Version EN

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

1 November 2008.

PART I

BOLOGNA PROCESS
TEMPLATE FOR NATIONAL REPORTS: 2007-2009

Notes:

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

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

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

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

Details

Country	FRANCE
Date	28 October 2008
BFUG member (one name only) Position	Hélène Lagier MESR/DREIC
Email address	helene.lagier@education.gouv.fr
Contributors to the report	MESR (DREIC, DGES, DGRI, DEPP), AERES, ENIC-NARIC France.

1. Main developments since London 2007

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

Since London 2007, a major reform has taken place in further education in France with the Act on the freedoms and responsibilities of universities (LRU) dated 10 August 2007 (no. 2007-1119) - http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/initRechTexte.do - which is part of a vast reform of higher education planned over the next five years.

A/ Law n° 2007-1199 dated 10 August 2007 regarding the freedoms and responsibilities of the universities:

This Act, known as the "LRU Act", defines two new public service missions devolved to the universities:
- participation in the construction of the European Higher Education and Research Area;
- student guidance and professional integration.

The LRU Act gives universities more room for manoeuvre, allowing them greater freedom of choice and the ability to interact with their environment. In this way, they can implement a development strategy tailored to their needs, demonstrate improved management and student support capabilities. The Act also adds to their appeal and heightens their profile at the European and international level.

It provides the 85 French universities with stricter governance, centred on their Vice-Chancellors and open to the business world:

- the Rector, who is appointed by the elected members of the university board from among research professors and equivalent staff regardless of nationality, has increased powers and becomes the real "boss" of the institution, which is a prerequisite for the implementation of the chosen strategy for his or her university;

- the University board becomes the strategic body, reduced to 20 or 30 members and more open to the outside world, with 7 or 8 external members, including at least one company manager or corporate executive.

Moreover the Act gives greater autonomy to universities for the management of their assets, human resources and their budget (and particularly the option of setting up financially independent foundations with funds from public and private subsidies, able to promote the university's research and training projects with businesses).

The Act is accompanied by an unprecedented investment of €5 billion over 5 years, representing an unparalleled 50% increase in the higher education budget, in order

to improve living and working conditions in universities, as well as the quality of training and the attractiveness of careers in university teaching. In the short term, in addition to the 2008 operating budget for each university, universities are also encouraged to adopt these new provisions by a €250,000 allocation for each university which attains the new degree of authority by 1 January 2009. Twenty universities will benefit from the new system as of 2009, and by 2012 all 85 universities will have attained their new status.

B/ Projects planned to complete the implementation of the Act:
Four other projects were launched in June 2007 to complete the scheme for the in-depth reform of universities, of which the LRU Act is the foundation:

1/ Student living conditions:
the new welfare system, implemented from the beginning of the 2008 university year, provides for:
> simplification of criteria for awarding grants;
> extension of the scheme to the middle classes;
> merit recognition throughout the period of study;
> funds to promote international student mobility, with more than 26,500 three-month mobility grants in 2009.
Moreover, the policy adopted to improve student lodgings specifically provides for the renovation of 70,000 rooms over 10 years (7,000 per year) and the building of 50,000 new rooms (5,000 per year).

2/ Making higher education and research careers more attractive:
All universities will have total control over all their human resource parameters within 5 years, in line with the broadened scope for initiative and action concerning human resources management targeted by the LRU Act.

3/ Renovation of university buildings:
apart from the property policy implemented by the Government/Regions planning contracts (2007-2013) to contribute to the modernisation of university buildings and improve working conditions, a special "Operation Campus" was launched to revitalise existing campuses and associate them in order to give them a strong international profile.

4/ Improving degree pass rates:
The long-term plan for improving Degree success, launched in 2007 for the period 2008-2012, serves a dual purpose:
- to improve pass rates on degree courses;
- to ensure that the diploma represents a real qualification for continuing studies or for finding employment.

In particular, this plan is combined with an active guidance scheme based on the dissemination of objective information to clarify students' in their choices (pass rates and openings relating to the various courses), and closer student monitoring and support.

This plan was launched experimentally in September 2007 and extended to all universities in September 2008.

2. Partnership

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

The implementation of the Bologna Process is at the centre of the four-year contractual policy for higher education institutions under the responsibility of the Ministry for Higher Education and Research (MESR). On this count, regular consultation meetings are arranged with universities and other institutions to ensure that the "Bologna philosophy" is applied in a way that takes into consideration realities in the field. The discussions to prepare the four-year contract that binds each institution to the State, and whose central role was reinforced by the LRU Act, draw on the report prepared by the institution and the evaluation now performed by AERES, the evaluation agency, and on the development project prepared by the institution. They lead to the definition of shared targets which meet both the institution's strategic issues and national priorities and allow the required resources to be allocated.

At the local level, the institution's board completes the project after consulting all stakeholders, who are represented on the basis of democratic elections.

At national level, any changes in the legal aspects of higher educational development presupposes consultation with representative bodies such as the National council for higher education and research (CNESER), where institutions, teaching and student unions and professional bodies, among others, are represented on the basis of elections.

a) Does your country have a national working group for Bologna follow-up [1]

	Yes ☐	No ☒

b) Does your national Bologna follow-up group include representatives of

	Yes	No
Ministry	Yes ☐	No ☐
Rectors' conference	Yes ☐	No ☐
Academic staff	Yes ☐	No ☐
Students	Yes ☐	No ☐
Staff trade unions	Yes ☐	No ☐
National Quality Assurance Agency	Yes ☐	No ☐
Employers	Yes ☐	No ☐

Other (please specify) <u>See answer 2 above.</u>

c) Does your country have a Bologna promoters' group [2]   Yes ☒   No ☐

d) Does your national Bologna promoters' group include representatives of

	Yes	No
Ministry	Yes ☐	No ☐
Rectors' conference	Yes ☒	No ☐
Academic staff	Yes ☒	No ☐
Students	Yes ☒	No ☐
Staff trade unions	Yes ☐	No ☒

---

[1] A group that develops policy proposals for implementing the Bologna Process
[2] A group that supports/advises HEIs on implementation of the Bologna Process

National Quality Assurance Agency   Yes ☒   No ☐
Employers   Yes ☐   No ☒
Other (please specify) _____

Please add any additional comments if necessary:

The task of the 18-member National Bologna Experts Team, whose members were selected by the MESR for their proven competence and particularly close involvement in the European movement - research professors with international lifelong learning responsibilities in universities, specialist schools and business schools, representatives of the Conference of University Rectors (CPU) and student representatives - is to:

- advise higher education institutions on the implementation of the Bologna Process, particularly for teaching within the framework of the "LMD" (degree, masters, doctorate) system adopted in France, ECTS credits connected with "learning outcomes", the question of authority, the qualification framework, diploma supplements, related diplomas or the "Quality" approach;

- contribute to the training and development of European staff skills, particularly in the institutions and their representative conferences, whether for the Bologna Process or the development of Erasmus;

- take part in providing information on the Bologna Process and its issues to the general public, not only in France but also in Europe and across the world.

Within this context, since 2008 the Bologna Experts Team has been involved in:

- conferences such as "The challenge of quality in higher education: towards a change of paradigm" in Montpellier (May 2008) with the AIPU (International University Teaching Association), or the conference on "The Bologna Process: a student-centred approach" in Lyon (June 2008) with the EAIE ((European Association for International Education);

- information meetings about the national framework for qualifications (RNCP: National directory of professional qualifications); the purpose of these reunions, which were held in close contact with the universities, the CNCP (national commission for professional qualifications) responsible for this framework, and the strong political will both of the MESR and the CPU, was to provide the "referents" designated by each university rector with clear explanations of the "skills" approach tied in with the "learning outcomes", awarding diploma supplements and the registration of diplomas with the RNCP referred to above.

Moreover, the EUA brochure on the "New European higher education landscape" has been translated into French and published, in order to ensure that the principles and aims of the Bologna Process may be known to the general public.

Finally, the consultation meetings which bring together the Bologna Experts Team, the CPU, CNCP referred to above, responsible for the national directory of professional qualifications (the RNCP), Europe Education Formation France ("2E2F"), responsible for management of the implementation of community education and training programmes in France, and the MESR, are organised regularly around central themes which are inherent to the Bologna Process. For example, the question of learning outcomes and quality assurance has been debated regularly.

