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

**Final:** 9 May 2006

**Notes:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

This template has three sections:

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

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

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

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

**Details**

| Country | CYPRUS |
|---|---|
| Date | |
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**Main achievements since Bergen**

| 1. Describe the important developments relating to the Bologna Process, including legislative reforms, since Bergen. |
|---|
| • The major developments in the education system of Cyprus are guided by the process of the Education Reform Study which was initiated by the submission of a proposal by seven academics in 2004 and was formally inaugurated by the President of the Republic in January 2005. As a result of this proposal, an ongoing dialogue has been initiated with all stakeholders and interested parties and advisory councils of Education have been set up (Elementary, Secondary and Higher Education Councils). As far as the higher education is concerned the reform aims, among others, at the increase of the available places for higher education studies in Cyprus, to be achieved by expanding the universities and upgrading the public and the private institutions of higher education and the introduction of Quality Assurance policies to regulate the quality of the higher education. As it follows in the paragraphs below, certain measures have already been put into effect.<br><br>• The Interim Governing Board of the Cyprus University of Technology (CUT) has appointed key administrative and academic personnel during the period 2005-2006. According to the relevant legislation, CUT will encompass the fields of study catered at present by public, non-university level, schools of higher education (HTI, HHIC and others), as well as develop new fields of study in the future. CUT is expected to admit its first students at undergraduate level, in September 2007, under the following Faculties: Applied Arts and Communications; Geotechnical Sciences and Environmental Management; Engineering and Technology; Health Sciences and Management and Economics. (http://www.cut.ac.cy/english/)<br><br>• The Interim Governing Board of the Open University of Cyprus (OUC), having successfully completed the initiation process, has admitted its first 182 students, all at graduate level, in October 2006, under two Masters Programmes, in Education, and in Management of Health Services. Two other programmes, an undergraduate programme in Greek Civilisation and another Masters programme in Computer Science, have already been approved and will start next academic year. (http://www.ouc.ac.cy)<br><br>• In September 2005, the University of Cyprus (UOC) has started a new programme in Architecture that will be 5 years in duration, leading to a (Postgraduate) Diploma in Architecture, but also with an exit point after 4 years of study, leading to a Ptychio (Bachelor) in Architecture. Graduate programmes in Architecture at the Masters and PhD levels will commence in 2007. Thus UOC's Engineering Faculty is gradually expanding to all its disciplines. Another important development for UOC since Bergen is the full implementation of the ECTS requirements, both for transfer and accummulation, for all its programmes of study, as from the academic year 2005/2006. UOC has been issuing a Diploma Supplement, automatically, in English, and free of charge to all its graduates from 1st (Ptychio) and 2nd (Masters) cycle programmes since 2004. UOC is currently implementing internal Quality Assurance mechanisms based on the Bergen standards and guidelines, for its education provision and research, thus aiming to |

develop its internal quality culture. Furthermore, during the last two years it has substantially enhanced its life long learning activities through the operation of its Continuing Education Centre, KEPEAA. (http://www.ucy.ac.cy/)

• Legislation governing the establishment and operation of private universities has been approved by the House of Representatives in July 2005, and set into operation by: (i) appointing, by the Council of Ministers, an independent Evaluation Committee in December 2005; the Evaluation Committee consists from 7 senior academics from at least 3 different countries, and (ii) accepting applications for evaluation; already 5 applications have been submitted, 4 involving existing private schools, and one proposing the establishment of a private university from scratch. The Evaluation Committee has met several times during 2006 and has appointed sub-committees of international experts for evaluating different aspects (governance, administrative, and academic, structures; learning resources and infrastructures, programmes of study, personnel, etc) of the proposed private universities. The Evaluation Committee is expected to submit its recommendations to the Ministry of Education and Culture by mid 2007. Thus the first private universities in Cyprus could be in operation by next academic year (2007/2008). (http://www.ecpu.ac.cy)

The Ministry of Education and Culture is progressing with measures regarding quality assurance in higher education. Together with all stakeholders, it is currently discussing the establishement of a Quality Assurance and Accreditation Board for Cyprus. A proposal has been prepared based on the Bergen standards and guidelines and tentatively approved by the Higher Education Council and the Education Council, following discussions. All stakeholders have been invited to submit feedback by the end of 2006. After that, the Ministry will proceed with the drafting of the relevant legislation aiming to get it approved by the House of Representatives within 2007.

**Thus Cyprus is substantially increasing its student capacity at university level, and at the same time it pushes forwards for (a) the full implementation of ECTS, and the granting of Diploma Supplements by all HEIs, and (b) the establishment of external QA processes.**

## 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 HE system in Cyprus includes various types of institutions, both university and non-university level. Presently all university level institutions are public. The non-university level institutions are either public or private. The Ministry of Education and Culture oversees the universities and the private schools, while the public schools are overseen by other Ministries. Overall, the public authorities and competent agencies/bodies in

Cyprus responsible for HE are:
- The Ministry of Education and Culture, and other Ministries (see below)
- The Cyprus Council for the Recognition of Degrees, KYSATS
- The Council for Educational Evaluation and Accreditation, SEKAP, that does external programme evaluation and accreditation for the private schools
- The Advisory Committee for Tertiary Education, SETE, that approves the registration of new private schools or new programmes offered by private schools
- The Evaluation Committee for the establishment of private universities

It is also noted that
- The Cyprus Foundation for the Promotion of Research, that operates under the Ministry of Finance, allocates national research funds on a competitive basis. Its new framework programme (2007-2010) aims to increase national spending on research to 1% of GDP by 2010.
- The Cyprus Productivity Centre, operating under the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, is the national Europass centre.

