

**NATIONAL REPORTS 2004 – 2005**

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**1. Main achievements since Berlin*****1.1. Give a brief description of important developments, including legislative reforms***

The reinforcement of the European and international dimension of Spanish Universities is one of the main objectives of the Ministry of Education and Science.

The legal framework for the implementation of the main instruments included in the statements and communiqués of the Ministers responsible for Higher Education in Bologna (1999), Prague (2001) and Berlin (2003) is now completed.

Rules on the use of the European credit system (September 2003), the issuing by the Universities of the Diploma Supplement (2003) and the validation and assessment of study programmes and official degrees (2004), are already in force.

After a very broad discussion that took place in the Council for Universities Coordination, in which a high level of consensus was reached, the Government has just approved (January 2005) by Royal Decree the two basic regulations for the establishment of a new structure of Higher Education programmes, consisting of three cycles: first cycle, master and doctoral studies; and has opened the process of renewal of the study programmes in these three levels

In all the above mentioned rules the European dimension is promoted and the development in the future of joint degrees between Spanish and other European Higher Education institutions is fostered.

## 2. National organisation

### **2.1. Give a short description of the structure of public authorities responsible for higher education, the main agencies/bodies in higher education and their competencies** (For example, do higher education institutions report to different ministries?)

The bodies and institutions with responsibilities over Higher Education are:

- The National Government, through the Ministry of Education and Science, being responsible for the coordination and questions relating to the definition of the main framework for Higher Education.
- The Governments of the seventeen regions (Comunidades Autónomas), which have direct responsibility over the public Universities in their respective areas and provide the major part of their financing. They also have legal capacity to approve legislation and issue rules and regulations, in conformity with the national framework.
- The Universities themselves, in accordance with the principle of autonomy.
- The Council for Universities Coordination (made up by the Rectors of all Universities, the high level officials responsible for Higher Education in each of the regional Governments and a number of individuals designated by the national Government and the national Parliament) is the supreme consultative and coordination body of the whole system and one in which representatives of all three institutional levels participate: The national State, the Regions and the Universities.

The implementation of all changes and reforms that will lead to the full integration in the European Higher Education Area is the responsibility of the institutions and bodies mentioned above.

### **2.2. Give a short description of the institutional structure** (For example, number of public/private universities/other HE institutions or numbers/percentage of students in public/private sector. To what extent are private and State higher education institutions covered by the same regulations?)

In Spain there is a total of 70 Universities, 48 of which are public.

The total number of students is 1.551.000. More than 90% of this figure are in public universities.

All universities, whether public or private, have to abide to national and regional legislation. Private universities have to be recognised by Law of either the regional or the national Parliament.

The Organic Law on Universities, of December 2001, allows for some differences between public and private universities in questions such internal structure, organization and operation rules and teaching staff.

### **2.3. Give a brief description of the structure which oversees the implementation of the Bologna Process in your country** (National Bologna group, thematic working groups, composition and activities, stakeholder involvement)

- The Bologna Promoters Group, financed through a grant from the European Socrates Programme, organizes activities of dissemination of information about the Bologna process.

- The Direction General of Universities (Ministry of Education and Science) and the Education Departments in the regional Governments provide through specific call for proposals finance for projects related to new higher education structures along the lines of the process (training and mobility of teaching staff, implementation of new study programmes).
- The Universities, for the most part, have established offices and positions whose mission is the active integration in the European Higher Education Area.
- The Council for Universities Coordination also participates in the process.
- The Rectors Conference of Spanish Universities has also a Working Group on European Convergence.
- The National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation offers a specific programme of actions for the European Convergence, among them a call for proposals regarding the adaptation of present study programmes to the new ones in line with the new degree structure.

### 3. Quality assurance

The following questions have been included in the template at the request of the Working Group on Stocktaking.

#### ***3.1. National quality assurance systems should include a definition of the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved.***

***Please specify the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved.***

The National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA) is a public foundation established in 2002 and whose mission is the coordination of quality assurance policies in Universities.

ANECA's activities focus mainly on assessment and accreditation of study programmes and institutions, teaching staff evaluation prior to appointment by Universities, prospective studies and reports and definition of quality criteria. Therefore, ANECA is an instrument to improve teaching, research and management activities in the universities, provide different authorities with adequate information for decision making and information to the public in general on the fulfilment by universities of its objectives.

