

AVEPRO

SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE 4TH MEETING

ROME, JUNE 12TH 2012



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- 4 Update on the evaluation process: the cases of Austria, France, Italy and Spain. The publication of the reports - Document C -**
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AVEPRO SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL
AGENDA
June 12th , 9.00 a.m.– 4.00 p.m.

Pontificio Consiglio per la Promozione della Nuova Evangelizzazione
Via della Conciliazione 5, Roma,
1st Floor

<i>TIME</i>	<i>ACTIVITY</i>	<i>POSITION PAPER</i>
9.00 – 9.15	Welcome address, Fr. Franco Imoda SJ	
9.15 – 9.30	Approval of the minutes of the last meeting and schedule of the next meeting	A - Minutes of the 3 rd Scientific Council Meeting
9.30 – 9.45	Synthesis of AVEPRO activities May 2011 – April 2012	B - Synthesis of AVEPRO activities
9.45 – 10.00	Follow up of the Bucharest EHEA Ministerial Conference, NQF and <i>Relatio triennalis</i> (Fr. Friedrich Bechina)	
10.00 – 10.10	Update on the evaluation process: the cases of Italy, Spain and Austria	
10.10 – 10.20	The site visit at the Faculty of Theology of Vienna University (Prof. Sigrid Mueller)	
10.20 – 10.30	The completed processes: the French cases from training to follow up	C - Examples and Form of a Site Visit Report (for web publication)
10.30 – 11.00	Coffee Break	
11.00-11.30	AVEPRO evaluation after the first “five years” of activity, areas to be improved	D – AVEPRO Statutes
11.30 – 12.30	The selection and training procedure for external evaluation experts: e-learning project, suggestions for an online course (5 minute movie, FAQ, guidelines and grids)	E - Briefing notes for external evaluation groups F - Form for external Evaluation G - E-Learning Training Programme Outline
12.40-14.00	Lunch	



14.15-14.30	Considerations about the current strategic plan	H - Strategic plan 2010-12– updated version April 2012
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	
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 Conclusive remarks	

List of Participants

- Fr. Franco IMODA, SJ, AVEPRO President
- Mgr. Guy-Réal THIVIERGE, IFCU/FIUC
- Mgr. Luis ROMERA, CRUPR
- Lieven BOEVE, FUCE
- Peter JONKERS, Tilburg University
- Stephan KAMPOWSKI, Student
- Don MCQUILLAN, former CEO of IUQB
- Sigrid MUELLER
- Pascal MUELLER JOURDAN
- Emanuela STEFANI, CRUI
- Fr. Gabino URIBARRI, SJ

Excused Members

- John DAVIES, Anglia Ruskin University
- Fr. Slawomir NOWOSAD, Catholic University of Lublin

Observers

- Fr. Friedrich BECHINA, F.S.O., Congregation for Catholic Education
- Mgr. Tymon T. CHMIELECKI, Secretariat of State (Excused)

Invited by the President

- Piero Tosi, former CRUI President



1. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting

The President, Fr. Franco Imoda SJ, welcomes members of the Scientific Council and asks Mr. Stephan Kampowski to introduce himself. Fr. Imoda then briefly outlines the day's Agenda. The President points out that three transversal issues will be dealt with during the day: the structure of the Agency, support provided to Faculties in sharing a culture of quality, and the role attributed to experts (including their selection, training and preparation of an evaluation report).

The first point on the Agenda is the approval of the minutes of the third Scientific Council meeting. The Councillors suggest stressing in the minutes that:

Faculties are responsible for QA in the connected institutions (Affiliated, Aggregated and Incorporated) and to this end should include a specific chapter in their self-evaluation reports (meaning that an Institution's overall QA also depends on the governance and the network of relations it has with connected Institutions); the President informs those present that, in the context of the evaluation of the Ecclesiastical Faculties in Italy, the Faculty of Theology of Palermo will develop a pilot project on the application of the evaluation procedures between "mother" and "daughter" institutions.

With the abovementioned amendments, the Council approves the minutes of the third meeting held in Rome on 12 June 2012.

2. Summary of AVEPRO activities, November 2011 – June 2012, Document B

By way of example, in the period between the second and third meetings of the Scientific Council (February-November 2011) the main events were:

- Internal organization and strategic plan
- External evaluation 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 meetings of the Scientific Council
- Meetings with the Congregation for Catholic Education
- Development of the AVEPRO website: translation of documents into German and Spanish in view of their publication online
- Participation in international events (ENQA – INQAAHE Seminars)

Following presentation of the document, the Council discusses some issues and points out that:

- ✓ It may be appropriate to specify in greater detail the criteria to be used to establish the duration of a site visit (one or two days);
- ✓ It seems necessary to clarify the relationship between QA and the recognition of qualifications;
- ✓ In some countries agencies carry out both accreditation and QA, establishing a single commission to deal with all Faculties; AVEPRO's competence is limited to QA and this could cause problems, especially in countries where the state grants funds to Ecclesiastical Institutions and therefore expects national regulations to be respected, also regarding



accreditation. While the complexity of this issue is recognized, it is deemed best to assess the situation on a case by case or country by country basis.

Following discussions, the Council approves Document B.

3. Follow up of the Bucharest EHEA Ministerial Conference, NQF and *Relatio triennalis*

Fr. Bechina, who participated in the last EHEA (European Higher Education Area) Ministerial Conference presents some points that arose during the Conference and were reiterated in the communiqué, which influence (either directly or indirectly) the role of QA in the context of the Bologna Process. The following issues in particular are highlighted:

- ✓ Recognition of qualifications: the communiqué provides concrete suggestions and the ENIC NARIC network has published a manual to help operators; the issue of the recognition of Theology studies has its own peculiarity, as art. 9 of *Sapientia Christiana* indicates the Congregation for Catholic Education as the institution responsible for carrying out this type of evaluation;
- ✓ Review of the ESG (European Standards and Guidelines): ENQA has been tasked with coordinating a working group to review the ESG;

Moreover, the CEC's activities in relation to the definition of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) are presented: a meeting is scheduled for July 2012 with the so-called "other faculties" in order to define the NQF. By the end of the year a discussion paper should be published for the NQF regarding Theology, Philosophy and Canon Law studies.

The Congregation is also considering, in collaboration with the Bologna Process Commission, starting to review the norms that regulate the *relatio triennalis*. In particular, its frequency may be altered to once every five years and its preparation by the Grand Chancellor or Chancellor may be connected to both the self-evaluation report prepared by the faculty and the final evaluation report prepared by the Commission of experts appointed by AVEPRO. The Congregation is currently preparing a draft to subsequently be sent to the Grand Chancellors.

The points mentioned triggered a discussion between members of the Council, mainly about the recognition of qualifications. The focus was also on the big differences in procedures between countries and how to gain recognition for ecclesiastical educational qualifications; experiences in Spain in particular were mentioned (where a bilateral agreement with the Holy See has been in place since 2011: this recognizes the equivalence of qualifications if issued by an institution, evaluated by AVEPRO, which issues the qualification accompanied by the diploma supplement), as well as in Austria and Belgium.

