

To: The Bologna Process Secretariat  
From: Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment.

16<sup>th</sup> March 2007

Attached please find the Bologna National Report of Malta for your attention.

Sincerely  
James Calleja  
Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment

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

**Final:** 9 May 2006

### **Notes:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

This template has three sections:

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

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

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

## A. Background information on your Higher Education system

### Details

Country	Malta
Date	16 <sup>th</sup> March 2007
BFUG member (one name only) Position	Dr Joachim James Calleja CEO, Malta Qualifications Council Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment
Email address	<a href="mailto:james.j.calleja@gov.mt">james.j.calleja@gov.mt</a>
Contributors to the report	Ms Veronica Grech, Deputy Registrar University of Malta; Mr Anthony Gellel, Registrar, University of Malta; Mr Anthony Degiovanni, Mutual Recognition Coordinator, Education Division; Mr Ray Farrugia, Registrar, Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology; Mr Teddy Camilleri Deputy Director, Institute of Tourism Studies; and Mr Jacques Sciberras, CEO National Commission for Higher Education.

### Main achievements since Bergen

1. Describe the important developments relating to the Bologna Process, including legislative reforms, since Bergen.
<p>The main important development since Bergen has been the enactment in August 2006 of a new legislation establishing the National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE) and the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST). The aims of the NCHE are to ascertain the needs and the aspirations of further and higher education; 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 give advice to government on any matter which is connected with further and higher education sectors.</p> <p>The MCAST, established by Public Deed in 2000 was re-established and incorporated in the Education Act 2006 to implement the mission to provide studies and training for education in the vocational and professional sectors. MCAST awards diplomas at Level 5 of the European Qualifications Framework and will shortly embark on awarding Bachelor's professional degrees in specific areas of study.</p>

### National organisation

2. Describe any changes since Bergen in the structure of public authorities responsible for higher education, the main agencies/bodies in higher education and their roles.

The National Commission for Higher Education as well as the Malta Qualifications Council (MQC) are the two entities responsible for higher education and vocational education (including Level 5 of the Bologna Process) respectively. The MQC has developed a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for Lifelong Learning which is in line with the Bologna Process and encompasses the European Higher Education Area. A consultation process on Malta's NQF started in November 2006 and will be completed in April 2007. It is expected that by autumn 2007, Malta will have its nationally agreed qualifications framework which includes development within the Bologna and the Copenhagen Processes.

Please include:

- whether higher education institutions (HEIs) report to /are overseen by different ministries
- how funds are allocated to HEIs
- areas for which HEIs are autonomous and self governing.

All HEIs report to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment, and are overseen by the NCHE and the MQC in their respective roles as described above.

Funds are allocated through the annual budget as approved by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance.

HEIs are autonomous and self-governing on matters related to the management of material, financial and human resources. The Council of the University of Malta is partially appointed by the Minister of Education, Youth and Employment, and the Board of Governors of the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology are appointed by the Minister of Education, Youth and Employment.

3. Describe any changes since Bergen to the institutional structure.

Please include:

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

The number of public HEIs are three: namely the University of Malta, the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology and the Institute of tourism Studies which fall under the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment.

Other private institutions award degrees in higher education through international Universities or other awarding bodies.

There are different types of higher education institutions in Malta delivering academic and professional diplomas at Level 5 of the EQF.

The number of students admitted in the academic session of 2006-2007 is 2919. This includes students admitted at the University of Malta (2577) and in Higher Diplomas at the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (322) and the Institute of Tourism Studies (20).

Education Act 2006 contains the regulations governing HEIs and includes chapters for the University of Malta, the MCAST, ITS, and the National Commission for Higher Education. Private institutions are regulated under the private schools framework in the same Act.

The Malta Qualifications Council is regulated through Legal Notice 347 of 2005.

## Partnership

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

Please include:

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

Since 2007, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment oversees the implementation of the Bologna Process.

Students, staff trade Unions, business and social partners have been regularly consulted on the Bologna Process. An annual meeting for all stakeholders is held to ensure that developments on the Bologna Process reach all bodies and entities concerned.

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

Please include:

- precise references (preferably with web links) to any legislation (or equivalent) in place to ensure students and staff are represented on HEI governing bodies

- the role of students in the governance of HEIs
- the role of staff trade union/representative bodies in the governance of HEIs.

The Education Act 2006 ([www.legal-malta.com](http://www.legal-malta.com) CAP 327) establishes an active role for students and staff on HEI governing bodies. Students and staff are represented in the University of Malta Council. Active students' Councils are present in the University of Malta and at MCAST. Staff Trade Unions are also active within the University of Malta.

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

An Annual Conference is held by the National Bologna Promoter open to all stakeholders. The updating and information conference is followed by discussion.