In addition to ANECA, eight regional Agencies develop similar activities in their respective geographical areas. In 2003, a coordination committee between the national and the regional agencies was set up with a view to improve coordination of their higher education assessment activities, based on the principles of transparency and cooperation. Shortly, the national Government will take appropriate measures to include regional Governments in ANECA's governing bodies.

#### ***3.2. National quality assurance systems should include a system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures.***

***Describe the system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures, if any.***

Before a official higher education degree programme is implemented, it must be validated and approved through the following procedure:

- 1- For first degree programmes, the national Government will approve first the general

guidelines regarding the curriculum which would include: degree denomination, number of credits and basic educational content. For postgraduate degree programmes, (second and third cycle) no general guidelines have to be followed other than those included in basic legislation.

2- The Regional Government must grant authorisation to the university to start the programme, after reviewing its interest and value in the regional context and the existence of adequate resources at the institutional level.

3- The University in question will prepare a specific curriculum proposal. This proposal, with the favourable opinion of the Regional Government, will then be submitted to the Council for Universities Coordination.

4- The Council for Universities Coordination will make the final validation decision after verification that the curriculum is fully in line with the specific guidelines for the degree.

5- The national Government approves and publishes the validation decision in the Official Journal.

Once the publication is effective, the degree programme may be fully implemented at the University and granted to students after completing the requirements included in the proposal approved.

As regards procedures to be followed on degree programmes already existing, in order to assess and accredit the appropriate quality assurance, the procedure is as follows:

1- Universities will have to submit to ANECA for assessment and quality assurance purposes all existing degree programmes in each one of them.

2- Criteria, standards and indicators for this assessment will be approved by the Ministry of Education and Science on the basis of an ANECA proposal and taking into account the opinion of the Council for Universities Coordination.

3- Once the evaluation exercise for each degree programme is completed, ANECA will send the accreditation report to the University, the Council for Universities Coordination, the Regional Government and the Ministry of Education and Science.

4- If deficiencies are mentioned in the report, the University will have to take necessary actions in cooperation with regional Governments and resubmit the proposal including appropriate documents proving that these deficiencies have been corrected. ANECA will then prepare a second accreditation report.

5- If the report is favourable, the Ministry of Education and Science will grant accreditation to the programme for a six year period. After this period of time a new evaluation will have to be conducted.

6- When serious deficiencies are noted concerning one particular programme, the University will not be allowed to accept new students into the programme and eventually it will be discontinued. The University will not be allowed to submit a request to start this same programme for the following six years.

### ***3.3. National quality assurance systems should include international participation, co-operation and networking.***

***Are international peers included in the governing board(s) of the quality assurance agency(ies)?***

ANECA is intensifying its institutional relations with other agencies and international

institutions having similar mission and objectives, in order to share experiences in the field of quality assurance and assessment and to participate in international initiatives leading to the establishment of networks and associations. This will result in exchange of information and good practices and will facilitate mutual recognition of evaluations.

ANECA already has included international evaluators in some of its programmes and activities and has bilateral agreements with agencies from a number of other countries. It is also member of several associations of accreditation agencies: European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA), IberoAmerican Network for Quality Accreditation in Higher Education (RIACES), International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and European Network of Quality Agencies.

Please add any general comments, reflections and/or explanations to the material on quality assurance in the stocktaking report.

#### **4. The two-cycle degree system**

The two-cycle degree system is covered by the stocktaking exercise. Please add any comments, reflections and/or explanations to the stocktaking report.

With the recent approval of the two Royal Decrees previously mentioned, the process for the transformation of the structure of higher education programmes in Spanish Universities is now open. The process will be developed in the next years and will be completed in 2010.

The new degree system is structured on undergraduate and postgraduate studies (grado / postgrado), which consist altogether of three cycles.

The undergraduate studies (grado) include first cycle degree programmes and its objective is to provide the student with adequate professional capacities to enter into the labour market. These programmes will have between 180 and 240 credits.

