

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

**A. Background information on your Higher Education system**

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**Main achievements since Bergen**

1. Describe the important developments relating to the Bologna Process, including legislative reforms, since Bergen.

The Spanish Government has concluded its project to reform the Organic Law of Universities (LOU). This reform project is now at an advanced stage of parliamentary procedure and has been initially passed by Parliament on 14th December 2006 and it is expected to be definitively passed at the beginning of next Spring. On 26<sup>th</sup> September 2006, the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science presented a detailed working paper on the Organisation of Higher Education in Spain based on the guidelines put forward by the EHEA. On 14<sup>th</sup> November, this proposal was the object of a favourable report by the University Coordination Council, the highest Spanish consultative body on university matters. The LOU confirms the cyclic structure, improves the mobility and the EHEA principles and increments the coordination among the Government and the Autonomous Communities.

The Ministry of Education and Science has set aside funding for universities for the 2006-2007 academic year to promote student and teacher mobility in the new postgraduate programmes. During the 2006-2007 academic year, around 1,000 ECTS-based Masters degrees (Bologna) are underway. The call for deciding which master degrees will be offered in the 2007-2008 academic year is open until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007.

Funding for visiting teachers has targeted official Masters degrees and quality-certified doctorate degrees and encourages the participation of teachers from other universities. At least 50% of foreign teachers must come from countries which have signed the EHEA

agreement.

Funding for students on Masters degrees and quality-certified doctorate degrees also encourages studying these degrees or at least part of them in other universities, including those in the Erasmus-Mundus programme.

## 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.

Some changes will be made as soon as the bill to reform the Organic Law of Universities (LOU), which is currently in the Spanish Parliament, has gone through the necessary parliamentary stages. These changes include the creation of the General Conference of University Policy, the Registry of Universities, Centres and Degrees and changes to the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA).

As Spain is a decentralised country in which the autonomous regions are responsible for education it is difficult to coordinate relations between the State, the Autonomous Regions and the universities. This means reaching a consensus among all the players involved and establishing clearly defined, smooth-running relations between them all. Coordination between central and regional governments is especially important as is coordination and cooperation in academic spheres. To achieve this, the General Conference of University Policy has been created to promote intergovernmental relations and the University Council has been given assessment, cooperation and coordination functions in the academic sphere.

The National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA) has a very important role to play in autonomy-accountability. To strengthen its role within the university system, its re-creation as a public agency has been authorised in line with the State Agency Law on improving public services. This will make it easier to coordinate quality assurance processes and to define assessment criteria.

The Ministry of Education and Science will be responsible for the Registry of Universities, Centres and Degrees. This will be a public registry and will contain the names of universities and centres as well as a list of all the nationally recognised diplomas and all other university diplomas. The Spanish Government will regulate its status, organisation and functions.

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

The Spanish university system is made up of public and private universities, of centres attached to universities and of university research centres. There have been no significant changes apart from the creation of two private universities. The number of students has remained relatively stable at around 1,500,000. 90% of students are enrolled at public universities.

The universities' legal framework is described in the Bergen report.

Since the Bergen report was written, two more private universities have been set up which takes the total number of universities to 74. There are 48 public universities.

There are also other centres in Spain, in addition to the universities, which provide non-university higher education. These include artistic subjects (music, dance, drama, art and design) and further vocational education. This system caters for around 250,000 students. See also the modifications of the LOU in the institutional structure in question 2.

## Partnership

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

-The Bologna Promoters Group, financed through a grant from the European Socrates Programme, organizes activities of dissemination of information about the Bologna process.

-The National Team consists of 15 members that have the required academic or administrative background and experience in Spanish and European Higher Education matter and European Programmes. Profiles of the three cycle system, quality assurance, higher education expert, recognition and employer are covered and tasks like Promoting EHEA, Internal and External Quality Assurance, ECTS, Diploma Supplement, Curricular Reform, Qualifications Framework, Promotion of mobility, Employability, Social Dimension of HE are developed.

- The team includes two students representatives with the task of Promotion of mobility, Social dimension of HE and Students involvement.

The team is coordinated by the General Director for Universities

-The Direction General of Universities (Ministry of Education and Science) and the Education Departments in the regional Governments provide through specific call for proposals finance for projects related to new higher education structures along the lines of the process (training and mobility of teaching staff, implementation of new study programmes).

-The Universities, for the most part, have established offices and positions whose mission is the active integration in the European Higher Education Area.

-The Council for Universities Coordination also participates in the process.

-The Rectors Conference of Spanish Universities has also a Working Group on European Convergence.