Among the actions planned for 2009, the advisory strategy of the Bologna Experts towards the institutions concerned by the next stages of the contractual policy will be continued, as well as the work already begun with specialised schools in the paramedical, artistic and social sectors.

Furthermore, two conferences are planned: one on "European tools for academic recognition, obtaining employment and the European qualifications framework", the other on "Mobility in doctorate studies".

DEGREE SYSTEM

3. Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle

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

As of 2002, France created an entire legal arsenal (cited by the Eurydice "Focus" brochure prepared for the last London ministerial conference in May 2007 - see pp 163-164 www.eurydice.org) to promote the adjustment of its higher education system, begun in 1999, to the European guidelines for the structure of academic awards sanctioned by the Bologna Process.

Two decrees were published to complete this legal framework: the first, published in April 2007 (see decree no. 2007-540 of 11 April 2007), concerns courses leading to the BTS (advanced vocational training certificate) - i.e. 120 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits corresponding to this diploma. The other, published in May 2007 (see decree no. 2007-692 of 3 May 2007), applies to the 2-year preparatory classes for the competitive entrance examinations to the "grandes écoles" - i.e. 120 ECTS credits).

Thus, since September 2006, almost all higher educational courses coming under the 1st or 2nd cycles in French universities and higher institutions are now established in the "LMD" scheme (degree, master, doctorate), which is a reflection of the European award structure based on the "BA/MA/D" ("Bachelor, Master, Doctorate").

As far as the medical and paramedical sectors are concerned, formerly excluded from the LMD scheme, negotiations are under way to enable the transition to the LMD.

b) Please give the percentage of the total number of all[3] students below doctoral level enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09.

Total number of all students below doctoral level	Number enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09[4]	% of all students enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2008/09
2,072,763 (September 2008) estimate)	1 752 384 (2008 estimate < 2007 figures)	84.53%)

---

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

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

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

Negotiations are in progress with all the professional organisations to allow paramedical training courses to be included in the "LMD" scheme. This should take effect as of September 2009 for nursing courses, and will allow university recognition of the State Nursing Diploma by giving it degree status. This approach will soon be extended to all other paramedical training courses.

A similar review is being undertaken with all interested parties on teaching courses leading to the medical (doctors and midwives), pharmaceutical and odontological professions. These teaching courses are not in fact included yet in the LMD scheme and the various stages of the programme are sanctioned neither by a bachelor's degree nor by a master's degree. On the other hand, entry into these professions is only possible those in possession of the corresponding State diploma: DE ("Doctorat d'exercise" - professional doctorate) for the medical, odontological and pharmaceutical professions, State diploma for midwives.

Finally, apart from a review of the "masterisation" process which should take effect in 2010, and competitive examinations for teachers (currently based on the first degree, or the 1st year of the Master's degree course - the former "Maîtrise" - for the higher examination), a Plan for success in first degree courses has been launched for the coming four years in order to improve pass rates for first year higher education students, who currently display the highest failure rate.

4. Stage of implementation of the third cycle
Please describe the progress made towards implementing doctoral studies as the third Bologna cycle.

Please include:
- the percentage of doctoral candidates following structured doctoral programmes including both taught courses and independent research
- the normal length of full-time doctoral studies
- other elements[5] apart from independent research that are included in doctoral study programmes
- the supervisory and assessment procedures for doctoral studies
- information on whether doctoral studies are included in your country's qualifications framework and linked to learning outcomes

---

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

- information on whether interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills are integrated in doctoral studies
- information on whether credit points are used in measuring workload in doctoral studies.
- Information on the status of the doctoral students (students, early stage researchers, both)

Courses leading to doctorates, redefined in 2002, have been restructured by the decree of 7 August 2006, especially to ensure better coordination with research. They are organised within doctoral faculties and are accessible after obtaining a diploma giving the grade of master, or by dispensation to students who have followed equivalent studies overseas or who have obtained prior learning accreditation. The doctoral faculties are attached to higher education institutions and bring together a group of research teams which are responsible for the teaching and development of doctoral students. They provide students with teaching relevant to their research projects and necessary for the acquisition of a broader scientific culture.

To ensure better visibility at European and international level, with both the appearance of centres of excellence based on Centres of Research and Higher Education (PRES) and the implementation of a cooperation process (joint accreditations or associations) in disciplines with a low critical mass, the number of doctoral faculties is dropping (315 in September 2005 compared with 289 in September 2008).

These courses, usually lasting three years, lead to the national doctorate diploma following a viva. The doctorate is granted by universities, écoles normales supérieures (teacher training "grande école") and higher education institutions authorised to do so, either singly or jointly, by a decree signed by the Minister for Higher Education and Research. In line with the principles of the EHEA qualifications framework adopted at Bergen, and taking account of the specificities connected with the requirements of research work, which cannot be quantified for France, no doctoral programme or doctoral diploma qualifies for ECTS credits.

It should also be pointed out that the possibilities of preparing a doctorate within the framework of the "international PhD co-supervision" have been extended by the decree of 6 January 2005. They comply with the recommendations of the Salzburg (2005) and Nice (2006) "Bologna" seminars regarding doctoral courses in the European higher education sphere.

About 40% of students beginning doctoral studies have employment contracts (as research assistants, temporary teaching and research associates, or as beneficiaries of a CIFRE - Industrial contract for training through research).

In this context, among the measures taken to make research careers more attractive and improve working conditions for young researchers, research allocations have been increased by 8% since 1 October 2007 and the minimum salary for CIFREs has been increased by 16%, which now enables a research

worker with a doctorate to earn €2000/month before deductions when these two schemes apply.

Moreover, a new "doctoral contract" is planned, aimed at giving more weight to doctorates and making them the flagship diplomas in the French teaching system. It will be a simpler, unique three-year contract for universities and research bodies, subject to the holder registering as a doctoral student, which can be adapted to individual cases, and will provide the same social security benefits as a work contract. This new statute will be adopted by decree and will be implemented as of September 2009.

Finally, the "doctoral student-counsellors" scheme, which was launched in September 2007 for teachers in higher education to improve mutual understanding between universities and businesses, will be developed during the 2008-2009 university year.

5. Relationship between higher education and research

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

> France is currently engaged in an ambitious policy aimed at:
>
> - structuring the teaching provided at doctorate level around centres of excellence in research, which associate both universities and specialist schools;
>
> - improving the organisation of doctorate studies through site policies, by encouraging cooperation between institutions and bringing together existing strengths in disciplines within the framework of the PRES (centres of research and higher education).
>
> This policy leads to a strengthening of the strong points of the university research system, with the following consequences:
>
> * the emergence of major multidisciplinary sites which stand out in global competition;
>
> *the consolidation of the strong points of average-sized sites;
>
> * the specialisation of other sites in "scientific niches".

b) Please outline any measures to improve co-operation between higher education institutions and other private and public institutions that undertake research. Please include:
- percentage of GDP spent on research
  - from public funds
  - from private funds
- total annual national research expenditure (expressed in national currency)
  - from public funds
  - from private funds
- percentage of research carried out in higher education institutions (in terms of funding)
- details of the funding mechanisms for doctoral students in your country

> One of the main aims of the "Ppact for research", adopted by the French government in 2006 to bring about an in-depth renewal of the national research and innovation system, is to reinforce synergy between higher education and research.
>
> Within this framework, in order to give stakeholders in research and higher education a front-line role and international exposure, in addition to "Operation Campus" referred to in point 1 above, the development of PRES (Centres for research and higher education) and RTRA (Theme-based networks for advanced research) is being encouraged:

** A/ The PRES: this new instrument of cooperation enables research institutions and bodies or higher education institutions, whether public or private and geographically close, to pool their activities and resources in order to attain a genuine critical mass.

To date 12 PRES have been created.

** B/ The RTRA: these new theme-based networks for advanced research, created from the best French research units with financial backing from the government, are intended to encourage the appearance of internationally-recognised scientific centres of excellence in France. This enables a critical mass of high-level researchers to be grouped around a cluster of geographically close research units, and united in a shared strategy around a common scientific objective. These networks also provide a bridge between high-level teaching in and by research and the scientific research world. A special private-sector status, FCS (Scientific cooperation foundation) has been created to provide these key players with the responsiveness they need to face an increasingly competitive world.

