

AVEPRO

MINUTES
OF THE 4TH BOD MEETING

ROME, MAY 4TH 2012



- 1 Agenda**
- 2 List of Participants**
- 2.1 Approval of the minutes of the last meeting** (Document A)
- 3 Summary of AVEPRO activities, May 2011 – April 2012** (Document B)
- 4 The process of evaluation in Italy, France, Lithuania, Austria and Latvia** (Documents C and D)
- 5 AVEPRO evaluation after the first “five years” of activity, areas for improvement** (Document E)
- 6 Next steps according to the Strategic Plan** (Documents F, G, H, I)
- 7 Any other business and next meeting**



AVEPRO

AVEPRO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AGENDA

May 4th, 9.00 a.m.– 4.00 p.m.

Pontificio Consiglio delle Comunicazioni Sociali, 2nd Floor

Via della Conciliazione 5, Roma

<i>TIME</i>	<i>ACTIVITY</i>	<i>POSITION PAPER</i>
9.30-9.45	Welcome address, Fr. Franco Imoda SJ	
9.45-9.50	Approval of the minutes of last meeting and schedule of the next meeting	A – Minutes of the 3 rd BoD meeting
9.50-10.00	Synthesis of AVEPRO activities May 2011 – April 2012	B - Synthesis of AVEPRO activities
10.00-10.15	Update on the evaluation process in Rome The external evaluation performed in France: a model from organization to follow up	C - Evaluation and Promotion of Quality in the Pontifical Universities and Athenaeums of Rome
10.15–10.30	The evaluation process of in Italy and the case of Austria and Latvia	
10.30–11.00	The processes completed: the cases of France and Lithuania	D - Examples and Form of a Site Visit Report (for web publication)
11.00-11.30	Break	
11.30-12.00	AVEPRO evaluation after the first “five years” of activity, areas to be improved	E – AVEPRO Statutes
12.00-12.30	Considerations about the current strategic plan	F – Strategic plan 2010-12 – updated version, April 2012
12.30-13.00	The link between the two strategic plans: the selection and training procedure for external evaluation experts, e-learning project, suggestion for an online course, 5 minute movie, FAQ, guidelines and grids	G – Briefing notes for external evaluation groups H – Form for external evaluation
13.00-14.30	Lunch	
14.30-14.40	AVEPRO Strategic Plan 2013 - 2014: Presentation	I - Strategic plan 2013-14
14.40-15.00	National Approach	
15.00-15.20	INQAAHE/ENQA Membership	



<i>TIME</i>	<i>ACTIVITY</i>	<i>POSITION PAPER</i>
15.20-15.40	Schedule of the activities for the next two years	
15.40-16.00	Matters arising not covered by the agenda Evaluation of the day Concluding remarks	

2. List of Participants

- Fr. Franco IMODA, SJ, AVEPRO President
- Fr. Friedrich BECHINA, F.S.O., Congregation for Catholic Education
- Prof. Sjur BERGAN
- Prof. Paolo BLASI
- Fr. Philippe CURBELIÉ
- Prof. Jan SADLAK
- Fr. Mario TOMLJANOVIĆ

Absent Members

- Mgr. Piero CODA

Absent Observer

- Mgr. Tymon T. CHMIELECKI, Secretary of State

Fr. Imoda and the Board of Directors welcome Fr. Mario TOMLJANOVIĆ, PhD candidate, who represents students within the Board.

2.1. Approval of the minutes of last meeting

The Board discusses the Document and approves the minutes of the third meeting, held in Rome on 6th May 2011. Moreover, the Board underlines that the quality of the documents is highly appreciated.

3. Summary of AVEPRO activities, May 2011 – April 2012 (Document B)

In the period between the third and the fourth meetings of the Board of Directors (May 2011 – May 2012) the main events and activities carried out by the Agency were:

- Training seminar for external evaluation experts in France
- Organization of external evaluations in France, Austria and one Faculty in Spain
- Meetings with all the Ecclesiastical Faculties located in Italy on QA topics



- Seminar with the Roman Institutes (Pontifical Universities and Athenaeums) on the state of the art of the QA process
- Meetings of the Board of Directors and the Scientific Council
- Meetings with the Congregation for Catholic Education
- Development of the AVEPRO website: translation of the documents into German and Spanish in view of their publication online
- Participation in international events

The Board discusses the Document and points out that:

- The evaluation visits in France produced positive feedback. The quality and sensitivity of the external evaluation commissions was appreciated. It was also highlighted that the evaluations are of enormous help to institutions in their organizational and management processes. These remarks also emerged during the follow-up seminar organized in Paris on 3 February 2012, which was attended by both the external experts and the Deans and Rectors of the French Faculties involved in the site visits
- Concerning the start of the evaluation process in the Italian Faculties it was underlined that they are responsible for the quality of the Higher Institutes of Religious Sciences (HIRS) connected to them; therefore the Faculties' self-evaluation reports should in some way also take this aspect into account. This situation is not new in the academic world (think of the "Branch campus" experience of British universities). For AVEPRO it may be sufficient to highlight the Faculties' responsibility for any institution connected to them in the guidelines.
- The Faculties and Universities based in Rome are proceeding with the collection and analysis of data with which to prepare the SER. An increasing number of requests has been arriving regarding other issues related to the Bologna Process, such as the diploma supplement and National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

Following discussion and comments, the Board approves document B.

4. The process of evaluation in Italy, France, Lithuania, Austria and Latvia (Documents C and D)

In addition to remarks already expressed regarding the evaluation process in France and the progress of the evaluation process in Italy and Rome, the Board examined Documents C and D and made the following observations:

- The size of Ecclesiastical Faculties must be taken into consideration during the evaluation process, as it is rarely comparable to that of state faculties. This implies that certain issues need to be treated with care (especially the "weaknesses" indicated in the SWOT analysis and any that may emerge from the site visit). The publication of an excessively negative self-evaluation report could further weaken a Faculty. The report could be integrated with contextual information regarding the Faculty and/or the country in which it is located.
- It seems appropriate to highlight, almost in contradiction to the point above, that transparency is fundamental to the QA and should be considered to guarantee it. Moreover, the ESG explicitly require the publication of reports. The method adopted by AVEPRO allows institutions to respond to the reports drawn up by external experts, especially in the case of unsatisfactory or unclear elements.