## B. Main stocktaking questions, including scorecard elements

### Degree system

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle

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

Please include:

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

The Maltese degree system is based on the three cycles, Bachelors, Masters and Doctorate. Long cycle first degree courses (five years duration) exist in professional courses in Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Architecture and Theology. All these courses, however, also lead to a second cycle Masters course.

In 2006/7, 11% are enrolled on short courses within the first cycle (one or two year certificate/diploma courses), 67.1% are enrolled on first cycle courses (3/4/5 yr Bachelors), 14% on Masters courses and 6.3% are on other second cycle postgraduate courses below Masters level (postgraduate diploma/certificate).

( Eurydice )

Stage of implementation of the third cycle

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

Please include:

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

The percentage of students pursuing studies towards a doctoral degree is 1.6%. All doctoral studies are currently conducted by supervised independent research although there are plans to introduce taught doctorates in certain professional fields in the near future.

The duration is between three and five years of full-time studies, or four to eight years in the case of part-time studies.

All doctoral studies are conducted under the close supervision of a senior academic appointed for the purpose. Specialist advisors and/or a co-supervisor may also be appointed. Assessment for the award of the degree is on submission of the thesis which must contain original and significant contributions to knowledge. The Board of Examiners is composed of not less than three examiners, of whom at least one an examiner from a reputable overseas university. Candidates are required to defend their thesis orally before the Board.

Doctoral degrees are included in the proposed National Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning. Doctoral degrees in Malta are not linked to learning outcomes. Credits are not used for doctoral studies, but will probably be used if a taught element is introduced in some doctoral programmes.

(Scorecard and Eurydice )

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

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

Please include:

- the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to the second cycle
- if appropriate, the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to the third cycle
- the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to both the second and third cycles
- the percentage of second cycle qualifications that give access to the third cycle
- specify any first cycle qualifications that do not give access to the second cycle
- specify any second cycle qualifications that do not give access to the third cycle.
- specify any examples where bridging courses are necessary to transfer between cycles in the same subject area
- any measures planned to remove obstacles between cycles.

All first cycle qualifications give access to the second cycle.

First cycle degrees are classified as first, second or third class. Students in possession of a third class first cycle qualification are normally required to complete a qualifying programme before being allowed to proceed to second cycle studies.

Successful completion of the second cycle can always give access to the third. The normal route to the third cycle is through successful completion of the second cycle. Exceptionally, an outstanding student with a very good first degree may be allowed to register directly as a doctoral candidate without completing a second cycle programme.

(Scorecard and Eurydice )

Implementation of national qualifications framework

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

Please include:

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

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

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

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2007, the Malta Qualifications Council launched a proposed NQF and a consultation period of six months. This will end in April 2007 when it is expected that the Minister of Education will present Malta's official NQF for LLL. Malta's NQF is aligned with the Framework of Qualifications of the EHEA and the EQF.

Malta's NQF is reflected in the national legislation and in particular in Legal Notice 347 – *Malta Qualifications Council Regulations 2005*. The Malta Qualifications Council has been set up to steer and maintain the development of the national qualifications framework for LLL. MQC is also in the process of establishing national outcomes-based descriptors of qualifications in vocational education and training. The timeframe set for the implementation of outcome-based descriptors for Level 5 is Q4 of 2007.

All key stakeholders are involved in the consultation process to develop a national qualifications framework. These include all public and private training providers, trade unions, employers, non-governmental organizations political parties and governmental organizations.

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

Please include where possible:

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

Last data regarding graduate employment relates to 2004 graduates, of whom 83% found in employment (75% full-time and 8% part time;). 30% of first cycle graduates continued into second cycle, as full time or part time students in 2005/6. (note: most part-time students are in employment whilst pursuing studies).

A number of measures under the ESF 2007-2103 operating programme are envisaged to boost the career guidance services and additional services related to transition or occupational mobility. Particularly relevant to graduates are services related to supporting business start-ups, research

## Quality assurance

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

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

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

Please include:

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

The National Commission for Higher Education is working towards establishing a National Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA as established by the EHEA.

The Malta Qualifications Council will publish in Q2 of 2007, a Working Document of a Quality Assurance System for Vocational Education and Training Programmes that fall within the higher education sector and within the remit as established by Legal Notice 347 of 2005.

Both the University of Malta and the Institute of Tourism Studies have internal QA systems in place. MCAST is working towards a QA policy.

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

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of development of external quality assurance system

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

Please include:

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

Quality Assurance Systems (Internally and Externally) are in operation within the University of Malta and the Institute of Tourism Studies. MCAST has a QA policy for external certification across all areas of studies. There are internal assessments in all programmes and results are internally published.

