

A photograph of a man and a woman looking at a book together. The man is on the left, wearing a dark blue shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a green top. They are both smiling and looking at the book. The background is blurred, showing other people in a public space.

A TEMPUS STUDY

State of Play of the Bologna process in the Tempus Countries of the Southern Mediterranean (2009 - 2010)



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This study has been produced within the framework of the European Union's Tempus programme, which is funded by the EuropeAid Co-operation Office and the Directorate-General for Enlargement.

The data for this report has been provided by the National Tempus Offices, in agreement with the national authorities and the EU Delegations of the countries concerned. The preparation of the report would not have been possible without the close collaboration and support provided by Eurydice, the network on education systems and policies in Europe.

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Preface

Since the beginning of the 2000s, the Bologna Process has expanded from the European Union towards the neighbouring countries and the Bologna Declaration has by now been signed by 47 countries. In addition, an increasing number of countries have shown their interest in the process by implementing most of its recommendations and tools on a voluntary basis and by making it a major policy goal at national level, without officially joining the intergovernmental process.

The present report is a first attempt to describe the implementation of the Bologna Process in the Southern Mediterranean countries participating in the Tempus programme. The results show the attractiveness of the Bologna concepts and tools, in particular in the Maghreb region, and the indisputable efforts made by the Mediterranean countries to come closer to the European Higher Education Area. Since 2002, numerous pilot initiatives have been launched under the Tempus programme, which has undoubtedly become a major instrument to promote the Bologna Process in this region.

The report has been produced by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), which is responsible for the management of certain strands of the EU programmes in the field of education, under the powers delegated by the European Commission. It is also responsible for gathering and analysing information needed to guide the implementation of these programmes.

This study was put together by the unit in charge of the management of the Tempus programme, in close cooperation with the unit coordinating Eurydice, the well-known network on education systems and policies in Europe. The data was provided by the National Tempus Offices, in agreement with the national authorities and the EU Delegations of the countries concerned. This report is part of a larger analysis which consisted of gathering data on the implementation of the Bologna Process in all Tempus countries. A full study on the Bologna implementation in all Tempus countries has been published as a separate report.

The report is primarily targeted at all stakeholders of the Tempus programme, including current and future beneficiaries of Tempus projects. I am convinced that the analysis of the unique data collected in this report will help them to refine their strategies and to optimise the impact of the programme and individual projects on higher education in the countries of the Southern Mediterranean. Hopefully this can also lead to the development of ambitious regional and cross regional strategies.

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TEMPUS offices in the partner countries of the Southern Mediterranean region

Introduction

The objective of this study is to describe and map the current state of play of the Bologna Process in the nine countries of the Southern Mediterranean participating in the Tempus programme¹. For the last twenty years, the Tempus programme has supported the modernisation of higher education systems in countries neighbouring the EU by financing cooperation projects in all fields of education. The Southern Mediterranean countries participate in the programme since 2002.

The purpose of this report is to provide all stakeholders interested in the Tempus countries of the Southern Mediterranean area (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria and Tunisia) with comparable information on the main components of the Bologna Process and data on how they are being implemented in this region. This comprehensive mapping can help policy makers to analyse their strategies and approaches from different points of view and to identify directions for future initiatives. It could also be a useful tool for current or future Tempus beneficiaries, providing them with an overview of the situation in the partner countries of the Southern Mediterranean and helping them to develop relevant projects.

Since it was launched more than ten years ago, the Bologna Process has expanded beyond Europe and 47 countries have signed the Bologna Declaration and are implementing this intergovernmental agreement. Progressively, other countries which have launched reflections and reforms of their higher education systems have used the Bologna Process and the EU Higher Education Modernisation Agenda as a source of inspiration and reference.

None of the Tempus countries of the Southern Mediterranean region are signatories of the Bologna Declaration, but five of them (Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia) participated in the last Bologna Policy Forum in March 2010. This forum gathered countries interested in discussing how worldwide cooperation in higher education could be enhanced through the Bologna Process.

This study was carried out on the basis of methodologies and tools developed by Eurydice, the network on education systems and policies in Europe. Data was collected with the support of the National Tempus Offices, in close cooperation with the national authorities and the EU Delegations concerned. This report is complementary to another study published by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, "State of Play of the Bologna Process in the Tempus countries" (2010), which describes the situation in all countries participating in the Tempus programme.

The analysis is mainly based on criteria and categories defined in previous Eurydice studies² and it tries to cover the main components of the Bologna Process, in particular the extent to which the following tools and approaches have been implemented or adopted:

- the Bologna three cycle structure;
- the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS);
- the Bologna Diploma Supplement;

¹ Libya is expected to join the programme in 2010.

² Eurydice (2010) - Focus on Higher Education in Europe 2010: the impact of the Bologna Process

Eurydice (2009) - Higher Education in Europe 2009 - Developments in the Bologna Process

Eurydice (2007) - Focus on the Structure of Higher Education in Europe 2006/2007 - National trends in the Bologna Process

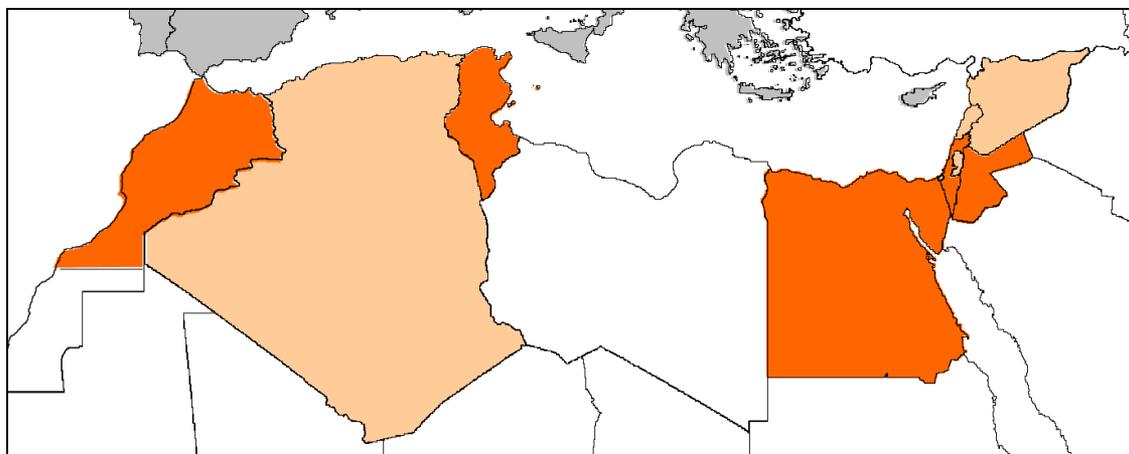
- National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF);
- independent Quality Assurance Agencies;
- the signature of the Lisbon Convention on the recognition of foreign qualifications.

For each of these items, precise criteria have been defined which reflect different stages in the implementation of these tools and provide a comprehensive description of the current state of play of the Bologna Process.

The data was collected during the winter 2009 - 2010 and it describes the situation in the academic year 2009 – 2010.

When looking at the situation in the Southern Mediterranean countries, it should be kept in mind that the adoption of the Bologna principles and approaches is a voluntary process and that the pace of reform may vary a lot depending on the local and historical context.

Map1: Tempus partner countries of the Southern Mediterranean and the Bologna Process



- Tempus partner countries having participated in the 2010 Bologna Policy Forum
- Other Tempus partner countries

Executive summary

The aim of this report is to map, for the first time, the state of play of the Bologna Process in the nine countries of the Southern Mediterranean participating in the Tempus programme. Even if none of these countries are signatories of the Bologna Declaration, many of them are nevertheless influenced by the process and have adopted at least some of its main elements. Several of them have also shown their interest in the process by joining the Bologna Policy Forum, which gives them the opportunity to be involved in policy discussions around the Bologna Process in a worldwide context. It should also be underlined that convergence with Bologna developments happens on a fully voluntary basis, depending on the needs and strategies of the higher education systems in these countries and the traditions on which these systems are based. This should be kept in mind when comparing the different countries.

The report shows that some differences in the Bologna implementation in this area are at least partly explained by history and the geo-political context. This is particularly the case in the Maghreb countries, where the higher education systems are relatively similar and the tendency to move ahead according to Bologna principles is clear. In certain countries of the Middle East, the convergence with the Bologna Process is less pronounced, probably because the higher education systems have been historically influenced by the Anglo-American model.

The Bologna Three Cycle Structure

One of the main components of the Bologna Process is the division of higher education programmes into three sequential levels namely first, second and third cycles, leading to three main kinds of qualifications and degrees: Bachelor, Master and Doctorate.

A common model has been developed for the Bachelor and Master programmes whereas the third cycle has, to a large extent, been left in the hands of universities with no attempt to introduce further regulation within the Bologna Process.

