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	Italy
Date	31st October 2008
BFUG member (one name only) Position	Dr.ssa Marzia Foroni - Directorate General for University - IV Office International Relations
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Contributors to the report	MIUR - CIMEA

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.

National evaluation and accreditation Agency

The regulation for the operations of the Italian Agency responsible for evaluation and accreditation of universities and research has been established in 2008 by the Presidential Decree 64/2008 (Regolamento concernente la struttura e il funzionamento dell'Agenzia nazionale di valutazione del sistema universitario e della ricerca – ANVUR http://www.na.infn.it/rnric/polric/Mussi_riforma_univ/DPR_regolamento_ANVUR.pdf). ANVUR replaces the two pre-existing bodies: CNVSU (the National University Evaluation Committee) and CIVR (The National Research Evaluation Committee).

Degree system

Two Ministerial Decrees in March 2007 have reformed the degree programme set up by Universities - first and second "Bologna" cycles (Laurea and Laurea Magistrale) - Decreto MIUR 16 marzo 2007 "Determinazione delle classi delle lauree universitarie" http://www.miur.it/Miur/UserFiles/Dossier/NuoveClassiLaurea/LaureeTriennali.pdf; Decreto MIUR 16 marzo 2007 "Determinazione delle classi di laurea magistrale" http://www.miur.it/Miur/UserFiles/Dossier/NuoveClassiLaurea/LaureeMagistrali.pdf. The aim is to ease access to the second cycle by removing obstacles to the inter-cycle graduate mobility.

Dublin Descriptors

According to the quoted 2007 Ministerial Decrees, starting from academic year 2008-09, Universities must adopt the "Dublin descriptors" in the reforming exercise of their first and second cycle programmes.

Italian Qualifications Framework - IQF

The implementation process of IQF has been continued in 2008 by establishing a working group with the mandate to develop the levels for the HE sector and to identify the qualifications there included. The working group included all the ministerial services involved, two Bologna Experts and CIMEA, the centre which had the task to prepare the first draft of IQF.

Lifelong learning

In 2007, a working group of experts nominated by the Minister developed a comprehensive strategy on LLL in HE (http://www.miur.it/Miur/UserFiles/Notizie/2007/Conferenza%20Napoli%20-%20Linee%20Indirizzo%20Apprendimento%20Permanente.pdf). Furthermore, a new framework law reforming the Italian lifelong learning system has been proposed in 2008.

Recognition of Prior Learning

A national working group of experts nominated by the Minister has defined the "National Guidelines for the recognition of prior learning" to be adopted by the Universities.

Social dimension

In 2007-08 the fifth Italian Eurostudent survey has been carried out with the aim of contributing to the collecting of European Indicators on the Social Dimension made by the Eurostudent Network according to the London Communiqué.

Third cycle

In 2008 the number and the amount of Doctoral scholarships has been increased by the Ministerial Decree 18.06.2008 (http://www.miur.it/0006Menu_C/0012Docume/0015Atti_M/7165Aument_cf2.htm).

2. Partnership

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

The implementation of the Bologna Process is a task which involves various authorities and structures, both at ministerial and institutional level.

National level:

- within the Ministry of Education, University and Research, two Directorates General are sharing, according to the specific portfolios, the responsibility for international relations and the Bologna Process: the Directorate General for University and the Directorate General for AFAM (Academies and institutions for Arts, Drama, Dance and Music).

Local level:

- HEIs have each appointed a "Bologna delegate"; they build up a national network coordinated by CRUI (see their website at http://www.crui.it/internazionalizzazione/HomePage.aspx?ref=1233).

- The Italian Bologna Expert group is constantly contributing to the spread of information on the BP with its activities. It is made up of 16 members, including representatives of both the university and the AFAM sector (www.processodibologna.it). Students participation in the Bologna Process is granted by CNSU (www.miur.it/cnsu), through his President.

As to other stakeholders (trade unions staff, businesses, social partners), their consultation has been made compulsory for the definition of new degree programmes and qualifications (see Art. 11, paragraph 4, of Ministerial Decree No270/04

http://www.miur.it/0006Menu_C/0012Docume/0098Normat/4640Modifi.htm). As to social partners, they must be consulted by universities for any relevant decision in relation to the Bologna process.

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
    Ministry   Yes ☒   No ☐
    Rectors' conference   Yes ☒   No ☐
    Academic staff   Yes ☒   No ☐

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[1] A group that develops policy proposals for implementing the Bologna Process

Students   Yes ☒   No ☐
Staff trade unions   Yes ☐   No ☒
National Quality Assurance Agency   Yes ☐   No ☒
Employers   Yes ☐   No ☒

Other (please specify) <u>The Italian BFUG includes a representative of CODAU (the Permanent Conference of Directors and Head of Office in Universities)</u>

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

d) Does your national Bologna promoters' group include representatives of
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>It includes three representatives of the AFAM sector, one doctoral student and representatives of the institutions administrative staff.</u>

Please add any additional comments if necessary:

The Directorate General for University has recently established a task force of experts who are asked to contribute to the strategy for the internationalisation of the Italian HE system to be presented to the Minister and to its implementation.

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[2] A group that supports/advises HEIs on implementation of the Bologna Process

DEGREE SYSTEM

3. Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle
a) Please describe the progress made towards introducing the first and second cycles.

> The implementation of the degree structure for 1st and 2nd cycle has been completed; therefore all degree courses of 1st and 2nd cycle currently available at Italian HEIs are designed in conformity to the Bologna reforms.

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
1.630.310	1.605.850	98,5%

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

> At present, all degrees are structured according to degree system of the Bologna Process, with the exclusion of the ones in educational sciences and the ones from the "pre-Bologna" period. These are still being run to give to the students who started their programmes before the Bologna reforms the opportunity to conclude their studies; no new students can matriculate for these courses.
>
> From the academic year 2008/09, all the new programmes must be described in terms of learning outcomes and according to what is foreseen by the Dublin Descriptors.
>
> The before mentioned data refer to the academic year 2007/08.

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

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[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

- 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
- 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)

- 100% of 3rd cycle programmes are defined by a regulatory framework which defines, amongst other aspects, the different responsibilities at all level, the total number of doctoral students, the amounts given as a doctoral grant, the managing structure of the Doctoral programme itself (Department and Scientific Council) and the responsibilities of the tutor;

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

- All doctoral courses include two main evaluation phases: an initial one, consisting in the selective competition for admission to the study programme, and a final one on the occasion of the defence of the dissertation. In addition, there is a formal evaluation at the end of each study year to grant transition to the next; doctoral students whose performance is found unsatisfactory are asked to withdraw from the programme. Supervision of individual doctoral programmes is carried out by specific teachers' councils (Collegio docenti del corso di DR), as well as by a single supervisor. The selection criteria and procedures are defined by the institution itself in their autonomy and are not, therefore, homogeneous.