NCHE is working towards establishing a national agency and a system of peer review of such an agency according to the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Level of student participation

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

Please include:

- whether students are included in the following aspects of quality assurance:
  - the governance of national agencies for QA
  - as full members or observers in external review teams
  - as part of the decision making process for external reviews
  - in the consultation process during external reviews (eg

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

- arrangements for external reviewers to consult with students)
- in internal evaluations.

A new framework for internal and external QA will outline the role of students in QA governance, participation and decision making in external reviews. No framework is in place as yet.

However, given the small HEI sector, the current framework does give student representation in all governing bodies of HEIs which are currently responsible for QA. Students are represented in all University Committees such as the Board of Studies, the Faculty Board and the Council. The participation of students within the various structures of the University of Malta, MCAST and the Institute of Tourism Studies allows them to actively participate and influence the decision-making processes taking place including measures in Quality Assurance. Furthermore Students Organizations at all HEIs in Malta play a very active role in the general academic, cultural and social affairs of their institutions. Such associations regularly express their opinion in public and draw up reports on issues concerning changes and developments within HEIs. Regular conferences, seminars and consultations are organized by Student Organizations to address particular issues concerning programmes of studies including QA systems.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Level of international participation

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

Please include:

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

All HEIs in Malta have a high level of international participation in their QA system. All international qualifications are directly monitored by the International Awarding Body. The University of Malta, MCAST and the Institute of Tourism Studies have also regular external monitoring in all programmes of studies. The University of Malta is an active member of ENQA while the Malta Qualifications Council is Malta's representative on ENQA-VET since December 2006.

## Recognition of degrees and study periods

(Scorecard and Eurydice )

Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement

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

Please include:

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

The University of Malta is committed to issuing the DS to all its students, automatically (i.e. without the need of a request) and free of charge, as soon as possible. However, practical difficulties have hindered progress towards the University's aims. A pilot project was conducted in 2006 resulting in the first DS being issued to a few students.

The DS that has been issued is in full conformity with the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format.

It is planned that in 2007 the DS will be issued a significant small percentage of graduates and that full implementation be reached by 2009.

(Scorecard)

National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention

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

Please include:

- whether your country has ratified the convention (including depositing ratification instrument at either CoE or UNESCO)
- whether all appropriate legislation complies with the legal framework of the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents
- which of the following principles are applied in practice

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

- applicants' right to fair assessment
- recognition if no substantial differences can be proven
- demonstration of substantial differences, where recognition is not granted
- provision of information about your country's HE programmes and institutions
- whether you have a fully operational ENIC
- any action being taken to ratify or fully implement the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents.

Malta ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2005 transposed into Maltese legislation through Legal Notice 280/2006.

All appropriate legislation complies with the legal framework of the Convention. With regards to the Supplementary Documents all texts comply except for the Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Trans-national Education; the Explanatory Memorandum to the Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Trans-national Education; the Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees and the Explanatory Memorandum to the Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees.

All the principles list in 17 are applied in practice. Malta has a fully functional ENIC. The Ministry of Education is working towards the ratification of the Supplementary Documents.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of implementation of ECTS

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

Please include:

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

Accumulation of credit towards the award of a degree has been in operation at the University of Malta for many years.

However the University changed to the ECTC system in 2003 and all first and second cycle courses, with the exception of the Medicine and the Dentistry courses which operate on ECTS.

19. Has your country produced a national plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications<sup>6</sup>? If so,

<sup>6</sup> ENIC/NARIC has produced guidelines for National Action Plans for Recognition.

give a brief description of the plan and attach a copy.

The Department of Further Studies and Adult Education of the Education Division organized a National Conference on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 2006 to discuss the framework of a national plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications. The conference also served to officially launch the Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre which was established on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September 2002. The Centre was set up to satisfy the requirements established by the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications Act XVIII of 2002 and the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region.

The Ministry of Education is working towards the design of a national plan based on the national consultation conference of 2006.

## Lifelong Learning

(Scorecard)

Recognition of prior learning

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

Please include:

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

The recognition of prior learning (and informal, non-formal formal learning) is on the Malta Qualifications Council agenda for Q1 of 2008.

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

Please include:

- any flexibility in entry requirements
- any flexible delivery methods

- any modular structures of programmes.

The proposed National Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning was presented by the Malta Qualifications Council on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2006.

The NQF creates pathways for flexible learning paths in higher education and from vocational education into higher education. It is expected that the NQF will be officially launched by the end of Q3 of 2007.

The NQF is based on Exit points rather than entry requirements. Entry requirements to all training programmes are set by individual training providers.

