

What is the legislation?

Ministerial Decree no. 509 of 3 November 1999 - Regulation setting out the norms concerning the curricular autonomy of universities

Art. 1. For the purposes of this Regulation: (...) 1) university educational credit (credito formativo universitario) shall mean the learning workload, including individual study, required of a student (equipped with adequate initial preparation) to acquire the knowledge and abilities in the educational activities envisaged by the degree course.

Art. 5. 1. The university educational credit, hereinafter referred to as a credit, corresponds to 25 hours of work per student. By means of ministerial decree the said hours for single classes may be increased or decreased within a 20% limit for stated reasons. 2. The average annual learning workload of a full time university student is conventionally fixed at 60 credits.

Joint Declaration on Harmonisation of the Architecture of the European Higher Education System by the four Ministers in charge for France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom - Paris, the Sorbonne, May 25 1998

The international recognition and attractive potential of our systems are directly related to their external and internal readabilities. A system, in which two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate, should be recognized for international comparison and equivalence, seems to emerge.

Much of the originality and flexibility in this system will be achieved through the use of credits (such as in the ECTS scheme) and semesters. This will allow for validation of these acquired credits for those who choose initial or continued education in different European universities and wish to be able to acquire degrees in due time throughout life. Indeed, students should be able to enter the academic world at any time in their professional life and from diverse backgrounds.

The European Higher Education Area - Joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education convened in Bologna on the 19th of June 1999

While affirming our support to the general principles laid down in the Sorbonne declaration, we engage in co-ordinating our policies to reach in the short term, and in any case within the first decade of the third millennium, the following objectives, which we consider to be of primary relevance in order to establish the European area of higher education and to promote the European system of higher education world-wide:

(...)

Establishment of a system of credits - such as in the ECTS system - as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility. Credits could also be acquired in non-higher education contexts, including lifelong learning, provided they are recognised by receiving Universities concerned.

Towards the European Higher Education Area. Communiqué of the meeting of European Ministers in charge of Higher Education in Prague on May 19th 2001.

Ministers emphasized that for greater flexibility in learning and qualification processes the adoption of common cornerstones of qualifications, supported by a credit system such as the ECTS or one that is ECTS-compatible, providing both transferability and accumulation functions, is necessary. Together with mutually recognized quality assurance systems such arrangements will facilitate students' access to the European labour market and enhance the compatibility, attractiveness and competitiveness of European higher education. The generalized use of such a credit system and of the Diploma Supplement will foster progress in this direction.