- Even if, during the first year of Doctoral studies, taught courses prevail, there are a few differences in the following years, depending on the subject sector. For instance, taught courses and seminars are included in doctoral programmes relating to history, humanities, languages and literature, social sciences, etc., whereas Doctoral studies in scientific fields mainly consist in independent research. There are a few special typologies of structured Doctorate, the so-called doctorates "en co-tutéle", i.e. doctoral studies carried out under the joint supervision of the competent authorities of two different countries. Such doctorates are set up on the basis of formal bilateral agreements between Italy and another country, or following the direct initiative of the Italian universities concerned. Another increasing phenomenon is the setting up of "European" and "International" doctoral programmes, which too are co-financed by the Ministry when they meet some indispensable requirements as a guarantee of their true European or international dimension.

- It has been decided that doctoral studies will be included in level 8 of the IQF (Italian Qualification Framework), and that they will be linked to learning outcomes.

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

- Interdisciplinary in doctoral studies is being promoted by the further strengthening of "Doctorate Schools" (Scuole di Dottorato di Ricerca), where teachers and doctoral students of different faculties carry out research in a variety of fields.

- The national law does not make it compulsory to use credit points when designing doctoral programmes as the matter is left to the autonomous decision of individual HEIs. So far a limited number of doctoral programmes has adopted credit points to measure students' workload in doctoral studies.

- The status of Doctoral students is the one of "students", even if they benefit of some workers' Rights.

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.

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

The former Minister of University and Research (On. Fabio Mussi) has been called to play an active role in all decisions on research policies, including funds allocation, which are made by CIPE (Interministerial Committee for economic planning).

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
  o from public funds
  o from private funds
- total annual national research expenditure (expressed in national currency)
  o from public funds
  o 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

GDP spent on research:
- public funds: 0.58%
- private funds: 0.55%
Research expenditure:
- public funds 7.502M€
- private funds 6.646 M€
% of research carried out in HEIs: 65%.

At least 50% of Doctoral students enrolled in a Department must be granted a scholarship. Part of these funds goes from the State budget to the Universities which normally make available additional funds, coming either from their budget or from research and private entities.

The yearly amount of a doctoral scholaeship is minimum € 13.638, 47 € (DM 18/06/2008).

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

Yes ☒   No ☐   If Yes, please specify:

> CNVSU yearly releases a detailed report on Italian "Dottorato di Ricerca" in which a section on internationalisation and a section tracking the professional developments of research Doctor are included. Both sections are based on yearly surveys carried out by "Nuclei di Valutazione di Ateneo" (http://www.cnvsu.it/_library/downloadfile.asp?id=11349).

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 first cycle qualification give access to the second cycle.
>
> The Italian HE system is made up of two main sectors, university and AFAM, but both the 1st cycles of the university and of the AFAM sectors offer just one degree typology.
> No 1st cycle qualification gives access to 3rd cycle programmes.
> The Laurea (first cycle for Universities) and the Diploma Accademico di primo livello (first cycle for AFAM institution) gives access to the 2nd cycle.

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

> None.

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:

> The cases before mentioned are the ones including the Degrees in the area of nursing studies.

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

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[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."

None.

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

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

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

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

6.2 Access and admission between the second and third cycles

Please indicate:

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

100% of the 2nd cycle qualifications give access to the 3rd cycle. It is though worth mentioning that in nursing, the 3rd cycle is still under development.

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

See 6.2a.

c) any measures planned to remove obstacles between cycles

See 6.2a.

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

The Italian Laurea is the first cycle qualification of the Italian university system. DM 509/1999 and DM 270/2004 make provisions to increase the employability of graduates holding a Laurea, such as Art. 11, paragraph 4 of both quoted decrees, which states that universities must previously consult the representatives of all stakeholders, like businesses, social services, professional organisations, trade unions, etc… Such consultation must concern not only current educational needs as seen from the labour market but also the real occupational opportunities.

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

- a period of traineeship aiming at facilitating employment has been made a compulsory requirement of all 1st cycle degree programmes;

- individual universities have set up guidance and placement services for their graduates;

- the rules for participation in public competitions giving access to the civil service foresees the 1st cycle degree as the main educational qualification to enter public administration.

According to a survey on the employment rate of 1st cycle degree holders who graduated in summer 2006 (see http://www.almalaurea.it/lau/sondaggi/perc_che_lavora.shtml?ATENEO=0&FAC OLTA=0&TIPOLAU=1), the situation is the following:

- 45 % of graduates were employed a year after graduation;

- 45 % of graduates decided to pursue with further university studies by enrolling in second cycle degree courses;

- 10 % of graduates are either unemployed or neither studying nor looking for a job.

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:

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 2007, the Ministry of University and Research, now Ministry of Education, University and Research, has approved several legislative measures aimed at reforming the study programmes of universities with explicit reference to the Overarching Framework and to the Dublin Descriptors (DM 270/04, DDMM March 2007, DM 386/07 and DM 544/07).

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **Comment** The descriptors for each cycle in the various subject areas have been defined, with explicit reference to the Dublin Descriptors (see question 8a).

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **Comment** For the first and second cycle the range of credits (180 and 120) has been defined.

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

Yes ☐   No ☒

> **Comment** The national working group mentioned in the introduction (question 1) has identified the actors to be consulted, dividing them into two main categories:
> - actors involved in the HE system: Italian Rectors Conference (CRUI), National University Council (CUN), National Student Council (CNSU), National Council for the Art and Music sector (CNAM);
> - other actors involved in the HE system
> Although the parties to be consulted have already been defined, the consultation process will begin in the second half of 2008.

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** See question 8d.

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?

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

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.

> Taking into account the fact that the Italian QA system was already following the
> ESG in its main features, the approval of the regulation of ANVUR is a further
> step in the same direction. In particular, the new agency will develop the external
> evaluation of the system by focusing its work not only on quantitative indicators
> but as well on qualitative ones.

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: Starting from 1999, the Ministry
> provided to the University an annual fund of 3,2 M€ with the aim to provide the
> "Nuclei di Valutazione" (NVA - internal evaluation body) with organisational and
> statistical support.

- Other measures

Yes ☐   No ☒

> **If Yes**, please outline these measures

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 Thanks to the financial

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[8] http://www.bologna2009benelux.org/documents/Standards-and-Guidelines-for-QA.pdf

[9] ESG - Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

support (see 9c) all the "Nuclei di Valutazione" were and are able to hire expert statistician and other support personnel.

9.1. Internal quality assurance in higher education institutions

Describe the internal QA systems in place in your HEIs.

The Italian Internal QA system is in line with the "Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA" in the following main features:

1) Approval, monitoring and review of degree courses and awards

According to the national legislation, HEIs have to comply with a formal procedure for the approval of their degree courses and qualifications; they have also to monitor their courses so as to grant the periodical review of the regulations of individual degree programmes (decrees 509/1999 and 270/2004, Art.s 11, 12). Students and students' representatives participate, according to the competent level, in approval and monitoring procedures.

2) QA policy, procedures, initiatives

Evaluation units established in each HEI (Nuclei di Valutazione - NVA) are responsible for internal evaluation. Established in 1993, NVA have considerably developed: they are now fully into the construction and the improvement, in the respective universities, of a QA culture that may affect all university operations.