The postgraduate studies (postgrado) include two cycles: Master, consisting of advanced training, lasting between 60 and 120 credits and doctoral programmes, aimed at research training and leading to the PhD or Doctor's degree, the highest level in higher education.

This structure fulfils the objective of having a flexible degree system and comparable to that existing in other countries. It will greatly encourage and promote mobility among students and create more professional opportunities for graduates.

Spain will contribute with this new system to the configuration of the European Areas for Higher Education and Research and accomplish the objectives defined in the summits of Lisbon and Barcelona: European Higher Education systems as references for world class quality by 2010.

#### **5. Recognition of degrees and periods of study**

Recognition of degrees and periods of study is covered by the stocktaking exercise. Please add any comments, reflections and/or explanations to the stocktaking report.

The Spanish Government has begun the procedure for the signing of the Lisbon Convention on the recognition of foreign degrees.

At the same time, the Royal Decrees just approved on a new degree structure mentioned in the previous points, also include aspects on improving the access of students from other countries to Spanish institutions, simplifying procedures for recognition of previous studies and promoting mobility from and to other countries.

## 6. Doctoral studies and research

### **6.1. Give a short description of the organisation of third cycle studies**

*(For example, direct access from the bachelor level, balance between organised courses, independent study and thesis)*

Doctoral studies must be viewed as the initial phase in the training of researchers and whose main legal requirement is the elaboration of a thesis involving original research results, after the previous completion of 300 credits. Though there is no specific number of compulsory credits assigned to third cycle studies and each doctoral programme will be allowed to include research training, in the form of courses or workshops, which may be defined as either compulsory or optional.

Access to third cycle (doctoral studies) will normally require possession of a master degree. However, a possible alternative way, based in previous education determined by each responsible unit, is contemplated in the legislation too. In any event, a minimum of 300 credits in official first degree or master degree programmes (at least, 60 of them in post graduate education). It will not be possible, therefore, to start the elaboration of a thesis only with a first degree, but it will be possible to do so with a first degree and some postgraduate studies even if a master programme has not been completed.

### **6.2. What are the links between HE and research in your country?**

*(For example, what percentage of publicly-funded research is conducted within HE institutions?)*

The university sector accounts for approximately 61% of the research undertaken in the country.

## 7. Mobility of students and staff

### **7.1. Describe the main factors influencing mobility of students from as well as to your country** *(For instance funds devoted to mobility schemes, portability of student loans and grants, visa problems)*

Main factors are economic support, adequate inter-institutional arrangements and recognition of degrees and periods of study.

Visa regulations are important for mobility from and to countries outside UE and associated countries.

Grant and scholarship portability is limited to some national, regional and university support programmes addressed to doctoral studies.

### **7.2. Describe any special measures taken in your country to improve mobility of students**

***from as well as to your country***

In many of the economic support programmes mentioned in the previous point for postgraduate studies, specific periods abroad are contemplated including an additional complementary grant during the stay in the foreign country.

On the other hand, the budget for scholarship programmes addressing mobility in both directions has experienced a significant growth including domestic mobility programmes (Seneca programme). Both national and regional Governments as well as universities have adopted measures to support European programmes in particular Erasmus and Leonardo. Special mention deserve programmes administered by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation, in particular addressed to second and third cycle studies. However, additional efforts are needed on the part of all educational authorities and universities.

***7.3. Describe the main factors influencing mobility of teachers and staff from as well as to your country (For instance tenure of appointment, grant schemes, social security, visa problems)***

Availability of grants and inter-institutional arrangements. It is also important to mention the flexibility to offer contracts and other appointments to persons with a non UE nationality, something which is not now a legal obstacle for Spanish universities. As a matter of fact, appointments to permanent positions at universities for these persons has increased considerably and will be facilitated by new legislation on recognition of foreign degrees. The new 2005 Regulation on foreigners further simplifies contract procedures for teaching and research staff.

***7.4. Describe any special measures taken in your country to improve mobility of academic teachers and staff from as well as to your country***

Some recent changes in the legislation on visas have facilitated the possibility for professors and researchers from non EU countries to do short and medium duration stays at Spanish universities.

