

bologna process

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1. Main achievements since Berlin

1.1. Give a brief description of important developments, including legislative reforms

In April 2002, a working group was appointed at the Swedish Ministry of Education and Science (as of 1 January 2005; Ministry of Education, Science and Culture) with the task of reviewing certain issues related to degrees awarded by higher education institutions (henceforth referred to as the Degree Review). The review was called for mainly as a consequence of national developments in higher education during the past ten years and developments within the Bologna Process.

The review has primarily concerned the degree structure – and more specifically, the level and status of the magisterexamen (master's degree) – formulation of the scope and objectives of different degrees and the translation of degree names into English. Another task was to address the issue of adapting the Swedish credit point and grading scale systems to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). During this process there have been a number of consultations with relevant stakeholders.

The points of departure for the Degree Review have been to:

- promote national and international mobility for students, during and after completing their studies,
- increase the clarity and transparency of the Swedish structure for higher education,
- strengthen confidence in the quality of Swedish higher education,
- increase possibilities for lifelong learning, and
- safeguard freedom and flexibility for both students and higher education institutions.

An interim report was presented in March 2003 and the final report (Högre utbildning i utveckling – Bolognaprocessen i svensk belysning, Ds 2004:2) in February 2004. The final report was circulated to all the relevant stakeholders for their comments. The Government will subsequently take a stand on the proposals put forward by the review group. If accepted by the Government and the Parliament, the proposals would primarily entail changes in the Higher Education Act (1992:1434), the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100) and the Degree Ordinance (an appendix to the Higher Education Ordinance). The review group estimates that new legislation and regulations ensuing from the proposals could come into effect on 1 July 2007.

Since 1 January 2003 a Diploma Supplement, describing the degree programme and its place in the educational system, is issued automatically, free of charge and in English, and is

appended to all degree certificates within undergraduate education, in Sweden at the bachelor's and master's degree level (*grundläggande högskoleutbildning*). The review group suggests that a Diploma Supplement should also be issued for degree certificates at the doctoral level.

Information activities have been carried out with the direction of debate of HEIs and among students.

In December 2002, the Swedish Government appointed an independent Commission of inquiry to conduct a review and investigation of Swedish doctoral education and the post-doctoral period. The final report of the Inquiry, *A new system of doctoral education: a concerted commitment to excellence and growth* (Swedish Government Official Reports 2004:27), was delivered to the Minister for Education and Science on 1 March 2004. The report has since been circulated for comments to all institutions of higher education and other parties concerned. The proposals contained in the report and the views of those invited to comment on it, will subsequently be considered by the Government in 2005.

The Swedish Ministry of Education and Science arranged a Bologna follow-up seminar on "Joint Degrees –Further Development" on 6-7 May 2004 in Stockholm. The seminar focused on the Bologna action line 6: Promotion of the European Dimension in Higher Education, with a special focus on Joint Master Degrees. The seminar resulted in recommendations to the Bologna Follow-up Group and recommendations to the Bergen Ministerial Meeting. The report and recommendations from the seminar are presented on the Bologna-Berlin website.

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?)

In Sweden the state is responsible for the provision of higher education. The Swedish Riksdag (Parliament) and the Government decide what regulations are to apply and how resources are to be allocated. Management by objectives and results is conducted within the framework of the annual central government budget process.

The Government exercises control by issuing appropriation directions, special government decisions, special ordinances (such as the Higher Education Ordinance) and assignments, and by its choice of managerial organisation and appointment of vice-chancellors and members of the governing boards. The institutions report back to the Government in their annual reports. All institutions report to the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture except for the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, which reports to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs. An additional instrument is the informal dialogue between the Government Offices and the universities and university colleges.

The governing board of a Swedish higher education institution consists of 15 members. The Government appoints eight members, three members represent the teachers at the institution and these are appointed by the institutions via election. The students nominate three members and the vice-chancellor also sits on the board.

Most of the universities and university colleges are state institutions but there are some private institutions receiving national grants.