With the support of CRUI and of CNVSU, most NVA have strengthened their reciprocal cooperation so as to exchange knowledge, expertise, and good practices in QA. This process lead to the creation of a national coordination body of NVA (CONVUI - Coordinamento Nazionale dei Nuclei di Valutazione delle Università Italiane).

Similar structures have been recently defined and created for AFAM institutions as well (DPR 132/2002).

Furthermore, to meet the requirements of the ministerial technological initiative called "Anagrafe Studenti" (the database with all main features of Italian students), all HEIs are collecting relevant objective information which proves useful for the effective management of their degree programmes and related operations.

3) QA of teaching staff

The evaluation of teaching staff is one of the task of NVA at single HEI. Students are involved through questionnaires in the evaluation of teaching activities; the results of the questionnaires are published, usually aggregated at the institutional level, and have to be transmitted by the NVA to CNVSU accompanied by an explanatory report.

Both national and local measures have been taken to enhance QA of university teachers; e.g.: some universities have set up a body charged with the continuous evaluation of all teaching activities (permanent council on teaching evaluation = Osservatorio Permanente della Didattica).

4) Assessment of students

Criteria for students' assessment are included in the teaching regulations of individual universities and/or degree programmes, available online.

5) Public information

It was already an established procedure for HEIs to publish objective updated information on their degree programmes, on their internal structure, on students services and on student support schemes in their websites. This procedure has been formalised with a Directorate Deecree (Decreto Direttoriale 10 giugno 2008 n°61 http://www.miur.it/UserFiles/2848.pdf).

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

Universities are applying the revision of study programmes according to what foreseen by the DMs of 16th march 2007), while for AFAM institutions, given the recent creation of NVA (Internal QA bodies) there are no information available.

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.

In accordance with the principle of university autonomy, DM 509 (art. 12, c.3) require the HEIs to put in place a Committee at the programme level with the task of monitoring ECTS, workload and learning outcomes and give its opinion to the relevant bodies. These Committee, composed by students and academics, should include an equal participation (50% - 50%) of both categories.

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 Please refer to the before mentioned Directorate Deecree (Decreto Direttoriale 10 giugno 2008 n°61 http://www.miur.it/UserFiles/2848.pdf).

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

Until 2007, the Italian QA system was made up of two separate sections, one concerned with HE teaching and research at HEIs, the other specific for research, under the responsibility of CNVSU and CIVR respectively.

The Art. 36 of DL 262/2006 (http://www.giurdanella.it/mainf.php?id=7605) established a single national evaluation structure, named ANVUR (national agency for the evaluation of higher education and research), which is to replace both CNVSU, CIVR and ANVUR, which is endowed with juridical personality, enjoys operational, managerial and budgetary autonomy; its functions must be developed according to principles of impartiality, professional competence, and transparency; its criteria and operations must be made public.

The new QA Agency is responsible for:

a) the external evaluation of the quality of any operations at all HEIs and public and private research bodies which receive State funding, on the basis of an annual plan;

b) the coordination and supervision of the internal evaluation processes carried on by individual evaluation units within HEIs and research bodies;

c) the assessment of the efficiency and efficacy of State plans aimed at funding and incentivizing research and innovation.

The outcomes of ANVUR evaluation will supply reference criteria for the allocation of State funds to HEIs and research bodies.

The document regulating the internal functiong of ANVUR has been approved with Presidential Decree n°64/2008.

Nevertheless, until the ANVUR (new QA agency) is fully operational, the pre - existing CNVSU and CIVR were working according to the following regulations. They are responsible for the definition of the general criteria of their respective external evaluation operations, for the experimentation and the diffusion of evaluation methodologies, for the yearly plan of external evaluation activities and for the annual report on their assessment of the respective systems (higher education, research).

CNVSU also determines the criteria and methods for the harmonisation of self-evaluation procedures carried out by NVA at single HEI.

Degree programmes, first approved by the relevant authorities of individual HEIs, must also be approved - after a consultation with CUN (National University Council) - by the Ministry (see Decrees 509/1999 and 270/2004, Art.s 3-10), as well as accredited by CNVSU. In detail, CNVSU verifies that institutions are compliant with organizational and structural pre - requisites (facilities, services), with participation pre - requisites (minimum number of students involved) and with teaching pre - requisites (minimum number of teachers) when they submit proposals for Degree Programmes. Even all e-learning programmes at State universities must follow the same procedure. Furthermore, all non-State telematic

universities must go through the procedures of legal institutional recognition at the care of the Ministry and their degree programmes must be accredited by CNVSU. Institutional recognition and course accreditation are reviewed at intervals of 3 to 5 years.

Public information

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

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

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:

CNVSU covered all HEIs (until 2007), the new agency is responsible only for universities.

d) which of the following elements are included in your external quality assurance 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 <u>no date is fixed yet, but the review is foreseen by the regulation of the Agency</u>) No ☐

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[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.

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***:**

The regulation of the national agency foresees the participation of up to 4 students in the consultative Committee:

- 2 students are nominated by the national students council;

- 1 student is nominated by ESU;

- if any Italian student is elected in ESU's decision making bodies, then s/he will have the right to participate to the consultative Committee as well.

Furthermore, the students organisations can propose one or more candidate for the selection of the main governing body of the agency.

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:

EUA, ERC and ESU nominate candidates for the governing bodies of the Agency. As already mentioned, ANVUR – the Agency to which the answers to questions 11 and 12 are referred – is not yet operating. The Ministry warmly hopes that it will soon be amongst ENQA members and involved in other international networks, as the actual regulation of ANVUR foresees.

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 legislative framework require HEIs to release the DS in the European format to all graduates, free of charge and in a widely spoken European language (Italian and English). At the national level there isn't any statistic information concerning the DS implementation, but the perception the Ministry has is that institutions are quickly finalizing the last steps for the implementation of the DS, even if they have technical obstacles. If these will be solved by 2009, all graduates will receive it by the end of the same year.

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>italian and english</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** The academic recognition of foreign HE qualifications with the aim of further study in university programmes is a responsibility of the receiving institution, which takes an autonomous decision but, at the same time, has to comply with the bilateral or multilateral agreements in force.
>
> Universities apply the procedures of the so-called finalised recognition: they give a global evaluation of the foreign degree with the aim of deciding about their suitability in terms of level and contents for the candidate student access to the chosen advanced programmes.

> As a matter of fact, each university, following general criteria established at national level, sets its own specific rules for enrolment: the Diploma Supplement has been officially indicated as a reference document on mentioned general Rules for the enrollment of foreign students for the three-year period 2008-2011 (see Norme per l'accesso degli studenti stranieri ai corsi universitari nel triennio 2008-2011 http://www.studiare-in-italia.it/studentistranieri).

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** Each university establishes which documents will have to be translated according to its own rules and to the nature of the study course, as indicated on general Rules for the enrolment of foreign students for the three-year period 2008-2011 (see Norme per l'accesso degli studenti stranieri ai corsi universitari nel triennio 2008-2011 http://www.studiare-in-italia.it/studentistranieri).

