# Action A7

## INITIAL SEMINAR

*Blended learning for increasing youth opportunities*
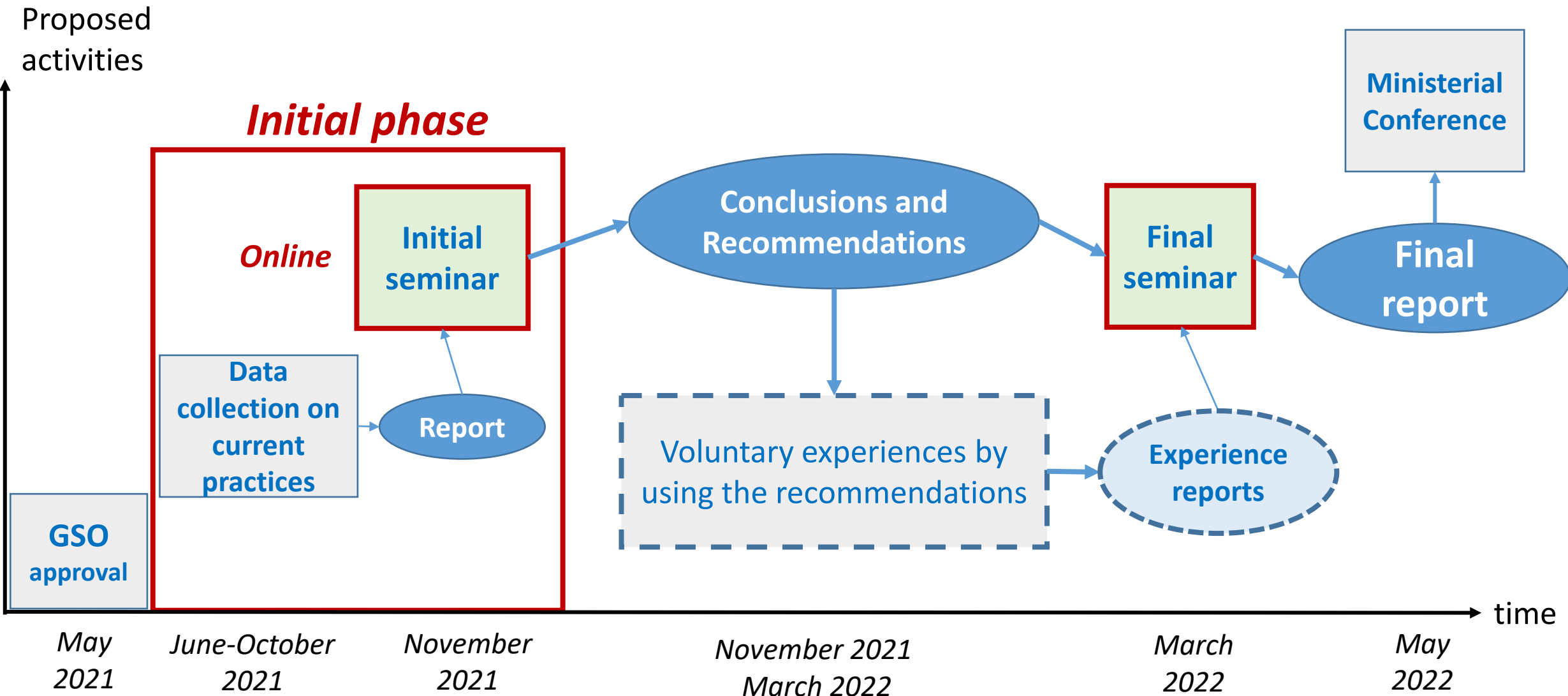
*Gonzalo León (Spain)*
*Abdelouahid Ezzarfi (Morocco)*

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# Context of Action A7

- **Give better opportunities to youth** was the main goal of the last *Ministerial Conference of Dialogue 5+5* in Rome (2019)
- **Blended learning** was considered as one of the instruments to increase opportunities for young people in the region by updating their skills
- **Action A7** was included in the Work Programme 2020-2021 of the Dialogue 5+5 to analyse the use of "blended learning" models in the region and to increase its impact in the future
  - ✓ Morocco and Spain assumed the co-leadership
- Information for this report was collected from a **survey** based on a **questionnaire** prepared and sent to all delegations

# Planning of A7



**Proposed activities**

*Initial phase*

*Online*

**GSO approval**

**Data collection on current practices**

**Report**

**Initial seminar**

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

Voluntary experiences by using the recommendations

**Experience reports**

**Final seminar**

**Final report**

**Ministerial Conference**

time

| May 2021 | June-October 2021 | November 2021 | November 2021 March 2022 | March 2022 | May 2022 |

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# Objectives of the Seminar on A7

- to *present and discuss* the data processed from the answers received to the survey on A7
- to *learn* from best practices in participating countries
- to *complete* the preliminary report with further insights
- to *extract recommendations for future work* for the next Dialogue 5+5 Ministerial Conference in Mauritania 2022

# Initial Survey

## Type of information requested:

- ✓ **On the legislative framework**
    - At what extent blended learning is part of the governmental university legal framework

- ✓ **On the institutional regulatory framework**
    - How is blended learning included in university studies?
    - What are the internal regulations of universities to deal with?
    - Quality Assurance

- ✓ **On the support to blended learning**
    - Main features of the existing support programmes
    - Incentives
    - Interaction with COVID-19

- ✓ **On the future evolution**
    - Cooperation at international level

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# Presentation of the results

- This **preliminary version of the report** has included data provided by the delegations of
  - ✓ Mauritania, Morocco, France, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain.
- The **structure of the report** follows the ordered questions included in the survey prepared for this Action 7.
  - ✓ After each question, the document also includes all comments received related to that question.
  - ✓ This presentation has extracted some relevant issues
- The report presents some **conclusions and suggestions** for future work to be discussed and finalised during the Seminar
- After the seminar, a **refined version** will be prepared
  - ✓ To be presented in the GSO meeting 2-3 December 2021

# Conclusions of the Survey (I)

**Not all countries participating in this survey have specific governmental legislations and regulations that support blended learning at national level.**

| Mauritania | Morocco | France | Italy | Malta | Portugal | Spain |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NO | YES | YES | YES | NO | NO | YES |

a. The use of blended learning relies on the responsibility of universities and higher education establishments.

b. The concept of blended learning is understood in very different ways

c. In countries where regulations were set (Morocco, France, Italy, Spain) there is not a clear border with distance education.

> **Suggestion for future work in Dialogue 5+5:**
>
> Clarification on the concept of blended learning in the region is needed to be able to propose specific actions and to differentiate them with distance learning.