- The issue of the “ownership” of reports cannot be analyzed independently of the question of responsibility for evaluations. In both cases the Agency plays a key role. As this is also the guiding criterion for the publication of reports, there may be cases in which it is not appropriate to send and/or publish the report. The President shall decide what to do, as can be inferred from the Statutes.
- The publication of a report is fundamental to the QA process as it emphasizes both positive aspects and those that can be improved upon: this implies a process of accountability towards the outside world which, in the long term, reinforces the whole of the Holy See’s education system. The reports are also likely to be read by students and teaching staff of other Faculties, generating positive emulation. If the purpose of evaluation is to encourage improvement, the publication of all reports cannot contradict this. The Board suggests that reports always be sent to the Chancellor/Grand Chancellor and that any responses they may have also be published.
- The Board is informed that the two Latvian-based Institutions affiliated to the Pontificia Università Lateranense are subject to visits by their national accreditation agency every 6 years; from the first informal contacts it seems possible to collaborate with the Institutions involved and repeat the experience of the “joint” evaluation that took place in Lithuania in collaboration with the Agency SKVC.
- The Board is informed that the Agency is carrying out evaluations at three Ecclesiastical Faculties in Austria (Wien, Trumau and Heilige Kreuz).
- The external evaluation visits in France will finish in May, with the site visit at the Faculté de Notre Dame – Collèges des Bernardins.

Following discussion and comments, the Board approves documents C and D.

5. AVEPRO evaluation after the first “five years” of activity, areas to be improved (Document E)

The Board discusses the Document and points out that:

- So far the Agency’s Statutes have permitted the effective management of activities. Nonetheless, some changes may be proposed for approval in the future.
- The hypothesis of merging the Board and the Scientific Council into one body may be considered. Two meetings per year were important for the Scientific Council during the initial phase of the Agency’s activities, but one annual meeting may be sufficient in the future. It is suggested that the simple structure of the Statutes be maintained, without creating excessive rules and regulations.

6. Next steps according to the Strategic Plan (Documents F, G, H, I)

The Board discusses several aspects and points out that:

- The documents supporting the preparation of SER are very helpful. They should help the commissions of experts in their work and ensure uniformity. The question of the evaluation of the ecclesiastical dimension of the Faculties remains unanswered, i.e. how to include explicit reference to the Catholic dimension of the institutions in the self-evaluation reports. The identification of specific indicators that would allow the evaluation commissions to assess this



element seems a complex and delicate matter. It is suggested that comments and observations regarding aspects such as the following be included in the SER:

- a) Presence within the Institutions of offices responsible for the recognition of qualifications;
 - b) Governance of affiliations;
 - c) Mobility of teaching staff and students;
 - d) Study grants;
 - e) Students' viewpoints.
- AVEPRO should start considering the possibility of moving outside the European context and becoming the Agency of reference for the Ecclesiastical Faculties of the whole world. Moreover, in future AVEPRO's competences could be expanded to cover Catholic universities. From an organizational viewpoint, the Agency would need to be constituted of two sections: one for the Ecclesiastical Faculties and one for the Catholic Universities. The Congregation for Catholic Education supports this idea.
 - It seems appropriate to begin preparing a Strategic Plan which includes the diffusion of AVEPRO's activities throughout the world. In this context some contacts have already been established with academic institutions in Asia (the Philippines, Taiwan and Korea) and South America (Chile).
 - It is essential to increase communications to publicize the Agency. It is suggested that a brochure be designed, which could be used to inform people about the Agency's activities, and that letters be written to the various Apostolic Nunciatures, as well as the various Episcopal Conferences and national QA agencies in countries in which Ecclesiastical Faculties are based. Contact with the Episcopal Conferences could also involve the identification of a contact person in the various countries, who would assist AVEPRO by relieving the Agency of some organizational/logistic tasks.
 - The "transferability" of the decision of QA agencies is another much debated issue in Europe; this could also refer to AVEPRO activities, in view of the establishment of Regional Branches, which should guarantee forms of continuity (institutional, administrative and decisional) with the Agency in Rome.
 - It is highlighted that the process of joining ENQA may be of use not only to AVEPRO in its activities but also (and above all) to the Ecclesiastical Faculties, which frequently operate within state Universities. It has come to light that the results of evaluations become transferable when the Agency is in some way "recognized" by other stakeholders. In effect, within Europe this happens through membership of ENQA or inclusion in the EQAR register. Of the two options ENQA seems preferable, mainly because this network performs services that are not "market driven". Briefly, the Board's opinion is that AVEPRO should be autonomous but not isolated and it would be desirable for the Holy See to support AVEPRO's application for full membership of ENQA, having evaluated the advantages and disadvantages of this decision together with the Agency and the Congregation for Catholic Education.

Following discussion and comments, the Board approves documents F, G, H and I.

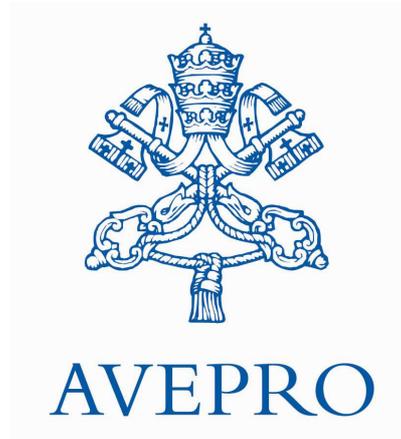
7. Any other business and next meeting

During this Board meeting various issues that came to light during the EHEA Ministerial Conference held in Bucharest on 26 and 27 April 2012 are discussed. In particular, it emerged that in the next decade the European Higher Education Area will increasingly need to become a place of



cooperation. Even though no particularly significant news emerged from the final statement of the conference, it is acknowledged that the current crisis also seems to be affecting the enthusiasm with which the Bologna Process has developed over the last decade. Some aims have been reiterated (e.g. the realization of the National Qualifications Framework), but this will be followed by a complex period of work to standardize regulatory and organizational aspects. Moreover, the final statement mentions the need to review the ESG, although it is presumed that the fundamental principles will remain intact. Much space was dedicated to the issue of mobility, which has not seen the expected increase. Nonetheless, the Bologna Process continues to be very attractive, considering the applications arriving from countries such as Belarus, Tunisia and Israel.

Having covered all matters for discussion the President thanks everyone for their valued cooperation and the next meeting is scheduled for **FRIDAY 3th May 2013**.



