



# Higher Education Reform Project

## REGIONAL SEMINAR FOR HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM EXPERTS: “Towards Equivalence of Higher Education Degrees between the Southern Mediterranean and the EU”

### READER

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22 – 23 November 2011



## **CONTENT**

- 1. The Universitat de Barcelona Today**
- 2. The Union for the Mediterranean**
- 3. Introductory Note on the Seminar's topic**
- 4. ENIC – NARIC, gateway to recognition of academic and professional qualifications**
- 5. MERIT Network – Mediterranean Recognition Information Centres**
- 6. Background documents**

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author(s), and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

## **1. The Universitat de Barcelona Today**

The University of Barcelona (UB) is the most formidable public institution of higher education in Catalonia, catering to the needs of the greatest number of students and delivering the broadest and most comprehensive offering in higher educational courses. The UB is also the principal centre of university research at a state level and has become a European benchmark for research activity, both in terms of the number of research programs it conducts and the excellence these have achieved.

Its own history closely tied to the history of Barcelona and of Catalonia, our university combines the values of tradition with its position as an institution dedicated to innovation and teaching excellence: a university that is as urban, outward-looking and cosmopolitan as the city from which it takes its name.

Welcome to the University of Barcelona. We hope to see you very soon!

### **Some basic figures**

**87.486** students

**65** EHEA bachelor's degree courses

**6** second-stage llicenciatura degree courses ('llicenciatures de segon cicle')

**152** university master's degree courses

**71** doctoral programs

**440** postgraduate programs

**5.247** professors, lecturers and researchers

### **A broad and innovative range of quality courses**

The University of Barcelona offers prospective students a wide range of course offerings tailored to their needs and to the needs of society in general, thus placing the University at the head of academic fields in very different degree areas, from technology on the one hand to art on the other.

By course type, the UB's offerings mainly comprise EHEA bachelor's degree courses, university master's degree courses and doctoral programs. But given the rising importance of lifelong learning in modern society, the University has also consolidated one of the broadest and most multidisciplinary offerings in such courses in all Catalonia.

Finally, the UB also attempts to prioritize those aspects of student life which may not be exclusively related to studies, to facilitate its members' access to information and services of every type and to support and promote those members' organization of and participation in cultural, sporting and advocacy initiatives of all kinds.

### **Research and Innovation**

The University of Barcelona (UB) is Spain's leading research university, publishing more research than any other Spanish institution with the exception of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) (*Third European Report on Science and Technology Indicators*).

The UB has 106 departments and more than 5,000 full-time researchers, technicians and research assistants, most of whom work in the UB's 243 research groups as recognized and supported by the Generalitat de Catalunya (Catalan Government). In 2010 the UB was awarded 175 national research grants and 17 European grants and participated in over 500 joint research projects with the business sector, generating an overall research income of 70 million euros. The work of these groups is overseen by the UB's research centres and institutes which collaborate with the leading research institutions and networks in Spain and abroad. The UB is also home to three large research foundations: the Barcelona Science Park Foundation (PCB), which includes the Institute of Biomedical Research (IRBB); the August Pi i Sunyer Biomedical Research Institute (IDIBAPS); and the Bellvitge Institute for Biomedical Research (IDIBELL).

The guidelines for research policy are drawn up by the Office of the Vice-Rector for Research. Research activities are managed by the UB office Research Management (OGR), which is in charge of national research programs, the UB office European Research Projects (OPER), which is responsible for European projects, and the Bosch i Gimpera Foundation (FBG), which oversees knowledge transfer and relations with the business sector. The Science and Technology Centres (SCT) are a group of UB centres that support research both in the university and in other public and private institutions.

### **Our urban setting**

The UB is above all an urban university, outward-reaching and cosmopolitan like the city in which its campuses live. And because of this, it plays a direct and active part in the urban fabric of Barcelona, becoming a hub of cultural activity for the city itself.

The UB campuses are spread out across the entire inner-city area, thus fostering a series of close ties between the institution of our University and the city around us. These ties contribute to the human and cultural environment present in certain parts of Barcelona and enables members of the university community to enjoy both the city's services and those of the UB .

### **About Barcelona**

Barcelona is a cosmopolitan city, which the Mediterranean opens to the rest of the world, establishing a bond with other cultures and producing a history marked by diversity. Magnificent examples of artistic trends throughout the ages can be found here providing a great Romanesque, Gothic and above all Modernista legacy, the latter represented by the work of architectural genius Antoni Gaudí.