The Public Universities are autonomous public institutions regulated by their respective Laws under the Ministry of Education and Culture. Their funds are provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture through the approval of their budget proposals which are examined and approved by the Ministry of Finance, the Council of Ministers and the House of Representatives. Public Universities are autonomous in their academic affairs, the management and control of the administrative and financial resources and of their property, as well as the elections or promotions of the academic and of the administrative staff.

The public institutions of tertiary education provide professional training at various levels and disciplines and most of them operate as Governemnt Departments under the control of the following Minsitries who are responsible also for their annual budget:

Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance
- Higher Technical Institute
- Higher Hotel Institute
- Mediterranean Institute of Management

Ministry of Health
- Nursing School

Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources
- Forestry College

Ministry of Justice
- Police Academy

Finally tuition fees represent a major source of funding for the private institutions. The public institutions, namely the universities, can claim tuition fees for their graduate programmes. All students, either studying in Cyprus (on accredited programmes in the case of private institutions) or abroad, get an annual state grant, in the form of tax exemption.

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

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

Two new universities (CUT, OUC) have started their operation after Bergen. No university offers short-cycle programmes, and all their programmes are academic, with the exception of UOC's MBA programme. The public, non-university level institutions, primarily offer short cycle programmes of a professional nature. These programmes will be upgraded to university, $1^{st}$ cycle academic programmes when incorporated under CUT. The private, non-university level institutions offer a mixture of programmes (short cycle, $1^{st}$ cycle, $2^{nd}$ cycle); their short cycle programmes are either academic or professional.

The Law for the establishment of Private Universities has been approved by the House of Representatives in July 2005 and the Evaluation Committee for Private Universities has been appointed in December 2005. The Committee has appointed Committees Experts for the evaluation of 5 applications. The first Private Universities are expected to be in operation by the academic year 2007/2008. ( http://www.ecpu.ac.cy)

The following Private Institutions of Tertiary Education(PITE) have been registered, since Bergen, in the Ministry of Education and Culture:
- Cyprus International Institute for Public Health in Association with the Harvard School of Public Health, to operate as a research and educational institution in public health in Cyprus and the whole Mediterranean region, offering among others a Masters programme in Public Health. This school is the outcome of an agreement between the Cyprus Government and the Harvard School of Public Health (USA), which was officially signed by the President of the Republic and the Rector of the Harvard University Public Health.
- Alexander College, delivering professional courses in Interior Design.

Student registration in the academic year 2006/2007
University of Cyprus                6.666
Open University of Cyprus            182
Public Institutions of Tertiary Education   1.870
Private Institutions of Tertiary education  15.883 (incl. 6.150 international. students)
TOTAL                24.601

Note: The Cypriot students studying abroad for the academic year 2004/2005 were 19.400 and correspond to 56% of the total Cypriot student population for this academic year.

Legal framework: The Public Universities are regulated by their corresponding individual Laws and Regulations. The Public institutions of tertiary Education operate under the various Ministries either as governmental departments with their internal

regulations or with corresponding laws and internal regulations.  The private institutions of tertiary education are regulated by the Law of Schools of Tertiary Education and the corresponding Regulations.  The Private Universities, under evaluation, will be regulated by the corresponding Law.  During the discussions for the establishment of the Cyprus Quality Assurance and Accreditation Board the presence of a variety of Laws and Regulations has been an issue of concern and efforts are expected to be made to simplify the legal framework of higher education in Cyprus.

## 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.

The Bologna process is overseen by the Department of Higher and Tertiary Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture; through the formulation of the appropriate legal framework and consultations with HEIs, it tries to implement the developments which are agreed upon.  There is collaboration with all the institutions and the stakeholders of higher education of Cyprus; all have been represented in the Cyprus delegation at the Ministerial Conference in Bergen.  Furthermore there is close collaboration and coordination       with       the       Cyprus       Bologna       Promoters       Group (http://www.moec.gov.cy/bolognaprocess/), that aims to disseminate information and to provide hands on advice and help to the institutions for the implementation of the Bologna requirements such as ECTS, Diploma Supplement, internal quality culture etc. There is a student representative amongst the 5 Bologna promoters, while the others are members of staff at HEIs.

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.

Legal Framework
Law      No.      144/1989      that      established      the      University      of      Cyprus (http://www.ucy.ac.cy/admin_serv/UnivLaw.pdf )
Council of the University of Cyprus:
   (a) The Rector and the Vice-Rectors of the University;

   (b) two members of the permanent academic staff elected by all members of the academic staff;

(c) four members appointed by the Council of Ministers;

(d) three members appointed by the Senate of the University, who shall not be members of the staff of the University;

(e) one member representing the students of the University;

(f) one member representing the administrative staff, elected amongst all members of that staff.

(g) The Director of Administration and Finance takes part in the meetings of the Council, without the right to vote.

Senate of the University of Cyprus

(a) the Rector and the Vice-Rectors of the University;

(b) the Deans of the Faculties;

(c) three representatives of the teaching staff of each Faculty elected by the Board of the Faculty;

(d) the representatives of the students, whose number shall correspond to the number of the Faculties.

Board of Faculty

(a) the Dean and the Deputy Dean of the Faculty;

(b) the Chairmen of the Departments of the Faculty;

(c) two members from each Department of the Faculty elected by the Board of the Department, at least one of whom must have the rank of Professor or the rank of Associate Professor;

(d) the representatives of the students, whose number corresponds to the number of the Departments of the Faculty.

Board of Department

The Board of the Department is responsible for the research and teaching work of the Department within the framework of the decisions of the Board of the Faculty. Each Department has a Board of Department which consists of the Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors and Lecturers of the Department and a number of the students' representatives of the Department.