To date 13 RTRAs have been set up, representing 5,900 researchers in nearly 40 different institutions.

**Statistics (2006 data):

- Percentage of GDP invested in research:

  * public funding: 36.9%

  *private funding: 63.1%

- Total annual national research expenditure:

  * public funding: 13,994 M euros

  * private funding: 23,915 M euros

- Percentage of research undertaken in higher education institutions:

  * public funding: 95%

   (government, higher education and private non-profit-making)

  * private funding: 1.7%

* Financing mechanisms for doctorate students:

In addition to the existing possibilities referred to above, regarding research allocations and CIFRE contracts, for which respective amounts have been increased, and graduate assistantships (with 1000 new graduate assistant positions created in 2007 and 2250 more in September 2008 to enable each research students to fill assistantship positions), a new system created by decree (no. 2008-390 of 24 April 2008) now allows companies to sponsor doctorates.

Companies can now contribute to the financing of a specific doctoral research project on the basis of research projects proposed for this type of sponsoring and published by the doctoral faculties. Payments made in this way to the doctoral faculty, either to the institution entitled to award the doctorate, the institution associated with the doctoral faculty, or the university foundation set up in this institution, are entitled to a 60% tax rebate, as is the case for charitable donations. The company's contributions can make up all or part of the remuneration received by the doctoral student: when he or she receives a revenue for the completion of the doctoral research project, the company's contribution can be in the form of resources made available to carry out the research.

c) Is there any tracking system to follow the further career of doctoral graduates?
Yes ☒   No ☐   If Yes, please specify:

Increasing importance is being given to monitoring the professional integration of students obtaining doctorates.

The decree of 7 August 2006 concerning doctoral teaching put finding employment at the centre of the responsibilities of doctoral faculties, and employment is now a new public service mission for the universities following the Act of 10 August 2007 on the freedoms and responsibilities of the universities. Doctors' employment potential is assessed at the time of applications for accreditation of doctoral teaching courses. Information on doctors' career development is taken into account by the AERES assessment agency when assessing doctoral faculties, and is both a PAP (annual performance project)

indicator and a criterion retained to evaluate the performance of institutions, used to calculate the resources (research allocations) which will be granted to them.

6. Access[6] and admission to the next cycle

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

6.1 Access and admission between the first and second cycles

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

> 100% of diplomas confer the grade of "licence" (bachelor's degree).

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

> The "licence", or any national diploma with an equivalent the grade, is the diploma required to attain the second cycle, apart from specific provisions intended for the accreditation of prior and experimental learning if the candidate does not have those qualifications.
>
> Entry to the second cycle is automatic with a "licence" in a subject compatible with that of the national master diploma (in compliance with article 5 of the decree of 25th April 2002). A selection takes place subsequently between the first and second years of the master ("master 1" and "master 2").

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

sit entrance exam	Yes ☐	No ☐	In some cases ☒
complete additional courses	Yes ☐	No ☒	In some cases ☐
have work experience	Yes ☐	No ☒	In some cases ☐

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

>

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

> No

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

all students   Yes ☐   No ☐

---

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

holders of particular first cycle qualifications　　　Yes ☐　　No ☐
students of the same field coming from other HEIs　　Yes ☐　　No ☐

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

entrance exam　　　　Yes ☐　　No ☒　　In some cases ☐
additional courses　　Yes ☒　　No ☐　　In some cases ☐
work experience　　　Yes ☐　　No ☒　　In some cases ☐

6.2 Access and admission between the second and third cycles

Please indicate:

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

100% of diplomas conferring the grade of master or of foreign diplomas of the same level.

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

To register for the doctorate course the candidate must hold a national master diploma or another diploma conferring the grade of master, following a study programme which establishes his/her aptitude for research. If the diploma condition is not met, students may be admitted by dispensation if they have followed studies overseas at an equivalent level or benefit from the VAE - accreditation of prior and experiential learning - (< article 14 of the decree of 7 August 2006 regarding doctoral studies).

c) any measures planned to remove obstacles between cycles

7. Employability of graduates/ cooperation with employers

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

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

Employability of graduates is one of the government's priorities and has been identified as one of the missions of the higher education administration since the LRU Act of 10 August 2007 referred to above.

Several levers have been brought into play to make improvements in this area:

* 1/ informing and counselling, active guidance: wide use of active guidance to take account of the outlets associated with each course of study;

* 2/ observation: observers have been appointed in each institution or university to measure employment rates for each speciality and at each level;

* 3/ professionalisation of courses of study: internships (in companies, the community sector or the public services) are being developed and generalised in all programmes, especially in the 3rd year of the "licence", as well as partnerships with the business sector;

* 4/ assistance with finding employment: two new tools have been developed:

> employment assistance departments: these departments are specifically responsible for informing students in each university about internships and a variety of employment opportunities in line with the courses of study provided by the university, and helping them to look for their internships and initial employment;

> employment platforms, of which there are currently 18 for 35 universities, which have a dual purpose:

>> to encourage the professional and academic sectors to work together to define educational and training programmes;

>> Determine the nature of the institutions' socio-economic environment by making use of locally-produced information.

Since the studies followed by higher education graduates should allow them to obtain stable employment in line with their qualifications rapidly, a new indicator based on the rate of employment of young graduates three years after the end of their initial studies has been created within the framework of the PAP (annual performance project), in addition to regular surveys of samples undertaken by the CEREQ (Qualifications study and research centre).

On the basis of the CEREQ survey "Generation 2004", the rate of employment of graduates measured in 2007 at management or supervisory level (all types of employment and sector taken together) is as follows:

* for all graduates (levels L, M and D): 77% (70% in permanent employment (open-ended contract),

* for holders of first degree (licence) 62%,

* for holders of master: 82%,

* for holders of a doctorate: 88%.

It should be noted that the rates of employment for managerial or supervisory staff for all L, M and D graduates by sector are as follows:

* sciences and technical: 89%

* law, economics, management: 85%

* arts and human sciences: 71%.

The professional "licenses" (degrees) created in 1999 have developed considerably and there are now more than 1600. They can provide an opportunity for students of DUT (University technical diplomas) and BTS (Higher vocational diplomas) to continue their studies in a professional programme leading to a "licence". The "Generation 2004" survey referred to above showed that 55% of young holders of a professional degree came from a BTS. Professional degrees are also a path to professionalisation and an outlet at the "BAC + 3" level (3 years post-baccalauréat studies) for students who do not hold a DUT or a BTS..

After three years of working life, holders of a professional degree are in a relatively favourable position, with more than three-quarters of them in permanent employment. They are less affected by unemployment than holders of non-professional degrees, with an unemployment rate of 7% (instead of 13%) for professional degrees specialising in the service sector, and 4% (instead of 5%) for those with an industrial specialisation. They are also better paid than holders of general degrees, but are also more frequently in management or supervisory positions 3 years after graduating.

b) To what extent there is a dialogue in your country between higher education institutions and employers on:
- curriculum design, work placements and international experience
  Significant ☒   Some ☒   A little ☐   None ☐

- accreditation/quality assurance
  Significant ☒   Some ☒   A little ☐   None ☐

- university governance
  Significant ☒   Some ☐   A little ☐   None ☐

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

Yes ☒ No ☐ In some cases ☐

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

Yes ☒ No ☐ In some cases ☐

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

The "licence" is the minimum diploma required to be able to apply for the civil service competitive examination in category "A" (management staff). For the Master, the conditions of eligibility for the competitive examination leading to the teaching profession in France will be implemented from 2010.

8. Implementation of national qualifications framework

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

a) Has the national qualifications framework been prepared[7]?

Yes ☒   No ☐

Comment
In January 2002 the "social modernisation" Act instituted the National Directory of Professional Qualifications (RNCP), which is now the framework for qualifications in France. Any higher education diploma has a professional purpose because ultimately every holder of these diplomas must be able to find employment. Consequently every higher education diploma has the right to be registered with the RNCP. The RNCP site can be consulted via the Internet: www.cncp.gouv.fr.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

Comment
The description of each qualification in terms of the RNCP highlights "learning outcomes", especially in terms of skills. Furthermore, it sets out the field of activities and specialities to which registration provides access, as well as the level of qualifications. For special diplomas, the employment rate over the past three years is also shown. This description based on "learning outcomes" facilitates the implementation of the VAE (prior learning accreditation), which is one of the means of obtaining any diploma registered with the RNCP since the Act of 2002 referred to above.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

Comment
Any diploma giving the grade of "licence" represents 180 ECTS credits, and those giving the grade of Master correspond to 120 credits, making a total of 300 ECTS credits after the baccalauréat.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

Comment
The CNCP (National commission for professional qualifications) allows all interested parties to be associated in ensuring that diplomas are adapted to employment

---

[7] A national framework of qualifications compatible with the overarching framework of qualifications of the EHEA

opportunities, making recommendations for special diplomas to the bodies that issue qualifications and proposing a comparison chart for understanding diplomas.