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 most common documents requested by university institutions to prove the validity of the qualification are:
> a) the certificate of achieved foreign degree (i.e. the certified photocopy of the original paper);
> b) the official university document listing all the subjects of courses completed for the foreign degree usually called transcript;
> c) the Diploma Supplement, attached to the degree;
> d) the so-called Dichiarazione di valore - DV, i.e. statement of validity, issued by the competent Italian diplomatic authorities abroad.

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** The Italian Europass National Centre (Centro Nazionale Europass Italia), also in cooperation with the Bologna Experts, organised conferences and published documents on the state of the art of the Diploma Supplement as a communication tool towards the labour market in the Italian context.

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.

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[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: The Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) was ratified by Law No. 148 of 11th July 2002, but the legal instruments have not yet been deposited. The Ministerial Decree No. 214 of 26th April 2004 was published in conformity to Art. 4 of Law 148/2002, it regulates the recognition of the qualifications awarded by foreign HEIs based in the Italian territory. Both the mentioned Italian provisions comply with the legal framework of the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents.
>
> Art.s 12 and 13 of Law No. 29 of 25th January 2006 have provided the legal regulations for cases of academic recognition falling within the competence of public administrations other than universities (see Art. 5 of Law 148/2002).

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: Law 148/2002 determines that:
> - academic recognition is mainly a responsibility of individual Italian universities (Art. 2);
> - universities have to apply the Lisbon Recognition Convention, and to complete their recognition procedures within 90 days from the reception of a duly documented application (Art. 3);
> - Art. 332 of the Royal Decree 1592/1933 (the old legal provision on academic recognition) is revoked (Art. 9);
> - recognition of qualifications awarded by TNE HEIs based in Italy shall be regulated by a separate legal provision (Art. 4);
> - academic recognition for certain specific purposes (e.g. selection for allocation of scholarships/fellowships, assignment of some tasks within public entities, etc.) is the responsibility of some State administrations.
>
> In Italy the repealing of the old legislation on academic recognition has caused the automatic extension of the LRC to HE qualifications from all countries in the world.

   ii) Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees

Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If Yes**, please demonstrate how it is achieved: Our national legislation allows Italian HEIs to award joint degrees: Italian HEIs are open to apply the LRC and the Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees to joint degrees awarded by foreign HEIs. When one or more Italian universities are involved in designing, setting up an integrated degree course, and awarding the related joint degree, there is no need for legal recognition in Italy. In fact the national legislation delegates the procedures for the award of joint qualifications to the general academic regulations of individual universities (DM 509/1999 and DM 270/2004, Article 11, paragraph 7, subparagraph o) which however have to clearly state the Italian degree typology to which the joint qualification concerned pertains.
>
> Joint qualifications awarded by foreign HEIs may be recognised in Italy, provided the following conditions are met in each case: (i) the partner institutions are

"recognised" by the respective HE systems; (ii) the design, setting up, and management of the integrated course are regulated in a specific interuniversity agreement including a clause which determines the validity/recognition of the joint qualification within the respective HE systems of all partner HEIs, or at least of those awarding the joint qualification concerned to a specific person; (iii) the Italian HE system offers a degree comparable in level and nature; (iv) limitedly to Doctorates, the joint degree must have been awarded after a minimum of 3 years.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

If Yes, please demonstrate how it is achieved: Taking into account the Art. 4 of Law 148/2002 - Italian ratification of the LRC -, Art. VI.5 of the LRC, and in conformity to the Code of Good Practice in the Provision of TNE, Italy has approved specific regulations on TNE HEIs based within its national borders.

The Ministerial Decree No. 214 of 26th April 2004 determines that the recognition of HE qualifications awarded by HEIs pertaining to the above mentioned category is possible only on condition that the single HEI concerned has previously be accredited by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR). Once checked the ministerial accreditation, the Italian university concerned may start the recognition procedure by applying the LRC and the criteria of the quoted Code of Good Practice.

So far only one TNE HEI based in Italy (Link Campus - University of Malta) completed the mentioned accreditation process.

In case of TNE qualifications awarded outside Italy, universities have adopted as a basic criterion for eligibility to recognition that the awarding HEI be recognised/accredited both by the HE system of reference and that of the host country. Only under certain circumstances Italian universities are willing to recognise a TNE degree awarded by a HEI which enjoys the proper legal status of the HE system of just one of the two countries concerned.

A specific section of the CIMEA website created on July 2008 is dedicated to TNE topics (http://www.cimea.it/portal/page/categoryItem?contentId=66393): there are information available in English and Italian on the Revised Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education - 2007, on the Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education – 2001 and its Explanatory Memorandum and a Cimea document named Transnational Education in Italy.

c) which of the following principles are applied in practice

i) applicants' right to fair assessment

Yes ☒   No ☐

If Yes, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level Law No. 148 of 11th July 2002 transmitted the LRC concept of fair assessment on our legislation and on our recognition procedures. So far, no problems have arisen with reference to the applicants' right to fair assessment.

ii) recognition if no substantial differences can be proven

Yes ☒   No ☐

If Yes, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level The concept of substantial difference is connected to different procedures and to the purpose of a specific recognition procedure (i.e. access to the Civil Service by participation in public competitions; admission to and enrolment in university programmes, recognition of professional qualifications, equivalence of foreign higher education academic qualifications to the corresponding Italian degrees, etc.). The general criteria recently adopted by several universities are common to all recognition purposes, while specific criteria may depend on the purpose for which recognition is sought. The very basic criteria generally agreed upon are related to:

- the legal status of the awarding institution (its definition is a prerequisite to proceed in the evaluation); the awarding HEI must form "official" part of the system of reference, which means that it should be either a State institution, or a State-recognised one, or accredited, depending on the rules of the education system concerned;

- the cycle/level and nature (academic/professional) of the foreign qualification within the system of reference;

- the academic rights that the foreign qualification grants in the awarding country.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

If Yes, please describe how it is ensured at national and institutional level With reference to the applicants' right to a motivated recognition refusal, HEIs agree on its importance and they motivate their decisions, but sometimes still find it difficult to define the concept of "substantial differences" and to apply it to the different concrete situations. CIMEA, the Italian Enic-Naric centre, promote a discussion on cases of substantial differences inside the Enic-Naric network where an ad hoc working group was established in 2005.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

If Yes, please describe how it is done in practice The Italian Enic/Naric centre (CIMEA) acts as the Italian national centre providing information on the Italian HE system and on the academic recognition in Italy of foreign qualifications. According to the Art. VIII.2 of the Lisbon Convention the following information has been made available in English and in Italian on CIMEA website in a specific section updated in June 2008 (see page http://www.cimea.it/portal/page/categoryItem?contentId=15433). Following information are available online to the public: full text of the LRC; Law 148/2002 - Italian ratification of the LRC; the legal provisions on the accreditation of foreign universities: Decree 214/2004 English – Italian; types of Italian Higher Education Institutions; list of Italian University institutions; list of Higher Institutions for the Arts and Music (AFAM); list of Higher Schools for Language Mediators; list of Specialisation Institutes/Schools in Psychotherapy; types of University Degrees; Diploma Supplement: the Italian University System; Diploma Supplement: the Italian AFAM System.

v) do you have a fully operational ENIC

If Yes, please describe the role of your ENIC in recognition and information provision a) nationally and b) internationally The competent Italian Ministry has entrusted the role of national information centre with CIMEA - Information Centre on Academic Mobility and Equivalence, the Italian Enic-Naric centre, since 1986. CIMEA has no decision-making powers; its main tasks consist in:

- providing information on recognition legislation and procedures (academic, professional de iure, professional de facto);

- providing information on the Italian education system, with special reference to higher education;

- providing advice on recognition matters and/or specific recognition cases; CIMEA advice is reserved for the Ministry, foreign and Italian HEIs, foreign and Italian public administrations, international organisations, public and private companies, foreign and Italian employers, etc.