# Conclusions of the Survey (II)

**Regulations for "distance learning" are common in countries to ensure quality, rights, and obligations.**

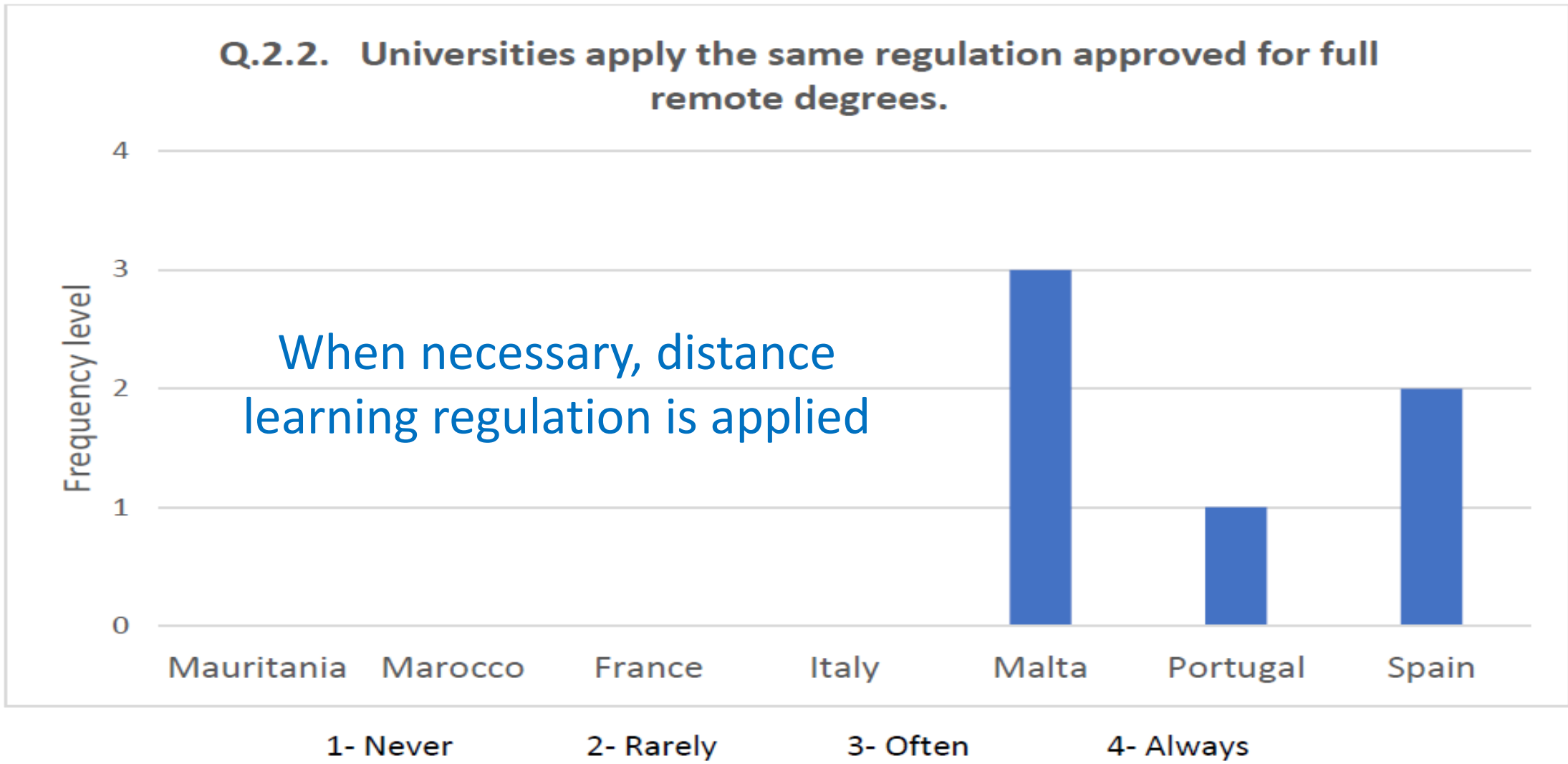| Mauritania | Morocco | France | Italy | Malta | Portugal | Spain |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| --- | NO | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES |

a. Nevertheless, there are not specific references to blended learning.

    i. It is considered an implementation issue of university degrees except when they become full distance degrees.

    ii. In countries like Italy the applicable regulation is for distance education.

b. Other countries like Malta are in the process of approving a regulation

> **Suggestion for future work in Dialogue 5+5:**
>
> Perform a detailed comparison analysis of regulations approved at national level to help participants to learn from others.

# Conclusions of the Survey (III)



Q.2.2. Universities apply the same regulation approved for full remote degrees.

When necessary, distance learning regulation is applied

1- Never     2- Rarely     3- Often     4- Always

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# Conclusions of the Survey (IV)

**Except in the case of Morocco, regulations are not linked to specific programmes for ICT**

  a. In the EU the access to ICT solutions is not a regulatory problem in universities.
  
      i. It does not mean that universities have not allocated extraordinary budgets to facilitate students the access to remote courses (part of digitisation programmes)

  b. Digital platforms are very different and decided at individual university level. Universities are not committed to use specific ones.

      i. Morocco : Google classroom, Moodle, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, Zoom, …
  
      ii. Portugal : Zoom and Microsoft Teams

> **Suggestion for future work in Dialogue 5+5:**
>
> Analysis of the interoperability of digital platforms and software tools used in Dialogue 5+5 universities to conduct blended learning and to exchange educational modules

# Conclusions of the Survey (V)

**Universities and higher education establishments are using blended learning for all types of courses.**
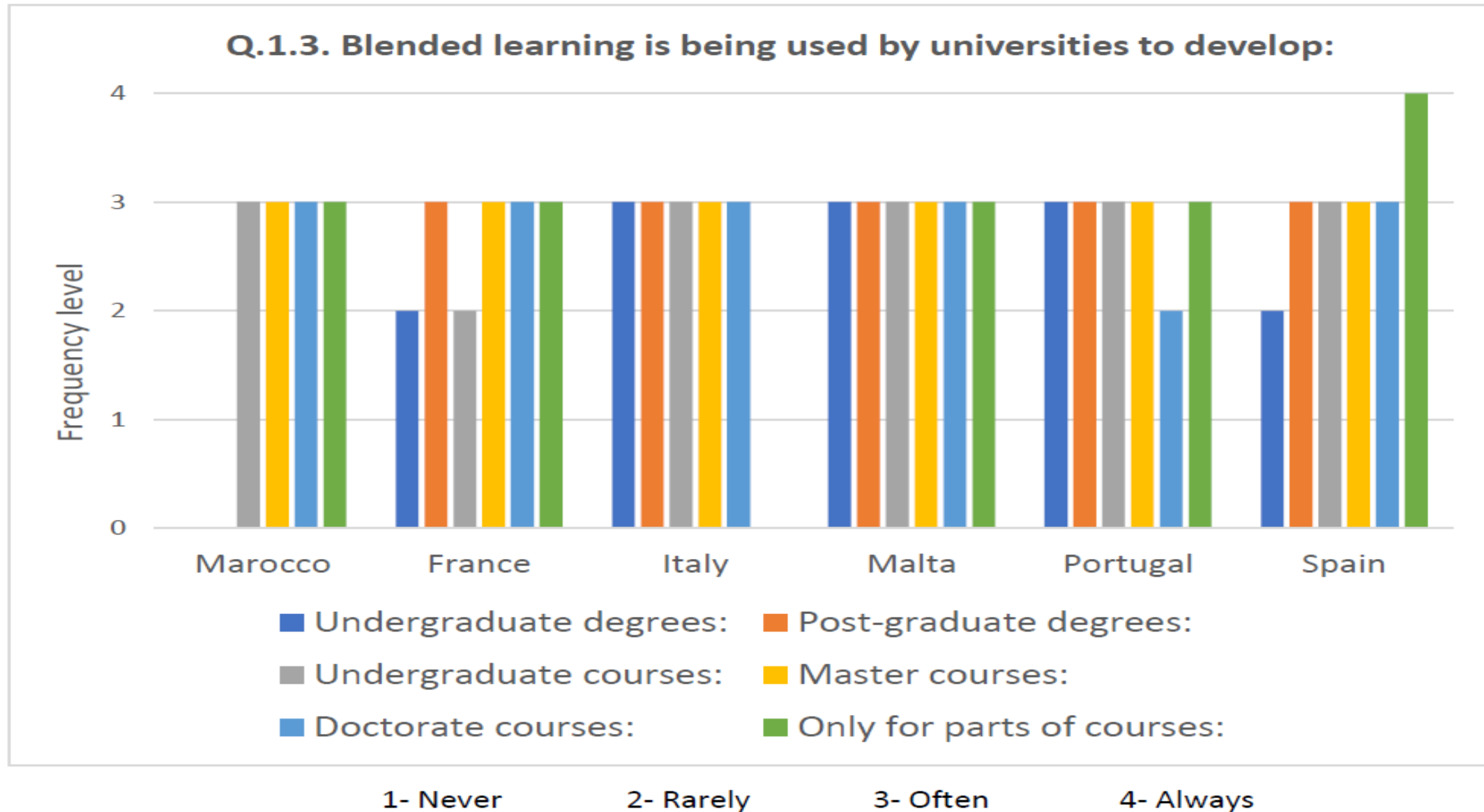
    a. From undergraduate to doctorate courses based on their institutional strategy

        i. Explicitly mentioned in the cases of Morocco, Malta, Portugal and Spain.

