

**BOLOGNA PROCESS
NATIONAL REPORTS: 2005-2007**

A. Background information on your Higher Education system

Details

Country	Italy
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Main achievements since Bergen

<p>1. Describe the important developments relating to the Bologna Process, including legislative reforms, since Bergen.</p>
<p>Italy had first applied the principles of the Bologna Declaration in its 1999 university reform. Since Bergen, the main developments consist in efforts to simplify the transition from the 1st to the 2nd cycle as per the Ministerial Decree 270 of 22nd October 2004. The mentioned decree includes a few minor amendments to the 1999 reform with reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - names of degrees and corresponding academic titles; - procedures for the setting up of degree programmes and their actual starting at individual universities (a ministerial decree is required in each case, along with a favourable report of the evaluation unit of the university concerned); - specific criteria for admission to LM programmes (2nd cycle, master-level courses); - number of credits obligatory for certain degrees; - procedures to define or modify the groups of degree programmes having the same legal validity (<i>classi dei corsi di studio</i>); - subject matters to be regulated by individual institutions in their own university teaching regulations (<i>Regolamenti didattici di ateneo</i>). <p>A few more legal provisions deserve mentioning in relation to some important topics of the Bologna Process:</p> <p>Ministerial Decree 17th November 2005 [3-year plan for the development of the university system (2004-06)] allocates new funds to promote:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the internationalisation of the university system; - the relationship between universities and industries; - teachers' education and training at all levels; - advanced specialisation courses for training to the legal professions; - the network of institutions for advanced high quality education which is being developed by Italian universities in cooperation with higher scientific institutes, public and private entities, Italian and foreign undertakings; - new research doctorate schools within the framework of the agreements signed by the Ministry and the HEIs of a few interuniversity consortia. <p>Resources to finance the above 2006 activities are allocated on the basis of the quality</p>

evaluation provided by the Cnvsu, the Italian QA agency.

Ministerial Decree (MIUR) of 1st August 2005 (http://www.miur.it/0006Menu_C/0012Docume/0015Atti_M/5532Riasse_cf2.htm), which determines the national typologies of university specialisation schools in the health sector, and provides the main rules for their reorganisation; the related postgraduate courses must be restructured in credits (Art. 2); at the end of each programme postgraduates are awarded the related degree (*Diploma di Specializzazione in...*) along with the Diploma Supplement (Art. 5, paragraph 1).

Ministerial Decree (MIUR) of 29th March 2006 (http://www.miur.it/0006Menu_C/0012Docume/0015Atti_M/5532Riasse_cf2.htm), which defines the minimum standards obligatory for the accreditation of university specialisation schools as well as the specific requirements for individual clinical and medical specialties.

Law No. 230 of 4th November 2005 (<http://www.normeinrete.it/cgi-bin/StampaFrameURN?URL=http://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/05230l.htm>); it dictates new regulations on university teachers' recruitment by introducing the obligation for both full and associate professors to achieve the so-called "national scientific suitability"; it also introduces a new professional category, the so-called "contract researchers", who are to gradually replace researchers by no time-limit appointments.

Ministerial Decree of 23rd November 2005, which further defines the equivalences of the old 2nd cycle degrees (Lauree-DL) to the *Lauree specialistiche/magistrali* (LS/LM), the new master-level degrees according to the Bologna Process.

Ministerial Decrees of 25th November and of 21st December 2005, which define the features of the 5-year Master course in law (*Corso di Laurea magistrale in giurisprudenza*), newly designed and established as minimum academic requirement for admission to some legal professions (e.g. lawyers, magistrates).

National organisation

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

Please include:

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

The latest political elections (Spring 2006) resulted in a centre-left majority which started the 15th legislature of the Republic. The newly appointed government decided to split the former MIUR (Ministry of Education, University and Research) into two separate entities with quite distinct structures, functional offices and responsibilities (Decree of the President of the Ministers' Council of 14th July 2006; see:

<http://www.normeinrete.it/cgi-bin/StampaFrameURN?URL=http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/guri/attocompleto%3FdataGazzetta=2006-09-05%A7redazione=06A08197%A7service=0%A7ConNote=2>):

-MPI (Ministry of Education), in charge with primary and secondary education, as well as

with all categories of school teachers;

-MiUR (Ministry of University and Research) responsible for two main H.Ed. sectors, university and AFAM (higher education in visual and applied arts, dance, drama, music), through two specific Directorates General; MiUR is also responsible for advanced research.

The main agencies and advisory bodies to MiUR are CRUI (Conference of Italian University Rectors), CUN (National University Council) and CNSU (National Council of University Students) (see National Report of 2005).

As far as CUN is concerned, a recent legislative act has restructured its composition and redefined its competences (Law No. 18 of 16 January 2006; see:

<http://www.normeinrete.it/cgi-bin/StampaFrameURN?URL=http://gazzettaufficiale.it/guri/attoCompleto%3FdataGazzetta=2006-01-26%A7redazione=006G0008%A7service=0%A7ConNote=2>); e.g.:

- the number of student representatives has been raised from 5 to 8;

- in addition to its traditional consultation tasks in matters of university development planning, funding issues, approval of university teaching regulations, definition of teaching subject sectors, recruitment of teaching and research staff, CUN has to carry out disciplinary actions concerning university teachers and researchers through a new body, the Disciplinary Council (Collegio di disciplina), consisting of 5 Counsellors elected by CUN out of its own members.

HEIS supervision

Universities are overseen by MiUR's Directorate General for University Education, whereas AFAM institutions are overseen by MiUR's Directorate General for AFAM (Higher Education in visual and applied arts, dance, drama and music, recently upgraded to university-level by the implementation of the Bologna Declaration principles and criteria).

Funds allocation to HEIs

Italian HEIs are financed from a national fund called FFO (fund for ordinary financing). Each institution yearly receives a fixed amount, which is determined on the basis of objective data like the number of enrolled students, as well as a variable amount, increasing over the years, which is determined by taking into account quality indicators.

Areas for which HEIs are autonomous and self governing.

Since 1989 (see Art. 6 "University Autonomy" of Law n_ 168 of 9th May 1989, Art. 6; http://www.normeinrete.it/cgi-bin/StampaFrameURN?URL=http://www.miur.it/0006Menu_C/0012Docume/0098Normat/1668Istitu.htm), institutional autonomy has been increased considerably; at present all HEIs enjoy autonomy in the following fields:

1. definition of statutes (institutional regulations and internal governance);
2. drawing up of budget and funds allocation;
3. management;
4. teaching regulations (design and organisation of degree courses);
5. research (definition of topics, priorities, etc.);
6. teachers' recruitment.

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

Please include:

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

regulations.

At present (October 2006) the Italian H. Ed. System includes **94 universities, 131 AFAM institutions, 25 higher schools for language mediators (SSMLs)**.

Afam institutions consist of fine arts academies, the national dance academy, the national drama academy, higher schools of design, music conservatories, recognised musical institutes. The H.Ed. system is divided into two main sectors, the university and the non-university. The non-university sector covers higher education in the arts, dance, music, in language mediation (interpreting and translating), as well as higher technical education and training (IFTS programmes); the mentioned typologies of non-university HEIs have been upgraded at university level by the implementation of the Bologna reform.

In the academic year 2006-07, the numbers of students enrolled at Italian HEIs are as follows:

- **1,977,610** at universities;
- **70,509** at Afam institutions.

Universities, Afam institutions, SSMLs and IFTS are covered by different legal provisions, each of them specific for the institutional typology concerned, even if they may share some common features.

Partnership

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

Please include:

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

Overseeing the implementation of the Bologna Process is a task shared by various authorities and structures, both at ministerial and institutional level.

