

## **AGREEMENT**

### **between the Holy See and the Republic of Lithuania on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education**

THE HOLY SEE

and

THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA (hereinafter referred to as the "Parties"),

*having regard for* the ongoing implementation of the Agreement between the Holy See and the Republic of Lithuania on co-operation in education and culture (signed on 5 May 2000),

*having regard to* the Council of Europe and UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, signed on 11 April 1997 in Lisbon (hereinafter referred to as the "Lisbon Recognition Convention")-, which was ratified by both Parties,

*confirming* their obligation, in accordance with the Bologna Process, to participate fully in the construction of the European area of higher education, to improve the transparency of higher education qualifications conferred by authorized institutions and to facilitate the mobility of students and teachers of higher education institutions of the Parties,

have agreed as follows:

#### **Article 1**

#### **Purpose of the Agreement**

The purpose of the present Agreement shall be:

1. Improvement of the transparency for the competent authority of the other Party of secondary education and higher education qualifications obtained in the institutions belonging to Lithuania's higher education system (hereinafter referred to as the "Lithuanian higher education institutions") and those earned in the Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties which have been canonically erected or approved by the Holy See and which have the right to confer academic degrees by the authority of the Holy See (hereinafter referred to as the "Holy See's higher education institutions").
2. Recognition of qualifications giving access to higher education, as well as study titles necessary to permit enrolment in a Faculty after periods of study completed and qualifications conferred in the higher education institutions belonging to the educational systems of the Parties, with the aim of beginning or continuing studies of the same or a higher cycle in the higher

education institutions of the other Party referred to in Article 2.2 of the present Agreement.

## **Article 2**

### **Scope of application**

1. The present Agreement shall be applied to:

Documents certifying secondary education acquired in the institutions belonging to the education system of the Republic of Lithuania, periods of study completed in Lithuanian higher education institutions and higher education qualifications conferred by these institutions.

Documents certifying periods of study completed in the Holy See's higher education institutions and higher education qualifications conferred by these institutions.

2. The Parties shall draw up lists of higher education institutions recognized by legal acts of each Party. The list of Lithuanian higher education institutions shall be drawn up by and published on the website of the Ministry of Education and Science. The list of the Holy See's higher education institutions shall be drawn up by and published on the website of the Congregation for Catholic Education. The Parties shall also provide, upon request, printed copies of the said lists, updated and approved by the authorized institutions.

3. Each of the Parties shall designate competent bodies authorized to cooperate with each other and provide information to the interested parties, such as higher education institutions and employers, concerning the equivalence of the qualifications within the scope of the present Agreement, the education systems of both Parties and changes therein.

## **Article 3**

### **Recognition of secondary education**

The secondary education acquired in the institutions belonging to the education system of the Republic of Lithuania gives its holder the right to seek admission to the first cycle programmes of study in the Holy See's higher education institutions. The admission may be subject to additional requirements, if it is provided for by the legal acts of the receiving Party and/or the requirements of the higher education institution in question.

## **Article 4**

### **Periods of study and their recognition**

Periods of study completed in a higher education institution of one of the Parties, according to the lists presented in Article 2.2, shall be recognized when the studies are continued in a higher education institution of the other Party on the basis of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and in accordance with the legal acts of the Parties governing studies.

## **Article 5**

### **Recognition of higher education qualifications**

1. The recognition of qualifications obtained in higher education institutions of the Parties shall be carried out on the basis of the qualification level indicating equivalents set out in the Annex to the present Agreement, which constitutes an integral part thereof, unless substantial differences are established between higher education qualifications of the Parties.
2. The recognition of *Sacrae Theologiae Licentiatus*, *Iuris Canonici Licentiatus* and *Historiae Ecclesiasticae Licentiatus* obtained in the Holy See's higher education institutions shall be carried out with due regard to the specificity of these qualifications. The recognition decision shall equate the level of qualifications and shall also refer to the original title of the qualification obtained.
3. When accrediting higher education qualifications as part of studies, account may be taken of additional terms, specified by the legal acts of the Parties and/or the requirements of the higher education institution where studies are to be continued.
4. Qualifications conferred by higher education institutions of the Parties, other than those specified in the table of equivalent qualifications of the Annex, shall be evaluated and recognized in accordance with the provisions of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the legal acts of the Parties.
5. With a view to ensuring mutual recognition, studies in the first cycle of Catholic theology being taught in institutions of higher education in Lithuania shall have the same period of study, scope and structure as required by the documents of the Holy See.