In 2009/2010, the Bologna cycle structure for the Bachelor and Master levels is fully or extensively implemented in most institutions and programmes in Algeria, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia. The other countries (Egypt, Jordan, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Syria) have their own three cycle structure.

Looking at the structure of Bachelor and Master degrees, the influence of the geo-political context can be noted. The three countries of the Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia) have adopted the same model, with Bachelor degrees of 180 ECTS (3 academic years) and Masters of 120 ECTS (2 years). The same approach prevails in Lebanon, while in Israel various combinations exist at Bachelor level and Masters usually last 2 years.

At Doctoral level, as in Europe, many developments are at an early stage and common patterns are difficult to identify.

European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

ECTS is a tool which enables students to collect credits for learning achieved through higher education. It aims to increase transparency of learning outcomes and learning processes and facilitates the recognition of studies. In practice, 60 ECTS credits are attached to the workload of a full-time year of formal learning (academic year) and the associated learning outcomes.

Among the Tempus countries of the Southern Mediterranean, the concept of credits is relatively widely adopted and only two countries, Morocco and Syria, do not use any credit system. However, only Algeria, Tunisia and Lebanon implement ECTS to a certain extent, but they are still far from full implementation. Both in Algeria and in Tunisia, legislation governing the implementation of ECTS has been introduced.

The remaining countries, Egypt, Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Jordan, have their own national credit systems, mainly based on the Anglo-American model.

Bologna Diploma Supplement (DS)

The Bologna Diploma Supplement is a document attached to a higher education diploma that aims to improve international transparency and facilitate academic and professional recognition of qualifications. It consists of eight sections describing in particular the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were successfully completed. It also includes a description of the higher education system in the country.

At the moment, only two countries of the Southern Mediterranean, Tunisia and Algeria, are using the Bologna Diploma Supplement. In Tunisia, it is issued in a vast majority of study programmes, while in Algeria it is still being gradually introduced. In Israel and in Egypt, higher education institutions are using a national Diploma Supplement. In the remaining countries, Morocco, Jordan, Lebanon, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Syria, no Diploma Supplement is currently used.

National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF)

A National Qualifications Framework is an instrument for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved, which aims to improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society. It describes the different qualifications and other learning achievements that can be obtained in a given country and relates them coherently to each other.

On a scale consisting of five steps towards establishing a National Qualifications Network, none of the Tempus countries in the Southern Mediterranean have reached the highest steps of full implementation. For the moment, Tunisia is the most advanced in the process, meaning that the country has formally adopted a National Qualifications Framework for higher education and started implementing it. In Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon and Syria, the process is underway while Morocco is at the very beginning of the process. The remaining countries (Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Jordan) have so far not started developing an NQF.

National Quality Assurance systems (NQA)

In the context of this report, quality assurance refers to the process of evaluating, monitoring, guaranteeing, maintaining and improving the quality of higher education systems, institutions and programmes. At the national level, this type of external evaluation should ideally be carried out by an independent body, which has autonomous responsibility for its operations and methods.

Whereas the principle of independent quality assurance is becoming a world-wide trend, it has not yet been widely adopted in the Tempus countries of the Southern Mediterranean. However, quality assurance in higher education is recognised as a priority item on the agenda of most countries in the region.

For the moment, only Jordan has established an independent agency for quality assurance. In the other countries, either a government dependent body or the relevant Ministry is responsible for quality assurance activities in relation to both public and private institutions. However, at least in Tunisia and Algeria, the transition towards an independent quality assurance system has already started.

Lisbon Recognition Convention

The Lisbon Recognition Convention is an international convention, which allows qualifications granted in one country to be recognised in another country on the basis of defined standards. The convention has been elaborated jointly by the Council of Europe and UNESCO and it has already been signed by more than 50 countries in Europe and beyond. It is addressed in priority to Members of the Council of Europe and the UNESCO Europe and North America region.

Among the Tempus countries of the Southern Mediterranean region, only Israel has ratified the Lisbon Convention, as the country is a member of the UNESCO Europe and North America region. However, four other countries (Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon and Morocco) are signatories of the UNESCO "International Convention on the recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees in higher education in Arab and European countries bordering the Mediterranean" (1976). It should also be noted that the principle of recognition of qualifications granted in another country is nevertheless applied in the other countries as well.

Part 1 – The Bologna three cycle structure

The three cycle degree structure is one of the main components of the Bologna Process which the signatory countries are committed to implement in view of the creation of the European Higher Education Area.

The three cycle system is seen as a major tool to address the fragmentation of programmes and degrees among the Bologna countries and to make them more understandable, visible and attractive within Europe and beyond at worldwide level. Easily readable programmes and degrees are indeed a major step towards increasing mobility of students and graduates, more structured and integrated university cooperation leading to joint, double and multiple degrees and enhanced university – business cooperation in an international context. These are probably the main reasons to explain the success of the initiative initially launched in 1998 by four countries (Sorbonne Declaration) and its progressive extension beyond the borders of the EU and even beyond the Bologna signatory countries.

In the countries in which these concepts were rather unknown, the implementation of the three cycle structure had far reaching consequences, going beyond the simple reorganisation of the degree structure. The two main challenges associated with the design and the implementation of the Bologna structure were (i) the organisation of studies and programmes according to the three main levels, with identified learning outcomes and degrees giving access to the labour market and (ii) the appropriate duration of each of these cycles to acquire the associated competences and skills. This was particularly true in continental Europe where traditional academic university programmes lasted four to five years with limited possibilities to access the labour market at intermediate level or to move between institutions in order to complete a degree.

The Bologna Process provides a flexible framework to implement such changes and is in no way a prescriptive instrument. The Bologna Declaration (1999) states only that first cycle studies should last a 'minimum of three years' while subsequent Bologna discussions on the second cycle have concluded that a Master programme may range between 60-120 ECTS (in practice, one to two years³). The development of the third cycle has, to a large extent, been left in the hands of universities with no attempt to introduce further regulation within the Bologna Process.

In practice, the first cycle qualifications typically comprise 180-240 ECTS credits (three to four years) and the second cycle qualifications 90-120 ECTS credits with a minimum of 60 credits. As stated above, the initial idea was indeed to break the traditional long study programmes lasting four to five, even six years and to replace them with the Bologna Bachelor and Master levels. Therefore, longer programmes should not be qualified as Bologna compliant.

In the Southern Mediterranean region, it is possible to identify different levels of Bologna implementation and convergence, notably in terms of workload/duration of studies at Bachelor and Master levels. At Doctoral level, as in Europe, many developments are at an early stage and common patterns are difficult to identify.

³ An academic year typically comprises 60 ECTS credits (see part 2).

Three cycle structures developing towards Bologna

In 2009/2010, the Bologna dynamic has partially reached the Tempus countries of the Southern Mediterranean (Map 2). The Bologna cycle structure is now fully or extensively implemented in most institutions and programmes in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Israel and Lebanon.

Apart from Lebanon and Israel, which are currently implementing the Bologna structure, the other countries in the Middle East have another three cycle structure. However, this structure cannot be considered in line with Bologna, since Bachelor programmes in many cases are longer than the current Bologna practice, lasting usually 4 to 5 years, as was the case in most European countries a decade ago. For instance, 5 year-long Bachelor degrees exist in certain disciplines in Egypt, Jordan and Syria. In these countries, a minimum duration of four years at Bachelor level is the norm, whereas under Bologna it is rather the upper limit. The three cycle structure in the Middle East has mainly been influenced by the Anglo-American model. In these countries, Master programmes last one to three years and they are usually an integral part of the process towards a doctorate.

Bachelor and Master structures revealing the geo-political context

In many countries the implementation of the three-cycle structure is generating lively debates on the extent to which it is necessary to take into account the national specificities of the labour market and specific types of institutions, programmes, disciplines and qualifications. Nevertheless, the arguments used to oppose the changes are often the expression of a certain inertia or conservatism. Medical studies and related fields, as well as architecture and engineering are examples of study fields where long study programmes are often still proposed.

As regards the modalities of implementation of the Bologna cycle structure, the analysis below focuses on the structures which have been most commonly implemented in the Tempus countries of the Southern Mediterranean. Official rules at national level may authorise some flexibility in order to take into account the needs of particular institutions, programmes or disciplines to fulfil their mission and role. Nevertheless, in the majority of countries, there is clearly a reference model (if not a single compulsory model) that applies to the majority of institutions and programmes.