4. Update on the evaluation process: the cases of Austria, France, Italy and Spain (Document C)

Fr. Imoda briefly reports on the main findings of the evaluation of the ecclesiastical Faculties in different EU countries, such as Austria and France. In particular, the experience at the University of Vienna is taken into consideration. Here the Faculty of Theology is regularly evaluated every 5 years by a commission appointed by the University itself. This time, following preparatory work in



collaboration with AVEPRO and the University of Vienna, a joint evaluation was performed: the two commissions appointed independently by the Agency and the University carried out the site visit simultaneously. All the criteria present in AVEPRO's Guidelines were confirmed and the two commissions (7 experts in total) worked very well together in the meetings with the various stakeholders. The discussions were open and frank and the final recommendations were very encouraging.

Visits to the Ecclesiastical Institutions in France were completed (with the exception of Strasbourg), whereas in Italy an action plan was launched which should involve the preparation of self-evaluation reports by 8 Faculties by spring 2013, with the site visits taking place by the end of 2013. In Spain the situation is still being clarified: the Agency has received the SER from one Institution and the site visit should take place by the end of 2012.

As for other countries, the case of Belgium is highlighted, where the state carries out a very in-depth evaluation at Institution level, but the evaluation of study programmes is much less thorough, and Poland, which will require great care considering the high number of Ecclesiastical faculties in that country.

In any case it is reiterated that it will be appropriate to show a spirit of and capacity for adaptation and mediation in relation to individual situations as the hypothesis of a single model applicable in all countries would be unlikely to produce positive results. It also seems clear that where states finance Ecclesiastical Faculties, the Institutions should in any case be subject to state evaluation. This may be another field in which forms of cooperation between the state and the Church can be considered.

In parallel to the abovementioned aspects, the issue of the publication of evaluation reports arose. The Council analyzed various options, such as: the publication of an executive summary, the publication of a summary with the option of asking AVEPRO for a full version of the final report, and the full publication of reports. Discussion regarded not only the most appropriate action in relation to reports published to date (some of which are deemed by certain members of the Council to be excessively negative), but also the possibility of defining a clear procedure and standards for future evaluations.

In general terms the Council expresses the necessity to maintain the principle of rendering reports public, and seeking to improve their quality. It is suggested that the Agency draft a training programme for the experts involved in external evaluations and that the Faculty authorities always be involved, asking them for feedback before proceeding with any kind of publication of the site visit results.

Following discussions, the Council approves Document C.

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

The President reminds the experts that the Statutes provide for self-evaluation by the Agency under the “supervision of the Congregation for Catholic Education” once every five years. Moreover, the Statutes themselves were approved for a five year period *ad experimentum* and the self-evaluation experience could be of use to AVEPRO's candidacy for full membership of ENQA.

The Council discusses the Document and points out that:

- ✓ The simultaneous performance of the three activities needs to be managed by both the Agency and the Congregation in order to avoid duplicating work;



- ✓ ENQA membership seems to be almost inevitable for the Agency although it needs to be handled with caution, evaluating the advantages and disadvantages;
- ✓ In revising the Statutes it may be helpful to discuss whether to maintain two deliberative bodies (one mainly dedicated to the definition of strategies, the other with a high level of technical competence) or to merge them;
- ✓ Art. 5 par. 3 of the Statutes could be amended to include the concept of “ownership” (in the sense of responsibility) of the reports by the Agency (which could therefore take decisions about publication autonomously);
- ✓ The current art. 13 (Relations, reports and publication of the Agency’s work) should be moved to the Regulations.

Following discussion, the Council decides that more time and thought are necessary to evaluate the possible amendments to propose in the revision of the Statutes.

6. The selection and training procedure for external evaluation experts, Documents E, F, G

As emerged from the discussion about the publication of the reports, the role of experts and the preparation of documents should respect homogeneous standards. In particular it seems appropriate to avoid over-generic recommendations or the expression of opinions in excessively negative terms. The need to interact with the Faculties at the highest level of the academic hierarchy before publishing evaluation reports is reiterated.

A possible solution to the limitations encountered could be to design a training programme for experts in both e-learning form and face-to-face, possibly in one-day courses (naturally bearing in mind the difference in costs). The documents prepared by the Agency (E, F, G) therefore seem to be of great use in organizing the whole evaluation process and facilitating the task of the experts. These documents could be supplemented with indications of the desired length of the individual sections and it should be specified that the recommendations must be realistic and precise, indicating timescales for implementation where necessary. Lastly, information about the “style” to be used in the report is needed.

It is pointed out that the evaluation procedure proposed by AVEPRO does not finish with the site visit and the publication of the report, but the Faculty, following the evaluation, is required to prepare a Quality Improvement Plan. It may be appropriate for the QIP to be published together with the evaluation reports.

A further possible development may be the publication on the website of a hypothetical report to be used as a model for guidance. In any case it is underlined that the final reports must contain information regarding the context in which the Faculty works and the Institution’s vision.

The Council members agree on the principle that ownership and therefore responsibility for the reports lies with AVEPRO.

Following discussions, the Council approves Documents E,F,G.

7. Next steps according to the Strategic Plans 2010-2012 and 2013-2014, Documents H, I

The Council members discuss the versions of the two strategic plans and make the following points:



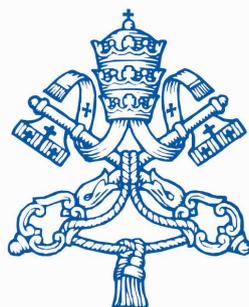
- ✓ The “Roman” Institutions may require continuous stimulation in order to successfully realize the process suggested by AVEPRO and therefore it might be a good idea to appoint a Quality Expert with the exclusive task of supporting the Roman Institutions. The President summarizes the activities already carried out in support of these Institutions and, although not objecting to the proposal, maintains that it would need to be clarified who would bear the cost of such a Quality Expert;
- ✓ More emphasis needs to be placed on the “follow up” in the context of the evaluation process suggested by AVEPRO, both to support the Faculties in the definition and preparation of their Quality Improvement Plans and to monitor the Holy See’s higher education system.

8. Any other business and next meeting

Fr. Bechina informs the meeting that in 2014 the Holy See, together with Italy, will hold the Presidency of the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG) for a semester and that in 2015 various special occasions will be celebrated (100th anniversary of the establishment of the Congregation for Catholic Education, 25th anniversary of the publication of the Apostolic Constitution *ex corde Ecclesiae*). Starting in June 2012 a cycle of meetings and dialogues on the future of education will be held with international experts.

Fr. Uribarri mentions that In February 2013 a conference will be held in Salamanca on the topic “What counts as quality in theology?”.

An attempt was made during the meeting to decide upon a possible date for the next Scientific Council meeting. Given the difficulty of finding a period convenient for all present it was decided to postpone the decision, which will be made following consultation via e-mail between the Agency and the Council members.



