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IMPLEMENTING THE 'EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2010'
WORK PROGRAMME

2005 Progress Report

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PORTUGAL

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NATIONAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
"EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2010"
WORK PROGRAMME

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1. INTRODUCTION: THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL POLICIES AND THE LISBON AGENDA

As is also the case with its European partners, the process of building a knowledge-based society and economy is posing Portugal a range of challenges in which the education and training systems play a primordial role. It is thus understandable that many of the objectives that the European Union has set within the scope of the *"Education and Training 2010" Work Programme* have been echoed in the concerns and principles expressed in various official Portuguese documents, be they medium-term policy guidelines (such as the "Major Policy Options for 2003-2006" set out in Law no. 32-A/2002, dated 30 December 2002), or others that specifically address the policies which Portugal is to pursue in the education and training fields (as was the case with the Guidelines for the Curricular Revision of the Secondary Education, which was subsequently embodied in Executive Law no. 74/2004, dated 26 March 2004, which is itself expressly based on the *"Detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe"*). Indeed, as can be seen from the following chapters, many of the measures that were defined between 2002 and 2004 aim at working towards those objectives.

The Programme of the XVII Constitutional Government (passed by the Portuguese Parliament in March 2005) explicitly recognises that the European framework is a unique opportunity for Portugal, and the proposals it makes for this Legislature (2005-2009), particularly in the chapter on education, sit firmly within the lines of the Lisbon Strategy. In addition, the government's agenda includes the launch of a *Technological Plan* consisting of an articulated range of transversal policies and measures, which will help to transform the country into a modern knowledge-driven society and aim at stimulating and mobilising Portugal in such a way as to respond to the new challenges posed by the information society, lend new drive to entrepreneurial innovation, overcome scientific and technological backwardness and qualify human resources. The generalisation of the access to the Internet and to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) is also a critical element of this Government's proposal towards the development of the Portuguese society. But, well beyond the acquisition of these technologies, this Government gives priority to the development of a scientific and technologic culture.

The restrictions on the annual nominal growth in public spending imposed by the Programme of Stability and Growth for 2003-2006 could not but condition increases in the overall level of expenditure on education and training, and the fact is that there has been a great deal of pressure to ensure the latter's containment. No quantified targets have been set in relation to the possibility of increasing the investment in human resources in absolute terms, although the new government's Programme does provide for the reorientation of both expenditure and investment, particularly within the context of the new Community Support Framework, which is itself being drawn up in the light of the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy. Having said this, the targets that are expressly set out in the Programme include doubling public investment in R&D so as to bring it up to 1% of GDP, and tripling the R&D effort made by private enterprises.

Taking the European benchmarks that the Council (Education) adopted in May 2003 as a framework of reference, and acting in the light of Portugal's specific situation, targets have been set up that reflect a number of priority political action areas, which are particularly expressed in the *National Employment Plan for 2003* (PNE-2003), which also lays the guidelines for 2003-2006:

- Reduce early school leaving among 18-24 year-olds, from 45.5% in 2002 to 35% in 2006 and 25% in 2010;

- Increase the proportion of 22 year-olds with upper secondary education, from 44.2% in 2002 to 55% in 2006 and 65% in 2010;

- Increase the extent to which the working-age (25-64 years old) adult population takes part in lifelong learning actions, from 2.9% in 2002 to 6% in 2006 and 12.5% in 2010.

As we will cover in more detail in other sections of this Report, the new government's Programme provides for the implementation of a range of measures in response to these concerns They include: consolidating basic education[1], which will be targeted at the development of fundamental competencies; expanding and diversifying secondary-level education and training; in the higher education field, ensuring the qualification of Portuguese citizens within the European area (via the Bologna Process), promoting the system's quality, and improving the governance of the various institutions (via suitable assessment and financing models); and as regards vocational training, essentially investing in the intensification of the qualification of human resources as part of an overall lifelong learning perspective.

In Portugal the Lisbon Strategy has been the object of regular and systematic attention by the Inter-ministerial Committee for Community Affairs (CIAC) – a formal body that acts within the sphere of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and includes every central government ministry and the governing bodies of the Madeira and Azores Autonomous Regions.

Where the Ministry of Education is concerned, the Bureau for European Affairs and International Relations(GAERI) has promoted cooperation between the Ministry's own departments and those of the Ministries with responsibility for Higher Education and for Labour and Vocational Training, with a view to the joint oversight of the *"Education and Training 2010" Work Programme*, all in close cooperation with the Portuguese experts appointed to the various Commission Working Groups. Within this overall framework there is a proposal for the formal creation of an Inter-ministerial Platform that will make it possible to supervise the Work Programme and draw up and implement a National Action Plan in this field. In parallel to this, we have witnessed the creation of various inter-ministerial bodies, the role of which is to stimulate and monitor the educational process in the different intervention areas, while acting in close cooperation with the various ministerial offices. Examples include the National Commissions for the Supervision of the National Employment Plan (PNE) and of the National Action Plan for Inclusion (PNAI).

The quantitative and comparative information that has been worked on and disseminated not only within the European Union, but also in other international organisations – particularly the OECD – has naturally had an impact on the diagnosis of the country's situation, and thus on the definition of Portugal's education and training policies.

Having said this, the main difficulties that have been experienced are largely related to Portugal's starting point, requiring a significant effort considering the definition of priorities. Nor, on another level, can we fail to mention something that is emphasised in

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[1] In Portugal, Basic Education comprises school grades from 1 to 9, corresponding to Levels 1 and 2 of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) as developed by the UNESCO and adopted in November 1997 (ISCED-1997)

other sections of this Report – the successive changes in government that have occurred over the last few years. These have not provided Portugal with the desirable degree of stability with which to pursue policies that make it possible to stimulate, monitor and assess this process. What is more, the effects of the initial phase of the process at Community level were have also felt, in the shape of the integration and stabilisation of all the processes within the framework of the current *"Education and Training 2010" Work Programme.*

Notwithstanding all this, to a large extent we have successfully completed the stage that entailed publicising and raising awareness of the issue around the country, which progressively made it possible for this Work Programme to really be taken on board in Portugal. The fact is that in its role as a framework of reference for the development of education and training policies in Europe, we have promoted the Programme in a variety of both formal and informal meetings at different levels.

To this end, in an initial phase we conducted a dissemination and awareness-raising campaign that included various initiatives – particularly a European Conference and a cycle of Regional Seminars. The European Conference, which was entitled *"European Education and Training Area: different systems, common objectives for 2010"* , took place in March 2003 with backing from the European Commission and joint organisation by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, and permitted a wide-reaching debate on this topic. In the presence of then Ministers of Education, Higher Education, and Labour and Vocational Training, the Conference was attended by around three hundred people, including political decision-makers, teachers in general, social partners, representatives from bodies and organisations with an interest in the education and training field, some national delegates to the European Union Council's Education Committee and representatives from other Member States. In close cooperation with all the country's regions, a cycle of Regional Seminars was then promoted. The latter were organised around those of the Programme's objectives that are most important in regional terms, and they had a major impact on civil society. More recently, in May 2004, as part of the Education Week dedicated to public education and early school leaving, the President of the Republic promoted and chaired a seminar on the *"Education and Training 2010" Work Programme*, which was held at the Castelo Branco Polytechnic Institute.

Finally, in addition to other meetings of various kinds that were basically held to coordinate the participation of the Portuguese experts in the European Commission's Working Groups, but also made it possible to enhance the Work Programme's visibility, we should also note the process of drawing up this Report, which led to broad-based, inter-ministerial and inter-departmental reflection on the development of the education and training system in Portugal within the framework of the Lisbon Strategy.

2. INVESTING MORE AND MORE EFFICIENTLY: FOCUSING REFORM ON THE KEY AREAS

2.1. The current priorities of the national education and training policy

In recognition of the fact that the delay in the country's overall development is linked to the serious shortcomings in the education/training and qualification of the Portuguese population, the new government's Programme states the indispensable need to direct the education and training policies in such a way as to overcome that deficit. Thus, aiming at transforming Portugal, in the middle term, into a modern knowledge-based society, that Programme proposes the implementation of a Technologic Plan meant as "*a coherent mesh of tranversal policies and measures*" which should be "*the linchpin of the*

Government's economic policy", including "*the qualification of human capital as the main factor of progress in any society*".

In this framework, the main targets to be attained by 2009 are as follows:

- To cut in half school failure in basic and secondary education;
- To double young people's attendance in technological and vocational courses at the upper secondary level;
- To impose teaching of experimental sciences throughout basic education;
- To generalise English language teaching from the 1st cycle of basic education;
- To make compulsory the attendance of education or training courses for all youngsters up to the age of eighteen;
- To relaunch the application of the "*training clause for young people*" and the "*annual minimum training period*";
- To increase the number of degree holders and advanced training in higher education.

At the same time, with a view to "*opening up the access to lifelong learning*", it aims at making lifelong learning more inclusive and diversified, "*opening to all the possibility of refreshing and deepening their skills and face the challenges inherent to job flexibility*".

