



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

**1 November 2008.**

## **PART I**

### **BOLOGNA PROCESS TEMPLATE FOR NATIONAL REPORTS: 2007-2009**

#### **Notes:**

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

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

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

Information from National Reports will form the basis of the Stocktaking Report to be presented to Ministers when they meet in April 2009.

#### **Details**

Country	Holy See
Date	10.12.2008
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Contributors to the report	Bologna Process- Commission;

	Rectors' Conference; Students' Representatives; AVEPRO	QA-Agency:
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### 1. Main developments since London 2007

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

On 19.9.2007 the Holy See founded the Agency "AVEPRO" for quality assurance and promotion of quality at the ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties. It subsequently has started its work with a pilot project in which a sample of Faculties of 4 different European Countries undergo the processes of internal and external evaluation. The Project shall be completed by February 2009.

According to the special needs of German University-legislation in the autumn of 2008 the German Agency "AKAST" has been founded as a national articulation of AVEPRO, and subsequently accredited by the German Akkreditierungsrat.

In collaboration with the Pontifical University S. Tommaso ("Angelicum") in Rome, in 2008 the Congregation for Catholic Education (CEC) has organized a research-project about academic recognition, especially in the areas of Lusophone Africa and eastern Europe.

In late 2008 preparations begun for a mixed working group on recognition in a European and global context together with the diplomatic Service of the Holy See (Secretariate of State) and international experts.

Both of the last two initiatives, mentioned above, (will) contribute to the two working groups in which a representative of the CEC participates. The BFUG-WG on the Global dimension of the Bologna Process, the ENIC/NARIC WG on recognition in a global context. In the second one the representative of the CEC got the task to keep in touch both WGs and to link their work better together.

Less substantial amendments in line with the Bologna Process which do not need an update of the present legislation, are put into practice by Circular letters of which one has been sent to all academic institutions and relevant stakeholders on 20.12.2007. The next one, dealing with the question of diversity and unity in the context of different national applications of the Bologna Process (with a special interest for the studies of Catholic Theology), will be sent out soon.

There had been a number of national and regional meetings with Faculties and HE stakeholders to assure the necessary exchange between Institutions of different national, cultural and legislative settings in Europe, and to promote good practice in different challenges of our days.

On 28.06.2008 a new legislation on HEIs in Catholic "religious sciences" was put into place. The new legislation reorganises the structure of the academic formation of teachers and other more "professional" coworkers in the activities of the Church and therefore creates and regulates a good number of new useful professions for the "labour-market" of the Church. Among the new achievements the twofold (BA/MA) degree-structure has to be mentioned (both give access to professions in the

Church) as well as some QA-measures which help to uphold the same academic standards of similar institutions all over Europe.

## 2. Partnership

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

This work is mainly performed by the Congregation for Catholic Education (CEC) which has at its disposal a commission of international experts for the Bologna Process. In addition to this there is a permanent, direct and close collaboration and consultation with the students' representatives and the President of the Rectors' Conference.

- a) Does your country have a national working group for Bologna follow-up <sup>1</sup>
- Yes  No
- b) Does your national Bologna follow-up group include representatives of
- |                                   |   |                             |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Ministry                          | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rectors' conference               | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Academic staff                    | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Students                          | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Staff trade unions                | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| National Quality Assurance Agency | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Employers                         | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Does your country have a Bologna promoters' group<sup>2</sup>
- Yes  No
- d) Does your national Bologna promoters' group include representatives of
- |                                   |   |                             |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Ministry                          | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rectors' conference               | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Academic staff                    | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Students                          | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Staff trade unions                | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| National Quality Assurance Agency | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Employers                         | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

*Please add any additional comments if necessary:*

to question b)

There is a good collaboration between the Working Group ("Commission of experts") and the students' representatives even if they are not formally part of the Commission. In our system there are no formal "trade unions" and representation of Employers. The respective tasks are fulfilled by representatives of the Academic Staff and the national Bishops' Conferences with which there is an active collaboration.

<sup>1</sup> A group that develops policy proposals for implementing the Bologna Process

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

to question c) and d): this group coincides with the one mentioned in a & b

## DEGREE SYSTEM

### 3. Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle

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

The 3-cycle-structure has for centuries been part of the academic system of the Holy See
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b) Please give the percentage of the total number of all<sup>3</sup> students below doctoral level enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09.