- editing information materials on recognition and on the Italian HE education system (guides, booklets, leaflets, websites, etc.).

At national level, CIMEA cooperates with the Italian ministries in charge with de iure professional recognition, with professional councils, and such organisations as chambers of commerce, trade unions, etc., regional authorities competent for education and training, Crui, HEIs, other public authorities in charge with finalised academic recognition.

As to international networking and cooperation, CIMEA is a member of the Enic, Naric and Meric networks. It also cooperates with AEC, EAIE, EURES, FEDORA, ECSTA, FEANI, as well as with foreign organisations like Education International, NAFSA, NIAF, and WES in the USA, BBT (CH), DAAD (DE), the British Council (UK), foreign Embassies and Consulates, etc.

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

Practical application of Lisbon Convention principles may require the building up of a new and more flexible recognition culture at national level. Both Law 148/2002 and Ministerial Decrees 509/1999 and 270/2004 entrusted Italian universities with a greater autonomy in the evaluation of foreign qualifications; as a consequence, universities needed some training on the implications of institutional autonomy in relation to academic recognition, as well as on the principles and criteria of the two above legal provisions innovating the old legislation in the field.

Upon Ministry request, in January 2003 CIMEA organised a national course devised to provide academics and administrative staffs at all universities with the necessary basic training on the new legislation. As a result, participant universities decided to set up two working groups, coordinated by Bologna and Padua universities, with the purpose of elaborating proposals for common guidelines to be adopted by individual universities when drawing up their institutional regulations on academic recognition. The two working groups met several time, requesting Cimea's participation and contributions. In the end:

> - the group coordinated by Bologna State University produced guidelines for the recognition of foreign HE qualifications taking into account the above quoted Recommendation;
>
> - the group coordinated by Padua State University revised the ministerial Note on the admission to Italian universities of candidates holding foreign school leaving diplomas.
>
> To raise awareness in the non-university sector, Cimea organised in 2005 four training courses open to directors and teachers of all Afam institutions.
>
> Upon request of individual institutions, Cimea organises local trainings on specific recognition cases and problems.

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% ☐

| |
| |

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:

| Not applicable. |
| |

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

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

| Not applicable |
| |

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

                                               Yes ☒   No ☐

> **If Yes,** please explain: In the Ministerial Decrees of 16th March 2007, introducing the improvements in the implementations of the Degree structures according to the Bologna action lines, there is an explicit reference to learning outcomes and the same is valid for the guidelines accompanying the Decrees. At the same time,

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[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

the Bologna Experts put a lot of efforts to accompany the HEIs in the process of redefining degrees, by providing them guidance and useful documents related to the implementation of learning outcomes. Amongst the Experts, the work has been carried out especially by the ones involved as well in the Tuning project.

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

<div align="right">Yes ⊠   No ☐</div>

If Yes, please explain: Every academic year, the internal QA body of every HEI (Nucleo di valutazione - NVA) collects and analyses a survey distributed to students concerning academic activities and related services (classrooms, timetable,etc…). The results of the questionnaires are published online according to individual HEI internal regulation. Since not all HEIs were fully accomplishing with what foreseen in the legislation, a further provision has been set up (D.D. 61/2998 - Decreto Direttoriale) which explicitly requests HEIs to publish the results collected. Together with the questionnaires, the legislation (DM 509/99, art 13, c.3) foresees the creation of consultative commissions with the mandate of assessing LO, ECTS and students workload (see q. 9.1d).

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

<div align="right">Yes ⊠   No ☐</div>

If Yes, please explain: This activity is included amongst the ones of the internal QA body (Nucleo di Valutazione), which has the task to analyse the students' questionnaires and to suggest possible improvement strategies to the Rector and to the Senate. The Bologna Experts who are as well ECTS Counsellors have performed several activities to support the introduction of ECTS, including counselling and the organization of seminars for institutions, students and teachers.

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?

<div align="right">Yes ☐   No ⊠</div>

If Yes, please specify:

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

If Yes, please specify: The Ministerial Decree 270/04 and the subsequent DMs of the 16th March 2007 foresee that HEIs can put in place internal regulation for the RPL. In any case, the Institution is not allowed to recognise more than 60 ECTS in the RPL framework.

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

<div align="right">Yes ☒   No ☐</div>

If Yes, please specify: A national working group (see question 1) has defined the "National Guidelines for the recognition of prior learning" to be adopted by the Universities.

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

<div align="center">Comprehensively ☐   Some ☒   A little ☐   None ☐</div>

Please describe the current situation: The "National Guidelines for the recognition of prior learning" (Linee guida per un Regolamento di Ateneo sull'Accreditamento dell'Apprendimento Pregresso - AAP) mentioned in the previous answer are directed to the Universities. Three typologies of recognition are defined: - AAPC – Apprendimento Certificato (Certified Learning) - AAPE – Apprendimento basato sull'esperienza (Experience based Learning) - AAPA – Apprendimento basato sullo studio autonomo (Autonomous Learning). National Guidelines also suggest: - how to attribute ECTS credits for prior learning - framework agreements with non universities learning institutions - internal offices which should be involved - a list of typical activities that may be recognized (foreign languages competence certifications, Ecdl, civil service, voluntary work, internship, professional qualifications, vocational training qualifications, etc.) - recognition procedures - information and transparency.

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.

Eleven "telematic" universities (Università Telematiche) have been approved and recognised in order to create opportunities for more flexibility in HE programmes provision. Their degree courses are subject to quality control and accreditation procedures at the care of CNVSU; consequently, the degrees they confer have

the same legal validity as those awarded by Italian State-established or State-recognised universities that offer a traditional delivery mode of education. All Università Telematiche share the the goal to facilitate the access to HE -as well as the attainment of at least a 1st cycle degree- of a few social categories like working / disadvantaged / handicapped / adult students. When a degree programme includes professional training and/or some practical activities as compulsory curricular requirements, the telematic university concerned set it up in collaboration with a traditional HEI on the basis of a specific agreement.

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

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 Italian telematic universities enjoy the juridical status of non-State, but State-recognised universities; such a legal recognition entitles them to offer the same degree typologies as those of the traditional universities directly established by the Italian State and will be placed in the correspondent level within the NQF.

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 It is left to the initiative of HEI within university autonomy.

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 For the students older than 25 who want to access HE, without possessing the required secondary education qualification, can get access to the state exam without being obliged to get back to school. Any secondary school diploma allows access in any HE programme.

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 There are specific teaching methods in place foreseen for disabled students and for students who are working.