National level:

- The Minister of University and Research has delegated one of his Under-Secretaries to that task; at present the Minister's delegate is Prof. Luciano Modica, former CRUI President (CRUI is the Conference of Italian University Rectors);
- within the Ministry of University and Research, three Directorates General are entrusted with specific responsibilities for international relations and the Bologna Process: the Directorate General for University, Directorate General for Afam, Directorate General for Student Welfare Services.

Local level:

- HEIs have each appointed a Bologna referee; they build up a national network coordinated by Crui (see their website at <http://www.crui.it/Internazionalizzazione/link/?ID=2163>).
- The national group of Bologna Promoters has been created; it is made up of 14 members, including representatives of both the university and the Afam sector of higher education (<http://www.processodibologna.it>).

Students participation in the Bologna Process is granted by Cnsu (<http://www.miur.it/cnsu>), as well as by their two representatives within the national group of Bologna referees.

As to other stakeholders (trade unions staff, businesses, social partners), their consultation has been made compulsory with reference to such matters as the definition of new degree courses and qualifications established in the framework of the Bologna Process (see Art. 11, paragraph 4, of Ministerial Decree No270 of 22nd October 2004 http://www.miur.it/0006Menu_C/0012Docume/0098Normat/4640Modifi_cf2.htm). As to social partners, they must be consulted by universities for any relevant decision in relation to

the Bologna process; e.g. they have participated in the national consultations on the Diploma Supplement and the NQF.

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

Please include:

- precise references (preferably with web links) to any legislation (or equivalent) in place to ensure students and staff are represented on HEI governing bodies
- the role of students in the governance of HEIs
- the role of staff trade union/representative bodies in the governance of HEIs.

The participation in the governance of HEIs of all H.Ed. stakeholders (students, teachers, administrative staff, trade unions representatives, etc.) is made compulsory by law; related legal provisions are included in the statutes of individual universities. The database of all university statutes and teaching regulations is available online at page <<http://www.fondazionecruai.it/rda/startup/rda.htm>>.

Students contribute to university governance at national as well as at local level:

- their national representative body is CNSU, the National Council of university students (<http://www.miur.it/cnsu>);
- students are also members of CUN (National University Council): in conformity to art. 2 of Ministerial Decree 278/1997 dictating the rules for Cun's elections, the student component -elected by Cnsu- must amount to 8 persons out of 14;
- at local level, student percentage within university Management Boards (CDA) of individual universities is fixed at 15% (see art. 6 of Law No. 236 of 21st June 1995 at http://www.normeinrete.it/cgibin/StampaFrameURN?URL=http://www.italgiure.giustizi a.it/nir/1995/lexs_150036.html); students are also members of all Faculty Councils, and of the Councils of single degree courses; eventually, they are represented in the administrative bodies in charge with the provision and management of university welfare services (see Art. 6, paragraph 3, and Art. 13, paragraph 1, of Law No. 390 of 2nd December 1991, at http://www.normeinrete.it/cgibin/StampaFrameURN?URL=http://www.italgiure.giustizi a.it/nir/1991/lexs_132651.html). Student representatives within the administrative bodies of single universities are elected by all the students of the institution concerned.

The statutes and teaching regulations of all universities provide for the involvement of outside trade unions staff in university governance (see database of university statutes and teaching regulations at <<http://www.fondazionecruai.it/rda/startup/rda.htm>>). Different operational models have been adopted; the most common ones may foresee the participation of the representatives of outside stakeholders in the meetings of university management boards (CDAs), or the setting up of a social advisory council (*Consulta di forze sociali*), or the creation of a university foundation including external members (*Fondazione universitaria a partecipazione esterna*).

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

Within the Bologna Process, a framework agreement was signed by the Ministry of University and Research, Cruai and *Confindustria* (the major association of Italian industrialists), on the basis of which a working group was established to debate and take decisions on the main topics related to the reform of Italian higher education in conformity

to the Bologna Declaration.

A formal compulsory cooperation of business and social partners is provided for in the national law (see both decrees implementing the Bologna reform). It concerns the following items:

- design of curricula of all 1st and 2nd cycle degree courses;
- implementation of the Diploma Supplement; since DS is part of the Europass, the cooperation with social partners covers all the transparency tools included in Europass;
- the drawing up of a NQF in view of the EQF;
- LLL promotion; e.g. LLL programmes are co-financed by universities and social partners which operate in close cooperation (e.g. they make co-decisions in matters of funds allocation and management).

B. Main stocktaking questions, including scorecard elements

Degree system

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle

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

Please include:

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

By now the degree courses of the old Italian H.Ed. system have been phased out, while the implementation of the 1st and 2nd cycle has been completed; therefore all degree courses of 1st and 2nd cycle currently available at Italian HEIs are designed in conformity to the Bologna reform.

As a consequence, in 2006-07 the **98.5% of students** enrolled (matriculated) in the two cycle degree system (below doctoral level) are attending Bologna-modelled programmes.

(Eurydice)

Stage of implementation of the third cycle

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

Please include:

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

integrated in doctoral studies

- are credit points used in measuring workload in doctoral studies?

By tradition, in Italy doctoral studies (*Dottorato di Ricerca-DR*) are all structured; their essential features are the following: admission by selective public competition; allocation of a scholarship to the competitions winners; defence of the dissertation in the final doctoral examination.

Special typologies of structured DR are the so-called doctorates “*en co-tutèle*”, i.e. doctoral studies carried out under the joint supervision of the competent authorities of two different countries. Such doctorates are set up on the basis of formal bilateral agreements between Italy and another country, or on the direct initiative of the Italian universities concerned. So far Italy has signed ministerial *co-tutèle* agreements with France, Germany, Spain and Switzerland. Doctorates *en co-tutèle* are co-financed by the Italian Ministry of University and Research (MiUR). Another increasing phenomenon is the setting up of “European” and “International” doctoral programmes, which too are co-financed by MiUR, provided they meet some indispensable requirements as a guarantee of their European or international dimension.

As a consequence of what above, **100%** of 3rd cycle students engaged in doctoral studies are attending structured programmes.

Normally, DR programmes take 3 years (after a previous university education of 300 Ects over 5 years ending with a 2nd cycle degree); doctoral programmes in some medical fields take 4 years.

Some DR characteristics vary depending on the subject sector; for instance, as concern the programme structure, taught courses and seminars are included in doctoral programmes relating to history, humanities, languages and literature, social sciences, etc., whereas DR studies in scientific fields (biology, chemistry, mathematics, physics, etc.) mainly consist in independent research. However, when taught courses and seminars are included in the programme structure, they are present in the 1st study year, while the 2nd and 3rd year of the doctoral programme are essentially devoted to the research thesis development.

As to the assessment of students’ performance, all doctoral courses include two main evaluation phases: an initial one, consisting in the selective competition for admission to the study programme, and a final one on the occasion of the defence of the dissertation. In addition to initial and final assessment, there is a formal evaluation at the end of each study year to grant transition to the next; doctoral students whose performance is found unsatisfactory are asked to withdraw from the programme. Supervision of individual doctoral programmes is carried out by specific teachers’ councils (*Collegio docenti del corso di DR*), as well as by a single supervisor, a teacher, for each doctoral student (*docente supervisore*).

It has been decided that doctoral studies will be included in level 8 of the IQF (Italian Qualification Framework), and that they will be linked to learning outcomes. Actually, the IQF prototype developed in Italy in 2006 mentions DR studies -along with learning outcomes- in its level 8.

In Italy, interdisciplinarity in doctoral studies is being promoted by the development of “DR Schools” (*Scuole di Dottorato di Ricerca*), which are university structures where teachers and doctoral students of different faculties carry out interdisciplinary research in a variety of fields; DR schools are a recent phenomenon incentivized by the Ministry of University and Research by means of funds allocation.