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

The aforementioned LOU reform project envisages the drawing up of a university student

statute and the creation of the national University Student Council to coordinate essential student participation in the university system.

Students currently make up between 20% and 30% of university Senates. This percentage is similar in the other governing bodies: the governing board, departmental boards, etc. This participation allows the students having information and participating in taking decisions.

Administration and service staff also account for around 20% of the governing bodies (depending on each university).

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

Social partners and business are an essential part of the Bologna process. Thus, the studies carried out on adapting each degree to the Bologna process (white books) have taken their opinions and suggestions into account for the first time and different meetings have been held to find out what these opinions and suggestions were.

Work is also being carried out on the development of the Spanish Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (MECES). A national committee will be soon created in which a significant number of social partners and businesses will take part.

Finally, the Ministry of Education and Science is drawing up a document which brings together the guidelines universities need to follow on how to put together a curriculum. This document contains a section which indicates that the curriculum should be put together in conjunction with external partners, students, employers and social partners.

**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.**

Higher education in Spain is to be organised in three cycles, pursuant to the agreements stemming from the construction of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). These three cycles correspond to three levels of university degrees to be known as *Grado*, Master and Doctorate. This proposal is in line with the decision adopted by the vast majority of European countries and the agreement reached at the Bergen Conference of European Ministers responsible for Higher Education (May 2005) with a view to establishing a European Framework for Higher Education Qualifications based on the Dublin descriptors. Likewise, the proposed structure complies with the recommendation, still at the debate stage, of the European Qualifications Framework, which whilst being based on the Dublin descriptors, extends the recommendations to encompass lifelong

learning. This framework contemplates three cycles (including, within national contexts, the possibility of intermediate cycles), each of which is described in terms of learning output and competences and includes a recommendation about the credit ranges for the first two cycles and the number of years for Doctorates.

All *Grado* degrees will consist of 240 ECTS credits which shall include all types of learning with their respective assessments, as proposed under the European Qualifications Framework. This level corresponds to the UNESCO ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education) level 5A (1997 edition), and EQF level 6 (European Qualifications Framework, proposed by the European Union Commission in line with the first cycle in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications adopted in Bergen in 2005).

A Master may have 60 to 120 ECTS credits, which shall include all types of learning and their respective assessments. The Master will end with the production and oral defence in public of an end-of-degree project or dissertation by the student. The number of credits for this will be established in the respective curricula and will be included in the total number of credits. This level corresponds to level 6 in the UNESCO ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education), (1997 edition), the second cycle of the European Framework for Higher Education, and EQF level 7 (European Qualifications Framework, proposed by the European Union Commission which complies with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications approved in Bergen in 2005).

Masters degrees will offer a high standard of training both specialised in a specific field of knowledge and in interdisciplinary areas, with a view to enhancing specific competences in a given professional field or discipline. The professional areas they focus on include research, meaning that a Master's degree can be part of the training involved in obtaining a Doctorate. Masters degrees with elements in common may be grouped together in postgraduate programmes. These postgraduate programmes may also incorporate the research period required to obtain a Doctorate.

Around 1,000 new Masters degrees were taught during the 2005-2006 academic year.

Likewise, the vast majority of Spanish universities have undertaken pilot schemes to adapt to Bologna reforms. These affect changes in teaching-learning methodologies, in the design of ECTS subjects, in including subjects based on the skills to be acquired, etc.

( Eurydice )

Stage of implementation of the third cycle

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

This level corresponds to level 6 in the UNESCO ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education), (1997 edition), the third cycle of the European Framework for Higher Education, and EQF level 8 (European Qualifications Framework, proposed by the European Union Commission and complies with the Framework for Higher

Education Qualifications approved in Bergen in 2005).

The European Qualifications Framework does not specify the timeframe or number of ECTS credits for doctoral studies. However, the Doctoral Programmes for the European Knowledge Society document (the findings of a survey about doctorates conducted by the European University Association, containing the results of the seminar on doctorates organised within the framework of the Bologna process in Salzburg in February 2005) defines a reasonable time for attaining a doctorate as being 3 to 4 years in the case of full-time students. This estimated time is directly related to the length of research scholarships.

The Doctoral Programme to be approved by each university will consist of a training period and a research period. The training period will consist of 60 credits which may be Masters studies (from one or several Masters degrees) or university training activities specifically designed or selected for said programme. These activities must be approved pursuant to the procedure laid down by the universities, bearing in mind at the very minimum, academic excellence criteria or institutional strategy criteria. The training period may conclude with the production and public defence of research work, whose duration in credits will be established by the university. The research period will consist of the research activities necessary to write the doctoral thesis and will be supervised by the thesis supervisor. Universities will establish the conditions for registering the subject of a thesis and being a thesis supervisor, quantifying the necessary time to be dedicated by the supervisor, in both instances, in accordance with the criteria set forth.