MINUTES
OF THE 3RD BOD MEETING

ROME, MAY 6TH 2011



- 1 Agenda**
- 2 List of Participants**
- 2.1 Approval of the minutes of the last meeting** (Document A)
- 3 Summary of AVEPRO activities, September 2010 – May 2011**
(Document B)
- 4 Evaluation of the Ecclesiastical Faculties in France: the main findings
emerging from the site visits, towards a possible model** (Documents C
and D)
- 5 Next steps according to the Strategic Plan: Strategic Plan, Updated
Version – May 2011** (Documents E and F)
- 6 Any other business and next meeting**



AVEPRO BOARD OF DIRECTORS
AGENDA
6th May , 9.00 – 16.00

Pontificio Consiglio delle Comunicazioni Sociali - Meeting Room
Via della Conciliazione 5, Rome, 2nd Floor

<i>TIME</i>	<i>ACTIVITY</i>	<i>PAPER</i>
9.00-9.15	Welcome address, Fr. Franco Imoda SJ	
9.15-9.30	Approval of the minutes of the last meeting	a) Minutes of the first meeting
9.30-10.00	Summary of AVEPRO activities September 2010 – February 2011; key points: the seminar organised by the CEC in October 2010, site visit in Lithuania, activities in France, presentation of the website	b) Summary of AVEPRO activities, September 2010 – May 2011 c) Commissions for site visit evaluation in France
10.00-10.15	A possible model: the first steps realised in France, Fr. P. Curbelié	
10.15-10.30	The main findings emerging from the site visits, Professor. P. Blasi	
10.30-11.00	Open discussion	
11.00-11.15	Coffee Break	
11.15-12.15	Site visit in France - a first summary from an organizational perspective: - Criteria for the external evaluation - Identification of possible experts to involve - The definition of the whole procedure - Open discussion	d) Evaluation Procedures
12.15-12.45	Next steps according to the Strategic Plan: - Definition of key priorities for the near future	e) Strategic Plan, Updated Version - May 2011
13.00-14.15	Lunch	
14.15-14.45	Next steps according to the Strategic Plan: - Applying the French model in another EU country:	f) How and where to start – Quality Assurance and



	the cases of Germany, Poland and Spain; - Internal and external Evaluation of the Pontifical Universities in Rome; - Other ecclesiastical Faculties in Italy	Accreditation Regimes in four EU countries: France, Germany, Poland and Spain
14.45-15.15	Open discussion	
15.15-15.30	Any other business (Confirmation of the date of the next meeting, matters arising not covered by the agenda)	
15.30-15.45	Evaluation of the day	
15.45-16.00	Concluding remarks	

2. List of Participants

- Fr. Franco IMODA, SJ, AVEPRO President
- Fr. Friedrich BECHINA, F.S.O., Congregation for Catholic Education
- Prof. Sjur BERGAN
- Prof. Paolo BLASI
- Fr. Christian BOCK
- Fr. Philippe CURBELIÉ
- Prof. Jan SADLAK

Observers

- Mgr. Tymon T. CHMIELECKI, Secretary of State

Absent Members

- Mgr. Piero CODA

2.1. Approval of the minutes of last meeting

The Council discusses the Document and approves the minutes of the second meeting, held in Rome on 15th September 2010. Moreover, the Council underlines that the quality of the documents is highly appreciated.



3. Summary of AVEPRO activities, September 2010 – May 2011

By way of example, in the period between the second and third meetings of the Board of Directors (September 2010 - May 2011) the main events were:

- ✓ Seminar organized by the CEC (October 2010) with the contribution of various members of the AVEPRO bodies (Mons. Coda and Prof. Paolo Blasi for the Board of Directors). A rich array of “side events” took place, including a meeting with the French Faculties which laid the foundations for the evaluation procedures, and a meeting with Dr. Achim Hopbach, President of ENQA;
- ✓ The realization of external evaluation visits in 12 French Ecclesiastical Faculties;
- ✓ The evaluation visit to the Faculty of Theology of Kaunas in Lithuania;
- ✓ The realization of the prototype website in Italian.

The Council discusses the Document and points out that:

- There is a real possibility that other religious institutions (other than European Ecclesiastical Faculties) may participate in the evaluation process carried out by AVEPRO; this may involve both Higher Institutes of Religious Sciences (HIRS) and Catholic Universities. Moreover, in future the Agency’s work may be in demand beyond the boundaries of Europe. Can AVEPRO manage such a workload? And with which resources?
- In order to deal (at least in part) with this eventuality, it is suggested that the Agency’s website be translated into at least three languages; the website should also contain a link to the database being set up by the Congregation for Catholic Education and some information about the system of ecclesiastic studies.

Following discussion and comments, the Board approves document B.

4. Evaluation of the Ecclesiastical Faculties in France: the main findings emerging from the site visits, towards a possible model. (Documents C and D)

Fr. Curbelié presents the activities carried out in France, highlighting that the evaluation experience was generally viewed positively by the Institutions as elements that effectively characterize the life of the Faculties were brought to light.

The Council discusses the Document and points out that:

- Some positive aspects arose, such as: the welcome received from the Institutions and their participation at all levels; there was an excellent level of understanding between the members of the Commission; the effective situation in the Institutions was accurately described; the Faculties appreciated the professionalism of the experts; a very positive image of AVEPRO emerged;
- Aspects that could be improve upon were underlined, including: the scheduling of visits and writing of reports allowed too little time for preparation and were too close together; the exceptional speed at which the procedure was carried out can only be managed once by both faculties and experts; the “ecclesiastical dimension” of the Faculties should be taken into greater consideration and respected in relation to both self-evaluation and the external visits;
- Some “open questions” were mentioned, namely: whether it is appropriate to recompense the experts (not necessarily financially; if so, what would be the most appropriate way to do so); it seems necessary not only to limit the length of the self-evaluation reports but also that of the



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annexes, in order to avoid situations in which Institutions include documents of over 500 pages; the self-evaluation report should be divided into two parts - one for the dean and one for the rector - as some issues are beyond the competence of the dean and directly concern the rector;