Similarly Law 234(I)/2002 that regulates the establishment and operation of the Open University of Cyprus and the Law 198(I)/2003 regulating the establishment and operation of the Cyprus University of Technology, incorporate conditions for the involvement of students, staff and other stakeholders in their governing bodies.

Law 109 (I) /2005 regulating the establishment, operation and control of Private Universities in Articles 25 to 32 identify the composition of the Council, the Senate, the Schools and the Department Boards where the students and staff are represented. (http://www.ecpu.ac.cy/laws_and_regulations.htm )

Law 67(I)/1996 stipulating the legal basis for the establishment and operation of higher education institutions (including private institutions), incorporates the following provisions:

The public institution's council is composed of the following:
- (a) one representative from the Ministry of Finance, one from the Ministry of Education and Culture and one from the Planning Bureau;
- (b) one to three representatives of the Ministries or public corporate bodies related to the work or profession the students of the institution are being trained for;
- (c) two to five persons from the private sector related to the work or profession the students of the institution are being trained for;
- (d) two representatives of the teaching staff of the institution;
- (e) one representative of the student associations of the institution;
- (f) two persons with special knowledge and capabilities on matters concerning tertiary education.

The Private Institution's Council is composed of the following:
The owner of the institution, the members of the teaching staff, and the students of the institution and its task is to advise the owner and director of the institution on any matter concerning the following:

Staff and Students' participation in governance of higher education
Thus students participate in the Council, the Senate, the Faculty and the Departments of the public universities. They are also represented in the Advisory Committee of Tertiary Education which advises the Minister on the registration of any private school of tertiary education and every programme of study.

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

Business and social partners are represented in the various administrative and advisory boards for higher education. More specifically and within the Education Reform, the recently established Councils for primary and secondary education, higher education, and education in general, that represent important discussion forums for all educational reforms in Cyprus, including the Bologna reforms, have representatives of the professional and social stakeholders. In addition, the ongoing discussions about the establishment of the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency as well as of a National Qualifications Framework, involve all stakeholders, including business 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.

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

The programmes of study of all HEIs in Cyprus always conformed to a two-cycle system (in fact a three-cycle system in the case of universities), even if credits were not used in every case; thus combined programmes were never offered in Cyprus. Short cycle programmes are offered by non-university level, institutions. The HE system of Cyprus uses the following degree structure:

- Certificate (one year)
- Diploma (two years)
- Higher Diploma (three years)
- Bachelor Degree or Ptychio (four years)
- Postgraduate Diploma (one year – professional orientation)
- Master Degree (one to two years – academic orientation)
- Doctoral Degree PhD (three to four years)

All the students (100%) below doctoral studies are enrolled in the two-cycle degree system including short cycle 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 $3^{rd}$ 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?

- Doctoral studies in Cyprus always constituted a discrete, third cycle. At present only UOC offers doctoral programmes. The other two public universities will offer doctoral studies in due course, again as the third cycle. Private universities, if and when formed, will have the option to offer doctoral studies, but based on the submitted proposals for establishing private universities, doctoral studies will not be a priority area for them, and if they do offer them they will be Professional Doctorates. Regarding the specific points:

- All students on the third cycle are following structured doctoral programmes. Access directly from the $1^{st}$ cycle (Ptychio or equivalent) is permitted, but these students are necessarily required to attend taught courses at the graduate ($2^{nd}$ cycle) level (see below).
- The normal length is 4 full-time academic years, while the minimum length is 3 (full-

time) years, and the maximum length 8 years.

- A doctoral programme consists of the following elements: (a) postgraduate taught courses that amount to at least 60 ECTS, credits (having a Masters degree on a relevant specialization could exempt a student fully or party from this requirement), (b) qualifying examination, (c) presentation of a Thesis proposal, (d) independent research that leads to original work and major knowledge advancements in the given area, and whose findings are documented in a Thesis that is examined by a five member committee, including at least one external member.

- The taught courses are assessed as normal taught courses on the basis of learning outcomes. The qualifying examination is either an oral or a written examination involving more than one assessor (usually three) in the case of oral examinations. A student should be given at least two chances in passing this examination. If s/he fails twice this constitutes dismissal from the programme. The research work is supervised by a three member team chaired by the Principal Supervisor. Monitoring procedures are in place to ensure that a student progresses well with his/her research. The supervisory team assesses the Thesis proposal and participates in the Thesis Examination (Viva) Committee together with two other assessors, at least one of which should be external to the university. The Viva involves an open presentation of the Thesis.

- As there is no National Qualifications Framework for the time being the doctoral programmes are not included either, although the degree system is in line with the QF for HE as agreed in Bergen.

- Doctoral programmes may be of an interdisciplinary nature and could be offered jointly between departments or between universities. UOC is already involved in joint doctoral programmes with other universities. The concept of a Graduate School is currently being considered to promote interdisciplinary programmes and to integrate transferable skills in doctoral studies in a systematic way, something which is not currently done.

- ECTS is used for the taught courses. Its use regarding the qualifying examination is optional. For the research part ECTS is used just to measure time.

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(Scorecard and Eurydice )

Access[1] 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

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[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.

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

All first cycle qualifications give access to second and third cycle studies. However there are criteria by each department as to the Grade Point Average of each applicant as well as to how relevant is the first cycle degree to the postgraduate programme. Direct entry to third cycle is possible subject to the conditions mentioned in paragraph 8 above. Similarly all second cycle qualifications give access to third cycle studies.

(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[2].

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.

At present there is no National Qualifications Framework in Cyprus. Following the deliberations for the approval of the European Qualifications Framework in the EU, a working committee has been set up to formulate the policies for the introduction of the National Qualifications Framework. The discussions are at their early stages and every effort has been made to involve all stakeholders and government departments in this attempt. The Cyprus HE system however was always based on the three cycle system, including short cycle programmes, and is fully in line with the Qualifications Framework of the EHEA as agreed in Bergen.