## **Article 6**

### **Evaluation of programmes of study governed by the Congregation for Catholic Education of the Holy See**

With a view to ensuring the conformity of the quality of study programmes governed by the Congregation for Catholic Education of the Holy See and taught in higher education institutions of the Republic of Lithuania according to the requirements of the Holy See and the Republic of Lithuania as well as the recognition by and transparency of the acquired education and qualifications for other states, external evaluation and accreditation of these programmes of study shall be carried out by the Holy See's Agency for the Evaluation and Promotion of Quality in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties (AVEPRO) and the Congregation for Catholic Education accordingly. These institutions shall present the conclusions of the evaluation and accreditation to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania. Study programmes governed by the Congregation for Catholic Education of the Holy See and taught in higher education institutions of the Republic of Lithuania shall be accredited at least once every six years.

## **Article 7**

### **Implementation of the Agreement**

1. For the purpose of implementation of the present Agreement the authorized institutions of the Parties shall be:

In the Holy See - the Congregation for Catholic Education;

In the Republic of Lithuania - the Ministry of Education and Science (hereinafter referred to as the "Parties' authorized institutions").

2. For consultations concerning all questions arising from the application of the present Agreement the Parties' authorized institutions shall form an Experts' Commission consisting of no fewer than three members appointed by the authorized institution of each Party. The lists of the Experts' Commission shall be presented through diplomatic channels.

3. The tasks of the Experts' Commission shall be as follows:

3.1. care of the proper application of the present Agreement and submission of proposals for its improvement;

3.2. timely exchange of information on the changes in higher education systems of the Parties;

3.3. provision of information on recognition procedures and results;

3.4. resolution of disputes concerning the interpretation and application of the provisions of the present Agreement by means of negotiations and consultations.

4. The meetings of the Experts' Commission shall be held alternately in the Republic of Lithuania and the Holy See on proposal of the authorized institution of one of the Parties.

## **Article 8**

### **Validity, entry into force, amendment and termination of the Agreement**

1 The present Agreement shall be concluded for an indefinite period of time.

2 The present Agreement shall enter into force on the day when both Parties inform each other via diplomatic notes that each Party have fulfilled the internal legal procedures necessary for the entry into force of this Agreement. The day of entry into force shall be the day of the receipt of the last note.

3 The present Agreement may be supplemented and/or amended on mutual agreement of the Parties. Amendments and supplements shall be executed as protocols, which shall form an integral part of the present Agreement, and enter into force in accordance with the procedure set out in paragraph 2 of this Article.

4 One of the Parties may terminate the present Agreement by written notification to the other Party through diplomatic channels. The present Agreement shall cease to be in force six months after the day on which the other Party receives a notice of its termination.

Done in Vilnius on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2012, in two original copies, in the English and Lithuanian languages, both texts being equally authentic.

For the Holy See

X Luigi BONAZZI

For the Republic of Lithuania

Audronius AŽUBALIS

## **ANNEX**

### **to the Agreement between the Holy See and the Republic of Lithuania on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education**

#### **A COMPARATIVE TABLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS**

Under the present Agreement the recognition of qualifications

concerning higher education acquired in the Holy See and the Republic of Lithuania shall be carried out on the basis of the following qualification level indicating equivalents:

	The Holy See	Republic of Lithuania
First-Cycle	<i>Baccalaureatus</i> <sup>1</sup> or an accredited part thereof	<i>Professional Bachelor</i>
	<i>Baccalaureatus</i> <sup>1</sup> <i>Sacrae Theologiae</i> <i>Baccalaureatus</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>Bachelor</i>
Second-Cycle	<i>Master</i> <sup>2</sup> <i>Licentia</i> <sup>3</sup> <i>Sacrae Theologiae</i> <i>Licentiatus</i> <sup>4</sup> <i>Iuris Canonici Licentiatus</i> <sup>3</sup> <i>Historiae Ecclesiasticae</i> <i>Licentiatus</i> <sup>3</sup>	<i>Master</i>  <i>Master</i>  <i>(Licentiate of Theology)</i>
	<i>Doctoratus</i> <sup>5</sup>	<i>Doctor of Science</i> <i>Doctor of Arts</i>

<sup>1</sup> Studies lasting no less than 3 years comprising at least 180 ECTS credits.

<sup>2</sup> Studies lasting no less than 1 year following the first cycle of studies and representing a total volume of at least 240 ECTS credits.

<sup>3</sup> Studies lasting no less than 2 years following the first cycle of studies and representing a total volume of at least 300 ECTS credits.

<sup>4</sup> Studies lasting no less than 2 years following the first cycle of studies and representing a total volume of at least 420 ECTS credits.

<sup>5</sup> Studies lasting no less than 2 years, to which the holder of the qualification of *Licentia* or *Licentiatus*, mentioned in the table above, is admitted or studies lasting no less than 3 years, to which the holder of the qualification of *Master* is admitted.