## Joint degrees

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Establishment and recognition of joint degrees

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

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of any legislation to establish joint programmes
- whether joint<sup>7</sup> degrees are allowed and encouraged in legislation
- whether joint degrees are allowed and encouraged in all three cycles
- an indication of the percentage of HEIs that have established joint programmes and are awarding nationally recognised degrees jointly with HEIs of other countries
- any action being taken to encourage or allow joint programmes.

<sup>7</sup> a joint degree is a single degree certificate awarded by two or more institutions, and where the single degree certificate is valid without being supplemented by any additional national degree certificate.

The University of Malta is at Law an autonomous institution and as such has established joint degrees for example with the University *La Sapienza* of Rome. Joint degrees are encouraged at the first two cycles of the Bologna Process. The University facilitates through its International Office and in particular the Socrates Staff Mobility Programme contacts with other Universities.

## C. Current issues in Higher Education

### Higher education and research

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

Higher education and research are synonymous in Malta. Practically all research takes place within higher education institutions. However the Malta Council for Science and Technology conducts various research programmes within the FP6 programme. Several Government entities such as the Malta Tourism Authority, the Malta Communications Authority, Malta Environmental and Planning Authority and the Malta Financial Services Authority among others all have specific research units at higher education level.

There is wider involvement of industry in research and in particular at the University of Malta and at the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology. HEIs are working towards sponsorship or commissioning of research projects to be undertaken at higher education levels.

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

No data is available but the National Commission for Higher Education has the remit to research these issues.

### The social dimension

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

Please include:

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

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment has a number of schemes and scholarships to support quality higher education particularly among disadvantaged groups. These are on an annual basis. See examples in 26 below.

26. Describe any measures to help students complete their studies without obstacles related to their social or economic background.

Please include:

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

Guidance and Counselling services are available in all HEIs. Several schemes for scholarships are regularly published by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment (MEYE). Furthermore the MEYE has a Youth Specialisation Scheme ([www.youth.gov.mt](http://www.youth.gov.mt)) offering loans with substantial subsidised interest rates for successful students as well as a Malta Government Scholarship Scheme for graduate students with a total annual grant for research of 430,000euro. MEYE is working towards establishing measures to monitor the impact of policies to improve retention.

The ESF Operating Programme for 2007-2013 will boost this aspect of support through bursaries and scholarships aimed at helping the furtherance of education at a higher level of education to those who would otherwise not afford such studies.

## Mobility

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

Please include:

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

Higher education institutions have set up Offices for information on inward and outward mobility. Seminars and information sessions are held on a regular basis to inform students of research and training opportunities available in various European HEIs. A weekly write-up in a Sunday paper also informs the general public and in particular students of inward and outward mobility. Specific notice boards in HEIs also provide such information and are updated on a regular basis.

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

All students in public higher education institutions receive a grant from government on a monthly basis. Grants vary according to the area of study which students follow. This grant is donated through the use of a smart card system which has been in place for a number of years. The Youth Specialisation Scheme together with the Malta Government Scholarship Scheme are two examples of portable grants available for students undergoing studies abroad.

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

Please include:

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

Inward and outward staff mobility has been encouraged through joint activities between the University of Malta and the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) in providing access to a Bachelor's degree in Tourism Studies for students following the Higher Diploma in Hospitality at the ITS. There is also cooperation between the University of Malta and MCAST on areas such as Information Technology and Mechanical Engineering.

Staff from the University of Malta lecture on the teacher training courses of MCAST and students from MCAST and the University of Malta share experiences in laboratory work and in workshops related to mechanical and electronic engineering.

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

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

All HEIs promote the attractiveness of the EHEA. This is re-enforced through information seminars which are held regularly at all public HEIs. Such promotion concerns Curricular Development, Inter-institutional cooperation, Mobility schemes and Integrated Programmes of Study, Research and Training.

Mobility is widely encouraged in all HEIs for students as well as Faculty members.

### **Future challenges**

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

The main challenges ahead are the following:

- establish the infrastructure of the National Commission for Higher Education and the Malta Qualifications Council
- implement reforms relating to the structure of the HE sector in Malta, including aspects of governance, funding and accountability;
- improve the synergy between HEIs in Malta
- establish greater synergy between HEIs and research sectors particularly those in industry
- legislate the national qualifications framework for lifelong learning
- establish the Diploma Supplement for all degree courses
- implementation of the standards and guidelines for QA as proposed in the ENQA report
- establish a National Quality Assurance System for Higher Education
- establish professional degrees at the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology
- establish a system for joint degrees
- increase support for research among graduate and post-graduate students
- increase mobility between HEIs in Malta and between Maltese HEIs and higher education institutions in MEU Member States
- create more flexible learning pathways in higher education including procedures for the recognition of prior learning

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

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

Bologna Secretariat  
May 2006