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

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

> 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.

Cyprus never had integrated/combined qualifications and thus the bachelor qualification always gave access to employment in Cyprus and as such no measures are required to increase the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications. However, the percentage of graduates with higher level qualifications (Masters, PhDs) continuously increases, increasing competition in the work market. Regarding the particular points:

- The first cycle qualification gives access to employment into the government service, the education sector and the regulated professions like engineering etc. Consultation between the HEIs and the professional bodies ensure that the programmes satisfy the requirements of the professional bodies in terms of relevant learning outcomes (knowledge, skills).
- There are no available figures for the percentage of first cycle graduates (2005/06) employed or continued studies.
- There are no reasons or indications that the existing situation is going to change.

## Quality assurance

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

National implementation of the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA[3]

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

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

- The external QA system of Cyprus is presently realised in the form of the Council for Educational Evaluation and Accreditation (SEKAP) which applies programme evaluation and accreditation to the programmes of the private institutions of tertiary education. SEKAP consists of seven senior academics, of international standing,

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[3] http://www.enqa.net/files/BergenReport210205.pdf

from at least three different countries. SEKAP employs international expert committees, and the evaluation process involves the submission of a self assessment report by the institution taking the form of internal evaluation. A second recently established external evaluation and accreditation process is embodied in the operation of the Evaluation Committee for the establishment of private universities (the relevant law was approved in July 2005). This Committee operates on the same principles as SEKAP but it also applies institutional evaluation and accreditation on the proposed private universities. Presently, the public universities and institutions are not subjected to any regulatory quality assurance provisions but they have voluntarily initiated peer review evaluations from bodies like EUA, e.g. in the case of the University of Cyprus, that also works towards the establishment of internal QA mechanisms and processes.

- Bearing in mind the existing situation in Cyprus and the requirements of the ENQA Standards and Guidelines a proposal has been formulated for establishing a Cyprus Quality Assurance and Accreditation Board (CyQAAB) whose operation will adhere to the agreed standards and guidelines. More specifically, the aim is to apply programme and institutional evaluation to all HEIs in Cyprus, both public and private, and programme and institutional accreditation to private institutions alone. In addition, it will incorporate provisions for the evaluation of flexible and borderless programmes of study. The proposal has been discussed at the Higher Education Council and at the Education Council, two advisory bodies, where all the stakeholders are represented. The establishment of the CyQAAB was also proposed in the Education Reform Study which was carried out by a group of 7 academics (the education reform was formally inaugurated by the President of the Republic in January 2005).

- There is no official deadline for the introduction of the CyQAAB but it is appreciated that this could be operational within 2007. Its operation will subsume the operations of SEKAP, the Evaluation Committee for the establishment of private universities, the Advisory Committee for Tertiary Education, and the recognition of internal qualifications awarded by private, non-university level, institutions that is currently performed by KYSATS. Thus the operation of the CyQAAB will subsume and streamline the existing external QA mechanisms and processes, in a comprehensive fashion.

- The actions planned in order to introduce the CyQAAB include the official decision by the Council of Ministers, the preparation of the regulatory framework and its approval by the House of Representatives.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of development of external quality assurance system

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

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of your external quality assurance system
- the scope of your external quality assurance system: does it operate at a national level; does it cover all higher education[4]
- 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.

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- As described in paragraph 12 above.
- The present external QA system of Cyprus covers only the private institutions of tertiary education.
- The external accreditation system is based on an internal self assessment report, on the external evaluation by an expert international team and the publication of the positive evaluation decisions reached in the official Gazette of the Government.
- Provisions for peer review of agencies will be included in the regulatory framework for the Cyprus Quality Assurance and Accreditation Board (CyQAAB).

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(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.

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- No students are involved in the governance of the existing national agencies for QA. Provisions are made to include them in the new agency (CyQAAB).
- No students are involved as full members or observers in external review teams. Provisions are made to include them in the new agency.
- No students are involved as part of the decision making process for external reviews.
- The students are involved in the consultation process during external reviews taking

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[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.

part in the visit of the expert committee in the institution under evaluation.

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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.

- The Council of the Educational Evaluation - Accreditation (Simvoulio Ekpaidefitikis Axiologisis-Pistopoiisis SEKAP) consists of seven members, the Chairman and six other members.  The Chairman and members of the Council of Educational Evaluation - Accreditation must be of a recognized academic status; the five members must be University Professors.  The present Council consists of academics from Cyprus, Greece, UK, USA and Germany.  The Council appoints External Evaluation Committees consisting of at least three members, who come from each body shown below, provided that no more than one person is appointed from the same body, establishment or organization.
  - (a) The University of Cyprus;
  - (b)  The public tertiary education institutions of Cyprus;
  - (c) The evaluated- accredited educational overseas institutions, which are recognized by the competent  authorities of the country in which they function
- The Evaluation Committee for Private Universities consists of seven Professors, including the Chairperson of SEKAP, as its ex-officio Chairperson, two other members of SEKAP, and four other members. The members are appointed by the Council of Ministers, must be from at least three different countries and should have sufficient experience in matters of university administration.  The present composition of the Council consists of members from Cyprus, Greece, UK, Germany and USA.  The Committee appoints sub-committees of Experts comprising at least three members, from different organizations.
- SEKAP has full membership in ENQA and is also a member of the European University Association (EUA), the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and the European Association of the Schools of Higher Education (EURASHE).

## Recognition of degrees and study periods

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.