Higher education diplomas are automatically registered at the initiative of the certifying ministry. To be registered with the RNCP, special diplomas must have received the approval of the CNCP prior to publication of a decree by the ministry responsible for vocational training in the JORF (Official Journal of the French Republic).

If the answer to d) is No, please answer question e):
e) has a timetable been agreed for consultations with all stakeholders?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Comment

If the answer to d) is Yes, please answer the following questions:
f) Are all formal arrangementsdecisions for implementing the framework in place and have the necessary formal decisions for establishing the framework been taken?

Yes ☒   No ☐

Comment

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

- The framework is fully implemented. All qualifications have been
  added to the NQF through a QA procedure (e.g. accreditation) ☐

- There is significant progress on implementing the framework ☒

- The work of describing all qualifications in terms of learning outcomes
  and competencies has been completed ☐

- There is a timetable for implementation and the work has started ☐

- Work on implementing the framework has not yet started but a
  timetable for implementation has been agreed ☐

- Work on implementing the framework has not yet started and there is
  no timetable for implementation ☐

Comment

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

Completed ☐   Started, but not yet completed ☒   Not yet started ☐

Comment

i) Has the self-certification report been published?

Yes ☐   No ☒

Comment

*Please add any additional comments if necessary***:**

Comment

NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EHEA (ESG)[8]

9. Reviewing the QA system against the ESG[9] and national support for implementation

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

Yes ☐   No ☐   ☒ Not yet, but such a review is planned
(Please specify time) _____

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

> The assessment agency AERES, the MESR and the CPU have initiated a review process.

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

Stakeholder consultation on changes required to the national QA system?

Yes ☐   No ☐

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If Yes,** please give details of these incentives:
> Together with the PAP (annual performance project) indicators, contractual policy has given a central role to evaluation, so that contracts based on a genuine self-evaluation approach form the main management tool for both institutions and the ministry.

- Other measures

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If Yes**, please outline these measures
>
> Quality assessment is placed at the centre of contractual policy, together with the LOLF (constitutional bylaw on budget acts) and the Act of 10 August 2007 on the freedoms and responsibilities of universities. From now on, within the framework of increased autonomy, each university is accountable and is required to provide more detailed proof of its performance using common indicators. In the context of contractual policy, when the development project is discussed between the

---

> responsible university and the MESR, the internal diagnosis to be undertaken by the institution is an essential element.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

If Yes, please give details of how evidence of the impact of the changes was gathered, and of the main outcomes that it demonstrates

Each institution submitting a project must undertake a shared internal diagnosis based on a genuine self-evaluation approach.

9.1. Internal quality assurance in higher education institutions

Describe the internal QA systems in place in your HEIs.

The contractual policy developed between the government and the universities has strengthened the evaluation approach, especially internally: alongside projects which underlie a contract with operational aims related to the institution's specific development strategy, the emphasis is placed on the idea of performance and the creation of appropriate indicators. The development of a performance-driven system induced by the LOLF (constitutional bylaw on budget acts) implies that higher education institutions must first procure the tools required for genuine internal control, allowing the definition of targets which are compatible with the allocated resources.

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

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

All HEIs ☐　　Most HEIs ☐　　Some HEIs ☒　　No HEIs ☐

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

All HEIs ☐　　Most HEIs ☒　　Some HEIs ☐　　No HEIs ☐

Please describe what kind of arrangements are in place

There is an internal procedure for installing new programmes in each institution. Students are included in this. In addition, evaluation procedures for existing programmes are available in some institutions.

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

All HEIs ☐　　Most HEIs ☐　　Some HEIs ☒　　No HEIs ☐

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

All HEIs ☐　　Most HEIs ☐　　Some HEIs ☒　　No HEIs ☐

Please describe how the above is achieved.

This is particularly the case for courses leading to engineering degrees.

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

All HEIs ☐　　Most HEIs ☒　　Some HEIs ☐　　No HEIs ☐

Additional information if necessary

10. Stage of development of external quality assurance system

Describe the external quality assurance system operating in your country.

Please include:
a) the stage of implementation of your external quality assurance system

In order to strengthen the quality of external evaluations while ensuring that they are consistent, clear and independent, France has created a new higher education and research assessment agency, AERES. This independent agency, created by the programme act on research (no. 2006-450 of 18 April 2006), whose organisation and operation were laid down by decree no. 2006-1334 of 3 November 2006, is responsible for the external quality assessment of institutions, teaching courses and research units.

AERES has the status of an independent administrative authority. It assesses but has no power of decision. It has a board of 25 members, both French and foreign, whose chairman and 14 scientific members are designated on the basis of proposals by listed bodies, account being taken of their scientific work. AERES is divided into 3 sections:

 - the institution section, responsible for assessing institutions and examining staff assessment procedures,

- the research unit section, responsible for assessing research activities,

- the teaching section, responsible for assessing courses of study and diplomas.

The assessment of the quality of both private and public teaching courses leading to State-recognised engineering degrees is mandatory before approval can be granted to award the diploma of qualified engineer. This assessment comes under the CTI (Commission for Engineering Diplomas), set up in 1934, whose missions are now defined by the Education Code (articles L 242-1 to 12).

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

If **No**, please specify:

c) does your external quality assurance system cover all higher education[10]

Yes ☒   No ☐

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

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

---

[10] 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.

- self-assessment report	Yes ☒	No ☐
- external review	Yes ☒	No ☐
- publication of results	Yes ☒	No ☐
- follow-up procedures	Yes ☒	No ☐

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

Yes ☐   No ☒

If **No** is there a date set for the review? ☒ Yes (please specify date ___2009) No ☐

11. Level of student participation
From the following, please indicate all aspects of quality assurance in which students are involved:

a) in governance of national agencies for QA.

Yes ☐   No ☒   In some cases ☐

b) as full members in external review teams

Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

c) as observers in external review teams

Yes ☐   No ☐   In some cases ☐

d) as part of the decision making process for external reviews

Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

e) in the consultation process during external reviews (eg arrangements for external reviewers to consult with students)

Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

f) in internal quality assurance (e.g. periodic review of programmes)

Yes ☐   No ☐   In some cases ☒

g) in preparation of self-assessment reports.

Yes ☐   No ☐   In some cases ☒

h) in follow-up procedures:

Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

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

12. Level of international participation
In which of the following is there international participation in quality assurance
a) the governance of national agencies for quality assurance

Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

b) the external evaluation of national quality assurance agencies

Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

c) teams for external review of institutions or programmes, either as members or observers

Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

d) membership of ENQA

Yes ☒   No ☐   In some cases ☐

e) membership of any other international network

Yes ☒   No ☐   If **Yes**, please specify:

INQAHE

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

RECOGNITION OF DEGREES AND STUDY PERIODS

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

> The principle of issuing a "diploma supplement", or descriptive appendix to a diploma, is provided for by decree no. 202-482 dated 8 April 2002 applying the EHEA construction to the French higher education system, and its application is always required for each accreditation process. In fact, all graduates do not yet receive the "diploma supplement" (or descriptive appendix to the diploma), the main difficulty residing in the new approach to the assessment of "skills".
>
> In order to better clarify the question of "learning outcomes" and facilitate the description of diplomas not yet registered with the RNCP (National Directory of Professional Qualifications), specific "on site" meetings were held in 2007/2008 by the DGES (Directorate-General for higher education), the Bologna Experts, the CNCP and the CPU - see point 2.d above - .