The National Agency for Higher Education is a central agency responsible for matters relating to institutions of higher education. It evaluates the higher education institutions. This takes the form, for instance, of the evaluations of subjects and programmes conducted by the

National Agency once every six years. It also ensures HEIs compliance with the laws and regulations in force in the area of higher education. The agency evaluates foreign degrees and acts as the office for the ENIC/NARIC networks. An important task for the agency is to conduct analysis and reviews of the activities of the higher education sector.

The International Programme Office for Education and Training (IPK) shall make it easier for those working with education to participate in international co-operation. This is done through information and marketing to the target groups. IPK is also aiming at providing simple and effective administration for those applying for support through the programmes that IPK handles.

The Swedish Institute (SI) is entrusted with the task to inform the world about Sweden and to organise exchanges with other countries in the spheres of culture, education, research and public life in general. In performing this task, the Institute seeks to promote Swedish interests. The SI also has special assignments in the field of international development cooperation. Much of the work is undertaken in cooperation with Swedish embassies and consulates-general around the world.

The Swedish National Board of Student Aid (CSN) is the national authority that handles the Swedish financial aid for students; i.e. loans and grants for studies.

The Association of Swedish Higher Education (SUHF) is an organisation for institutional co-operation on a voluntary basis. All 39 universities and university colleges are members. The Association aims at safeguarding the external interests of the institutions and at strengthening their internal co-operation.

The Swedish National Union of Students (SFS) is an association of student unions at the universities and university colleges in Sweden. All students in Sweden are required by law to be members of the local student union at the university or university college.

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?)

The public higher education sector in Sweden comprises 14 universities and 22 university colleges. In addition to these, there are 13 private institutions, partly funded by the state, of which 10 are very small. The institutions of higher education presently have more than 300 000 students and approximately 50 000 employees, of which about 30 000 are academic staff. The combined balance-sheet, total for education and research at Swedish higher education institutions, amounted to almost SEK 44 billion (EUR 4.8 billion) in 2004. Higher education and research is financed predominantly out of central government funds.

During 2003, about 850 000 students, in all levels of the educational system, received loans and grants for studies from the Swedish National Board of Student Aid (CSN), to the sum of SEK 23,7 billion (EUR 2,6 billion). About 30 000 students yearly, take advantage of the possibility to use their grants and loans for studying at a foreign institution.

With the exception of the private institutions, universities and university colleges in Sweden are formally government agencies under the jurisdiction of the Government and Riksdag and are subject to the same general body of regulations as apply to other government authorities and agencies.

Two of the private institutions came into being in 1994 when two institutions formerly in the

state sector, were converted into foundations with the Swedish state as principal. Each foundation then established its own company, completely owned by the foundation, whose business is the conduct of higher education and research. The Swedish state continues to provide most of the funding via education and research contracts. On account of these contracts, in all essential respects, the same regulations and reporting requirements for education and research activities apply as at public institutions of higher education.

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 Minister of Education is responsible for the Bologna Process. Implementation of the Bologna Process is an open process built on dialogue between the actors in higher education. Different public authorities and agencies/bodies have hosted conferences, seminars, hearings and meetings to inform and discuss relevant issues related to the Bologna Process. Individual institutions, that have their own internal organisation of Bologna implementation groups etc, carry out the realisation of new elements of the Bologna process in the Swedish higher education system.

In 2000 an informal Bologna coordination group was set up. The group consists of representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science, the National Agency for Higher Education, the International Programme Office for Education and Training, the Association of Swedish Higher Education (the Swedish rectors' conference) and the Swedish National Union of Students. The group meets at regular intervals to discuss Bologna-related issues.

On the initiative of the European Commission, the Swedish Ministry of Education and Science delegated to the International Programme Office for Education and Training the task of putting together a National Team of Bologna Promoters. The members of the National Team were nominated by the actors in higher education, including student associations, and formally appointed by the ministry. The group is now functioning and has the assignment of supporting higher education institutions in Bologna related matters.

The National Agency for Higher Education is carrying out a quality audit of Universities and University College's work on internationalisation of higher education. The review deals with policy, efforts to support mobility at all levels, internal organisation and examples of good practice to meet the needs of students, teachers and staff. The final report is expected in January 2005.