The national law does not make it compulsory to use credit points when designing doctoral programmes; the matter is left to the autonomous decision of individual HEIs. So far a

limited number of doctoral programmes has adopted credit points to measure students' workload in doctoral studies.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Access¹ to the next cycle

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

Please include:

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

The Italian H. Ed. system is made up of two main sectors, university and AFAM (system of higher education in visual and applied arts, dance, drama and music).

With reference to both the H. Ed. sectors mentioned above, 100% of 1st cycle qualifications give access to 2nd cycle studies.

No 1st cycle qualification gives access to 3rd cycle programmes.

No 1st cycle qualification gives access to both the second and third cycles.

100% of the 2nd cycle qualifications named LS/LM (*Laurea Specialistica/Magistrale*) give access to the 3rd cycle, whereas the 2nd cycle intermediate university qualifications called MU1 (*Master Universitario di primo livello*) do not allow transition to 3rd cycle studies.

Both the 1st cycles of the university and of the AFAM sectors offer just one degree typology, the L (3-year *Laurea*) and the DA1 (*Diploma Accademico di primo livello*), respectively; they all (L and DA1 in any subject fields) give access to the 2nd cycle.

All the 2nd cycle intermediate university qualifications called MU1 do not give access to the 3rd cycle.

No bridging courses are required to transfer between cycles in the same subject area.

One of the main purposes of the DM 270/2004 which partly amended the 1999 university reform was to remove any obstacles to the transfer from the first to the second cycle. In fact, in the previous reform law (DM 509/1999) the LS (2nd cycle degree) was described as requiring 300 Ects all together (including the 180 of the first degree), therefore universities had to design each LS course taking into account subjects and credits allocation in a related

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

Laurea (1st degree); as a further consequence, when *Laurea* graduates applied for access to LS programmes, universities had to evaluate their individual curricula in all details to check if they had the indispensable education needed to enter the LS course of their choice; in the negative, the access was denied. The DM 270/2004 removed such an obstacle by stating that the LS/LM consists of 120 credits in itself, which allow universities to carry out a global evaluation of 1st degrees towards access to the 2nd cycle.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Implementation of national qualifications framework

10. Describe the stage of implementation of the national qualifications framework to align with the overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA².

Please include:

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

In the years 2001-05, that is in the first implementation period of the latest H.Ed. reforms inspired by the Bologna Declaration, in Italy the need for a national classification of qualifications and for a clear set of definitions became an important issue in all stakeholders' discussions. As a result of coordinated consultations, in 2001-02 a national database was created providing information on all the official 1st and 2nd cycle degree courses approved by the competent Ministry and accredited by the Italian QA agency. Individual degree programmes in the database were described by universities according to a standard grid consisting of such 14 items as name of the degree group of reference (*classe*), name of the university faculty concerned, name of the specific degree course, number of available places, specific course objectives, preliminary knowledge required for access, additional admission conditions, curriculum (subject fields and credit allocation), type of final examination, university structures and services available to students, occupational openings.

On the initiative of MIUR, a national consultation took place in Autumn 2005 to discuss some relevant matters with a view of producing the Italian H.Ed. QF; among the topics that were long debated it deserves mentioning learning outcomes and adequate descriptors, key competences, guidance and counselling, validation of non-formal/informal learning, etc. The decision was made to draw up a prototype (first semester of 2006) for further discussion at national level (second semester of 2006). The electronic prototype of the Italian qualifications framework (IQF) has the following main characteristics:

- a) it concerns Italian university and non-university higher education;
- b) it includes both the old and the new qualifications (before and after the 1999 reform

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

modelled on the Bologna Declaration pattern);

c) with reference to the new degrees:

- in the prototype a link has been created to the ministerial database recording all the 1st and 2nd cycle accredited degree courses currently in offer at Italian universities (3,300 Bachelor programmes, and 2,700 Master courses);
- in the mentioned database individual degree courses are still described on the basis of the 14-item grid, but MIUR has recently decided:
 - to revise the grid by replacing the item “specific course objectives” with “learning outcomes”;
 - to ask universities for the description of the expected learning outcomes of single degree programmes by using a common set of descriptors, taking into account the ongoing international debate on NQFs and the overarching Qualifications Framework of the EHEA.

A national Committee has been appointed with the specific task of having the IQF worked out and implemented.

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

Please include where possible:

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

The *Laurea-L* (180 Ects over 3 years) is the Italian first degree established in conformity to the university reform after the Bologna Declaration model; therefore it is the new bachelor qualification of the Italian university system; the corresponding degree courses started in the a.y. 2001-02.

DM 509/1999 and DM 270/2004 make provisions to increase the employability of graduates holding a 3-year L; in fact Art. 11, paragraph 4 of both the quoted decrees states that, when drawing up their own university regulations including those on the establishment of a new degree course, single universities must previously consult the representatives of all stakeholders, like businesses, social services, professional organisations, trade unions, etc.; such a consultation must concern not only current educational needs but also real occupational opportunities.

In addition to what above, the following measures have been taken:

- 1 a period of practical training aiming at facilitating employment has been made a compulsory requirement of all L degree courses;
- 2 individual universities have set up guidance and placement services for their graduates;
- 3 the rules for participation in public competitions giving access to the civil service have included the 3-year *Lauree* as the new 1st cycle university degrees.

According to a survey on the employment rate of 3-year *Laurea* holders who graduated in 2004 (see www.almalaurea.it/universita/occupazione/occupazione04), the situation in 2005-06 is the following:

- the 54% of L-graduates were employed;
 - the 54% of L-graduates decided to pursue further university studies by enrolling in second cycle degree courses;
- please note: both the above percentages include a 18% of graduates who chose to carry on further studies and work simultaneously);

- it is expected that in 2006-07 the rate of L-graduates employed soon after graduation should further increase due to the fact that the labour market -both in its public and private sectors- has given evidence of accepting the new first degrees.

Quality assurance

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

National implementation of the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA³

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

Please include:

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

Up to 2006 Italy has developed a QA system made up of two separate sections, one concerned with H.Ed. teaching and research at HEIs, the other specific for research, under the responsibility of Cnvsu and Civr respectively. The Italian QA system is in line with the “Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA” in the following main features:

Internal QA

Approval, monitoring and review of degree courses and awards

According to the national legislation, HEIs have to comply with a formal procedure for the approval of their degree courses and qualifications; they have also to monitor their courses so as to grant the periodical review of the regulations of individual degree programmes, especially with reference to the allocation of credits to single subjects and/or other educational activities (decrees 509/1999 and 270/2004, Art.s 11, 12); students’ representatives participate in approval and monitoring procedures.

In the framework of the “CampusOne Project” launched by Crui, a methodological model for the evaluation of degree courses has been worked out; such a model, which may be adopted by universities on a voluntary basis, includes both internal and external evaluations, and aims at promoting the diffusion of QA in the whole H.Ed. system.

QA policy, procedures, initiatives

Evaluation units (*Nuclei di Valutazione*-NVs) are responsible for internal evaluation at individual HEIs. First established in 1993 with the purpose to evaluate institutional efficiency, NVs have considerably developed: thanks to their active cooperation with Cnvsu and Crui, they are now committing themselves in building up in the respective universities a QA culture that may affect all university operations.

With the support of Crui, most NVs have strengthened their reciprocal cooperation so as to exchange knowledge, expertise, and good practices in QA.

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

To meet the requirements of the ministerial technological initiative called “*Anagrafe Studenti*”, all HEIs are collecting relevant objective information which proves useful for the effective management of their degree courses and related operations.

QA of teaching staff

The evaluation of teaching staff is one of the task of NVs at single HEIs. Students are involved in the evaluation of teaching activities, and NVs have to transmit to Cnvsu both students’ evaluation reports and their own.

Both national and local measures have been taken to enhance QA of university teachers; e.g.: some universities have set up a body charged with the continuous evaluation of all teaching activities (permanent council on teaching evaluation = *Osservatorio Permanente della Didattica*); the already mentioned “CampusOne Project”, launched by Crui, also aims at improving teaching quality across the system; therefore it includes provisions for achieving such a purpose.