In sectorial terms, the new government's Programme emphasises structural changes where non-higher education is concerned, designed to achieve a quality education for all and, in response to the fundamental problems that have characterised education in Portugal in recent years, are focused on the following priorities:

a) Progressively widen preschool education (ISCED Level 0) to cover all children of the appropriate ages, and consolidate the universality of nine years of basic education;

b) Extend fundamental education to the end of secondary education or training, by integrating all minors (up to the age of 18) into academic or vocational training paths;

c) Make a qualitative jump in adult education and training;

d) Change the way in which the education system and resources are organised, with a view to both the general public interest as a whole and the interest of students and their families;

e) Entrench both a culture and the practise of assessment and accountability in every aspect of the education and training system.

In addition to the fact that the Programme explicitly states that the ambitions that have been laid out for the Legislature which began last March must fall within the framework of the Lisbon Strategy (in such a way as to "*make the information and knowledge-driven society a lever for social cohesion and economic and technological modernisation*"), it is possible to see a direct relationship between the definition of these priorities and the strategic objectives that were formulated as part of the *"Education and Training 2010"* process, both via the *"Detailed programme on the follow-up of the objectives of the education and training systems in Europe"*, and via the principles that were agreed within the ambit of the Lifelong Learning and Copenhagen Processes, and, finally, via the benchmarks that the Ministers of the Education adopted in May 2003.

Thus, the bet that is enshrined in a *"quality education for all"* expresses a concern which is also particularly reflected in two of the three objectives of the abovementioned Programme on the follow-up of the common objectives. Several of the measures that are planned for the next four years work towards the thirteen objectives which the European Union hopes to attain by 2010. The following list shows the similarities between the current government's education guidelines (as set out in the government's Programme) and the EU objectives (the latter are referred to by the numbers in brackets):

- impose demanding standards in terms of the *"rigueur and relevance of initial and continuous training for kindergarten and other teachers"*, and define a *"national teacher training programme, with explicit performance profiles and consequent measures for providing incentives for the quality of both initial and continuous training"* (obj. 1.1.);

- ensure *"the acquisition of competencies supporting lifelong learning"* (obj. 1.2.);

- *"the generalisation of access to, and use of, the new information and communication technologies"* (obj. 1.3.);

- *"the compulsory attendance to experimental science classes throughout basic education"*, *"enhancing and attaching increased value to maths teaching"*, and *"enhancing the awareness towards components of a technical, technological and vocational nature in the 3rd basic education cycle" (ISCED Level 2)*; and at secondary education level (ISCED Level 3), *"stimulate the search for courses in the sciences and technologies area"* (obj. 1.4.);

- *"consolidate the dynamic of groups of basic education schools"*, and grant *"a greater degree of autonomy to schools, in such a way as to ensure their ability to manage both resources and the national curriculum, to establish local partnerships, and to match the service they provide to the specific characteristics and needs of the students and communities they serve"* (obj. 1.5.);

- consolidate *"the flexible management of the national curriculum by schools"* as one of the *"structuring principles of universal basic education"*, and *"stimulate and enhance a fine web of diversified post-basic education and training paths by creating an articulated and complementary network of opportunities among secondary schools, vocational schools and vocational training centres"*, while simultaneously providing *"diversified recurrent teaching"* (obj. 2.1.);

- *"provide every child and young person with a motivating, demanding and gratifying learning environment"* (obj. 2.2.);

- *"set guidelines for special education learning policies in accordance with the principles of the inclusive school, and enhance and attached increased value to intercultural education and the integration of immigrants' children"* (obj. 2.3.);

- ensure a *"growing degree of closeness between secondary education and the vocational training system"*, and *"broaden the offer of technological, artistic and vocational teaching"* (obj. 3.1.);

- *"generalise the teaching of English as of the 1st basic education cycle"* (obj. 3.3.).

The first of the specific priorities that are singled out in the government's Programme (paragraph a. above) is a way of fighting the relatively low levels of basic competencies that young Portuguese people continue to display, compared to the average for their counterparts in most of the Member States. The abovementioned report indicates that between 2000 and 2003 there was an improvement in Portugal's results in the indicator that is used in this domain (level of reading literacy among 15 year-olds, as measured by the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) Study), although they are still far below the Community average. The reform of the basic education curricula that has been undertaken in the last few years with a view to making both the curricula themselves and teaching practises focus on competencies rather than just on knowledge, may really be making a fundamental contribution in this respect.

The second specific priority (noted above in paragraph b.) responds to the need to drastically reduce the shortfall from which Portugal is suffering in relation to most of the countries in the European Union, as regards both the rate of completion of secondary education and the general level of qualification of our human resources, and the proportion of early school leavers (two of the benchmarks that were adopted in 2003). According to the recent report entitled *"Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training"* (March 2005), despite the progresses that have been made since 2000, Portugal is still (or at least was in 2004) one of only two Member States in which the percentage of people between the ages of 20 and 24 who have completed upper secondary education remains below 50% (still a long way from the European target of 85%). Similarly, in 2004 Portugal continued to occupy the second-worst place in the European Union as regards the percentage of the 18-24 age group who did not pursue any type of studies or training after their basic nine years of schooling (also despite the important progress that has been achieved in the last few years: a fall in this indicator from 45.5% in 2002 to 39.4% in 2004).

In this context the Portuguese government has recently launched the Initiative 'New Opportunities' (*Novas Oportunidades). It defines a comprehensive qualification strategy of the Portuguese population, taking as reference the objective of generalising secondary education as a minimum education level. In order to do so, the initiative has two main axes: one for the young population and another one for adults.*

For the young population, the initiative promotes the strengthening of professional double certification teaching as an essential recourse to stop the youth inflow leaving the education and training systems without secondary education levels.

Concerning adults, the new opportunity is given to all those already in the labour market without full secondary education, recurring to action instruments, expanding Adults Education and Training Courses, widening the National Recognition, Validation and Skills Certification System, investing in strategies which make an important mobilisation factor, for the (re)investment in education and training paths, of the recognition of learning through experience.

This is an initiative were both of the Ministries (Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity) are working together.

The third priority (paragraph c. above) highlights the importance that the government is allocating to adult participation in lifelong learning processes, given that it is precisely in the 25-64 age group that we find the greatest differences between qualifications in Portugal and the average for the European Union. What is more, an analysis of the

evolution that has occurred in the indicator for this domain (percentage of the population between the ages of 25 and 64 who attended schooling or training actions in the four weeks prior to the survey) reveals that Portugal has again made notable progresses that deserve mentioning (going from 2.9% in 2002 to 4.8% in 2004), but is still far from the desired objectives.

Lastly, the fourth and fifth priorities that are set out in the government's Programme and are reproduced at the beginning of this section (for the fifth priority, also see section 2.3.), attach special importance to resource optimisation processes and the need to significantly raise the levels of efficiency of the Portuguese education system. Here, we should call attention to one of the negative aspects that are particularly noted in the European Commission's reports on the Portuguese economy, which precisely concerns the very high degrees of inefficiency that can be found in education and training systems in Portugal.

As regards higher education, the objectives that have been set up in the current government's Programme are to implement the Bologna process, reform the higher education institutions' management system, structure a system that will guarantee quality, and promote equal opportunities for access to higher education. The transition from a teaching system that is based on the transmission of knowledge to one that is founded on the idea of acquiring competencies constitutes both the main challenge of the Bologna Process and higher education's role in lifelong learning. The revision of the "Teaching Career Statute", the creation of a system of contract programmes with learning institutions that will ensure the implementation of the necessary pedagogical measures, and finally, teacher and student mobility, are all instruments that will make it easier to make the Bologna Process a reality within the overall framework of the Lisbon Strategy and the implementation of the Knowledge-driven Society for All project.

Where vocational training is concerned, the government is betting on a human-resource qualification strategy that will be more daring and efficient than has been the case in the past, will be incorporated into a lifelong learning strategy, and will be closely coordinated with a policy that makes it possible to increase the quality and qualification of work and jobs. It is within this perspective that we find a set of measures for implementation in 2005-2009, such as the re-launch of the "training clause for young people" and of an "annual minimum number of hours of certified vocational training", the creation of a debureaucratised vocational certification system, and the promotion of access to technological training.

The role of Community funds in developing the reforms.

Against the background of Community Support Framework III (2000-2006), and as was the case with the earlier CSF, Community funds undoubtedly make a fundamental contribution to the implementation of the investments associated with the execution of the major guidelines for the transformation of the Portuguese education system. In this context, in its role as the Educational Operational Programme for 2000-2006, PRODEP (*Educational Development for Portugal Programme*) III is taking responsibility for part of the funding for the interventions included in Axis I of CSF III: *"Raise the level of qualification of the Portuguese people and promote employment and social cohesion"*. The three main priorities set by this financial support instrument indicate that investments should essentially be concentrated in the following areas:

- *Initial Qualifying Training for Young People*, thereby making a special investment in the generation aged between 15 and 20 in 2000-2006, not only by diversifying the training opportunities available to them in such a way as to attempt to ensure that no young person leaves the education

system without first securing a professional qualification, but also by supporting the development of post-secondary and higher education;

- *Support for the Transition to the Active Life and Promotion of Employability*, thereby aiming at stimulating training-related partnerships between teaching institutions and companies and other economic organisations, particularly via: the generalisation of the use of traineeships as part of forms of training that lead to professional qualification, or to qualifications of a level equivalent to higher education; the creation of new services for the certification of know-how and competencies that have been acquired over the course of a person's life; and the creation of short-duration learning opportunities focused on a precise topic, particularly those that are designed to provide technological literacy and are aimed at both young people and adults.