AVEPRO

SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE 3RD MEETING

ROME, NOVEMBER 11TH 2011



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- 6 The external evaluation carried out in France: how to improve the procedure and outputs (Document C - External evaluation reports: France)**
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AVEPRO

AVEPRO SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL
AGENDA
November 11th 2011, 9.00 – 4.00 pm

Pontificio Consiglio della Cultura
Via della Conciliazione 5, Rome,
3rd Floor

<i>TIME</i>	<i>ACTIVITY</i>	<i>PAPER</i>
9.00-9.15	Welcome address, by Fr. Franco Imoda SJ and presentation of the new members of the Scientific Council	
9.15-9.30	Approval of the minutes of the last meeting	A - Minutes of the second meeting
9.30-9.45	Summary of AVEPRO activities February 2011 – November 2011	B - Summary of AVEPRO activities, February – November 2011
9.45-11.00	The external evaluation carried out in France: how to improve the procedure and outputs - ICP Don McQuillan - UC Lyon Emanuela Stefani - UC Toulouse Mgr. Guy-Réal Thivierge - UCO Angers and Lille University Lieven Boeve - Centre Sèvres Peter Jonkers Open Discussion	C - External evaluation reports: France
11.00-11.15	Coffee Break	
11.15-11.45	The Follow-up activities in France: suggestions and recommendations for the Seminar to be held in Paris in February 2012	
11.45-12.15	The Roman Faculties and the activities to be worked on	D - Evaluation and Promotion of Quality in the Pontifical Universities and Athenaeums of Rome
12.15-12.45	The ecclesiastical faculties located in Italy: another laboratory for AVEPRO	D - Evaluation and Promotion of Quality in the Pontifical Universities and Athenaeums of Rome
13.00-14.15	Lunch	
14.15-15.15	Next steps according to the Strategic Plan:	E - Strategic Plan, Updated



	-Establishing the structure of AVEPRO: Regional Branches, the case of Germany - Supporting the development of capacity for internal quality assurance and developing systems of external quality assurance for the ecclesiastical institutions: the cases of Austria, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland	Version - November 2011
15.15-15.30	Open discussion and issues to be addressed to the Board of Directors	
15.30-15.45	Any other business (confirmation of the date of the next meeting, matters arising not covered by the agenda)	
15.45-16.00	Evaluation of the day	
16.00	Concluding remarks	

2. List of Participants

- Fr. Franco IMODA, SJ, AVEPRO President
- Mgr. Guy-Réal THIVIERGE, IFCU/FIUC
- Mgr. Luis ROMERA, CRUPR
- Lieven BOEVE, FUCE
- Peter JONKERS, Tilburg University
- Fr. Slawomir NOWOSAD, Catholic University of Lublin
- Don MCQUILLAN, former CEO of IUQB
- John DAVIES, Anglia Ruskin University
- Sigrid MUELLER
- Pascal MUELLER JOURDAN
- Fr. Gabino URIBARRI, SJ

Excused Members

- Fr. Josè M.R. FUENTES, PhD Student PUG
- Emanuela STEFANI, CRUI

Observers

- Fr. Friedrich BECHINA, F.S.O., Congregation for Catholic Education
- Mgr. Tymon T. CHMIELECKI, Secretariat of State (Excused)
- Riccardo Cinquegrani, AVEPRO Director

Invited by the President

- Piero Tosi, former CRUI President



3. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting

The President, Fr. Franco Imoda SJ, welcomes members of the Scientific Council and asks the three new members (Sigrid MUELLER, Pascal MUELLER JOURDAN and Fr. Gabino URIBARRI, SJ) to introduce themselves. Fr. Imoda then briefly outlines the day's Agenda. One change of order will take place: the assessment of the French Faculties will be analysed after the presentation of Document D and the related discussion of progress in the evaluation of the Roman Institutions.

The first point on the Agenda is the approval of the minutes of the second Scientific Council meeting. The Councillors suggest the following emendations to the minutes:

On page 7, at the end of the paragraph "After the experience in France it would be important to proceed with another country such as Italy (where the process the Pontifical Universities located in Rome started in 2009) or another country with a considerable number of ecclesiastical faculties (e.g. Poland or Spain)", the following sentence should be added: "In order to achieve this task, it would be useful to invite experts from foreign agencies to a seminar".

Page 8: (Next steps according to the Strategic Plan: Strategic Plan, Updated Version - February 2011, Document D) the following sentence should be added: "Possible agreements with national and local QA agencies could be achieved, while respecting international norms and Concordats";

Page 8: at the end of the paragraph "considering that the Congregation for Catholic Education is the competent authority for the accreditation of an ecclesiastical Faculty, the Council suggests identifying (together with the Congregation) appropriate means with which to inform Faculties that the QA procedure is compulsory". The following sentence should be added: "An official statement made by the Congregation for Catholic Education seems to be necessary in order to oblige the Faculty to undertake the evaluation procedure".

With the abovementioned amendments, the Council approves the minutes of the second meeting held in Rome on 25 February 2011.

4. Summary of AVEPRO activities, February - November 2011, Document B

By way of example, in the period between the second and third meetings of the Scientific Council (February-November 2011) the main events were:

- ✓ Evaluation of French Faculties (Receipt of SER, establishment of Commissions, realization of external visits to 12 Faculties - leading to the recognition of qualifications, according to an agreement between France and the Holy See of December 2008);
- ✓ Contact with Chancellors and Grand Chancellors to involve them in the whole evaluation process;
- ✓ Two meetings with Mons. Becciu (Deputy Secretary of State for General Affairs);
- ✓ Receipt of nominations for three new Councillors (for the Scientific Council);
- ✓ Appointment of Don Mario Tomljanović as student representative on the Board of Directors;
- ✓ Seminar with the Italian Faculties and meeting with Mons Brambilla in the context of supporting the evaluation of Italian Faculties;
- ✓ Meeting with the Roman Institutions for an update on the realization of the self-evaluation phase;
- ✓ Visit to ANVUR (Italian Agency for the Evaluation of the University System and Research);
- ✓ AVEPRO participated in various seminars/conferences organized by ENQA and INQAAHE, during which new contacts were established.



After the presentation of the document, the Council discusses some issues and points out that:

- ✓ The relationship with “affiliated and aggregated” institutions should be explored, especially in Italy;
- ✓ Training sessions should be offered to experts;
- ✓ Training on the subject of leadership and management could also be offered subsequently to rectors, deans and heads;
- ✓ The key importance of a Strategic Plan for Institutions is another aspect to focus upon; IFCU /FIUC will publish guidelines within which it will emphasise the importance of the relationship between QA and the Strategic Plan.

Following discussions and suggested amendments, the Council approves Document B.