    b. Blended learning is applied for all tertiary education levels.

        i. Decisions made by universities according to their autonomy.

    c. "Guidelines" for distance education prepared by individual universities or in international contexts:

        i. Morocco, in partnership with the Francophone University Agency (AUF), has prepared the contents of modules with learning guides

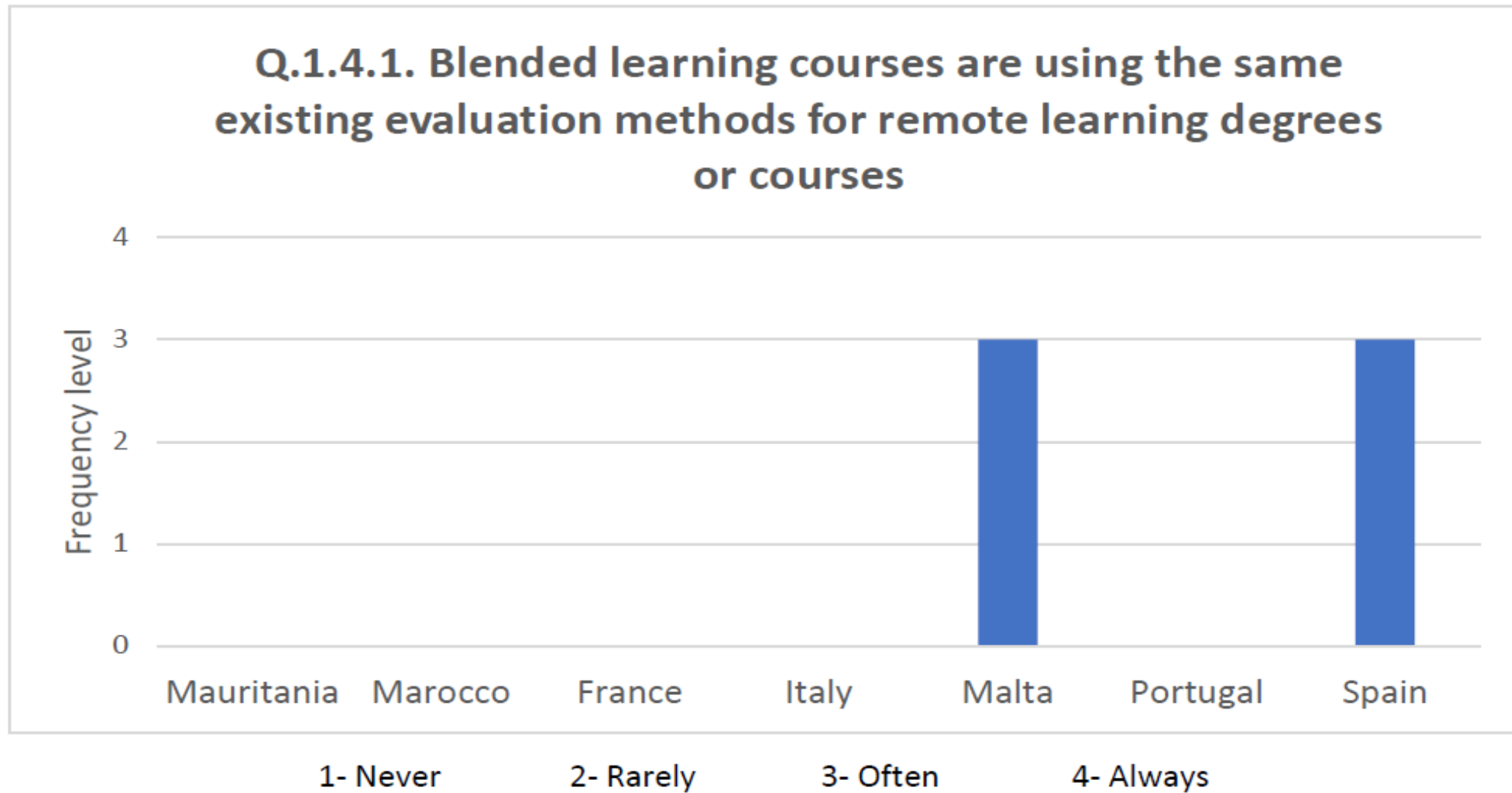**Suggestion for future work in Dialogue 5+5:**

Make available guidelines on the use of blended learning to improve its efficacy in the learning processes in university courses; maybe in cooperation with UfM

# Conclusions of the Survey (VI)



Q.1.3. Blended learning is being used by universities to develop:

1- Never     2- Rarely     3- Often     4- Always

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# Conclusions of the Survey (VII)



Q.1.4.1. Blended learning courses are using the same existing evaluation methods for remote learning degrees or courses

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# Conclusions of the Survey (VIII)



Q.2.3. The universities themselves decide to use blended learning based on their institutional strategy

1- Never          2- Rarely          3- Often          4- Always
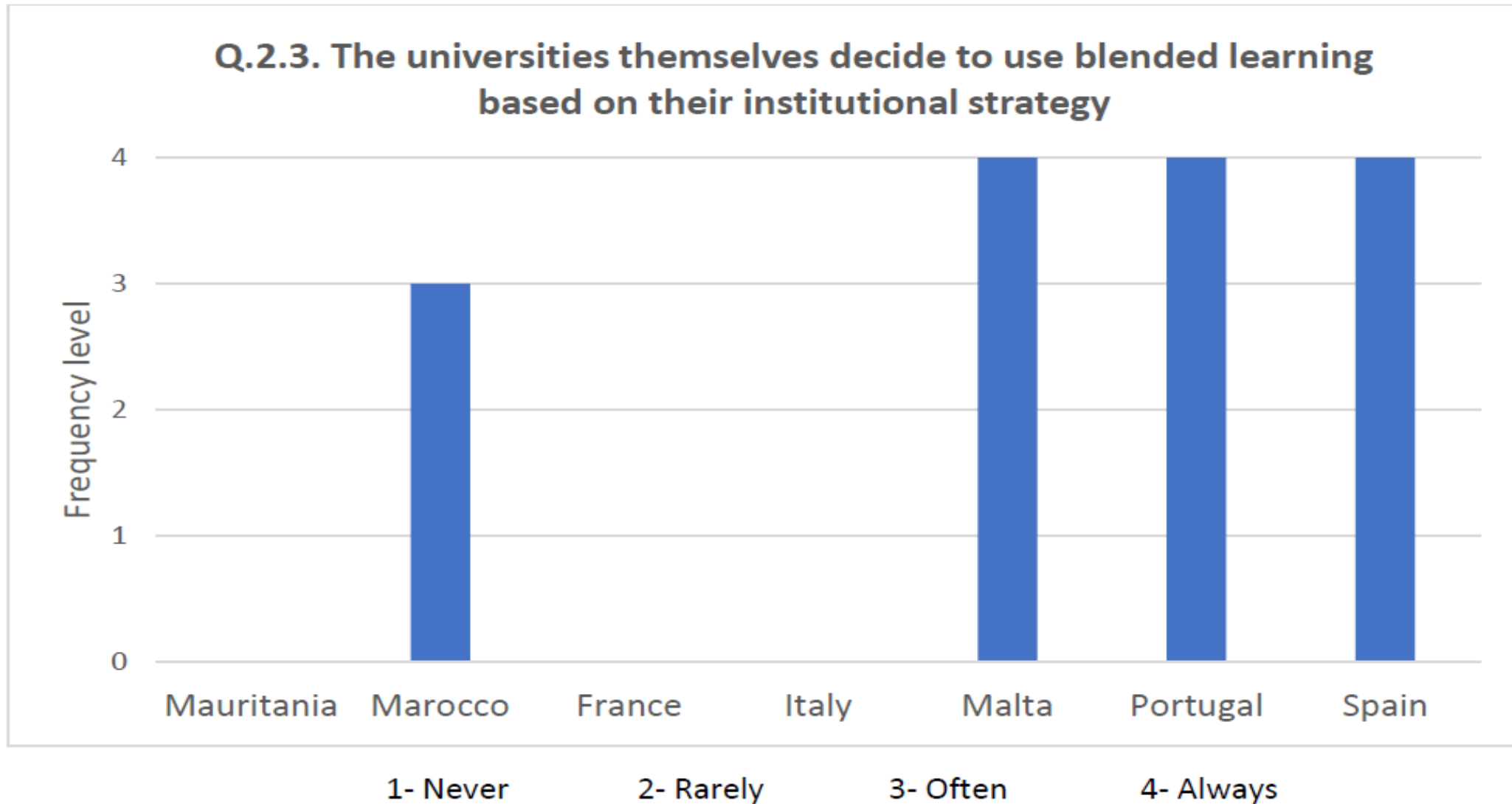
# Conclusions of the Survey (IX)