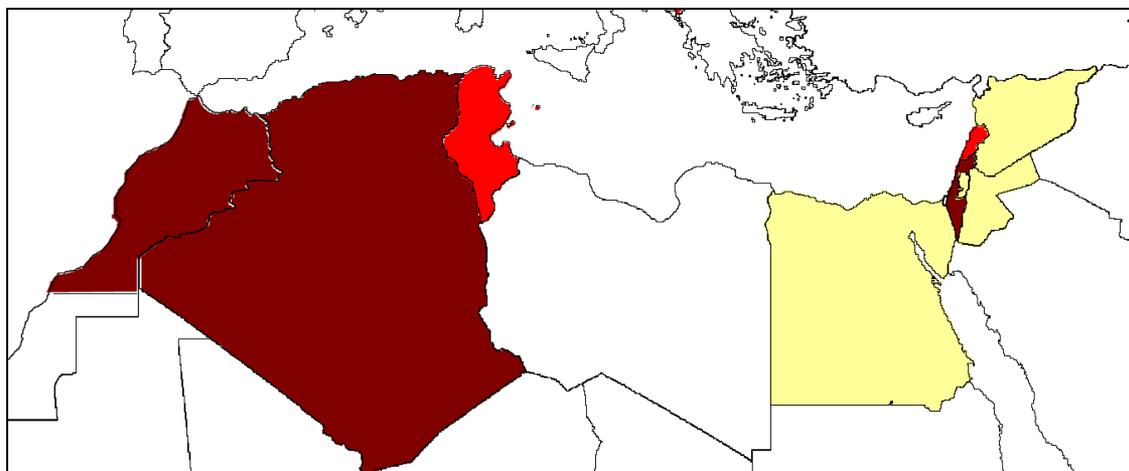
With regard to the Bachelor programmes (Map 3), the countries of the Southern Mediterranean do not have a common approach. The Bachelor structure, which is the backbone of any higher education system, actually appears to be largely embedded in the geo-political context and two main groups of countries can be identified in this region.

One group consists of Lebanon and the Maghreb countries, which have adopted the 180 ECTS credit (3 year) system, influenced by their long lasting relations with certain EU member states. Egypt, Jordan, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Syria form a second group, where the model of the Bachelor programmes has been influenced by the Anglo-American model. In Israel, the situation is more diversified, with various models being used for the Bachelor programmes.

Practically the same groups can be identified in Master programmes (Map 4), where a common model of 120 ECTS credits (2 years) has been adopted by the Maghreb countries, Lebanon and also Israel. The rest of the countries follow their own three cycle structure. In Egypt, Master programmes usually last 1 to 2 years, whereas in Syria the duration varies between 2 and 3 years. In Jordan and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Master programmes last 2 years.

Finally, the combination of the Bachelor and Master reference models reflects the situation described above (Map 5). The 180+120 credit (3+2 academic years) model which dominates in the EU countries characterises the Maghreb countries and Lebanon, while in Israel the programme structures depend largely on the institutions and study fields concerned and combine the various possibilities offered.

Map 2: Level of implementation of a three-cycle structure compliant with the Bologna Process, 2009/2010

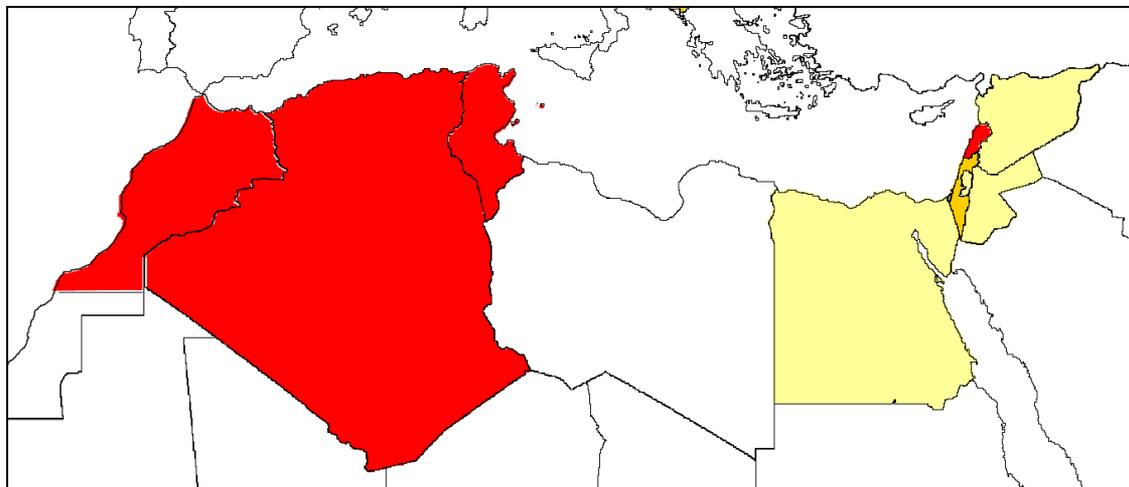


- Fully implemented in all or most study fields
- Extensive but gradual introduction/ongoing adaptations or extensions
- Existing three cycle structure but not compliant with Bologna

Explanatory note

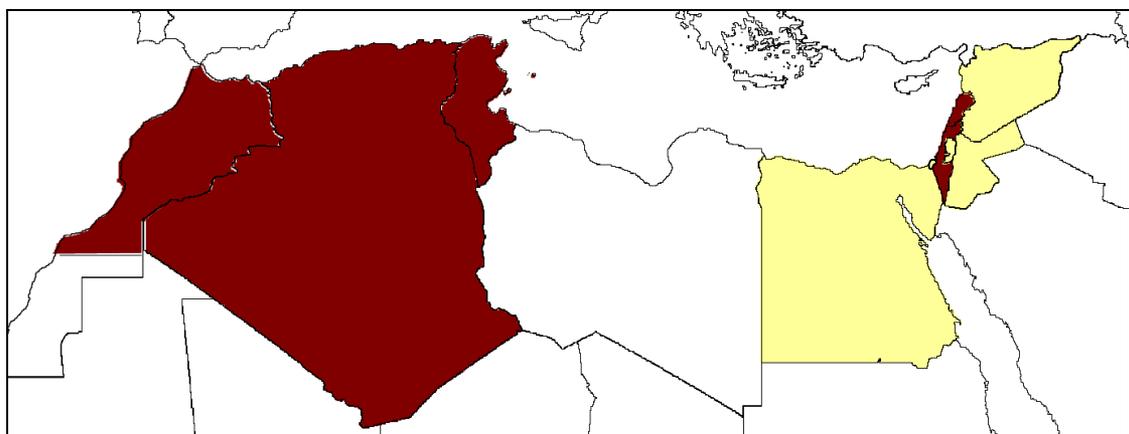
Countries have adapted the Bologna principles to their own situation and may have implemented them in a flexible way to take into account specificities of the labour market, of institutions and study fields or disciplines. Therefore, a unique model has not necessarily been designed and applied in each country, and institutions may have been given space to adapt. Nevertheless, in most countries a common approach or "reference model" stands out in practice. Maps 2, 3, 4 and 5 try to capture this situation.

Map 3: Students workload/duration for the most common Bachelor programmes, 2009/2010



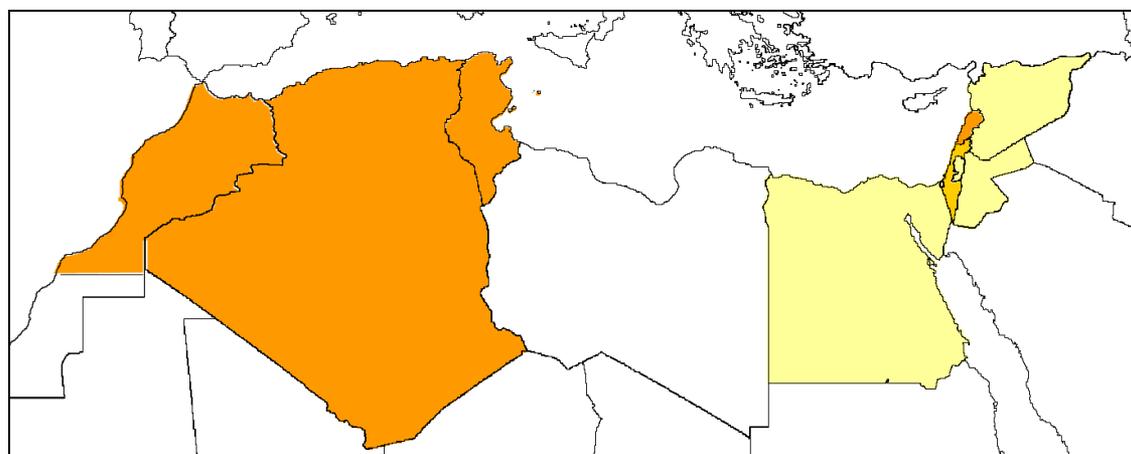
- 180 ECTS (3 academic years)
- Various combinations
- Existing three cycle structure but not compliant with Bologna

Map 4: Student workload/duration for the most common Master programmes, 2009/2010



- 120 ECTS (2 academic years)
- Existing three cycle structure but not compliant with Bologna

Map 5: Bachelor-Master models most commonly implemented, 2009/2010



- 180+120 ECTS (3+2 academic years)
- Various combinations
- Existing three cycle structure but not compliant with Bologna

Part 2 – The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

The ECTS system was initially developed at the end of the 1980s, at the time when the Erasmus Programme was launched. Initially used for credit transfer to facilitate student mobility it also became a credit accumulation system, encouraged by the Berlin Communiqué in September 2003.

