds from all sources, and particularly from the EU. It is seeking from government increased annual funds to enable it to achieve its targets and to offer a high quality education. Funding in this regard will remain the biggest short term challenge. Currently the University is negotiating new terms and conditions of employment for its academic staff with the aim of introducing new work practices supported by better working and financial conditions.

2. Another aspect in relation to the growing demands on the University in terms of increasing student numbers is the balance required between teaching and research activities undertaken. The University requires further investment in its research activities to ensure the provision of quality teaching and high quality tertiary level education.

Long term challenges

1. The primary long-term challenge is the future growth in demand in relation to the capacity and existing funding system for tertiary level education in Malta.

2. A second challenge is the additional challenge of an ageing population with a simultaneous derived demand for adult education services not necessarily at a

tertiary level of education. Growing demand in this area may detract funds available for tertiary level education growth

Bologna Experts will foster the Learning Outcomes culture within the respective Higher Education Institutions whilst ensuring that all students and academics do actually comprehend the terminology of issues such as Qualifications Framework, Learning Outcomes and Workload and Quality Assurance.

Furthermore, experts should bring forward any feedback, proposals or complaints of the institution of which they are responsible. This would consolidate the stakeholders' consultation process. Particular problem cases should also be tackled one by one as each requires particular attention. Sessions with employers and the market/industry should also be looked into as their demands would guarantee the employability of students who achieve the given Learning Outcomes of their studies.

On the other hand, the National Agency should continue to monitor the process within all the relevant Higher Education Institutions, applying pressure to cases which if not given immediate attention, would be detrimental mostly to students.

Ultimately, the Bologna Experts and the National Agency should further collaborate to implement good practices and hence, yield the best results within an efficient timeframe.

PART II

TEMPLATE for NATIONAL STRATEGIES on THE SOCIAL DIMENSION of THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

Practical instruction

The answers to this questionnaire will be included in the general national report on the implementation of the Bologna Process and reach the Bologna Secretariat (e-mail: secr@bologna2009benelux.org) by November 1, 2008. **Please do not exceed the length of 10 pages for the national strategy on social dimension.**

The questions in Annex C are not included in the questionnaire itself but are to be considered as reference material which could facilitate the drafting of the information on the national strategy.

I. Definition of the Social Dimension in the London Communiqué

“We strive for the societal goal that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of our populations. We therefore pledge to take action to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity.”

II. AS IS SITUATION (Current state of affairs)

1. Which groups in society are still underrepresented in your national higher education system? What are the main obstacles to participative equity in terms of access and successful completion of studies?

Students with disabilities having accessibility problems at educational insitutions.

2. Please describe what measures your Government is taking to increase the representation of the groups identified in the question above. Please refer to the possible actions listed in the Bologna Working Group report on the Social Dimension and Mobility (see Annexes A and B to this document).

Government has legislated that all public institutions are accessible to persons with disabilities.

3. Describe what measures are being taken by the Government to help students complete their studies without obstacles related to their social or economic background. Again, please refer to the possible actions listed in the Bologna Working Group report on the Social Dimension and Mobility (see Annexes A and B to this document). Please indicate whether the measures apply to all students or only to certain levels or types of higher education institutions.

Students coming from a social and economic background are provided with special maintenance grants.

4. Does your country have statistical and/or other research evidence at disposal to underpin the identification of underrepresented groups and the main obstacles to participative equity (see Q 1) ? If yes, please specify. Or are regular student survey organised with the aim to provide data concerning the social dimension?

No

III. PROCESS TOWARDS A MORE INCLUSIVE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM (strategy for the future)

5. How do you plan to tackle the challenges identified under Q 1 in the near future (2008-2010)?

(a) Which concrete goals do you want to achieve?

HEIs will ensure that additional or new educational facilities fulfill all requirements so as to ensure access to all students. Facilities include both physical and educational

(b) What actions are planned for the different target group identified above to overcome the obstacles in access, participation and completion of studies by students? Please refer to Annex B and to the suggested approach outlined in the 2007 report from the Bologna Process Working Group on the Social Dimension and Mobility (Annex C to this document).

