



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

**Α.ΔΙ.Π.**

**H.Q.A.A.**

ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY

ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ

FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

## **EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT**

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF CRETE

September 2010

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### External Evaluation Committee

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of History and Archaeology of the University of Crete consisted of the following five (5) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQAA in accordance with Law 3374/2005 :

1. Professor Paolo Odorico (president)  
(Title) (Name and Surname)

École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, France  
(Institution of origin)

2. Professor Roland Etienne  
(Title) (Name and Surname)

Université Paris 1, France  
(Institution of origin)

3. Professor Anthony Molho  
(Title) (Name and Surname)

European University , Florence  
(Institution of origin)

4. Professor Diamantis Panagiotopoulos  
(Title) (Name and Surname)

University of Heidelberg  
(Institution of origin)

5. Vincent Gabrielsen  
(Title) (Name and Surname)

University of Copenhagen  
(Institution of origin)

**N.B.** The structure of the “Template” proposed for the External Evaluation Report mirrors the requirements of Law 3374/2005 and corresponds overall to the structure of the Internal Evaluation Report submitted by the Department.

The length of text in each box is free. Questions included in each box are not exclusive nor should they always be answered separately; they are meant to provide a general outline of matters that should be addressed by the Committee when formulating its comments.

## ***Introduction***

### **I. The External Evaluation Procedure**

The present report has been written in accordance with the requirements of the Law 3374/2005 and the instructions and guidelines provided by the HAQAA.

- **Dates and brief account of the site visit.** The External Evaluation committee (EEC) visited the department of Archaeology and History, University of Crete, Rethymno from 20 to 22 September 2010. The visit took place in a very cooperative and collegial spirit, as regards the Faculty, the staff and the students. Moreover, the visit was completed in accordance with a detailed plan, prepared in advance by the Head of Department, although in some points, because of unexpected issues, it had to be slightly modified.
- **Whom did the Committee meet?** The EEC met the Vice Rector of the University, Prof. Iosiph Papamatheakis, the Head of Department, Prof. Sokratis Petmezaz and some of the members of the Internal Evaluation Committee. In addition, we had meetings with the administrative staff of the department, the majority of the teaching staff and groups of students, i.e. representatives of student organizations as well as random students at graduate, postgraduate and doctoral levels.
- **List of Reports, documents, other data examined by the Committee.** The EEC’s work is based on the Internal Evaluation Report as well as on a series of documents given to it during its visit to Rethymno. It is also based on such evidence that the EEC has been able to collect and which demonstrates the quality and quantity of the work in the department.
- **Groups of teaching and administrative staff and students interviewed.** The EEC interviewed separately the following groups: (a) representatives of all the departmental Sections and of all the postgraduate programmes; (b) groups of the undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral students; and (c) all the members of the administrative staff.
- **Facilities visited by the External Evaluation Committee.** The EEC visited those facilities that are within the department and those within the Faculty that are related to the work of the department. Particularly, we inspected some classrooms, some professors’ offices, meeting rooms, the offices of the administration staff, the History Lab, IT Lab, the Archaeological Labs, the University Library, the Institute for Mediterranean Studies, and the Students’ Dining Facility.
- **II. The Internal Evaluation Procedure**
- **Appropriateness of sources and documentation used.** The ECC finds that the sources and documentation used – statistical as well as qualitative – is appropriate. Especially we shall stress the comprehensiveness, accuracy and

soberness with which the *Internal Evaluation Report* was drafted.

**\*\*\*To what extent have the objectives of the internal evaluation process been met by the Department?** To the extent that the objectives of the internal evaluation have been to offer the EEC a clear picture of the activities of the department, it can be said that they have succeeded to a high degree.

**NB!** In composing its report the EEC has decided to depart slightly from the proposed structure of the document by producing a continuous and coherent text in which the answers to the questions asked do not appear exactly in the sequence given in the template but are interwoven in the text. Moreover, the graduate and doctoral programmes are dealt with together as their assessment raises similar issues.

## **A. Curriculum**

*To be filled separately for each undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programme.*

### **UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMME**

The overriding goals and objectives of all the undergraduate studies of the Department are the following: (a) to give to the students a fundamental knowledge in the subjects taught in the Department, and in the methods used in the study of these subjects; (b) to equip adequately students for becoming teachers in Secondary School education; (c) to prepare students for their successful advance to the graduate level of studies; and (d) to equip students with the critical faculties, competences and skills that are required for the pursuance of a further academic career and an orientation towards other fields of professional activity.