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

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

see a)
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### 4. Stage of implementation of the third cycle

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

Please include:

- the percentage of doctoral candidates following structured doctoral programmes including both taught courses and independent research
- the normal length of full-time doctoral studies
- other elements<sup>5</sup> apart from independent research that are included in doctoral study programmes
- the supervisory and assessment procedures for doctoral studies
- information on whether doctoral studies are included in your country's qualifications framework and linked to learning outcomes
- information on whether interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills are integrated in doctoral studies
- information on whether credit points are used in measuring workload in doctoral studies.
- Information on the status of the doctoral students (students, early stage researchers, both)

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

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

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

The doctorate is legally defined as the "academic degree which enables one to teach in a Faculty". The main requisite for obtaining the doctorate is a doctoral dissertation that makes a real contribution to the progress of science. The dissertation ought to be written under the direction of a teacher, publicly defended and collegially approved; the principal part, at least, must be published.

Within this framework academic institutions are free to organize the third cycle in a certain diversity, while the Congregation for Catholic Education (now also with the help of the "National" Agency AVEPRO) has to approve (accreditate) the curriculum to assure that it will meet the requested standards. There is no exact statistics available about the percentage of doctoral candidates following structured programmes or others which both exist in our system.

The doctorate will be an integral part of our National QF clearly linked to learning outcomes (as it is basically done already in the present legislation).

Interdisciplinary work is part of the definition of most of ecclesiastical study programmes.

ECTS are applied only in a few cases.

Doctoral Candidates are normally seen both as students and as researchers; in some cases they are already part of the teaching staff of a Faculty.

## 5. Relationship between higher education and research

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

Research (as the first goal of Higher Education Institutions according to legislative provision) is a necessary part of the academic activity. On the level of full time professors the percentage of time dedicated to research would usually range around 40-50 %.

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

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

The funding of academic institutions and activity does not belong to the competences of the Congregation for Catholic Education. There is a broad diversity of public (in some national systems as for example in Germany), regional, ecclesiastical or private funding. Given the complexity of the various legal and ecclesiastical contexts there is no exact data about this issue available.

c) Is there any tracking system to follow the further career of doctoral graduates?

Yes

No

If Yes, please specify:

Copies of dissertations must to be sent to the Congregation. If the doctoral candidate's career path is to remain in the academic field (which is very often the case) the CEC follows-up and registers all further full time and stable academic appointments at the minimum.

## 6. Access<sup>6</sup> and admission to the next cycle

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

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<sup>6</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."

## 6.1 Access and admission between the first and second cycles

Please indicate:

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

all main study programmes of the traditional Faculties (in which more than 90 % of student's are enrolled) give access to at least one programme of the second cycle.

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

Recently some Faculties and Institutes connected with them have developed more professionally oriented study programmes which will meet special needs of the local or universal Church and therefore offer the needed qualifications for defined professions. Some of these would not find a corresponding second cycle programme.

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

sit entrance exam Yes  No  In some cases

complete additional courses Yes  No  In some cases

have work experience Yes  No  In some cases

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

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

in most cases further language requirements are requested and the marks of final exams of the first cycle ought to reach a certain level.

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

all students Yes  No

holders of particular first cycle qualifications Yes  No

students of the same field coming from other HEIs Yes  No

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

entrance exam Yes  No  In some cases

additional courses Yes  No  In some cases

work experience Yes  No  In some cases

## **6.2 Access and admission between the second and third cycles**

Please indicate:

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

all main study programmes of the second cycle within traditional Faculties (in which more than 90 % of students are enrolled) give access to a programme of the third cycle.

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

- c) any measures planned to remove obstacles between cycles

## 7. Employability of graduates/ cooperation with employers

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

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

In the system of ecclesiastical studies nearly all academic degrees correspond to well defined professions in the Church or/and society. In the past there was one exception which was the Bachelor in Philosophy which in the new form remains a short cycle (of two years) without an academic degree and which serves in many cases as preparation to enroll in the first cycle of Theology.

Following the new structure some students would complete the Bachelor (3 years) in Philosophy before enrolling in Theology. Most other students who have obtained the Ba in Philosophy would continue with a Master in Phil. or another similar specialisation.

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

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

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

Yes     No     In some cases

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

Yes     No     In some cases

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

In most cases the local Bishop would be both: the future "employer" and the ecclesiastical responsible (including funding) for the academic institution.

## 8. Implementation of national qualifications framework

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

a) Has the national qualifications framework been prepared<sup>7</sup>?

Yes  No

**Comment** As the present legal basis of HE under the authority of the Holy See, (Apostolic Constitution Sapientia christiana, 1979) already includes a framework which corresponds to the purposes of the NQF, with a worldwide scope there was no need for a new definition, but rather for some " updates" in the language and common form agreed about in the Bol. Proc. Therefore, in one sense the NQF of the Holy See already exists. In another sense a translation into "Bologna-terms" and the technical solution of the respective web-site are still to be finalised. The relative work began in 2005 and should be finished in 2009/2010.