## **8. Higher education institutions and students**

***8.1. Describe aspects of autonomy of higher education institutions***

*Is autonomy determined/defined by law? To what extent can higher education institutions decide on internal organisation, staffing, new study programmes and financing?*

The principle of university autonomy is included in the present Spanish Constitution, in the 1983 Law on University Reform (LRU) and in the 2002 Organic Law on Universities (LOU). LOU establishes the general legal framework for the organization of public Universities but there is a considerable margin for them to determine its specific institutional arrangements as to structure centres and departments and to regulate teaching organization. Private universities establish their own rules in the organization and operation of the institution, though they must respect the principle of academic freedom.

On the contrary, and in connection to what was explained in other points, the introduction of degree programmes requires that such a degree is included in the official degree catalogue approved by the Government and specific authorization from the regional Government.

Universities are, however, free to establish their own university diplomas but they have no effects in official terms.

Public universities enjoy financial autonomy and the same principle applies in the preparation of their budgets. In practical terms, they receive most of their funds (between 70 and 75% of the total revenues) as grants from regional authorities. They get between 15 and 20% of income from tuition fees paid by students (their amount is determined by regional Governments between certain margins approved by the Council for Universities Coordination). Other sources of revenue (external contracts and provision of services) account for between 5 and 7% of the total.

Universities make decisions on the number of teaching positions (permanent appointments or contracts) and on other staff (permanent appointments and contracts as well). Access to permanent positions is governed by civil service national or regional regulations.

While certain rules must be respected, public Universities have wide margin for decisions on administrative and non teaching staff. On the contrary, teaching staff salaries and category classification are determined in national or regional legislation. Private universities have autonomy to decide on teaching contracts but at least 25% of their teaching staff must have Doctor's degrees.

### ***8.2. Describe actions taken to ensure active participation from all partners in the process***

LOU guarantees the participation of all members of university in the governing bodies, in both public and private universities. In addition, every public university must establish a Social Council (with participation of personalities from the cultural, professional, economic, labour and social environments) in order to improve its relationship to the outside world.

### ***8.3. How do students participate in and influence the organisation and content of education at universities and other higher education institutions and at the national level?***

*(For example, participation in University Governing Bodies, Academic Councils etc)*

Students are represented in all governing boards and councils in public and private Universities, including Faculties and Schools. They also participate in committees discussing curriculum matters.

## **9. The social dimension of the Bologna Process**

### ***9.1. Describe measures which promote equality of access to higher education***

Student access to public Universities is done through a model based on a transparent and neutral system determined by their grades (average between access examination and secondary education record). Equality of opportunities is promoted by means of a scholarship and grants policy in the field of higher education. The Ministry of Education and Science has increased 10,5% this chapter of the 2005 budget compared to the 2004 budget. In this area, priority has been given to compensatory grants addressed to students from lower income segments. The reduction of socio-economic differences for purposes of access to Universities will be a priority for upcoming years.

On the other hand, the creation of new universities and expansion of existing ones in the last 20 years in all Spanish regions, has greatly facilitated access to Higher Education and reduced regional differences in student rates.

## 10. Developments in lifelong learning

### ***10.1. What measures have been taken by your country to encourage higher education institutions in developing lifelong learning paths?***

Several measures have contributed to establish flexible modalities in the university sector:

- freedom to establish university diplomas
- programmes addressed to adult and mature population (University for Seniors)
- distance education programmes through UNED (National Distance University) and other universities
- online programmes

### ***10.2. Describe any procedures at the national level for recognition of prior learning/flexible learning paths***

There are specific rules regarding the recognition and validation by the universities of previous degrees and partial studies that allow for a wide margin of autonomy in its application.

At present, there is no specific legislation on recognition of learning and skills obtained through non conventional means or professional experience.

## 11. Contribution to the European dimension in higher education

### ***11.1 Describe any legal obstacles identified by your country and any progress made in removing legal obstacles to the establishment and recognition of joint degrees and/or joint study programmes***

The main obstacle up to now was the existence of rigid rules regarding official degree programmes. The compulsory core curriculum, fixed by the national Government, included very detailed content guidelines, leaving little space for institutions and making it very difficult to articulate these requirements with other countries' programmes. In addition, first degree programmes were generally longer than in other countries (in most cases 300 ECTS).