- *The Learning Society*, in such a way as to exploit the education system's capacity to use its human resources (teachers and other education agents) to integrate the whole of the potential offered by the latest information and communication technologies into the teaching/learning process, in a way that emphasises the strategies of conducting teacher training actions, implementing plans for equipping the basic and secondary networks with computer-related resources, and ensuring the availability of mass-produced multimedia educational content.

There are other Operational Programmes that include a major element of both initial and continuous training incentives. This is the case of the *Employment, Training and Social Development Operational Programme* (POEFDS), which, along with the Decentralised Employment, Training and Social Development Measures (integrated into the Regional Operational Programmes), also forms part of Axis I of CSF III and constitutes an important and decisive aid for the development of vocational training in the 2000-2006 programming period. POEFDS was structured in the shape of a coherent, integrated set of five axes, with emphasis on the measures targeted at young people, active employed persons and the unemployed (including the various different disadvantaged groups). Adding to qualifications and reinforcing social cohesion play a primordial role in the various measures included in POEFDS and make a decisive contribution to the increased employability and the professional insertion of the different groups at which it is targeted.

We should also mention the different sectoral programmes, such as the *Programme of Incentives for the Modernisation of the Economy* (PRIME), which incorporates a range of medium-term (to 2006) economic policy instruments, in which the qualification of human resources is directly linked to processes involving modernisation and innovation in enterprises or their support structures, with particular emphasis on Axis 2 – Qualification of Human Resources. Also at sectoral level the Operational Programmes in the areas of Health and Agriculture, which include measures targeted at the training of active members of the population, should be taken into account. Finally, we should note the importance of the *Science, Technology and Innovation Operational Programme* (POCTI) and the *Knowledge-driven Society Operational Programme* (POS_Conhecimento), especially when it comes to the advanced training of human resources.

2.2. The correlation between measures taken at national level and the three key investment areas singled out at European level

The last few years have witnessed the implementation of various initiatives that fall within the three key action areas identified by Working Group E, in which it is thought necessary to increase and improve investment. On the subject of "institutional reforms" there are a number of policies that we mentioned earlier, such as the reorganisation that was undertaken in the network of basic education establishments – particularly by means of the creation of Groups of Schools – and the ongoing pursuit of the process of decentralising competencies in favour of local authorities. In terms of fostering partnerships between the Ministry of Education and other bodies, it is worth mentioning that we have been seeing a broadening of the initiatives in this domain, inasmuch as they are no longer just restricted to the management and operation of vocational schools (as was the case in the 1990's), but are now a reality in other areas, such as the expansion of the preschool education network, insertion into the job market, and the implementation of adult education and training courses. At the advanced level we should note the new laws governing the development and financing of higher education – Law no. 1/2003, dated 6 January 2003 (Legal Regime governing the Development and the Quality of Higher Education), and Law no. 37/2003, dated 22 August 2003 (Bases for the Financing of Higher Education), respectively. As regards the financing of public higher education, we can point to the new criteria which must now underlie higher education institutions' operating and investment budgets and which permit their entry into contract programmes or institutional development contracts, according to the concrete objectives that they are aiming at attaining.

As far as the "development of incentives for investment in education and training" is concerned, among the various existing financial incentives we can particularly mention: the possibility of deducting the cost of education and vocational training from income tax (up to a given limit); the so-called "simple contracts" or "development contracts", depending on the educational level in question, between the state and private and cooperative educational establishments, which enable the most financially disadvantaged families to exercise their right to educational choice; and finally, the Sponsor Status, which enables companies to count donations given to educational establishments that are recognised by the Ministry, as tax losses for the financial year in question (again up to a given limit). The non-financial incentives include the possibility that in the near future, and subject to improvements in quality already implemented, basic and secondary schools will be able to enter into "autonomy contracts" with the central government. At the higher education level we should note the Higher Education Assessment System, which is coordinated by the National Higher Education Assessment Council (CNAES), under the terms of which the new Legal Regime governing the Development and Quality of Higher Education has established a relationship between the results of the assessment of each higher education institution or course and its funding and development.

Lastly, as regards "mechanisms to increase private investment", it is worth underlining the public support that is given to the creation of vocational schools (many of which are the product of partnerships between the public and private sectors), and, in the higher education field, the introduction of fees. These are paid by students on the basis that while on the one hand the funding of higher education is an important social investment, on the other they themselves also obtain individual benefits from the training they receive. Having said this, in order to ensure that no student is excluded from the higher

education subsystem due to a financial inability to pay, the state does ensure the existence of a social action system, which gives direct support in the form of the award of student grants, as well as indirect social support in the shape of student accommodation, canteens…

2.3. The monitoring and evaluation of education policies

In recent years, within the overall framework of the promotion of the quality of education and training, a growing importance has been attached to the definition and implementation of evaluation policies at different levels of the education and training systems.

Both the "Major Options of the Plan for 2003-2006" and the "Education and Non-higher Education Assessment System" – two legal statutes that were published in December 2002 – clearly express the importance that is now being attached to this subject. The major medium-term options highlight the following essential priorities in the "education", "science and higher education" and "labour and training" areas:

- structuring of the education system assessment model, as well as that of the instruments for gauging and accrediting the evaluation carried out by the Ministry of Education's departments;

- assessing the performance of basic and secondary schools;

- perfecting the national higher education assessment system, by promoting the development of criteria and methods that are comparable at the European level;

- promoting the quality of vocational training, by means of the continuous improvement of the Training Body Accreditation System (SAEF).

Under the terms of Law no. 31/2002, dated 20 December 2002, in its role as a central instrument for defining education policies the Education and Non-higher Education Assessment System pursues the following objectives:

- to promote improvements in the quality of the education system, in its organisation and in its levels of efficiency and efficacy, support the formulation and development of education and training policies, and ensure the availability of system management information;

- to equip local, regional and national government and society in general with a framework of information about the functioning of the education system;

- to ensure educational success by promoting a culture of quality, demanding standards and accountability in schools;

- to guarantee the credibility of the performance of education and teaching establishments;

- to enhance and attach added value to the role of the various members of the educational community;

- to promote a culture of continuing improvements in the organisation, functioning and results of both the education system and educational projects;

- to participate in the international education-system evaluation institutions and processes.

As we saw in section 2.1., the new government's Programme attaches special priority to the entrenchment of both a culture and the practise of assessment and accountability in every aspect of the education and training system. It then goes on to explicitly state that this assessment must cover not only student performance, but also the national curriculum, teachers at every level of education, schools, and the technical services that support them, and must apply criteria based on results, efficiency and fairness. Particularly in the case of the assessment of basic and secondary schools, Portugal is to launch a national programme that will have consequences in terms of both rewarding good schools and making them reference points for the whole network, and using contract programmes to support the improvement plans of schools that suffer from greater difficulties.

In the specific higher education area, the idea is to go further than the higher education course assessment system that has been in place up until now, by creating a "national system for guaranteeing quality in higher education", which will be recognised internationally and will cover every higher education institution. It will be composed of four axes:

- widening the assessment process to include each institution's performance;

- rendering the assessment criteria objective, translating the results into qualitative judgements that address one aspect at a time and are comparable with one another, and clarifying the consequences of the assessments, both in terms of the way in which a school or a course functions, and as regards its funding;

- internationalising the assessment process and particularly its institutional evaluation aspect;

- requiring universities and polytechnics to implement specific quality assurance systems that will be subject to certification.

With a view to the supervision of the effective integration of the beneficiaries of the various employment, vocational training and job-market insertion measures, Portugal is presently developing a permanent global observation (supervision and assessment) system aimed at the active employment measures that are implemented by the Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP). This system will give priority to the measures that cover the largest numbers of people. This process is based on a method for surveying these people's employment situation, the degree to which they are satisfied with their jobs and the quality thereof, after a period of three months. We should also note the work that has been done by the Observatory of Entries into the Active Life (OEVA), which is a means of permanently observing the trainees who have completed initial or continuous IEFP vocational training courses with a duration of 100 hours or more. It makes it possible to obtain a better characterisation of the training itself, analyse the trainees' (re)insertion before and afterwards, and find out how the ex-trainees assess their training experiences.

3. PUTTING IN PLACE TRULY COHERENT AND COMPREHENSIVE LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGIES

3.1. Main measures taken in Portugal to draw up and implement a National Lifelong Learning Strategy

In 2001, as part of the review of the National Employment Plan (PNE) for that year – and following the Council Recommendation on Lifelong Learning, the publication of the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning and the Agreement on Policy governing Employment, the Job Market, Education and Training (also 2001), which was signed by the government and all the social partners – and acting in cooperation with other structures, the PNE coordinators outlined a lifelong learning strategy based on the principles and concepts that had been adopted in this respect at Community and international level. This document made it possible to reinforce the horizontal nature of the strategy, both within the framework of the education and training systems and in the light of a whole range of policies – not just those governing education and training, but also the ones concerning the information society and employment. At the same time the document shows the fundamental importance of establishing a close relationship between the strategy and the PNE itself. It also places special emphasis on improving the quality of basic education and expanding and diversifying young people's initial training, as well as on the measures that have been and are going to be taken in relation to adult training and education, inasmuch as this is one of the areas in which Portugal is furthest behind much of the rest of the European Union.

Since then, the various annual and multi-annual versions of the PNE have systematically referred to the National Lifelong Learning Strategy, and last year presented a framework for the achievement of the different targets. As part of the 2nd phase of the European Employment Strategy and following on from the Report of the Employment Task Force, Directive 4 focuses on *"Promoting the development of human capital and lifelong learning"*.