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

Yes  No

**Comment**

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

Yes  No

**Comment**

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

Yes  No

**Comment** The work on the NQF (beginning its work 2005-2006) is mainly carried out by a Working Group consisting of a representative from the CEC, the representative of the HEIs ("CRUPR" = Rectors' Conference of the Pontifical Universities and Faculties), the representative of the Students (CSUP = Conference of Students' Representatives of the Pontifical Universities and Faculties). The group was supported by an external expert who was one of the main designers of the NQF of another country. In addition to that (on occasion of the IV Circular Letter; 30.10.2006) all academic institutions have been invited to send in examples of how

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<sup>7</sup> A national framework of qualifications compatible with the overarching framework of qualifications of the EHEA

to formulate the main curricula and specialised programmes based on ECTS and learning outcomes.

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

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

Yes  No

***Comment***

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

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

Yes  No

***Comment*** Consultations will continue till the completion of the steps mentioned above including also the self certification process.

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

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

**Comment**

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

Completed       Started, but not yet completed       Not yet started

**Comment** Some steps of the self-certification process are and will be already integrated into the work schedule of the implementation of the NQF of the Holy See.

i) Has the self-certification report been published?

Yes       No

**Comment**

*Please add any additional comments if necessary:*

**Comment**

## NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EHEA (ESG)<sup>8</sup>

### 9. Reviewing the QA system against the ESG<sup>9</sup> and national support for implementation

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

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

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

This process has been connected with the foundation of the QA Agency of the Holy See, AVEPRO (19.9.2007) and a test-run of its activities in 2008.

The CEC is at the same time at work in preparing a "Handbook" on quality and promotion of quality within the ecclesiastical Faculties while the Agency is about to prepare orientations for internal evaluations. A first draft of such orientations has been sent to all institutions already with the III Circular Letter on the Bologna Process (12.07.2005) in which all institutions had been invited to establish a responsible body for internal evaluation and initiate the relative processes.

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

Stakeholder consultation on changes required to the national QA system?

Yes  No

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

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please give details of these incentives: Together with the Agency AVEPRO the CEC raise external funds (from privates, enterprises, foundations and other organisations) in order to promote the "quality culture" of the HEIs of the Holy See.

- Other measures

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please outline these measures

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

<sup>9</sup> ESG - Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

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

Yes  No

**If Yes,** please give details of how evidence of the impact of the changes was gathered, and of the main outcomes that it demonstrates : The test-run among a wide sample of institutions showed that all of them already had in place the means and mechanisms for internal QA which to a great degree already correspond to the requirements of the ESG. These initiatives have been well received by the respective institutions. On the other hand, they also provided positive feedback from the institutions creating a reserve of "good practice" for the service of others.

## 9.1. Internal quality assurance in higher education institutions

Describe the internal QA systems in place in your HEIs.

With the III Circular Letter on the Bologna Process (12.07.2005) all HE institutions had been invited to establish a responsible body for internal evaluation and initiate the relative processes. The AGENCY AVEPRO together with the CEC (where necessary or asked for) help the single institutions to develop their own procedures. Concrete measures are in most cases the dissemination of good practice and the organisation of a pool of experts.

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

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

All HEIs       Most HEIs       Some HEIs       No HEIs

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

All HEIs       Most HEIs       Some HEIs       No HEIs

Please describe what kind of arrangements are in place

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

All HEIs       Most HEIs       Some HEIs       No HEIs

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

All HEIs       Most HEIs       Some HEIs       No HEIs

Please describe how the above is achieved.

Learning outcomes are published in students'guidebooks, presented to them during the courses and assessed in final written and oral exams as well as other exercises during the year.

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

All HEIs       Most HEIs       Some HEIs       No HEIs

**Additional information if necessary** Almost all our HEIs, located in more than 20 European countries with affiliations also in many countries outside Europe, have websites and students'guidebooks giving clear information.

## 10. Stage of development of external quality assurance system

Describe the external quality assurance system operating in your country.

Please include:

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

The most important step forward regarding external QA was the foundation of the QA Agency of the Holy See, AVEPRO (19.9.2007) and a test-run (pilot project) of its activities in 2008. Peer review group visits have been organized to six faculties in 4 European countries.

The CEC is at the same time at work in preparing a "Handbook" on quality and promotion of quality within the ecclesiastical Faculties while the Agency is about to prepare orientations for internal and external evaluations that will be spread more widely. A first draft of such orientations has been sent to all institutions already with the III. Circular Letter on the Bologna Process (12.07.2005) in which all institutions had been invited to establish a responsible body for internal evaluation and initiate the related processes.

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

Yes  No

If **No**, please specify: it is operating at an international level but referring to the whole academic system of the Holy See (and in that sense it could be called "national").