- The training of experts is a particularly sensitive issue; it would be preferable to offer guidelines which do not allow a broad margin of interpretation by members of the Commission; in this context a two day seminar could be arranged, involving a group session and a smaller group session, according to linguistic and contextual requirements. From a financial viewpoint, support could be requested from the Episcopal Conferences;
- A meeting could be scheduled with the Institutions' Chancellor/Grand Chancellor to present the results of the evaluation process and discuss the ecclesiastical dimension of the Faculties;
- The involvement of students during the evaluation visits was both essential and satisfactory;
- It is important to remember that the aim of the evaluations is to ascertain to what extent the Faculties meet their purpose (*their "Fitness for Purpose"*); therefore the experts have the task of clarifying whether or not there are aspects that diverge from this purpose, as specified, for example, in the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana*. The Commission will point out any problems, then the competent body (the Congregation for Catholic Education) will arrange specific actions if appropriate. In this context it is necessary to clarify the relationship between the evaluation performed by AVEPRO and the use that the Congregation for Catholic Education makes of it;
- It is pointed out that one of the purposes of the Congregation for Catholic Education's Handbook "*La cultura della Qualità, guida per le Facoltà ecclesiastiche*" (*The culture of Quality; a guide for Ecclesiastical Faculties*) is to support Institutions in defining their purposes and suggest ways of creating the right conditions for the improvement of quality, also in ecclesiastical terms;
- The question of the transmission and publication of reports is analysed: it seems appropriate to send the reports to both rectors and deans, while it may be more appropriate to publish only a sort of executive summary on the website, giving the possibility for anyone interested to request the whole evaluation report from the Agency;
- In terms of the transferability of the model, it has become clear that the presence of a national coordinator facilitates the realization of visits;
- In general, although the experience to date has been positive from an organizational viewpoint, a procedure for appeals should be provided for in case a Faculty or Institution is dissatisfied with the results of its evaluation. Various possibilities should be provided for, including appeal before the report is published, e.g. leaving 30 days between the report being sent to the rector/dean and its publication on the website, or allowing for appeal only after publication. As mentioned previously, one possible solution would be to publish only an executive summary containing a synthesis of the report and the main recommendations on the website; based on the opinion of the Board of Directors the decision is made to continue publishing the reports, albeit in summary form.

Following discussion and comments, the Board approves documents C and D.

5. Next steps according to the Strategic Plan: Strategic Plan, Updated Version – May 2011, (Documents E and F)

The Council discusses the Document and points out that:



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- Poland could be the next country in which to launch the evaluation procedure, considering the high concentration of Ecclesiastical Faculties there; the model adopted in France could mostly be reused, with the identification of a national coordinator and the realization of a training seminar; it will be essential to create a good relationship with the national evaluation and accreditation agency, PKA;
- The Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education, Cardinal Grocholewski, will be visiting Poland in June 2011; this may be an opportunity to start contacting the various institutional actors involved in the evaluation process in various ways;
- The cycle of evaluation in France includes a seminar in February 2012 which will again involve the experts who participated in the external evaluation visits;
- Training for experts (another subject included in the Agency's Strategic Plan) could be organized with the involvement of the national coordinator in a three-day seminar in Rome which, essentially, should be structured so that the first day is mainly dedicated to the training of experts to involve in evaluation visits, the second day to studying specific issues related to individual geographic contexts and the third day dedicated to the training of national coordinators;
- The evaluation activities taking place in Italy and Rome include a refresher seminar to be held in collaboration with CRUPR in September 2011; a collaboration has also been established with the Italian Episcopal Conference to proceed with the evaluation of the other Faculties of Theology in Italy.

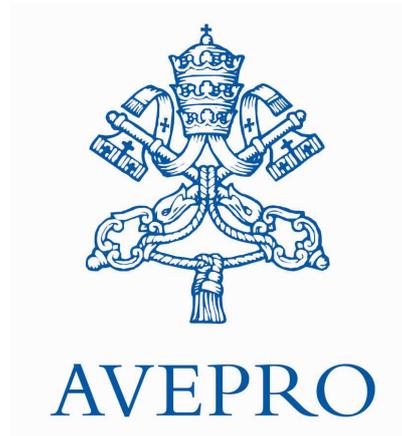
Following discussion and comments, the Board approves documents E and F.

6. Any other business and next meeting

The Council discusses several aspects and points out that:

- The possibility of involving Higher Institutes of Religious Sciences (HIRS) in the evaluation of Italian Ecclesiastical Faculties, could lead to an excessive workload for the Agency;
- The Board is informed that the two Latvian-based Institutions affiliated to the Pontificia Università Lateranense are subject to visits by the national accreditation agency every 6 years; from the first informal contacts it seems possible to collaborate with the Institutions involved and repeat the experience of the "joint" evaluation which has already taken place in Lithuania in collaboration with the Agency SKVC;
- The Board is informed about the regulations in force in Austria concerning Quality Assurance; it is underlined that evaluation is the competence of the individual universities, which decide on schedules and procedures. It is presumed that it will be possible to come to an agreement with the 9 Ecclesiastical Faculties present in Austria for the purpose of harmonizing the methods of evaluation, in line with the standards suggested by AVEPRO.

The next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday 4th May 2012.**



MINUTES
OF THE 2ND BOD MEETING
ROME, SEPTEMBER 15TH 2010



- 1 Agenda**
- 2 List of Participants**
- 2.1 Approval of the minutes of last meeting**
- 3 Terms of reference, Document A**
- 4 Institutional context and resulting scope of AVEPRO activities, QA in Ecclesiastical Institutions in Europe, Document B**
- 5 List of Institutions, Document C**
- 6 General principles for External Review, Document G**
- 6.1 External Review: Format of Institutional Self Evaluation Report (SER), Document H**
- 6.2 External Review for small Faculties, Document I**
- 7 AVEPRO Strategic Plan, Document J**
- 8 Relationship between national QA Agencies and AVEPRO, Document N**
- 9 Regional sub-components of the Agency: Regional Branches, Document K**
- 10 Costs of an External Review, Document L**
- 11 Staffing and resources, Staff Policy, Document M**
- 12 Next meeting**



**AVEPRO BOARD OF DIRECTORS
AGENDA**
September the 15th , 9,00 am– 5,30 pm

Pontificio Consiglio della Cultura (Morning Session) 3rd Floor
AVEPRO offices (Afternoon Session)
Via della Conciliazione 5, Roma

TIME	ACTIVITY	POSITION PAPER
9,00-9,15	Welcome address, Fr. Franco Imoda SJ	
9,15- 9,30	Approval of the minutes of last meeting	
9, 30-10,00	Matters arising not covered by the agenda (Verbal report of the Scientific Council first meeting, Pilot Project outcomes, Internal evaluation developed by the Pontifical Universities)	
10,00-10,30	Terms of Reference Fr. Franco Imoda SJ	a) Terms of Reference
10,30-10,45	Schedule of Next meeting	
10,45-11,15	Institutional context and resulting scope of AVEPRO Activities, R. Cinquegrani	b) QA in Ecclesiastical Institution in Europe c) List of Institution
11,15-11,30	Coffee Break	
11,30-12,00	External Review in Ecclesiastical Higher Education Institutions: methodological framework and open questions (experts, fees and financing) Fr. Imoda SJ	g) General principles on external review i) External Review for small Faculties
12,00-13,00	AVEPRO Strategic Plan: - Relationship between National QA Agencies and AVEPRO - ENQA Membership - Languages of work	j) Strategic Plan n) Relationship between National QA Agencies and AVEPRO
13,00-14,00	Lunch	
14,00-14,30	AVEPRO Strategic Plan: Regional sub component of the Agency	k) Regional Branches
14,30-15,00	Staffing and Resources	m) Staff Policy
15,00-16,00	Fees and Financing	l) Cost of an external Review
16,00-16,30	Evaluation of the day	
16,30	Conclusive remarks	