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

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

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

- issued in a widely spoken European language   Yes ☒   No ☐
  - *please specify the language* <u>French; bilingual FR/EN occasionally</u>
- issued   free of charge ☒   for a fee ☐
- issued   automatically ☒   on request ☐
- corresponds to the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format   ☒

- a national Diploma Supplement is used that is
  different from the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format   ☐

13.1. Use of Diploma Supplement for recognition of qualifications

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

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

                                             Yes ☐   No ☒

Comment

> No two "diploma supplements" are the same in Europe and they are drafted in a variety of ways, due to the lack of harmonisation in the understanding of sections, which makes their interpretation difficult. So today the diploma supplement cannot be a standard reference document supporting a diploma presented by a foreign candidate.

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

Yes ☒   No ☒

> *Comment*
> A sworn translation of foreign diplomas issued by non French-speaking countries is required by higher education institutions in France. On the other hand the ENIC-NARIC centre does not require it when the document is written in German, Arabic, Spanish, French, Italian or Portuguese.

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

Yes ☐   No ☒

> *Comment*
> The origin of the diploma, even when it is accompanied by a diploma supplement, is always required..

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> *Comment*
> A survey is currently being carried out jointly by ENIC-NARIC France in the name of the ENIC-NARIC network and ENQA on the perception of the "diploma supplement" by its users. This survey has Business Europe as its chief partner, which enables employers' reactions to be taken into account, as well as representatives of the ESU, EUA and EURASHE. This survey was due to be published at the end of 2008.

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

Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementary documents[11] of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

---

[11] 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)

a) Does appropriate legislation comply with the Lisbon Convention?

Yes ☒   No ☐

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved:

France signed the Lisbon Convention on 11 April 1997 and ratified it on
4 October 1999.

The principle of the diploma supplement, known as the descriptive appendix to the diploma, was legally approved by decree no. 2002-482 of 8 April 2002, the framework decree for the application of the Bologna principles to the French higher education system.

The grounds for refusal constitute a legal principle laid down in France by Act no. 79-587 of 11 July 1979 on the grounds for administrative measures.

The provisions adopted in France for the accreditation by higher education institutions of higher studies completed in France or overseas (by decree no.2002-529 of 16 April 2002) and of prior learning (by decree no. 2002-590 of 24 April 2002) allow for clear procedures, fair judgments (with the definition of common rules for accreditation and the constitution of juries by the Board of Administration) and the notification of the decision to the candidate. Juries may also make recommendations or give advice to students in order to help them in the pursuit of their studies.

b) Does appropriate legislation comply with the later Supplementary Documents:
     i) Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition

Yes ☐   No ☒

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved: ENIC-NARIC has undertaken the reform of its procedures in order to comply more closely with the principles of this Recommendation, which assume especially that the value of a foreign diploma can be compared with the national system. To this end ENIC-NARIC will use all available criteria, relating to learning outcomes, ECTS credits and "quality" factors other than academic and/or professional outlets and the duration of studies currently used

     ii) Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees

Yes ☒   No ☐

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved:

> Decree no. 2005-450 of 11 May 2005 provided the possibility of awarding diplomas through international partnerships, whether real joint diplomas or double diplomas..

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

<div align="right">Yes ☐   No ☒</div>

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

c) which of the following principles are applied in practice

    i) applicants' right to fair assessment

<div align="right">Yes ☒   No ☐</div>

> **If Yes,** please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level
>
> This principle is adhered to at national level by ENIC-NARIC, which gives its opinion regarding the diplomas submitted to it for by the appropriate authorities (institutions, authorities organising competitive examinations, employers) to obtain an accurate appraisal.
>
> Locally, juries rely on any certificates likey to enlighten them: certificates for courses followed and diplomas obtained, any documents certifying the professional experience and duration of the different activities followed by the candidate (see article 4 of decree no. 2002-590 of 24 April 2002).

    ii) recognition if no substantial differences can be proven

<div align="right">Yes ☒   No ☐</div>

> **If Yes,** please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level
> This is the case for ENIC-NARIC. For example, the presence or absence of a year's studies, an internship or a dissertation will be qualified as a significant difference.

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

<div align="right">Yes ☒   No ☐</div>

> **If Yes,** please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level
> In France, any refusal must be justified in writing (according to the principle of justification of administrative decisions).

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

<div align="right">Yes ☒   No ☐</div>

> **If Yes**, please describe how it is done in practice
>
> Information of this nature may be obtained from the following Internet sites:
>
> MESR - www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr ; www.etudiant.gouv.fr -

Campus France - www.campusfrance.org - as well as the French university web sites.

v) do you have a fully operational ENIC

Yes ☒　　No ☐

If Yes, please describe the role of your ENIC in recognition and information provision a) nationally and b) internationally

At the national level, ENIC-NARIC France, attached to the CIEP ("Centre international d'études pédagogiques") has been responsible since 2004 for providing information on all questions related to diploma recognition. In this capacity, it prepares certificates of recognition of study levels for foreign diplomas, obtains information about the procedure for recognition of French diplomas in other countries and about foreign education systems, and provides information concerning procedures to be followed to exercise a regulated profession.

Moreover, for work within the scope of its activities, ENIC-NARIC France is associated with the MESR, MEN, CPU, the Commission for Engineering Diplomas, the Conférence des grandes écoles (specialist universities) and other institutional partners. ENIC-NARIC is specifically associated with the preparation of mutual recognition agreements between France and its partners, and the application of European directives. Moreover, it is the national contact point for the 2005 Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications in Europe.

Internationally,ENIC-NARIC France carries out the following activities in addition to its participation in the survey conducted with ENQA on the perception of the diploma supplement by its users:

> it participates in a cooperation project with the Dutch body NUFFIC (Netherlands University Foundation for International Cooperation) on the recognition of qualifications acquired through professional experience,

> it chairs the ENIC-NARIC network for France,

> it is associated with UNESCO's work for the creation of the MERIC network.

On behalf of the ENIC-NARIC network, and in order to improve methods of cooperation at international level, ENIC-NARIC France has also submitted a proposal to UNESCO to set up a working group on the internationalisation of the network which will associate the presidents of other UNESCO conventions on the recognition of diplomas in other parts of the world.

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

ERIC-NARIC is in the process of updating its procedures to take better account of the recommendations on assessment procedures and criteria, as well as information derived from the 2007 report on the analysis of national action plans on recognition in Europe. In this respect, new accreditations are being drafted which are more in phase with international texts. These developments will be presented to the universities in 2009 during a meeting organised on the initiative of ENIC-NARIC.

Moreover, ENIC-NARIC maintains regular contacts with AERES for the exchange of good practices..

15. Stage of implementation of ECTS[12]

Describe the implementation of ECTS in your country.

a) Please include the percentage of the total number of higher education programmes[13] in which all programme components are linked with ECTS credits

100% ☐   75-99% ☒   50-75% ☐   <50% ☐

The translation of paramedical, medical, odontological and pharmaceutical studies into ECTS is now underway.

Regarding doctoral level studies in France, it is not planned to quantify the study programme and doctoral diploma, in compliance with one of the principles of the EEES qualification framework adopted at Bergen and with the "research" aspect of these courses of study, which is scarcely compatible with any kind of quantification.

b) Are ECTS credits linked with learning outcomes[14] in your country? Please tick one:

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

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

This is of no interest for France, which has adopted the principle of generalising the European ECTS credit system for higher educational studies, except for the doctorate level.

i) is it compatible with ECTS?   Yes ☐   No ☐

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

---

[12] Please refer to definitions in the ECTS User's guide,
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/ects/guide_en.html
[13] Except doctoral studies
[14] Clarification: Learning outcomes in the form of knowledge, skills and competences are formulated for all programme components and credits are awarded only when the stipulated learning outcomes are actually acquired

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If Yes,** please explain: Information meetings were organised in 2008 to explain the approach underlying the "learning outcomes" to be defined for each diploma. The meetings will be continued in 2009 on the initiative of the MESR (DGES) and the CNCP, responsible for the drafting of the national qualifications framework (RNCP: National Directory of Professional Qualifications), and associating the CPU (University rectors conference) and the Bologna Experts Team.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If Yes,** please explain: The National Bologna Experts Team informs and advises the higher education institutions on the implementation of ECTS, in line with students' work loads and learning outcomes.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If Yes,** please explain: The National Bologna Experts Team also provides assistance and advice to teaching staff regarding the correct implementation of ECTS. Additionally, a conference on the theme of the "Bologna Process: a student-centred approach" was organised by the Bologna Experts and the EIAE in Lyon in June 2007.