All 1st and 2nd cycle students graduating from the University of Cyprus (UOC) in 2007 will receive a Diploma Supplement, in English, free of charge and automatically, that corresponds to the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format. UOC has been issuing a Diploma Supplement since 2004. At present UOC does not issue a Diploma Supplement for PhD graduates.

In 2005 the Cyprus Productivity Centre that operates under the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance undertook the role of national Europass centre and has circulated information to all HEIs about issuing their Diploma Supplements and has provided the relevant template.

Some private institutes have also started issuing Diploma Supplements. The other two public universities, the Cyprus University of Technology (CUT) and the Open University of Cyprus (OUC) will not have any graduates yet in 2007. However, both new universities have adopted both the ECTS and the Diploma Supplement from the start and thus their first graduates will be receiving a Diploma Supplement as soon as they graduate, in the same manner as UOC does.

(Scorecard)

National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention

17. Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementary documents[5] 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

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[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)

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.

Cyprus has signed and ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention through Law 24(III)/2001. The principles and additional supplementary documents are adhered to in all relevant legislation. In particular the Law and Regulations governing the operation of the Cyprus Council for the Recognition of Degrees (KYSATS) satisfies the requirements of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. More specifically,

- applicants' right to fair assessment is safeguarded and followed in practice; an applicant has the right to request re-examination of his/her case if the first decision is negative
- the principle that recognition should be given if no substantial differences can be proven is applied with great flexibility, for example although in Cyprus all $1^{st}$ cycle programmes are 4 full-time years in duration, KYSATS gives recognition to 3 year Bachelor programmes treating them as equivalent to the national standard
- where recognition is not granted, substantial differences are indeed demonstrated, and
- comprehensive information about Cyprus' HE programmes and institutions is provided

(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 September 2005, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is applied to all programmes of study at the University of Cyprus, both as a credit accumulation as well as a credit transfer system. The two new public universities (CUT, OUC) have adopted right from the beginning the use of ECTS and the Diploma Supplement. The Open University admitted its first students in September 2006 and the Cyprus University of Technology will admit its first

students in September 2007.

- Some of the public and private institutions have started using the ECTS for their programmes and they have been consulting the Bologna Promoters Group in this respect. In some cases the application is not easy because no credit system was used previously and the programmes have no modularity. Thus the application of ECTS demands drastic structural reforms on these programmes. However, these programmes concern a small percentage of the overall student population in Cyprus, and in fact some will cease to exist as their fields of study will be gradually subsumed by CUT. In some other cases, ETCS credits are used in parallel with some other credit system, usually based on contact hours that does not relate directly to ECTS. The use of a double system of credits can cause confusion and the national plan is to gradually enforce the use of ECTS as the sole system of credits.

- Thus there are no national credits as such at present, but ECTS will be gradually established (both legally but in actual practice) as the national system of credits for Cyprus' HE.

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19. Has your country produced a national plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications[6]? If so, give a brief description of the plan and attach a copy.

See appendix for the national plan and for further information on matters arising regarding the recognition of degrees. In summary the Law and Regulations for the Cyprus Council for the Recognition of Degrees (KYSATS) have been appropriately amended so that joint and combined degrees can be considered for recognition, and transfer credits based on relevant work experience or non-university level examinations may be recognized. Furthermore, some amendments were made in order to reduce processing time; on average KYSATS can reach a decision within a three month period after the submission of the request for degree recognition. Problems continue to exist with the recognition of degrees based on the older systems (relevant bilateral agreements for the mutual recognition of degrees should be appropriately clarified), in particular integrated/combined degrees, as well as degrees from new types of programmes, e.g. distance-learning programmes, work-based programmes, etc. The systematic Quality Assurance of transnational forms of education, with the allocation of relevant resources, is planned to be assigned to the Cyprus QA and Accreditation Board (CyQAAB). At present KYSATS is "forced" to do programme evaluation of relevant distance-learning programmes offered by conventional HEIs to ensure that basic requirements are satisfied (infrastructure for student guidance and support, credibility/reliability of assessment methods, etc.). Finally regarding information provision, improvements will always be made so that information is comprehensive, up to date and in a widely spoken European language as well.

**Lifelong Learning**

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(Scorecard)

Recognition of prior learning

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

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.

There are no procedures or national guidelines at present for the recognition of prior learning, including non-formal and informal learning. The individual higher education institution in evaluating entry or transfer requirements may allocate at its own discretion a number of credits for prior learning. A recent modification of the Law of KYSATS allows the Council to recognize, at its discretion, transfer credits based on previous work experience as part of a formal degree title (see paragraph 19). The general matter of recognizing prior learning arose in the context of the discussions about the development of a National Qualifications Framework, but the discussions are at a very early stage. However some steps have been taken on the initiative of institutions. For example, the Continuing Education Centre, KEPEAA, operating within the University of Cyprus, has assigned learning outcomes and credits to the modules of some of its life long learning programmes.

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.

There is little flexibility in the entry requirements of higher education institutions. The applicants must be graduates of the secondary education or equivalent examinations for entry to any programme. Flexible methods of delivery are unconditionally accepted in the case of open type universities alone. Other forms of delivery, when applied by conventional type HEIs, are recognised provided they satisfy some basic requirements set out by KYSATS, namely that the delivery of such programmes is well organised and adequately supported, that there are quality assurance mechanisms in place and that the student assessment system is reliable. Most of the programmes offered by the HEIs are modular in nature. All programmes delivered by the universities including the Open University of Cyprus are modular. Only some of the older programmes offered by non-university level institutions are non modular and these are gradually being phased out. The University of Cyprus allows the use of e-learning tools complementarily to conventional learning methods. However, distance-learning through e-learning and other means is permitted in the case of joint programmes.