**All participating countries have national agencies to control the quality of university degrees which also act on blended and distance degrees.**

a. Quality Assurance Agencies are common:

    i. HCERES in France, ANECA in Spain, ANVUR in Italy, E3ES in Portugal, MFHEA in Malta, ANEAQ in Morocco

b. Regulations try to define/adapt quality assurance systems for grading students for blended learning through specific national agencies.

    i. Agencies in Malta, Portugal and Spain have adapted their regulations (degrees or courses).

    ii. In Portugal, there is no quality assurance and accreditation of diplomas, only of courses.

c. Control procedures, instruments and guidelines widely differ between countries

    i. The International Quality Seals (SIC) implemented in ANECA (Spain) are periodically audited by the international associations ENQA, ENAEE, EQANIE and ECTN.

> **<u>Suggestion for future work in Dialogue 5+5</u>:**
>
> Interaction with Quality Assurance Agencies of all countries for exchanging lessons learned and to agree on common guidelines

# Conclusions of the Survey (X)



Q.2.7. The QAA agencies /ministry in your country are on their way to develop external review procedures that take into consideration the particularities of e-learning/blended learning.

1- Never    2- Rarely    3- Often    4- Always
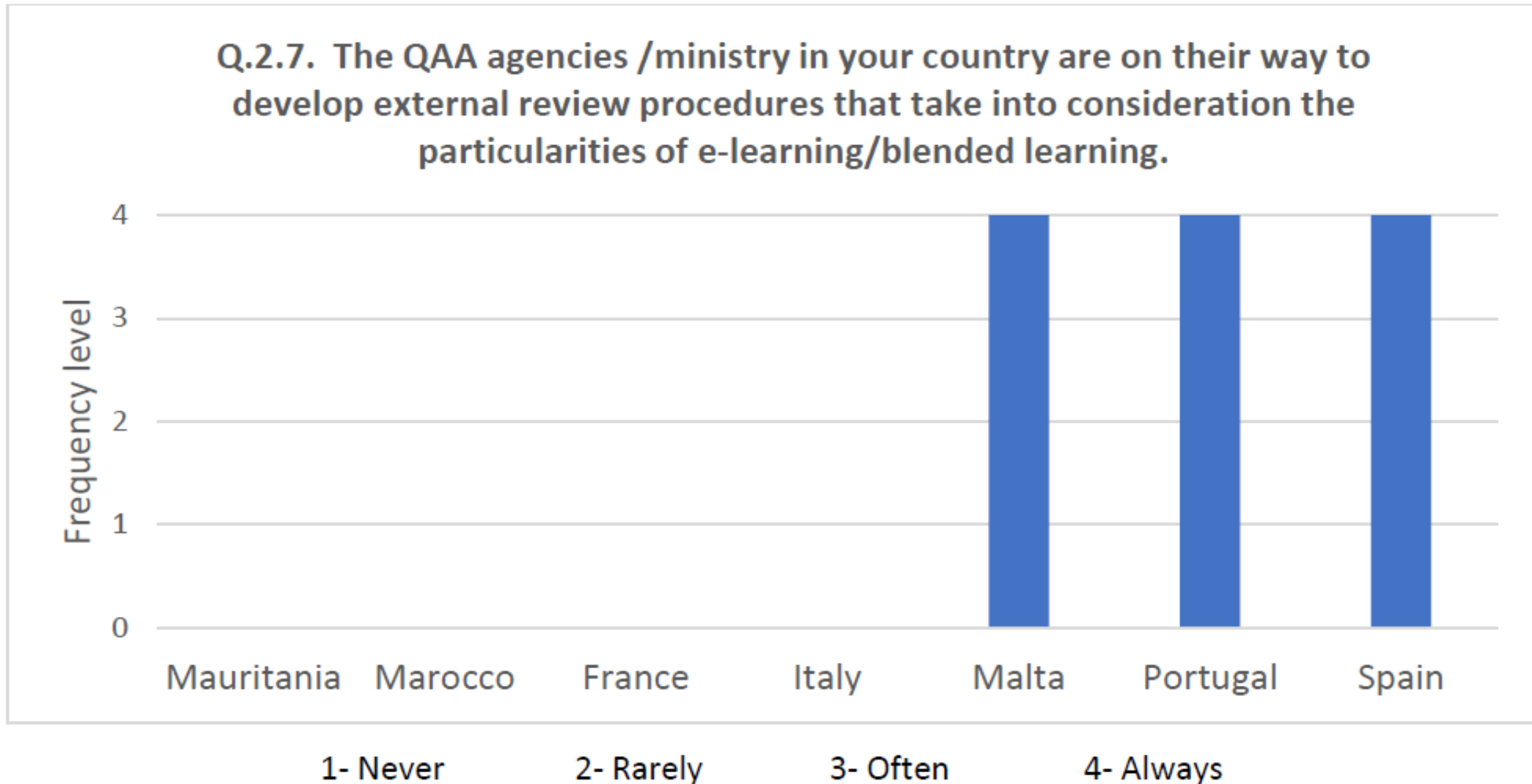
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# Conclusions of the Survey (XI)

**Universities have adapted their internal quality procedures to the case of blended learning.**

    a. Confinements / quarantines during COVID-19 pandemic

        i. Analysis of difficulties of students to follow blended courses.

    b. Evaluation of the results to control the performance of students in blended learning method are explicitly mentioned in Morocco, Malta, and Spain.

        i. student surveys on the effectiveness of the blended learning approach.