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 In the framework of the university autonomy, institutions can organise specific programmes for workers who want to enter HE. They are defined as part time students.

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,

> In the a.y. 2006/07, the students enrolled in telematic Universities were 10.536.
>
> Thanks to this provision, these students could benefit of higher education (0,6% of the total students population).

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 ☐

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[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.

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)?

Social sciences 31%
Engeneering and architecture 25%

e) Estimate the number of joint programmes in your country

They were 310 in 2004 and we estimate an increase of 35% in 2008.

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

Specific "actions for internationalisation" have been proposed in the three latest plans for the development of the Italian university system up to 2006. The Ministry has made available considerable financial resources and has set out guidelines for the development of bilateral and multilateral projects leading to joint degrees. The common thinking that underlines the three main typologies of internationalisation actions can be summarised as follows:
•support of international student mobility;
•use of ECTS system and Diploma Supplement;
•participation of teachers and students from at least another country;
•co-financing of projects (50%) by HEIs;
•quality assurance.

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

> The before mentioned actions for internationalization included as well grants for students involved in joint/double degrees.

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?

> Financial support:
>
> - the Ministry, according to what foreseen by the Ministerial Decree DM 198/03 (http://www.miur.it/UserFiles/2168.pdf), is investing 12,7 M€ each year in mobility grants for students;
>
> - several HEIs reserve a quote of their budget to integrate the existing grants (such as Erasmus) or to create new mobility opportunity. Usually these grants are allocated following specific criteria based on socio - economic conditions, success in study, destination, disabilities, etc.;
>
> - the bodies managing students support schemes, according to DPCM 9 aprile 2001, art. 10 (reference to Law 390/2001, http://www.miur.it/0006Menu_C/0012Docume/0015Atti_M/1362Unifor_cf2.htm), integrate the mobility grant of all students who already receive a study grant in cases where the mobility period implies recognition of ECTS;
>
> - in the 2007-09 development plan that the Universities are required to prepare in order to receive part of the government funding, one of the priority guideline set by the Ministry, the one dealing with plans in internationalisation, includes all initiatives concerning students mobility. If the Universities will be successful in implementing this action, they will benefit of more funding (DPR n°25/1998 and DM n°506/2007 http://www.miur.it/universita_programmazione/).
>
> Parallel to financial support, the Ministry is implementing several measures to promote quality in mobility:
>
> - in cooperation with the Bologna Experts, the Ministry organised several seminars for students and students' representatives to train them on all available tools for mobility and recognition of periods of study;
>
> - in cooperation with the LLP national Agency, the Ministry is supporting changes in the allocation of Erasmus funds in order to increase the grant for students and to give more resources to the HEIs which are better in recognising study periods abroad and joint/double degrees, in attracting foreign students and in promoting mobility amongst Italian students.

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

<div align="right">Yes x   No ☐</div>

> **Please add** appropriate comments to describe the current situation:

The regulatory framework relating to visas and permits for students, researchers and professors includes:

- articles for the access of foreign students (years 2008 - 2011, reg. 1291 16th may 2008 - http://www.studiare-in-italia.it/studentistranieri/testo_delle_norme.html);

- Laws 30/2007 and 154/07 (Decreti Legislativi);

- Law 9th october 2008 for scientific research (Decreto Legislativo);

- implementation of EU norms and principles.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation: See q19a

d) Are study periods taken abroad recognised?

Yes ☒   No ☐

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation:

Listed below you can find a few good practices implemented by Italian HEIs:

- automatic recognition of all activities included in the agreement sucessfully undertaken abroad by the students once official documentation is provided;

- delegation of all the recognition procedures by the Faculty Council/Study programme Council to one individual referent (usually a teacher);

- introduction of the same procedures for recognition at the institutional level.

Even if not all HEIs could provide an example of good practices, these are more and more spreading in the system.

e) Is there accommodation for mobile students and staff?

Yes ☒   No ☐

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation: 10% of the accomodations available for students are reserved for international students. Since this measure can't cover all the requests, HEI staff usually support international students in finding an accomodation.

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

Yes ☒   No ☐

Please add appropriate comments to describe the current situation: See q19a

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. There are, nevertheless, two good practices: the region Valle d'Aosta and the

province of Bolzano provide local students with grants which can be used to study either in Italy or abroad.

b) Are portable loans available in your country?

Yes ☐   No ☒

If **No**, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of loans. There is a good practice set up in the Fullbright Consortium which allows students, who are eligible for the Fullbright grant but exceed the limited number of grants available, to apply for a loan to be spent in the Fullbright programme.

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

21. Implementation of strategy

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

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

- "Marco Polo" programme: created and launched by CRUI, the project aims at promoting cooperation between Chinese and Italian universities by taking a number of concrete measures (e.g. setting up two coordinating offices, one per country; ensuring accomodation for students and researchers; offering intensive Italian language courses; facilitating research opportunities; providing work placements with Italian companies). On a voluntary basis, Italian Universities and Confindustria, the major association of Italian industrialists, actively participate in the project along with other interested parties.

- Fellowships for India: the Ministry allocated Euro 1,5M € for 100 fellowships, amounting to Euro 15,00.00 each, to young Indian researchers;

- Italo-Chinese University: the Ministry of Education in cooperation with some Italian universities, a few private companies, and two Chinese universities (Fudan University in Shanghai and the University of Tongji) launch a project to promote the education and training in management of both Chinese and Italian students.

b) What has your country done to:
i) improve information on the EHEA outside Europe?

The Ministry provided for the publication of four websites, one in English, one in Chinese, one in French and one in Spanish, consisting in a detailed description of the new Italian university system and its 1st and 2nd cycle degree programmes (see http://www.study-in-italy.it and http://www.studyinitaly.cn). A German version of it is under construction.

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

In co-operation with Agencies and the National Contact points for EU mobility programmes, the Ministry supported the participation of HEIs to TEMPUS, LLP and Erasmus Mundus.

The results of such a work are very positive both if we consider the actions managed nationally and if we look at the centralised ones. Furthermore, a few Italian Universities are co – founders of the Euromediterranean University.

iii) strengthen cooperation based on partnership in higher education?

In order to promote bilateral cooperation with other countries, the Ministry gives support to several bilateral universities, such as:

- Italo - turkish University;

- Italo - egyptian University;

- Italo - pakistani University.

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

The main tool to support HEIs in their dialogue with other world's region have been the three actions for internationalization. Under the third one, for example, the funds available were distributed according to the following geografic priorities: Mediterranean region (26%), Balcans (13%), Latin America (22%), USA (26%), Cina - India - Japan (13%).

v) improve recognition of qualifications with other world regions?

The Italian ERIC - NARIC centre is taking part to the MERIC Network -

Meditterranean Recognition and Information Centre.

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.

In the Italian HE system, in order for an HEI to provide a state recognised qualification it is necessary to hold:

- a Decree of recognition as Institution allowed to offer recognised qualification;

- a Decree of recognition for the released qualifications.

These regulations apply to all Institutions, including the ones which are not based in Italy. Furthermore, the DM 270/04 regulates accreditation and minimum quality standards for TN Institutions operating in Italy.