During the 2005-06 academic year, some universities managed to adapt their doctoral studies to this new structure and already have students enrolled.

(Scorecard and Eurydice )

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

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

Students with a *Grado* degree issued by the competent authorities in the European Higher Education Area or the equivalent in other countries are eligible to enrol on a Master's degree.

Students with a *Grado* degree are eligible for admission to the Doctorate training period. Students who complete the training period or who have a university Master's degree, depending on the provisions of the respective Doctorate Programme, are eligible for admission to the research period.

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

(Scorecard and Eurydice )

Implementation of national qualifications framework

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

Work is underway to develop a Spanish Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (MECES) which will reflect the cooperation of all the parties involved in the process. To achieve this, a Royal Decree will be passed to create a Spanish MECES Committee which will be publicly and socially responsible for the MECES. Moreover, a Working Group will act as an information and proposal provider for this Committee and has already met and worked together on several occasions. This committee of experts will be made up of representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science, trade unions, the University Coordination Council, students, businesspeople, the regional governments, the central government (the Ministry of Employment, the Ministry of Public Administration and the Ministry of the Economy), ANECA and experts in qualifications frameworks.

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

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

The first measure is the choice of 240 ECTS credits as the degree length. Although some European countries have set the length of this first cycle as 180 credits in some of their degrees, 240 credits will enable a better match with other major university systems in the world which are also important to Spain (USA, Latin America, Asia, etc.).

Moreover, the new structure of *Grado* degrees will enable more practical training, external traineeships and mobility, which are the essential objectives of this reform. It must be stated that the 240 credits will include all the activities in the degree (traineeships, languages, Bachelor dissertation or project, etc.).

Likewise, other external sectors, such as employers and professional associations, will be closely involved in the creation of curricula leading to the new *Grado* degrees.

A 240-credit *Grado* degree will facilitate employability because it is an easily recognisable university degree which does not require a second level of training.

### Quality assurance

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

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

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

In 2006 ANECA applied for the external evaluation of ENQA along with the quality assurance agency of Catalonia (AQU-Catalunya) according to the Standards and Guidelines of ENQA.

In the first stage, ANECA has accomplished the self-evaluation report following the Standards and Guidelines in the analysis of the different elements of the agency to be evaluated. The second stage will be the external review by an international panel of experts. The external evaluation will take place in the first semester of 2007.

Amongst the initiatives oriented to the implementation of Standards and Guidelines in the Spanish higher education system accomplished by ANECA, is the organisation of an international seminar on the Implementation of Standards and Guidelines of ENQA in the Summer University Menéndez Pelayo in July 2006. European experts from quality assurance and related to the Bologna Process were invited. The Seminar was mainly aimed at the staff of the quality assurance units of the Spanish universities, as well as members of the Spanish regional agencies.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

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



## Stage of development of external quality assurance system

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

The quality assurance system in Spain is organised according to the de-centralised structure of the state, where the regional governments have competences in higher education, mainly concerning funding public institutions, and providing a regional legal framework to higher education. Therefore, and according to the Organic University Law approved in 2001 (an overarching legal provision which also includes the regional governments and the universities all over Spain) in 2002 was created the Spanish Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation (ANECA) whose competences ranges at the national level.

But, as part of this de-centralised system, the same Law permits the creation of quality assurance agencies whose competences range at the regional level. At the end of 2006 eleven quality assurance agencies have been created in Spain: Catalonia, Andalucia, Galicia, Balearic Islands, Castilla y León, Valencia, Madrid, Canary Islands, Castilla-La Mancha, Aragón and the Basque Country.

According to the University Law, the Spanish quality assurance system leads to an accreditation decision system programme-based. The definition of the accreditation framework is also being adapted to the trends and debates arisen in the European setting along with the general effort of adaptation to the quality assurance framework derived from the European Higher Education Area.

Consequently, ANECA is playing an active role in the European networks on quality assurance (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, ENQA) and accreditation (European Consortium for Accreditation, ECA) where the exchange of good practices and the benchmarking are essential issues in their agendas.

Furthermore, within Spain, ANECA and the regional agencies networking is also the natural way of collaboration and acting. To such purpose they have created a network called REACU to look for ways of co-operation, especially at the technical and methodological level concerning the procedures of the programmes.