Admission rules that are simple, fair and transparent; flexible delivery of higher education; flexible learning pathways into and within higher education; guidance and tutoring services; working tools and environment particularly in well functioning of libraries, lecture halls and seminar rooms as well as access to internet facilities; provision of student canteens; students evaluation of courses and programmes; financial and legal advice to students; a University Ombudsman service; support measures for studnets with children in HEIs Childcare Centres.

(c) is there a specific budget for these measures for underrepresented groups ? If yes, please provide details

No but expenditure is part of the recurrent budget of HEIs.

d) is there a timeline for action? If yes, please provide details.

Action is ongoing and developing.

6. What arrangements are planned for monitoring progress towards more equitable access, participation and success?

Regular monitoring is done centrally through administrative procedures and actions.

IV. INFORMATION ON THE NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PREPARATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGIES

Please indicate which authority or other actor is responsible for the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the national strategy and describe the way in which the various stakeholders are involved. Did your country designate (a) contact point(s) for the national strategy? If so, please add the coordinates of the national contact point(s).

The National Commission for Higher Education is the Maltese entity responsible for the preparation and evaluation of a national strategy. Implementation is delegated to the autonomous HEIs. The NCHE was set by the Education Act 2006. Its objectives are to ascertain the needs and the aspirations of further and higher education institutions, (b) inform the public of issues connected with sustainable development of further and higher education sectors in Malta in order to meet the needs of society, and (c) give advice to the Government on any matter which is connected with the further and higher education sectors. The Commission shall: (a) Formulate the guiding principles for further and higher education, and propose a clear vision and sustainable strategic targets and objectives for the further and higher sectors of education. (b) Research, analyse, review and, through the Minister, give advice to the Government on the development, planning and governance of the further and higher education policy. (c) Recommend to the competent authority systems and policies for the evaluation, approval, accreditation, authorization and recognition of institutions and programmes that will ensure their quality. (d) Recommend financing policies, and alternative financing systems, of the further and higher sectors of education, while addressing the issue of the adequacy of this financing and of the accountability of the sectors. (e) Propose policies which are related to students on sustainable options, equity in access and mobility in the institutions, financial support, services of information and guidance about pathway development for students. (f) Recommend policies related to research, innovation, intellectual property, and knowledge transfer. (g) Formulate policies related to the international dimension of further and higher education and to the expansion and diversification of their provision. (h) Advise and, where the case shall so require, make such recommendations as may appear to be required, to the Government and to the institutions, on any matter or other issue related to further and higher

education. The NCHE involves other stakeholders such as the Malta Qualifications Council (a public accreditation and quality assurance agency for vocational education and training), private and public training providers, employers associations, trade unions and other key players in an ongoing process of consultation on the various issues within its remit.

ANNEX A

Actions mentioned by the Bologna countries in the 2007 national reports

Financial

- scholarships - means tested
- scholarships - merit based
- research grants
- grants for studying abroad
- grants or loans for (nearly) every student
- unspecified social support system
- free education (at least 1st cycle)
- reimbursement of tuition fees for certain groups
- financial assistance for certain groups/areas
- improved funding systems

Structural

- new /expanded routes of access
- broader teaching or learning strategies
- information and preparation at secondary schools
- increase student places
- indirect aid schemes (tax relief, family allowance)
- subsidised residences/meals/transport/books
- provision of student welfare services (health care, day care centres)
- counselling/guidance services

Certain groups

- measures for ethnic minorities (not financial)
- measures for disabled (not financial)
- measures for disadvantaged groups (not financial)
- allocation of study places to certain groups
- promote access from all national areas

Policy and practice

- explicit widening access policy (devoted funds/units/laws)
- carry out surveys (study & work, disabled students,...)
- evaluations/research of policies and practices
- monitoring access (and retention) by students

ANNEX B

Possible actions and tools identified by the 2007 Bologna Working Group on the Social Dimension and Mobility

Measures to promote equal opportunities for access, participation and completion

- Anti-discrimination legislation covering higher education
- Admission rules that are simple, fair and transparent

Measures to widen access to and participation in higher education

- Outreach programs for underrepresented groups as defined nationally
- Flexible delivery of higher education
- Flexible learning paths into and within higher education
- Transparency of qualifications and recognition of prior learning
- Incentives for higher education institutions to take action to widen access and participation

Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience

A, Provision of academic services

- Guidance (academic and careers) and tutoring
- Retention measures (modification of curricula, flexibility of delivery, tracking academic success etc.)
- Working tools and environment (well functioning libraries, lecture halls and seminar rooms, internet access, access to scientific data bases etc.)