The Degree Review (Högre utbildning i utveckling – Bolognaprocessen i svensk belysning, Ds 2004:2) has been circulated for comments to all relevant stakeholders.

All universities and university colleges commented on the Degree Review. The report also served as a start for different Bologna-related initiatives at the institutional level.

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.

All institutions of higher education are, according to the Higher Education Act and the

Higher Education Ordinance, responsible for quality assurance of all their activities. “Activities shall be adapted so that a high quality is achieved, in education as well as in research and artistic development. Available resources shall be efficiently utilised in order to maintain a high quality of activities. Quality efforts are a joint matter for staff and students at institutions of higher education. (Law 2000:260)”

The National Agency for Higher Education conducts continuous quality evaluation of higher education. Its evaluation extends to all higher education including doctoral studies. It scrutinises the quality assurance activities undertaken by the institutions themselves and considers applications for the right to award degrees. On behalf of the Government the Agency examines applications from higher education institutions for the right to give doctoral degrees in a special area of research. The Agency also, on behalf of the Government, examines applications from private institutions for the right to award degrees.

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.

The National Agency For Higher Education validates programmes leading to professional degrees. This is done following an application from an institution, which gives a description of its preconditions for offering a specific degree (number of current and projected students, scientifically qualified staff, infrastructure, etc.). It is then visited by a group of external experts who recommend (or not) degree-awarding powers. A similar process exists for upgrading colleges to full or partial university status, although in this case, the decision on whether or not to upgrade is made by the government. These are the accreditation processes.

Another form of accreditation within the Swedish national quality assurance system is connected to the programme and subject reviews. All higher education leading to a professional or general degree is evaluated at least once every six years. These programme and subject reviews which include self-study, site-visit and public report have a three-fold aim of development, control and information to students, the government and the general public. The evaluation involves possible negative consequences in the form of institutions losing their degree-awarding powers for inferior provision of programme/subject. So the programmes or subjects in question within the institutions that don't lose their powers are then accredited.

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)?

The National Agency for Higher Education is the responsible agency for quality and has an international advisory group to ensure the international perspective in the quality assurance system. “The Advisory Board” consists of five internationally eminent researchers in the field. Added to this, is international participation in the different evaluation teams responsible for carrying out examinations of subjects and programmes. International contribution and participation is also common in the internal quality work at the institutional level. However, Swedish legislation does not permit international representation in governing bodies of public organisations.

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

The majority of Swedish higher education institutions are actively involved in different international associations and organisations looking after their interests on the European level. The different students associations are also internationally engaged.

Sweden is a member of the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) through the National Agency for Higher Education. There is also a Nordic Network of Quality Assurance Agencies that is, to an increasing extent, cooperating with the stakeholders, the institutions and the students, regarding quality issues.

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.

The Degree Review group proposes that degrees within higher education should be formally divided into three cycles or levels: the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral levels. Institutions of higher education should thus organize and label their programmes and courses according to these three levels.

The Degree Review group also proposes that in order to gain admittance to programmes at the graduate level leading to a master's degree, the student must have the requirements needed for a bachelor's degree (180 ECTS credits) or a professional degree comprising at least 180 ECTS credits or a corresponding foreign degree or have otherwise acquired the equivalent knowledge. To gain admittance to doctoral studies, the student must have completed at least four years of full-time study (240 ECTS credits), of which 60 ECTS credits must be at the graduate level, or equivalent studies abroad. If studies at the graduate level cover more than 60 ECTS credits, any credits exceeding 60 ECTS may be given credit for at the doctoral level.

The degree review group also proposed two possible master degrees, one after completing one year of graduate studies, and another after two years. Access to third cycle programmes would (in the proposal) require one year of graduate studies. If the student has a two-year master's, a reduced amount of courses are expected to be required for the third cycle. The interface between master's and PhD-studies is still under debate.