Assessment of students

Criteria for students’ assessment are normally included in the teaching regulations of individual universities and/or degree courses, available online (enter single websites through the national database at <http://cercauniversita.cineca.it>).

Public information

All HEIs provide objective updated information on their degree courses on the respective websites (enter websites of single HEIs through the national database at <http://cercauniversita.cineca.it>, and then go to the item “*didattica*” or “*offerta didattica*”).

HEIs make available online also their statutes, institutional regulations, student services, available scholarships and grants, etc.

External QA

QA National Agencies

Both national agencies for QA (Cnvsu and Civr) are responsible for defining the general criteria of their respective external evaluation operations, for fostering experimentation and the diffusion of evaluation methodologies, carrying out a yearly plan of external evaluation activities, drawing up an annual report on their assessment of the respective systems (higher education, research).

Cnvsu also determines the criteria and methods for the harmonisation of self-evaluation procedures carried out by NVs at single HEIs.

Approval, monitoring, and accreditation of degree courses and awards

Degree programmes, first approved by the relevant authorities of individual HEIs, must also be approved by the Ministry (see decrees 509/1999 and 270/2004, Art.s 3-10), as well as accredited by Cnvsu.

The ministerial project known as “*Anagrafe Studenti*” is meant to harmonise the technological information systems of individual HEIs and to provide a complete set of updated data useful for such purposes as regular analysis and review of teaching and management operations.

Recognition and accreditation of e-learning HEIs and programmes

All e-learning programmes at State universities must be recognised by MiUR and accredited by Cnvsu.

All non-State telematic universities must go through the procedures of legal institutional recognition at the care of MiUR and their degree programmes must be accredited by Cnvsu.

Institutional recognition and course accreditation are reviewed at intervals of 3 to 5 years.

QA of teaching staff

New national rules have been approved in 2006 in view of further enhancing quality in teaching: with reference to university teachers’ recruitment, they dictate the obligation for them to achieve the so-called “national scientific suitability” (see Legislative Decree

164/2006 at <http://www.normeinrete.it/cgi-bin/StampaFrameURN?URL=http://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/deleghe/testi/06164dl.htm>)

Public information

Two national databases recording detailed information on all 1st and 2nd cycle degree programmes currently in offer at Italian HEIs have been made available online, at page <http://offf.miur.it> (university sector), and at page <http://afam.miur.it/studentistranieri/> (education in the arts, dance, design, drama and music).

Cnvsu and Civr make their activities known to all stakeholders by regularly updating the lists of their projects, activities, evaluation reports, etc., on their websites (www.cnvsu.it and www.civr.it respectively). Their annual reports on the evaluation of the H.Ed. system and of national research are officially presented to stakeholders and the public at large in two national meetings, and are available online as well. Both reports cover the description of evaluation criteria, objectives, procedures, outcomes.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of development of external quality assurance system

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

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of your external quality assurance system
- the scope of your external quality assurance system: does it operate at a national level; does it cover all higher education⁴
- which of the following elements are included in your external quality assurance system:
 - internal assessment
 - external review
 - publication of results
- whether procedures have been established for the peer review of the national agency(ies) according to the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA.

As already mentioned, Italy has two separate QA sections: the first is focused on the evaluation of H.Ed. teaching and management (it only partially deals with the quality of research within HEIs), whereas the second deals exclusively with research, both at universities and public and private research bodies. So far the responsibility for the respective evaluation activities has been entrusted with two different national agencies, CNVSU (National Committee for the evaluation of the university system) and CIVR (National Committee for the evaluation of research).

A) Assessment of quality in teaching and all HEIs' operations

Since 1993, an evaluation unit (*Nucleo di Valutazione-NV*) has been set up within each institution with the task of checking the efficiency of internal teaching activities in relation to public funds management (see Art. 5, paragraph 22, of Law No. 537 of 24th December 1993, at

<http://www.normeinrete.it/cgibin/StampaFrameURN?URL=http://www.italgiure.giustizia.it/>

⁴ 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.

[nir/1993/lexs_141993.html](http://www.normeinrete.it/cgibin/StampaFrameURN?URL=http://www.itagiure.giustizia.it/nir/1993/lexs_141993.html). All NVs have to draw up an annual report to be sent to MIUR, Cun, Crui, and Ovsu for further evaluation actions to be carried out at national level.

The national evaluation of the whole H.Ed. system is carried out on a regular basis by CNVSU (National Committee for the evaluation of the university system). The National Committee, established by Law No. 370 of 19th October 1999 (http://www.normeinrete.it/cgibin/StampaFrameURN?URL=http://www.itagiure.giustizia.it/nir/1999/lexs_177727.html), replaced the previous OVSU (national university evaluation council); as from 1st January 1999, its budget was increased of LIT 2 billions. Cnvsu consists of 9 members -international experts included- highly qualified and well experienced in evaluation; they must be selected out of various disciplinary and methodological sectors which may also belong to non-academic contexts; they are appointed by decree of the Minister of University and Research, subject to the previous approval of the relevant parliamentary committees.

Cnvsu's chief purposes are to assess the efficiency and efficacy of the Italian H.Ed. system - both the university and the Afam sector-, and verify the development plans and the re-balancing of the H.Ed. system. Since its establishment, the national agency for QA has accomplished all the tasks previously assigned to Ovsu, e.g. drawing up of an annual report on the 3-year development plan of the university system, as well as of a formal assessment of the plan itself; presentation of technical proposals for the definition of the criteria to be adopted when allocating the re-balancing quota of State funds for the current expenditures of universities, etc. With reference to **2005-06**, Cnvsu has:

- a. provided the guidelines for the evaluation of all typologies of HEIs and all their activities - including teaching and related services-, after previous consultation with Crui, Cun and Cnsu;
- b. defined the type of information and data that the NVs of individual universities must communicate to the Committee itself in their annual reports;
- c. elaborated and carried out -on the basis of the NV reports from individual universities and of information from other sources- an annual plan of external evaluation of single universities or specific teaching structures like faculties; such evaluation visits focus on the quality of university teaching in relation to the Council recommendation on cooperation in QA in higher education and to ENQA's standards and guidelines for QA in the EHEA;
- d. provided the Ministry with the necessary support to promote the diffusion of an evaluation and self-evaluation culture;
- e. promoted experimentation, application, and diffusion of evaluation methodologies and good practices;
- f. carried out, on the Minister's request, additional tasks in terms of consultation, evaluation, definition of standards, guidelines, technical rules, etc., also with reference to specific university operations or to projects and proposals submitted by the universities themselves;
- g. drawn up the usual annual report on its own evaluation activities;
- h. drawn up and made public the annual report on the evaluation of the Italian H.Ed. system.

B) Assessment of quality in research

The national research system was reorganised in 1998, and a specific QA agency was created to grant its constant evaluation (Legislative Decree No. 204 of 5th June 1998, available online at <http://www.civr.it/ecivr/laws/normativadlgs204.asp>). The national law stated that:

- a) the 3-year PNR (national research plan), to be approved and updated yearly, had to take into account the European and international dimension of research, as well as initiatives of regional research entities; it has to define both the general objectives of research activities and the modalities to carry them out; public administrations, including universities and

other research bodies, shall contribute to the financing of the planned research actions within the limits of their institutional autonomy and planning;

- b) as from 1st January 1999, a “special fund” had to be made available to contribute to specific research projects mentioned in the PNR as initiatives of strategic importance for the achievement of the general objectives; the special fund was to be included in the budget of the Ministry of Treasure in addition to the ordinary resources allocated to research;
- c) the outcomes of all research activities were to be subject to evaluation according to general criteria worked out by a national committee (CIVR) that would take into account the specific characteristics and methodologies of the different subject areas.