2. List of Participants

- Fr. Franco IMODA, SJ, AVEPRO President
- Fr. Friedrich BECHINA, F.S.O., Congregation for Catholic Education
- Prof. Sjur BERGAN
- Prof. Paolo BLASI
- Fr. Christian BOCK
- Fr. Philippe CURBELIE
- Prof. Jan SADLAK

Absent Members

- Msg. Piero CODA
- Mgr. Tymon T. CHMIELECKI, Secretary of State

Observers

Invited by the President

- Don MAQUILLAN

2.1. Approval of the minutes of last meeting

The Council approves the minutes of the first meeting held in Rome in November the 26th 2009.

3. Terms of reference, Document A

The Council discusses the Document and points out that:

- The “representative of the students” should be intended as representative of students coming from Ecclesiastical Faculties;
- The expression “public relation” should be changed into “external communication”;

The Council suggests the following amendments:

- The director participates in the meetings without the right to vote and he is responsible for keeping the minutes of the meeting rather than “as minute taker”.

Following discussion and the indication of the suggested amendments the Council approves Document A.

4. Institutional context and resulting scope of AVEPRO activities, QA in Ecclesiastical Institutions in Europe, Document B

The Council discusses the Document and points out that:

- the quality of the document is highly appreciated;



- concerning Poland there is a distinction between accreditation (managed by a State Commission, valid from a legal point of view) and QA;

The Council accepts the observations and the amendments made by the Scientific Council during the meeting of September the 10th 2010, in particular:

- the links and the “border” between QA exercises and Accreditation exercises is not always clear and precisely defined. This implies the possibility of identifying a sort of bridge between QA and Accreditation;
- Germany has started the accreditation procedure for five Ecclesiastical Faculties, thanks to AKAST;
- in order to respect local sensitivity it may be useful to ask Faculties if they intend to be functionally related to a particular “Regional Branch”.
- The Council discussed the possibility of using English and Italian as working languages, and agreed on the fact that the final report needed to be also in English;

Following discussion and the indication of the suggested amendments the Council approves Document B.

5. List of Institutions, Document C

The Council discusses the Document and points out that:

- there is a Faculty (Lviv) in Ukraine which, at the moment, should not be included in the list.

The Council approves Document C.

6. General principles for External Review, Document G

The Council discusses the Document and points out that:

- a fundamental principle is the distinction between *internal evaluation* (concerning the responsibility of the Institutions) and *external evaluation* (entrusted to the relevant competent Agencies). The external evaluation should not be seen as a “control” but as a service, which will help the Institutions to improve their policy concerning a culture of quality. The result of both steps of the evaluation should be a “*strategic plan*”. The Bologna Process did not invent the QA but tries to harmonize it into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA);
- in general terms, and in particular for smaller Faculties, the weight of procedures should be minimized;
- AVEPRO is not allowed to oblige Faculties to undertake an evaluation procedure;
- Faculty should not perceive the site visit as an inspection and it should be underlined that the aim of evaluation is to support the Institution in a process of quality improvement;
- ENQA full membership will be a crucial point for AVEPRO development;
- transparency should be considered one of the most important criteria in conducting the external review;
- according to ENQA requirements, the external evaluation report must be published;
- in the future, Institutions should have internal and external QA procedures and Strategic Plans;
- a cycle of external evaluation every 5 years seems too frequent; in some European countries evaluations take place every 8 years. AVEPRO’S schedule should respect the variety of national and regional specificities;



- external evaluation will stimulate a culture of strategic planning and quality within Institutions and will foster a management culture;
- AVEPRO will have a training role especially concerning experts involved in external evaluation;
- the procedures of evaluation as a whole, especially external evaluations, should be perceived as an obligation. The Congregation for Catholic Education will be the institution with the authority to require Faculties to implement QA procedures;
- the procedures for external evaluation must be considered crucial to satisfying the ENQA standards and guidelines;
- Some members suggest that the report should be published when approved by a governing body of the Faculty;
- There must be a legal provision delivered by the CEC in order to publish the final report;
- The final version of the report should be in English: the translation will be realised by the Faculties;

The Council suggests the following amendment:

- Page 11: “The Congregation reserves the right to take remedial action, if necessary, as a result of issues identified in the institutional review reports and strategic plan”.

Following discussion and the indication of the suggested amendments the Council approves Document G.

6.1 External Review for small Faculties, Document I

The Council discusses the Document and does not suggest any amendments.

Following discussion the Council approves Document

7. AVEPRO Strategic Plan, Document J

The Council discusses the Document and points out that:

- The strategic plan contains also “operational” aspects; it could be useful to deliver a five years strategic plan and a two years operational plan;
- The strategic plan presents 5 key priorities:
 - a) define the structure of AVEPRO
 - b) support the development of internal QA within the Ecclesiastical Institutions
 - c) develop systems of external QA for the Ecclesiastical Institutions
 - d) develop its governance and organization processes
 - e) devise a communications and public relations plan
- these priorities seem too ambitious for a 2-year strategic plan; it may be useful to concentrate resources on only one or two of them;
- considering the present structure of the office, the strategic plan should be revised and reduced;

Following discussion the Council approves Document J.



8. Relationship between national QA Agencies and AVEPRO, Document N

The Council discusses the Document and points out that:

- the relationships with national QA agencies will represent a turning point for AVEPRO activities over the next few years;
- the hypothesis of becoming a full member of ENQA has to be intended as an important opportunity;

The Council suggests the following amendment:

- Page 4: “AVEPRO will undertake, within the next 12 months, a series of systematic national dialogues to explore these possibilities in each setting, together with the relevant bishops’ conferences, Institutions and organizations of Institutions”.

Following discussion the Council approves Document N.