Programmes leading to a professional degree comprising 240 ECTS credits or more would, if the proposal is accepted, include both first cycle and second cycle studies within the same programme. Such programmes will not be formally divided into two separate cycles. According to the proposed structure, first cycle studies should give access to second cycle programmes and second cycle studies should give access to doctoral studies, thus creating a clear division of levels based on learning outcome within Swedish higher education in accordance with the intentions of the Bologna Process.

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.

In 2001, Sweden ratified the Lisbon convention – Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region. The general policy is to be open and generous concerning recognition. Institutions of higher education are

responsible for recognition related issues stated in the Higher Education Ordinance (*högskoleförordningen*) (1993:100) Chapter 6, Sect.12.

The National Agency for Higher Education evaluates qualifications awarded on completion of higher education programmes outside Sweden. This evaluation determines to which Swedish programme the foreign programme corresponds.

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)

According to the Higher Education Act, it is required for a doctorate that the doctoral student has passed the examinations forming part of the doctoral programme and also has had an academic dissertation (doctoral thesis) approved. The doctoral thesis shall have been orally defended in public and judged by a committee.

All doctoral education in Sweden is subject to the same regulations. However, these regulations allow for a good deal of variation and in practice, doctoral education often differs from field to field. In the Swedish system, doctoral education leading to a doctorate is supposed to correspond to four years of full-time study, i.e. 240 ECTS credits. Production of the thesis shall correspond to studies of at least 120 ECTS credits. The actual time required, however, is generally longer. A doctoral student can be awarded a licentiate degree after completing 120 ECTS credits including an accepted thesis corresponding to studies of at least 60 ECTS credits.

The balance between taught courses and thesis work varies from subject to subject, but often the courses comprise about 60 ECTS credits.

To be eligible for doctoral education, a person must have basic qualifications worth at least 180 ECTS credits and any special qualifications required by the faculty board, and must also be judged to have the capacity to successfully complete the education. In addition, the faculty board must be of the opinion that funding can be secured to cover the whole study period and that the applicant will be able to complete her or his studies within eight years.

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?)

According to the Higher Education Act the state shall, as the entity responsible, provide institutions of higher education for education based on science or art and on tested experience, and research and artistic development and other development. The institutions of higher education shall also cooperate with the surrounding community and give information about their activities. Activities shall be conducted so that there is a close relationship between research and higher education.

The state is responsible for basic research and for postgraduate education. Sweden allocates almost four per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP) to research and development. Most state-funded research is carried out at the higher education institutions.

Since 1997 the state has allocated permanent resources for research to all universities and university colleges.

The boards of governors of the individual higher education institutions are responsible for their own research environments. The boards make the decisions that affect strategic investments and the reallocation of priorities. The boards are also expected to encourage their departments to adopt profiles and to initiate national and international evaluations of research activities.

Doctoral education is considered to be an important link between education and research.

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)

Swedish universities and university colleges are active in internationalisation through cooperation agreements with foreign institutions. HEIs offer several courses and programmes in English both for national and international students.

All higher education is provided for free. Foreign students have the same right as Swedish students to higher education without any tuition fees. It is also possible for foreign students to obtain scholarships from different Swedish support schemes.

Swedish students are entitled to use their state grants and loans for studies abroad, provided that the foreign institution is approved by a competent Swedish authority. The students also have the possibility to apply for an additional loan when studying abroad.

Aside from the centrally organised exchange programmes, students also frequently arrange for studies abroad through their own initiative.

Sweden is active in all EU programmes for education and training, such as Socrates and Leonardo, Tempus, Alfa and Asia-Link. There are also several Nordic cooperation initiatives through the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Apart from the EU programmes, there are several national initiatives to support student mobility, especially regarding exchanges with developing countries. Such initiatives include the Linnaeus-Palme programme, which supports exchange of academic staff and students between Sweden and HEIs in developing countries. Scholarships are granted for both outgoing and incoming academic staff and students.

7.2. Describe any special measures taken in your country to improve mobility of students from as well as to your country

The International Programme Office for Education and Training (IPK) has a special assignment to increase student mobility within the European Union programmes for education and training. IPK has put together a group of representatives from HEIs where the Erasmus participation has been in decline. The work of the group is to identify problems and find solutions to improve the participation of Swedish students in the Erasmus programme. IPK is also part of an EU Commission working group called the "Decline Group" which is working on improving the participation in the Erasmus programme in certain countries.