CIVR (national committee for the evaluation of research), is made up of 7 members, including international experts, highly qualified and well experienced; they must be selected out of various disciplinary and methodological sectors. Civr’s chief purpose consists in supporting the quality and optimal exploitation of national scientific and technological research; it elaborates the guidelines for the evaluation of all research outcomes, promotes the experimentation, application and diffusion of evaluation methods, techniques and best practices, fosters cooperation among the various national and international institutions engaged in research. In **2005-06, Civr** has:

- contributed to the selections of indicators for the benchmarking of European policies in matters of research and development;
- collected a good deal of data on most research entities and their activities, which has enabled Civr itself to elaborate reference evaluation criteria, and has provided the necessary background for the setting up of an evaluation unit (CIV = *Comitato Interno di Valutazione*) within each research body;
- produced evaluation reports, recommendations, proposals for public bodies like the Ministry of University and Research, the Ministry of Industry, ENEA (National Agency for new Technologies, Energy and Environment), thus contributing to the selection of projects of relevance and the appropriate allocation of public funds, as well as to the evaluation of the efficacy of cooperation agreements between public research bodies.

In recent years, universities have thought it appropriate to set up specific internal bodies for the evaluation of research activities like the CIVs within public research bodies; known as university internal committees (*Commissioni interne di Ateneo*), they contribute to QA in university research in close cooperation with the NVs.

C) New National QA Agency

The Art. 36 of DL 262/2006 (<http://www.giurdanella.it/mainf.php?id=7605>; see also the third item at <http://www.miur.it/Dossier/Finanziaria2007/Default.aspx#AC1750> for a summary) provides for the reorganization and rationalization of the national QA system by establishing a single national evaluation structure, named ANVUR (national agency for the evaluation of higher education and research), which is to replace both Cnvsu and Civr.

Anvur, which is endowed with juridical personality, enjoys operational, managerial, and budgetary autonomy; its functions must be developed according to principles of impartiality, professional competence, and transparency; its criteria and operations must be made public.

The new QA Agency is responsible for:

- a) the external evaluation of the quality of any operations at all HEIs and public and private research bodies which receive State funding, on the basis of an annual plan;
- b) the coordination and supervision of the internal evaluation processes carried on by individual evaluation units within HEIs and research bodies;
- c) the assessment of the efficiency and efficacy of State plans aimed at funding and incentivizing research and innovation.

The outcomes of Anvur’s evaluation will supply reference criteria for the allocation of State

funds to HEIs and research bodies.

Summing up the above description, the Italian QA system:

- c. operates at national level; its annual work plan covers all higher education sectors and activities;
- d. includes the following elements:
 - internal assessment (through evaluation units at HEIs; similar units have been set up also at individual research bodies);
 - external review (through Cnvsu's visits to HEIs, and Civr's their evaluation and assessment of research products from both HEIs and research bodies which resulted in the national rating of research institutions);
 - publication of results: single internal evaluation units within HEIs have collected data on their activities and recorded them in a database available online (<http://www.crui.it/valutazione/link/?ID=693>); Cnvsu and Civr have regularly published full reports on all their evaluation activities (description of objectives, evaluation criteria, procedures, and outcomes); Cnvsu's and Civr 's publications are available online (see respective websites: www.cnvsu.it and www.civr.it).

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Level of student participation

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

Please include:

- whether students are included in the following aspects of quality assurance:
 - the governance of national agencies for QA
 - as full members or observers in external review teams
 - as part of the decision making process for external reviews
 - in the consultation process during external reviews (eg arrangements for external reviewers to consult with students)
 - in internal evaluations.

The current Italian QA model does not include the participation of students in the governance of the two national QA agencies (Cnvsu and Civr) but grants Cnsu, the university student national council, an institutional role in the external evaluation of the H.Ed. system, with a special reference to students' conditions.

Students have their representatives in the permanent councils on teaching evaluation at single universities (*Osservatori Permanenti della Didattica*).

Students participate in the internal evaluation activities carried out by NVs at single HEIs.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Level of international participation

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

Please include:

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

According to the Italian law, both Cnvsu and Civr, as well as ANVUR, the single national agency which will soon replace them, include international experts among their members; (as concerns Cnvsu, see http://www.normeinrete.it/cgibin/StampaFrameURN?URL=http://www.italgiure.giustizia.it/nir/1999/lexs_177727.html); as concerns Civr, see <http://www.civr.it/ecivr/laws/normativadlgs204.asp> -go to Art. 5-; as concerns Anvur, see DL (*Decreto-Legge*) 262/2006, Art. 36 at <http://www.giurdanella.it/mainf.php?id=7605>). Cnvsu is an ENQA member; it will be replaced in that membership by Anvur. In their autonomy, individual HEIs are free to apply to external accrediting entities, Italian or international, for institutional accreditation or for the accreditation of some of their programmes.

Recognition of degrees and study periods

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement

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

Please include:

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

With reference to the Diploma Supplement (DS), the decree 270/2004 (Art. 11, paragraph 8) confirmed what already stated in DM 509/1999: “individual universities have to determine in their own institutional regulations the modalities according to which they will issue, along with each degree, a certification based on the same models as adopted by the other European countries (*Supplemento al Diploma*)”.

A national committee, made up of directors responsible for the administrative and technical offices of Italian universities, developed a project aimed at implementing the DS throughout the country; it included:

- the creation of a website giving general explanations and legal details (the site is presently being updated; see <http://www.cruis.it/Internazionalizzazione/link/?ID=989>; and <http://www.cruis.it/cruis/DS/default.htm>);
- an official translation into English of the relevant university terminology;

- the drawing up of a brief standardised description of the new university system, in English and Italian, as well as of its scheme and diagram (see http://www.cimea.it/portal/template/viewTemplate?templateId=99e3avsba15_layout_jgio_gcyve1.psml)

As a further step, the Ministerial Decree No. 9 of 30th April 2004, Art. 6, decided for the adoption of a national DS model, attached to the mentioned decree (see http://www.miur.it/0006Menu_C/0012Docume/0015Atti_M/4126Anagra_cf2.htm).

The 100% of students graduating in 2007 will receive the Diploma Supplement; in fact, according to the above quoted legal provisions, Italian universities have to issue a DS to accompany the degrees of the new system.

The Italian DS will be issued:

- in a bilingual version (English and Italian);
- free of charge;
- automatically, on the awarding of any 1st or 2nd cycle degree of the Bologna reform.

The Italian DS model corresponds to the EU/CoE/Unesco Diploma Supplement format.

(Scorecard)

National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention

17. Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementary documents⁵ of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Please include:

- whether your country has ratified the convention (including depositing ratification instrument at either CoE or UNESCO)
- whether all appropriate legislation complies with the legal framework of the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents
- which of the following principles are applied in practice
 - applicants' right to fair assessment
 - recognition if no substantial differences can be proven
 - demonstration of substantial differences, where recognition is not granted
 - provision of information about your country's HE programmes and institutions
- whether you have a fully operational ENIC
- any action being taken to ratify or fully implement the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents.

Italy ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention in 2002 (see Law No. 148 of 11th July 2002 in Ordinary Supplement No. 151 to the Official Journal No. 173 of 25th July 2002); in 2004, a further step in the ratification process was made (see Ministerial Decree No. 214 of 26th April 2004 in the official Journal No. 192 of 17th August 2004), but the legal instruments have not yet been deposited; ratification procedures should be completed very soon. Both the mentioned Italian provisions comply with the legal framework of the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents.

⁵ 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)

Law 148/2002 determines that academic recognition is mainly a responsibility of individual Italian HEIs (Art. 2), which have to carry it out by applying the Lisbon Recognition Convention (Art. 3); HEIs have to complete recognition procedures within 90 days from the reception of the recognition application, duly documented (Art. 3).