ECTS is a tool which enables students to collect credits for learning achieved through higher education. It is a learner-centred system which aims to increase transparency of learning outcomes and learning processes. It aims to facilitate planning, delivery, evaluation, recognition and validation of qualifications and units of learning. As a result, ECTS makes teaching and learning more transparent and facilitates the recognition of studies, whether formal, non-formal or informal. It also serves curriculum design and quality assurance, by facilitating the comparison of programmes and structures.

ECTS credits are based on the workload⁴ needed in order to achieve expected learning outcomes⁵. In practice, 60 ECTS credits are attached to the workload of a full-time year of formal learning (academic year) and the associated learning outcomes. In most cases, one credit corresponds to 25 to 30 hours of work⁶.

ECTS is one of the cornerstones of the Bologna Process and it is increasingly used by institutions in other continents. It thus plays a role in the growing global dimension of the Bologna Process and contributes to increased global mobility.

The analysis below tries to capture to which extent ECTS is used in the Tempus countries of the Southern Mediterranean region and describes also the main national understandings of the system. Experience shows that there is considerable diversity in the interpretation of ECTS at national and also institutional level.

ECTS implemented to varying degrees

Among the Tempus countries of the Southern Mediterranean, the concept of credits is relatively widely adopted and only two countries, Morocco and Syria, do not use any credit system (Map 6). However, Morocco has recently adopted and implemented a modular approach to design study programmes and is considering the possibility of introducing the concept of credits.

Currently only Algeria, Tunisia and Lebanon implement ECTS to a certain extent, but they are still far from full implementation. By full implementation we refer to a situation where more than 75 % of institutions and programmes are using ECTS for both transfer and accumulation purposes and credit points are based on learning outcomes and student workload. In Algeria and Tunisia, ECTS is used in more than 75% of institutions and programmes but the credits are in practice mainly based on contact hours (hours spent by students on activities guided by teaching staff) or a combination of contact hours and student workload. In Lebanon, less than 75% of institutions and programmes are using ECTS and various references are used to define credits. In many countries, the

⁴ Workload indicates the time students typically need to complete all learning activities required to achieve the expected learning outcomes.

⁵ Learning outcomes describe what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do after the successful completion of a learning process.

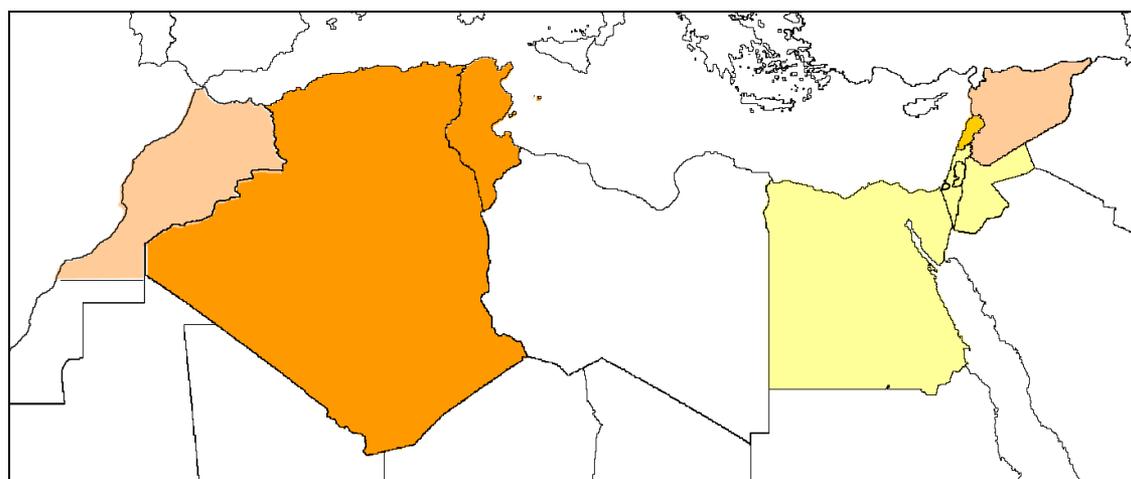
⁶ European Commission (2009) – ECTS Users' Guide, DG Education and Culture

introduction of ECTS often started with a pilot phase and the system was then extended and phased in gradually during the second half of the 2000s.

In 2 countries, namely Algeria and Tunisia, legislation governing the arrangements for implementing ECTS has been introduced (Map 7). In Tunisia, ECTS is fully implemented at Bachelor and Master levels but not yet at Doctoral level. In Lebanon, ECTS is being introduced without legislation, favouring a non regulatory approach.

The remaining countries, Egypt, Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Jordan, have their own national credit systems. In Egypt for example, most programmes have adopted the Credit Hours System based on the Anglo-American system and are using the contact hour concept. Equivalence tables are being used and tested within the Higher Education Enhancement Programme⁷ (HEEP) and through some Tempus projects.

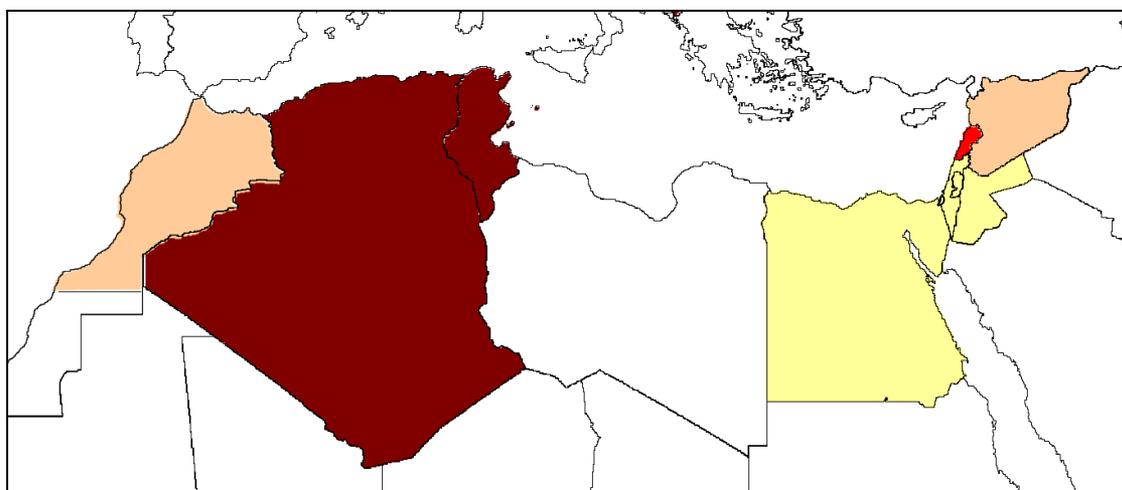
Map 6: Level of implementation of ECTS, 2009/2010



- More than 75 % of institutions and programmes are using ECTS for both transfer and accumulation purposes. Allocation of ECTS is based on learning outcomes and student workload.⁸
- More than 75 % of institutions and programmes are using ECTS for both transfer and accumulation purposes. Allocation of ECTS is based on student workload.⁸
- More than 75 % of institutions and programmes are using ECTS for both transfer and accumulation purposes. Allocation of ECTS is based on contact hours, or a combination of contact hours and student workload.
- 75 % or less institutions and/or 75 % or less programmes are using ECTS for both transfer and accumulation purposes. Various references are used to define the credits.
- Other credit system
- No credit system

⁷ The Higher Education Enhancement Programme is a project funded through a loan from the World Bank in 2002, which aims to improve the quality of the higher education system in Egypt, through legislative reform, institutional restructuring and the establishment of quality assurance mechanisms and monitoring systems.

⁸ None of the Tempus countries of the Southern Mediterranean have so far reached this level.

Map 7: Legislation concerning ECTS, 2009/2010

- Legislation governing the arrangements for implementing ECTS has been introduced
- ECTS being introduced without legislation
- Other credit system
- No credit system

Part 3 – The Bologna Diploma Supplement

The Bologna Diploma Supplement (DS) is an instrument developed jointly by the European Union, the Council of Europe and UNESCO. It has become one of the major Bologna tools to describe qualifications in an easily understandable way and relate them to the higher education system within which they were issued.

The importance and relevance of the Bologna Diploma Supplement was reinforced in the Berlin Communiqué (2003) where Ministers of Education from the countries involved in the Bologna Process stated that, starting from 2005, all graduating students should receive this document automatically, free of charge and in a widely used European language.