Today architecture continues to offer gems like the Torre Agbar, designed by Jean Nouvel and the b720 architects and inspired by Gaudí and the mountain of Montserrat. But there is more. The city combines with nature to produce delightful locations like Montjuïc and Parc Güell, as well as dream spots on beaches near the city centre that have everything for a romantic evening in good company.

In recent years Barcelona has established itself as a focus for new trends from around the world. Many artists involved in design, music, fashion, art and the cinema opt for Barcelona as somewhere to live and inspire them. Contemporary writers offer us their own, particular vision of the city, like Carlos Ruiz Zafón in *La Sombra del Viento/The Shadow of the Wind* and *El Juego del Angel*, as do the pop groups Ojos de Brujo, film director Isabel Coixet and many more. Culture, sport, leisure, nature and history come together in the city, which is like a big book, where you can learn something new every day.

Barcelona has always been a city open to the world. Barcelona's calling has much to do with its highly strategic geographical location. Its port has played a fundamental role as the place of arrival for people from round the world and as a point of exchange of cultures. Barcelona is the "North of the South and the South of the North" and one of the gateways joining Europe, Africa and the Middle East, across the Mediterranean.

Barcelona has gone about positioning itself on the international scene with a firm will and constant effort. In a clearly global world, Barcelona City Council upholds the value of the cities and of governance based on decentralisation and the power of proximity.

Our city enjoys international acknowledgement thanks to its quality of life and its ambition of urban transformation accompanied by a development model that prioritises social cohesion and sustainability.

Barcelona is bubbling all year round. Alternative art galleries, urban sport, festivals, fairs, exhibitions and more fill the calendar with ideas that bring us closer to a culture always hanging on the latest trends, not just personal but also urban, artistic, mobility and even food. Yet Barcelona people have fixed habits and therefore they like to look after and promote their history, preserving buildings and streets, while maintaining their traditions throughout the year. Celebrations like the Festa de la Mercè, literally the "Festival of Our Lady of Mercy", the city's patroness, is a very good example of this. It is also important to mention the folk festivals in each of the city neighbourhoods, notably those in Sants and Gràcia, where every year they follow the same traditions, with giants, human towers and folk music.

Barcelona faces the sea and, as a result, became a large gateway through which, during the course of its history, knowledge, traditions, customs, new consumer products have passed, in short, an inexhaustible source of wealth, not only from Europe but also all the lands that form the Mediterranean and beyond. Although culturally Barcelonians have fed themselves through this always open window, they are people of habit, with fixed times and hours, as well as a family character. We can therefore assert that their cultural growth has always rested on a formula that is very much their own and difficult to copy: an interesting mix of local traditions and others that have come from outside.

## **2. The Union for the Mediterranean**

We are the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean created by the 43 Euro-Mediterranean Heads of State and Government in Paris on 13 July 2008. Foreign Affairs Ministers in their meeting in Marseille on 4 November 2008 decided that the headquarters of the Secretariat would be in Barcelona. The Statutes of the Secretariat were adopted on the 3 March 2010 by the Senior Officials of the Member States of the UfM. A headquarters agreement was concluded between the UfMS and the Government of Spain on 4 May 2010, granting the Secretariat the privileges and immunities of an international organisation under the Spanish law.

### **Vision**

The Union for the Mediterranean is a multilateral partnership with a view to increasing the potential for regional integration and cohesion among Euro-Mediterranean partners. The Union for the Mediterranean is inspired by the shared political will to revitalize efforts to transform the Mediterranean into an area of peace, democracy, cooperation and prosperity. The creation of a joint secretariat is a key stone in this partnership. The Secretariat will contribute to reinforcing co ownership of new Mediterranean relations and achieving visibility through economic projects.

### **Mission and Mandate**

The mandate and missions of the Secretariat have been defined in the Paris and Marseille Declarations as well as in the Statutes adopted on 3 March 2010. It is recalled that the mandate of the UfM Secretariat is of a technical nature, focusing on identifying, processing, promoting and coordinating projects, which are in line with the principles and rules of international law, which enhance and strengthen the cooperation and impact directly on the livelihoods of citizens.

As stated in the Paris and Marseille Declarations, the central mission of the UfMS is to increase, promote and ensure the coordination of regional, sub-regional and transnational UfM projects in order to improve the socio-economic development, regional integration, sustainable development and the exchange of knowledge among and within the countries of the UfM.