The Swedish Institute (SI) has been assigned the task of marketing Swedish HEIs abroad. This is done mainly through www.studyinsweden.se, which is a comprehensive resource for information about higher education in Sweden, geared towards prospective students from outside Sweden.

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)

The HEIs are responsible for their teachers and for supporting and acknowledging their mobility and engagement in international cooperation. A flexible system, which provides possibilities for both short and long term engagements at foreign institutions, is of great importance.

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

HEIs are considered to be international environments and as such are encouraged in their efforts to promote multiculturalism and mobility.
As mentioned previously there are several national initiatives to support the mobility of students, teachers and staff. Among others previously described, the Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education (STINT) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) provides scholarships for both incoming and outgoing academic staff and students.

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 higher education institutions are part of the public, central government administration, in terms of both organisation and function. Hence, institutions of higher education are formally administrative agencies subject to the Government. As from 1993, a system of management by objectives and results was introduced for higher education, with the Government and Riksdag (Swedish Parliament) setting the objectives and the higher education institutions being assigned the task of meeting the objectives within given parameters and resources. Universities and university colleges are generally free to decide on internal affairs such as organisation and staffing. Each institution is responsible for the fulfilment of obligations stated in the budget document decided by the Government.

The Government decides which universities and university colleges are to exist. The Government also determines, after a quality assessment procedure conducted by The National Agency for Higher Education (please see question 3), whether a higher education institution is entitled to call itself a university and whether an independent course provider is to be empowered to award degrees or diplomas.

The difference between a university and a university college is that universities are generally entitled to award doctoral degrees. However, a few university colleges are entitled to award doctoral degrees in specific research areas (*vetenskapsområde*). The establishment of new study programmes and courses, their content and curriculum, can be decided by individual institutions fulfilling the requisites described under accreditation and the right to award degrees, as well as the regulations around professional degrees.

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

During the work with the Degree Review (please see question 1.1) different stakeholders of

the labour market were participating in seminars and discussions and were also invited to comment on the Degree Review. (Please see question 2.3)

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)

Sweden has a long tradition of student participation and influence in the Higher Education sector. According to the Higher Education Act the students have a right to exercise influence over higher education. It is also stated in the Higher Education Ordinance that the students have the right to be represented in all decision-making and advisory bodies within the institutions, which are of importance for the education and the situation of the students. The students are represented in the quality assessment groups of the National Agency for Higher Education as well as in the board of the agency. There is also a continuous dialogue between the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and the National Union of Students. The National Union of Students takes active part in ESIB, the National Unions of Students in Europe, at the European level.

9. The social dimension of the Bologna Process

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

Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100)

Equal treatment of students and applicants

Sect.9 Provisions on the equal treatment of students and applicants to institutions of higher education, irrespective of gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or disability are given in the Equal Treatment of Students in Higher Education Act (2001:1286). Ordinance 2002:81.

Sweden wants to emphasise the importance of the social dimension of higher education and of the international mobility of students. Sweden works very actively with broadening the recruitment to higher education using different instruments to ensure social, financial and geographical access to higher education. Sweden has a financial support system open to all students admitted to programmes and courses within higher education, which also applies to non-Swedish citizens. All Swedish students are entitled to use their state grants and loans for studies abroad, provided that a competent Swedish authority approves the institution to which they want to go.

The right of everyone to knowledge and personal development is the basis of the Government's policies. The knowledge-based society must be open to all. This will be the major task of welfare policies in the future. Universities and university colleges is considered to be a force for social change.

Recruitment to higher education should therefore increase and extend to include new groups. The diversity that exists in society must be reflected to a greater extent in universities and university colleges. All students should have equal access to higher education irrespective of their background, place of residence, sex, ethnic origin, or disability. The proportion of young people going into higher education should increase. The Government's target is that 50 percent of those born in any given year shall have embarked on university level studies by the age of 25. We are close to reach the goal set up; in 2003, 42 percent enrolled for higher education studies.