The purpose of the Bologna DS is to improve understanding of knowledge, skills and competences acquired by an individual to facilitate academic mobility or to provide employers with relevant information. It is a standard document attached to a higher education diploma and it consists of eight sections describing in particular the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were successfully completed. It also includes a description of the higher education system in the country.

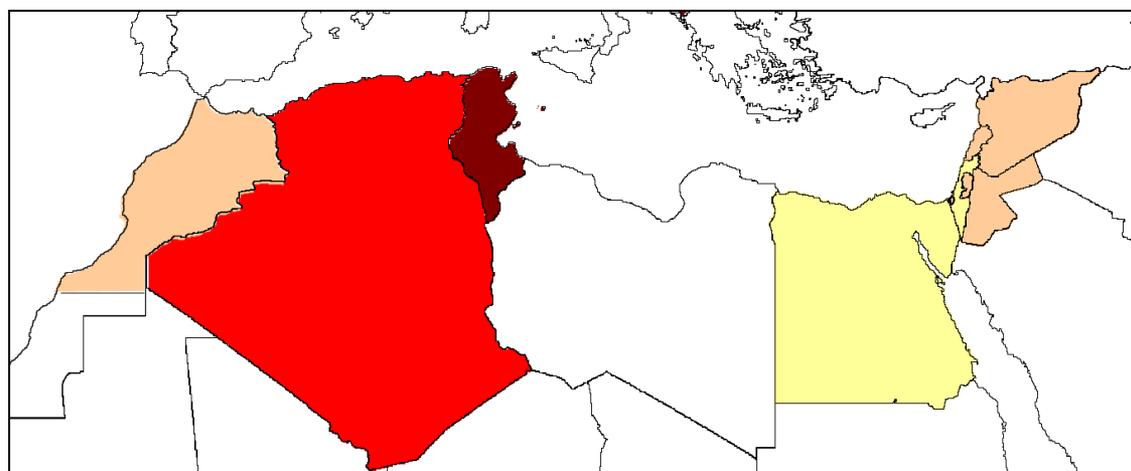
Limited introduction of the Bologna Diploma Supplement

Only two Tempus countries of the Southern Mediterranean region, Tunisia and Algeria, are using the Bologna Diploma Supplement (map 8). In Tunisia, the Diploma Supplement is issued in a vast majority of study programmes, while in Algeria it is still being gradually introduced. In Algeria, a "Bologna type" Diploma Supplement was already in use but it has just been standardised at national level to be fully in line with the Bologna one. Its implementation will be compulsory as of the end of the academic year 2009/2010.

In line with the commitment made by the Education Ministers in the Berlin Communiqué (2003), the Bologna DS should be issued automatically and free of charge to graduates at the end of their studies. This is already the case in Tunisia. In Algeria, where the former DS was issued on request, the new one will be automatically issued and free of charge. Regarding the language in which the Bologna DS is issued, in Algeria, it is issued in Arabic or in French while in Tunisia only in French for the moment (but it will soon be also delivered in Arabic and English).

In Israel and in Egypt, higher education institutions are using a national Diploma Supplement. In Egypt, students can benefit from a national DS consisting of a degree certificate per subject studied and a description of these subjects in terms of curricula and learning outcomes. It is issued on request and in return for payment in Arabic or in English. In Israel, the DS is also issued on request and in return for payment in the language of instruction or in other languages. Nevertheless, there are plans to start implementing the Bologna DS.

In the remaining countries, Morocco, Jordan, Lebanon, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Syria, no Diploma Supplement is currently used.

Map 8: Level of implementation of the Bologna Diploma Supplement, 2009/2010

-  Bologna DS issued in the vast majority of study programmes
-  Partial and gradual introduction of the Bologna DS
-  Other type of Diploma Supplement
-  No Diploma Supplement

Part 4 - Stage towards establishing a National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

A National Qualifications Framework is an instrument for the classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for specified levels of learning achieved, which aims to improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labour market and civil society. It describes the different qualifications and other learning achievements that can be obtained in a given country and relates them coherently to each other. It shows what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on the basis of a given qualification and how learners can move between qualifications.

Qualifications frameworks play an important role in developing degree systems and study programmes at higher education institutions. They are also important instruments in achieving comparability and transparency between different national systems and facilitating the movement of learners. These instruments should reflect the shift from traditional input-based approaches of categorising qualifications towards a focus on learning outcomes, credits and the profile of qualifications.

At European level, the development of National Qualifications Frameworks has been encouraged in recent years by a range of initiatives and processes. In the context of the Bologna Process, European Ministers of Education in Bergen (May 2005) adopted the overarching Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (FQ – EHEA) and also agreed that National Qualifications Frameworks should be set up by 2007 and implemented by 2010 in all Bologna signatory countries. These National Qualifications Frameworks for higher education would include reference to the Bologna three-cycle study structure and the use of generic descriptors based on learning outcomes, competences and credits for the first and second cycles.

In parallel to the above mentioned process, a European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for lifelong learning has been developed in the context of the Lisbon strategy and adopted by the European Council and Parliament in 2008. The main purpose of the EQF is to act as a "translation device" and neutral reference point for comparing qualifications across different education and training systems.

Development of National Qualifications Frameworks still at early stages

In order to qualify the different country specific situations in the process of NQF development and in particular to clearly differentiate between the formal adoption of the framework and its implementation, the Eurydice network⁹ has defined a scale which classifies countries according to five main steps towards establishing a National Qualifications Framework. These steps are based on the recommended ten steps scale proposed by the Bologna Follow-up Group's (BFUG¹⁰) working group on Qualifications Frameworks. The situation of the Tempus countries of the Southern Mediterranean on this scale is illustrated in Map 9.

For the moment, none of the Southern Mediterranean countries have reached steps 4 or 5 on the scale, and Tunisia is the only country which has reached step 3, which means that the country has formally adopted a National Qualifications Framework for higher education and started implementing it.

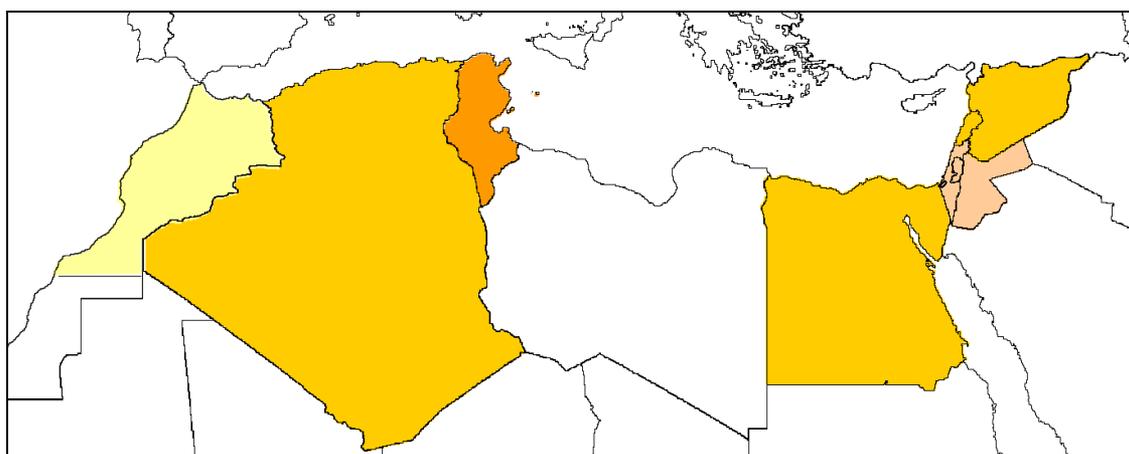
⁹ Eurydice (2009) – Higher Education in Europe 2009 – Developments in the Bologna Process

¹⁰ The Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) consists of ministerial representatives of all Bologna signatory countries and the European commission as full members. The role of the BFUG is to follow up on the implementation of the Bologna Process.

In 4 other countries, Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon and Syria, the process is underway, the purpose of the NQF having been agreed and various committees having been established (step 2). In Egypt for example, the NQF has already been developed and its implementation is being studied. In Lebanon, the decision to develop an NQF has been taken at the Ministry level and a NQF Coordination Committee has been established. The Committee is now developing the NQF to be implemented by mid-2012.

In Morocco, the decision to develop a National Qualifications Framework has been taken, which means that the country is at the very beginning of the process (step 1). The remaining countries (Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Jordan) have so far not started developing an NQF.

Map 9: Stage in establishing a National Qualifications Framework (NQF), 2009/2010



- Step 5: Overall process fully completed including self-certified compatibility with the Framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.
- Step 4: Redesigning the study programmes is on-going and the process is close to completion.
- Step 3: The NQF has been adopted formally and the implementation has started.
- Step 2: The purpose of the NQF has been agreed and the process is under way including discussions and consultations. Various committees have been established.
- Step 1: Decision taken. Process just started.
- Not started formally / not foreseen.