During the last year and also supported by the test-run of the QA Agency AVEPRO the CEC had to identify a lot of special challenges due to the fact that our HEIs are located in more than 20 different European Countries (with affiliated Institutions in much more countries inside and outside Europe). Most of these countries have quite different QA legislations and systems in place. Even if most of them would state to be in line with the ESG a lot of problems arouse, concerning, for example the diversity between concepts of "quality"; "promotion", "control", "enhancement" or "accreditation"; or different focus (programmes, Institutions, mission-statements; procedures etc.).

Another major challenge arises from the necessary collaboration between two 'national' higher education systems (that of the host country and that of the Holy See): HEIs belong, in certain countries to both of them. In many cases, this collaboration is regulated by contracts of international law (concordats). The experience of recent years shows that it is not always easy to deal with two different ways of applying the common ESG of the Bologna Process in the field of QA. Therefore this situation can be seen as test case for the functioning of the Bologna Process in practice. It can help to avoid illusions about an 'ideal Bologna Process', and offer worthwhile experience on how to settle problems arising at the grass-root level.

In order to make progress in this context the CEC is about to set up a mixed-international working group together with the Secretariat of State and the

Diplomatic Service of the Holy See and a number of international experts to address problems and challenges in that field.

Even if the Agency AVEPRO is one with an international scope of activity, it turned out to be necessary to create regional or national "articulations" or "branches" of AVEPRO which could adapt themselves in their statutes to the local needs and legislations. One first branch/articulation was established and accredited by the competent authority (Akkreditierungsrat) in Germany.

These examples show that obviously neither the ESG nor the EQAR (AVEPRO as associate member of ENQA will apply for being listed in the EQAR) alone can assure full international exchange between the work of QA Agencies in Europe.

c) does your external quality assurance system cover all higher education<sup>10</sup>

Yes  No

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

Regarding the affiliated and other connected institutions the main responsibility of QA remains at the affiliating institutions, while the way they deal with it is an essential part of their own QA exercises.

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

- |                          |   |                             |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| - self-assessment report | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| - external review        | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| - publication of results | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| - follow-up procedures   | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

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

Yes  No

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

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<sup>10</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.

## 11. Level of student participation

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

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

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

## 12. Level of international participation

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

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

The ecclesiastical HEIs form in a certain sense their own worldwide network

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

Internationality is an essential part of all academic activity under the authority of the Holy See; therefore in most cases all single procedures of QA would be carried out by

an internationally composed group. The Agency AVEPRO is itself not bound to one national identity or system.

## RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND STUDY PERIODS

### 13. Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement

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

The Holy See's decision to adopt the Diploma Supplement (DS) was taken in 2004, upon joining the Bologna Process. It is to be issued in both a widely spoken language (in most cases English) and the language of the study programme. With Circular Letter III of 12.07.2005, issuing the DS free of charge at the request of students was made obligatory for all HEIs of the Holy See.

Further circular letters of the Congregation for Catholic Education to all its HEIs serve as a means of follow up for the correct implementation of the DS.

Due to the different countries and situations of the HEIs of the Holy See, exact data about the implementation at the grassroot level is not yet available. With Circular Letter IV (30 October 2006) questionnaires have been sent to all HEIs to get more evidence about the present state of implementation of the diploma supplement to all students free of charge. The responses showed that in most cases the DS is well implemented.

As another good sign in the same direction it can be reported that until now there has not been a single case brought to the CEC (as competent authority) in which a student (or other person) had to complain about an insufficient fulfillment of the respective requirements.

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

- 1st cycle programmes Yes  No
- 2nd cycle programmes Yes  No
- 3rd cycle programmes Yes  No
- remaining "old type" programmes Yes  No  Not applicable
- short higher education programmes Yes  No  Not applicable

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

- issued in a widely spoken European language Yes  No 
  - please specify the language it depends on the country in which Institutions are located (in most cases English).
- issued free of charge  for a fee
- issued automatically  on request
- corresponds to the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format
- a national Diploma Supplement is used that is different from the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format

#### 13.1. Use of Diploma Supplement for recognition of qualifications

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

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

Yes  No

**Comment** In most cases this is even not necessary as all ecclesiastical studies which prepare for ecclesiastical professions are part of the same worldwide and quite homogeneous system.

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

Yes  No

**Comment**

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

Yes  No

**Comment** In most cases this is even not necessary as all ecclesiastical studies which prepare for ecclesiastical professions are part of the same worldwide and quite homogeneous system

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

Yes  No

**Comment** This is not necessary as both ecclesiastical studies and ecclesiastical professions are part of the same quite homogeneous system.

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

Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementary documents<sup>11</sup> of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

a) Does appropriate legislation comply with the Lisbon Convention?

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please demonstrate how it is achieved: The system of ecclesiastical studies is quite specific so that many of the ordinary recognition problems would normally not occur in it. A lot of effort is made by the CEC to study (and further

<sup>11</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)

develop) the concept of "substantial differences" in order to achieve fully fair recognition for holders of other qualifications which could be useful in view of ecclesiastical studies.