It is appropriate to mention that in 2003 Portugal's report on the follow-up of the Council Resolution on Lifelong Learning expounded on and specified just what that strategy represents for this country, the framework in which it is inserted and the measures it includes. At the moment (April 2005), its implementation is the object of an external evaluation by a team of independent experts. This process is designed to determine the extent to which the Lifelong Learning Strategy has been responding to the challenges facing Portugal in this domain – particularly as reflected in the Council's recommendations – and what progress has been made in terms of the commitments that were undertaken, compared to the targets that were set as part of the PNE for 2003-2006. The intention is thus to find out what contribution the Strategy has made, by identifying the policy measures for, and their impacts on, each of its segments and target groups, and by gauging the suitability of its interventions and the effectiveness of its investments.

Finally, it is expected that over the course of 2005 it will be possible to reformulate the National Lifelong Learning Strategy – particularly on the basis of the results of the abovementioned evaluation and any recommendations that may be issued – with the objective of reinforcing its coherence and incorporating an improved articulation with the European Employment Strategy, the *"Education and Training 2010" Work Programme* and the political priorities set out in the new government's Programme.

Be that as it may, the framework that was defined from 2001 onwards by the strategy's adoption facilitated the joint work of the different partners and ministries and adjusted a number of formats that will be capable of multiplying education and training actions and thus creating new learning opportunities which people can take advantage of in conjunction with their work and the demands of family life. The last few years have in fact witnessed a number of cooperative inter-institutional initiatives designed to deepen the coherence and integration of the education and training policies, as well as to diversify and upgrade the opportunities that exist in this area and the recognition, validation and certification of non-formal or informal competencies from an overall lifelong learning perspective. The new government's Programme confirms and further develops this option.

Among the main reforms and initiatives that have been undertaken, the following warrant particular mention:

a) *The involvement of the social partners and civil society and the development of partnerships*. The importance attached to the social partners' involvement and participation in the definition of a national lifelong learning strategy is clearly reflected in the achievement of an *Agreement on Policy governing Employment, the Job Market, Education and Training*, which the government and all the social partners signed in February 2001. This Agreement establishes as priorities the fight against the shortcomings in schooling and professional qualifications, the promotion of job quality, and the response to unemployment by means of intervention via active integrated employment, training and labour policies. Among other objectives, in this respect it was decided: (i) that as of 2002, at least 10% of every company's staff must take part in continuous training actions; (ii) that all workers must attend a minimum of 20 hours of certified training per annum as of 2003, and a minimum of 35 hours as of 2006.

At the same time, given their transversal nature, the promotion and development of lifelong learning policies require a major concentration and coordination of efforts on the part of the state, the social partners and civil society. This has been reflected in increased coordination between the ministries with responsibility for education, higher education, and labour and vocational training, as well as in the creation of inter-ministerial structures that are specifically designed to stimulate and monitor the process in the various different intervention areas, often in close collaboration with the social partners. This is the case, for example, of the PNE Supervisory Commissions (within the framework of which the implementation of the National Lifelong Learning Strategy is also the object of supervision) and the National Action Plan for Inclusion.

Finally, it is appropriate to mention that the formulation in 2001 of a national strategy in the lifelong learning field – one that was put forward as an overall, prospective and strategic framework of reference for the development of the education and training systems – gave the government the opportunity to state the indispensable need to mobilise the whole of society. In this respect particular importance was attached to participation by the social partners and civil society on different levels – local (including local authorities), regional and national – particularly by means of the formation of partnerships that make it possible to share responsibilities, detect problems, come up with proposals and solutions, and so on. In the last few years there have been various examples of partnerships that have underpinned the development of

the education and training policies and systems. The contributions they have made in the following areas deserve a special mention:

- the expansion and development of the Preschool Education Network;

- the reinforcement of initial training for young people;

- the prevention of early school leaving;

- the design, organisation and operation of adult education and training courses;

- the process of recognising, validating and certifying competencies and know-how that adults have acquired by non-formal and informal means;

- the development of Pro-Citizenship Education projects;

- the establishment of closer relationships between schools and enterprises (embodied in protocols intended to ensure the provision of the training in a working context that is laid down in the curricular plans of the professionally qualifying courses, as well as traineeships that may or may not be incorporated into the training).

b) *The constitution of early bases for the development of future learning*. Given both preschool education's special importance in the creation of the initial foundations for a sustained lifelong learning process, and the very low levels of attendance of this level of education that existed in the mid 1990's, in the last ten years a high priority has been attached to the execution of a policy of expanding and developing preschool education, particularly in terms of the network of educational and social preschool establishments. Over a six-year period this resulted in moving from an attendance rate among five year-olds of 68.3% in 1996/97 to one of 91.3% in 2002/03; and for 3-4 year-olds, from a rate of 55.9% in 1996/97 to one of 70.3% in 2002/03. The XVII Constitutional Government's Programme states that in 2005-2009 preschool education will progressively be extended to every child of the applicable ages, and especially to all five year-olds. Where basic education (grades 1 to 9) is concerned, Portugal has broadly reformed its curricula, organisation and forms of operation in moves that have reinforced the importance attached to the acquisition of the ability to learn to learn.

c) *Curricular reorientation and the development of basic competencies*. The core element of the curricular reorganisation that was undertaken at the basic education level in recent years was the definition of a range of structuring general competencies and forms of know-how that must be developed in every child who receives the nine years of compulsory education. In addition to laying down the National Basic Education Curriculum, the legislation which took effect in 2001 in this area also covers the principles, measures and implications of aspects such as the development of competencies, the assessment of students' learning, and the organisation and management of the curriculum. The new government's Programme, which was presented to the Portuguese Parliament in March 2005, proposes to *"extend fundamental education to the end of secondary level*

education or training and to incorporate therein every person of the applicable age group" by 2009. This will mean *"ensuring that all persons under the age of 18, including all those who are already working, pursue academic or vocational training paths"*. This new way of looking at secondary level education and training – as the final stage of "fundamental education" – will certainly have repercussions on the definition of the basic competencies that everyone must acquire at each stage of his/her scholastic and/or training path, including the fact that those competencies must be such as to sustain lifelong learning practises. Lastly, we should note that the new offers of education and training opportunities targeted at poorly qualified adults are put together on the basis of a *"Framework of Reference for Key Competencies for Adult Education and Training"*, which is itself organised into four key areas. These follow the principle of increasing complexity and are all considered necessary to the training of any citizen in today's world: language and communication; information and communication technologies; mathematics for life; and citizenship and employability.

d) *The recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning*. The *National Competency Recognition, Validation and Certification System* (RVCC System), which is targeted at adults (18 years old or more) who have not completed compulsory education, was implemented in 2000 under the joint oversight of the Ministries of Education and Labour, but is now under the sole authority of the Ministry of Education. It constitutes a way of offering every citizen (particularly adults with lower levels of academic and professional qualifications) an opportunity for the recognition, validation and certification of the competencies and knowledge which they have gradually, non-formally or informally acquired in the most varied contexts over the course of their life-paths. This System will thus promote and facilitate new education and training paths and promote the (re)construction of significant personal and professional projects. At the national level we have an operational network of 93 Centres (April 2005) that are accredited by the Ministry of Education and are already providing this service. Under the terms of the new government's Programme these processes will progressively be extended to the secondary education level by 2009. Under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security a similar system (RVCC-PRO) has been designed for professional purposes and is being implemented under an "observation" regime (*see Section 5.1.*).

e) *Lifelong guidance counselling policies and services*. In Portugal the school and professional guidance counselling services are essentially provided by structures that form part of the ministries that have been responsible for the education and the employment and vocational training areas. As part of the cooperation between these two ministries, it has increasingly been deemed essential to ensure the integrated development of the competent departments and services that work in this domain in schools, vocational

training centres and job centres. The idea is to support both young people and adults in their academic and professional choices and to motivate them in relation to lifelong learning opportunities. Two major needs have been identified in this respect: to bring vocational information and guidance counselling closer to the citizen; and to create integrated mediation services, above all for the most disadvantaged populational groups. At present, at Ministry of Education level we are implementing two initiatives that warrant particular mention: the online database "Escolhe o teu futuro" (*Choose your future*) (which enables users to freely and interactively search all the existing education and training opportunities); and the "InOV Space" (a physical and virtual space that offers vocational information and guidance counselling and promotes self-information and guidance). Other initiatives, which involve various bodies and ministries, are also playing an important role. They include the Student Forum and the "SerPro" initiative, which aim at publicising both the training opportunities that are on offer all around the country and the corresponding professional outlets, with emphasis on the new professions and those in which there is a shortage of qualified professionals. Amongst other things, they also promote work and initiatives that are undertaken in the education and training field.