The objectives are largely consistent with the Curriculum and follow appropriate standards. They are decided by reference to a tradition that was established at the foundation of the department, and by continuous adjustments that reflect the development of the disciplines concerned, the professional future of the students and the needs of contemporary society. The unit has a procedure for the revision of the curriculum.

The Department's goal is clearly formulated and conscientiously implemented. It can also be said, however, that the Department is distinguishable from other departments that we are familiar with by the freedom it allows to the students to choose their courses, whether that freedom can be exercised because of practical considerations (such as conflicting schedules and enrollment limits in individual courses ) or because of established tradition. Our experience suggests that the request of some of the students interviewed for greater guidance in the selection of their courses may well be justified. Particularly useful may prove introductory courses that are obligatory for all first year students. Another remark is that the system can be expected to function even more efficiently in the future if the number of students accepted each year is reduced. The Department has considered various options for curricular change, but as long as there are no concrete plans to let the increase in the number of students be accompanied by the creation of new positions, it has concluded to maintain the present curricular system.

The Department makes a great effort to achieve its declared objectives. The teaching staff is aware of the fact that a great number of students are immatriculated in the Department not because they have chosen their area of studies, but because they have been assigned to them. To this should be added the unanimous opinion of the teaching staff that more students than previously lack basic knowledge when they initiate their studies. According to the teaching staff one result of this is that the entire group of students tends to be divided into three categories: (a) those who only with great effort and delay complete their studies; (b) those who are dedicated and complete their studies in time, but do not have the ability to excel; and (c) those who do complete their studies in time and excel. As it can be seen in *Internal Evaluation Report* p. 15, Table 4, the time it takes to complete the studies has in recent years markedly increased: only a small number of students complete their studies in normal time. Whereas ten years ago the whole group of students was divided into one half with low grades

and another half with good grades, now this twofold division is such that the low-grade group forms a majority. The number of students who complete their studies in the prescribed time of four years strikes us as very small (and decreases every year) and this despite the increase in the number of registered students. In this connection we wonder whether better academic counselling might lead to an improvement of the situation.

## **POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES**

### **1. The Ancient World**

The programme offers a high degree of specialization in the three fields of research: Prehistorical Archaeology, Classical Archaeology and Ancient History. Main objectives include the development of critical thought and a deep insight into the primary evidence as well as the modern scholarship in the field, including theoretical debates. A remarkable strength is the opportunity it offers through participation in archaeological excavation to acquire directly practical experience in fieldwork. It needs to be emphasized that the excellent cooperation that exists between archaeology and history is something that could stand as a model for a number of other European universities. The programme provides a fairly good thematic and chronological coverage. But in certain areas it would have been desirable that the innovative thinking that distinguishes the Department's Archaeologies in respect to methodological advances and thematic broadness become also a more prominent feature of the study of ancient history. Such an important discipline as that of epigraphy, for instance, features less prominently in the programme.

### **2. Byzantine Studies**

The programme of Byzantine Studies is eleven years old, and has specialized in the disciplines of history, philology, archaeology and the civilization of the Byzantine world as well as the relations of that world to the Balkan peoples. The programme is organized so that it consists of three directions: (a) history, (b) history of art and archaeology and (c) philology. A distinguishing feature is that the programme is cross-departmental and cross-disciplinary, in that there is a close cooperation with the Departments of Philology and Physics. Thus students have the opportunity to become familiarized with methods and themes that are very important for Byzantine studies. Even though philology is one of the three directions of the programme, one misses the presence of the Byzantine literary production. A merit of the direction "history" is its emphasis on the study of institutions and on certain important aspects of Byzantine reality. The direction "archaeology" features as the one with the best organization, particularly on account of its close links with physics laboratories. This characteristic can be said to offer graduate students increased possibilities for untraditional employment.