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

i) Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please demonstrate how it is achieved:

ii) Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please demonstrate how it is achieved: The policy of the Holy See is now to promote Joint Degrees, even if they go beyond the field of strictly ecclesiastical studies (those are the ones which directly fall under the competence of the CEC). By being open to approving all reasonable proposals in that sense the CEC is at the moment engaged in collecting examples which can serve as models for good practice. A specific academic institution has recently been founded under the authority of the Holy See in Italy, the whole programme of which is necessarily linked to studies completed in other fields and institutions and which operates a lot with Joint degrees and other means of international collaboration.

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

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please demonstrate how it is achieved: Nearly all HE under the authority of the Holy See is TNE. Therefore the CEC tries to follow with a special attention all related initiatives in the Bologna Process.

c) which of the following principles are applied in practice

i) applicants' right to fair assessment

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level This is normally granted by the HEIs themselves. In more difficult cases the help of the ENIC-office of the CEC can be asked for. The system of ecclesiastical studies is quite specific and homogeneous so that many of the ordinary recognition problems would occur quite seldom in it.

ii) recognition if no substantial differences can be proven

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level The system of ecclesiastical studies is quite specific and homogeneous so that many of the ordinary recognition problems would occur quite seldom in it.

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

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level The system of ecclesiastical studies is quite specific and homogeneous so that many of the ordinary recognition problems would occur quite seldom in it.

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

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please describe how it is done in practice Till now the database is publicly available only in printed form. Work is in progress toward setting up a website of the CEC in collaboration with AVEPRO on Higher Education under the authority of the Holy See with a worldwide scope.

v) do you have a fully operational ENIC

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please describe the role of your ENIC in recognition and information provision a) nationally and b) internationally **Generally speaking the ENIC-office of the Holy See is fully operational. What still needs to be done is the final set-up of the web-site mentioned above and to assure more personal and technical resources, which would give the possibility to reorganise the practical work of the Office which - at the present stage - is part of the responsibility of the University Office of the CEC itself.**

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

In order to make progress in the context of recognition (especially in a global context) the CEC is about to set up a mixed-international working group together with the Secretariat of State and the Diplomatic Service of the Holy See and a number of international experts to address problems and challenges in that field and to work out solutions for the problems existing in many bilateral academic relationships. This work should indirectly contribute also to the activities of the

ENIC/NARIC networks in a global context (linking both the activities of BFUG and ENIC/NARIC in the same context). Therefore the Holy See joined (with the same delegate) both WGs of BFUG and ENIC/NARIC. In addition to that some existing (information)-networks of the Holy See (and the Catholic Church as such) could serve also as information resources in a broader context of worldwide HE.

## 15. Stage of implementation of ECTS<sup>12</sup>

Describe the implementation of ECTS in your country.

- a) Please include the percentage of the total number of higher education programmes<sup>13</sup> in which all programme components are linked with ECTS credits

100%       75-99%       50-75%       <50%

A decision to adopt ECTS was taken along with that of becoming a member of the Bologna Process. The system was legally established in 2004 and has gradually been implemented. With Circular Letter III of 2005 (12 July 2005) the adopting of ECTS was made obligatory for all HEIs of the Holy See. Even if legislation is already in place it is more likely that there would be at least one programme which in reality has not yet put into place ECTS that to presume that 100% would have fulfilled their tasks in that sense.

The Holy See is, in nearly every case, a cross-border provider. Therefore, examples of good practice of other national systems have to be taken into account.

Due to the complexity of our HE system and a significant regional autonomy in certain issues of HE Institutions which operate in nearly all European countries under very different conditions, the Congregation for Catholic Education is still working on suitable methods that will provide an overview of relevant statistical data. It would be impossible to list here the different data about the implementation of ECTS in all European countries one by one – and besides this, the different methods of collection would lead to inconsistent overall results.

With Circular Letter IV (30 October 2006) questionnaires were sent to all HEIs requesting reliable information about the present state of implementation of ECTS at the grass-root level. The responses showed that in nearly all cases the use of ECTS has been well implemented.

As another good sign in the same direction it can be reported that until now there has not been a single case brought to the CEC (as competent authority) in which a student (or other person) had to complain about an insufficient fulfillment of the requirements.

- b) Are ECTS credits linked with learning outcomes<sup>14</sup> in your country? Please tick one:

<sup>12</sup> Please refer to definitions in the ECTS User's guide,  
[http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/guide\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/guide_en.html)

<sup>13</sup> Except doctoral studies

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

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

If necessary the Holy See credit system adapts to the various national credit systems.

i) is it compatible with ECTS? Yes  No

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

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

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please explain: disseminating good practice and collecting examples coming from all HEIs. All HEIs are used to sending a copy of their study programmes to the CEC. A great majority of programmes sent to the CEC during the last two years showed a good use of L.O., even if there remains still quite a broad variety in the specific ways (and methodology) of doing so. The full implementation of the NQF of the Holy See (and the corresponding web-site) will offer the necessary landmark for further development.

