

Observations of the Holy See
on becoming a signatory member
of the “Declaration of Bologna”

31 May 2003

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A. The specific characteristics of the Higher Education system of the Holy See.

1) Structure of the Higher Education System, Number and Type of Institutions, Number of Students

The Academic Centres at university level for which the Holy See bears responsibility all over the world are classified according to two types in light of the finality and contents of the studies: Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties, and Catholic Universities. Ecclesiastical Faculties may exist alone (free-standing), within an Ecclesiastical or a Catholic University or within a civil university.

All Catholic Universities teach and carry out research, in the light of the Christian faith, in the disciplines common to all universities. These universities and university-level colleges (over one thousand in number throughout the world) award degrees on the basis of civil authority. The recognition of their degrees outside the country where they are located is the same as that of the degrees of the civil universities of their country. Catholic Universities are governed by Canon (Church) Law, the Apostolic Constitution "Ex Corde Ecclesiae", the Ordinances for its local application and the Statutes of the Institution.

Only Ecclesiastical Faculties and their affiliated, aggregated or incorporated Institutes, and not the Catholic Universities, are affected by the Holy See's application of adherence to the Declaration of Bologna. Catholic Universities grant degrees by civil recognition and so do not depend on the Holy See in the same manner. Catholic Universities follow the academic legislation and structure of the respective nations.

Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties are engaged in teaching and research in the religious sciences proper to the Church. These institutions are governed by a common academic legislation everywhere in the world, i. e. the Apostolic Constitution

“Sapientia Christiana” of 1979¹, and they confer degrees on the authority of the Holy See. At present, these institutions number one hundred and fifty-seven, and are listed in the “Annuario Pontificio 2003”, the official yearbook of the Holy See².

The purpose of Ecclesiastical Faculties is defined in a threefold way (cf. Art. 3 of “Sapientia Christiana”): (1) the Faculties are to cultivate and promote, through scientific research, their own disciplines, and especially are to deepen knowledge of Christian revelation and of matters connected with it, to enunciate systematically the truths contained therein, to consider in the light of revelation the most recent progress of the sciences, and to present them to the people of the present day in a manner adapted to various cultures; (2) they are to train the students to a level of high qualification in their own disciplines, according to Catholic doctrine, to prepare them properly to face their tasks, and to promote the continuing education of the ministers of the Church; (3) to collaborate intensely, in accordance with their own nature and in close communion with the Hierarchy, with the local and the universal Church in the work of evangelization.

At the present moment, in the European region there exist Ecclesiastical Faculties in the countries listed below with the number of these Faculties and Faculty-level institutions in brackets. The category “Faculty-level” institutions refers to all those institutions that are enabled to confer a Doctorate and which, therefore, include the third cycle. A detailed list is given in the attachment (cf. Appendix #1).

Austria (8), Belgium (7), Croatia (3), Czech Republic (2), France (15), Germany (26), Hungary (2), Ireland (5), Italy (71), Lithuania (1), Malta (1), The Netherlands (1), Poland (19), Portugal (1), Slovakia (1), Slovenia (1), Spain (16), Switzerland (4), United Kingdom (1).

Besides these, there are affiliated, aggregated and incorporated institutions that grant academic degrees through the authority of an Ecclesiastical Faculty which, with approval of the Holy See’s Congregation for Catholic Education, takes the responsibility for the academic quality and standard of the studies offered in these institutions. The “affiliating”, “aggregating” or “incorporating” Ecclesiastical Faculty, which sometimes is situated in the same country, sometimes outside the country, oversees the courses and awards the degrees. Through an “affiliation”, the academic baccalaureate degree concluding the first cycle (“baccalaureatus”) is awarded; an “aggregation” offers both the first cycle and the second, granting the licentiate (“licentia”); an “incorporation” may offer either the second cycle or the third (which concludes with the doctorate or “doctoratus”) or both.