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?

Swedish higher education institutions have a long tradition of offering their courses and programmes to students with different backgrounds, students working part- or full-time etc. For example, many courses and programmes at the institutions are given as part-time courses or distance courses. The fact that the system of higher education is built on an accumulation of modules and credit points also enhances the possibilities for lifelong learning and for moving in and out of the system.

In 2001 the government took the initiative to start the Swedish Net University (www.netuniversity.se) that coordinates and markets the distance education already offered by the institutions. The institutions are also initially given a financial incentive from the government to take part in the Swedish Net University. The Swedish Net University was established in order to widen access to higher education and to encourage lifelong learning.

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

Starting in the autumn of 2003 all higher education institutions are obliged to assess prior and experiential learning of applicants who demand such an assessment and who lack the formal qualifications (or the documentation of such qualifications).

In 2001 the government introduced a new, more professionally oriented master's degree, in addition to the conventional, more research oriented degree. The rationale behind this was (among other things) to give the higher education institutions greater opportunities to provide continuation courses for development of competence for those in employment. It will be an important element for lifelong learning within higher education.

Recent measures undertaken by the government in order to facilitate lifelong learning and access to higher education:

- To infuse energy into recruitment efforts at institutes of higher education, a recruitment commission was set up for the three-year period 2002-2004.
- Preparatory studies aimed at applicants who lack the specific qualifications for a given programme, especially programmes in natural sciences and engineering, have been enhanced.
- A college-year – a “bridge” between adult education/upper secondary education and HE (half of the courses are university level courses, the other half of upper secondary level courses) – has been introduced.
- Higher education institutions have been given the opportunity to decide on the grounds of selection to be used for recruitment (10 per cent max), in order to widen access paths to higher education.
- New courses, part-time courses, evening-courses etc., that better match the demands of students with varying backgrounds, have been developed.
- More vocational training programmes of shorter duration have been set up.
- Universities have been encouraged to be active in offering attractive contract-training programmes to public and private institutions/industry for staff qualification improvement training, in order to meet the demand of a more knowledge-based labour market/economy.

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 Swedish Ministry of Education and Science arranged a Bologna follow-up seminar on “Joint Degrees – Further Development” on 6-7 May 2004 in Stockholm. (Please see question 1.1)

The Swedish experience is that there are a number of different definitions of the term “joint degrees” which makes the question rather complex.

Sweden has defined the term joint degree as follows:

- A joint degree should preferably be documented in one single document issued by the participating institutions in accordance with national regulations.
- A clear distinction should be made between joint and double degree programmes, in terms of their curricular objectives and organisational models, also with a view to protecting the learners/users.
- Two or more participating institutions in two or more countries.
- Programmes and integrated curricula are developed or approved jointly by two or more institutions in a written bilateral or multilateral agreement.
- Learning outcomes and competencies, as well as student workload described in ECTS credits, should be viewed as crucial elements in constructing joint programmes.
- Joint degrees and joint study programmes should require student and staff/teacher mobility.
- The students’ stays at the participating institutions are of comparable length.
- On the basis of mutual trust and general acceptance of national assurance systems, principles and general standards for quality assurance and accreditation should be developed.
- Periods of study and exams passed at the partner institutions are recognised fully and automatically.
- Full use should be made of the Diploma Supplement and ECTS.

With the current legal system in our country it is not possible for public HEIs to award joint degrees or joint diplomas with another legal entity within or outside Sweden. However, there are no obstacles for universities or university colleges to develop and realise joint programmes together with institutions within or outside the country. Several institutions are already involved in international joint programmes.

This is due to the relatively old principals of recognition in Sweden. The Higher Education Ordinance (*högskoleförordningen*) (1993:100) Chapter 6, Sect.12 states, “If a student at an institution of higher education within the country has successfully completed a certain undergraduate programme, the student shall be entitled to credit for this programme when applying for study at another institution of higher education. This does not, however, apply if there is a substantial difference between the programmes at the different institutions.”

“The same provision also applies to students who have successfully completed a certain programme at a university or other institution of higher education in Denmark, Finland, Iceland or Norway or in an entity that is a party to the Council of Europe Convention of 11

April 1997 on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region. Ordinance 2001:738.”