    c. Distance evaluation made more difficult to manage students and groups of students
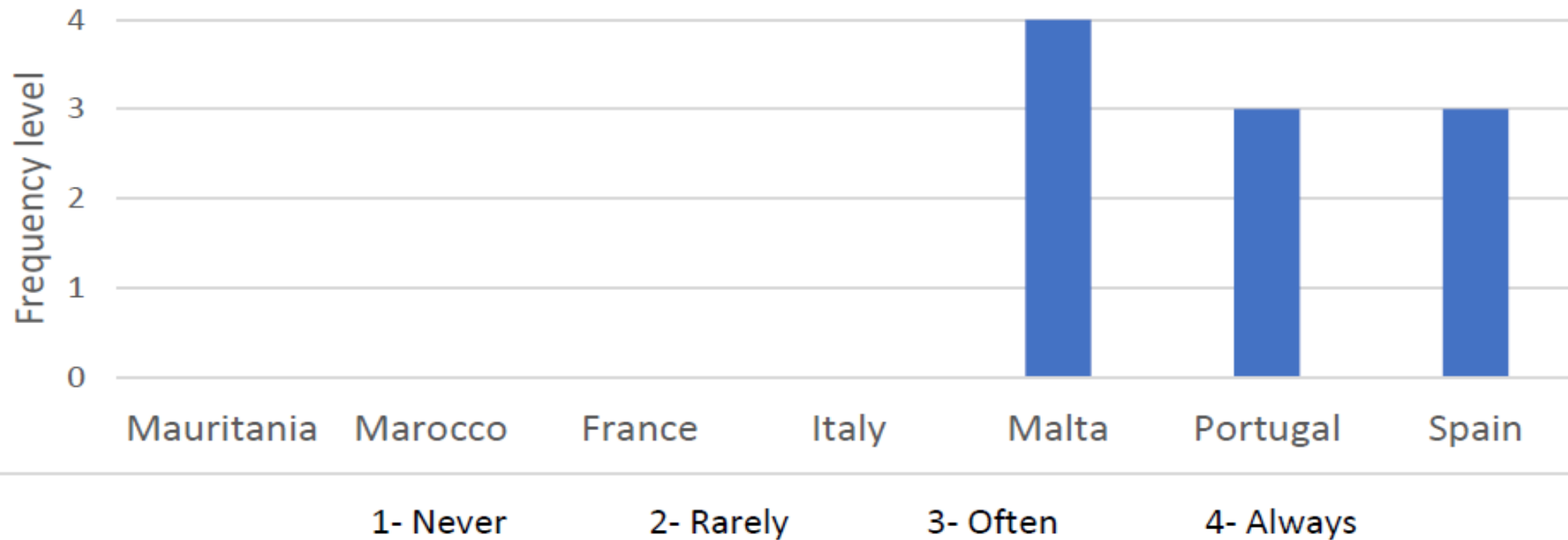
**Suggestion for future work in Dialogue 5+5:**

Exchange experiences in the use of digital platforms for evaluation of students. This suggestion is supported by the fact that there are no community of shared practice, peer learning, and peer support over the last two years on integrating blended learning in Quality Assurance evaluation process and standards.
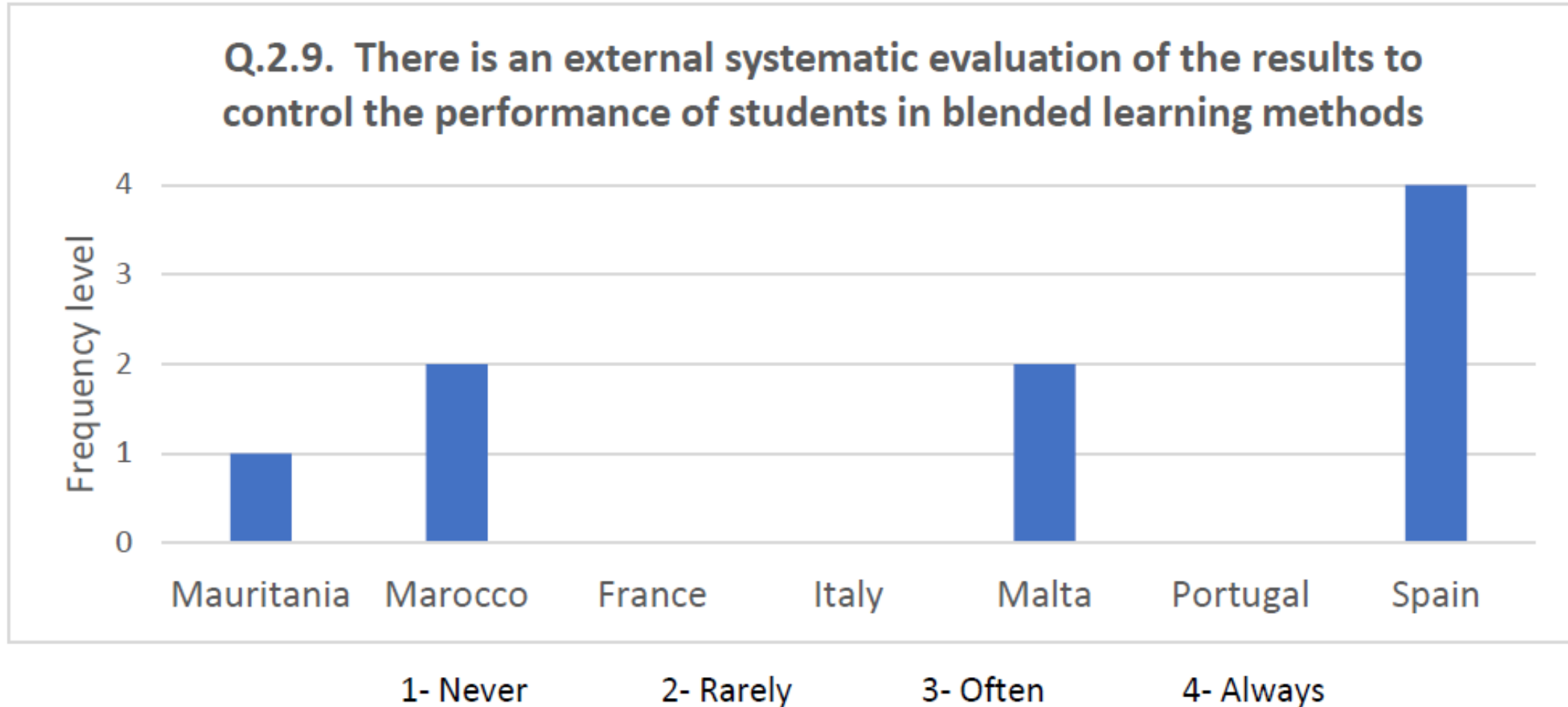
# Conclusions of the Survey (XII)



Q.2.6. Universities (HEI organizations) are adapting their internal quality assurance systems to guarantee the quality of their teaching and learning processes in case of blended learning schemes
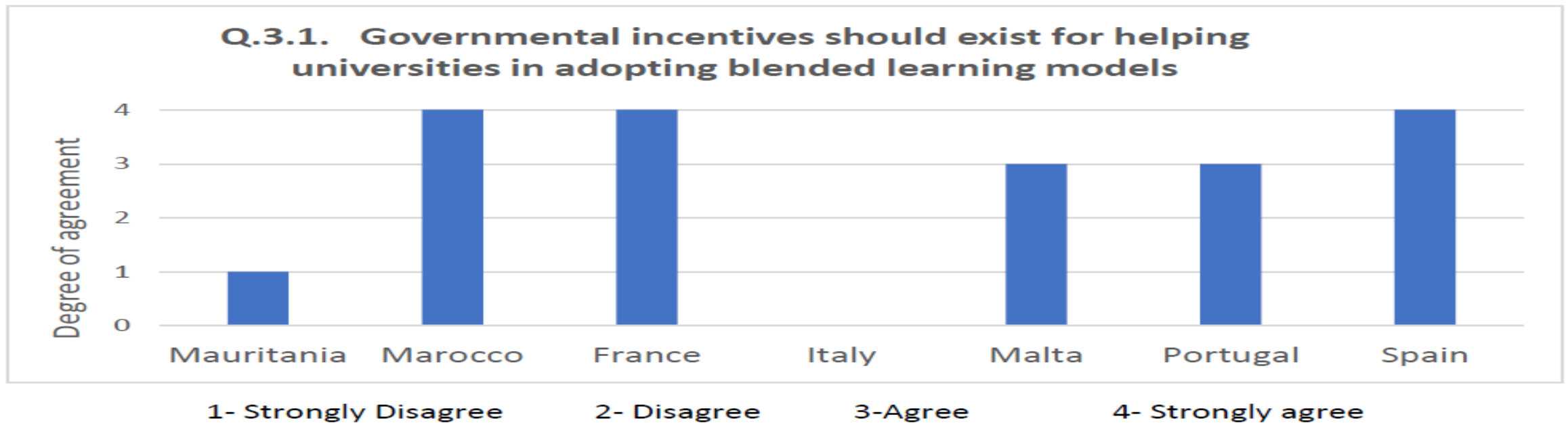
1- Never        2- Rarely        3- Often        4- Always

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# Conclusions of the Survey (XIII)



Q.2.9. There is an external systematic evaluation of the results to control the performance of students in blended learning methods

1- Never    2- Rarely    3- Often    4- Always

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# Conclusions of the Survey (XIV)

**Governmental plans and incentives to increase the use of blended learning in the future in university or higher education establishment degrees were set-up in the last two years**



Q.3.1. Governmental incentives should exist for helping universities in adopting blended learning models

1- Strongly Disagree    2- Disagree    3-Agree    4- Strongly agree

**Suggestion for future work in Dialogue 5+5:**

Promote the creation of an "Observatory on blended learning experiences". UfM could be the main organiser.