**Joint degrees**

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Establishment and recognition of joint degrees

> 22. Describe the legislative position on joint degrees in your country.
>
> Please include:
> - the stage of implementation of any legislation to establish joint programmes
> - whether joint[7] 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.

There are no legal obstacles regarding the recognition of joint programmes. KYSATS' Law and Regulations stipulate that joint programmes and joint degrees are recognizable. The individual Laws of the universities allow them to offer joint programmes and to award joint degrees in any of the three cycles; in fact the universities are allowed to deliver such programmes (for the 2nd and 3rd cycle) in an international language. The University of Cyprus (UOC) is already offering such programmes in collaboration with other institutes (these are Masters and PhD programmes) and has already awarded joint degrees with the University of Athens. UOC has recently decided to promote joint Doctoral Programmes and is presently working towards a flexible framework for these programmes. The private institutions are not allowed to have joint programmes.

## 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.

The research activities in Cyprus are relatively low, at about 0.38% of GDP. The major part (60%) of this research is carried out at the University of Cyprus and other higher education institutions. The establishment of the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Cyprus has already created new research activities and this is going to culminate even more with the operation of the Cyprus University of Technology.

Furthermore the Cyprus Government has provided funds to set up, in 2005, the Cyprus International Institute for Public Health in Association with the Harvard School of Public Health (USA). This is an educational and research institute aiming to address important public health issues not only in Cyprus but also in the surrounding region. Another institution of a similar nature, the Cyprus Institute, is being established with the aim to deal, among other things, with the environmental and water issues in the region of Cyprus.

The overall research activities in Cyprus are overlooked by the Cyprus Foundation for the Promotion of Research which keeps close relations and activities with all the HEIs and Research Centres of Cyprus. The new national framework programme for research that

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[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.

covers the period 2007-2010 aims to increase national spending in research to 1% of GDP by 2010. Furthermore the Government has introduced special funds to establish new technology incubators and the public and private institutions of tertiary education are actively involved in the process.

Research activities especially in the form of applied research and business development are expected to be further encouraged by the setting up of a Technology Park in Cyprus which at present is under evaluation and planning.

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?

There are no figures available for the doctoral candidates taking up research careers but the figures are expected to increase with the measures under implementation mentioned in the previous paragraph (23). Recently a researcher's mobility centre was established in Cyprus, managed by the Cyprus Foundation for the Promotion of Research. Furthermore, the operation of two new public universities (together with the further expansion of the older University of Cyprus), as well as the prospect of having private universities, will substantially increase the employment opportunities of PhD holders, both as members of academic staff, since having a Doctoral degree is an obligatory requirement for the academic staff of both public and private universities in Cyprus (all academic staff in public universities are considered to be researchers for 50% of their time), and as full time researchers on funded projects. The establishment of new research institutes and the planned establishment of a Technology Park all add to the job opportunities of researchers.

## The social dimension

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

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

The establishment of the Open University of Cyprus and the Cyprus University of Technology will increase tremendously access to quality higher education in Cyprus and will reduce the number of Cypriot students studying abroad who at present represent 55% of the total Cypriot student population in higher education. Furthermore, the prospect of establishing quality-based private universities (the evaluation of the relevant applications is underway) will increase the university level capacity of Cyprus substantially.

The public universities and institutions of tertiary education have provisions in their entry regulations for the allocation of a certain percentage of places to candidates with special needs as well as to candidates from socially and economically disadvantaged groups. The new Law of the Pancyprian Examinations that regulates entry to 1st cycle and short cycle programmes of the public institutions stipulates that 3% additional places on every programme should be offered to students graduating from evening

schools and 10% additional places on technological/engineering programmes should be offered to students graduating from the secondary technical schools.

The Cyprus Government provides a number of scholarships, grants and loans for studies both locally and abroad. These funds are provided both on the basis of merit but also on the basis of both merit and family financial conditions.

The Cyprus Government in its effort to increase higher education studies is paying the fees for the 1$^{st}$ cycle and short cycle programmes at public institutions. In addition, the Government provides an annual grant of £1000 (£1500 if fees are paid by the student) to every student at all levels of higher education studying locally or abroad in accredited programme of study.

The impact of the policies to increase access to higher education is directly observed from the number of students both locally and abroad. According to these figures and following the introduction of the above measures in 2001, the student numbers have grown from 20.536 in 2001 to 34.577 in 2005 which means an annual increase of 11 %.

There are no other definite plans for increasing access to higher education, apart from gradually increasing the number of student places (through the expansion of existing programmes or the introduction of new programmes of study) at the public universities.

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 polices to improve retention, including results if possible
- any further measures planned, following evaluation of the retention measures already in place.

Guidance and Counselling is provided to all secondary education students especially in the last form in order to assist them identify their preferences for higher education studies in relation to their personal aptitudes and capabilities. Counselling and career planning including personal tutorship is further available at all the HEIs. In addition, the student welfare services of the institutions try to address the problems of all students, in particular those students facing financial and other social difficulties, and provide psychological support as well as some financial support to the very needy.

There are no measures in place to monitor the retention ratio which in general is quite high, and thus the situation does not urge for any particular attention. For example, the students of the University of Cyprus that complete their studies within the regular time of the course is about 86%, while the percentage of students failing and not completing them is low at 3 %. In view of this situation no further measures are planned for the time being.

**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.

- Inward student mobility is encouraged by the introduction of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) to all programmes of study at the University of Cyprus. The two new public universities have also adopted right from the beginning the use of ECTS. A number of other public and private institutions of tertiary education are also introducing ECTS. Furthermore the University of Cyprus realizing that the use of the Greek language for its teaching is a barrier to incoming student mobility runs for a number of years now and quite successfully a School of Greek Language to provide intensive summer language courses to incoming students. It also provides hostel facilities to such students.