The number of affiliations (total: 164), aggregations (total: 18) and incorporations (total: 11) that exist presently in the European region are given in the following overview,

¹http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_15041979_sapientia-christiana_en.html

² Holy See, *Annuario Pontificio 2003*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City, 2003, pages 1605 – 1638.

while the detailed list is presented in the attachment (cf. Appendix #2).

Austria (1), Belgium (5), Croatia (6), France (10), Germany (1), Hungary (7), Ireland (2), Italy (46), Latvia (1), Lithuania (2), Malta (1), The Netherlands (2), Poland (46), Portugal (4), Romania (3), Russia (1), Slovakia (4), Spain (45), Switzerland (1), Ukraine (1), United Kingdom (4).

At this moment, it is not possible to present exact statistical details and numbers of students. A new database and data entering system currently under development should assist in providing more precise information in the future.

In the city of Rome there are 19 Ecclesiastical Universities, Athenaea, autonomous Faculties or institutions of Faculty level. The details in teacher and student numbers referring to the academic year 2000-2001 are reported in the attachment (cf. Appendix #3). A brochure by Grzegorz Ga̧zka, published at *Libreria Editrice Vaticana* and titled "Pontifical Universities and Roman Athenaea" is enclosed with this Report as an illustration and portrait of the major Roman Ecclesiastical institutions (cf. Enclosure #1).³

2) Educational System of the Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties

The three major Faculties of an Ecclesiastical University are Theology, Philosophy and Canon (Church) Law. There are, however, other areas of studies which can be included in an Ecclesiastical University or constitute an Ecclesiastical Faculty or Institute. A partial listing of these can be found in "Appendix II" of "Sapientia Christiana" (for instance: Biblical Studies; Oriental Ecclesiastical Studies; Moral Studies; Church History; Christian Spirituality; Catechetics; Liturgical Studies; Sacred Music; Ecumenical Studies; Psychology; Social Sciences; Arabic-Islamic Studies, and so on).

The fundamental structure of this educational system and the goals of its diverse stages is as follows.

The first cycle lasts at least two, three or five years according to the scientific field (Philosophy 2 years, Canon Law 2 years, Theology 5 years). This cycle provides a fundamental introduction to the subject matter and to its proper scientific methodology, and when successfully concluded, ends with the degree of Baccalaureate ("baccalaureatus").

The second cycle lasts at least for two years and consists in the beginnings of a specialization in the field. Successfully concluded, this cycle ends in the Licentiate ("licentia").

³ Grzegorz Ga̧zka, *Anno Domini 2000. Pontifical Universities and Roman Athenaea*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City 2000.

The third cycle, lasting for “a suitable time” (usually at least two years) and involving the completion of scientific formation and the writing and defense of a doctoral dissertation, concludes successfully with the Doctorate (“doctoratus”).

Generally the language of instruction in an Ecclesiastical Faculty is that of the place. In some instances, it is possible that Latin may be used for this purpose. Even where the language of the place is used, some courses may be offered in one or another of the more commonly spoken modern languages.

3) Enrolment

With regard to the qualifications for admission to the Ecclesiastical Faculty, the following norms are to be observed:

“Ecclesiastical Faculties are open to all, whether ecclesiastics or laity, who can legally give testimony to leading a moral life and to having completed the previous studies appropriate to enrolling in the Faculty” (“Sapientia Christiana”, art. 31).

“To enrol in a Faculty in order to obtain an academic degree, one must present that kind of study certificate which would be necessary to permit enrolment in a civil university of one’s own country or of the country where the Faculty is located” (“Sapientia Christiana”, art. 32 § 1).

“The Faculty, in its own Statutes, should determine what, besides what is contained in § 1 above, is needed for entrance into its course of study, including ancient and modern language requirements” (“Sapientia Christiana”, art. 32 § 2).

Entrance into the second cycle requires the attainment of the degree of the previous one or the completion of studies judged by the Faculty to be equivalent. Entrance into the third cycle requires the previous attainment of the Licentiate in the field of studies.