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

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please explain: As all study programmes which lead to academic degrees under the authority of the Holy See have to be approved by the CEC it is easy to check if the students' workload is correctly taken into consideration and expressed by means of ECTS. In most of the recent cases study programmes did sufficiently correspond to this request from the beginning (and without a necessary intervention from the CEC).

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

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please explain: Workshops have been organized with different HEIs which also dealt with these issues.

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

## LIFELONG LEARNING

### 16. Recognition of prior learning

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

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

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please specify: The academic legislation of the Holy See (Apostolic Constitution Sapientia christiana [1979] foresees the possibility of access to an academic career also on the basis of "exceptional and singular accomplishments" achieved outside institutional HE. The concrete responsibility for assessing PL lies at the HEIs. But in fact the number of students applying for RPL is quite marginal and the development of a clearer perception of learning outcomes and qualifications requested for certain professions in the "labour market" of the Holy See (professions in the Catholic Church) demonstrate quite clearly that only in a very few cases have students already gained these competences outside the academic field. Given to this background there seems to be no need/possibility of a reasonable additional promotion of RPL.

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

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please specify: see above

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

Yes  No

**If Yes**, please specify: see above

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

Comprehensively  Some  A little  None

Please describe the current situation: there are very few students asking for RPL; as for the reasons: see above

## 17. Flexible learning paths

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

On the level of Bishops' Conferences (= regional or national) or of local Churches there are a lot of initiatives in place in order to grant persons who lack the conditions for access to Higher Education the possibility to begin and complete theological studies (also serving as intellectual condition for access to the priesthood). As examples in Europe the Study-House "Lantershofen" of the German Bishops' Conference or the International Seminary "Lopoldinum" in Heiligenkreuz (near Vienna) can serve as examples. The students can begin and complete these studies (in Heiligenkreuz even at an institution with the right to award academic degrees. If these studies (which at the beginning are not considered as real academic ones and do not lead per se to academic degrees) are completed successfully (with very good results) they can also serve to make it possible for the student to continue (under certain conditions) his studies at the level of a second cycle of academic study. Studies below academic level fall into the competence of the local churches. But the general legislations offer the necessary framework to make possible what has been described above.

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

Yes  No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation The possibilities mentioned above will also be mentioned in the new NQF of the Holy See.

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

Yes  No

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation Most of this happens at regional and local level in the specialised institutions mentioned above.

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

Yes  No

Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between the three Bologna cycles see above

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

Yes  No

Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between different Bologna cycle Most of this happens at regional and local level in the specialised institutions mentioned above.

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

Yes  No

Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between different Bologna cycle

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

The number of students enrolled in special programmes of the type mentioned above differ between different nations. In Germany, for example, they are likely to range between 5 and 10 % of the total number of seminary students of Theology.

## JOINT DEGREES

### 18. Establishment and recognition of joint degrees<sup>15</sup>

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

Are joint degrees specifically mentioned in legislation?

Yes  No

Does the legislation fully allow:

i) establishing joint programmes?

Yes  No

If No please explain what are the obstacles see below

ii) awarding joint degrees?

Yes  No

If No please explain what are the obstacles see below

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

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

i) joint degrees

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

ii) joint programmes

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

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

In the first cycle?      None       Little       Widespread

In the second cycle?      None       Little       Widespread

In the third cycle?      None       Little       Widespread

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

All HEIs of the Holy See offer the same academic degrees. In some cases degrees are also awarded as double degrees of two national systems. Some degrees of the Holy See can only be obtained by studying in two or more different places or institutions.

In a majority of European countries the regional legal framework requests from those studying Theology in the first cycle to spend at least one year of study in another country.

Another similar thing would be “affiliations” : these are, in a certain sense, full functioning HEIs which enjoy the right to grant the theological bachelor's degree of other more developed and autonomous HEIs. This praxis, which very often concerns European Faculties which grant their academic degrees through smaller institutions outside Europe, is one of the best ways to establish ecclesiastical HEIs in developing countries. At present there are about 160 affiliated HEIs in Europe, and another 180 outside Europe most of which are affiliated to European HEIs.

During the last two years, in addition to what is already in place, the CEC, with rather good results, tries to encourage HEIs to establish joint initiatives also with other fields of study, not part of the academic system of the Holy See.

e) Estimate the number of joint programmes in your country

see above

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

see above

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

Support mechanisms of that kind are mostly granted at local and regional ecclesiastical level, where a lot is done to make students' mobility possible, as an essential element of HE under the authority of the Holy See as such.