In addition, as ad hoc measures against degree mills, the Ministry took the initiative of publishing a list of HEIs offering programmes in Italy which were no way recognised by the Ministry (Years 1988, 1993, 1994). Other ad hoc initiatives have been taken by the Antitrust Authority which, since 1990, took actions against 150 different cases of Institutions promoting themselves as "University" and/or "Politechnics" (even if they were not defined so through the before mentioned ministerial procedure) or cases of qualifications promoted as being "Laurea" (even if they could not do so).

Lastly, the Ministry is supporting the Italian ENIC/NARIC centre, which recently finalised a publication in English and Italian on Diploma Mills (http://www.cimea.it/portal/page/categoryItem?contentId=66393).

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.

The main challenges now foreseen for the Italian HE system are:

- short term, completion of the implementation of DM 270/04 and Ministerial Deecrees of 16th march 2008 concerning the correction of the drawbacks of the first Bologna Reform (DM 509/99) and consequent monitoring;

- short term, full implementation of the LLL guidelines for HEIs;

- long term, definition of the guidelines for the reform of the governance and preparation of its legal basis.

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?

The monitoring of students population happens according to these three aspects: gender, disabilities, socio - economic status.
a) the composition of students population according to gender reproduces the distribution of men and woman amongst young population: woman constitute the majority in students population as in youth population.
b) disable students matriculated in 2005/06 are the 0,7% of the total students population. Data refer to the disabled students officially recognised as such by the universities in order to receive public support (DPCM 19.04.2001, art. 8). The rate refers to the total number of students enrolled in first and second cycles programmes (pre-reform and post-reform of Bologna).
c) the composition of students population on the basis of the socio - economic background is measured through the working situation and the educational background of parents. It indicates the under-representation of students coming from families were parents are "blue collars" (or similar occupation) and of students who's parents are with up to lower secondary education.
Therefore, the socio - economic condition appears as the main obstacle to participative equity in HE. It must be taken into account though the fact that access to HE is influenced by the existing selection in lower level and that it influences the indicators also in students population.

There are no statistical proofs of under-representation of disabled students amongst student population, if compared with the total population of the same age group.

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).

Measures to support access of socio-economic underrepresented groups into Higher Education:

-   Information and counselling in secondary schools;
-   guarantee of accessible and transparent on line information on the programmes offered by HEIs , including possibilities for working careers and students services (D.D. 61/2008 - D.G. Università);
-   Information and counselling by Higher Education Institutions for pupils in the pre - access phase;
-   Free access to most of 1st cycle courses (except in cases on numerus clausus regulated by law);
-   Fee exemption (total or partial) is means tested, it is also partially merit based (DPCM 9 aprile 2001, art. 8), fees may also be reimbursed;
-   Scholarships and grants are means tested; they are also partially merit based (DPCM 9 aprile 2001, artt. 4-5-6);
-   Housing in student residences are means tested; they are also partially merit based (DPCM 9 aprile 2001, art. 2); similar rules may apply also to access to student restaurants;
-   Special grants for students in exceptional bad economic conditions or bad events;
-   Indirect aid in the form of tax relief for families with dependant students;
- No bareers to access based on geographical location of HEIs or provenience of students.

Measures to support disabled students (and students with special needs):

-   Legal framework for the support, social integration and Rights of disable people (Laws N°104/1992 and N°17/1999);
-   Support schemes for disable students and students with special needs (DPCM 9 april 2001, art. 14);
-   presence in several HEIs of a delegate of the Rector taking care of disabled students integration;
-   Desk at HEIs specialised in disabled students support;
-   Peer tutoring;
-   Free transportation;
-   Exemption from tuition fees;
-   Increase in the financial support to facilitate academic activities (facultative for disabled students with less than 66%).

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.

Measures adopted by the Government are as follows:
- grants and students' loans;
The framework Law concerning students' welfare – L390/1991, art. 16, c. 4 – creates an integration to the resources put at disposal of Regions and autonomous provinces referred to as Integrative Fund (Fondo Integrativo statale) for the set up of a loan scheme. After the approval of the Law n662/1996, it is possible to use that fund for grants s as well. The repartition between Regions and Provinces is yearly done by a Decree of the Prime Minister after a proposal from the HE Ministry prepared on the basis of students' welfare data related to the previous academic year. The Decree has to be approved as well by the permanent Conference State – Regions and every local authority (regional or provincial) specifies in a public call the procedures, the requisites and possible priorities – study cycle, merit, disciplines - set to get access to loans. In these public calls it has to be clear which procedures will be followed for the re – payment of the loan and for possible recoveries for insolvency. It has to be clear though that in the majority of Italian Regions there are students who have the right to get a grant but who don't receive it because of the lack of financial resources at the national and/or at the local level. The percentage of students not getting their grant, even if they should, goes between few % points and a much higher rate.
Later on, according to Law 170/2003 and DM 198/03, some experimental initiatives on other loans schemes were started. Some of them have been financed under the condition that they would be based on previous agreement between Regions and Universities and regulated by provisions agreed with banks. The agreement mentioned should define not only the procedures but also the main features of the scheme (total amount, repayment rules, rates, cycle, discipline, qualification, etc). The amount foreseen varies between 3.000 and 15.000€. Finally, the Law 350/2003 includes a fund for the creation of financial guarantees for banks and credit institutions concerning students' loans and an additional help for the best performing students in the repayment of the loans.
-    Grants for studying abroad
Please, refer to question n 19a.
-    On-campus counselling and guidance
-    On-campus tutoring for all students
The Ministry set up several initiatives concerning counselling and guidance.
The project called "Scientific Qualifications" ("Lauree scientifiche"). The multi annual university planning for the period 2004-2006 foresaw targeted resources to be distributed amongst Universities on the basis of projects, involving also research institutions, aimed at reinforcing scientific skills for secondary school students by training their teachers, by developing ad hoc programmes more focused on the needs of the labour market and of the ICT sector and through experimental stages and traineeship. The activities targeted on pupils and

teachers are developed in the framework project "Guidance and training for teacher" (Orientamento e Formazione Insegnanti) for the disciplines of chemistry, physics, maths and science of materials and are articulated in the following activities: laboratories, training courses for teachers, conferences and seminars, study visits in universities laboratories, competitions, production of teaching materials and self - evaluation tests.

Regulation in terms of access and guidance (D.M. 245/1997 and following changes). In the Regulation the practices for pre - access in HE institutions by pupils finishing their secondary education are defined.

UNIverso. On the Ministry webpage there is a link to the web address UNIverso (http://universo.miur.it/), which includes a general informative session on the HE system, the main legislative documents and the forms to be used to complete the pre -access to HEIs.

Guide to HE and to the labour market. The guide is a tool for guidance realised on a yearly base with the aim to become a reference point for secondary school pupils during the choice of the discipline in which to pursue their studies and possible future working career (http://www.miur.it/DefaultDesktop.aspx?doc=975).

Guide to HE second cycle qualifications in Universities and in other typologies of HE Institutions. To provide all graduates with a first cycle qualification with accurate and useful information on the continuation of their studies, the Ministry publishes a guide including all programmes offered by the different institutions, their location and the main features of students services.