The scope of the quality assurance system concerning higher education is a comprehensive one: reaching from bachelor to master and doctoral cycles. In Spain there is a sound tradition in doing an evaluation of Doctoral programmes by ANECA which implies the awarding of a “quality label” linked to financial benefits in terms of scholarships for students, funds for improving facilities and purchasing research infrastructure, etc.

The quality assurance system includes a classical approach based upon: a self-evaluation report conducted by the institution, an external review by a peer-panel and the publication of a report including weaknesses and strengths as well as the improvement measures.

Generally speaking, the institutions have made a great effort to strengthen the self-evaluation procedures in the last ten years and every university has its own quality evaluation technical unit which centralises within the university all the issues related to the quality assurance of the institution and gives a clear support to the people involved in the evaluations.

The external reviews are the responsibility of the quality assurance agencies and are made

up experts coming from the academic world (peers) and also by experts in quality processes in the companies and industry.

The peer-reviewers act according to the procedures established by the agency but in an independent way and according to a code of good practice signed by them and including ethics issues and commitments to avoid mainly any conflict of interest.

Concerning the implementation of external review of quality assurance agencies, ANECA and the quality assurance agency from Catalonia AQU-Catalunya applied in 2006 to ENQA to be reviewed by an external panel defined by ENQA according to the European Standards and Criteria for Quality Assurance.

This joint external evaluation will take place in the first semester of 2007. In December 2006 both agencies will finish the self-evaluation reports and at the beginning of 2007 they will be submitted to their stakeholders before being sent to ENQA to begin the process.

It is a very relevant and remarkable action because both agencies will be the first to be submitted to an external evaluation through an international peer-panel using the ENQA European Standards and Guidelines as a reference. Other external reviews with international peer-panel have occurred in Europe in the last year, but the review faced by ANECA and AQU-Catalunya is the first truly ENQA review. It does not provide an extra value *per se* to the agencies submitted to the review, but it undoubtedly stresses the relevance of the Standard and Guidelines as a practical and useful tool to improve coherence to the quality assurance system within the European Higher Education Area.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Level of student participation

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

The level of student involvement in the national quality assurance system shares a similar development to its involvement at the higher education system as a whole. A lack of articulation occurs, although some clear remarks towards a change of direction can be recently seen, both within the institutions and at the regional (comunidades autónomas/regional governments) level.

There is a very uneven participation depending on the kind of institution and the regional setting. Therefore, some general trends can be identified:

On the student side:

1. A strong capacity building towards the institutionalisation of student unions and associations. Two main trends: institutional-based unions attached to their universities (e.g. student union of the Universidad de Oviedo) as well as sectoral unions related to field of study and organised at the national level (supra-regional level) in Spain (e.g. Sectoral Union of Students of Medicine, Computer Sciences, etc.).
2. These steps have resulted in the building of a Student Union at the national level named CREUP which is being settled down and acting as an interlocutor with the

European Student Unions (e.g. ESIB).

3. A major interest shown by student representatives to take part in the debates derived from the debates of the European Higher Education Area especially in domains not yet previously explored such as quality assurance issues.

On the quality assurance agency side:

ANECA has developed some initiatives in 2006 towards a student involvement in quality assurance issues articulated within the agency in 2007:

- *February 2006. Organisation of a Forum ANECA*, a seminar at the national level on student involvement with representatives of students, managers of the universities, representatives from QA agencies, stakeholders, etc. in order to define the situation of student involvement and suggest a road map towards their participation in QA issues.
- *March 2006 until now. Creation of a working group on student involvement in QA issues with student representatives in ANECA*. The working group has to analyse the European situation, define good practices after this experience and prepare a report to be submitted to the Board of Directors of ANECA suggesting an action plan to implement it.
- *October 2006. ANECA co-organised with ENQA a Workshop on Student Involvement in QA Agencies in Madrid* to analyse this relevant topic from the viewpoint of the main actor in QA issues in Europe: ENQA. Best practices were heard and proposals to encourage those countries where the participation is lower were suggested.
- From these three experiences, ANECA has included in its Action Plan for 2007 actions to implement the involvement in its quality assurance programmes and processes, e.g. taking part in the external evaluation teams of the Institutional Evaluation Programme in 2007; the inclusion in the Advisory Board of ANECA, amongst others.

From the viewpoint of the student involvement in the quality assurance system in Spain:

*Student participation at the institutional level.* There is a clear participation at the institutional level (university and faculty/school level) concerning the preparation of the self-evaluation report and the issues regarding the site-visit in the external evaluation stage (audiences of the panel with bachelor, master and doctorate cycle students, graduated students from the last three-five years), etc.