5. Evaluation and Promotion of Quality in the Pontifical Universities and Athenaeums of Rome (Document D)

Fr. Imoda presents the results of the seminar held on 29 September 2011 (organized with CRUPR and held at PUSC) to which the Rectors of the 7 Pontifical Universities and 3 Athenaeums situated in Rome were invited. All of the Institutions invited attended. A relatively positive situation emerged, and much work has been done, although in a somewhat disorganized manner. The external visits should take place between 2012 and 2013. The Councillors discussed various matters based on the elements and documents at their disposal, including:

- ✓ The problems encountered in self-evaluations and external visits, due to the differences between Institutions;
- ✓ The necessity to strongly emphasise that the quality of related Institutions is the responsibility of the affiliating Institutions (so-called “mother” Institutions) as the latter effectively issue degrees. Although the priority is to launch a cycle of QA in Ecclesiastical Faculties, it is suggested that a chapter be included in the self-evaluation report in which the Institution describes its system of relations with the Institutions that depend on it. Specific guidelines need to be drawn up concerning relations with affiliated Institutions. Aspects such as the following should be analysed: governance, academic control, how exams are held, the management of resources including personnel policies, management of information flows, student feedback processes and any system of sanctions applied when something goes wrong. Lastly, the relationship between “mother” and “daughter” Institutions needs to be analysed in both directions. It seems realistic to hypothesize that relations with affiliated Institutions will be dealt with more thoroughly in the second cycle of evaluation. Nonetheless, the Scientific Council highlights that affiliation makes it possible to take the Higher Education system to remote areas. Faculties must persuade affiliated Institutions to develop a culture of quality: in some cases two or three affiliated Institutions could be visited, as an example, during the external evaluation visit;
- ✓ In some cases the approach to evaluation has not followed the procedures suggested by AVEPRO. Although not obligatory, the guidelines are meant to be adhered to - it is suggested that Faculties be encouraged as much as possible to follow the procedures;
- ✓ It is probably necessary to underline the difference between accreditation agency and quality agency; AVEPRO’s aim is to help the Faculties, not reward or punish them;
- ✓ A schedule and precise deadlines need to be established to avoid procedures dragging on in time;
- ✓ It is important to remember that even if individual academic units are being evaluated, the self-evaluation report is presented by a single Institution, which will be subject to an external visit;



this Institution therefore has the task of ensuring that the self-evaluation report is coordinated and uniform, also from a stylistic viewpoint;

- ✓ The SER should indicate the actions that the Institution intends to take to improve quality;
- ✓ The definition of a strategic plan should be the endpoint of the whole evaluation process; it would be interesting to acquire IFCU/FIUC's guidelines for the definition of the strategic plan, which they are in the process of drawing up; this would make it possible to direct all Ecclesiastical Faculties towards a common way of writing the strategic plan, thus avoiding "wish lists". In any case, it is reiterated that the self-evaluation report should constitute the basis for any kind of strategic reflection. It is therefore suggested that the Roman Institutions and Faculties (which represent a model for all Ecclesiastical Faculties) are strongly encouraged in this phase to focus their efforts on carrying out the SER as well as they possibly can;
- ✓ External evaluators also need to have some familiarity with and competence regarding strategic planning; thus AVEPRO also needs to train its own experts in this area. Experts from other national or local agencies could be appointed to the evaluation teams;
- ✓ Another important issue is leadership: rather than considering exclusively administrative leadership, it seems appropriate to speak of "ecclesiastical leadership".

6. The external evaluation carried out in France: how to improve the procedure and outputs (Document C - External evaluation reports: France)

Fr. Imoda briefly reports on the main findings of the evaluation of the ecclesiastical Faculties in France and introduces the members of the Council that have accepted to read the reports in order to suggest elements for the discussions:

- ICP - Don McQuillan
- UC Lyon - Emanuela Stefani (absent, but sent a note summarizing her observations)
- UC Toulouse - Mgr. Guy-Réal Thivierge
- UCO Angers and Lille University - Lieven Boeve
- Centre Sèvres - Peter Jonkers

Generally, there are discrepancies between the SER (well structured and mainly based on the AVEPRO guidelines) and the final reports, which sometimes focus too heavily on study programmes. This is probably due to the need for the whole evaluation procedure to serve for the recognition of qualifications, as set down in the 2008 agreement between France and the Holy See.

Concerning ICP the following remarks were made:

- ✓ An Institutional SER is lacking;
- ✓ The external evaluation reports highlight some shortcomings concerning aspects such as the rectorship, leadership, organization;
- ✓ Some reports were too short, although it should be underlined that the recommendations were excellent;
- ✓ It will probably be necessary to arrange training on how to write reports.

In relation to the evaluation of Lyon the following points were highlighted:

- ✓ Although the report is generally clear and analyses the points cited in the SER, the style prompts some doubts (too colloquial in parts);



- ✓ Publication of the whole report may not be appropriate: a sort of “*executive summary*” could be drawn up containing selected information, in order to render the results of the evaluation public without publishing the whole report.

The following comments were made concerning the evaluation carried out at UC Toulouse:

- ✓ The reports are clear and exhaustive, although there is a certain predominance and maybe carefulness of the Faculty of Theology in relation to the Faculty of Philosophy;
- ✓ The evaluation process has mainly been carried out according to AVEPRO’s guidelines;
- ✓ The critical aspects (few women and lay people, the lack of training for teachers during Sabbatical years), suggestions for improvement (greater emphasis on subjects such as Dogmatic and Fundamental Theology) and strong points (availability of teachers, quality of the tutorship system and educational design) are all presented effectively within the report.
- ✓ In general terms (i.e. not in relation to the individual reports) improvements could be made in three areas:
 1. *Role of Rectors*: the role of rectors is somewhat neglected throughout the process; in the subsequent evaluations they should be given the opportunity to express their opinions on the academic life of the whole Institution, in order to avoid their marginalization.
 2. *Governance*: there is little analysis of the relationship between the faculties and the governing body, despite the fact that this is a determining factor in the Institution’s mission and identity.
 3. *Transversal nature of Faculties of Theology*: Faculties of Theology have a key role within Catholic Universities, also concerning spirituality and dialogue with the other Faculties concerning the system of cultural transformations. It would probably be a good idea to expand AVEPRO’s external evaluation guidelines on this topic.

In relation to the evaluation of UCO Angers and the Faculty of Theology of the University of Lille the following points were highlighted:

- ✓ There is insufficient analysis of the institutional dimension in the self-evaluation report;
- ✓ The analysis of the course’s educational framework is inadequate – i.e. it is not clear what type of theology is taught in the Faculty;
- ✓ Evaluation of research output is lacking;
- ✓ Students are not well represented;
- ✓ Research seems to be determining only in the third cycle, and of little importance in the first and second cycles;
- ✓ In general, the two reports in question do not appear to be comparable; a summary should be drawn up, mainly by the writers of the final reports.

Concerning the Faculties of Theology and Philosophy of the Centre Sèvres the following remarks were made:

- ✓ A sort of “reverence” towards the Institution emerges from the final evaluation report;
- ✓ Strengths and possible improvements are underlined in all sections, although an evaluation is lacking;
- ✓ The recommendations are generic and probably of little help to the Institution;
- ✓ It is not possible to understand from the report which recommendations are optional, which are “obligatory” (or strongly advised) and which are interpretative.