Part 5 - National Bodies for Quality Assurance

In higher education, quality assurance can be defined as policies, procedures and practices that are designed to achieve, maintain or enhance quality as it is understood in a specific context. It consists of both internal and external processes.

Mutual recognition in the field of quality assurance in higher education calls for the development of clearly defined and commonly accepted evaluation and accreditation criteria and methodologies. To achieve this objective, national quality evaluation systems should not only include the bodies responsible for this task but also specify their composition and fundamental goals.

In order to ensure the objectivity of quality assurance, it is now commonly accepted that the body responsible for this task should be independent and have autonomous responsibility for its operations and methods. Indeed, its reports and findings should not be influenced by third parties. The independence of the body should be guaranteed in official documentation (e.g. legislative acts or instruments of governance). The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area produced by the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA) are a widely used reference when setting up such bodies.

A national body without independent status is usually formed as a council, commission or agency directly answerable to the top-level public authorities.

Government-dependent bodies are responsible for quality assurance

In all Southern Mediterranean Tempus countries except Jordan, either a government-dependent body or the relevant Ministry is responsible for quality assurance activities in relation to both public and private institutions. The specific situation in each country is shortly described below.

The Egyptian national Authority for quality assurance and accreditation was established in 2006 and it is attached to the Prime Minister's service. This body evaluates and accredits programmes and institutions.

In Israel, a government-dependent body, the Quality Assessment Unit in the Council for Higher Education, is mainly responsible for evaluating and accrediting study programmes. However, it is foreseen that this body will soon deal with the evaluation of institutions as well.

In Lebanon, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education is formally in charge of quality assurance, although some higher education institutions are seeking accreditation from international bodies. The Ministry is mainly responsible for the legalisation of new institutions and for the accreditation of new programmes.

The reform of the Moroccan higher education system in 2000 formally introduced the principle of quality assurance, covering the accreditation of all curricula in both public and private institutions, the creation of an assessment system and the establishment of government dependent bodies. Higher education institutions are responsible for the quality of their programmes on a self-assessment basis.

In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (AQAC), is responsible for the accreditation of new academic programmes and educational institutions.

The Syrian Ministry of Higher Education has started since 2007 the development of a national framework for quality assurance through a project aiming at developing systems that reflect best international quality assurance practices, while taking into account local needs.

In Tunisia, the Law on Higher Education (2008) foresees the creation of an independent agency by 2012. In the meantime, the National Evaluation Committee, a government-dependent body assisted by experts, is still in charge of quality assurance.

Also in Algeria, the transition towards an independent quality assurance system is underway.

In Jordan, the only country already having an independent agency for quality assurance, the role of the agency is to take decision granting the reviewed institution/programme permission to operate/teach at certain levels, undertake research etc.

To conclude, it is worth noting that a specific network, the Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE), has been established in 2007 to create a mechanism between Arab countries to exchange information about quality assurance issues and to disseminate good practice. It also contributes to the setting up of new institutions responsible for quality assurance, supports existing ones through the development of common standards and encourages cooperation between quality assurance bodies. It involves partners from 10 countries, including the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAAE) in Egypt, the Higher Education Accreditation Commission (HEAC) in Jordan and the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (AQAC) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Part 6 – The Lisbon Convention and the recognition of qualifications

The Lisbon Convention

The Lisbon recognition convention is considered as one of the key instruments of the Bologna Process to achieve the "European Higher Education Area". It is an international convention elaborated jointly by the Council of Europe and UNESCO¹¹. It is addressed in priority to Members of the Council of Europe and the UNESCO Europe and North America region. Since 1997, the Convention has been signed by more than 50 countries in Europe and beyond (e.g. Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the USA). It allows qualifications granted in one country to be recognised in another country on the basis of defined standards¹².

The Convention stipulates that degrees and periods of studies must be assessed and recognised in another country unless substantial differences are proved. Students and graduates are guaranteed fair procedures under the Convention. The possibility for students to study abroad has been recognised as an essential element of European integration since the foundation of the Council of Europe in 1949.

In order to develop policy and practice for the recognition and transparency of qualifications and, from 1997, to implement the principles in the Lisbon Recognition Convention, the Council of Europe and UNESCO have established the European Network of National Information Centres on academic recognition and mobility (ENIC Network). This network was complemented in 1984 by an initiative of the European Commission: the National Academic Recognition Information Centres network (NARIC Network). These two networks are intertwined and cooperate on all recognition issues.

Out of the Tempus countries of the Southern Mediterranean region, only Israel has ratified the Lisbon Convention and is member of the ENIC network, as the country is a member of the UNESCO Europe and North America region. However, four other countries of the region have signed the UNESCO International Convention covering Arab and European countries of the Mediterranean, as described below.

The UNESCO International Convention on the recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees in higher education in Arab and European countries bordering the Mediterranean

The UNESCO "International Convention on the recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees in higher education in Arab and European countries bordering the Mediterranean" (1976) is the most widely ratified recognition convention in the Tempus countries of the Southern Mediterranean. It allows the recognition of a foreign certificate, diploma or degree of higher education by having it accepted by the competent authorities of a Contracting State and granting to the holder the rights enjoyed by persons possessing a national certificate, diploma or degree with which the foreign one is assimilated. Such rights extend to either the pursuit of studies, or the practice of a profession, or both, according to the applicability of the recognition.

¹¹ The Council of Europe and UNESCO have agreed on the need to coordinate the Council of Europe's activities in academic recognition and mobility with those of the UNESCO Europe Region.

¹² Such as: the applicant's right to fair assessment of his/her qualification; recognition of qualification provided that no substantial differences can be proven; in case of non recognition, demonstration of substantial difference by the competent authority ; introduction of Diploma Supplement, etc.

For the moment, this convention has been signed by four Tempus countries of the Southern Mediterranean, namely Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon and Morocco¹³. Syria and Tunisia have not yet signed the Convention, even though they attended the International conference in Nice (1976).

It is worth noting that the principle of recognition of qualifications granted in another country is nevertheless also applied in Jordan, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria and Tunisia.

In addition, the Mediterranean Recognition Information Centres Network (MERIC), built on a Tempus pilot project, was launched by the Intergovernmental Committee for the Mediterranean Recognition Convention in June 2005. It aims to promote information exchange in the Mediterranean Region and create synergies with the ENIC/NARIC networks and those being developed in the Arab countries. Further to the deliberations of the second MERIC meeting¹⁴, several concrete actions (i.e. training, terminology and capacity building) have been identified to strengthen the network's capacity in a nearby future.

Ministries of Education are usually in charge of recognising foreign qualifications

In practice, Ministries of Education or dependent bodies are usually responsible for recognising foreign qualifications in the Tempus countries of the Southern Mediterranean.

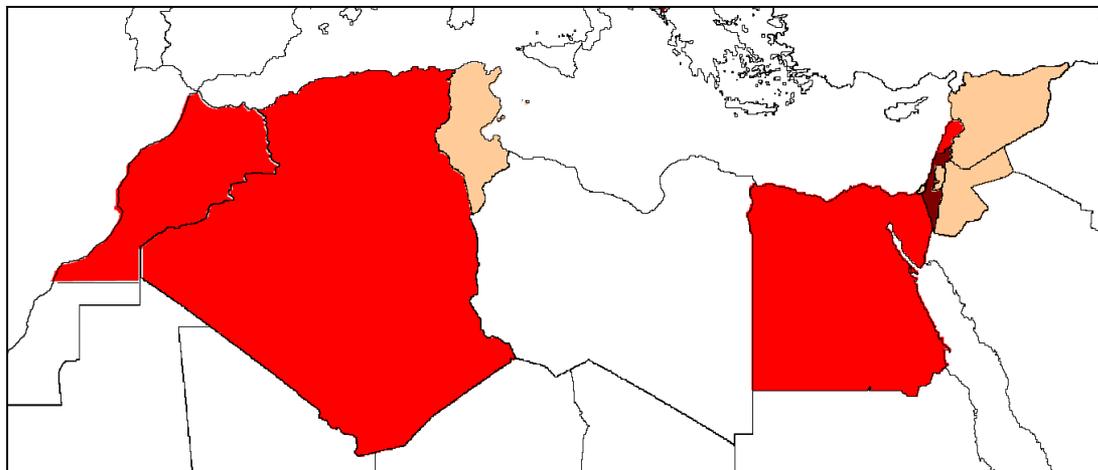
In Israel, the Department for Evaluation of Foreign Academic Degrees and Diplomas in the Israeli Ministry of Education is in charge of recognising foreign qualifications for purposes of employment and wages in the public sector. As for academic purposes, accredited institutions of higher education in Israel enjoy academic autonomy to admit students according to the conditions and requirements that they set individually. Furthermore, the Israeli national authorities have set up an ENIC which provides information on the recognition of foreign diplomas, degrees and other qualifications as well as advice on practical questions related to mobility and equivalence.

In Egypt, the Supreme Councils of higher education institutions are responsible for recognising foreign qualifications.