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# Conclusions of the Survey (XV)

a. Morocco, France, Portugal, Spain and Malta have specific governmental programmes.

    i. In Portugal, Recovery and Resilience Plan, there is a call for funding projects from higher education institutions aimed at training young people in STEAM areas which may include courses that adopt blending learning.

    ii. In Spain, ERASMUS+ and KICs of the EIT are mentioned as drivers.

    iii. The national platform "Morocco Digital University" (MUN) is a project dedicated to online courses (MOOC) and private small group online courses (SPOC).

b. Italy connects blended learning with the Digital Education Action Plan
https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/digital-education-action-plan_en

c. In Malta, France, Portugal, and Spain the courses with blended learning in universities in the last two years are above 30% of the total  with more than 30% of students involved

# Conclusions of the Survey (XVI)

**Governments in the region have created specific incentives to implement blended learning.**

   a. In all cases, universities are devoting part of the budgets received from governments to implement blended learning schemes.

      i. Some countries as France and Spain are supporting universities with specific grants (>100,000 euros) for extending the use of blended learning.

   b. It is mainly used to purchase equipment and licenses of platforms and to develop new blended courses.

      i. Morocco has more than 111.000 diverse digital resources produced, covering between 70% and 100% of the programmed pedagogical contents during this period.

> **Suggestion for future work in Dialogue 5+5:**
>
> There are many opportunities to reuse educational material developed in blended modules. One suggestion is the creating of open common repositories, organised by themes in the priority areas of Dialogue 5+5.

# Conclusions of the Survey (XVII)



Q.3.1.1. Type of goals that are related to incentives for blended learning

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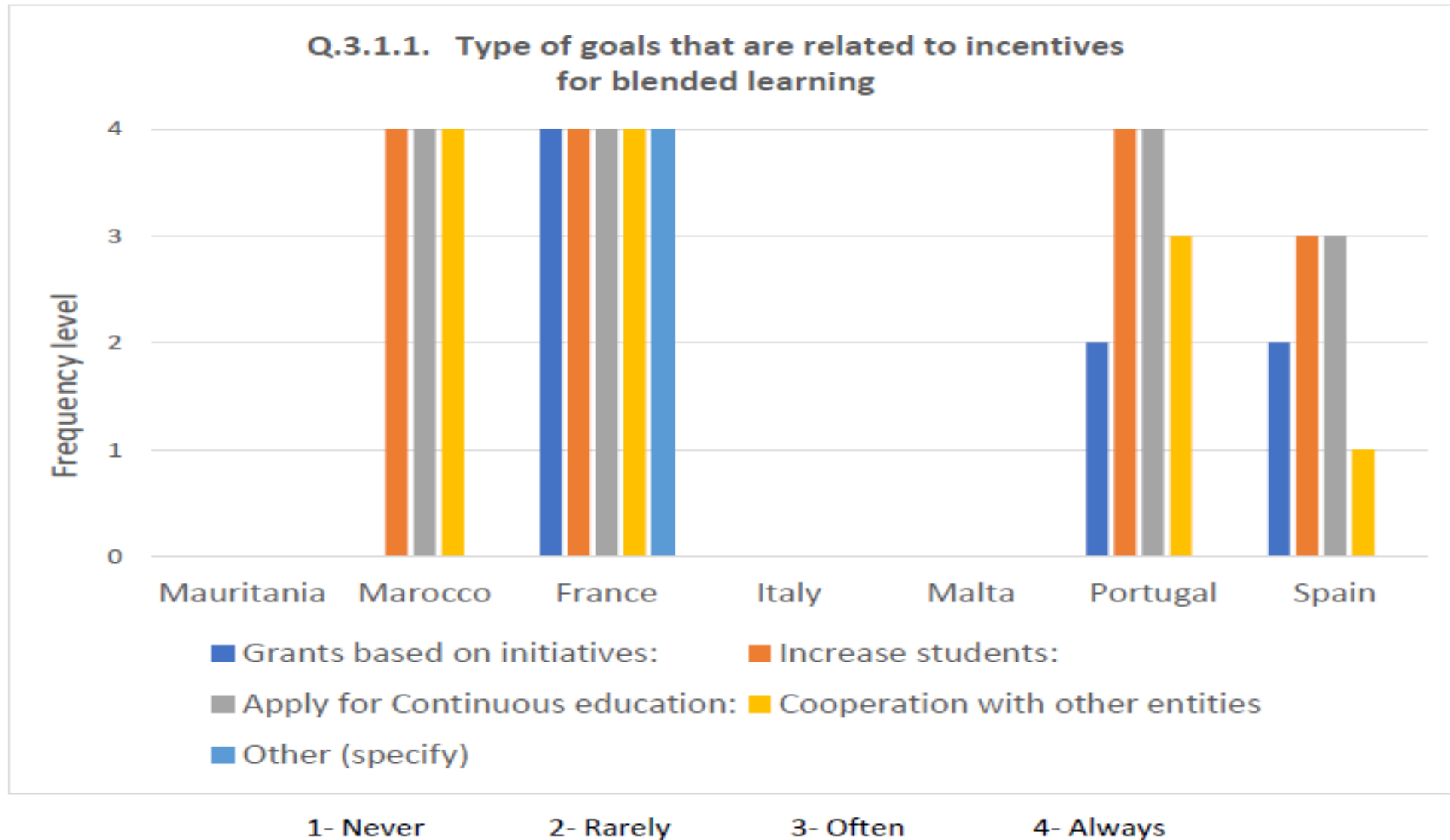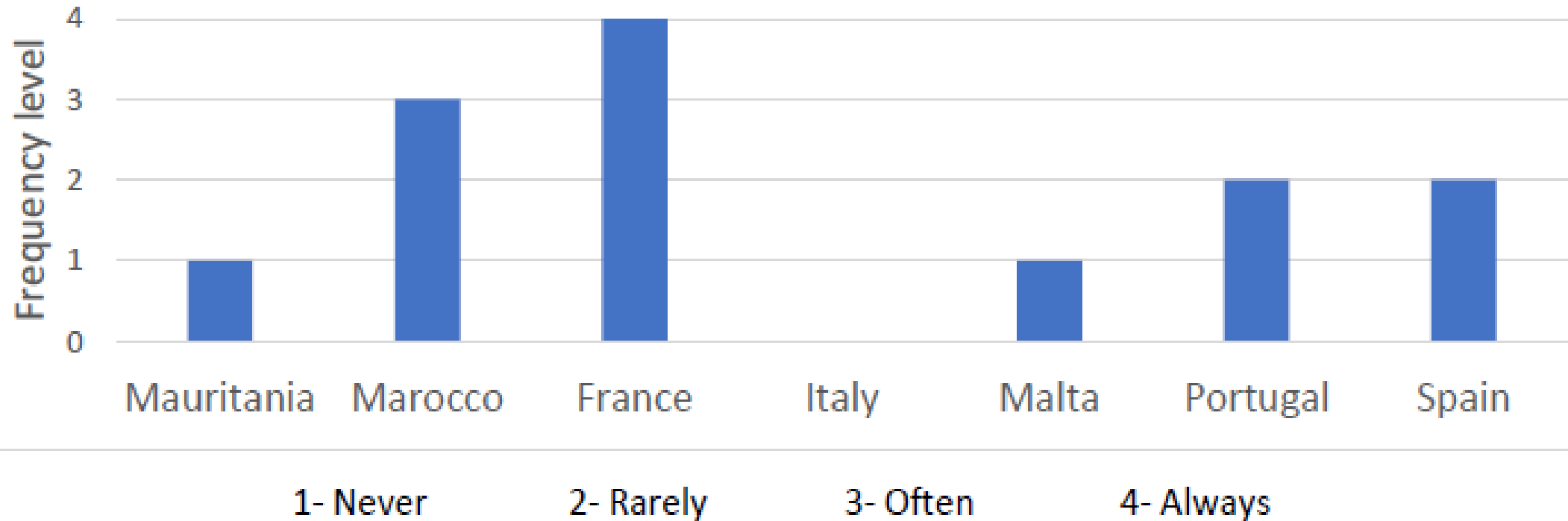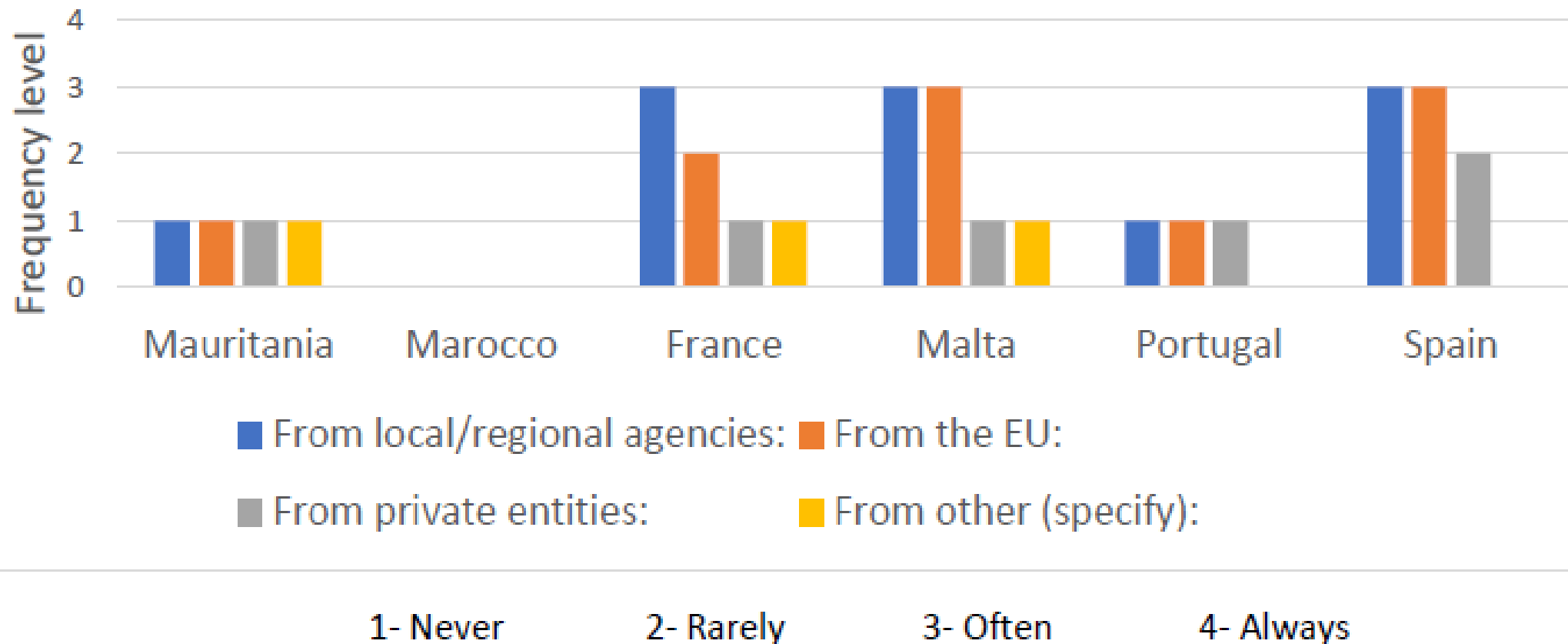
# Conclusions of the Survey (XVIII)