A suitable knowledge of Latin is required for enrolling in any of the Faculties of sacred sciences. Depending on the material studied, Greek, Hebrew and other ancient languages may also be required. For the level of the third cycle two modern languages in addition to the student’s mother tongue are ordinarily required. In all cases the Faculties may set the language requirements they judge appropriate.

4) Teaching staff

With regard to the teaching staff, all teachers of every rank must be noted for their upright life, integrity of doctrine, and devotion to duty, so that they can effectively contribute to the proper goals of an Ecclesiastical Faculty. Those who teach matters touching on faith and morals are to be conscious of their duty to carry out their work in

full communion with the Magisterium of the Church, above all, with that of the Roman Pontiff (“Sapientia Christiana”, art. 26, § 1 and § 2).

To be legitimately hired as a permanent teacher in a Faculty, a person must be distinguished by wealth of knowledge, witness of life, and a sense of responsibility; have a suitable doctorate or equivalent title or exceptional and singular scientific accomplishment; show documentary proof of suitability for doing scientific research, especially by a published dissertation; demonstrate teaching ability. These requirements for promotion to a permanent teacher must be applied also, in proportionate measure, in hiring non-permanent ones. In hiring teachers, the scientific requirements in current force in the university practice of the local area should be taken into account (“Sapientia Christiana”, art. 27, §§ 1-3).

Also, teachers at an Ecclesiastical Faculty, in order to carry out their tasks satisfactorily, must be free from other employment which cannot be reconciled with their duty to do research and to instruct (cf. art. 29 of “Sapientia Christiana”).

5) “Government Agency” in charge of Coordination of Higher Education

As established by the Code of Canon Law, canon 816, as well as by the Apostolic Constitution “Pastor Bonus” of 1988, article 116, the department of the Holy See responsible for governing and coordinating Higher Education is the Congregation for Catholic Education. According to the Apostolic Constitution “Sapientia Christiana”, art. 12-14, the subordinate higher authority of an Ecclesiastical Faculty is the Chancellor and/or Vice Chancellor, i.e. the local authority. The same Constitution reserves the canonical erection or approval of Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties to the Congregation for Catholic Education (art. 5). The Statutes (including the Programmes of Studies and the degrees offered) of each University or Faculty, which must be drawn up in accordance with the Constitution, require approval by the Congregation (art. 7). For the correct application of the Constitution, the Norms of Application⁴ issued by the Congregation need to be observed (art. 10).

⁴http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_15041979_sapientia-christiana_en.html: cf. second part.

B. Two specific questions regarding the geographical extension and regarding institutions belonging to the Holy See and to another national Higher Education system.

1. The Geographical Limits of Institutions of Higher Education Belonging to the Higher Education System of the Holy See. Such Institutions Located Outside Europe and their Relation with the European Higher Education Area

As has been pointed out *passim* in the previous presentation of the Holy See's Higher Education system, the institutions that belong to the Holy See's system are present all over the world wherever the Catholic Church is present.

Therefore, there is a large number of such institutions also outside the European region. Since they are regulated by the Apostolic Constitution "Sapientia christiana", they are indirectly also related to the European Higher Education Area. In order to enhance and favour recognition of the studies completed in its academic system, the Holy See is Party to four UNESCO Regional Conventions in the field of Higher Education, namely those for Latin America and the Caribbean (Mexico, 1974), for the European Region (Paris, 1979), for the countries of Africa (Arusha, 1981) and for the countries of Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, 1983). In addition to this and with regard to the European Region, the Holy See has also signed the documents relating to the Convention of Lisbon of 1997⁵.

The Holy See is part of the ENIC-NARIC network. Provision of statistical and other information is under the way⁶.

The Holy See participates already, on various levels, in European institutions dealing with various aspects of Higher Education, among others, in the European Council and in the Cultural Convention. For many years, the Holy See has actively taken part at the regular conference on university problems and also in the Committee for Education.