## MOBILITY

### 19. Removing obstacles to student and staff mobility

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

Support mechanisms of that kind are mostly granted at local and regional ecclesiastical level, where a lot is done to make students' mobility possible, as an essential element of HE under the authority of the Holy See as such.

As the Holy See (with the exception of two academic institutions located in the Vatican City State) operates with all his other HEI in other countries, mobility is a very important issue. By Concordates, other treaties and different forms of collaboration (including a substantial work of our diplomatic service), the Holy See tries to assure the possibility that student's from abroad may be able to enroll in programmes outside their own home country. The ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties are worldwide among those with the highest percentage of foreign students; some of them with students from more than 140 nations. The percentage of international students in some of the Faculties would range above 70 %.

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

Yes  No

**Please add** appropriate comments to describe the current situation: In this question the Holy See depends on the collaboration with the host countries in which it operates.(see above).

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

Yes  No

**Please add** appropriate comments to describe the current situation: Support mechanisms of that kind are mostly granted at local and regional ecclesiastical level (a greater part of it also by "private" funds), where a lot is done to make students' mobility possible, as an essential element of HE under the authority of the Holy See as such.

d) Are study periods taken abroad recognised?

Yes  No

**Please add** appropriate comments to describe the current situation: see comment to question 18 d)

e) Is there accommodation for mobile students and staff?

Yes  No

**Please add** appropriate comments to describe the current situation: Support mechanisms of that kind are mostly granted at local and regional ecclesiastical level (a greater part of it also by "private" funds), where a lot is done to make student's mobility possible. With most of our Faculties "colleges" are combined in which students can, not only live, but also develop additional qualifications, skills and competences. In many countries these colleges are much appreciated and in numerous cases also open to students from HEIs not part of the academic system of the Holy See. The tradition of these colleges and student's homes goes back to the time of the first Universities founded by the Catholic Church more than 800 years ago.

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

Yes  No

**Please add** appropriate comments to describe the current situation: As mobility is an essential part of the HE system of the Holy See there are ungoing efforts to keep this possible and - where necessary and reasonable - to enhance it.

## 20. Portability of loans and grants

a) Are portable grants available in your country?

Yes  No

**If No**, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of grants. Support mechanisms of that kind are mostly granted at local and regional ecclesiastical level (a greater part of it also by "private" funds), where a lot is done to make students' mobility possible, as an essential element of HE under the authority of the Holy See as such. The greater part of grants for students is rather bound to the home countries of the students (it is quite easy to get a grant for a student from developing and/or poor countries). A lot of special funds are dedicated to this. The place of study to which the student will be sent, depends on the special qualifications searched for and the final decision of the local Church authority who - in most cases - has the ultimate responsibility for formation and academic careers of students coming from its area.

b) Are portable loans available in your country?

Yes  No

**If No**, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of loans. The normal and more frequent form of students' support (in the system of the Holy See/Catholic Church) are grants. In some regions or local churches there are systems in place due to which those who have completed their academic studies and are working for the Church have to contribute to funds which make studies possible for poorer candidates. These systems can somehow be seen as "loan-systems".

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

### **21. Implementation of strategy**

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

The academic system of the Holy See is itself essentially global. Besides all this there are two major "measures" frequently used which in a special way enhance the global dimension:

a) the creation of privileged academic places with a high "critical mass" of academic activities, different (highly specialised and also research-oriented

Institutions) HEIs and a higher level of quality, students' infra structure etc. These centres attract many international students and also prepare them for the future creation of HEIs and centres outside Europe.

b) Affiliated institutions which belong in most cases to European-based HEIs but operate outside Europe (in the whole world). Such affiliations are also a first institutional step in the process of building up HEIs in other countries of the world.

Many information networks exist in the Church and the persons responsible for ecclesiastical education in all the world will (on a legal and regular basis) every 5 years visit the CEC to discuss the more important issues of education, including in a special way HE.

One greater difficulty in this great variety is to bring the different networks and the great amount of information together, as the central administration (CEC) does not have too many staff resources at its disposal.

**b) What has your country done to:**

i) improve information on the EHEA outside Europe?

see above

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

see above

iii) strengthen cooperation based on partnership in higher education?

see above

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

see above

v) improve recognition of qualifications with other world regions?

see above; also the answers to questions 13-17 and 18 d)

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

Both the staff of the CEC as also that of the Agency AVEPRO are specially trained regarding TNE (for example by participating in related Seminars). This item asks for a special attention on our part as nearly all of our HE can be seen as TNE.

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

i) cross-border provision of your education programmes?

Yes  No

**If Yes** please explain in what ways the guidelines are applied As a basic principle the Holy See considers academic levels and conditions of a host country in which it operates as binding also for its own HEIs. If the general standards, QA measures etc. of the Holy See were to require a higher level, in most cases this also has to be fulfilled by the HEIs.

ii) incoming higher education provision?