*Student participation in the external site visit team.* This level has not yet been generalised at the moment. Some experiences in a pilot-project level have been accomplished by the quality assurance agency of Catalonia, focusing on the training of students for some particular programmes and then joining them to the evaluation teams. The experiences concerning the evaluation of the library services of universities were particularly successful.

*Student participation in the external review of agencies.* This feature is quite new and has not yet been implemented. Nevertheless, the external review of ANECA and AQU-Catalunya will be carried out by ENQA in the first semester of 2007, will include in the panel a student representative from an international union.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

## Level of international participation

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

One of the main priorities of ANECA is the internationalisation of its action towards the European Higher Education Area. This effort has two major trends which can be identified as follows:

1. Participation in European and international organisations, associations and networks related to quality assurance and accreditation policies and
2. Taking part in projects and workshops focusing on technical aspects and procedures with European and international partners in a bilateral or multilateral way.

1.- ANECA is full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance Agencies on Higher Education (ENQA) and the Director of the agency has been re-elected as member of the Board in the last General Assembly in September 2005. ENQA is the main actor within the EHEA concerning quality assurance issues and play a very active role of awareness with the agencies and organisations within the Association.

Furthermore, ANECA is member from its foundation of the European Consortium of Accreditation (ECA) a project-based organisation of 10 countries and 14 agencies working towards the achieving an mutual recognition of accreditation decisions within the EHEA in close relationship with the organisations in charge of the recognition of degrees. The Director of ANECA is member of the Management Group of ECA.

ANECA takes also part in the meetings of the Joint Quality Initiative which led the working group that defined the Dublin Descriptors. The feedback of the JQI is especially fruitful at the national level due to the fact that it provides useful information for the working group designed to establish the Spanish Qualification Framework, where a representative of ANECA also takes part amongs other stakeholders involved.

In other contexts but also closely related to the international sphere, ANECA is member of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) which work at the global level and of the Ibero-American Network of Accreditation Agencies (RIACES) which plays a significant role at the regional level in Latin America, where ANECA is providing a very fruitful perspective from the European setting.

2.- Concerning the projects accomplished, ANECA has co-organised in October 2006 a Workshop on Student Involvement in Quality Assurance Agencies along with ENQA as part of the issues derived from the Bergen Communiqué. Furthermore, within ECA four working groups on practical issues regarding accreditation have been defined and ANECA takes an active part in all of them, chairing the WG number 2 which focuses on the accreditation issues for joint-programmes.

ANECA also conducts workshops on procedures and aspects of its work with European quality assurance agencies. These workshops are problem-oriented and deal with specific technical issues included in the agenda of some European agencies, such as accreditation

of doctoral degrees, exchange and training of international evaluators, etc.

Finally, ANECA has developed a programme to include the participation of international reviewers in the different evaluation programmes in order to foster the internationalisation of the evaluation procedures in the higher education institutions.

Concerning the external evaluation of agencies. ANECA applied in 2006 to ENQA for its external evaluation, which will take place in the first semester of 2007. At the regional level, the Quality Assurance Agency of Catalonia, AQU-Catalunya, also applied for external evaluation, being the two first agencies to be submitted to an ENQA external review according to the fulfilment of the European Standards and Criteria for Quality Assurance in the EHEA, approved by the Ministers in Bergen in 2005.

Members of the staff of ANECA have also take part as evaluators in the external evaluation team for accreditation of European higher education institutions of other European agencies, being a very fruitful experience in terms of mutual understanding of procedures and in order to build trust amongst the different agencies in the EHEA.

## 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.

The implementation of the Diploma Supplement in Spain is regulated under the Royal Decree 1044/2003, dated 1<sup>st</sup> August. Spanish universities are working on the development of specific DS fields that correspond to their centres.

The Diploma Supplement, as the Royal Decree that regulates it indicates, is issued in Spanish and English.

It must be remembered that this regulation is extremely recent and thus a statistically significant number of DS have not yet been issued.

Some autonomous regions have passed symbolic rates of DS requests.

(Scorecard)

<sup>4</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)

National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention

17. Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementing documents<sup>4</sup> of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

The Spanish authorities responsible for education have completed all the internal procedures required to sign and ratify the Lisbon Recognition Convention. It will be authorised in a near future by the Cabinet.

Although this convention is not yet in force, the 2/2006 Organic Law on Education, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> May, already expressly envisages admission to Spanish universities for students who have fulfilled university entrance requirements in their respective educational systems. This applies to students from EU educational systems and to countries which have signed international reciprocity agreements on higher education.