The Conference of the Rectors of the Pontifical Roman Universities (CRUPR) is a collective member of the European University Association (EUA) and cooperates actively in its Council (cfr. www.unige/EUA.ch), while various single Universities are individual members of the same Association.

In the attachment (cf. Appendix #4), a list of all full Faculty-level Ecclesiastical Institutions of the Holy See worldwide is presented to provide an overview.

5 Cf. http://www.cepes.ro/hed/recogn/lisbon/signatory_states.htm.

6 Cf. <http://www.enic-naric.net/members.asp?country=Holy+See> .

2. Institutions of Higher Education Belonging both to the Holy See System and to Another National System

In Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Poland, Switzerland, The Netherlands, The Czech Republic and Slovakia there are Ecclesiastical Faculties either within Catholic Universities or within civil Universities which belong to both the system of their nation as well as the Holy See's system.

With regard to Austria, Germany and Poland, this situation is regulated in bilateral treaties such as Concordats between the Holy See and the national governmental Authorities.

Art. 8 of "Sapientia Christiana" provides for these cases: "Ecclesiastical Faculties erected or approved by the Holy See in non-ecclesiastical universities, which confer both canonical and civil academic degrees, must observe the prescriptions of the [...] Constitution, account being taken of the conventions signed by the Holy See with various nations or with the universities themselves".

There are Ecclesiastical Theological Faculties in a number of Catholic Universities in the European region that follow both the legislation of the Holy See on Higher Studies as well as the national legislation of the country. These Catholic Universities are situated in Belgium (Leuven: Katholieke Universiteit Leuven; Louvain-La-Neuve: Université Catholique de Louvain); France (Angers: Université Catholique de l'Ouest; Lille: Fédération Universitaire et Polytechnique de Lille; Lyon: Facultés Catholiques de Lyon; Paris: Institut Catholique de Paris; Toulouse: Institut Catholique de Toulouse); Germany (Katholische Universität Eichstätt); Hungary (Budapest: Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem); Ireland (Maynooth: St. Patrick's College); the Netherlands (Nijmegen: Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen); Poland (Lublin: Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski); Portugal (Lisbon: Universidade Católica Portuguesa); Spain (Bilbao: Universidad de Deusto; Madrid: Universidad Pontificia "Comillas"; Pamplona: Universidad de Navarra; Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca).

Ecclesiastical Faculties in Catholic Universities in European countries which follow the "Bologna Process" would already apply the criteria provided by the "Bologna System" along with their applying the specific national legislation on Higher Education.

C. Review of the Holy See's present commitment and achievements and its plans with regard to the goals mentioned in the Bologna Declaration and the Prague Communiqué.

1. Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees.

Bologna Declaration:

Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, also through the implementation of the Diploma Supplement, in order to promote European citizens' employability and the international competitiveness of the European higher education system.

Prague Communiqué:

Ministers strongly encouraged universities and other higher institutions to take full advantage of existing national legislation and European tools aimed at facilitating academic and professional recognition of course units, degrees and other awards, so that citizens can effectively use their qualifications, competencies and skills throughout the European higher education area.

Ministers called upon existing organisations and networks such as NARIC and ENIC to promote, at institutional, national and European level, simple, efficient and fair recognition reflecting the underlying diversity of qualifications.

The Holy See's achievement and commitment in this:

As already mentioned above, on 11 April 1997 the Holy See signed the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region. The Convention was ratified 28 February 2001 and took effect 1 April 2001. As a consequence, the Holy See participates in the ENIC-NARIC network⁷. Supply of statistical and other information is under preparation⁸.

The same commitment for data supply is being undertaken, for instance, for the so-called APARNET consultation website currently being set up by the Australian Government for the Asian-Pacific region on behalf of the Regional Committee for the Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok 1984). In fact, Australia is also a signatory state to the 1997 Lisbon Recognition Convention.

2. Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles.

Bologna Declaration:

Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate. Access to the second cycle shall require successful completion of first cycle studies, lasting a minimum of three years. The degree awarded after the first cycle shall also be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification. The

7 Cf. <http://www.enic-naric.net/members.asp?country=Holy+See> .

8 Cf. <http://www.enic-naric.net/members.asp?country=Holy+See> .

second cycle should lead to the master and/or doctorate degree as in many European countries.

Prague Communiqué:

Ministers noted with satisfaction that the objective of a degree structure based on two main cycles, articulating higher education in undergraduate and graduate studies, has been tackled and discussed. Some countries have already adopted this structure and several others are considering it. It is important to note that in many countries bachelor's and master's degrees, or comparable two cycle degrees, can be obtained at universities as well as at other higher education institutions. Programmes leading to a degree may, and indeed should, have different orientations and various profiles in order to accommodate a diversity of individual, academic and labour market needs as concluded at the Helsinki seminar on bachelor level degrees (February 2001).

The Holy See's achievement and commitment in this:

The Holy See's system of Higher Education, as described above, already allows for a three years cycle of basic studies (earning the canonical Baccalaureate/"Baccalaureatus" if concluded successfully) followed by a two years cycle of specialization (for the canonical Licentiate/"Licentia") in all fields but Theology and Canon Law.

These latter two offer the training qualifying for particular and important offices and tasks in the Catholic Church, such as the priesthood, teaching of disciplines connected with faith and morals, or other employments in ecclesiastical fields like administration, ecclesiastical tribunal or pastoral cooperation.

Given the particular needs of the Catholic Church for well-trained personnel in these fields, the first cycle of Theology consists of five years or ten semesters (the second cycle consisting of at least two years), whereas in Canon Law, the second cycle extends over three years (the first cycle lasting at least two years).

As for additional academic degrees besides the canonical ones, the Apostolic Constitution allows a good flexibility as long as any confusion with the canonical degrees is avoided. Art. 47 of the Constitution reads: "§ 1. The academic degrees conferred by an Ecclesiastical Faculty are: Baccalaureate, Licentiate, and Doctorate. § 2. Special qualifications can be added to the names of these degrees according to the diversity of Faculties and the order of studies in the individual Faculties". With regard to how the titles are called, the Apostolic Constitution continues in Art. 48: "Academic degrees can be given different names in the Statutes of the individual Faculties, taking account of the university practice in the local area, indicating, however, with clarity the equivalence these have with the names of the academic degrees above and maintaining uniformity among the Ecclesiastical Faculties of the same area".

3. Establishment of a system of credits.

Bologna Declaration:

Establishment of a system of credits - such as in the ECTS system - as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility. Credits could also be acquired

in non-higher education contexts, including lifelong learning, provided they are recognised by the receiving universities concerned.

Prague Communiqué:

Ministers emphasized that for greater flexibility in learning and qualification processes the adoption of common cornerstones of qualifications, supported by a credit system such as the ECTS or one that is ECTS-compatible, providing both transferability and accumulation functions, is necessary. Together with mutually recognized quality assurance systems such arrangements will facilitate students' access to the European labour market and enhance the compatibility, attractiveness and competitiveness of European higher education. The generalized use of such credit system and of the Diploma Supplement will foster progress in this direction.

The Holy See's achievement and commitment in this:

There are various credit-systems in use at the various Ecclesiastical Institutions. At the moment, however, many of them are in the process of adapting their system to the ECTS or have already done it. In the perspective of compatibility it is fairly easy to indicate equivalence.

As a matter of fact, the various Programmes of Studies offered at the different Faculties need approval by the Holy See. Therefore, the principal compatibility and recognition of the *curriculum* as a whole is guaranteed. The use of credit systems that relate clearly to the ECTS should enhance exchange of students and facilitate transfers to a compatible Faculty, which - in the case of Ecclesiastical Studies - needs to be another Ecclesiastical Faculty.