Q.3.1.2.  The additional governmental resources for implementing blended learning courses or degrees are distributed to universities through competitive calls

1- Never     2- Rarely     3- Often     4- Always

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# Conclusions of the Survey (XIX)



Q.3.2. Governmental plans for using blended learning are co-funded with external entities

Legend:
- From local/regional agencies:
- From the EU:
- From private entities:
- From other (specify):

1- Never    2- Rarely    3- Often    4- Always

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# Conclusions of the Survey (XX)

**COVID-19 pandemic was a huge driver to implement blended learning in 2020 and 2021.**

a. It is not evident that blended learning will continue with the same rate of increase in the next future if COVID-19 is overcome.

b. The evolution of the pandemics makes less relevant for France, Portugal, and Spain to continue the effort on blended learning implementation.

   i. There is a pressure to recover presential learning models, as the basis for university education, even if remote modules will be used as a complementary method.

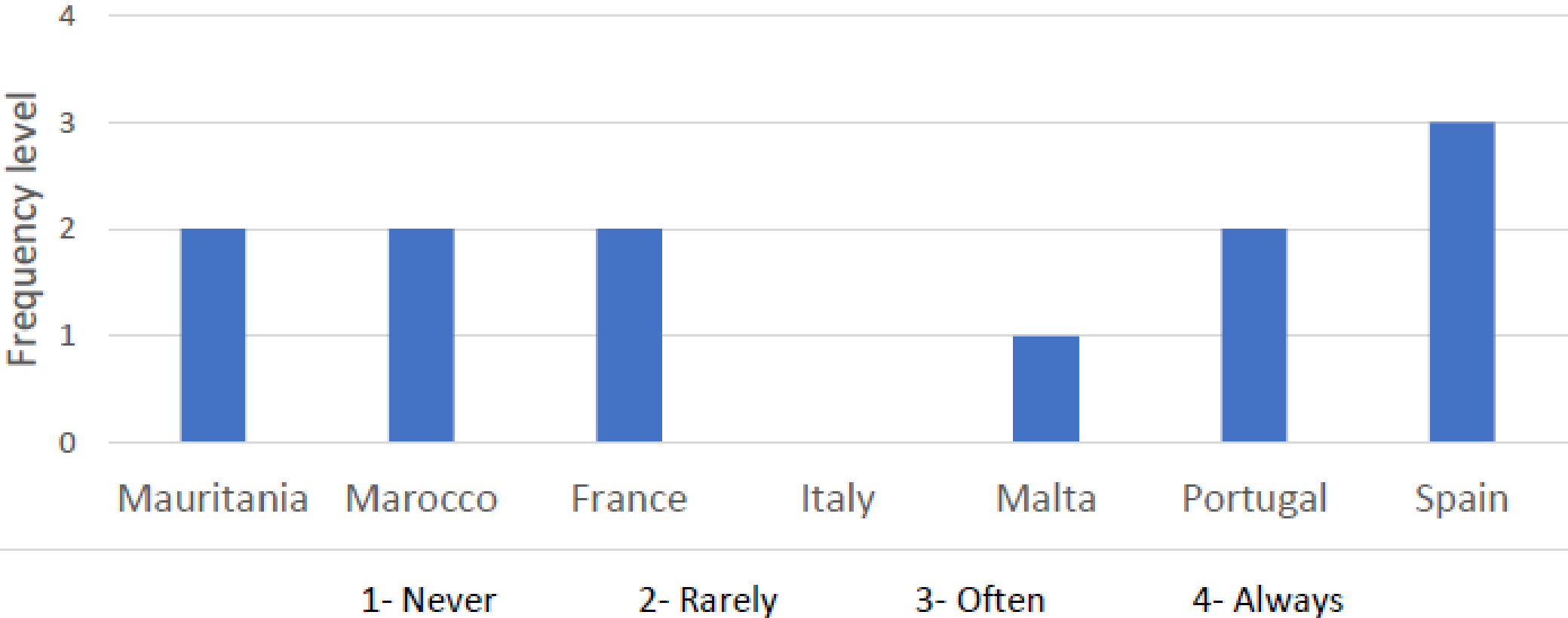c. Nevertheless, the use will be higher than in pre-pandemic period.