¹³ Libya is also a signatory country of this Convention.

¹⁴ 11-12 February 2010, Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Map 10: Recognition of qualifications – Signature of international Conventions
by Tempus countries of the Southern Mediterranean 2009/2010**



- Lisbon Convention signatory countries
- Signatory countries of the UNESCO International Convention on the recognition of studies, diplomas and degrees in higher education in Arab and European countries bordering the Mediterranean
- Other Tempus countries

Brief overview of the Tempus programme

Tempus is the EU's external cooperation programme that supports since 20 years the modernisation of higher education systems in the European Union's neighbouring countries. The partner countries have changed throughout the years; currently the programme covers countries of the Western Balkans, Central Asia, Eastern Europe, Northern Africa and the Middle East¹⁵. Since the beginning, Tempus contributes to the promotion of cooperation between higher education institutions of the European Union and the partner countries, in particular via various capacity building activities. It also promotes the voluntary convergence of higher education systems in these countries with EU developments in higher education, including the Bologna Process. Indeed, the Bologna Process has become a reference point for most of Tempus partner countries by setting in motion a series of reforms to modernise higher education systems and make them more compatible and comparable.

Background

Initially covering Central and Eastern European Countries, the first phase of the programme was launched in 1990 and lasted until 1993. In those years, Tempus sought to contribute to socio-economic reform through cooperation in higher education. At the beginning, the focus was put on higher education systems in countries that later joined the European Union.

The second phase of the programme, Tempus II, covered the period of 1994-2000. During that time, the programme was extended to new eligible countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. National priorities defined by national authorities were introduced.

The third phase of Tempus was implemented from 2000 to 2006. The concept of regional cooperation was introduced during that programme period. In the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, Tempus III was extended to North Africa and the Middle East, with a view to contributing to their socio-economic development. Besides, the programme aimed at promoting inter-cultural understanding as a means to secure sustainable growth, peace and stability in the region and reinforce the intercultural and civil society dimension of the programme.

Since 2007, Tempus has entered in its fourth phase, which will be running until 2013. It puts emphasis on regional and cross-regional cooperation and on the reinforcement of links between higher education and society. The programme currently covers 28 partner countries. The programme is integrated into the European Union's 'Neighbourhood', 'Enlargement' and 'Development' policies, which aim to promote prosperity, stability and security in the targeted regions. Tempus is funded by four specific EU financial instruments: the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI).

¹⁵ Tempus partner countries (2010): Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo under UNSCR 1244, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Russia, Serbia, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

Main characteristics of Tempus

Tempus was primarily designed to contribute to the reform and upgrading of partner countries' higher education institutions and systems. Through cooperation at higher education level, the programme also aims at reinforcing civil society, promoting democracy, as well as enhancing mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue between the EU and its partners. It combines a "bottom-up" approach - putting the initiative on higher education institutions - and a "top-bottom" approach in so far as national and regional priorities are established by national authorities for each partner country with a view to maximise the impact of the programme on higher education reform processes.

To achieve its objectives, Tempus IV supports three types of projects.

- *Joint Projects* are specifically designed for individual higher education institutions and fund multilateral partnerships between EU and partner country institutions. They notably aim at developing, modernising and disseminating new curricula, teaching methods and teaching materials, enhancing quality assurance mechanisms in institutions, modernising the governance and management of higher education institutions, strengthening their role in society and their contribution to the development of lifelong learning and reinforcing the 'knowledge triangle' of 'education-research-innovation'.

- *Structural Measures* directly contribute to the development and reform of higher education systems in partner countries, to enhance their quality and relevance to the world of work and society at large, and promote further convergence with EU developments in the area of higher education. They can focus on issues linked to the reform of governance in higher education institutions (qualification systems, quality assurance mechanisms, autonomy of institutions...), or foster links between higher education, the world of work and other sectors of education. They can include studies and research, the organisation of national, regional and thematic conferences and seminars, the provision of training, policy advice and the dissemination of information.

Both Joint Projects and Structural Measures are funded through calls for proposals. Yearly, approximately 70 projects are funded. The financial support varies from 0.5 to 1.5 million EUR.

- *Accompanying Measures* are funded through Calls for Tender or Framework Contracts. They comprise of dissemination and information activities such as thematic conferences, studies and activities which aim to identify and highlight good practice or consultation of stakeholders, for example. They are also used to fund the National Tempus Offices and the activities of the group of 'Higher Education Reform Experts' in the Tempus partner countries.

Management of Tempus

The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) is responsible for both the management and the implementation of Tempus, under powers delegated by the European Commission. EuropeAid Co-Operation Office and Directorate-General for Enlargement allocate funds directly to the Executive Agency to manage the programme and thus have the formal responsibility for supervising its activities. In line with their mandate, Directorate-General for External Relations contributes to the strategic orientations of the programme and Directorate-General for Education and Culture brings in its sectoral expertise and facilitates linkages with the European Union's internal higher education reform policies.

Overview of the Bologna Process

History of the Bologna Process¹⁶

The Bologna Process is the product of a series of meetings of Ministers responsible for higher education at which policy decisions have been taken with the goal to establish a European Higher Education Area by 2010. The process also includes the European Commission as a full member. The Council of Europe and UNESCO – CEPES, along with a range of stakeholder organisations are also involved as consultative members. There is thus full and active partnership with higher education institutions, represented by the European University Association (EUA) and the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), students, represented by the European Students' Union (ESU), academics represented by Education International (EI) as well as the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and Business Europe representing employer organisations.

Since 1998, eight ministerial conferences devoted to mapping out the Bologna Process have been held in different European cities, namely Paris (at the Sorbonne University), Bologna, Prague, Berlin, Bergen, London, Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve and Budapest/Vienna.

Sorbonne Declaration (1998)

The basic precepts of the Bologna Process date back to the Sorbonne Joint Declaration on Harmonisation of the Architecture of the European Higher Education System, signed on 25 May 1998 by the education Ministers of four countries: France, Germany, Italy and United Kingdom.

The Sorbonne Declaration focused on:

- Improving the international transparency of programmes and the recognition of qualifications by means of **gradual convergence towards a common framework of qualifications and cycles of study**;
- Facilitating the **mobility of students and teachers** in the European area and their integration into the European labour market;
- Designing **a common degree level system** for undergraduates (bachelor degree) and graduates (master and doctoral degrees).

Bologna Declaration (1999)

The Bologna Declaration on the European Higher Education Area, largely inspired by the Sorbonne Declaration, was signed in June 1999 by Ministers responsible for higher education in 29 European countries. This Declaration became the primary document used by the signatory countries to establish the general framework for the modernisation and reform of European higher education. The process of reform came to be called the Bologna Process.

¹⁶ Eurydice (2010) – Focus on Higher Education in Europe 2010 – The impact of the Bologna Process

In 1999, the signatory countries included the then 15 EU Member States, three EFTA countries (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland) and 11 EU candidate countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia). International institutions such as the European Commission, the Council of Europe and associations of universities, rectors and European students also participated in drafting the Declaration.

The Bologna Declaration also formulates the objective of increasing the international competitiveness of the European system of higher education and stresses the need to ensure that this system attracts significant attention from around the world.

In the Bologna Declaration, Ministers affirmed their intention to:

- Adopt a system of **easily readable and comparable degrees**;
- Implement a system based essentially on **two main cycles**;
- Establish a **system of credits** (such as ECTS);
- Support the **mobility of students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff**;
- Promote **European cooperation in quality assurance**;
- Promote the **European dimensions in higher education** (in terms of curricular development and inter-institutional cooperation).

Prague Communiqué (2001)

In May 2001, the meeting in Prague was convened to assess the progress accomplished to date (particularly as indicated in the respective national reports) and identify the main priorities that should drive the Bologna Process in the years ahead. 33 countries participated, with Croatia, Cyprus and Turkey accepted as new members. Liechtenstein was also included, having committed to the Process between the Bologna and Prague conferences, and the European Commission also became a member.

The education Ministers also decided to establish a Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) responsible for the continuing development of the Process. The BFUG is composed of representatives of all signatory countries and the European Commission and is chaired by the rotating EU Presidency. The Council of Europe, the European University Association (EUA), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) and the National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB), later renamed the European Students Union (ESU), take part as consultative members in the work of the BFUG.

The Prague Communiqué emphasised three elements of the Bologna Process:

- Development of **lifelong learning**;
- Involvement of **higher education institutions and students**;
- Promotion of the **attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area**.

Berlin Communiqué (2003)

Held in September 2003, the Berlin Conference was an important stage in the follow up to the Bologna Process. With the inclusion of seven new signatory countries (Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Holy See, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro), 40 countries were then involved.

In the Berlin Communiqué, Ministers charged the BFUG with preparing detailed reports on the progress and implementation of the intermediate priorities and organising a stocktaking process before the following ministerial conference in 2005. The Unesco European Centre for Higher Education (Unesco-CEPES) joined the work of the BFUG as a consultative member.