According to the Apostolic Constitution "Sapientia Christiana", art. 45, the single Faculty is entrusted with the task of recognizing studies completed elsewhere, "especially in regard to being dispensed from some disciplines or examinations or even in regard to reducing the curriculum". The relevant *criteria* are to be determined in the Statutes of each Faculty. These have to respect the prescriptions of the Congregation for Catholic Education (cf. *ibidem*).

If it should become necessary, the Congregation for Catholic Education is the authority to release special norms to enhance a uniform mode and standard of recognition that is compliant with the ECTS. A principle in referring credits to effective lesson or homework hours is that these hours need to have some qualifying element with them, such as a paper or an exam.

The *Diploma Supplement* is certainly of a great help towards major clarity on the true value of an academic degree. The Holy See is very cooperative in developing and introducing such an instrument. In fact, the exchange of students between Ecclesiastical Faculties has already motivated the involved Faculties to provide a more extensive description of the course and exam work that had led to earning an academic degree.

4. Promotion of mobility.

Bologna Declaration:

Promotion of mobility by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement with particular attention to:

- for students, access to study and training opportunities and to related services;
- for teachers, researchers and administrative staff, recognition and valorisation of periods spent in a European context researching, teaching and training, without prejudicing their statutory rights.

Prague Communiqué:

Ministers reaffirmed that the objective of improving the mobility of students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff as set out in the Bologna Declaration is of the utmost importance. Therefore, they confirmed their commitment to pursue the removal of all obstacles to the free movement of students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff and emphasized the social dimension of mobility. They took note of the possibilities for mobility offered by the European Community programmes and the progress achieved in this field, e.g. in launching the Mobility Action Plan endorsed by the European Council in Nice in 2000.

The Holy See's achievement and commitment in this:

With regard to mobility of students, the Ecclesiastical Faculties already allow for a great mobility, since it is the single Faculty that has to recognize studies taken elsewhere (cf. "Sapientia Christiana", art. 45, and as previously said).

For example, German and Austrian students of Theology usually leave "their" Faculty for the 5th and 6th semester to continue their studies or in another Ecclesiastical Faculty of Theology in the same country, or in the European region, or even outside this region. Many of them would, for instance, come to Rome, where special courses are provided at some Pontifical Universities to meet their needs.

Teachers' mobility is no problem either, because the requirements for assuming a professor are the same for all Ecclesiastical Faculties (cf. above, with regard to the respective norms of "Sapientia Christiana", artt. 25-29). It is clear, however, that a professor needs to have a competency in the language he will have to teach in. It is the responsibility of each Faculty to hire their staff, both teaching and administrative.

The Holy See's institutions of Higher Education do not adhere to the "Socrates", "Leonardo" mobility and exchange programmes. As mentioned earlier, however, there has always been, among all Ecclesiastical Faculties, and especially with regard to the Pontifical Universities and Athenaea in Rome, which are international by nature, a broad and fruitful exchange and circulation of students.

5. Promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance.

Bologna Declaration:

Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies.

Prague Communiqué:

Ministers recognized the vital role that quality assurance systems play in ensuring high quality standards and in facilitating the comparability of qualifications throughout

Europe. They also encouraged closer cooperation between recognition and quality assurance networks. They emphasized the necessity of close European cooperation and mutual trust in and acceptance of national quality assurance systems. Further they encouraged universities and other higher education institutions to disseminate examples of best practice and to design scenarios for mutual acceptance of evaluation and accreditation/certification mechanisms. Ministers called upon the universities and other higher education institutions, national agencies and the European Network of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), in cooperation with corresponding bodies from countries which are not members of ENQA, to collaborate in establishing a common framework of reference and to disseminate best practice.