f) *The diversification, increased flexibility and permeability of learning paths*. It is becoming increasingly widely recognised that one of the strategies via which lifelong learning can be developed is that of increasing the diversification of the academic and training paths which are made available to all, from children to adults. To this end, in the last few years Portugal has been making an investment in this kind of diversification at various levels. In the case of basic education, the Curricular Reorganisation has made it possible to differentiate between pedagogical strategies and forms of support that are given to students and to make them more flexible. Where secondary education is concerned, one of the most innovative aspects of the 2004 Curricular Revision is the increase in the diversity, flexibility and permeability of scholastic paths, the goal of which is to match educational responses to students' options and profiles. In particular, one of the core objectives of the education and training policy has been to construct a coherent model for professionalising training at secondary level, in such a way as to consolidate a new balance between the offer of secondary education on the one hand and that of technological and vocational secondary training on the other. The overall goal is to attain the target of doubling young people's participation in secondary level technological and vocational courses, as stated in the government's Programme. While still on the subject of initial training, we should also mention the increase in vocational training and in dual-certification vocational education/professional training courses. The opportunities for adult education and training are

characterised by a high degree of diversification, both in terms of their promoters and the framework within which they are provided, and as regards the training paths they entail. This reflects an effort to match the training to the different adult target groups and their differing contexts and training needs, as well as an attempt to stimulate the actual demand for such training. In this respect work is also being done to make the different promoters and education and training opportunities more flexible. The process of flexibilisation of learning paths developed in the scope of vocational training, of which the professional component is the reference for young people's and adults' education and training courses, should also be noted. In the last years, IEFP has developed an effort to transform, in a first phase, all those paths in curricular frameworks based on capitalisable units. Today, work is been done aiming at modularising those paths, in such a way as to allow, for instance, the progressive certification of modules acquired throughout life, in a perspective of gradual building and formally recognising training processes in the development of skills leading to higher qualification levels.

g) *Teacher and trainer training*. Various initiatives are under way in order to augment the resources that will make it possible to significantly improve the qualification and training of all the different education and training agents and professionals. This broad category not only includes basic, secondary and technological specialisation course (post-secondary) teachers, but also non-teaching staff and other education and training professionals – for example, those who are responsible for competency recognition and validation, and the trainers on vocational courses and in the education and training opportunities for young people and adults. Acting via the *Educational Development for Portugal Programme* (PRODEP), the structural funds have been playing an important part in this process and it has been possible to make a considerable investment in the continuous and specialised training of basic and secondary level teachers, as well as in the continuous training of non-teaching staff. In this field it is only right to highlight the work that has been done by the School Associations' Training Centres (CFAE) in their role as the structuring hubs of this system, by the various scientific and professional associations, and, when it comes to specialised training, by higher education institutions. In the vocational training and trainer-training field this role has been played by the *Employment, Training and Social Development Operational Programme* (POEFDS). In addition, within the Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP) the intervention, at a national level, of the National Centre for the Training of Trainers (CNFF) aims at contributing to the improvement of the quality of professional training, through the pedagogic training of the main agents in training, introducing innovation factors and fostering the use of intervention methodologies by training

professionals, leading to a better adequacy of the training methods to the diverse publics, curricula contents/ competencies and training modalities. Within the CNFF, the New Technology Learning Centre (CANT), is designed to train trainers, teachers and other training professionals, allowing them to acquire technical and pedagogic skills aiming at the design and development of multimedia resources to be used in learning environments (*see Section 5.1*).

h) *The integrated use of ICT in education and training*. The national priority awarded to the development of the information and knowledge-driven society is being pursued by means of the coordination of various sectoral policies that have together been reflecting this objective's transversal nature. The structure of the *Action Plan for the Information Society* includes an "action pillar" dedicated to the "new skills", which provides for a range of actions targeted at both basic and secondary education students and university students and citizens in general (particularly via Axis 2.3., "Lifelong Learning"). With financial support from the Operational Programmes that have existed for this area (POSI and now POS_Conhecimento), all the schools at these levels have been outfitted with computer equipment and Internet connections, and the same thing is happening in preschool education establishments at the moment. One of the major objectives of the National Lifelong Learning Strategy, as formulated in 2001, was *"to develop a national system for training, certifying and developing competencies in the use of ICT"*. In this context the Internet@EB1[2] (Internet@BasicSchool-1st Cycle) made it possible to grant the Basic ICT Competencies Diploma to both teachers and students in the 1st Basic Education cycle. In the meantime, ICT were taking on a transversal role in teaching methods in every subject and area – a transversality that has been recognised in the curricular changes that were recently made at the basic and secondary education levels. The Network of ICT Competency Centres (RCCTIC – part of the *Nónio Programme*) has played a noteworthy part in the provision of pedagogical support for the integrated use of ICT in education. Since 2003 the teaching of ICT competencies has been compulsory in all schools that include grades 9 and 10[3]– a move that has simultaneously been accompanied and supported by the implementation of the 1,000 ICT Classroom Programme. At the higher education level Minho University's Virtual Campus is one example of adapting ICT to the management and sharing of knowledge among the members of an educational community, and is also a starting point for the University to state its position as a hub for the development of a

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[2] EB1 corresponds, in Portugal, to the first four grades of school education, that is, the first four years of ISCED Level 1

[3] Grade 9 is the last year of ISCED Level 2, and Grade 10 the first year of ISCED Level 3

knowledge-driven region. The B-On (Online Library) Project is an initiative that is designed to give the higher education community electronic access to the full text of more than 3,500 periodical publications from six internationally renowned publishers in the main areas of scientific and academic research. ICT are also a transversal priority for POEFDS, which has now set the target of including ICT contents in at least 50% of continuous worker training actions, with a minimum weight of 10% of the total number of training hours. It should be noted that all initial or middle/long duration training paths developed and implemented by the IEFP systematically integrate a training component in ICT, with up to three levels, according to the training path it belongs to and competencies already acquired.

i) *Education and training policies in favour of social inclusion.* Among the various provisions that have been made over the last few years in order to respond to the needs of specific groups of students who are experiencing repeated academic failure, are suffering from problems with their integration into the basic education system, are at risk of leaving school early and/or are experiencing difficulties that condition their learning, we should particularly mention the following:

- the organisation of classes with "alternative curricula";

- the "Integrated Education and Training Programme", which forms part of the Plan to Eliminate the Exploitation of Child Labour;

- the "education and training courses" that are aimed preferentially at young people aged 15 or over who are in danger of leaving school or who have already actually dropped out of the education system;

- the Programme "Escolhas – 2ª Geração" (Choices – 2nd Generation), which is intended to promote inclusion, especially of children and young people from more disadvantaged and problematic socio-economic contexts, such as the children or other members of immigrant families.

In this domain we can also highlight a number of instruments that are provided for in the National Plan for Inclusion 2003-2005 and aim at ensuring an integrated intervention on the social and educational planes, with the dual objective of fighting exclusion and promoting development. Finally, with regard to poorly qualified adults, we can point to various measures promoted by either the Ministry of Education, or the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity (EFA [Adult Education and Training] Courses, RVCC and RVCC-PRO Systems, "S@BER+" Actions, Continuous vocational training). The interventions in relation to these target groups have been evolving in such a way as to move towards an integrated personal development, training and professional insertion process that is complemented by the promotion of employment programmes/measures which are in turn suited to each group's characteristics and needs and foster its social inclusion. We should also emphasise the importance of a number of different projects that are specifically aimed at these target groups and are being undertaken within the framework of the "Equal Initiative".

j) *Policies in favour of older workers and citizens.* In the light of the need to create conditions that facilitate the older active population's access to education and training actions, in recent years Portugal has adopted measures designed to promote the acquisition, reinforcement and updating

of their competencies and thus facilitate their continued presence in the job market. In this respect we can mention:

- "Recurrent Learning", which provides a second opportunity for education to people who have been to school in the past, but for whatever reason have not completed their training, and a first opportunity for those who have never been to school at all;

- the "Extra-scholastic Education Courses", the purpose of which is, acting from a lifelong learning perspective, to enable any person to increase his/her knowledge and develop his/her competencies as an addition to his/her academic training or as a way of making up any shortcoming therein;

- the "EFA [Adult Education and Training] Courses", which constitute an integrated education and training opportunity with dual academic and vocational qualification and are targeted at adults (aged 18 or over) who have not completed nine years of compulsory education, have no professional qualifications, may be employed or unemployed, and are registered at Job Centres or forwarded by other bodies;

- the short duration "S@BER+ Actions", which take the form of capitalizable and certifiable solutions that are targeted at members of the adult population who wish to acquire, develop or reinforce their personal competencies in specific professional or academic areas.

- the "FACE Programme", which is a measure that supports the staff of enterprises in a difficult economic and financial situation and is designed to ensure their professional reconversion inside or outside the company in question, particularly by means of the acquisition of new competencies.

- The "Strategy for Enhancing and Prolonging the Active Life", which is based on a coherent global approach and acts in various domains by means of a range of instruments that are intended: from a preventive perspective, to foster people's sustained participation in the economy throughout their life-paths (by ensuring that they remain in jobs), and to fight the early departure from the job market of people who are currently in employment; and from a corrective perspective, to combat not only unemployment among older workers (especially long and very long-term unemployment), but also the generalised transition to inactivity, and to provide incentives for the reinsertion of active members of the population.

Where this type of group is concerned, it is important to note that we are talking about people who are often not very interested in taking part in vocational training actions. In this context Law no. 99/2003, dated 27 August 2003, which approved the Labour Code, and Law no. 35/2004, dated 29 July 2004, which regulated the Code, are seen as being very important, inasmuch as they oblige employers to provide their employees with a minimum annual number of hours of certified training, which may either be conducted directly by the employer, or be given by an accredited training body. At the same time, inasmuch as such persons are more vulnerable to technological and organisational change, the professional reconversion element takes on a special significance – one that is a determinant factor in a worker's ability to adapt to alterations of this kind, particularly when it comes to the increasingly generalised use of information and communication technologies.