- As the majority of Cypriot students are studying abroad there is no pressing need to encourage vertical mobility. However, efforts continue regarding the further promotion of horizontal mobility for the students studying in Cyprus.

- All universities in Cyprus are now allowed to offer joint programmes and to award joint degrees. Efforts are being made to increase the number of such programmes, principally at the doctoral level.

- The Cyprus Productivity Center has undertaken the role of the Cyprus Europass Center, aiming at the establishment and as broadly as possible use of the Europass portfolio which will enhance mobility.

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

All grants, loans and scholarships are available for studies in Cyprus and in any recognised institution in another country.

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 establishment of joint programmes is one measure under consideration. For this reason the language barrier is lifted in the case of graduate level joint programmes. The University of Cyprus (UOC) and the other two public universities are required by their Laws to keep 10% of their academic staff positions permanently vacant to be used for visiting professors. This institution has been working quite well for UOC that has a continuous flow of overseas scholars (for short duration visits or full semester visits) throughout an academic year. Outward mobility of staff is encouraged through the institution of sabbatical leave, which is utilized by many members of academic staff.

Furthermore the government covers additional expenses of outward staff mobility and the reception expenses of inward staff mobility, for public institutions of tertiary education (like HTI).

**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. |
|---|
| For the academic year 2006/2007 the number of international students studying in Cyprus is 6.150 and these students are originating from countries like China, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Russia etc.  The government policy objectives include the promotion of Cyprus into a regional and international education and research centre. As most of the international students are studying at the private institutions of tertiary education, measures have been taken to upgrade their status to Private Universities (see paragraph 1).  Furthermore in an effort to identify quality international students and avoid the incoming of illegal workers the relevant government departments are pursuing personal interviews at the country of origin of the applicant, with positive results on the quality of the international students.<br><br>In addition the Department of Higher and Tertiary Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture has participated recently in the European Higher Education Fair, in Delhi, India, together with 3 private colleges.<br><br>In order to implement the relevant EU Directive allowing part time job for international students the relevant legislation is currently under discussion in order to attract more international students. |

**Future challenges**

| 31. Give an indication of the main challenges ahead for your country. |
|---|
| Cyprus has initiated a major Educational Reform which was proposed by a group of seven academics and was inaugurated by the President of the Republic. Within this reform there are several significant suggestions for the Higher Education Sector such as the substantial increase of the available university places, the upgrading of the private institutions of tertiary education and the establishment of quality-based private universities, as well as the introduction of a Cyprus Quality Assurance and Accreditation Board, in line with the agreed ENQA Standards and Guidelines.<br><br>A further challenge for the Cypriot education system is the formulation of a systematic and comprehensive Life Long Learning strategy and mechanisms for implementation, as it is required within the EU.  Parallel to this challenge is the introduction of a National Qualifications Framework which presently is completely absent.<br><br>Specific measures, as described above, have been taken to realise these objectives and challenges and much more effort is necessary. |

Completed National Reports should be sent to the Bologna Secretariat by email no later than **Friday 15 December 2006**.
Please remember to attach a copy of your national action plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications.
Bologna Secretariat
May 2006

**Appendix**

**GUIDELINES FOR NATIONAL ACTION PLANS FOR RECOGNITION**

**THE CYPRUS CASE**

In response to the above guidelines approved by the Bologna Follow Up Group, Vienna, April 7, 2006, the case for Cyprus is analyzed as follows:

1.      Legislation

Cyprus has signed and ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention through Law 24 (III)/2001. The legislation of KYSATS (Cyprus Council for the Recognition of Degrees) fully adheres to the stipulations of the Convention.

KYSATS' legislation underwent various amendments since the operation of the Council back in 1996. The most recent amendment was this year and aimed to make the operation of the Council more flexible so that decisions on every case can be reached within a period of three months.

The major amendments introduced in relation to the original legislation are as follows:

   (a) Consideration of joint degrees for potential recognition.
   (b) Consideration for potential recognition, under conditions, of combined degrees, of previous European systems prior to the Bologna reforms, both as first and second cycle degrees.
   (c) Using a similar prior case, to reach a decision without the obligation to seek the opinion of an Expert Committee for the relevant specialization. This amendment aims to reduce processing time.
   (d) Using exams (organized by a university) as an alternative means, to attending supplementary modules, for demonstrating adequacy of knowledge. This amendment aims to facilitate candidates in meeting the Council's requirements regarding demonstration of knowledge in given disciplines, as timely as possible. It is noted that student placements at local universities for attending supplementary modules are often very limited.
   (e) Ability to recognise transfer credits based on relevant work experience or non-university level examinations.

In addition KYSATS has recently decided to demonstrate higher flexibility regarding the recognition of degree titles for given specializations against other compatible (but not identical) specializations, provided that the required knowledge enhancements do not exceed the equivalent of one academic year full time study.

Thus KYSATS' legislation is under continuous review both for making the Council's operation more time efficient and also for responding to new changes, such as joint degrees.

KYSATS' legislation, other pertinent information, and links to all European NARICS and other sites, are publicized through the Council's web site (http://www.kysats.ac.cy) that was inaugurated about a year ago. Some of this information, though, is listed exclusively in

Greek. **Thus one action is to maintain this information in a widely spoken European language, such as English, as well.**

Cyprus has signed a number of bilateral recognition agreements with other countries, both in the European area and outside. These agreements conform to the Lisbon Recognition Convention. However occasionally difficulties arise regarding correspondences between older titles awarded prior to the Bologna reforms and new titles under the streamlined education structures advocated by the Bologna Declaration. One area of particular difficulty concerns older combined titles of four years duration that are considered by the countries that used to offer them as second cycle (Masters) degrees. Given that in Cyprus first cycle degrees are four years in duration, it is difficult to recognise such older degrees as second level degrees. The same applies, but to a lesser extent, to combined titles of five years' duration. In many such cases KYSATS has already awarded both first and second cycle recognition.