While recognizing the excellent work done both by the Agency and by the experts, in general terms the Scientific Council suggests:

- ✓ Preparing a model for self-evaluation reports;



- ✓ Preparing a model for an extract to be published on the website;
- ✓ Asking the Institutions whether and how they will accept the experts' recommendations;
- ✓ Setting a time limit within which the *Quality Improvement Plan* must be received;
- ✓ Seeking to write reports within which the recommendations are extremely clear and detailed;
- ✓ Creating a cyclicality and a positive climate in relation to the idea of evaluation;
- ✓ Suggesting a way of ascertaining the adoption of recommendations (which can be refused by the Faculties, as long as they provide an appropriate explanation) one year after receipt of the QIP.

7. Next steps according to the Strategic Plan: Strategic Plan, Updated Version - November 2011, Document E

The Council discusses the Document and points out that:

- In relation to the subject of *Regional Branches* the most particular situation today concerns Germany and the relationship with AKAST. The President informs the Council that the Agency has drawn up a summary concerning the differences between the two Institutions/Agencies from the point of view of statutes, procedures, structures, stakeholders, outputs and purpose of the evaluation procedure. This dossier has been sent to the Secretary of State, from whom instructions are awaited. The President also points out that this has all taken place following a series of informal contacts with the President of AKAST, Mons. Alfred Hierold, and that he is aware of the importance and quality of the work carried out by AKAST.

The debate provides an opportunity to share ideas on the possible establishment of *Regional Branches* in countries such as Poland (which could also become a point of reference for the other Institutions/Agencies present in Eastern Europe).

- Latin America (a part of the world in which there are many Ecclesiastical Institutions) and Asia increasingly see the Bologna Process as a model on which to base the organization of higher education in these continents; both situations present challenges and opportunities for AVEPRO – in particular an agreement has been entered into with Taipei, which involves creating a Spanish version of the Agency's website. IFCU (International Federation of Catholic Universities) will carry out the translation for AVEPRO free of charge.

- Another aspect that should be dealt with in updating the Strategic Plan is the identification of a stable mechanism for financing AVEPRO, through a fee to be paid to the Agency when external visits are carried out.

- The Councillors suggest finding the best ways to improve the training of experts to involve in the external evaluations.

- Concerning the activities carried out in France, the experience to date could be improved by informing the Faculties that the evaluation process they are involved in is cyclic.

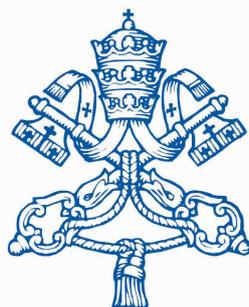
8. Any other business and next meeting of the Scientific Council

- The Councillors suggest increasing the Chancellors' and Grand Chancellors' involvement in the evaluation process;

- The President states that, from 2012, it will be possible to start working on the reform of the Agency's Statute, and that one of the possible innovations could concern the establishment of a single



Council/Board to replace the present Scientific Council and Board of Directors. Some Councillors suggest involving as many Academic members as possible in the new Council if this could happen. The next meeting of the Scientific Council is scheduled for **Tuesday 12 June 2012** (12/06/12).



AVEPRO

SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE 2ND MEETING

ROME, FEBRUARY 25TH 2011



- 1 Agenda**
- 2 List of Participants**
- 3 Approval of the minutes of last meeting**
- 4 Synthesis of AVEPRO activities, September 2010 – February 2011, Document B**
- 5 A possible model of evaluation: the first steps realised in France**
- 6 Site visit in France, List of experts for External Evaluation, Document C**
- 7 Next steps according to the Strategic plan, Strategic Plan Updated Version - February 2011, Document D**
- 8 Faculty of Theology of Kaunas, Lithuania: main findings emerging from the recent Site Visit**
- 9 Relationships with national QA/accreditation agencies - How and where to start – Quality Assurance and Accreditation Regimes in four EU countries: France, Germany, Poland and Spain, Document E**
- 10 Any other business and Next meeting**



AVEPRO SCIENTIF COUNCIL
AGENDA
February the 25th , 9,00 am– 5,00 pm

Pontificio Consiglio delle Comunicazioni Sociali Meeting room
Via della Conciliazione 5, Roma, 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 last meeting	a) Minutes of the first meeting
9.30-10.00	Synthesis of AVEPRO activities September 2010 – February 2011; top points: the Seminar organised by the CEC in October 2010, ENQA membership, activities developed in France	b) Synthesis of AVEPRO activities, September 2010 – February 2011
10.00-10.15	A possible model: the first steps realised in France, Fr. P. Curbelie	
10.15-10.30	The training model set up for France Prof. Don McQuillan	
10.30-11.00	Open discussion	
11.00-11.15	Coffee Break	
11.15-12.15	Site visit in France: - Criteria for the External evaluation - Identification of possible experts to involve - Open discussion	c) List of experts for External Evaluation c-bis) Message from Fr. Franco Imoda, SJ - 8 th November 2010
12.15-12.45	Next steps according to the Strategic plan: - Relationships with national QA/accreditation agencies: the case of Lithuania (Fr. Vidas Balcius, Avepro expert)	d) Strategic Plan Updated Version - February 2011
13.00-14.15	Lunch	
14.15-14.45	Next steps according to the Strategic plan:	e) How and where to start

	- Relationships with national QA/accreditation agencies - the question of jurisdictions, open discussion	– Quality Assurance and Accreditation Regimes in four EU countries: France, Germany, Poland and Spain
14.45-15.15	Next steps according to the Strategic plan: -Establish the structure of AVEPRO: Regional Branches	
15.15-15.30	Next steps according to the Strategic plan: - Internal Evaluation: the approach to the evaluation procedures in Ecclesiastical faculties located in another EU country	
15.30-15.45	Next steps according to the Strategic plan: - Internal and external Evaluation of the Pontifical Universities in Roma; - Other ecclesiastical Faculties in Italy	
15.45-16.00	Open discussion and issues to be address to the Council of Directors	
16.00-16.15	Any other business (Confirmation of the date of the next meeting, Matters arising not covered by the agenda)	
16.15-16.30	Evaluation of the day	
16.45	Conclusive remarks	



2. List of Participants

- Fr. Franco IMODA, SJ, AVEPRO President,
- Mgr. Guy-Réal THIVIERGE, FIUC
- Mgr. Luis ROMERA, CRUPR
- Lieven BOEVE, FUCE
- Fr. Josè M.R. FUENTES, PhD Student PUG
- Peter JONKERS, Tilburg University
- Fr. Slawomir NOWOSAD, Catholic University of Lublin
- Emanuela STEFANI, CRUI

Excused Members

- John DAVIES, Anglia Ruskin University
- Don MCQUILLAN, former CEO of IUQB

Observers

- Fr. Friedrich BECHINA, F.S.O., Congregation for Catholic Education
- Mgr. Tymon T. CHMIELECKI, Secretariat of State (Excused)

Invited by the President

- Piero Tosi, former CRUI President
- Vidas Balcius
- Philippe Curbelié

3. Approval of the minutes of last meeting

The President, Fr. Franco Imoda SJ welcomes members of the Scientific Council and describes briefly the Agenda of the day. After a short presentation of the main findings, the Council approves the minutes of the first meeting held in Rome in September the 10th 2010.