LIFELONG LEARNING

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

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If Yes,** please specify:
>
> Favourable decisions under the VAE scheme (prior learning accreditation), set up
>
> by Act no. 2002-73 of 17 January 2002 and registered with the Education Code

and the Labour code, constitute an individual right open to all, on obtaining all or part of a diploma or an accreditation by the VAE alone without a course of studies, since the legislation makes the VAE a new means of access to accreditation in the same way as initial training, apprenticeships or ongoing vocational training.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

If Yes, please specify:

The procedures governing the VAE for its award for a higher education institution are set by decree no. 2002-590 of 24 April 2002.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

If Yes, please specify:

It is the decree of 24 April 2002 referred to above.

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

Comprehensively ☒   Some ☐   A little ☐   None ☐

Please describe the current situation:

In 2006 there were 3,705 approved VAEs (accreditations for prior learning) of which 1,842 were for diplomas obtained entirely via the VAE.

In 2007 there were 4,199 approved VAEs of which over 2,000 (2,154 to be exact) were for diplomas obtained entirely through the VAE scheme.

It is interesting to note in this regard that the first years of implementation of the VAE were noted for a high growth in the number of accreditations and in the total number of diplomas awarded. While this development stopped in 2006 (due especially to the end of the national ESF programme and the lack of any advertising campaign concerning the VAE since 2002), activity increased in 2007. This could be explained by:
- improved access to the VAE (remote VAE system);
- the translation of diplomas in terms of skills (by the diploma supplement and descriptive sheets of diplomas registered at the RCNP);
- the creation of tools such as the interministerial web site: www.vae.gouv.fr.

17. Flexible learning paths

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

The modular organisation of teaching for study programmes at higher education level is one of the key principles adopted by framework decree no. 2002-482 of 8 April 2002 on the application of the EHEA structure to the French higher education system. Article 4 of this decree stipulates that "study programmes (…) are consistent groups of teaching units which organise appropriate pedagogical developments". At degree level, these programmes may "be organised by structuring a major disciplinary field with one or more minor fields" (article 16/2 of the decree of 23 April 2002 regarding university studies leading to the grade of "licence").

To improve student success in the 1st study cycle especially, which concentrates the highest failure rate, the "Plan for success in first degree courses" launched in September 2008 for the following four years, aims to encourage the fulfilment of projects which will allow universities to develop student support schemes, assistance with guidance and the strengthening of knowledge in preparation for employment or further studies. Where programmes are concerned, the aim is nonetheless to organise a limited study programme within each degree course, insofar as this is one of the conditions for setting up homogeneous educational teams providing continuous support for students.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation

The means of access (including by prior experience accreditation) to each diploma registered with the RNCP (National Directory of Professional Qualifications) is described.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation

Apart from the measures provided for by the Plan for success in first degree courses referred to above, AERES (Agency for the assessment of research and higher education) also gives assistance and advice to universities regarding their development project.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between the three Bologna cycles
>
> The conditions of access laid down by the legislation on study courses leading to a Licence, Master and Doctorate, allow for the VAE (prior experience accreditation) to be taken into account.

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

Yes ⊠   No ☐

> Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between different Bologna cycle
>
> The principle of modularity and of the wider application of the ECTS, as defined and applied in France, provides genuine flexibility in the construction of study programmes and the variable extent of prior experience accreditation (taking into account professional experience or higher studies undertaken in France or other countries), whether it relates to differentiated study programmes (exemption from all or part of teaching) or to the award of licences or masters. However, the requirements of research connected with a doctorate are not compatible with total exemption from teaching, since each doctorate presupposes the preparation and defence of a thesis.

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

Yes ⊠   No ☐

> Please add comments to describe the current situation and, where appropriate, differences between different Bologna cycle
>
> As previously stated, the modular organisation of licence and master programmes, combined with the accreditation of prior experience, allows greater participation in these higher educational programmes by students from wider backgrounds.

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

> Please refer to the statistics concerning the VAE in 16/d above.

JOINT DEGREES

18. Establishment and recognition of joint degrees[15]

a) Describe the legislative position on joint degrees in your country.
Are joint degrees specifically mentioned in legislation?

Yes ☒   No ☐

Does the legislation fully allow:
    i) establishing joint programmes?   Yes ☒   No ☐

If No please explain what are the obstacles

    ii) awarding joint degrees?   Yes ☒   No ☐

If No please explain what are the obstacles

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

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

    ii) joint programmes

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

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

In the first cycle?	None ☐	Little ☒	Widespread ☐
In the second cycle?	None ☐	Little ☐	Widespread ☒
In the third cycle?	None ☐	Little ☐	Widespread ☒

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

They are above all the precise scientific disciplines: economics, the sciences of nature, the engineering sciences and engineering.

e) Estimate the number of joint programmes in your country

Although the number of joint diplomas at Master level is difficult to measure, it must be recognised that the contractual discussions and development projects presented show that each university now has numerous integrated programmes.
It should be emphasised that the policy pursued in France, particularly in the framework of contractual negotiations with the universities, aims to exceed the level of integrated programmes alone, in order to encourage a developed form of international partnership based on joint diplomas. In this respect the number of joint diplomas is an indicator for evaluating the annual performance project and measuring the results of the international policy.

---

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

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

In addition to the decree of 11 May 2005 referred to above regarding diplomas in international partnerships, the contractual policy driven by the MESR (Ministry of Higher Education and Research) encourages higher education institutions to develop programmes and diplomas in international partnerships (double diplomas or joint diplomas - i.e. single diplomas with a double seal).

The MESR also develops bilateral support programmes for joint programmes and international partnership programmes. To date, Germany, Italy and Spain are the leading partner countries in addition to Greece, Poland, Portugal and the Czech Republic. Outside Europe, masters created in international partnerships are the preferred instruments of inter-university cooperation. For international joint thesis supervisions, of which there are currently 1,156, the target for 2012 is 1400.

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

The reform of financial support for students can be seen particularly in the development of mobility grants for students in financial difficulty to allow them to continue their studies outside France. In addition to the higher education grant based on social criteria, which by definition can be used throughout Europe, many grants, financed by local authorities, represent quite significant supplements in France.

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

At the European level, mobility is one of the priorities of the French presidency of the European Union, and a conference on the theme "Europe of higher education: reinforcing the space for mobility" was organised in Nancy on 4-5 November 2008. Taking account of the discussions in Nancy, the proposals of the High Level Group on Mobility and the French Strategic Analysis Centre, Conclusions on mobility were adopted by the Council of Ministers on 20-21 November 2008.

At the French level, a reform of financial aids for students has been undertaken to develop opportunities for financial support for foreign studies for a larger number of students.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation:

1- In compliance with articles L. 313-8 and R 313-11. of the CESEDA (French regulations regarding residence and asylum rights for foreigners), a residence permit marked "scientifique" is issued to foreigners who are not nationals of a Member State of the European Community or the European Economic Area, who hold a diploma equivalent to a master or higher, and who are involved in research work or teaching at university level within the framework of a hosting agreement with an approved body, stipulating certifying his/her status as a scientist and the purpose and duration of his/her stay in France.

The possession of this residence permit, the receipt for the initial application or the application for renewal constitutes the labour permit.

2- The Act of 24 July 2006 modifying article L 313-8 of the CESEDA and decree no. 2007-373 of 21 March 2007 modifying articles R 313-11 to R 313-13 of the CESEDA transposed the European directive of 12 October 2005 relating to a specific admission procedure for nationals of non-European Union countries for the purpose of scientific research.

Three important improvements to this system derive from this transposition:

- a/ the approved body signing the hosting agreement may be a public or private body with a research or higher education activity, which allows approval to be given to profit-making private companies or institutions that were excluded from the agreement when it was reserved for scientific or university bodies;

- b/ the field of application is extended to students holding a master who are preparing a doctorate, on condition that they produce a contract (employment contract or a non-tenured public service employee's contract etc) registered with the body mentioned in the agreement to undertake the research or teaching mission it provides for.

- c/ holders of this residence permit benefit from a mobility clause within the European Union which allows them to undertake a paid or unpaid research mission for 3 months in a research or higher education body in France, on the sole basis of a residence permit marked "scientist" from another Member State of the European Union and the hosting agreement signed in that State.