### **3. Turkish Studies**

One of the few, if not the only, in Greece, the post graduate programme in Turkish studies offers instruction in research methods, and promotes the acquisition of skills in areas that have a wide range of usages; namely, in the disciplines of the history of the Ottoman Empire, palaeography and language. Although the programme has been established very recently and its academic staff consists of very few and young scholars, thanks to their energy,



intelligence and commitment, it has already achieved important and very promising results. A merit is the programme's insistence that its students master Ottoman palaeography, thus being able to consult directly original sources – a clear prerequisite for high level research. It is an undoubted strength that the programme's graduates should be expected to find employment in areas outside the traditional academic world.

#### 4. Contemporary Greek and European History

This programme enjoys several important strengths. They are: its emphasis on the European dimension of historical study and the consequent distancing from a Hellenocentric approach; its introduction of students to a hands-on study of archives; its organization of summer seminars where students have a chance to present their work and discuss it with colleagues and other visitors. Additional opportunities are offered to students by the programme's close cooperation with the Institute for Mediterranean Studies, especially in helping them to join other research programmes and to secure funding as well as in providing them with the centre's well-equipped library. As is the case with the other programmes of the Department, professors in this one rightly emphasize theoretical, methodological and comparative historical aspects of European History. These enable the students to acquire the discursive tools with which to exchange views with historians from other parts of the world. A clear merit is that the courses deal with topics – e.g. the history of gender, history and memory, the forging of ethnic identities, etc. – that are at the centre of international historical discussion. They also reflect an awareness towards contemporary global issues, something that inevitably attracts the interest of the students. It would be desirable if coverage was also offered in the history of such parts of the world as Russia, China, India, etc.

#### 5. History of Art

Like the previous programme, the present one is distinguished by its non-Hellenocentric approach and its consequent emphasis on a broad and insightful coverage of Western European art from the Middle Ages to the present. This programme also offers to interested students the possibility to introduce themselves to the history of art in Antiquity and the Byzantine Empire. The programme has successfully given the discipline of the History of Art a scientific profile, separating it, as is often the case in European and American Universities, from the disciplines of Archaeology and History. Postgraduate students have the opportunity to regularly participate in projects sponsored by the Institute for Mediterranean Studies and to benefit from scholarships especially attached to this programme. In combination, these advantages may be part of the explanation for the attraction of this programme to students from other universities. In these times of financial exigency it is imperative that the Department continue to procure funds with which to cover the costs of travel to European and other art collections, an indispensable part of high-level training in Art History.

## ***B. Teaching***

In this Section the EEC will evaluate the Department's teaching activities as a whole.

The principles according to which the teaching staff conducts its teaching are laudable. First of all, all teaching is based on research, and therefore follows international standards. Secondly, a main aim of the teaching staff is to ensure a sensible progression in the acquisition by the students of knowledge and skills, and at the same time to maintain a high scholarly level. Thirdly, in most cases theoretical (i.e. class-room based) teaching is complemented by practical training (archaeological sites, laboratories and even private and public archives). Fourthly, the enthusiasm, commitment and devotion shared by the teaching staff to their responsibilities were all too evident during our exchanges, and it was just as clear that these qualities were transmitted also to their students. Three concrete examples can be provided as evidence of this: (a) The teaching staff do not rely on the distribution of a single monograph or manual, but rather encourage the students to prepare themselves by reading a more extensive bibliography; (b) no course is repeated within a four year period; (c) all sections frequently carry out excursions and training visits abroad and within Greece. Fifthly, it is admirable the extent to which most members of the teaching staff have succeeded in integrating the latest information technology into their teaching; it is to be noted that the Moodle platform is a welcome novelty.

In reflecting over the implementation of these principles, we have noted that they are applied to a large extent and with satisfactory efficacy. However, we also wish to draw attention to certain observations and raise a number of questions. We take note of the fact that all examinations are in written form. We wonder whether in some occasions it might be appropriate also to have oral exams; our suggestion is based on the belief that each of these two forms requires possession of different sets of skills. Given the importance of ever developing of one's teaching capabilities, it may prove advantageous to the Department to introduce measures that offer particularly (but not only) to its younger and less experienced staff the opportunity to increase their skills and competences in this area. In connection with the Curriculum, we advised the reduction of free choice, especially to first and second year students, in favour of firmer direction in their course selection. A greater degree of guidance is also advisable in connection with teaching, so that especially the first and second year students are led more securely through their course of studies. Possible ways of introducing improvements here include: (a) a more extensive and systematic use of the existing Moodle platform; (b) at the beginning of each course the professor should explain clearly (preferably in written form) the main goals of the course, particularly the skills and competences which he/she aims to instil into the students), so that each student is aware of what is required from him/her during the course and at the examinations. The Department is keenly aware of the varied rates of success of its undergraduate students. Nonetheless, even after long discussions and given the constraints of numbers and policies, it has been unable to devise a clear strategy of improving its students' rate of success. It is our strong recommendation that measures be taken to enable undergraduate students to complete their