The Holy See's achievement and commitment in this:

As mentioned above, the Holy See is already participating in the ENIC-NARIC network for quality assessment and assurance. The Holy See's Congregation for Catholic Education is the higher national agency responsible for quality assurance.

Quality assurance refers both to the creation of new Faculties and to the maintenance and/or improvement in the high standards in the existing institutions. The Apostolic Constitution "Sapientia Christiana" and the Norms of Application provide for both.

In order to undertake the erection of a new University or Faculty, it is necessary to demonstrate a true need or usefulness which cannot be satisfied either by affiliation, aggregation, or incorporation. It is also necessary that certain basic prerequisites be present: a staff of permanently engaged teachers who respond in number and quality to the nature and demands of an Ecclesiastical Faculty; a suitable number of students; a library with scientific apparatus and suitable buildings; economic means sufficient for a University or Faculty; Statutes, together with the Study Programme, which are in conformity with the Constitution and with the Norms of Application. The Congregation for Catholic Education, after listening to the advice first of the Bishops' Conference and next of experts, including that of nearby Faculties, will take the decision about the suitability of the erection of a new Faculty (cf. Art. 45 of the Norms of Application).

With regard to the maintenance of the quality of an academic institution, every Ecclesiastical Faculty is required to submit a detailed report on its activities every three years. This is prescribed in Art. 8,6 of the Norms of Application of "Sapientia Christiana".

This so-called "Triennial Report" should refer to 1) the academic and scientific activity (the authorities of the institution, the various boards; a complete list of the teachers, their publications, participation at symposiums, seminars and conferences, their memberships in scientific associations; the situation of the administration and the archives; the main events at the institution, scientific congresses, symposiums; academic celebrations and graduations organized by the institution; scientific contributions published by the institution); 2) the didactic activity (the academic structure: Faculties, schools, institutes, departments, the various *curricula* offered, number of professors and students, number and quality of the degrees conferred; number of doctoral dissertations concluded successfully); 3) the students (their numbers in the various categories of enrolment, their origin and ecclesiastical status; students' associations and their

activities; their lodging; pastoral care for the students); 4) the didactic means (library, its organization, number of volumes and scientific magazines in subscription; the increase within the three years' period; halls, rooms, technical equipment; the yearly budget); 5) the general condition (the atmosphere within the institution, the spirit of cooperation and commitment; cooperation with other ecclesiastical or civil scientific institutions; the relationship with the local Church and civil authorities; contributions to the cultural life of the region); 6) the economic and financial situation (the annual budget of income and expense; the status of the funds of the institution; status of the buildings and their maintenance); 7) connected institutions (affiliations, aggregations, incorporations).

The report is studied and answered by the Holy See with respect to the issues that arise from the Report. This Report is an important means for the control and assurance of academic quality of the institutions.

6. Promotion of the European dimensions in Higher Education.

Bologna Declaration:

Promotion of the necessary European dimensions in higher education, particularly with regards to curricular development, inter-institutional co-operation, mobility schemes and integrated programmes of study, training and research.

Prague Communiqué:

In order to further strengthen the important European dimensions of higher education and graduate employability, Ministers called upon the higher education sector to increase the development of modules, courses and curricula at all levels with "European" content, orientation or organisation. This concerns particularly modules, courses and degree curricula offered in partnership by institutions from different countries and leading to a recognized joint degree.

The Holy See's achievement and commitment in this:

The European dimension is promoted and emphasized in various aspects and fields. Church history, for instance, a major subject matter of ecclesiastical studies in its own right and an important auxiliary discipline in the other ecclesiastical scientific fields with regard to its historic development, is largely linked to the general evolution of European history.

Moreover, the European viewpoint emerges as a particular perspective during the studies of the various situations of the Catholic Church and of its members in different parts of the world according to the ecclesiastical study matter that is being dealt with.

Finally, the Holy See is present as an Observer at various bodies and organizations of European level, especially with respect to the Committees and Boards working for the Council of Europe. This presence is also echoed in the Ecclesiastical Studies.