In conformity with what stated under Art. VI.5 of the Lisbon Convention and with the Code of Good Practice in the Provision of TNE, the Ministerial Decree 214/2004 regulates the accreditation of TNE HEIs based on the Italian territory, and the recognition of their qualifications.

As to the Lisbon Convention principles listed above, they have been clearly illustrated to the relevant representatives of all HEIs; in certain cases, their practical application may require the building up of a new recognition culture, more flexible than the equivalence mentality that inspired the previous national legislation. So far, no problems have arisen with reference to the applicants' right to fair assessment, and to recognition when no substantial differences can be proven; concerning the provision of information about Italian H. Ed. programmes and institutions, applicants may take advantage of the ministerial databases recording all degree courses at universities and Afam institutions, as well as all Italian State-established and State recognised HEIs. With reference to the applicants' right to a motivated recognition refusal, HEIs agree on its importance but sometimes still find it difficult to define the concept of "substantial differences" and to apply it to the different concrete situations.

CIMEA of the *Fondazione Rui* acts as the Italian national centre providing information on the Italian H.Ed. system and on the academic recognition in Italy of foreign qualifications; it is a member of the ENIC, NARIC and MERIC networks. The information requested by Art. VIII.2 of the Lisbon Convention has been made available online on CIMEA website (see page <http://www.cimea.it/portal/page/categoryItem?contentId=15433>; all documents may be downloaded).

A further step towards easier academic recognition by avoiding the old equivalence procedures has been taken in early 2006, thanks to Art. 12 of Law No. 29 of 25th January 2006 (see Ordinary Supplement No. 34 to the Official Journal No. 32 of 8th February 2006): it allows Italian public entities to establish the comparability of EU and EFTA study qualifications to the Italian ones required for specific purposes; their evaluation is subject to the previous consultation of the Ministry of University and Research.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of implementation of ECTS

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

Please include:

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

Since the 1999 H.Ed. reform, Italy has adopted a national credit system for the structuring of degree courses both in the university and in the Afam sector. The related legal provisions are the following:

- Art. 5 of the Ministerial Decree 509/1999 and of the Ministerial Decree 270/2004, both

referring to university credits (CFU = *Crediti Formativi Universitari*);

- Art. 6 of the Presidential Decree No. 212 of 8th July 2005, which describes the credit system used by Afam institutions (CFA = *Crediti Formativi Accademici*) (see http://www.normeinrete.it/cgi-bin/StampaFrameURN?URL=http://www.italgiure.giustizia.it/nir/lexs/2005/lexs_412503.html).

Despite the two different acronyms (CFU and CFA), the Italian credit system is the same in both H.Ed. sectors; modelled on the ECTS, it has the following main characteristics:

- it is a student-centred system measuring the student's workload;
- 1 credit corresponds to 25-30 hours of student workload, including time for personal study;
- 1 academic year corresponds to 60 credits;
- credits are earned by students only when they pass the subject exams of single subject courses.

The three above mentioned legal provisions also determine the global number of credits to be earned for the awarding of the main qualifications within the three H. Ed. cycles.

University sector:

- 1st cycle: *Laurea (L)*, 180 credits over 3 years;
- 2nd cycle: *Laurea Specialistica/Magistrale (LS/LM)*, 120 credits in 2 years;
- 3rd cycle: *Dottorato di Ricerca (DR)*, minimum 3 years; universities autonomously decide whether to structure individual DR programmes in credits or not.

Afam sector:

- 1st cycle: *Diploma Accademico di 1_ livello (DA1)*, 180 credits over 3 years;
- 2nd cycle: *Diploma Accademico di 2_ livello (DA2)*, 120 credits in 2 years;
- 3rd cycle: *Diploma Accademico di formazione alla ricerca* (not yet defined)

Since their very establishment, all the new 1st and 2nd cycle degree programmes of the two H.Ed. sectors adopted the national credit system for both accumulation and transfer purposes; this means that 100% of 1st and 2nd cycle degree courses are using the national credit system (Ects compatible) in the a.y. 2006-07.

Italy has just one national credit system as described above.

19. Has your country produced a national plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications⁶? If so, give a brief description of the plan and attach a copy.

To improve the process of academic recognition all over the country, in the period 2003-2005 the Italian Ministry of University and Research produced a national action plan the realisation of which was entrusted to the Italian Enic-Naric; the plan aimed at:

- providing extensive information to all HEIs on the Lisbon Convention and supplementary documents;
- defining common criteria for some sort of university regulation framework which could serve HEIs when drawing up their own institutional regulations, including rules on academic recognition.

The action plan chiefly consisted in the organisation of 5 national training courses open to qualified staff of administrative and technical offices as well as academics of Italian HEIs, both universities and Afam institutions; structure and content of the three main course typologies are illustrated in the attached agendas.

In the current academic year (2006-07), Cimea is organising training courses on specific recognition problems against request of individual universities.

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

Lifelong Learning

(Scorecard)

Recognition of prior learning

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

Please include:

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

Before 1999 there were no national legal provisions allowing Italian HEIs to recognise prior learning; it was the Ministerial Decree 509/1999 that marked the first step in the direction of prior learning validation within university degree programmes. The quoted decree, while defining the reform of the whole university system in conformity to the Bologna Declaration, also provided for the adoption of a national credit system compatible with the Ects, and the possibility to validate prior learning through credit-transfer: in fact its Art. 5, paragraph 7 states that universities may recognise documented professional knowledge and skills, as well as knowledge and skills acquired in post-secondary professionally-oriented educational activities, by translating them into university credits according to pre-determined criteria (see the following webpage for the text of the decree: http://www.miur.it/0006Menu_C/0012Docume/0098Normat/2088Regola.htm and go to Art. 5, paragraph 7). It means that individual universities, according to their institutional autonomy, have to determine the criteria for such operations in their own university teaching regulations (RDA = *Regolamento Didattico di Ateneo*). The same principle was confirmed by the DM 270/2004; its Art. 5, paragraph 7, used exactly the same wording as in the above mentioned article and paragraph of decree 509/1999 (see [file:///CORSO%20UniPD/Doc%20x%20Corso%20PD/Allegati%20\(Un.PD\)/All.1_DM%20270.html](file:///CORSO%20UniPD/Doc%20x%20Corso%20PD/Allegati%20(Un.PD)/All.1_DM%20270.html)).

No national guidelines nor any procedures of individual institutions have been so far provided for the validation of prior learning with a view to access to H.Ed.

So far Italian universities have validated prior learning according to two main modalities:

- a. case by case evaluation and assessment; e.g. universities have accepted:
 - certificates and diplomas of competence in foreign languages in substitution of subject exams in foreign languages;
 - the ECDL (European Computer Driving License) to allocate credits in substitution of exams in computer practice;
 - certificates concerning professional activities in substitution of practical training periods which are a compulsory curricular requirement of some degree courses;
 - credits from post-secondary non-university technical courses (IFTS) so as to grant a reduction in length of related *Laurea* degree programmes;
- b. drawing up of agreements with professional associations; a professional organisation may set up education and training activities for a whole professional category; each agreement (*Convenzione*) between a university and a professional association is devised to define the conditions for the allocation of university credits to those professionals who have attended courses and passed the related exams organised by the association

concerned for their requalification and/or progress in the respective careers.

As a consequence of the experiences carried out in the period 2000-05, the Ministry of University and Research has recently decided it appropriate to indicate the following two limits: Italian universities may validate prior learning by allocating max. 60 credits within a *Laurea* degree course (1st degree of the Bologna process) and max. 40 credits within a *Laurea Specialistica* degree course (2nd degree of the Bologna process).

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

Please include:

- any flexibility in entry requirements
- any flexible delivery methods
- any modular structures of programmes.