It is also recalled that in launching the UfM, the Heads of State and Government identified six priority areas. These are the following:

- De-pollution of the Mediterranean
- Maritime and land highways
- Civil protection
- Alternative energies: Mediterranean solar plan
- Higher education and research, Euro-Mediterranean University
- The Mediterranean Business Initiative

The UfMS will focus its activity in 2011 on the priority tasks and projects described below. In accordance with the Marseille Declaration, in submitting project proposals the Secretariat shall uphold the principle of sustainable development and will also ensure that every project must:

- Strive to contribute to the stability and peace in the whole Euro-Mediterranean region
- Maintain the legitimate interests of any member of the UfM
- Take into account the principle of variable geometry
- Respect the decision of member countries involved in an ongoing project when it is subject to further development

## **SOM**

The partners of the Union for the Mediterranean meet on a regular basis at the level of Senior Officials of the Foreign Affairs departments of the 43 partner countries, EU institutions and the League of Arab States. Senior Officials meetings (SOM) oversee and coordinate the work of the Union for the Mediterranean.

They approve the budget and the work programme of the Secretariat and prepare meetings of Foreign Affairs Ministers. They also discuss the project proposals submitted by the Secretariat for approval and endorsement. Senior Officials take decisions by consensus.

## **The Co-Presidency**

The meetings of the Union for the Mediterranean are chaired by a co-presidency of two partners, one from the European Union side and the other from the Mediterranean partner side. The co-presidency applies to all levels: summits, ministers' meetings, and official's level meetings.

The north-south co-presidency was introduced by the Paris Summit on 13 July 2008, and it is one of the measures to increase the sense of co-ownership and to improve the balance between all participants in the process. Currently, the co-presidency is held by France and Egypt.

For further information please visit the following website: <http://www.ufmsecretariat.org/en/>

### **3. Introductory Note to the Seminar's topic**

As part of the UNICA series of Seminars on Higher Education within the TEMPUS partner countries, this Seminar, addresses the "issue" of Equivalence of degrees in the Euro Mediterranean area, within a regional context, and with experts coming from most of the Southern Mediterranean countries. The Seminar should help in refining strategies for equivalence between Higher Education Systems and optimizing the impact of the TEMPUS program and individual projects on Higher Education in the countries of the Southern Mediterranean.

#### **Objectives of Barcelona Seminar in relation with the Theme**

1. Information gathering and clarification of terminology
2. Recognizing specific professional development and initiating ways to develop community of practices
3. Working towards closing the gap between HE systems in the Euro Mediterranean region (the Intra Gap between the individual countries and the Inter Gap between the Southern Region and the EU)
4. Communicating and disseminating new transferrable knowledge and specific professional development
5. Sustaining and supporting networking

#### **Values governing Approaches**

- Implementing recommendations on a voluntary basis and by adopting it as a policy at national level
- The adoption of the Bologna principles and approaches is a voluntary process
- Equivalence should be fair: a win-win deal
- Student's freedom to select own study career
- Respect diversities we all have.
- Reduce Differences we all aware of
- Partnership in the diversity
- Independence in the approach, Flexibility, Tolerance

#### **Possible topics and open questions (order has no significance, propose other topics.)**

- Information needed for the initiative and for guiding further stages
- Applications of tools and approaches of the Bologna Process in MED countries
- Ways of developing regional bilateral agreements
- Dissemination and marketing for HE in MED countries
- How to deploy communication tools?
- What are the mission(s) of HE in MED countries?
- A minimum ILO's of an HE system!
- Equivalence, certification, mobility and related constraints
- Relationship with Pre-university education?
- The Market situation in MED countries countries
- Local influence? Diversity of systems in MED countries; M2 with thesis (memoire) and without; do we need full time students? The three Models of Influence: The Bologna, The Anglo-American, The Full year Model. Case histories!
- Would mobility between HE students in partner countries be a possible outcome of equivalence?



## 4. ENIC – NARIC, gateway to recognition of academic and professional qualifications

### The ENIC Network (European Network of Information Centres)

To implement the Lisbon Recognition Convention and, in general, to develop policy and practice for the recognition of qualifications, the Council of Europe and UNESCO have established the ENIC Network (European Network of National Information Centres on academic recognition and mobility). The Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES jointly provide the Secretariat for the ENIC Network. The ENIC Network cooperates closely with the NARIC Network of the European Union.