3.2. Existing obstacles and main areas for further progress

Bearing in mind what has been achieved so far, the difficulties that have been experienced and the things that still remain to be done, we can conclude that within the overall framework of the implementation of a national lifelong learning strategy, significant progresses have been made in the following areas in the last five years:

- access to preschool education;

- the organisation and expansion of the system for recognising, validating and certifying adults' non-formal and informal competencies;

- the increased diversity and flexibility of the education and training opportunities that are on offer, particularly in terms of professionally qualifying training;

- the progressive generalisation of the use and integration of ICT in the learning process;

- the increased cooperation between the ministries with responsibility for the education and the employment and vocational training areas;

- the construction of the Network of School Libraries, in articulation with other projects intended to promote reading.

However, despite the fact that 2001 a National Lifelong Learning Strategy has been formulated, the truth is that often the actions which have been undertaken fail to take account of this overall framework of reference, and there is no sufficiently systematic, coherent and integrated approach to the development of the education and training policies based on this point of view, and moreover fail to break with some of the structural problems that are characterised in Section 5.2 below.

At the same time, as we have already said, the alterations in guidelines that have arisen as the result of the political changes which have occurred in Portugal in the last five years have also had some major consequences, particularly as regards the lack of stabilisation and consolidation of the priorities of the national lifelong learning policies.

It would thus appear fundamentally necessary to define a new medium-term framework of reference in this field – one that would be the outcome of a broad-based participatory process in which all the people who intervene in this matter and all the social partners are actively involved, thereby facilitating everyone's shouldering of their specific responsibilities.

The new government's Programme states that the new lifelong learning framework must be based on a set of priorities, such as the definition of objectives (not only in terms of levels of education/training, but also in terms of the profiles that are lacking on the job market), the diversification of learning opportunities, the development of an infrastructure that takes advantage of information technologies, the stimulation of the demand for learning by the people in the street (in their role as workers and citizens), the dissemination of new models for sharing costs between workers, enterprises and public authorities, the improvement of the cooperation between the institutions that promote lifelong learning (thereby facilitating and enhancing the sharing of resources and the promotion of combined education/training solutions) and lastly, the active management of professional reconversion.

4. HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM

The main objectives of the XVII Portuguese Constitutional Government for Higher Education is to qualify the new generations of Portuguese citizens according to the European standards and requirements and ensure an adequate integration in the Bologna Process; to strengthen the evaluation system and to implement an accreditation system; to reinforce the institutional autonomy, while ensuring institutional responsibility through a reliable and modern government system; and to open the Higher Education system to the new layers of society.

Therefore, one of the main challenges is to ensure the development of the Portuguese Higher Education system within the scope of the institutional autonomy, also focusing on promoting the scientific development of the country.

4.1. The Reform of the Higher Education System: The Bologna Process

The main issue of the Bologna Process is to increase consistency and compatibility within the European higher education. This can be achieved by increasing the comparability of degrees across the EU and their international recognition, as well as by promoting the mobility and transparency of the effective improvement on the quality of the degrees. The Bologna Process represents an opportunity for diversification and autonomy for Universities and Polytechnics. However, it does not imply uniformity.

Different measures must be applied to achieve these purposes, namely:

- The adoption of a system of comparative and easily acceptable academic degrees, based on two-cycles (of three-cycles including the doctorate);
- The adoption of an European credit transfer and accumulation system (ECTS - European Credit Transfer System);
- The creation of conditions for all citizens to access lifelong learning programs as well as the development of the role played by higher education institutions within this process;
- The recognition by higher education institutions of training acquired throughout life.

In the curricular organization by credits, a curricular year corresponds approximately to 60 ECTS. Hence, we adopted a first cycle of higher studies, with a varying duration between 3 and 4 years, or equivalently, 6 to 8 semesters, which means a total of credits between 180 and 240 ECTS.

After the approval, by the Portuguese Parliament, of the programme of the XVII Portuguese Government in the end of March 2005, the Council of Ministers approved the proposal of amendment of the Comprehensive Law of the Educative System in 28th April, which regulates the organisation, degrees and diplomas of Higher Education. This amendment was generally approved by the Portuguese Parliament on 12th May 2005. The announcement of the law will be presented in Bergen (Norway) Ministerial Conference in May 2005.

4.2. Attracting more youngsters and adults for Higher Education

A Higher Education diploma is a very important resource in terms of employment, future apprenticeship, and lifetime project. Contrary to what is commonly said, Portugal does not have too many graduates. In fact, there is lack of graduates in all degree levels. Also, Portugal does not have too many students, but a lack of students. In order to attract students and adults to the Higher Education system, the Government assumes the following commitments:

- Do not increase, at constant prices, the tuition fees for the first cycle and to adequate the value of the students tuition fees to the new nature of the second-cycle;
- To introduce funding mechanisms that benefit those students with best scholar performance;
- To admit more working-students, respecting their specific situations and enabling the celebration of contracts with the schools for part-time studies;
- To develop programmes for helping those students who, having finished the secondary school, don't satisfy the minimum requirements for admittance to Higher Education, so that their training trajectory is not interrupted;
- To involve the institutions of higher education in the expansion of post-secondary training, keeping in mind the double perspective of articulation between the secondary and higher education levels as well as the accreditation challenges;
- To substitute the ad-hoc examinations by modern mechanisms of recruitment of adults;
- To foster the offer of Professional re-conversion courses for higher education graduates in areas of low employability;

4.3. Quality Review of the Higher Education System

The programme of the XVII Constitutional Government foresees the reinforcement of the regulator and evaluator role of the State, as well as the autonomy of the institutions. Within the present international context, MCTES will promote an international assessment and quality review of the Portuguese higher education system. The assessment and quality review will include both public and private, university and polytechnic institutions, in an independent, transparent and demanding approach. This exercise will be conducted by international associations and should result in recommendations aimed at supporting the reorganization of the present network of higher education institutions in light of current and future challenges.

The MCTES is already establishing contacts in order to find partners to develop the international evaluation process of higher education system. The overall assessment and quality review of the Portuguese system of higher education, as well as the planning and creation of a national accreditation agency that can ensure the accreditation of the higher education programs offered by the national institutions, should be concluded in Summer 2006.

4.4. Financing of Higher Education

Like in most EU countries, the number of students enrolled in higher education institutions will continue to be the main criteria for the distribution of the public funding among the public higher education institutions. Additional criteria include the number of graduates (measure of output), and the evaluation results (measure of quality). In addition, the state guarantees a minimum of funding through specific contracts. The offer of lifelong learning training and the development of programmes aimed at "new publics"

(or new layers of society) will be one of the main principles to be ensured, namely to those institutions that confront themselves with a reduction of students.

In this context, the Portuguese universities and polytechnic institutes have the guarantee that the transition to a structure in two cycles will not decrease the public funding available, and the value of the student tuition fees of the second cycle will be regulated and adequate for the new nature of this cycle. The model of funding in which the State assumes the main part of the costs with higher education will be, thus, progressively extended to the second cycle of studies, although with differenced values of student tuition fees. These purposes stated in the Programme of Government are integrated in the Comprehensive Law of the Educative System presented in Parliament which foresees: i) To guarantee the inclusion of graduated and master students in the financing formula; ii) To fix equal student tuition fees for the study cycles leading to the degree of master and graduation, in cases for which the access to the exercise of a specific professional activity the duration of training should be superior to eight work curricula semesters, in accordance with the legal norms of the EU; iii) To determine that the student tuition fees for the cycles leading to the degree of master in the remaining cases will be fixed by the institutions of higher education within the context of the rules to be approved by the Government trough a law-decree.

On the other hand, the MCTES decided that it will not fund, from 2009 on, those undergraduate programmes with less than 20 enrolled students. These measures will increase the ability to control the excessive diversification of undergraduate programmes in Portugal.

5. IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

5.1. Main policies and measures

One of the main objectives that guided the restructuring of the Ministry of Education in 2002 was the integration of vocational training into both education and training as a whole. This led to the creation of a new body – the Directorate-General of Vocational Training (DGFV) – the role of which is to act transversally in such a way as to achieve the goals that are set in terms of the lifelong qualification of both young people and adults. There was also a restructuring along these lines at Regional Education Directorate (DRE) level. Schools were given a qualifying training department, which supervises all their professionally qualifying courses (education and training courses; vocational courses; technological courses; technological specialisation courses).

In order to foster a learning culture by attaching value to and enhancing experimental learning, initiatives have been undertaken in relation to systems for recognising, validating and certifying competencies (RVCC) that are acquired in non-formal and informal contexts. To this end the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and its Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP) were responsible for the creation of an RVCC system for professional purposes (RVCC- PRO). Approval was also given to the strategy for implementing this system under an "observation" regime to be pursued until December 2005. This "observation" phase will involve ten Vocational Training Centres that between them cover the whole of mainland Portugal, and ten professional outlets. This system thus complements the academic certification system that already exists under the aegis of the Ministry of Education. In the future it will be coordinated with the school-based RVCC and will then become the single source of services available to

active members of the population who want to promote their own qualification (academic and professional). It will also be offered by other properly accredited public and private bodies – especially learning establishments.