4. Synthesis of AVEPRO activities, September 2010 – February 2011, Document B

After a presentation of the document, the Council discusses some issues and points out that:

- The meeting with His Eminence Card. Tarcisio Bertone Secretary of State in September 2010 has to be considered a key element in delivering updated information about AVEPRO to the authorities of the Holy See;



- The CD Rom realised by AVEPRO and distributed to the participants that attended the Seminar organised in October 2010 by the CEC, has to be considered an important tool aimed at supporting the Faculties in designing their QA strategies and infrastructures.
- The meeting with Achim Hopbach (President of ENQA) represents both a first approach to AVEPRO candidature as full member of ENQA and a way of realising “external communication” activities.

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

5. A possible model: the first steps realised in France

Fr. Philippe Curbelié reports on the “state of the art” of the evaluation of the ecclesiastical Faculties in France stressing that:

- An International agreement signed by the Holy See and the French Republic in December 2008 provides the normative framework of the whole process of evaluation; the agreement regulates the procedures for the recognition of the ecclesiastical titles in France;
- In France there are 15 ecclesiastical Faculties; 12 will be involved in this evaluation exercise;
- AVEPRO organised (February the 1st) in Paris a training seminar for 23 experts that will be involved in the site visits. Those experts are academics coming from the French ecclesiastical faculties;
- The schedule of the whole procedure (following the guidelines approved by both Councils in September 2010) foresees that the Faculties will send to AVEPRO their SER within March the 15th, the site visits will take place during the month of April 2011 and the reports will be finalised within June the 30th. After that date AVEPRO will send to the Congregation for Catholic Education the site visit reports and the CEC will decide which courses will be included in the list that will be sent to the Nunciature in Paris. This list will include the courses that will be recognised by the French authorities.

The Council thanks Fr. Curbelié for his presentation and points out that:

- it will be important to understand and evaluate the possibility of replaying this model to other context;
- there are countries in which experts are already familiar with QA procedures and for this reason it seems possible to avoid the organisation of the training seminar;
- it is important to keep under attention both regional and local sensibilities and the specificity of the ecclesiastical faculties;
- in some cases, in order to “bridge the gap” and avoid bias, it could be of interest to invite experts of the national agencies to a seminar or a meeting and share with them the architecture of AVEPRO evaluation model.

6. Site visit in France, List of experts for External Evaluation, Document C

The President expresses his gratitude to the members of the Council that sent to AVEPRO names for possible experts. The Council discusses the Document and points out that:

- in the list there are top level experts especially in Theology and Philosophy;



- they will support the Agency in the effort of expanding the “database” of experts including academics skilled in QA.

The Council approves Document C.

7. Next steps according to the Strategic plan, Strategic Plan Updated Version - February 2011, Document D

The Council discusses the Document and points out that:

- After the experience in France it would be important to proceed with another country such as Italy (where the process for the Pontifical Universities located in Rome started in 2009) or another country with a considerable number of ecclesiastical faculties (eg Poland or Spain). The President underlines that in Italy the Agency has already realised Seminars and other activities finalised at supporting the Institutions in setting up the QA process. Moreover he reminds that AVEPRO is not allowed to oblige Faculties to undertake an evaluation procedure
- 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 tries to harmonize QA into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA);
- in some European countries, a Faculty is allowed by the national authority to deliver a specific course only if it has undertaken the evaluation procedures every 5 years; considering that the Congregation for Catholic Education is the competent authority for the accreditation of an ecclesiastical Faculty, the Council suggests to identify (together with the Congregation), appropriate means in order to inform Faculties that the nature of the QA procedure is compulsory.
- It would be appropriate to organise regular meetings with experts in order to harmonise practices and the style of the reports;

The Council accepts the principle that the external evaluation reports should be published on the web site of the Agency and underlines that according to the Article 9 §6 and 7 of statute of the Agency “The Scientific Committee expresses justified advice on the modalities used for quality assessment, as well as on the choice and preparation of the experts in charge of evaluations”. The Scientific Committee can also be asked by the President of the Agency to express its opinion and advice about single external evaluations that have been or will be carried out, or on any other question

In order to avoid possible problems and contrasts which could emerge from the external evaluation reports , it seems to be appropriate for the Agency to structure a procedure of appeal;

Following discussion the Council approves Document D

8. Faculty of Theology of Kaunas, Lithuania: main findings emerging from the recent Site Visit

Fr. Vidas Balcius (AVEPRO expert and member of the evaluation commission of the Faculty of Theology of Kaunas, Lithuania), reports on the main findings emerged during the site visit (7th – 11th



February 2011). The visit has been organised and realised in cooperation with the National Agency of QA and accreditation in Lithuania (SKVC). The team received a considerable support from the Lithuanian Agency. Since the commission is still involved in writing the report, Fr. Balcius desires to point out only some aspects:

- the visit has been well organised, the Commission intends to deliver two reports: one for SKVC (the objective is the accreditation of 3 programs) and one for AVEPRO (the purpose is to support a culture of quality);
- in general terms, the standards of the Faculty are positive if compared with the other Faculties and Universities based in Lithuania; nevertheless it seems to be necessary to foster and support the realisation of a quality improvement plan;
- in general the SER were enough clear and represented correctly the reality in which the Faculty is acting; during the site visit some aspects (both in terms of points of strength and weakness) have been confirmed.

The Council thanks Fr. Balcius for his presentation.

9. Relationships with national QA/accreditation agencies - How and where to start – Quality Assurance and Accreditation Regimes in four EU countries: France, Germany, Poland and Spain, Document E

The Council discusses the Document and expresses its appreciation for the quality of the material prepared by the Agency. Concerning document E the council points out that:

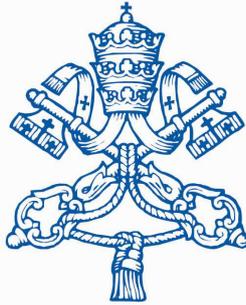
- it seems to be appropriate to define specific strategies to be applied to different contexts;
- it will be important to involve stakeholders (in particular bishops' conferences, Institutions and organizations of Institutions QA national Agencies) in designing specific national/regional QA paths;
- at the moment, possible sites where it could be of interest to set up the evaluation cycle are: Portugal, Poland, Bruxelles area

Following discussion the Council approves Document E.

10. Any other business and Next Meeting of the Scientific Council

- Presentation of AVEPRO website;
- QA in Austria: Fr. Bechina informs the Council that the Austrian system does not foresee accreditation procedures for public Universities. Therefore the realisation of QA processes is task and a responsibility that belongs to single Faculties/Universities. The Faculty of Theology in Wien is structuring and organising its own process. The intention of the Institution is to cooperate with the Agency. Fr. Bechina will participate at a meeting of the Faculty that will take place in Wien at the beginning of May 2011.