9. Regional sub-components of the Agency: Regional Branches, Document K

The Council discusses the Document and points out that:

- considering the number of Ecclesiastical Faculties in Europe, it will probably be necessary to establish Regional Branches of AVEPRO;
- Regional Branches will not be independent bodies, it will be necessary to maintain “unity respecting diversity”;
- Regional Branches could be intended in the future as a sort of “benchmarking club”;
- a first step in the organization and structuring of regional branches should be the identification of a contact/liaison person;

Following discussion the Council approves Document K.

10. Costs of an External Review, Document L

The Council discusses the Document and points out that:

- Faculties should cover the operating costs of external evaluations;
- The Agency should provide a lump sum in order to reward the Rapporteur;
- The other members of the commission will not received any payment;
- The agency should identify another type of reward (a medal, a sort of “diploma”) in order to thank tangibly the experts;
- it may be useful to apply to Bishops’ Conferences and private foundations for financial support;
- it is suggested to pay around 1.000 Euro per Report; the Agency will explore this possibility together with the CEC;
- concerning the appointment of experts for external evaluations, it is recommended that each expert be asked to perform an evaluation only once or twice per year.

Following discussion the Council approves Document L.



11. Staffing and resources, Staff Policy, Document M

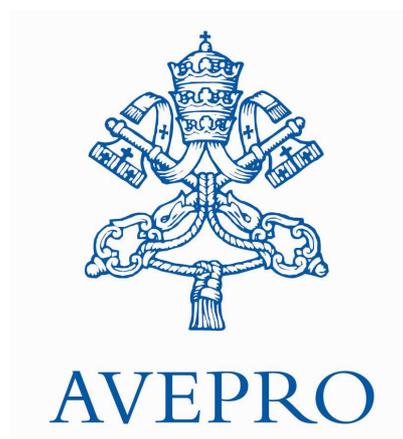
The Council discusses the Document and points out that:

- the current staff of the Agency seems to be not sufficient to cover the priorities indicated in the Strategic Plan;
- personnel suggested: a small central office (3/4 employees) and a large pool of external experts; this group will also provide strong links with Academic Institutions;
- it may be useful to ask Bishops' Conferences and private foundations for financial support.

Following discussion the Council approves Document M

12. Next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday 6th of May 2011.



MINUTES
OF THE 1ST BOD MEETING
ROME, NOVEMBER 26TH 2009



This document consists of two parts:

- Summary and Action Plan p.1-2
- Minutes of the meeting p.3-8

SUMMARY AND ACTION PLAN

This summary focuses on the immediate actions and objectives resulting from the meeting. A more developed account of the meeting itself is given in the minutes.

- **Scientific Committee:** Board members are invited to express their further opinions via email by December 21, after which the President will send the request for official appointment to the Secretariat of State. The President has taken the observations of the Board into consideration in the choice of 2 new members who are theologians and from other linguistic areas (Polish and Portuguese). The curricula of the new proposed members will be sent to the Board. The representative of students will be chosen with the help of the Conference of Students of the Roman Pontifical Universities.

- **Regulations:** The Board members are invited to indicate areas in which they consider these regulations will be needed. A number of possible items have emerged during the meeting: more accurate definition of who composes the teams of experts for external reviews, modalities for the publication of reports, work and relations with local branches, appointment of staff and volunteers, languages, reporting on PRG visits. A first draft will be prepared by the President and the office for the next meeting.

- **Terms of reference:** the President will determine terms of reference for each of the two Boards with the help of the Board of Directors and AVEPRO current advisers. They will be prepared for the next Board meeting.

- **AVEPRO staffing:** a job description will be prepared by the President and the office concerning the new person who can be employed on a yearly contract. A list of tasks which could be entrusted to volunteers will also be prepared. Modalities will have to be defined on the choice of persons who will act as contact persons for local branches. It will be helpful to be able to rely on skilled team coordinators for the visits and PRG reports. Some guidelines on specific matters (research degrees, strategic planning, student questionnaires, exploitation of credit systems) could be prepared by external advisers. Some help could be received for the reading and treatment of reports (identifying trends, common difficulties and challenges, good practices,...).

- **Strategic plan:** the President and AVEPRO office will update the current strategic plan, with help from AVEPRO advisers.

- **Pilot Project:** the institutions who took part in the Pilot Project can be very helpful in seminars or training workshops. A synthesis on the experience would be interesting but it is unlikely there will be time to write more than the already existing two-page report.

- **Roman Pontifical Faculties:** the AVEPRO office will organise a training seminar for them on internal Quality Assurance with the help of AVEPRO advisers and those who participated in the Pilot Project. The Dean who coordinates the various faculties of theology will be contacted by Fr Imoda on the choice of a date for the seminar.



- **External reviews:** the AVEPRO office will present a plan for the cycle of institutional reviews. It will consider, together with the Congregation for Catholic Education and the Secretariat of State, the appropriateness of regional branches undertaking small institute evaluations.
- **Experts:** the members of the Board are invited to suggest names of possible experts from various locations, subjects and languages.
- **Fees and financing of visits:** the issue still needs to be studied. The AVEPRO office will prepare a proposal based upon estimated expenditures for the next meeting.
- **Local branches:** the modalities for their setting up will have to be defined, contacts will have to be made with Bishops' Conferences and national agencies.
- **Letter to institutions:** the draft will be modified by the President and the Director following the observations from the Board. It will then be sent to the Board for final advice. This letter will be the means of conveying motivation and also of placing the initiative in a wider context linked with the cultural and spiritual mission of the Church. This letter could be sent in January. The convenience of sending it via electronic or postal mail will be examined.

Suggestions and advice are welcome on all topics, ...!

Next meeting of the Board: Monday 12 April, 2010 at 10.00.



MINUTES OF THE MEETING

AVEPRO's Board of Directors, officially appointed by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI on September 30, 2009, had their first meeting on Thursday November 26 at AVEPRO offices in Rome. The meeting started at 15:00 and ended at 18:00. It was presided by Father Franco Imoda S.J., President of the Agency. The following members of the Board participated:

- Prof. Paolo BLASI, former Rector of the University of Florence
- Mons. Piero CODA, President of the Italian Theological Society
- P. Philippe CURBELIÉ, Dean of the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic Institute of Toulouse
- Dott. Jan SADLAK, Vicerektor for International Cooperation at the School of Social Psychology and Human Sciences of Warsaw (SWPS), and President of the International Observatory on Ranking and Academic Excellence (IREG)
- Fr Friedrich BECHINA, F.S.O., Officer at the University Department of the Congregation for Catholic Education
- Annick JOHNSON, M. Id., Director of the Agency

Prof. Sjur BERGAN, Head of the Department of Higher Education and History Teaching at the Council of Europe, could not be present because of an unexpected, heavy flu, neither could Christian BOCK, the still unofficially appointed representative of students, because of another commitment taken before.