In the period 2004-06, eleven “telematic” universities have been approved and recognised in order to create opportunities of a more flexible H.Ed. modality. Such a HEI typology takes advantage of a variety of delivery modes such as satellite TV, digital TV, the web, etc. The establishment of *Università Telematiche* was first provided for by Art. 26, paragraph 5, of Law No. 289 of 27th December 2002, which adopted a few general criteria and guidelines in conformity to the international standards set by e-Europe, the European action plan for the development of e-learning (<http://www.normeinrete.it/cgibin/StampaFrameURN?URL=http://www.parlamento.it/parlam/leggi/022891.htm>). Further rules were laid down in the Interministerial Decree of 17th April 2003 concerning the accreditation of e-learning degree programmes offered both by telematic universities and the traditional ones.

Italian telematic universities enjoy the juridical status of non-State, but State-recognised universities; such a legal recognition entitles them to offer the same degree typologies as those of the traditional universities directly established by the Italian State. Besides, telematic universities and their degree courses are subject to quality control and accreditation procedures at the care of Cnvsu (NQA agency); consequently, the degrees they confer have the same legal validity as those awarded by Italian State-established or State-recognised universities that offer education through a traditional mode of delivery.

All *Università Telematiche* share the main aim of facilitating the access to H.Ed. -as well as the attainment of at least a 1st degree- of a few social categories like working / disadvantaged / handicapped / adult students.

When a degree programme includes professional training and/or some practical activities in frontal classes as compulsory curricular requirements, the telematic university concerned set it up in collaboration with a traditional HEI on the basis of a specific agreement.

Traditional universities too have been allowed to offer more flexible H.Ed. paths by setting up e-learning degree programmes or single subject courses. When establishing such programmes, universities have to follow the same procedures as stated by law for all traditional degree courses (consultation of all stakeholders, proposal to the Ministry, possible amendments, ministerial approval subject to documented presence of all required minimum standards, etc.); eventually, also e-learning courses at traditional universities must be accredited according to the regulations laid down in the already mentioned Interministerial Decree of 17th April 2003.

In Italy universities were first allowed to design degree programmes in modular structures by the 1990 reform of the university system (Law No. 341 of 1990). Since 1999, the participation in the Bologna process has further incentivized the recourse of Italian universities to modules and to their diversified combination when designing degree

programmes; insodoing, our HEIs take advantage of more flexible learning paths which facilitate both students' mobility and international university cooperation.

Joint degrees

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Establishment and recognition of joint degrees

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

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of any legislation to establish joint programmes
- whether joint⁷ degrees are allowed and encouraged in legislation
- whether joint degrees are allowed and encouraged in all three cycles
- an indication of the percentage of HEIs that have established joint programmes and are awarding nationally recognised degrees jointly with HEIs of other countries
- any action being taken to encourage or allow joint programmes.

In Italy an important turning point for the development of joint degrees was the approval of the Ministerial Decree 509/1999 concerning university teaching autonomy, which completed the process of university autonomy also in view of the creation of the EHEA. The reform provided new instruments aimed at promoting and supporting the university initiatives to open up internationally. Also the Ministerial Decree 270/2004 allowed universities to engage themselves more incisively in the international context, e.g. by classifying their main qualifications into first-, second- and third-cycle degrees.

With specific reference to the award of joint degrees, Article 3 of Decree 270/2004 confirms that further to agreements in this regard, Italian universities may award first and second degrees as well as all the other qualifications envisaged by the new rules- “in conjunction with other Italian or foreign universities”. The rules governing “the procedures for the award of joint qualifications” are delegated to the general academic regulations of individual universities (Article 11, paragraph 7, subparagraph o). In the case of joint degrees with foreign universities, the procedures for the award of the qualification concerned must be expressly regulated in the respective interuniversity agreements, given the differences in the national rules among the various countries.

Since 1999, MIUR has developed a number of policies to internationalise the Italian H.Ed. system by strengthening the European dimension according to the action lines indicated in the Bologna Process and so contribute to the establishment of the EHEA. Specific “actions for internationalisation” have been proposed in the three latest plans for the development of the Italian university system up to 2006; such actions are aimed at improving quality, increasing worldwide attractiveness for European higher education and at exporting the European education model to the rest of the world. The Ministry has made available considerable financial resources and has set out guidelines for the development of bilateral and multilateral projects leading to joint degrees. The common thinking that underlines the three main typologies of internationalisation actions can be summarised as follows:

- support of international student mobility;

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

- use of ECTS system and Diploma Supplement;
- participation of teachers and students from at least another country;
- co-financing of projects (50%) by HEIs;
- quality assurance.

Although provisional, available data seem to confirm the success of the policies implemented through the internationalisation actions: far from just supporting existing international cooperation, they promoted the creation of entirely new courses conceived from the start with an integrated international dimension; they also stimulated the development of an international dimension in national degree programmes; besides, supporting student mobility means allowing a significant number of Italian and foreign students to obtain a joint or double degree, which will have an impact on the labour market in the coming years. It is expected that the mobility supported under the 3rd Internationalisation Action will enable over 4,000 Italian university students to obtain a joint or a double degree at the end of an integrated study programme.

At present it is not possible to exactly quantify the number of integrated joint degree courses established by Italian universities since the monitoring of projects selected under the 2nd and 3rd internationalisation actions is still in progress. According to an approximate estimate, the number of projects selected for ministerial co-financing increased from 162 (1998-2000) to 297 (2004-2006), of which those concerning the awarding of joint degrees were 58 and 75 respectively.

C. Current issues in Higher Education

Higher education and research

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

In Italy, when taking into account research outcomes (number of research projects carried out per year, number of registered patents, etc.), we find that nearly 65% of national research is carried out in universities.

As from 2006, the Minister of University and Research has been called to play an active role in all decisions on research policies, including funds allocation, which are made by CIPE (Interministerial Committee for economic planning) within the Ministry for Economy and Finance; as a consequence, an increase in the synergy between university and industrial research is expected.

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

Nearly 52% of doctoral candidates engage themselves in research within universities, while 42% take up research careers at public and private research bodies. Only a very limited number of research doctors (about 6-7%) get engaged in other careers (e.g. in industries, as teachers in upper secondary schools, etc.).

The social dimension

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

Please include:

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

Italy has traditionally had a system of financial assistance (grants, scholarships, exemption from tuition fees, etc.) to help socially disadvantaged students at all educational levels; as concerns H.Ed. students, the related responsibilities are shared between individual HEIs and the regional bodies competent for student welfare services. The latest framework law concerning financial measures in favour of H.Ed. students dates back to 1991 (Law No. 390 of 2nd December 1991; see http://www.normeinrete.it/cgi-bin/StampaFrameURN?URL=http://www.italgiure.giustizia.it/nir/1991/lexs_132651.html).

Since that date, single provisions have been regularly approved to update the figures in relation to the increase of living costs; besides, additional measures have been taken to support specific projects or actions.

Measures taken: some legal provisions were approved at national level in 2003-04 and confirmed in the following years; e.g.

- MIUR decided for a contribution of Euro 500,000 to be allocated to single universities for loans to disadvantaged students; in conformity to Art. 7 of Ministerial Decree No. 198 of 23rd October 2003, funds allocation is to be based on the evaluation of innovating projects submitted by the regional bodies sharing with universities the responsibility for welfare student services; the projects, which must concern the signing of agreements with businesses and banks to the end of issuing student loans, are evaluated by MIUR according to criteria previously determined by Cnvsu; such criteria take into account the best envisaged conditions of loans issue and re-payment, as well as of the subsidiary guarantees agreed upon between regions and universities (http://www.miur.it/0006Menu_C/0012Docume/0015Atti_M/3588Fondo_cf2.htm);
- in 2004 a national fund was created (Law No. 350 of 27th December 2003, Art. 4, paragraphs 99-103) to provide guarantees on the re-payment of student trust loans issued by banks and other financial intermediary organisations; it amounted to Euro 10,000,000 for the year 2004.