Spain also has a procedure for recognising foreign higher education qualifications which provides a clear equivalent to Spanish academic degrees.

Moreover, recognition of foreign university study periods is carried out by the universities themselves, whilst the Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for the recognition of non-university higher education study periods.

In addition, Spain is also promoting bilateral agreements with other EU countries to make the academic degree recognition process easier and swifter. To date, agreements have been signed with Italy, Germany (both pending update) and more recently with France. A similar agreement will shortly be signed with Portugal.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of implementation of ECTS

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

The ECTS unit of measure has generally been used in student exchanges and mobility. During the past academic year, around 23,000 Spanish university students completed a study period in European universities.

Different pilot schemes have been carried out in Spanish universities to adapt methodological aspects to the Bologna process and mainly to calculate the student workload associated with each subject in terms of ECTS credits.

Widespread ECTS implementation throughout the Spanish university system will take place as of the 2008-2009 academic year. This is also the year in which the new Bachelor degrees are to be implemented.

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

The regulations that currently govern the recognition and validation of foreign higher education degrees, contained in the Royal Decree 285/2004, dated 20<sup>th</sup> February, envisage the recognition of foreign degrees as a general academic degree in the Spanish university system and not as a specific degree as listed in the Spanish Catalogue of Official University Degrees, as has occurred up until now. This should provide a faster response to the training demands in Spain of foreign graduates who have obtained their qualifications in other educational systems.

In addition, the aforementioned regulations simplify the recognition of degrees issued in EU member states as being equivalent to Spanish degrees, when the applicant has obtained professional recognition of his/her degree.

To do so, the technical committees created within the University Coordination Council will issue general reports on a particular foreign qualification or specific reports about a specific piece of training carried out by the applicant as part of a foreign degree.

The responsibility for recognising Masters and Doctorate degrees falls to the universities themselves. University procedure in this area, which was previously carried out by the Ministry of Education and Science, will be assessed by both the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA) and by the quality assurance agencies bodies in the autonomous regions.

## Lifelong Learning

(Scorecard)
Recognition of prior learning
20. Describe the measures in place to recognise prior learning, including non-formal and informal learning.
<p>1. Policies and legal framework regarding the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning :</p> <p><i>The legislation State</i></p> <p>Two Organic laws make direct and explicit reference to the recognition and validation of learning acquired in non-formal and informal ways and presently defines the action context in this field. The Organic Law 5/2002 of 19 June, on Qualifications and Vocational training and the Organic Law 2/2006 of 3 May, on Education.</p> <p><i>The Organic Law 5/2002 of 19 June</i>, assumes the objective of creating a National Qualifications and Vocational Training System that will allow not only to integrate the three vocational training supply models existing in Spain (initial, continuing and occupational) but also all the learning acquired in an informal way through work experiences.</p> <p>At the moment Spain is developing a procedure to allow assessment and accreditation of vocational competence based on this law.</p> <p><i>The Organic Law 2/2006 of 3 May</i>, on Education establishes the adoption of measures for assessment and validation of learning acquired through non formal and informal</p>

learning.

The final objective of the National Qualification and Vocational Training System will not be only to promote, provide or incorporate training offers but also to assess *and officially accredit vocational competences, regardless of how they might have been acquired.* (Art.3.5).

-Access and validation of non formal learning- exemption of requisites to continue education:

-Access to the General Certificate of Compulsory Secondary Education ( *Certificado en Educación Secundaria Obligatoria*- ESO) through tests( pruebas libres)

-Access to University Education to adults more than 25 who haven't completed upper secondary school through some equivalency exams established by the Universities for this purpose (since the General Law on education of 4 August 1970).

-Access to middle and higher levels of vocational training cycles through tests to those to who, at specific age, do not meet all the academic prerequisites. What is achieved in these cases, through the validation of learning acquired externally to formal schooling are not the degrees but only the exemption from them. For example, the entrance test to University for adults over 25 years of age when successfully passed does not award a high school degree (Bachillerato) but only the exemption of that degree in order to begin university studies

-Validation of non formal to partial or total recognition :

New regulations developed to the awarding of credits or degrees using this procedure. Since the Law 1/1990 the creation of tests to facilitate adults the acquisition of vocational training degrees is contemplated.