3- These innovations to the system offer four key advantages:

a/ they group all hosted scientists together in the same system, regardless of their legal status within the hosting body or the duration of residence,

b/ the residence permit is issued rapidly as the temporary residence permit is issued as soon as the applicant presents a hosting agreement issued by the approved hosting body, certifying his or her scientific status,

c/ they provide the guarantee of a residence permit which is valid as a labour permit for the spouse,

d/ through the transposition of the European Directive, they provide the mobility clause between Member States of the European Union.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation:

There are numerous incentive schemes for student mobility in France, both for incoming and outgoing mobility.

** A/ Incoming mobility: Various grants are financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to allow foreign nationals access to higher education in France. These include:

> "Eiffel excellence grants" from first degree to Doctorate level in three disciplines: engineering sciences, economics - management and law - political sciences. These grants have a twofold aim: to help French higher education institutions recruit the best foreign students and help train future foreign decision-makers from the public and private sectors (except for careers in teaching or research),

> "Major excellence grants" intended to encourage the pursuit of higher studies (up to Master level) by the best foreign students holding a French baccalauréat, following secondary education in French secondary schools and a successful 1st university cycle with an excellence grant from the AEFE (Agency for teaching French abroad),

> "French government grants" and bilateral grants financed under bilateral agreements intended for students in the last year of the Master.

**B/ Outgoing mobility:

> higher education grants based on social criteria, which by their nature can be used in Europe for the pursuit of studies. Their value has been increased by 2.5% to allow for the cost of living and the field of application has been extended to the middle classes,

> international mobility grants worth €400 per month aimed at students who follow their studies abroad for a period of two to nine months. Ultimately this measure will concern 30,000 students, which is twice the current number of beneficiaries of the mobility grants that these new grants replace.

d) Are study periods taken abroad recognised?

Yes ☒   No ☐

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation:

Decree no. 2002-529 of 16 April 2002 confirms the legal principle of the accreditation by French higher education institutions of studies undertaken abroad.

Thus, in 2007, of the 1,153 students making their initial doctorate registration for a thesis under joint supervision, 710 had obtained their Master's degree in a member country of the EEES (406 in France and 304 in Europe) and 443 outside Europe.

To encourage this recognition, ENIC-NARIC issues certificates for the recognition of foreign study periods for any period of one study semester or longer.

e) Is there accommodation for mobile students and staff?

Yes ☒   No ☐

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation:

To remedy the housing difficulties faced by foreign students and mobilise all available resources, the institutions make contact with the CROUS (Regional student service organisations), regional authorities, low-cost housing organisations (HLM) and private citizens.

The application of the contractual policy with the universities encourages the implementation of a genuine hosting system (which can take the form of a dedicated call centre to facilitate administrative procedures) and support for foreign students, teachers and researchers (welcome days, administrative and teaching follow-up, tutorial system etc).

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation:

Under the "International dimension" aspect of the contractual policy, higher education institutions are asked to:

- encourage, facilitate and develop the mobility of French students on an international level by making use of the opportunities offered by the LMD scheme, ECTS credits and prior experience accreditation, and by exploiting to the full the possibilities presented by the European Community programmes. In particular, the idea is to encourage mobility among students who are entitled to an international mobility grant, a system that has been reinforced by the global reform of direct aids to students. The ultimate aim is to allow each student registered in a course of LMD studies to follow some of his or her studies abroad,

- and set up long-term integrated transnational partnerships, involving both studies and research, with the development of joint diplomas for study courses

and, for research, the use of the opportunities presented by the FRDP for setting up projects under European cooperation, as well as the development of international jointly supervised theses, which are an essential tool for cooperation between French and foreign research laboratories.

20. Portability of loans and grants

a) Are portable grants available in your country?

Yes ☒   No ☐

If No, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of grants.

b) Are portable loans available in your country?

Yes ☒   No ☐

If No, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of loans.

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

21. Implementation of strategy

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

International cooperation is among the public service missions entrusted to universities, and is the corner stone of international policy for higher education, which makes it a priority line of development for contractual policy with the universities.

b) What has your country done to:

i) improve information on the EHEA outside Europe?

The implementation of this policy involves:

- improvement of information from institutions on courses provided, together with CampusFrance (www.campusfrance.org) and the new web portal set up by the European Commission "Study in Europe",

- for France, improving international awareness of doctoral courses and their content, and setting up the CEF network (Centres for studies in France), which provides information on all higher education courses provided by institutions.

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

The participation of many French universities and schools in the European Erasmus Mundus I programme, which has made France the leading European country for Master study courses aimed primarily at the best students and teachers from non-EU countries, helps add to the appeal of the European Higher Education area (EHEA).

Since 2004, extensive and repeated efforts have been made by French (MESR and CPU) and European bodies (EUA and the Conference of Spanish, Italian and Portuguese university rectors) to promote the EHEA, especially in Lebanon, Syria, Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria. These actions have usually been organised at the request of the university authorities of the countries mentioned: France has endeavoured to give them a European aspect. Other actions have been undertaken in sub-Saharan Africa.

iii) strengthen cooperation based on partnership in higher education?

The policy of international partnership diplomas is one of the key areas for cooperation being developed with the rest of the world. Outside Europe, the participation of many French higher education institutions in the European Erasmus Mundus programme and the development of partnerships with non-European countries furthers the cooperation of the EHEA with the rest of the world.

As far as cooperation developed by France is concerned, negotiations are in progress to prepare mutual recognition agreements for study courses and diplomas, with the aim of eliminating a number of obstacles to student mobility. Agreements of this type have already been reached with China, Vietnam and Taiwan and should soon be signed with Australia and New Zealand. Negotiations are also under way with India.

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

France is one of the signatories to the June 2007 Cairo Declaration regarding the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean area for higher education, and takes part in the Latin America, Caribbean and European Union area (EULAC). France also participates in the EU/USA and EU/Canada programmes.

v) improve recognition of qualifications with other world regions?

70% of diploma recognition applications received by ENIC-NARIC France come from non-EU countries. It has therefore submitted a proposal to UNESCO, on behalf of the ENIC-NARIC network it currently chairs, to set up a working group on the internationalisation of the network, with which the presidents of UNESCO's regional agreements on diploma recognition would be associated.

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

> At this stage no specific measures have been taken, as France is concentrating its efforts on implementing the ESG (European Standards and Guidelines) adopted at Bergen for the EHEA.

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

i) cross-border provision of your education programmes?

Yes ☐　　No ☒

> **If Yes** please explain in what ways the guidelines are applied

ii) incoming higher education provision?

Yes ☐　　No ☒

> **If Yes** please explain in what ways the guidelines are applied

FUTURE CHALLENGES

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

> All the action undertaken by France is aimed at reconciling its strong university tradition, based on the values of public service which give government a key regulating role, with the need to make the French higher education system competitive in the European and international arenas.
>
> The country is pursuing the modernisation of its higher education with the LMD approach (licence, master, doctorate), new development tools, all "Euro-compatible", created by the programme act on research (PRES, RTRA, reform of doctoral studies, development of joint diplomas, the new assessment agency AERES), the increased autonomy of universities and the new "rules of the game"

for governance defined by the Act on freedoms and responsibilities, and start-up projects regarding the plan for success in first degree studies, student life, and the careers of research professors.

PART II

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

Practical instruction

The answers to this questionnaire will be included in the general national report on the implementation of the Bologna Process and reach the Bologna Secretariat (e-mail: secr@bologna2009benelux.org) by November 1, 2008. **Please do not exceed the length of 10 pages for the national strategy on social dimension**.
The questions in Annex C are not included in the questionnaire itself but are to be considered as reference material which could facilitate the drafting of the information on the national strategy.

I. Definition of the Social Dimension in the London Communiqué

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

II. AS IS SITUATION (Current state of affairs)

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

In France the principle of equal opportunity is a key value that is central to the public education service and laid down in the 1st article of the Education Code:
"Education is the primary national priority. The public education service is designed and organised on the basis of pupils and students. It contributes to equal opportunity (…). The right to education is guaranteed for all (…). To guarantee this right while respecting equal opportunity, aid is granted to pupils and students according to their resources and their merit. (…) The acquisition of a general culture and a recognised qualification is ensured for all young people, regardless of their social cultural or geographical origin" (< article L-111-1 of the Education Code)..