The next meeting of the Scientific Council is scheduled for **Friday 11th of November 2011** (11/11/11).



AVEPRO

SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE 1ST MEETING

ROME, 10 SEPTEMBER 2010



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 - 4.1 List of Institutions, Document C**
- 5 QA in Ecclesiastical Higher Education Institutions: Methodological Framework, Briefing Note Document D**
 - 5.1 Preparing the SER, Document E**
 - 5.2 Guidelines for Internal Evaluation, Document F**
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 - 5.4 External Review: Format of Institutional Self Evaluation Report (SER), Document H**
 - 5.5 External Review for small Faculties, Document I**
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 - 6.1 Relationship between national QA Agencies and AVEPRO, Document N**
 - 6.2 Regional sub-components of the Agency: Regional Branches, Document K**
 - 6.3 Costs of an External Review, Document L**
 - 6.4 Staffing and resources, Staff Policy, Document M**
- 7 ENQA membership and languages of work**
- 8 Other business**
- 9 Next meeting**



1. Agenda

10 September, 9.00 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.
 Offices of the Pontifical Council for Culture
 Via della Conciliazione 5, Rome
 3rd Floor

<i>TIME</i>	<i>ACTIVITY</i>	<i>POSITION PAPER</i>
9.00-9.15	Welcome address, Fr. Franco Imoda SJ	
9.15- 9.45	Team building	
9.45-10.15	Terms of reference, Fr. Franco Imoda SJ	Terms of Reference
10.15-10.30	Schedule for next meeting	
10.30-11.00	Institutional context and resulting scope of AVEPRO activities, R. Cinquegrani	A in Ecclesiastical Institutions in Europe List of Institutions
11.00-11.15	Coffee Break	
11.15-13.00	QA in Ecclesiastical Higher Education Institutions: methodological framework, Prof. John L. Davies and Prof. Don McQuillan	Briefing note Preparing the Self Evaluation Report Guidelines for internal evaluation General principles for external review External Review: Format of Institutional Self Evaluation Report (ISER) External Review for small Faculties
13.00-14.00	Buffet lunch at AVEPRO Offices	
14.00-16.30	AVEPRO Strategic Plan: Relationships between National QA Agencies and AVEPRO Regional sub-components of the Agency ENQA Membership Staffing and Resources Languages of work	Strategic Plan Relationships between National QA Agencies and AVEPRO Regional Branches Cost of an external Review Staff Policy
16.30-16.45	Any other business	
16.45-17.00	Evaluation of the day	
17.15	Conclusive remarks	



2. List of Participants

- Fr. Franco IMODA, SJ, AVEPRO President,
- Mgr. Guy-Réal THIVIERGE, FIUC
- Lieven BOEVE, FUCE
- John DAVIES, Anglia Ruskin University
- Fr. Josè M.R. FUENTES, PhD Student PUG
- Peter JONKERS, Tilburg University
- Don MCQUILLAN, former CEO of IUQB
- Fr. Slawomir NOWOSAD, Catholic University of Lublin
- Emanuela STEFANI, CRUI

Absent Member

- President of CRUPR

Observers

- Fr. Friedrich BECHINA, F.S.O., Congregation for Catholic Education
- Mgr. Tymon T. CHMIELECKI, Secretary of State

Invited by the President

- Piero Tosi, former CRUI President

3. Terms of reference, Document A

The Council discusses the Document and points out that:

- a new member from France is needed for the SC;
- the possibility of appointing a member representing the European Society of Catholic Theology needs to be evaluated;
- the President asks members of the SC to indicate names of possible experts to involve in external evaluations.

The Council suggests the following amendments:

- mentioning that a delegate of the Secretary of State and one of the Congregation for Catholic Education are members of the SC (as observers).

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 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 suggests the following amendments:

Belgium:

- p. 4: Belgium: delete the sentence “The national law provides for procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and research in universities” (pag.11) and change “The Flemish language community has as reference agency for universities: VLIR-QAU Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad - Flemish Interuniversity Council Quality Assurance Unit” (pag. 12);
- p. 12: The Council discussed the possibility of using English and Italian, and agreed on the fact that a lot of documents and dealings of the faculties with the experts could be in the local language, but that the final report needed to be in English;
- delete the sentence “The national law provides for procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching and research in universities” (pag.11) and “The Flemish language community has more than one reference agency: VLHORA1 Vlaamse Hogescholenraad - Flemish Council of University Colleges and VLIR-QAU Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad - Flemish Interuniversity Council Quality Assurance Unit” (pag. 12). Insert “The NVAO- Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie - Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders is the accreditation organization, established by an international treaty, that ensures the quality of higher education in the Netherlands and Flanders”.

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

4.1 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.

5. QA in Ecclesiastical Higher Education Institutions: Methodological Framework, Briefing Note Document D

The Council discusses the Document and points out that:



AVEPRO

- a more 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 external evaluation must be a “*strategic plan*”. The Bologna Process did not invent the QA but tries to harmonize it into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA);
- the methodological framework suggested for Ecclesiastical Faculties is based on the “European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” elaborated by ENQA. Moreover, the documentation presented to the SC refers to the experience developed in Ireland. The Irish System is recognised by ENQA;
- the criteria defined in the methodological framework have been developed to reflect the results that emerged from the Pilot Project realised by AVEPRO in collaboration with eight EU Faculties in 2008-09;
- the procedure consists of two main “building blocks”: the internal evaluation, in which the responsibility lies with the Institutions, and the external evaluation, carried out by an independent agency;
- the briefing note should be considered an instrument and a point of reference, especially for larger Faculties;
- in general terms, and in particular for smaller Faculties, the weight of procedures needs to be minimized.

The Council suggests the following amendments:

- page 6 change into: “In common with other agencies, AVEPRO is likely to find that in some Institutions there is initially a low level of understanding of modern QA processes, limited QA competencies, and no tradition of strategic planning or awareness of the connection between strategic planning and QA. It may be said that some Ecclesiastical Institutions have not universally adopted these new approaches in their institutional governance and management”;
- pages 6-7 - after the paragraph “The ecclesiastical institutions vary in size, from a single faculty to full universities with four or more faculties. Whatever the unit chosen for quality evaluation, whether it is an academic department, faculty, academic programme, service department (such as the library or computer centre), or university, the basic steps in the procedures are essentially the same” ADD the following paragraph: “It would not be feasible or indeed appropriate to apply the full generic procedures of internal and external evaluation to smaller institutions. The regional and Rome offices should therefore collaborate in developing a lightweight process for smaller institutions, taking into account local circumstances. It will be the responsibility of the Rome office to organize and manage the external evaluation of the larger institutions, following the procedures set out in the abovementioned document”;
- page 9: “Common sense should dictate the appropriate scaled-down version suitable for these smaller institutions. AVEPRO will be available to discuss suitable arrangements in such cases”.