Monitoring initiatives: in 2005-06 the following evaluation studies were carried out with a view of monitoring the impact of policies to widen access to higher education:

- survey on the living and study conditions of university students (access, performance, aids, outcomes) - 4th Italian report - by Fondazione Rui, 2005 (<<http://www.fondazionerui.it/portal/page/categoryItem?contentId=22271>>);
- survey on the living and study conditions of university students, country report (Italy) for the 3rd comparative survey of the Eurostudent Project (<http://www.his.de/Abt2/Auslandsstudium/Eurostudent/report2005/Downloads/National%20Profiles>);
- ISTAT surveys on the relationship between social background, higher education, and transition to the labour market (2006): e.g. see:
 - social mobility (http://www.istat.it/dati/catalogo/20060724_00/);
 - school leavers and their study routes (http://www.istat.it/salastampa/comunicati/non_calendario/20060803_00/);
 - CNVSU surveys (2006) on:
 - International mobility of university students - Evaluation of innovating policies and experiences (<http://www.cnvsu.it/publidoc/pubblicazioni/quaderni/default.asp#q6>);

- The efficacy of policies to support university students – The Italian experience in the international context (<http://www.cnvsu.it/publidoc/pubblicazioni/quaderni/default.asp#q6>).

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

Please include:

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

The 1999 university reform has produced a twofold positive result, that is a substantial reduction in the:

- drop out rate;
- students' attendance of degree courses far beyond their legal duration.

In 2005-06 the drop out rate has decreased to the 20.5% of enrolled students, while the 58.89% of undergraduates matriculated in the new 3-year *Laurea* courses is awarded the degree within the prescribed time. Taking into account that only the 15.3% of the students enrolled in the old long *Laurea* programmes obtained the degree on due time, the mentioned figures give evidence of an initial success in the effort of improving of the productivity of the university system.

Measures adopted to improve retention

- a national student-centred credit system has been adopted; it is based on the concept of student workload, and modelled after the Ects;
- a national fund has been created for the co-financing of guidance projects submitted by individual universities;
- counselling centres and guidance activities have been increased both at secondary schools and at HEIs; their services concern the 3 main stages of students' route within HEIs (incoming, in progress, outgoing);
- in addition to local initiatives, a few national projects aimed at improving university guidance have been launched on an experimental basis: e.g. the “*Universo*” website (<http://universo.miur.it>) to help school leavers find their way among degree courses in offer and matriculation procedures, and the guide “*Istruzione Superiore e Professioni*”, describing all 1st cycle degree programmes and related occupational opportunities (www.miur.it and for details http://www.pubblica.istruzione.it/news/2006/guida_universita.shtml);
- MiUR has provided for the allocation of additional funds to be employed by single universities to incentivize tutorial services (Ministerial Decree No. 198 of 23rd October 2003, Art. 2, paragraph 3, http://www.miur.it/0006Menu_C/0012Docume/0015Atti_M/3588Fondo_cf2.htm);
- services of tutorial assistance have been increased in number and improved in efficacy at all HEIs.

Monitoring of adopted measures

A survey for the evaluation of guidance services at all HEIs has been carried out by Crui (see report in PDF format at <http://www.crui.it/link/?ID=2194>); a committee made up of MiUR and MPI representatives has carried out a national evaluation project on the efficacy of

university guidance services; MiUR takes into account its outcomes when co-financing new university projects aimed at fostering the best guidance practices.

Mobility

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

Please include:

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

Among other provisions, the latest ministerial plan for the internationalisation of the university system (period 2004-06) has adopted measures to support both incoming and outgoing mobility students. HEIs projects incentivizing student mobility are co-financed by MiUR (http://www.miur.it/0006Menu_C/0012Docume/0015Atti_M/4492Progra_cf2.htm).

In 2005 students on mobility programmes amounted to 4,087, equally divided between students on inward outward mobility.

In the framework of the so-called “youth project” (*Progetto Giovani*), a special national fund has been created to support a variety of initiatives in favour of university students, including outward student mobility (Law No. 170 of 11th July 2003, Art. 1, <http://www.miur.it/0002Univer/0052Cooper/0065Sosteg/0806Fondo/index>); criteria and modalities for funds allocation to single universities have been determined by MiUR, following a consultation with Crui and Cnsu (national student council).

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

In principle, loans and grants are not portable. However, two Italian public administrations, the Region *Valle d’Aosta* and the Province of *Bolzano*, deserve mentioning for their innovating legislation under that respect; in fact they award grants and scholarships which may be exploited to study both in Italy and abroad (with reference to *Valle d’Aosta*, information is available at http://www.regione.vda.it/istruzione/scuola/CorsiPostUni_i.asp and http://www.regione.vda.it/istruzione/scuola/CorsiEstero_i.asp; as concerns Bolzano, see http://www.provincia.bz.it/bildungsfoerderung/4001/hochschulbildung/index_i.htm and http://www.provinz.bz.it/cultura/bilinguismo/multilingue/contribute_i.htm).

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

Please include:

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

The latest ministerial plan for the internationalisation of the university system (period 2004-06) has adopted measures to support staff mobility, both inward and outward; HEIs projects incentivizing staff mobility are co-financed by MiUR (http://www.miur.it/0006Menu_C/0012Docume/0015Atti_M/4492Progra_cf2.htm).

In 2005 staff on mobility amounted to 4,140 persons, equally divided between staff on inward outward mobility.

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

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

attractiveness of the EHEA.

The number of international students enrolled at Italian universities has always been rather limited. To promote the attractiveness of Italian university education within the framework of the EHEA, in 2005-06 the following initiatives have been taken:

- “Marco Polo” programme: created and launched by Crui, the project aims at promoting cooperation between Chinese and Italian universities by taking a number of concrete measures (e.g. setting up two coordinating offices, one per country; ensuring lodgings for students and researchers at participating HEIs; offering intensive Italian language courses; facilitating research opportunities; providing work placements with Italian companies); on a voluntary basis, Italian Universities and **Confindustria**, the major association of Italian industrialists, actively participate in the project along with other interested parties.
- Fellowships for India: the Ministry of University and Research allocated Euro 1,500.000.00 to attribute 100 fellowships, amounting to Euro 15,00.00 each, to young Indian researchers (financial year 2005);
- Italo-Chinese University: the Ministry of Education in cooperation with some Italian universities (Bocconi in Milan, Luiss in Rome, the two State Technical Universities of Milan and Turin), a few private companies, and two Chinese universities (Fudan University in Shanghai and the University of Tongji) are about launching a project to promote the education and training in management of both Chinese and Italian students.
- Study in Italy”: the Ministry of University and Research provided for the production of two websites, one in English and the other in Chinese, consisting in a detailed description of the new Italian university system and its 1st and 2nd cycle degree programmes (see <http://www.study-in-italy.it> and <http://www.studyinitaly.cn>). In 2006, also a Spanish version of the website has been produced and made available at <http://www.estudiar-en-italia.it>.

Future challenges

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

In the next years we shall be able to verify if the four main goals of the 1999 reform have been attained permanently. Such goals were meant to promote the efficiency and efficacy of the Italian H.Ed. system. Therefore, our next challenges are the following:

in terms of efficiency,

- to further reduce the drop out rate;
- to increase the percentage of students who obtain their degrees within the prescribed time;

in terms of efficacy,

- to improve the employability of the *Laurea* (1st degree);
- to enhance the internationalisation of the system.

Among the measures to be adopted, we plan to foster QA with reference to both individual degree programmes and the system as a whole, to improve guidance and tutoring, promote inward and outward mobility and academic recognition, as well as joint awards, competence in foreign languages, number of Italian degree courses taught in English, etc.