B, Provision of social services

- Counselling
- Targeted support for students with special needs and students with children
- Appropriate housing conditions for all students
- Provision of healthcare
- Provision of transportation, student canteens etc.

Student participation in the governance and organisation of higher education

- Legislation or other measures to ensure student participation in higher education governance
- Provisions for the existence of and exercise of influence by student organisations
- Student evaluations of courses, programmes and institutions, including action plans and follow-up of actions taken

Finances in order to start and complete studies

- Financial and legal advice for students
- Appropriate and coordinated national financial support systems that are transparent
- Targeted support for disadvantaged groups as defined nationally
- Support measures for students with children

ANNEX C

Suggested approach of the work on national strategies on the social dimension

In time for the next ministerial meeting in 2009 the Working Group suggests that the countries should report to the BFUG on their national strategies for the social dimension, including action plans and measures to show their impact. All stakeholders concerned should actively participate in and support this work at the national level.

The development of a strategy should be followed by a national action plan that includes monitoring mechanisms. Ideally, the strategy and action plan will be based on a national debate on the social dimension and the future priorities of that country depending on the current situation. In order to facilitate a national debate on the social dimension the Working Group proposes the following structure and topics for such a debate:

- Measures to promote equal opportunities

What obstacles are there to equal opportunities within higher education? What protection is there if a student is discriminated when applying for, being admitted to or carrying out studies? Is there a framework for appeal? What action would be the most effective to achieve equal opportunities in higher education?

- Measures to widen access to and participation in higher education for underrepresented groups (gender, ethnic origin, immigration, socio-economic status and background, disability, geography etc.)

What groups are under represented in your national higher education system today? Is there data to show access to higher education by gender, socio-economic background, disabilities, prior immigration, region etc? What obstacles to widened access and participation are there within your higher education system? At other education levels? What actions would be appropriate for the different groups to achieve widened access? Are targeted outreach activities needed?

- Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience

A, Provision of academic services

B, Provision of social services

What kind of academic or career guidance is provided for the students in your country? What is the student – staff ratio? Are there retention measures adapted to different groups or individuals with different needs? Is the academic success of student tracked? What would be/has proven to be the most efficient retention measures? What kind of study environment is there at the higher education institutions? Do student have access to information, electronically or by other means? What is the condition of libraries, lecture halls and seminar rooms? How do students in your country live? Is housing available, of acceptable standard and affordable? Is targeted support provided or needed for specific student groups? Is counselling available if students run in to personal difficulties?

- Measures to increase formal and actual student influence on and participation in higher education governance and other higher education issues

Are there formal provisions for student influence and participation at all governance levels, in consultative as well as decision-making bodies? Are there formal provisions for student evaluation of the education? Are the formal regulations followed-up with actual practices? Are there informal ways of student influence and participation as well? Do students have an influence on all issues related to higher education? Are students aware of their rights? Do students have organisations that

can organise elections to fill elective posts? Is it possible to find enough candidates to fill the posts available? If not – how could this be improved?

- Finances in order to start and complete studies

What kind of information and guidance is provided for students regarding financial issues? How does the average student make his or her living during studies? What kind of state support is provided? Is it appropriate for all groups and individuals? Do certain groups run the risk of being excluded from, or not able to finish their studies, due to financial reasons? Which are these groups or individuals? What could be done to help them? Are students informed about possible employment possibilities after finishing their studies? How is the labour-market relevance of the studies secured? Are former graduates tracked to follow-up their employment rates?

- Monitoring: The participating countries should establish national measures to monitor and evaluate the impact of the national strategy and action plan.

What monitoring mechanisms would be the most appropriate? How could success in strengthening the social dimension be measured short-term and long-term? What quantitative and qualitative data are needed? How is the responsibility for monitoring and evaluation allocated and divided? Are there student surveys carried out to measure the impact of a social dimension strategy? How can student surveys be used in this work?

- Stakeholder involvement

Which stakeholders should be involved in the development of a strategy and an action plan? What should be the responsibility of the different stakeholders when carrying out the agreed strategy and plan?