-Recent legislation on the recognition of non formal training and learning acquired socially and through work experiences

The Spanish Constitution, in article 149.1.30 grants the State the right to regulate the procedures for obtaining, issuing and recognizing the academic professional degrees and diplomas. Based on this constitutional article, the central department has the authority to define the general guidelines and the basic requisites that will guide the integrated system of the training offers and the learning acquired through life experiences. There are two departments that are fundamentally responsible for the planning and department of education and training: the educational department that takes care of the initial and formal training and all its different levels, and the labour administration, which has authority over the subsystems of occupational and continuing training. The decentralizing model of the Spanish state maintains a policy of transferring responsibilities or competencies to regional authorities The educational department has relegated all the authority of regulation, planning, organization and department of the educational system (formal and initial training) to the Autonomous Communities (CC.AA).

-Regulations of the Autonomous Communities



It is worthwhile to mention some developments of some Autonomous Communities (CC.AA) that are establishing new paths for recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning The example of the Canary Islands :

In Canary Islands the Law 13/2003, of 4 April, on Adult Education and Continuous Training regulates the principles for the Adult Education and Continuous Training :

Correlation between learning and formal, non-formal and informal educational contexts, in their different modes, with emphasis on distance learning:

Validation and accreditation of formal and non-formal learning

The Resolution of 20 May, 2005, contains instructions for the organization and development of the Initial Validation of the learner (VIA) for Basic Adult Education and Training within the Autonomous Community of Canary Islands and establishes the criteria to validation of informal and non-formal learning without accreditation.

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

Adaptation to the EHEA includes making learning paths more flexible to adapt them to lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is a core function of universities. All officially registered *Grado*, Masters and Doctorate degrees may be part of the lifelong learning courses offered by universities. Consequently, universities shall attempt, when possible, to establish study modes and timetables that facilitate the participation of different types of students in their degree courses.

Universities may, furthermore, develop specific lifelong learning programmes in the form of awards which are different from *Grado*, Masters or Doctorate degrees. The names of these awards must not cause any confusion with the aforementioned degrees. Assessment systems will be established to check compliance with this requirement.

In short, university lifelong learning courses should include not only degrees which are similar to traditional Masters, Expert or Diploma qualifications, but also to official degrees or specific parts of these degrees that are available at the universities and that can make a return to the classroom easier at any stage of a person's professional life.

## Joint degrees

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Establishment and recognition of joint degrees

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

The Royal Decree 56/2005, dated 21<sup>st</sup> January, under which the structure of postgraduate studies in Spain was established, regulates the interdepartmental or interuniversity

programmes on offer, between one or several Spanish and/or foreign universities. In these cases, the resulting regulation will be conditioned by what is set out in the agreement signed by the universities participating in the programme. More specifically, this agreement will have to comment on aspects related to the issuing of the corresponding degree, which may be issued jointly by the universities involved or may allow each university to issue the degrees that it is responsible for.

However, given the complexity of this subject and the need for detailed control over certain aspects of this matter, an additional regulation which will define all these aspects and will make issuing fully recognised joint degrees in Spain feasible will be published shortly. This publication will also regulate how to issue degrees for joint programmes which lead to different degrees being obtained.

This complementary regulation is currently being drawn up by the Ministry of Education and Science. It is estimated that it will come into force in approximately three months time.

It is important to point out that many of the Spanish universities that take part in the European Union's Erasmus Mundus programme (Spanish universities take part in almost half the selected courses, which is a highly satisfactory number) expect to issue this type of degrees as soon as the necessary legislation has been passed.

## **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.

Universities as a whole carry out approximately 61% of the research work done in Spain. The university system is the major player in the Spanish science and technology system.

There are also extremely strong links between the R&D system in general and the university system, which ensures an excellent mutual relationship between the two and has led to the creation of mixed centres and legally independent consortia.

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

No exact figures are available. However, over the last few years the number of doctoral grants and of permanent research posts has increased. Special emphasis has been placed on making it easier for Doctors to find employment in private sector companies and institutions.

The General Directorate of Research, by means of the FPI Program offers support for the pre-doctoral formation of research personnel, whose objective is to support the training of new doctors.

“Ramon y Cajal”, “Juan de la Cierva” and Torres Quevedo programs finance research careers after doctorate. In 2006 the following contracts have been supplied:

Program Ramon y Cajal (RyC): 250

Program Juan de la Cierva (JdC): 350

Program Torres Quevedo (PTQ): 850

TOTAL: 1450 contracts

In summary, the scholarships and contracts offered by the General Directorate of Research during 2006 were 902 pre-doctoral and 1,450 postdoctoral ones.