Prof. John DAVIES, ^{internationally recognised QA expert} and AVEPRO adviser since the start, as well as Mons. Tymon Tytus CHMIELECKI, Councillor at the Second Section of the Secreteriat of State, were invited by the President as observers.

His Eminence Card. Zenon GROCHOLEWSKI, Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education, and Mons. Vincenzo ZANI, Undersecretary of the same Congregation, came to greet the newly-appointed Board and attended the first part of the meeting.

1.- Welcome and introductions

In his opening words Fr Imoda expressed warm thanks to His Eminence Card. Grocholewski and Mons. Zani for their presence, representing the Congregation who made AVEPRO come into existence.

Cardinal Grocholewski greeted the members of the Board, wishing them to be a council of wise men in the Biblical tradition, for a world in great need of thought, and of a close relation between faith and reason, as Pope Benedict XVI often brings out. He underlined the great qualities of each member of the Board, well recognised in their professional work and former service of the Church. He assured them of his prayer and blessing.

Mons. Chmielecki then expressed best wishes to the Board on behalf of the Secreteriat of State, opening a perspective on future activities of AVEPRO around the world in keeping with the



international character of the Catholic Church, with an Agency which therefore is bound to be more international than any. He also alluded to the demands of being confronted with many academic systems.

After these opening words, Father Imoda invited each participant to introduce himself, after which he offered a rapid survey of the whole agenda before then going through it according to the planned order.

2.- Context and setting up of AVEPRO

2.1 The Holy See's entrance into the Bologna Process in 2003 was one important factor for the creation of AVEPRO in September 2007, with the support of the Congregation for Catholic Education. The statutes were prepared in collaboration, and officially approved in February 2009. The initial Agency is composed of the President, a Director and a Secretary. A request was presented for additional staff. Initial activities have included: a Pilot Project with 8 faculties and participation in international encounters on Quality Assurance.

2.2 A chart and list of ecclesiastical institutions was presented. There are around 180 ecclesiastical faculties in Europe (260 in the world, themselves part of the 1860 institutions of higher education of the Catholic Church). From the point of view of the Agency's work, the most delicate case is that of the ecclesiastical faculties inserted in a state university, who should be evaluated by AVEPRO but often also need accreditation from the state, who finances them.

2.3 Prof. John Davies cited a number of characteristics which can be made out in the ecclesiastic system of higher education:

- diversity (size, typology, national context,...)
- usually little experience in Quality Assurance and strategic planning, and a low capacity for self-criticism
- existence of disciplines which are not traditionally ecclesiastical, raising the question of the recognition of their diplomas.

AVEPRO's work is improvement-oriented and not so much concerned with accreditation.

Dr Sadlak observed that even if there is no final accreditation, it is however essential for the success of AVEPRO to mobilise institutions by offering them the motivations which should lead them to undertake the effort towards improvement. The process should not be perceived as a mere order from above. He also referred to certain institutions which would like to be included in the process of evaluation by AVEPRO in order to receive some kind of recognition but will not be because they are not ecclesiastical faculties.

The various approaches to Quality Assurance were mentioned: fitness for purpose is that which will be favoured by AVEPRO. Benchmarking will also be a stimulating element, for example taking into consideration examples of good practice for PhDs in various contexts (time for completion,...).

2.4 AVEPRO is currently Associate of ENQA, and does not yet fulfil the requirements to be full member. It will be able to apply only after at least two years of external quality assurance activities whereas up to the present it has been working only at setting up internal quality assurance processes within institutions. The Board confirmed the importance of seeking ENQA registration, as soon as



the criteria had been addressed. Indeed, this membership means recognition, technical support from ENQA, possibility to be inscribed on the Register of Quality Assurance Agencies. The quality of national institutions is guaranteed if the national agency is approved by ENQA, and it also implies institutions from other countries are allowed to ask being reviewed by it. This membership would therefore make the AVEPRO reviews in various countries much more easily accepted.

3.- Regulations

The Regulations will come as a complement to the Statute. They will have to be approved by the President with the favourable opinion of the Board of Directors and previous consultation with the Congregation for Catholic Education. They will also be transmitted to the Secreteriat of State. The unanimous advice was that the regulations should be written starting from the Agency's daily experience, therefore after a little time has passed.

4.- Board of Directors

The cycle of meetings planned in the statute is "at least once a year". Everyone agreed for a second meeting in the spring of 2010 and the appointment was made for Monday 12 April at 10.00.

5.- Scientific Committee

Prof. Davies, as one of the proposed members for the Scientific Committee, left the room when the exchange on that issue took place.

Dr Sadlak commented that the Committee was too western and that some language groups (Slavonic, Portuguese) were missing.

Fr Imoda explained the need to start with a more restricted committee, which will be increased later on, so that it might not lose all its members in the same year.

Fr Bechina observed that there should be more members, at least half the total number, coming from the ecclesiastical world and knowing the system from the inside so that the work of the Committee on peer reviews might be more credible. He added that such people from various countries can be found in Rome, which makes regular work with them easier.

In response, Prof. Blasi underlined that the quality process was not an examination of the content of the disciplines taught (in his own case, physics) and that therefore it was not so important to have theologians –though at least one is necessary indeed– but more to have persons who are competent in the field of Quality Assurance. The statute refers to members being competent in quality promotion and representative of the geographical diversity of the Church.

The question of the relationship between form and content was taken up by Fr Curbelié, who asked whether you could actually evaluate the form without any regard to content.

Prof. Blasi mentioned his experience in state universities with various disciplines and the various indicators used in reviews (course attendance, time for completion of studies, funds for research,...), which do not include any evaluation of the contents of these disciplines.

Other members agreed that at least one theologian was needed but half the members would be too many. This could be one item for the Regulations.



Fr Bechina supported his own point of view recalling the fitness for purpose objective in the education for ecclesiastical professions and the service of the Church.

Prof. Blasi observed that the members by right should also be taken into account. Actually the three of them are theologians although two come as representatives of Catholic Universities. The representative of students has not been chosen yet.

Fr Imoda concluded saying he received the suggestions: need to have someone from inside the system, representatives from other geographical areas, also recording the need not to enlarge the Committee too much from the very start.

All were invited to communicate their comments on single proposed members as soon as possible via email.