Yes  No

**If Yes** please explain in what ways the guidelines are applied This question does not apply to our System and Competence.

## FUTURE CHALLENGES

### 22. Main challenges for higher education

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

The full implementation and self-certification of the NQF

Further development of the QA Agency AVEPRO and its measures and practices to the extent of a fully international operating QA Agency

Bilateral discussions and agreements for ensuring fair recognition of academic degrees of the Holy See in all European Countries and for resolving other problems which are often caused by a different way of implementing the principles of the Bologna Process in different European Countries.

The collaboration in BFUG and ENIC Network especially regarding the global dimension. In that sense the Holy See - as member/participant also of international conventions and initiatives outside Europe - wants to contribute to more effective means of collaboration between different world regions in the context of HE.

The creation of one central HE internet portal (and practically also web site) for academic studies within the Catholic Church, including in a special way those under the direct Competence of the Holy See ("ecclesiastical studies").

The creation of a central HE database for Academic studies within the Catholic Church, including in a special way those under the direct competence of the Holy See ("ecclesiastical studies").

## PART II

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

#### Practical instruction

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

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

#### I. Definition of the Social Dimension in the London Communiqué

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

#### II. AS IS SITUATION (Current state of affairs)

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

Given the complexity of ecclesiastical HEIs (under the authority of the Holy See) which operate in more than 20 European host countries (to which we have to add many other countries inside and outside Europe in which these institutions operate by "affiliations") this and the other questions cannot easily and exactly be answered, nor even applied to our system. Many questions of the so called "social dimension" concern "country-related" issues.

In some countries ecclesiastical HEIs are part of the national system, in other countries they are supported by society, in others they operate like foreign providers with or without civil recognition of the degrees awarded by them.

Due to the fact that both the host countries as also the HEIs are very different, complete and comparable data about the situation of all students enrolled in ecclesiastical HEIs is not (yet) available.

On the other hand there is a long and fruitful tradition in the Church dealing with the "social question" and providing at all levels means of support for those in special needs and the disadvantaged ones. Also in this regard (and comparing how many means are dedicated to this field of activities) the Catholic Church and also the Holy See within the limits of its competence and possibilities are among the greater "global players" of the world.

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

see above

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

Support mechanisms of all kinds are mostly granted to students at local and regional ecclesiastical level (a greater part of it also by "private" funds), where a lot is done to make it possible for students to begin and successfully complete their studies. The greater part of grants for students is related to their needs and especially oriented towards regions and countries, where there are major difficulties for students to enroll in HE (in our System it is quite easy to get a grant for a student from developing and/or poor countries, with more students from families which cannot afford to pay for the formation of their children). A lot of special funds are dedicated to this.

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

By setting up a more complete data-base with a European or even worldwide scope the CEC hopes also to get more reliable data on the social situations of students even if a lot of the corresponding questions would fall under the competence, authority and legislation of the host countries in which the HEIs of the Holy See operate. See also the answer to q. II.1

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

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

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

By setting up a more complete data-base with a European or even worldwide scope the CEC hopes also to get more reliable data on the social situations of students even if a lot of the corresponding questions would fall under the competence, authority and legislation of the host -countries in which the HEIs of the Holy See operate. See also the answer to q. II.1

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

see the answer to q. II.1 and 3

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

see the answer to q. 3

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

see the answer to q. 3

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

By setting up a more complete data-base with a European or even worldwide scope the CEC hopes also to get more reliable data on the social situations of students even if a lot of the corresponding questions would fall under the competence, authority and legislation of the host countries in which the HEIs of the Holy See operate. See also the answer to q. II.1

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

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

By setting up a more complete data-base with a European or even worldwide scope the CEC hopes also to get more reliable data on the social situations of students even if a lot of the corresponding questions would fall under the competence, authority and legislation of the host countries in which the HEIs of the Holy See operate. See also the answer to q. II.1

## **ANNEX A**

### **Actions mentioned by the Bologna countries in the 2007 national reports**

#### **Financial**

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

#### **Structural**

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

#### **Certain groups**

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

#### **Policy and practice**

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

## **ANNEX B**

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

Measures to promote equal opportunities for access, participation and completion

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

Measures to widen access to and participation in higher education

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

Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience

A, Provision of academic services

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

B, Provision of social services

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

Student participation in the governance and organisation of higher education

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

Finances in order to start and complete studies

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

## **ANNEX C**

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

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

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

- Measures to promote equal opportunities

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

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

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

- Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience

A, Provision of academic services

B, Provision of social services

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

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

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

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

- Finances in order to start and complete studies

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

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

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

- Stakeholder involvement

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