With the Berlin Communiqué, the Bologna Process gained additional momentum by setting certain priorities for the next two years:

- Development of **quality assurance at institutional, national and European levels**;
- Implementation of the **two-cycle system**;
- **Recognition of degrees and periods of studies**, including the provision of the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge for all graduates as of 2005;
- Elaboration of an overarching **framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area**;
- Inclusion of the **doctoral level as the third cycle** in the Process;
- Promotion of closer **links between the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area**.

Bergen Communiqué (2005)

By May 2005, the Bologna Process extended to 45 signatory countries with the inclusion of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The Ministers responsible for higher education met in Bergen to discuss the mid-term achievements of the Bologna Process. The commissioned Stocktaking Report was submitted by the BFUG for the occasion. The Bergen Conference also marked the adoption of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), and the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA).

The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the Education International Pan-European Structure and the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE, later to become Business Europe) joined the BFUG as consultative members.

In the Bergen Communiqué, Ministers enlarged their priorities for 2007, which now also include:

- **Reinforcing the social dimension** and removing obstacles to mobility;
- Implementing the **standards and guidelines for quality assurance** as proposed in the ENQA report;
- Developing **national frameworks of qualifications in compatibility with the adopted Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area**;
- Creating opportunities for **flexible learning paths in higher education**, including procedures for recognition of prior learning.

London Communiqué (2007)

The London ministerial meeting, held on 17 and 18 May 2007, provided a landmark in establishing the first legal body to be created through the Bologna Process – the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR). This is to become a register of quality assurance agencies that comply substantially with the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area on the basis of external evaluation.

London also saw developments in two key areas – the social dimension, where Ministers agreed to develop national strategy and action plans, and the global dimension, where Ministers agreed on a strategy to develop the global dimension of European higher education.

The country membership expanded to 46 with the recognition of the Republic of Montenegro as an independent State in the European Higher Education Area.

In the London Communiqué, Ministers:

- Welcomed the creation of the **European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)**;
- Committed to completing **national frameworks of qualifications** in compatibility with the adopted Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area by 2010;
- Promised to report **on national action to remove obstacles to the mobility** of students and staff;
- Pledged to implement and report on **national strategies for the social dimension**, including action plans and measures to evaluate their effectiveness;
- Adopted a strategy for the European Higher Education Area in global setting.

Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué (2009)

The Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve ministerial meeting, held on 28 and 29 April 2009, took stock of the achievements of the Bologna Process and laid out the priorities for the European Higher Education Area for the next decade.

Looking back to ten years of European higher education reform, Ministers emphasised the achievements of the Bologna Process, highlighting in particular the increased compatibility and comparability of European education systems through the implementation of structural changes and the use of ECTS and the Diploma Supplement. Acknowledging that the European Higher Education Area is not yet a reality, the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve communiqué also established the priorities for the decade until 2020.

The organisational structures of the Bologna Process were endorsed as being fit for purpose, and Ministers decided that in the future the Bologna Process would be co-chaired by the country holding the EU presidency and a non-EU country.

In the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, Ministers agreed that:

- Each country should set **measurable targets for widening overall participation and increasing the participation of under-represented social groups** in higher education by the end of the next decade.
- **By 2020 at least 20% of those graduating in the EHEA should have had a study**

or training period abroad.

- **Lifelong learning and employability** are important missions of higher education.
- **Student-centred learning** should be the goal of ongoing curriculum reform

Budapest/Vienna Communiqué (2010)

The Budapest/Vienna ministerial meeting held on 11 and 12 March 2010 launched officially the internationally competitive and attractive European Higher Education Area as envisaged in the Bologna Declaration of 1999, based on trust, cooperation and respect for diversity.

The Ministers committed to the full implementation of the agreed objectives and the agenda for the next decade set by in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve. They acknowledged that the Bologna action lines are implemented to varying degrees and that Bologna aims and reforms have not always been properly implemented and explained. Ministers emphasised the need to listen to the critical voices raised among staff and students and to work on improving and better communicating about the process.

In particular, Ministers fully support staff and student participation at decision-making structures (EU, national, institutional) and student-centred learning. Ministers recommitted to academic freedom as well as autonomy and accountability of higher education institutions.

They also reaffirmed that higher education is a public responsibility, and despite difficult economic times, are committed to ensure that higher education institutions have the necessary resources and can provide equal opportunities to quality education, paying particular attention to underrepresented groups.

The country membership expanded to 47 with the recognition of Kazakhstan as a new participating country.

In the Budapest/Vienna Communiqué, Ministers agreed:

- To ask the Bologna Follow-up Group to propose measures to facilitate the **implementation of Bologna action lines**, among others by developing additional working methods, such as peer learning, study visits and other information sharing activities.
- To intensify policy dialogue and cooperation with **partners across the world**.

Beyond Europe, the Bologna Policy Forum

In 2007, Ministers and European Union representatives decided to develop a strategy specific for the external dimension of the Bologna Process. Two years later, in 2009, the first Bologna Policy Forum was held to encourage closer cooperation with countries outside the process. This meeting immediately followed the ministerial meeting on 29 April 2009 and was attended by higher education Ministers or their representatives from 15 countries around the world, including the US, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Australia, China and several Tempus countries (Egypt, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco and Tunisia).

The first Bologna Policy Forum provided the opportunity to discuss how worldwide cooperation in higher education can be enhanced through the Bologna Process. The final

Declaration highlighted the consensus that a more permanent and structured dialogue between "Bologna" and third countries would be of mutual interest. It stated that the recognition of studies and qualifications as well as the issue of quality assurance are key elements for promoting mobility that go much beyond the Bologna signatory countries. It also concluded that the Bologna Policy Forum should become a regular, institutionalised event.

The second Bologna Policy Forum took place in Vienna on 12 March 2010, right after the Bologna Ministerial Anniversary Conference. More than 20 countries from all over the world were invited to attend and to join this open dialogue along with the European Higher Education Area countries. 5 Tempus partner countries attended this event (Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia).

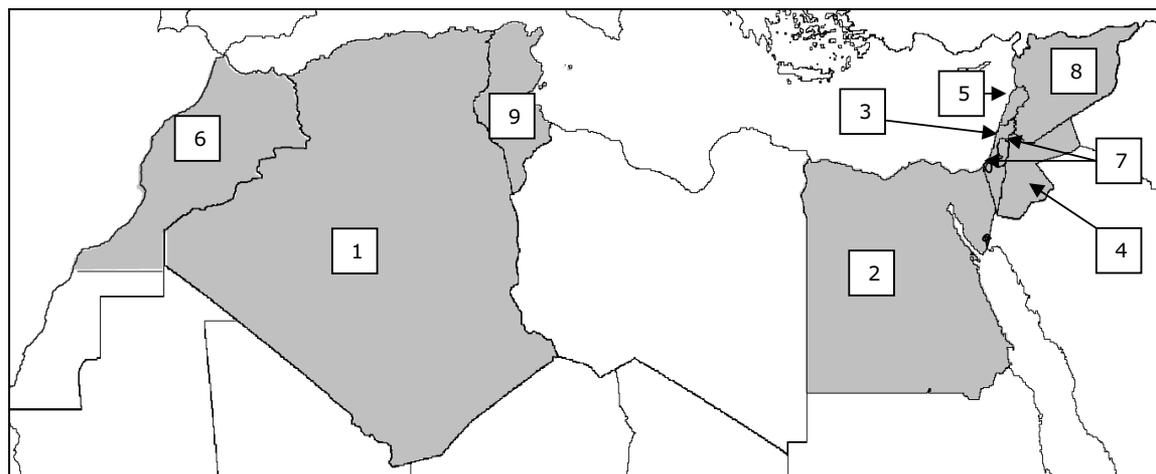
Debates focused on how higher education systems and institutions respond to growing demands, but also on mobility, including the challenges and opportunities of "brain circulation" and the balance between cooperation and competition in international higher education.

It was decided that each country will nominate a contact person who will function as liaison point for a better flow of information and joint activities, including the preparation of the next Bologna Policy Forum at ministerial level.

The Policy Forum will continue to promote dialogue and cooperation among higher education institutions, staff and students and other relevant stakeholders across the world. In this context, the need to foster global student dialogue is acknowledged.

Cooperation based on partnership between governments, higher education institutions, staff, students and other stakeholders is at the core of the European Higher Education Area. This partnership approach should also be reflected in the organisation of the next Bologna Policy Forum at ministerial level in 2012.

GLOSSARY OF COUNTRIES



- 1 Algeria
- 2 Egypt
- 3 Israel
- 4 Jordan
- 5 Lebanon
- 6 Morocco
- 7 Occupied Palestinian Territory
- 8 Syria
- 9 Tunisia

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