The continued Prague Communiqué:

Ministers also emphasized the following points:

Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is an essential element of the European higher education area. In the future Europe, built upon a knowledge-based society and economy, lifelong learning strategies are necessary to face the challenges of competitiveness and the use of new technologies and to improve social cohesion, equal opportunities and the quality of life.

Higher Education institutions and students

Ministers stressed that the involvement of universities and other higher education institutions and of students as competent, active and constructive partners in the establishment and shaping of a European higher education area is needed and welcomed. The institutions have demonstrated the importance they attach to the creation of a compatible and efficient, yet diversified and adaptable European higher education area. Ministers also pointed out that quality is the basic underlying condition for trust, relevance, mobility, compatibility and attractiveness in the European higher education area. Ministers expressed their appreciation of the contributions toward developing study programmes combining academic quality with relevance to lasting employability and called for a continued proactive role of higher education institutions.

Ministers affirmed that students should participate in and influence the organisation and content of education at universities and other higher education institutions. Ministers also reaffirmed the need, recalled by students, to take account of the social dimension in the Bologna process.

Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area

Ministers agreed on the importance of enhancing attractiveness of European higher education to students from Europe and other parts of the world. The readability and comparability of European higher education degrees world-wide should be enhanced by development of a common framework of qualifications, as well as by coherent quality assurance and accreditation/certification mechanisms and by increased information efforts.

Ministers particularly stressed that the quality of higher education and research is and should be an important determinant of Europe's international attractiveness and competitiveness. Ministers agreed that more attention should be paid to the benefit of a European higher education area with institutions and programmes with different profiles. They called for increased collaboration between the European countries concerning the possible implications and perspectives of transnational education.

Continued follow-up

Ministers committed themselves to continue their cooperation based on the objectives set out in the Bologna Declaration, building on the similarities and benefitting from the differences between cultures, languages and national systems, and drawing on all possibilities of intergovernmental cooperation and the ongoing dialogue with European universities and other higher education institutions and student organisations as well as the Community programmes.

The Holy See's achievement and commitment in this:

Lifelong learning.

The Holy See promotes lifelong learning for the students of Ecclesiastical Faculties. Specific *Curricula* have been approved, that allow graduates to continue to broaden and deepen their skills and knowledge, and to pursue advanced degrees. The

additional qualification is also useful for those who intend to broaden their professional development as well as for those who intend to change their job.

Higher education and students.

According to the Apostolic Constitution "Sapientia Christiana", the Statutes of a Faculty or University should define how the students, either individually or collectively, take part in the university community life in those aspects which can contribute to the common good of the Faculty or University. The Holy See, therefore, already allows for and supports active participation of the students in their education and in those matters that concern them as students.

Attractiveness of Europe as study place.

The Ecclesiastical Faculties in Europe and especially in Rome already attract many students from overseas. In Rome, there are more than 500 students from the Asia-Pacific Region presently studying at one of the Pontifical Athenaea. There are similar numbers from Africa, Latin and Central America and North America. This is due in part to the presence of National Colleges for the training of seminarians in Rome, such as the Philippine College, the Korean College, the North American College, the Brazilian College and many others. Another reason that accounts for many overseas students come to Rome for their studies, is that these students belong to religious orders that operate worldwide, which have a college or study house in Rome or have their headquarters there.

The attractiveness of an academic institution, however, is mostly dependent on the reputation and quality it offers and for which it is known. In the ecclesiastical fields, a number of institutions attract students both from inside Europe as well as from overseas because of their quality, for example, the "Institut Catholique" in Paris, or the Pontifical University of Salamanca. This criterion is closely linked to the assurance and maintenance of high level academic quality of the single institutions.

Continued follow-up

The Holy See is prepared and willing to support the efforts of the "Bologna system" in the continued follow-up that is part of the "system" itself, which it asks to be member of.

Given at the Holy See, 31 May 2003.