studies within the prescribed four years. We take note of the Department's great success in attracting postgraduate students from a variety of Greek universities and in helping them to satisfactorily conclude their studies within the prescribed period of time. This leads us to believe that a reduction of the yearly intake of undergraduates might well lead to a betterment of the graduation rates and to a reduction of the years to completion of studies by the undergraduates. We shall mention that the Department attracts foreign students, especially through the ERASMUS exchange programme, who successfully participate in seminars and the training excavation work. A greater number of foreign students would be expected to be attracted to the Department if specially designed courses were offered in English, but the EEC observes that such an innovation is currently not possible. A Summer School for foreign students will also add to the strengths of the Department in this area.

### **C. Research**

*For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate level, if necessary.*

Preliminarily we should like to point out that the distinction between under- and postgraduate level research does not prove useful in this connection.

Generally speaking, we are impressed by the high level of the research produced by the academic staff of the Department and of the pronounced international profile of that research. The publications reported so far are equally divided between Greek language and foreign language publications, though the type of “articles in foreign scholarly journals” stands out for its numerical superiority. The relevant journals are for the most part internationally highly esteemed, peer-reviewed journals; add to this that several of the edited volumes and monographs are published by distinguished academic presses. The Department’s scholarly production is also impressive in quantitative terms: within the period of four year (2004-2008) its members have published no less than 289 items, of which nineteen are monographs; a similarly good publication record can be noted in the area of book reviews, a type of scholarly publication that seldom is taken into account, despite its academic significance in maintaining a high standard and its time-consuming nature.

We also find it commendable that a good number of the relevant publications communicate scholarly finds to broader, non-academic readership. Special mention for its prolific output and great coverage (chronological as well as thematic) deserves the work related to the excavations of the Department, particularly those at Eleutherna which are the oldest ones. It is our considered opinion that much of this successful publication record owes to the fact that the Department is supported by a well-functioning and well-equipped University Library – it ought to be noted, however, that everywhere the cost of interlibrary loan for postgraduates and doctoral students is very high. Among the research initiatives of the Department is the close collaboration with the Institute for Mediterranean Studies and the Department of Physics. Members of the academic staff have organized and co-organized international conferences and 1-day seminars that have attracted distinguished scholars from Greece and abroad. The proceedings of these conferences have often been published and represent original scholarly contributions in their respective fields. Also a considerable number of the Department’s academic staff have been invited to contribute to international conferences and to give lectures at various academic institutions in Greece and abroad.

The Department’s contacts with the international research environment will without any doubt be enhanced, if its members headed major international research programmes as principal investigators. It is therefore all the more regrettable that the University imposed structural impediments make it very difficult for the Department’s academic staff to apply for such programmes. In the same spirit, and in light of the broader range of expertise possessed by the Department, it would be an advantage to encourage a greater degree of research cooperation amongst its academic staff, especially amongst those who work on related topics or use similar approaches and methodologies.

An important part of a Department's research strategy is the effectiveness of its recruitment plans; indeed, one might say that the promotion of young and talented researchers is its lifeblood. Ordinarily the Ph.d.-studies function as the main platform of such recruitment. The number of Ph.d.-students at the Department seems within reasonable limits. However, the success rate is not satisfactory, and as can be seen from the *Internal Evaluation Report* p. 39, Table 9, the number of years spent to completion is excessive: none of the 10 Ph.d.-students who started in the year 2004 had obtained his/her degree four years later. It has not been possible for the EEC to ascertain the causes of such delays (lack of funding which often results in extra-academic work, or personal matters, or something else), so that no concrete suggestions can be made as to how improvements can be introduced in the important area of young researchers' recruitment. But that said, it may well be that the requirement that Ph.d.-students spend at least one year in residence would contribute to ameliorating this situation. We would also like to stress that even in the absence of full funding, it would be helpful for doctoral students to have access to small grants that would enable them to travel to libraries, archives, museums, and archaeological sites in order to conduct their research.