The recently approved Royal Decrees establish the three Bologna cycles more comparable in duration to those existing in other European countries and will lead to a reduction of the content of core curriculum, based on the other hand on the definition of learning outcomes and competences. This will facilitate the creation of joint degrees with other European institutions and which, at the same time, may have the status of official degrees in Spain.

#### ***11.1.1. Describe the extent of integrated study programmes leading to joint degrees or double degrees***

The legal restrictions mentioned have been the main reason for the small number of double degrees concerted up to the present time. Joint degrees are almost non existing.

#### ***11.1.2. How have these programmes been organised? (joint admissions, mobility of students, joint exams, etc.)***

The usual way is through a specific agreement between the concerned universities. The agreements tend to move along the following lines:

-Students are accepted in the university of their country of origin

-As for first cycle degrees, after approximately three years (which for Spain would include most of the compulsory core curriculum), students request to be accepted into the double degree programme. The selection committee will have representatives from both universities. A period of one, maximum two years, is done in the partner institution.

-As for postgraduate degrees, the development of joint programmes is greatly facilitated by its flexibility which in the case of doctoral studies may also lead to a codirection of the thesis. Three months is the minimum period of time required to be spent in the other country.

-Periods of study in the partner university are mutually recognised, which results in a double degree for the student.

### ***11.2. Describe any transnational co-operation that contributes to the European dimension in higher education***

It must be mentioned that Spain is the first country of destination for other European students in the Erasmus Programme. It is also considerable the number of Spanish students participating in the programme and staying temporarily in other European countries.

### ***11.3. Describe how curriculum development reflects the European dimension (For instance foreign language courses, European themes, orientation towards the European labour market)***

So far, most of the Spanish degree programmes had no explicit European component. On the contrary, disciplines related to European policies, law or economy are now very common. Language courses, on the other hand, are very extended. At the postgraduate level specializations regarding specific European profiles are also extended (for example studies on European Community Law).

The new legislation puts the emphasis on skills acquisition, which should result in its being more oriented towards the European labour market.

## **12. Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area**

### ***12.1. Describe actions taken by your country to promote the attractiveness of the EHEA***

The Ministry of Education and Science, through the Group of Bologna promoters, disseminates information and supports, with some financing from the European Commission in addition to the Ministry's, universities in carrying out activities for the development of the European Higher Education Area.

The Group made up of 12 members, was formally appointed in June 2004. In the Group, members come from the Working Group on the EHEA of the Spanish Rectors Conference, as individual experts and from ANECA (the national quality assurance and assessment body).

The Group has focused its activities in 2004-2005 in the organization of seminars, dissemination of information and other related tasks, support to universities and preparation of materials, in particular regarding good practices to be used as reference.

Among others, it should also be noted, in addition to visits and presentations in universities, the preparation of a summary document including answers to frequently asked questions and two seminars: one addressed to students (which representatives from all universities and ESIB attended) and one addressed to the labour and professional world, on which participants from employers organizations, other social entities and professional bodies will be present.

### **13. Concluding comments**

#### ***13.1. Give a description of your national Bologna strategies***

The national Government has allocated 6,6 million € to a specific line in the 2005 budget of the Ministry of Education and Science to cover universities activities for the development of the Bologna process. These funds will be distributed to universities who, through an official call for proposals, will be able to submit specific projects with concrete actions related to the process. In particular, in this phase, priority will be given to actions such as the promotion within the teaching staff of the implementation of criteria linked to the new credit system, the establishment of contacts and temporary stays in other European institutions for teaching and administrative management staff devoted to the institutional organization area, to the improvement of the international projection of Spanish universities, to the promotion of student participation, to the design of postgraduate programmes and to the improvement of coordination with educational policies for other areas of the education system. The governments of the regions (Comunidades Autónomas) have also made allocations in their budgets to incentivate the process of adaptation to the new legal framework.

#### ***13.2. Give an indication of the main challenges ahead for your country***

Since the main legal framework for the new degree system has already been defined, the process of change is now open to all higher education institutions. In this new stage, only the full active participation and involvement of all education authorities (both national and regional) and the Universities themselves will assure success in achieving the Bologna objectives. In respect of the Universities, it will also be essential that this participation includes all groups and sectors of the higher education community.