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



5.1 Preparing the SER, Document E

The Council discuss the Document and points out that:

- Faculties should have a high level QA Committee, and the Director should be a high level academic;
- bureaucracy should be minimalized;
- the Self Evaluation Report forms the basis for a QA exercise that should be developed in collaboration with experts;
- each Unit must organise a Quality Improvement Plan based on the recommendations made by the experts.

The Council does not suggest any amendments.

Following discussion the Council approves Document E.

5.2 Guidelines for Internal Evaluation, Document F

The Council discusses the Document and points out that:

- the Rectors should visibly support the QA exercise;
- the person responsible for Quality assurance cannot only be an administrator but must come from academia; he/she must also ensure the support of the Governance of the Institution;
- the Quality of academic work also depends on the effectiveness of other services;
- the role of research in Faculties needs to be underlined within the framework of the Self Evaluation Report; the importance of research should be more clearly incorporated and emphasized. The third cycle should have more importance in the document;
- research and doctoral programs should be included in the Strategic Plan.

The Council does not suggest any amendments.

Following discussion the Council approves Document F.

5.3 General principles for External Review, Document G

The Council discusses the Document and points out that:

- Faculty should not perceive the site visit as an inspection and it needs to be underlined that the aim of evaluation is to support the Institution in a process of quality improvement;
- 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;
- the “whole package” of documents is “offered” to Institutions, their application depends on the level of maturity of the Institution with respect to QA;
- the general structure suggested seems to be feasible, especially for Faculties in countries where a national QA system has not yet been implemented; more difficulties are foreseeable for Institutions already involved in another system;
- the Holy See supports this system, also because there are no legal problems with national and international agreements;
- 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 should be linked to the development of the whole Faculty;
- 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 power to force Faculties to implement the QA procedures;
- the procedures for external evaluation must be considered crucial to satisfying the ENQA standards and guidelines;
- efforts have been made to limit the length of the document proposed. More information can be provided during the training of experts for external evaluation.

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.

5.4 External Review: Format of Institutional Self Evaluation Report (SER), Document H

The Council discusses the Document and points out that:

- The ISER should identify clear recommendations.

The Council does not suggest any amendments.

Following discussion the Council approves Document H.

5.5 External Review for small Faculties, Document I

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

Following discussion the Council approves Document I

6 AVEPRO Strategic Plan, Document J

The Council discusses the Document and points out that:

- the reactions of the SC concerning the "*Strategic Plan*" are generally positive;
- some activities should be considered as the "building blocks" of the 2-year strategic plan;
- there are 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 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;
- in order to foster a QA culture in Ecclesiastical Faculties it may be interesting to start AVEPRO activities in countries without a national agency devoted to this task;
- QA should be considered as an "investment" for the benefit of the Institutions;
- considering the present structure of the office, the strategic plan should be revised and reduced;

Following discussion the Council approves Document J. Some members express reservations regarding the possibility of completing some of the actions in two years.

6.1 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;
- AVEPRO will have to be aware of various regional peculiarities;
- frameworks of collaboration will need to be established with single QA agencies;
- the hypothesis of becoming a full member of ENQA could solve some of the above-mentioned issues;

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.

6.2 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;
- the Structures that will liaise between AVEPRO and the Institutions must work in a very simple way. In supporting both, AVEPRO and Regional Branches, the Nunciatures will play an important role;
- in order to respect local sentiments it may be useful to ask Faculties whether or not they intend to be functionally related to a particular "Regional Branch";
- the present division into 5/6 branches appears appropriate;



- establishing Regional Branches will probably require the support of the Secretary of State and CEC in order to resolve specific situations: it will probably be necessary to set up commissions composed of diplomats and experts who will explore and discuss specific issues;
- even if it were possible to set up branches based on “Faculties of Congregations” the SC considers this option risky and a potential source of fragmentation;
- Regional Branches should be strongly related to local Nunciatures in some way;
- a first step in the organization and structuring of regional branches should be the identification of a contact/liaison person; he/she could also be presented to the Board of Directors in order to be appointed to the SC.

The Council suggests the following amendment:

- Page 3: “Recent discussions have favoured six such components along geographic and linguistic lines as follows:
 - Italy, Malta, Italian-speaking Switzerland;
 - Germany, Austria, German-speaking Switzerland;
 - Poland, Lithuania, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia;
 - Spain and Portugal;
 - France and French-speaking Belgium and Switzerland;
 - Ireland, Holland and Dutch-speaking Belgium”.
- Page 4: “He should be an integral part of the AVEPRO team, working closely with the Rome Executive and the Holy See, with input into policy-making, especially as it affects his region”.
- In the whole document it is suggested that the word “expert” be used instead of “reviewers”.

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

6.3 Costs of an External Review, Document L

The Council discusses the Document and points out that:

- in many cases Faculties can not sustain extra costs for external evaluations; the situation is dramatic in terms of both financial and human resources;
- Faculties should cover the operating costs of external evaluations;
- smaller Faculties should pay a minimal sum. Costs should depend on their size;
- some members of the Council suggest that experts will perform evaluations for free and be willing to help. Obviously all travel and accommodation expenses will be provided;
- it may be useful to apply to Bishops’ Conferences and private foundations for financial support;
- 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.

6.4 Staffing and resources, Staff Policy, Document M

The Council discusses the Document and points out that:



- the current staff of the Agency seems insufficient to cover the priorities indicated in the Strategic Plan; nevertheless the SC appreciates the organization of the meeting and the preparation of the material proposed;
- personnel suggested: a small central office (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.

7 ENQA membership and languages of work

The Council discusses the topics and points out that:

- ENQA membership should be considered a strategic priority; the SC suggests that the President and Director organize a meeting with Prof. Hopbach (ENQA President), an invited speaker during the Conference organized by the CEC in October 2010;
- joining ENQA would be useful to gain respect and credibility at an international level;
- Concerning the languages of work, although AVEPRO will respect the variety of national and regional specificities, it will be necessary to reach operative agreements choosing one or two languages of work;
- regional cooperation is very important. Translations should not be the responsibility of AVEPRO;
- cooperation between all stakeholders - Nunciatures, Bishops' Conferences, CEC, Institutions etc. - is very important. It is the Congregation's duty to assist in the process of involving these parties;
- the Nunciatures could be involved in translating part of the documentations (Self Evaluation Report);
- the CEC could sensitize national Bishops' Conferences to supporting Faculties in the translation of materials.

As it is difficult to find definite solutions, the SC expresses 2 different opinions: on the one hand it supports the use of local languages, on the other hand it underlines the need to identify operative solutions and suggests English and Italian as the working languages.

8 Other business

There is no intention to establish a World Agency. AVEPRO will work worldwide in the future. A member of the SC suggests extending the QA approach and procedures to all Catholic Universities.

9 Next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday 25 February 2011.

The third meeting of the SC is scheduled for Friday 11 November 2011. Both dates will be reconfirmed. The President suggests scheduling AVEPRO SC meetings on the last Friday of February and the second Friday of November every year.