All in all, the overall quality of the research conducted at the Department is impressively high, resulting as it does, in the publication of large number of articles and books that are widely admired by the international community. If improvements are to be made in the area they concern the organization and funding of the doctoral programme, an area in which the university, not simply the Department, should feel a responsibility to strengthen. It would be desirable that all sections of the Department be financially supported at the same level as the section of archaeology.

### **D. All Other Services**

*For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate level, if necessary.*

Most of the administrative procedures, including the grading, are carried out electronically, thus rendering the conduct of the administration more efficient. There is an excellent co-operation between the members of the administrative staff, but they have expressed the need for separating the various administrative functions and setting them within a firmer, institutionalized structure. The recent employment of a new secretary has caused a marked improvement of the situation. Even though a computer technician assists the secretaries in many practical tasks, there is still a need for more thorough janitorial services, although it should be said that the Department's administration functions very well thanks to the willingness of its members to be flexible in the discharge of their responsibilities.

According to the *Internal Evaluation Report*, the physical distance between Rethymno and Iraklio and the distribution of the academic departments between the two cities render less efficient and more cumbersome the administrative life of the Department. According to the Vice Rector, however, the problem is not as acute as the Report claims.

Special mention deserves the University Library, on account of the richness of its collections, its service oriented staff, and its continuous effort to update its stock and internet resources. Moreover, it provides an aesthetically pleasant environment for reading and reflection. One of the positive results of this is that many students spend most of the day in Campus. Equally good services and a pleasant environment distinguish the Students Cafeteria and recreation areas.

All in all, the services provided can be said to be adequate and functional.

### **Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations**

**Please, comment on quality, originality and significance of the Department's initiatives.**

The members of the department have an excellent cooperation with various cultural, scientific, educational and other organizations. Especially close and fruitful is the co-operation of the archaeologists of the Department with members of the local archaeological Service. Moreover, the department organizes various events, including public lectures that are attended by the broader public from the local community.

### ***E. Strategic Planning, Perspectives for Improvement and Dealing with Potential Inhibiting Factors***

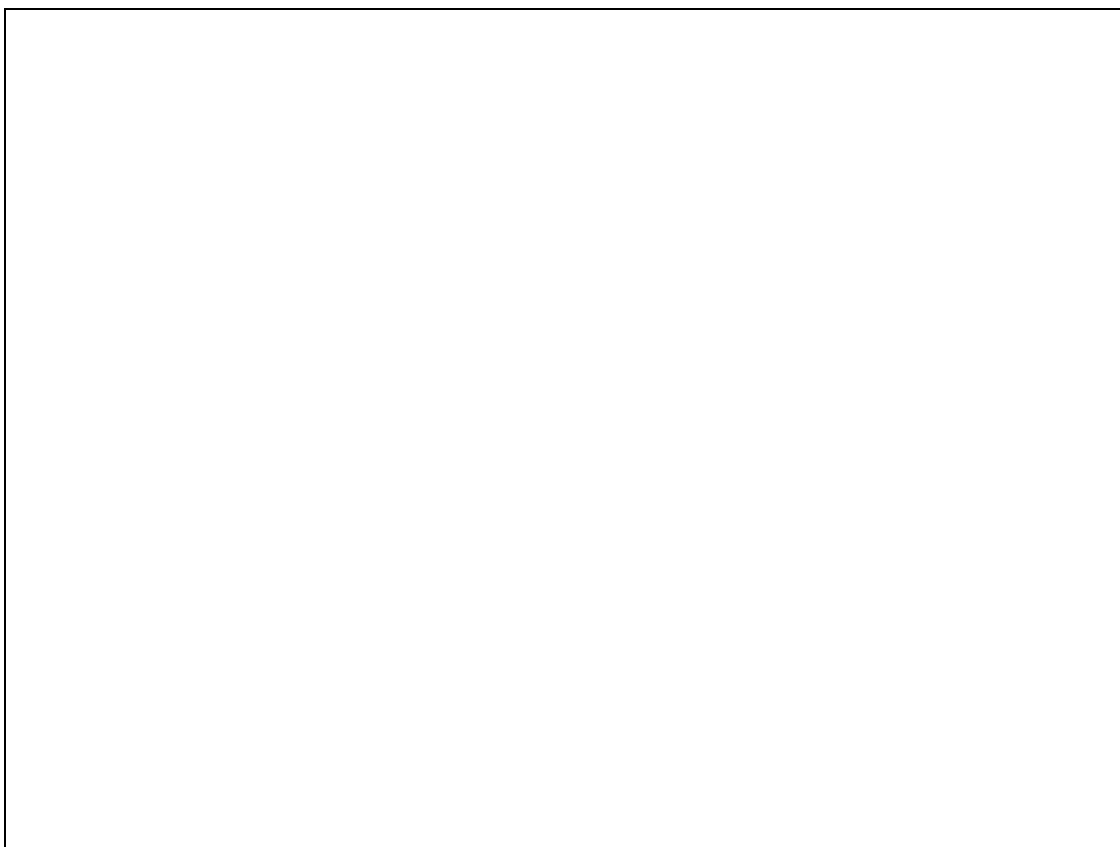
*For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate level, if necessary.*