Among other measures to stimulate the presence of candidates in the research career the Statute of the research personnel on period of training has been published. This will improve the conditions of people in the first stage of the research career, settling down a new legal status for these personnel, determining the bases for the relation between the researcher and the research centre, and facilitating the move of researchers to the scientific sector.

### **The social dimension**

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

The Ministry of Education and Science drives different modalities of scholarships and aids for higher education students.

The greater volume of these scholarships is for students of lower economic background. In addition, the Ministry also offers scholarships for mobility to cover the accommodation and travel costs of those students who enrol in Universities in other region different of the family residence.

Also “collaboration scholarships” are offered to the best students in the last courses that wish to begin tasks of research in the university departments.

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

This type of aid is mainly provided at institutional level.

### **Mobility**

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

Some recent changes in the degree recognition system will help to make it easier for foreign students to study in the Spanish higher education system.

Work is also being carried out to streamline the Spanish visa system, which is likely to encourage student mobility from non-EU countries.

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.

As a general rule, scholarships and grants can not be used outside the country, though this is a question presently under consideration. In any case, there are exceptions to this principle: some doctoral scholarship programmes as well as master level mobility programmes allow for temporal stays abroad of between 2 and 12 months.

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

Concerning mobility to other countries of teaching and research staff it should be mentioned that budget allocations covering this line of action have experienced a significant increase in the last few years. In 2005, a total of 326 temporal stays were financed by the national mobility programme administered by the Ministry of Education and Science. More than half of them took place in European countries.

Regarding mobility into the country for the same staff category, 246 temporal stays were financed by this programme. Of this number, 40% originated from other European countries.

On the other hand, it is expected that some recent changes in the visa system will facilitate the arrival of teaching and research staff from countries outside the European Union.

### **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 Spanish university community is convinced of the urgent need to implement reform and is playing an active role in a wide range of activities and specific programmes in order to put the changes required to adapt to the European Higher Education Area into practice. However, these activities are being carried out at different rates in the different universities. Efforts must be intensified and resources increased not only to continue projects which are already underway but also to start up new programmes.

The Ministry of Education and Science (MEC) is highly aware of the importance of this process and of the fact that the road to success requires considerable institutional backing. It has thus made significant funding available to the universities to contribute to the successful implementation of the process.

In 2005, the MEC awarded Spanish universities €6,600,000 in subsidies to fund projects and programmes aimed at helping the Spanish university system to comply with the Bologna framework. 46 of the 48 Spanish public universities requested these funds which

gives some idea of the process' strategic importance and the interest it has generated. The autonomous regions, which also took part in the call, together with the universities, co-funded these projects with another €6,000,000 approximately. Two kinds of institutional programmes were funded: 1) drawing up plans and strategies to develop the European Higher Education Area in each participating university, including an analysis of the situation at the time, the difficulties and costs of transformation, etc.; and 2) specific activities and training and mobility programmes for lecturers, managers, students and administrative and service staff, the implementation of new academic structures and of new managerial procedures to cater for new needs, etc.

In 2006, MEC funding for the continued implementation of the model rose to €13,090,000, a substantial increase on the previous year. The 2007 State Budget includes another €8,000,000 which will allow the MEC to consolidate its support for the construction of the European Higher Education Area as a permanent political fixture on the 2010 horizon.

This funding symbolises the Spanish State's commitment to providing universities with solid institutional backing so that they can design their strategies and develop the plans they feel are necessary to achieve convergence.

The resources placed at the academic community's disposal must be efficiently used and thus must be carefully assessed to establish their validity. Thus, the corresponding quality assurance mechanisms to follow up and monitor results have been put into place for MEC-led programmes.

The University Coordination Council, the highest Spanish consultative body on university matters, has been organizing during the past two years different actions to improve changes in teaching-learning methodologies, in the design of ECTS subjects, in including subjects based on the skills to be acquired, etc. The main conclusions have been published in <http://www.mec.es/educa/jsp/plantilla.jsp?area=ccuniv&id=910>.

## Future challenges

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

The implementation of the reforms presented in the reorganisation of university education proposed by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science with a view to achieving the setting up of the European Higher Education Area. The design of the new degrees would enable the new *Grado* qualifications to start in the academic year 2008-2009 (i.e. two years before the deadline set by the Bologna Declaration) and for the first university *Grado* degrees to be conferred in 2012. In this new stage, only the commitment and active participation of all education authorities and the Universities themselves will assure success in achieving the objectives.

Lifelong training is a core function of universities and the elaboration and implementation of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education is a challenge.

Increasing mobility of students and academic and administrative staff is also a challenge.

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

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

Bologna Secretariat  
April 2006