The Network is made up of the national information centres of the States party to the European Cultural Convention or the UNESCO Europe Region. An ENIC is a body set up by the national authorities. While the size and specific competence of ENIC may vary, they will generally provide information on:

- the recognition of foreign diplomas, degrees and other qualifications;
- education systems in both foreign countries and the ENIC's own country;
- opportunities for studying abroad, including information on loans and scholarships, as well as advice on practical questions related to mobility and equivalence.

### The NARIC Network (National Academic Recognition Information Centres)

The NARIC network is an initiative of the European Commission and was created in 1984. The network aims at improving academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study in the Member States of the European Union (EU) countries, the European Economic Area (EEA) countries and Turkey. The network is part of the Community's Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP), which stimulates the mobility of students and staff between higher education institutions in these countries.

All member countries have designated national centres, the purpose of which is to assist in promoting the mobility of students, teachers and researchers by providing authoritative advice and information concerning the academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study undertaken in other States. The main users of this service are higher education institutions, students and their advisers, parents, teachers and prospective employers.

The NARICs were designated by the Ministries of Education in the respective countries, but the status and the scope of work of individual NARICs may differ. In the majority of States, institutions of higher education are autonomous, taking their own decisions on the admission of foreign students and the exemption of parts of courses of study programmes that students may be granted on the basis of education undertaken abroad. As a result, most NARICs do not take a decision, but offer on request information and advice on foreign education systems and qualifications.

#### ***About the [enic-naric.net](http://enic-naric.net) website***

The site, a joint initiative of the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES, has been created primarily as a tool to assist the [ENIC-NARIC Networks](#) in carrying out the tasks they have been mandated to accomplish within their own jurisdiction, by directing them to up-to-date information supplied and maintained by the competent bodies in each member country and by each member organization.

It is also its express purpose to help other interested organizations and individuals easily find information on current issues in international academic and professional mobility, and on procedures for the recognition of foreign qualifications.

## **MERIC Network – Mediterranean Recognition Information Centres**

The MERIC Network was launched during the 7th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Mediterranean Recognition Convention in June 2005. The network brings together all the ratifying and signatory states of the Mediterranean Recognition Convention. It aims to promote information exchange in the Mediterranean Region and with the ENIC/NARIC networks, those being developed in the Arab states as well as other existing relevant networks, to promote synergy.

The second meeting of the MERIC Network was held on 11 February 2010 in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This network builds on the Tempus-MEDA pilot project 'RecQualif MEDA' which ran between September 2004 to April 2005.

The overall objective of RecQualif MEDA was to increase capacity for information exchange on the recognition of foreign qualifications and quality assurance in the countries bordering the Mediterranean. The specific objectives of this project were to:

1. foster the establishment of national information centres on academic mobility and recognition of foreign qualifications in the Southern Mediterranean countries building on the experiences of the European National Information Centres/the National Academic Recognition Centres (ENIC/NARICs);
2. support stronger links between quality assurance and the recognition of qualifications; and
3. establish the basis for a Mediterranean network of national information centres with existing centres and centres in the process of being developed.

Central to the achievement of the results of this project was the reinforcement of the role of transparent and reliable information on the recognition of qualifications and quality assurance to respond to the impact of globalization on higher education.

## Background Documents

Please note that the following documents can all be found on the Barcelona Seminar's website: <http://barcelona2011.bolognaexperts.net/>

- 'Focus on Higher Education in Europe 2010: New report on the impact of the Bologna Process', Eurydice, March 2010.
- 'Guide to the Bologna Process' UK HE Europe Unit, 2006.
- 'Higher Education Reform in Egypt: A Bologna Process-Based Cooperation Proposal' by Dr Samir Helal.
- OECD Feasibility Study for an AHELO (Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes), presentation by Fabrice Hénard.
- Reptool Version 1.0 Support for Learning Outcomes, presentation by Philippos Pouyioutas (University of Nicosia, Cyprus) for the UNILO project (funded in 2009 under the Lifelong Learning Programme)
- 'A Tempus Study: Overview of the Higher Education Systems in the Tempus Partner Countries – Southern Mediterranean', European Commission, Tempus, April 2011.
- 'A Tempus Study: State of Play of the Bologna Process in the Tempus Countries of the Southern Mediterranean (2009 – 2010), European Commission, Tempus, April 2010.
- Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020), O.J. C 119/2 on 28.05.2009.