- **Potential inhibiting factors at State, Institutional and Departmental level, and proposals on ways to overcome them.**

As we already stated, it is our conviction that the State must allow the Department to decide the number of students it admits each year. Furthermore, we are also convinced that a department of such excellence must be more generously supported financially, especially for the doctoral programme. At the Institutional level, we wish to encourage the greater openness of the central University administration towards the needs of a Humanities Faculty as such and the Department of History and Archaeology. At Departmental level, we endorse the Department's emphasis on research based teaching. But at the same time we also think that the Department must take responsibility for establishing introductory courses for first and second year students. Likewise we endorse and support the Department's intention of maintaining a high level of postgraduate teaching, but at the same time we propose the addition to its roster of certain fields of study and research such as Greek and Latin epigraphy and non-European history (esp. Africa and Asia). In response to the question relating to the "Potential Inhibiting factors, etc." we refer to the preceding sections of our Report, where these matters are dealt with in greater detail.

In addition to the short- and long term goals we have pointed out in this Report, the Department should take an active interest in enhancing its international presence by making possible for students from other countries to attend its programmes. The University administration will surely be sensitive to the advantages of establishing such international presence and thus be willing to provide financial support. We can only support

To increase its efficiency the Department will need additional space to accommodate the collection of casts, which now is dispersed in various places.



### ***F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC***

*For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate level, if necessary.*

As we pointed out above, the Department has a considerable number of strengths, but also a few weaknesses. Clear strengths include: (a) the excellent international academic profile of the Department's members; (b) the originality and quality of teaching, especially the interdisciplinary and experimental character of many courses; (c) the excellent scholarly and physical infrastructure (Library, Laboratories, etc.); (d) in terms of research and teaching the sections of Turkish Studies, Archaeology and History of Art are genuine spearheads that contribute greatly to bringing the Department into a synergetic relationship at once with its Cretan base and the international academic community; (e) the very high scholarly standard of the Ph.d.-candidates; and (f) a well run and efficiently organized Department administration.

However, in certain areas there is also room for some improvement. To begin with, (a) the organization of the undergraduate programme should be more streamlined as to be brought into accord with international practice; (b) a number of required courses should be introduced for the first and second year students, and more guidance should be offered in the selection of their studies; (c) an effort must be made to entice the undergraduate and doctoral students to complete their studies within the prescribed period of time; (d) the cooperation of teaching staff with different specialties in running a joint common course



should be institutionally integrated into the organization of the Department. We are convinced that the institutionalization of limits in the duration of undergraduate studies (whether in accordance with the system of the Bologna agreement or with some other system) will benefit greatly the organization of the Department's studies.

When all is said and done, we find that this is a Department that possesses all the requisites for being recognized as a Centre of Excellence. It is fully equipped to thrive academically in the future and to overcome any difficulties it may experience currently.

## The Members of the Committee

| Name and Surname | Signature |
|------------------|-----------|
| 1. _____         |           |
| 2. _____         |           |
| 3. _____         |           |
| 4. _____         |           |
| 5. _____         |           |