KYSATS' legislation (see amendment b. mentioned above) gives the Council authority to examine such older combined titles and decide on a case by case basis, provided that there is a bilateral agreement or the institution that awarded the title is from a country member of the European Union. Thus recognition of combined titles of minimum duration of five years at the second cycle level is possible but not automatic. Some parties conceive this to be in conflict with relevant clauses in given bilateral agreements. In more recent agreements the relevant clauses are unambiguously defined so there are no misunderstandings. **The same clarifications should be made with respect to all bilateral agreements.** However, it is stressed that these difficulties arise with respect to older, pre-Bologna titles and not for new post-Bologna titles.

Finally KYSATS has recently signed a bilateral agreement with Greece's corresponding competent authority (DOATAP) regarding the recognition of engineering titles of five year duration.

2.      Recognition practice

KYSATS applies the Recommendation on criteria and procedures of the assessment of foreign qualifications and periods of study. However it is emphasised that the interpretation of older titles, within the national context of Cyprus, and hence their recognition, is not necessarily a straightforward task. After all this was a major impetus behind the Bologna reforms.

In addition, there are serious difficulties in connection with transnational degrees.

KYSATS aims to process an application within a period of three months. Towards this aim it has proposed and strongly supported relevant changes in its legislation so that its operation is more flexible (see above). However, given the caution that KYSATS justifiably applies at present with respect to transnational titles through distance learning, the three month period is often not possible to be adhered to, primarily due to the often encountered inability of foreign institutions to respond promptly to relevant requests for information.

Moreover, it is important to clarify that KYSATS applies two forms of recognition: (a) equivalence ("isotimia"), and (b) correspondence ("antistichia"). Equivalence is the standard form of recognition and applies to all levels of recognition. Applications for equivalence are promptly processed.

Correspondence is a more demanding form of recognition. It applies just to first cycle degrees. All conditions for equivalence apply and, in addition, the content of the applicant's programme of study should be adequately comparable to the so-called prototype programme for the relevant specialization. Prototype programmes are primarily drawn from national programmes that take into consideration national standards for relevant professions (education, medicine, engineering, etc). Obviously, examining correspondence may often take longer than equivalence.

As already mentioned there are no legal obstacles regarding the recognition of joint degrees, although KYSATS has no experience so far, since no such titles have been submitted for recognition. Likewise, although in theory there are no legal obstacles concerning double and multiple degrees, it is important that such degrees are conceived, for any purpose, as components of a single qualification and not as separate, distinct qualifications. KYSATS has no experience of double and multiple degrees and thus what control measures should be taken in this respect. **This is certainly a matter for future action.** At the European level the form of a Diploma Supplement (DS) for double and multiple degrees should be specified. Regarding joint degrees it is assumed that there will be a single DS but with multiple entries corresponding to the periods of study in the different institutions.

**No measures have been taken so far regarding the notification of interested parties about the compliance of external bodies with the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Subject to the availability of necessary resources, this would be a future action.**

Regarding transparency tools for recognition, both the ECTS and the DS have been implemented by the University of Cyprus. The other state universities (Open University of Cyprus, Cyprus University of Technology) that have just commenced their operation, also plan to implement the ECTS and DS. It is noted that Cyprus does not have at present national legislation regulating tertiary education in a collective fashion. Instead there are (a) separate legislations for each state university giving it full autonomy, (b) legislation governing the operation of tertiary, non-university level, private schools (a recent amendment to this legislation enforces the implementation of the ECTS and DS) and (c) legislation governing the establishment and operation of private universities (no such institutions operate at present).

Concerning borderless/ transnational education, the existing legislation prevents the operation in Cyprus of satellite institutions (campuses) of foreign establishments. **However, there is discussion at present concerning the establishment of a Cyprus QA and Accreditation Board.** This body is likely to be responsible for the assessment of borderless/ transnational education. Until this agency is in operation, KYSATS is obliged to do programme evaluation of some sort of distance learning programmes (offered by conventional type institutions) on the basis of which it decides whether the given titles are potentially recognizable or not. This process, although necessary at present in order to safeguard minimum quality standards, it is also very time-consuming. Institutions offering distance learning programmes often do not facilitate KYSTAS with the necessary information in a timely fashion (sometimes they do not respond at all) and this causes delays and other difficulties.

3.      Information provision

As already mentioned KYSATS maintains its own web site that is linked to the ENIC-NARIC web site. The Ministry of Education and Culture also maintains a web site giving useful information about the national education system. **Improvements of course will always be made so that the information is comprehensive, up to date and in a widely spoken European language as well.**

Higher education institutions provide applicants with information packages and in addition they maintain their own web sites.


4.       Structures

KYSATS is also the national information centre, for Cyprus. The role of KYSATS as a national information centre is advisory.

According to KYSATS' legislation, the Ministry of Education and Culture provides the Council with the required staff and infrastructure for its operation.

KYSATS collaborates and exchanges information with SEKAP (Council for Educational Evaluation and Accreditation), the competent national authority regarding the quality assurance of programmes offered by tertiary, non-university level, private schools.

If SEKAP accredits a programme, KYSATS automatically recognizes the particular qualification (regarding equivalence but not necessarily correspondence, although this is a subject currently under discussion).

KYSATS is a member of the ENIC/NARIC Network and a member of the recently established MERIC Network, while SEKAP is a member of ENQA. These associations are very beneficial.

KYSATS also exchanges information with Greece's competent authority, DOATAP, and directly collaborates on certain matters (see above).