Sweden has now identified the legal obstacles that today are preventing higher education institutions from awarding joint degrees, as defined above. It is important to emphasize that the Government has a positive view on joint programmes resulting in *double degrees*. Cooperation on joint programmes between institutions in different countries supports the goals and intentions achievable with joint degrees, e.g. Erasmus Mundus.

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

Joint degrees, as defined above, are not legally possible to award in Sweden. However, joint study programmes, jointly developed and offered at a number of institutions are legally possible to arrange. Some of these programmes are leading to double degrees and some are leading to one degree with the periods of study at a foreign institution recognized in the degree awarded.

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

In Sweden the universities and university colleges are responsible for their activities concerning admission, mobility and examination within the framework given in the Higher Education Act and the Higher Education Ordinance. It is therefore not possible to give a just picture of the overall current situation.

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

Swedish universities and university colleges participate actively in the European Community programmes in the field of education and training. The institutions of higher education also increasingly integrate the European dimensions in their education. Active participation in the Bologna process, in international programmes, international cooperation and joint curriculum development projects, foster the ideas of the European dimension.

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

Swedish is considered a minor language area hence language education at all levels in the educational system is stimulated. In order to be attractive for foreign students and staff, Swedish higher education institutions offer a large number of courses and programmes in English. A number of programmes and courses are oriented to international relations and international conditions relevant to the subject, in order to prepare the students for a working life in a more internationalised world.

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

Higher education is free of charge for all students in Sweden including foreign students. The strong social dimension within higher education is one important factor in increasing the attractiveness of studying in Sweden.

The Bologna process has brought about a number of discussions and actions at different levels of the higher education system. Altogether, actions started by the process will

contribute to the attractiveness of the EHEA. It is important that the process continues and that all countries involved will carry on working for the realisation of the common goals. An essential component in this work is the question of recognition, where practice in some countries not always corresponds with the regulations.

The Swedish Institute has a mission from the government to coordinate the HEIs marketing activities and to disseminate information about Swedish higher education to other countries. The institute has a website for foreign students: www.studyinsweden.se

In Sweden, all higher education is provided for free. However the Government has recently appointed a committee to analyse and give recommendations for a system in which HEIs are given the right to charge tuition fees for students from countries outside the European economic area (EEA). By giving the HEIs this right it will be possible to increase the number of foreign students even more in a way that will not involve an increase in the government budget. At the same time the government wants to protect Swedish students right to tuition free studies and it is therefore preparing legislation with this intention.

13. Concluding comments

13.1. Give a description of your national Bologna strategies

Please see previous answers.

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

The Bologna process presents many challenges for the national as well as the European higher education systems. One of these challenges is to introduce and nurture the discussion about the Bologna process on a departmental level at each higher education institution and thereby broaden the discussion on creation of the EHEA. This would also facilitate and indeed be a precondition for the realisation of many of the goals that have been set up in the Bologna process.

Another challenge is the protection of different national traits within the framework of the Bologna process. In the Swedish case, the comparably liberal system of modularised courses that gives many students great freedom to individually select a combination of courses to form a degree is an important feature. However this system of free choice has proven to be particularly difficult to combine with some of the structures that are associated with the Bologna process.

A third challenge involves the introduction of the doctoral studies into the cycle structure. Sweden has traditionally had doctoral programmes that are four years long. This is also an important feature of the national system. Creating an interface between the second and the third cycle without prolonging the total time of studies is therefore a difficult problem that remains to be solved.

Since teacher education is considered crucial for the development of the school and educational sector, it would be of importance to find how teacher educations may fit in to the Bologna framework.

Legal obstacles are today preventing higher education institutions in Sweden from awarding joint degrees. The government therefore emphasizes the importance of joint programmes between institutions in different countries that supports the goals and intentions achievable with joint degrees. It would be of interest to develop the content of the already existing Diploma Supplement in order to include study periods at other institutions as well as any

relevant cooperation agreements.

The students would then have a more complete record of their studies.