At national level Portugal has implemented a number of measures intended to help make qualifications more transparent. In this respect and in accordance with the principle of linking the qualification and lifelong learning systems, we should particularly note the importance of the *Europass Training* system, which has been operating since 2000 and is now both widely known and increasingly being implemented in Portugal (*see Chapter 6*).

At the same time, in the same context the IEFP has been investing in the improvement, reinforcement and diversification of the services that are provided under the umbrella of the Self-Service Employment via Internet scheme. In 2006, as part of its *"Bolsa IEFP NETemprego"* (IEFP NETjob Exchange), the IEFP expects to create an integrated vocational traineeship exchange in close coordination with the revision of the framework legislation governing the Vocational Traineeship Programme and other related measures. The idea behind this move is to enhance transparency in the job and training markets at both the national and European levels.

When it comes to improving quality, we should also note the National Training Body Accreditation System (SNAEF) and the National Professional Certification System (SNCP), which is the object of a tripartite management.

As we saw in Chapter III, Portugal has a number of measures that are targeted at less qualified groups and persons who are in a disadvantaged situation. In this respect we can also mention the promotion of Adult Education and Training Courses (EFA Courses), which are an integrated opportunity for dual-certification (academic and professional) education and training for adult target groups (aged 18 or over) with low levels of schooling and professional qualifications. In 2004 somewhere between 7,220 and 10,830 (10-15 adults per course) registered for 722 EFA courses.

Recurrent education provides a second learning opportunity for people who, while they did once go to school, for one reason or another did not complete it, and a first opportunity for those who never went. One of the results of this type of education is to attenuate the imbalances between the older and younger age groups. The purpose of recurrent secondary education is to enable students to achieve a certificate of completion of secondary education and, in the case of technological courses, a level 3 professional qualification and/or access to higher education.

At the same time Portugal has been reinforcing its investment in initial training that leads to dual academic and professional qualification for young people – the Apprenticeship System, Education and Training Courses, Vocational Courses, Technological Courses, the Training Clause – all of which is simultaneously designed to raise the Portuguese population's low levels of schooling and professional qualification. There are also complementary courses, which permit people who have completed upper secondary education (ISCED Level 3) to obtain a level 3 qualification, and the technological specialisation courses, which confer a level 4 qualification.

In relation to persons who are unemployed or in danger of becoming so, and particularly those who possess low levels of qualification or qualifications that are unsuited to the needs of the job market, Portugal is continuing to undertake actions intended to support personal, professional and social development. To this end we have developed a strategy for *restructuring qualification referential systems* in such a way as to ensure greater

flexibility in the training opportunities in various areas and to adjust them to both the profile of their potential users and the needs of their potential employers.

Where *foreign populations* are concerned, one outstanding measure is the *PORTUGAL ACOLHE* (Portugal Welcomes) Programme, the objective of which is to facilitate access by the immigrant population living in Portugal to a range of forms of knowledge that are indispensable to ensuring their insertion into Portuguese society in their own right. The training that is given within the scope of this Programme aims at promoting the acquisition by immigrant workers of competencies that they need to achieve social insertion in Portugal – especially into the job market – particularly by giving them training in Basic Portuguese and Citizenship.

It is also worth noting the renewal of the Programme "Escolhas – 2ª Geração" (Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 60/2004, dated 30 April 2004), which has now become an inclusion promotion programme with emphasis on the integration of children and young people from more disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds – especially children and relatives of immigrant families.

Under the heading of measures that are being taken to improve the vocational path's image and attractiveness and its connections to the job market, and to give early warning of needs for competencies and their relationship to the planning of the offer of vocational education and training opportunities, the following warrant a special mention:

- the implementation of the process of revising the secondary education curricula with a view to the construction of a coherent model for technological training, on the basis of coordinated offers of technological and vocational training and the incorporation of lifelong learning, all in order to consolidate a new balance between the offer of general secondary education and that of technological and vocational secondary education in ways that are better suited to the professional fulfilment models;

- the reinforcement of the vocational information, guidance and counselling services in schools, vocational training centres and job centres, such as to make them capable of supporting young people and adults' qualifying vocational choices. Academic and vocational activities and initiatives have been increasingly rendered more dynamic in a coordinated effort by the Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP), the Directorate-General of Vocational Training (DGFV) and the Psychology and Guidance Counselling Services (SPO), among others;

- the consolidation of adult education and training as an integrated system that facilitates generalised, autonomous and permanent access by adults to educational, technological, cultural and professional advancement;

- the use of competency recognition systems to attach greater value to qualifications that have been acquired on the course of a person's professional path;

- the introduction of training in a real working context with both an autonomous curricular plan component and its validation. This training component is assessed by a tripartite jury (school, trade union and business representatives) that is formed especially in order to evaluate the final professional assessment tests;

- the conduct of sectoral studies that include a socio-economic diagnosis, a prospective analysis of each of the sectors in question, an analysis of the way jobs are evolving, identification of the competencies that are needed, a survey and analysis of the training that is on offer for each of the sectors, identification of training needs, clues as to how vocational training should be redirected, and identification of other strategies via which to respond to the needs for competencies;

- the construction per professional field, of sector-based professional competency referential systems designed to support the structuring of training opportunities that match the Portuguese productive fabric's training needs. These systems have covered four sectors of activity and around 78 professional profiles;

- the increase in the offer of continuous training that is to be undertaken within the scope of the Network of Vocational Training Centres (RCFP), which is particularly targeted at the people working in micro and small enterprises; and the ongoing adaptation of training referential systems to the characteristics of their target groups and the sectors and regions in which they work;

- the promotion of training in a working context (continuous worker training), which was reinforced by the issue of the regulations that define some of the details of the Labour Code (Law no. 99/2003, dated 27 August 2003) and aims at promoting the matching of the training that is on offer to labour needs. Thus, in the case of each worker's choice of training, it must either match the work he/she does, or else concern basic qualification in ICT, safety, health and hygiene at work or a foreign language. On top of this, the employer must draw up both annual or multi-year training plans based on a diagnosis of its staff's qualification needs, and an annual report on the way in which the continuous training has been executed;

- the holding of dissemination forums, such as the Student Forum, the "SerPro" initiative and others.

Within the overall context of the measures that have been taken to reduce the barriers between education and training and general education and higher education, we should especially note those concerning horizontal (common socio-cultural and scientific components) and vertical (between cycles) permeability. At the same time the creation of the Technological Specialisation Courses, which require the existence of protocols with higher education institutions, enable their holders to secure the accreditation of some or part of the subjects to part of the curriculum of the Course they have access to, once they have entered higher education. The expansion of secondary level education and training is particularly highlighted in the new government's Programme, especially in the form of the new obligation to offer "(...) *public secondary courses that allow the fulfilment of needs throughout the country, and to make it obligatory to attend education or training up until the age of eighteen, even when a young person is already inserted into the job market*". The Programme also promises a "*diversified recurrent education, thanks to both daytime programmes for young people between the ages of 15 and 18, and after-work programmes for working students, using the tutor system and the latest ICT.*"

Within this framework we should emphasise the recently announced Action Plan for the Promotion of Scientific and Qualified Employment (PAPECQ), which includes a coherent, coordinated set of measures designed to reconvert unemployed holders of an

advanced course in an area that offers a low level of employability, into areas that are oriented towards the current needs of the job market. One of the main measures in this field is the promotion of mobility between the higher education system and society – especially enterprises.

Where teacher and trainer training is concerned, we can point to the new teacher/trainer profile, which demands flexibility and the ability to adapt to change. Training is tremendously important when it comes to both the use of information and communication technologies, and the need to innovate in teaching and learning methods and processes and to adopt diversified assessment practises and instruments that address the various aspects of learning.

The IEFP has created, in the scope of the CNFF, the New Technology Learning Centre (CANT), the purpose of which is to train trainers, teachers and other training professionals and to give them the chance to make technical and pedagogical use of the commonest types of hardware and software, to individually produce simple pedagogical documents for use in their training actions, and to work as a team to produce multimedia documents that may then even be mass-produced for generalised training use (*see Section 3.1*).

In parallel to this, the implementation of a new way of organising and managing secondary education curricula, and the investment in increasing young people's participation in professionalising training opportunities both mean that it is absolutely necessary to privilege the continuous training of vocational training teachers in such a way as to facilitate:

- adherence to the principle of increased curricular flexibility and modular organisation;
- the success of significant learning at the level of both students' integral learning and their successful insertion into the world of work;
- the relationship between learning and the needs of the business fabric, as set against the background of a knowledge-driven economy.

The responsibility for this training has been entrusted to the Directorate-General of Vocational Training (DGFV), acting in cooperation with the Directorate-General of Human Resources in Education (DGRHE), the Consultative Council for Continuous Teacher Training (CCFCP), the School Associations' Training Centres (CFAE) and the Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP).

5.2. Current obstacles and the main areas in which progress is needed in the future

Despite the issues that have already been developed, there are still difficulties and obstacles in terms of the quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training. They include:

- the very low level of adherence to the idea of taking part in education and training activities on the part of the least qualified and oldest target groups;

- the structure of Portugal's enterprises, which is centred on entrepreneurs who are not very mobilised in relation to education and training;

- the limited co-responsibilisation of the different actors;

- the minimal impact that training has on either career progress or people's adaptability to new situations;

- on the one hand the fact that school is not very attractive to young people, and on the other the very limited prestige in terms of social status that families continue to attach to either training courses or certain professions;

- the loss of prestige that the teaching/training profession has suffered in the eyes of society in general;

- insufficient investment in educational and vocational guidance counselling services.