A number of questions were then raised and Prof. Davies was invited to join the meeting again:

- Germany:

Germany would be represented in the Committee through the person of Prof. Peter Jonkers, Dutch member of the accreditation commission of AKAST, the Church accreditation agency promoted by the Bishops' Conference and having official recognition from the German state.

- Internal evaluation reports: who are they sent to?

The guidelines cite: AVEPRO, the Congregation, the institutions' Great Chancellors.

- Attributions: some formulations in the statute seem too vague when the subject is AVEPRO, for example for the composition of the groups of experts (art. 11.3): who is meant by AVEPRO? the President? the Scientific Committee?

Fr Bechina pointed out that the answer can be found in the statute, which stipulates that the President is helped by the Committee and can ask for their advice on single reviews. This is why it is certainly important to have a nucleus of the Committee in Rome, so that they can more easily be called upon to come and help with the work of preparing but also evaluating external reviews.

- Finality of the process: apart from the intrinsic interest of self-improvement what other elements of attractiveness and recognition could be added with the final result of the evaluation?

Fr Imoda explained that a follow up is needed after evaluations, and also that the report will be sent to the Congregation, who has the authority to intervene if recommendations made in the reports have been ignored by institutions. Fr Bechina also recalled that the results of evaluation will be published and this too is an incentive.

- Reports for publication: the French model (AERES) could be followed, according to which the reports prepared by experts are approved by the Board of Directors before they are published. Modalities should also be given by the Scientific Committee on the length of the reports and other aspects, to achieve some kind of unity and comparability.

Mons. Coda brought out another kind of incentive for ecclesiastical institutions, which is that of the Christian cultural tradition they can offer to the academic community of our day, with an approach to quality which has an anthropological, ethical and spiritual dimension. This should also be born in mind in the training seminars for experts. Moreover, the quality process is of help for the university as a community and for its governance.

Experts will respect the mission the institutions give themselves in their statutes, although they can also comment upon it, when for example it can really seem to be out of date.



Fr Imoda concluded that part of the meeting on the Scientific Committee saying its role would have to be clarified and hoping both committees might be together at the next April meeting.

6.- AVEPRO office

Fr Imoda briefly commented on the small number of staff to face the work to come and announced that one more person had been granted by the Vatican central administration, on a renewable yearly contract.

7.- Strategic Plan

The strategic plan presented to the Board this time will be updated for the next meeting. Hopefully the new person and some volunteers will have been appointed by then.

A few points were clarified:

- Strategic plan 2.2.2 on Quality Officers in institutions: the Congregation announced in a Circular Letter that such a function was necessary. The name will have to be in the data base. It will often be the Dean or Vice Dean. The Roman Pontifical Universities have started appointing these Quality Officers.

- Strategic plan 2.5 on follow up of the Pilot Project: the Pilot Project is now past. The follow up was offered as optional in the Pilot Project. Two institutions, Burgos and Auxilium (Roma), have actually sent their action plan. Palermo was also willing for the follow up but maybe the change of Dean has not favoured their actually sending an action plan. Frankfurt have preferred to wait for one year and Polish institutions have not responded. A synthesis on the experience would be interesting and these institutions should not be forgotten in future.

- Strategic plan 3. on external quality assurance:

A calendar of reviews will have to be established. Many institutions do not seem to be ready yet for external evaluations. However, AVEPRO could accelerate the rhythm with those who are in fact ready. AVEPRO office could present a plan for the cycle of institutional reviews, also taking account of regional branches undertaking small institute evaluations.

Generally speaking it will be better to start with the most convinced and less problematic institutions, so that positive information is transmitted and other institutions also wish to enter the process.

The issue of the total number of institutions is a real challenge: a five-year cycle implies doing more than 35 visits a year, too much even though many of these institutions are small.

The issue of fees is still unsolved. There are two possibilities: a fixed fee or the institution paying the expenses of the visit (Italian model). Some social balance needs to be achieved between richer and poorer institutions. The Board affirmed the necessity of setting fee structures at the next meeting. The AVEPRO office should present proposals.

The 19 Pontifical faculties in Rome have contacted Fr Imoda to know what they are expected to do. Prof. Davies suggested starting with a seminar for them in addition to the written documentation which can be sent, and another seminar after one year.

- Strategic plan 1.4 on national branches:



Prof. Davies offered it as a possible response to the great number of institutions to be reviewed. AVEPRO in Rome could review the bigger ones. The smaller ones could be reviewed with the help of local branches set up in agreement with Bishops' Conferences. There would be some person for each local branch in charge of maintaining the link with AVEPRO Rome and training seminars would be organised to maintain unity. In front of ENQA there must be one Agency. Cf. AKAST in Germany, which however acts only as an accreditation body. This same case of an urgent need for accreditation will be found in other countries. This issue of national branches will be re-examined in the April meeting.

8.- Draft letter to all institutions

Several comments were made to improve the draft of this first letter to all institutions:

- the draft is too technical. As a first letter it should be introduced in a very positive way, insisting on the common effort for promotion and the opportunities given by the process. There should be at least one or two paragraphs in which the President gives a strong cultural and spiritual perspective, rooted in the Christian notion of *universitas* as contributing to rebuilding the unity of knowledge and harmonious dialogue between faith and reason (cf. the Pope's Regensburg speech).
- concrete details also have their importance for institutions are waiting for them (three notes of guidance will be included with the letter)
- again the question of the motivation was raised. The institutions should be helped to understand to what aim they should start the process. (note: The Briefing Note has one part on the "Value of the Process", p.7).
- reference could be made to the meeting of the Board of Directors.

9.- Priority items

- Web site: We should bear in mind that it will not be watched only by ecclesiastics but also by other people. Automatic functions on the web site could help to save time (ready made emails for experts for instance).
- Experts: The members of the Board were invited to suggest names of possible experts from various locations, subjects and languages to cover the great diversity of ecclesiastical institutions.
- Language issue: The self-evaluation can be made in the language of the country, but for the external review it will be more difficult to find people all speaking the language of the country in which the review takes place. One could decide to choose each time between the 6 official languages of the Holy See: Italian, English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese.

The meeting ended at 18.00 as planned.

Next meeting: Monday 12 April 2010 at 10.00.



Agenda for next meeting of the Board (12 April, 2010):

A few items can already be planned:

- Terms of reference: clear definition of the competences and tasks for each of the two committees
- Setting up of national branches
- Fees and financing of external reviews
- Updated strategic plan

We hope there will be the possibility of two overlapping meetings of the Board and the Scientific Committee so they can meet, and also agree on their mutual roles and competences.

Rome, 1 December 2009
Prepared by Annick Johnson,
Director