Current statistical surveys show that the chances of success are closely related to the family's economic situation. Taking all teaching courses together, 30.1% of students have parents who are senior managers or exercise a higher intellectual profession, whereas these socio-professional categories represent 11% of the working population; on the other hand only 11.2% of students are children of working class parents, who make up 25% of the total population.

2.   Please describe what measures your Government is taking to increase the representation of the groups identified in the question above. Please refer to the

possible actions listed in the Bologna Working Group report on the Social Dimension and Mobility (see Annexes A and B to this document).

The policy of democratisation of access to higher education now being developed in France is based on several levers:

- 1/ the "Success in First Degree Studies" plan (referred to in point 1/part I of this report), which is one of the priorities of the government's plan for higher education, and will commit €730 million for the period 2008-2012 ; the key features of this scheme, aimed at improving success rates in the 1st cycle leading to the "licence", are:

> enhanced student-teacher ratio,

> progressive specialisation of studies,

> implementation of opportunities for transfers at different stages of the programme,

> diversification of recruitment in the short cycle (STS- higher technical sections - and IUTs -technological universities), in order to make them more easily accessible to students with technological and professional baccalauréats, who have a better chance of success there;

- 2/ making more widespread use of active guidance from September 2008, so as to clarify the choices open to future students and obtain a better understanding of their profile in order to adapt teaching in consequence, and so offer them a greater chance of success. The implementation of this policy involves:

> circulating objective information,

> giving advice to students on the chances of success and employment prospects in the planned speciality, while leaving the student free to make their own choice,

> the creation of support systems for new students (pre-term; skills assessments; upgrading; installation of a methodology framework for university studies);

- 3/ improving the conditions of student life. Started in June 2007, this is one of the major projects for the reform of higher education:

** A/ Welfare system: following a vast consultation during summer 2007, a new welfare system aimed at providing greater transparency and fairness was set up with:

> higher education grants based on social criteria (BCS), which remain the foundation of the scheme: granted according to the resources and liabilities of the parents or the legal tutor, and open more to the low-income middle classes, 50,000 additional grant holders are expected in 2008/2009,

> support for merit (€200 per month), now also assessed upon entry into the master course, whatever the chosen speciality. In addition to student entitled to the BCS mentioned above, this is available to students not entitled to a grant and whose parents do not pay income tax. This has been generally available since September 2008 and will ultimately apply to nearly 30,000 students,

> an increase in mobility grants (€400 per month) - in addition to the BCS which by definition can be used in Europe - over the next three years, to attain a quota of 30,000 three-month grants in 2011,

> the creation of a national emergency grant fund (FNAU) to address more effectively difficulties that the BCS cannot address alon,

> easy access to loans, with a system of State-guaranteed bank loans open to all students whether they receive grants or not, without parental guarantees or means-testing; they are subject to an interest rate cap, and can attain €15,000 per student, with a State default guarantee of up to 70% of the loan.

** B/ Other measures:

This policy also involves the improvement of conditions of:

> housing: it is planned to renovate 70,000 rooms and build 50,000 more over 10 years, in addition to renovatinguniversity halls of residence which no longer comply with current standards,

> health: this area is also a priority, with the reform of preventive medicine and health promotion missions,

> support for disabled students: following the Act of 11 February 2005 for "equal rights and opportunities, participation and citizenship for disabled persons", which provided for the strengthening of support measures for students and the increased responsibility of higher education institutions in this respect (reception, accessibility, miscellaneous aids, support), a "University/disabled Charter was signed on 5th September 2007 by the MESR, the Ministry of Labour, Social Relations and Solidarity, and the Conference of University Rectors.

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

Please refer to the measures referred to previously (point 2 above, and point 16 of part I regarding accreditation of prior learning), which work jointly towards the aim of equal access to higher education.

With regard to the "Success in First Degree Studies" Plan, it should be pointed out that its implementation relies upon "teaching specifications" for the proposed study course for the "licence" programme, which is the reference document for drafting the development projects for each institution. It is structured along three main lines:

> the guidance and reception of new students by the general use of active orientation (see point 2 above);

> the strengthening of teaching support by designating "referent" teachers for personalised student support, the increase in teaching time, the reduction of the size of supervised work groups and the diversification of methods, especially by continuous monitoring;

> monitoring of students in difficulty via the early identification of drop-out symptoms, the implementation of support schemes, and where necessary, redirecting towards a speciality which is better adapted to the student's aims and abilities;

> professionalisation, with the wide use of the "Personal and professional project" module (which enables each student to be familiar with the outlets associated with the course of study being followed, and to think about his/her future employment), creation of professionalising teaching units and internships, as well as the acquisition of "cross-disciplinary" skills, particularly in modern languages;

> the implementation of schemes for study assessment and monitoring degree renewal.

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

Yes, in line with the INSEE (French national statistical office) figures referred to in 1 above.

Apart from specific analyses undertaken by the MESR (DEPP - Department of assessment, perspective and performance), regular monitoring of quotas of students is carried out by the CEREQ (Centre of studies and research on qualifications - www.cereq.fr), specifically regarding employment, as well as by the OVE (Observatory of student life - www.ove-national.education.fr).

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

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

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

The aim for 2012 is for 50% of a given age group to hold a higher education diploma.

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

Please refer to points II/2 and II/3 above.

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

€730 million for the "Success in First Degree Studies" Plan alone over 2008-2012. Furthermore, more than €2 billion is planned for 2009 under the "Student Life" programme (especially for direct and indirect aids, health and for student community, cultural and sporting activities). Finally, where buildings are concerned, €75 million more will be injected into fulfilling the "Campus Plan"; furthermore, €170 million will be allocated in 2009 for safety features and improving access for disabled persons; and an additional €260 million will speed up implementation of the university

programmes in the State/Regions plan contracts for building and specifically for new student housing.

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

2012.

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

A number of indicators have been adopted within the framework of the annual performance project for the "University higher education and research" programme and for the "Student Life" programme, including:

- the percentage of a given age group holding a higher education diploma;

- employment rates for young graduates three years after completing their initial education;

- the percentage of a given age group attaining the different diploma levels in higher education;

- access to higher education by persons of 20-21 years old by social origin;

- trends in the representation of students by socio-professional origins and by level of studies;

- the success rates of grant holders compared to non grant holders.

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

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

The Ministry for Higher Education and Research (MESR), through the Directorate-General for Higher Education (DGES), is responsible for implementing the projects set in motion in higher education, and specifically the "Success in First Degree Studies" Plan and in student life.

ANNEX A
Actions mentioned by the Bologna countries in the 2007 national reports
Financial
• scholarships - means tested
• scholarships - merit based
• research grants
• grants for studying abroad
• grants or loans for (nearly) every student
• unspecified social support system
• free education (at least 1st cycle)
• reimbursement of tuition fees for certain groups
• financial assistance for certain groups/areas
• improved funding systems
Structural
• new /expanded routes of access
• broader teaching or learning strategies
• information and preparation at secondary schools
• increase student places
• indirect aid schemes (tax relief, family allowance)
• subsidised residences/meals/transport/books
• provision of student welfare services (health care, day care centres)
• counselling/guidance services
Certain groups
• measures for ethnic minorities (not financial)
• measures for disabled (not financial)
• measures for disadvantaged groups (not financial)
• allocation of study places to certain groups
• promote access from all national areas
Policy and practice
• explicit widening access policy (devoted funds/units/laws)
• carry out surveys (study & work, disabled students,...)
• evaluations/research of policies and practices
• monitoring access (and retention) by students

ANNEX B

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

Measures to promote equal opportunities for access, participation and completion
• Anti-discrimination legislation covering higher education
• Admission rules that are simple, fair and transparent

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

Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience

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

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

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

Finances in order to start and complete studies
• Financial and legal advice for students
• Appropriate and coordinated national financial support systems that are transparent
• Targeted support for disadvantaged groups as defined nationally
• Support measures for students with children

ANNEX C
Suggested approach of the work on national strategies on the social dimension

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

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

• Measures to promote equal opportunities

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

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

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

• Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience

A, Provision of academic services
B, Provision of social services

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

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

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

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

- Finances in order to start and complete studies

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

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

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

• Stakeholder involvement

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