Autonomous initiatives of HEIs. Part of the financial resources available for multi annual planning for 2004 - 2006 have been used to reinforce guidance, tutoring and integrative training initiatives which the institutions are already putting in place, in order to reduce drop outs and the time needed to complete a period of study.

-    Targeted tutoring for non-traditional students or special groups (e.g worker students);

-    Psychological care and support for students in needs;

-    Free health care and basic medical assistance for all students;

-    special fund for students' housing (L. 338/2000);

-    Development of distance learning and e-learning tools (new distance universitities – e-learning in "traditional" universities) as a mean to reduce obstacles (economical, social, geographical) to mobility;

-    courses of language and culture of minorities in HEIs;

- provisions for RPL.

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?

The monitoring of the composition of students population according to gender and disabilities is taken care of by the statistical office of the Ministry (http://statistica.miur.it/).

> The Eurostudent Survey, done by Fondazione Rui in co-operation with and with the financial support of the Ministry, collects every three years information and data on the Social Dimension, especially concerning students from the 1st and 2nd cycle.
> The Almalaurea survey, done by Consorzio Almalaurea, collects every year data on the Social Dimension, especially concerning 1st and 2nd cycle graduates.

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 Ministry decided two concrete goals for the period 2008 - 2010:
>
> - reinforcement of academic and other services for disable students, in order to enlarge their participation in higher education;
>
> - development of new instrument to increase the opportunities for students coming from disadvantaged background parallel to the ones already existing, both in terms of teaching/learning processes innovation and in terms of financial resources for students' welfare system.

(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).

> Planned actions are as follows:
> - continuation of the policy of incentives for students' loans schemes to favour the ones who need a financial support to study – for every Bologna cycle – and give them a loan under better terms than market ones. This project is carried out under a bigger frame work agreement between the Italian Government and the Italian Association of Banks (ABI – Associazione Banche Italiane). In this direction, two legal provision have been already approved in 2004 (financial Law 2004) and in 2007 (Framework agreement between the Youth Policies Ministry and ABI).
> - promotion of e-learning, both through Telematic Universities and through e-learning programmes created in "traditional" Universities. This measure allows students, especially disable students, to get involved and study in Universities without facing physical or economical barriers;

- promotion of flexible learning paths and of lifelong learning. Thanks to the guarantee of full recognition for these activities, students can decide to attend part – time programmes which allow a parallel working activity (or any other activity) combined with their studies;

- strengthening of the co-operation between Ministry and regional authorities on the social dimension. Following the Constitutional reform on regional competencies, the students' welfare system has become a task of Regions, in co-operation with the Government; therefore Regions themselves became the main sponsor of students' welfare system, achieving in some cases very good results. The main goal of the Ministry is to transform these cases into the widespread rule in the country.

To the before mentioned measures, all the ones described in the previous answers concerning the three cycle reform should be added as much as the ones concerning students' support mentioned below:

- tutoring services specialized on disable students (insertion, equal opportunities in studies and in all other aspects of HE);

- changes in the legislation concerning health care systems to allow students to benefit of assistance even without changing their legal residence;

- promotion of agreements at the local level between institutions managing students' support and institutions taking care of local transportations and restaurants/cafeterias/canteens…;

- guarantee of admission procedures which are fair and transparent;

- development of a National qualifications framework and recognition of prior learning;

- National support to students starting their studies and to tutoring services through the production of informative material and the provision of ad hoc funding within universities strategy development support;;

- inclusion of students' representatives in all decision making bodies at the institutional, local and National level and in the upcoming ANVUR.

- students' participation in internal quality assurance processes.

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

Main financial resources are included in the following legal provision:

- Integrative fund for students' welfare (L 390/1991 and DPCM - Decree of the Prime Minister - 9 april 2001) foreseeing 152M € for 2008;

- Fund for the construction of students' housing (L338/2000 and DM 10 december 2004);

- Fund for students' and youth mobility (DM 198/03) foreseeing yearly 12,7M €;

- the financial support for the students' loan scheme is still to be defined.

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

The deadline set is 2010. Concerning students accomodation (residences), furthermore, the Ministry is preparing the second intervention plan co-finaced by the Ministry itself for 190M €.

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

The Ministry will keep on supporting governmental initiatives (Statistical Offices, existing databases, information and data collected by bodies for internal QA in institutions, by the CNVSU and by the upcoming ANVUR) and the third party initiatives (Eurostudent ed Almalaurea) for the collection of data and the monitoring of students' and graduates' characteristics and condition.

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).

According to the facet of social dimension considered, in the Italian system there are different responsibilities and actors involved:

- guarantee of students' representation and students' participation in national governing processes. Through a legislative provision (L59/1997 e DPR 491/1997), the Ministry established the creation of a National Council for Students (Consiglio Nazionale degli Studenti Universitari – CNSU), defined its competencies and guaranteed the inclusion of some of its member in the National Council for University (Consiglio Universitario Nazionale – CUN);

- guarantee of students' representation and students' participation in institutional governing processes. Students' participation in institutional governance is left to every institution in its autonomy: they can define methods and practices for students involvement, taking into account that at least 20% of the seats of every governing Council (Faculty Council and Senate, for example) should be left to students and that Special Commission made of an equal number of students and academics should be active at the Faculty level (DM 509/99) – see also previous answers;

- guarantee of students' representation and students' participation in quality assurance. Students' participation in quality assurance is left to every institution in its autonomy: they can define methods and practices for students involvement, taking into account that the collection of students' opinion on the academic offer and related services through predefined questionnaires is compulsory. Concerning external quality assurance, students' involvement has been already described in question 11.

- definition of support schemes for students (grants, loans, facilities, …). Support schemes for students are managed at the regional level by specific institutions (enti per il Diritto allo Studio) which are governed in close cooperation with regional authorities, with HEIs of the area and with students' representatives. The resources needed to cover the costs of support schemes come partly from the Ministry (point c of previous question), partly from regional government and partly from HEIs themselves.

- National health care system. Please refer to point b of previous question.

- academic services (guidance, libraries, support to disable students…). These services are guaranteed, developed and financed by universities through their budget (to which the Ministry contributes for 60%), with an additional external support from the Ministry. Often ad hoc administrative offices are set up for their management and they are under the responsibility of a Rector's Delegate for the field. External evaluation of these services will be included among the task of the upcoming ANVUR.

- development of social dimension in students' mobility. Students' International mobility is financed by Universities and by the Ministry (DM 198/2003), together with, in specific cases, EU programmes.

All what has been describe is the consequence of the convergence of two bigger trends in the Italian system, the first one being the introduction of university autonomy not only for academic issues but also for all other university activities. The second trend, instead, is a wider strengthening of governing institutions at the local and regional level, trend which is identified with the constitutional change of 2001 and with the federal reform, highly positioned in the public debate of these weeks.

As a consequence, many are the actors and the decision making levels involved. In this framework, the Ministry has a central coordinating function, putting at institution/Regions disposal part of the available resources and investing in the cooperation with other stakeholders.

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?