The new government's Programme aims at promoting qualification, amongst other things by recognising and certifying qualifications and competencies that have been acquired over the course of a lifetime, by creating a debureaucratised professional certification, and by promoting access to forms of technological training that lead to highly qualified jobs and facilitate the articulation between those jobs and the pursuit of education at an advanced level.

6. CONSOLIDATING THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

6.1. Increasing mobility by removing obstacles and via active promotion

There is already a vast range of measures and initiatives which, in general terms – and within the overall framework of Portugal's participation in the opportunities offered by the various Community programmes – form a basis for this country's definition and implementation of a true strategy for transnational mobility in the education and training field. This strategy is integrated, coherent and entails not just active promotion, but also the elimination of the various different obstacles we have already identified. The measures concerning the creation of a European higher education area – especially as regards the Bologna Process – that have already been implemented or are in the process of being developed are listed in Chapter 4.

Within the framework of the promotion of the conditions that are needed to ensure both transnational mobility in education and training in general and the essential principle of free circulation within the Community in particular, Portuguese legislation provides for the recognition of studies, diplomas and other qualifications that are undertaken or obtained abroad (Executive Laws nos. 217/97, dated 20 August 1997, and 283/83, dated 21 June 1983). We should also mention Executive Law no. 67/2005, dated 15 March 2005, which regulates recognition by the Portuguese state of academic degrees that are awarded following successful completion of an "*Erasmus Mundus*" Masters Course and the respective academic title, approved following the Decision no. 2317/2003/EC, of the

European Parliament and Council, dated 5 December 2003. In parallel to this there is other legislation that has transposed the Community directives which established general systems for the recognition of professional and specific (sectoral) directives for certain professional areas. We also have the National Professional Certification System (SNCP), the main objectives of which are to enhance workers' worth and increase the quality of both vocational training and jobs by recognising and certifying professional competencies and homologating vocational training courses. Professional certification is intended to facilitate the free circulation of workers within the European Union, promote the transparency of qualifications, make it possible to achieve a better employability match, and orient the offer of training towards the qualifications that are needed.

One highlight of Portugal's participation in Community programmes and initiatives is the issue of the Europass-Training document. It is managed by the National Agency for the Community's Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci Programmes and has been the object of substantial publicity around the country. Notwithstanding the fact that not many people are using it yet, the number of Europass documents in circulation has risen significantly (1,038 were issued between 2001 and the beginning of 2005). The National Europass Centre (CNE) is currently working on the Decision no. 2241/2004/EC, of the European Parliament and Council, dated 15 December 2004, which created a single Community framework for the transparency of qualification and competencies (EUROPASS).

Within the scope of the European Mobility Strategy, the objective of which is to attract researchers to Europe and stimulate their mobility within the European Research Area, Portugal is participating in the European Network of Mobility Centres (ERA-MORE). The Portuguese network comprises 15 Mobility Centres that are scattered all around the country. In this respect, working in close cooperation with the European Mobility Website (http://europa.eu.int/eracareers), Portugal has also created a National Website (www.astrolabium.pt). These sites provide information about grants and scientific jobs in Europe, while the Mobility Centre Network helps researchers and their families obtain accommodation and settle into their new homes.

On the subject of informing citizens about their rights under Regulation (EC) no. 1408/71 and the specific agreements governing social security and medical assistance, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security ensures that Portuguese citizens are aware of the legislative instruments that are in force at any given time, both under the terms of Regulation (EC) no. 1408/71 and under those of any other bilateral or multilateral agreements on social security and medical care that may apply. The European Health Insurance Card was introduced in Portugal as of 28 February 2005.

As to people's preparedness for the use of foreign languages, Executive Law no. 6/2001, dated 18 January 2001, allows schools teaching the 1st cycle of basic education (depending on the resources they have available) to initiate students into a foreign language, with emphasis on oral expression. Learning a foreign language then becomes compulsory in the 2nd cycle and carries on in the 3rd cycle, in such a way as to enable students to gradually master a fluency in the language in question. A second language also becomes compulsory in the 3rd cycle. The XVII Constitutional Government's Programme stipulates that the teaching of English is to become standard as of the 1st cycle of basic education. These measures have been taken in response to the request made by the Barcelona European Council and the provisions of objective 3.3 of the *Work Programme*, and fulfil the requirements of the European indicator for foreign language competencies.

Financial support for linguistic preparation has been made available within the framework of Portugal's participation in the Community's Leonardo da Vinci and

Socrates Programmes (with a gradual increase in Portugal's own contributions). The mobility opportunities that are offered within the framework of these Community programmes are being widely publicised by the National Agency.

6.2.   Consolidating the European dimension of education

In the present framework Portugal's national curricula aim at developing essential competencies and structural forms of learning for life. These include ICT, languages, the development of a culture of integration that respects differences, and learning to learn.

The guidelines laid down in the Framework Law on Preschool Education (Law no. 5/97, dated 10 February 1997) state that the objectives of this form of education include *"promoting children's personal and social development on the basis of experiences of democratic life undertaken from the perspective of pro-citizenship education"*. The Curricular Guidelines for Preschool Education fully and transversally develop the European dimension of education as part of the whole panorama of educational action in the three major areas of know-how (Personal and Social Training, Expression and Communication, and Knowledge of the World).

In harmony with both the guidelines set out in the Basic Law on the Portuguese Education System (Law no. 46/86, dated 14 October 1986) and the curricular reorganisation of basic education embodied in Executive Law no. 6/2001, dated 18 January 2001 (in force since the 2001/2002 academic year), the European dimension is present in the basic education curricula in the form of the introduction of a new transversal curricular component into all three cycles: "Pro-Citizenship Education". The latter's core objective is to help construct students' identity and develop their civic awareness. No single teacher or subject is responsible for this component; rather, it is given by means of a plan that covers the content of every subject and area on the curriculum. The European dimension of learning is addressed as part of the work that teachers and students do in both subject and non-subject areas of the curriculum.

It is also present in the programmes of some of the subjects in the secondary education curriculum. There is a set of subject areas and subjects, the objectives and purposes of which include the development of attitudes and values that lead to both the creation of a European awareness and the appropriation of fundamental values (such as tolerance, solidarity, respect for others and so on). One of the most innovative aspects of the guiding principles behind the product of the latest revision of the secondary curricula (Executive Law no. 74/2004, dated 26 March 2004), which came into force with the current academic year (2004/2005), is precisely the transversality of pro-citizenship education.

On the subject of promoting the quality of education, beyond the appropriation of forms of knowledge organised into subjects, the XVII Constitutional Government's Programme advises that teaching work should concentrate on developing competencies that underpin lifelong learning and on promoting education in favour of values. It is recognised that civic training is among the many responsibilities that fall to today's schools, and that it must include providing knowledge of our democratic institutions, stimulating civic participation, a culture of peace, attaching increased value to the European dimension, individual and group entrepreneurial capability, inter-civilisational and inter-cultural dialogue, and learning to live together.

At the same time we should particularly note Portugal's participation in the Community programmes in the education and training field, which (ever since the pioneering

programmes of the 1980's) have played a fundamental role in developing Community cooperation in general and have helped promote the European dimension of education in particular. The interim assessment of the Socrates Programme showed that out of the Programme's four objectives, the Portuguese participants in the various Actions considered that the reinforcement of the European dimension and the promotion of cooperation and mobility in the education domain were the most important.

We should also mention the activities of the European Clubs – a Portuguese initiative that dates back to 1986 and currently possesses a network of 300 in-country hubs (spread among education and learning establishments from the preschool to secondary levels, right across Portugal), plus those in the 24 countries that form part of the international network. Working on a voluntary basis, they aim at creating and disseminating a true European spirit and to promote the dissemination of information about Europe.

As regards teacher and trainer training, for the purposes of the application of the financing that has been programmed for Action 5.1 (Continuous and Specialised Training in Basic and Secondary education) PRODEP III has stated that support for training with contents that aim at developing pro-citizenship education in all its different guises is a priority in the Programming Complement. One important element of the training of language teachers is the intercultural aspect, which some higher education institutions are now giving in the form of an "Intercultural Studies" subject.

Also at funding level, the main objectives of the Science and Innovation Operational Programme 2010 (POCI 2010) – so-called following the European Commission's approval of the reprogramming of the Science, Technology and Innovation Operational Programme under Decision C (2004) 5706 – are: the coordination and creation of synergies between higher education and the scientific system; and, in operational terms, advanced training, the promotion of innovative forms of learning, the creation of Knowledge Networks, and the modernisation of higher education infrastructures.

Portugal also has postgraduate training in the intercultural field, as well as a whole series of International Relations and European Studies courses at the degree *("licenciatura")*, postgraduate and master's degree levels, and European components in the study plans of a variety of other areas.

In relation to the Bologna Process, Portugal has been moving ahead with putting the Process's guidelines into practise. Legislation regulating the three-cycle system is to be published shortly, and the implementation of this system is expected in 2005/06 or 2006/07 at the latest. The creation of a new curricular credit system and the introduction of the Diploma Supplement, two essential requirements that result from the Bologna Process (Executive Law no. 67/2004, dated 22 February 2004) and the recent generic approval, by the Portuguese Parliament, of the Comprehensive Law of the Educative System, in 12th May 2005, are also worthy of mention.