> **Suggestion for future work in Dialogue 5+5:**
> It is necessary to understand what type of blended learning practices in the region will continue in the stable post-pandemic period and how learning practices can improve.
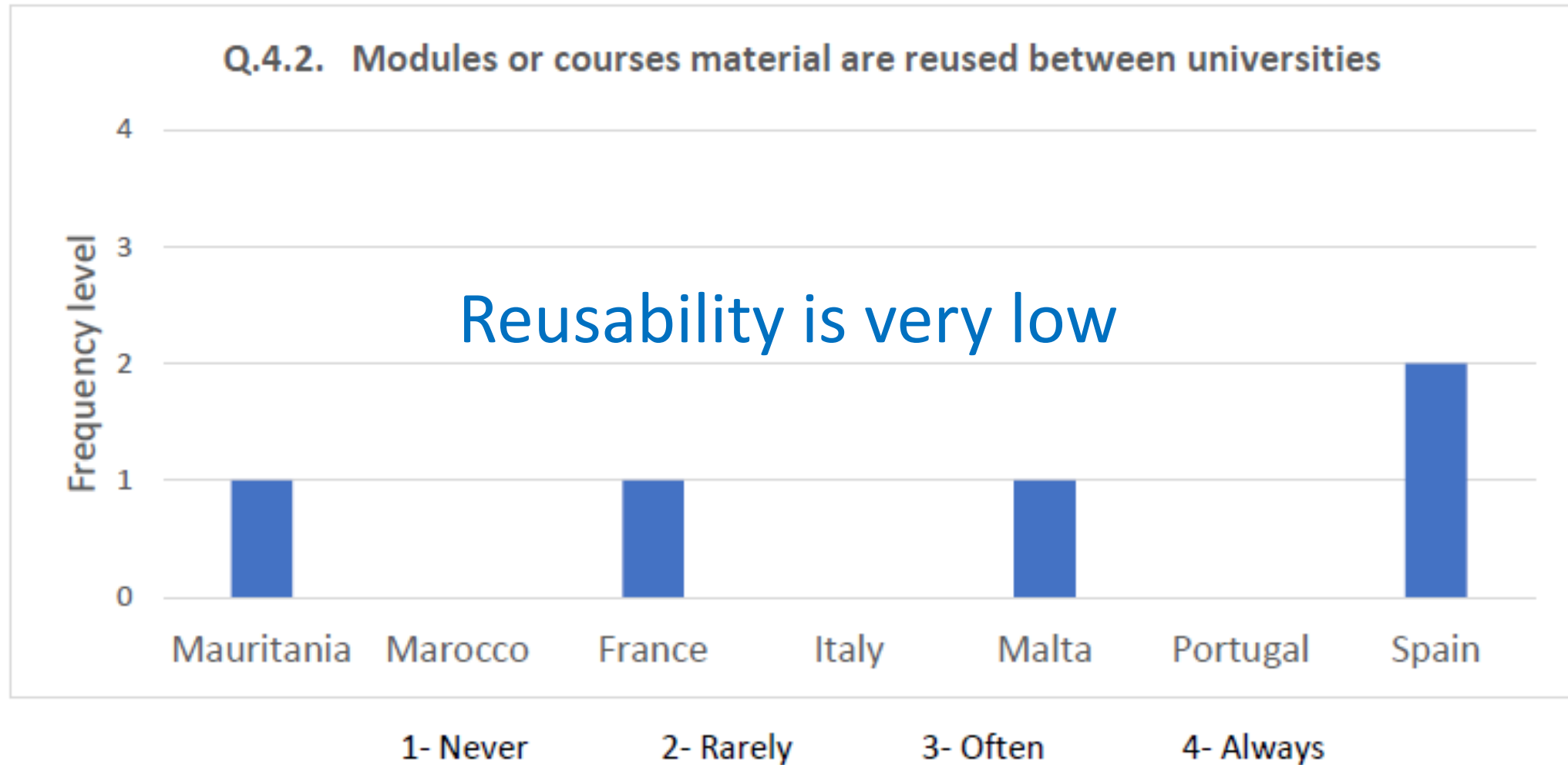
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# Conclusions of the Survey (XXI)



Q.4.1. Universities use a common digital education platform for remote courses

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# Conclusions of the Survey (XXII)

Q.4.2. Modules or courses material are reused between universities

Reusability is very low

Frequency level: Mauritania, Marocco, France, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain

1- Never    2- Rarely    3- Often    4- Always
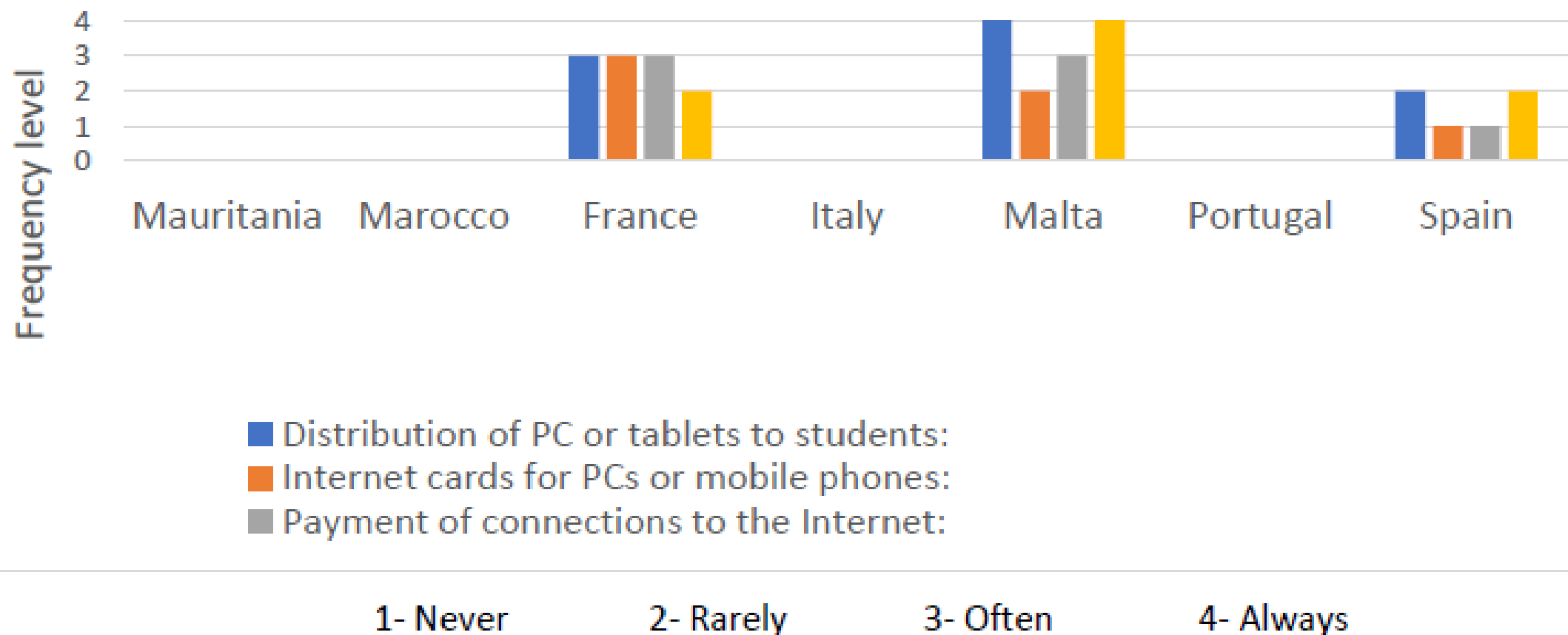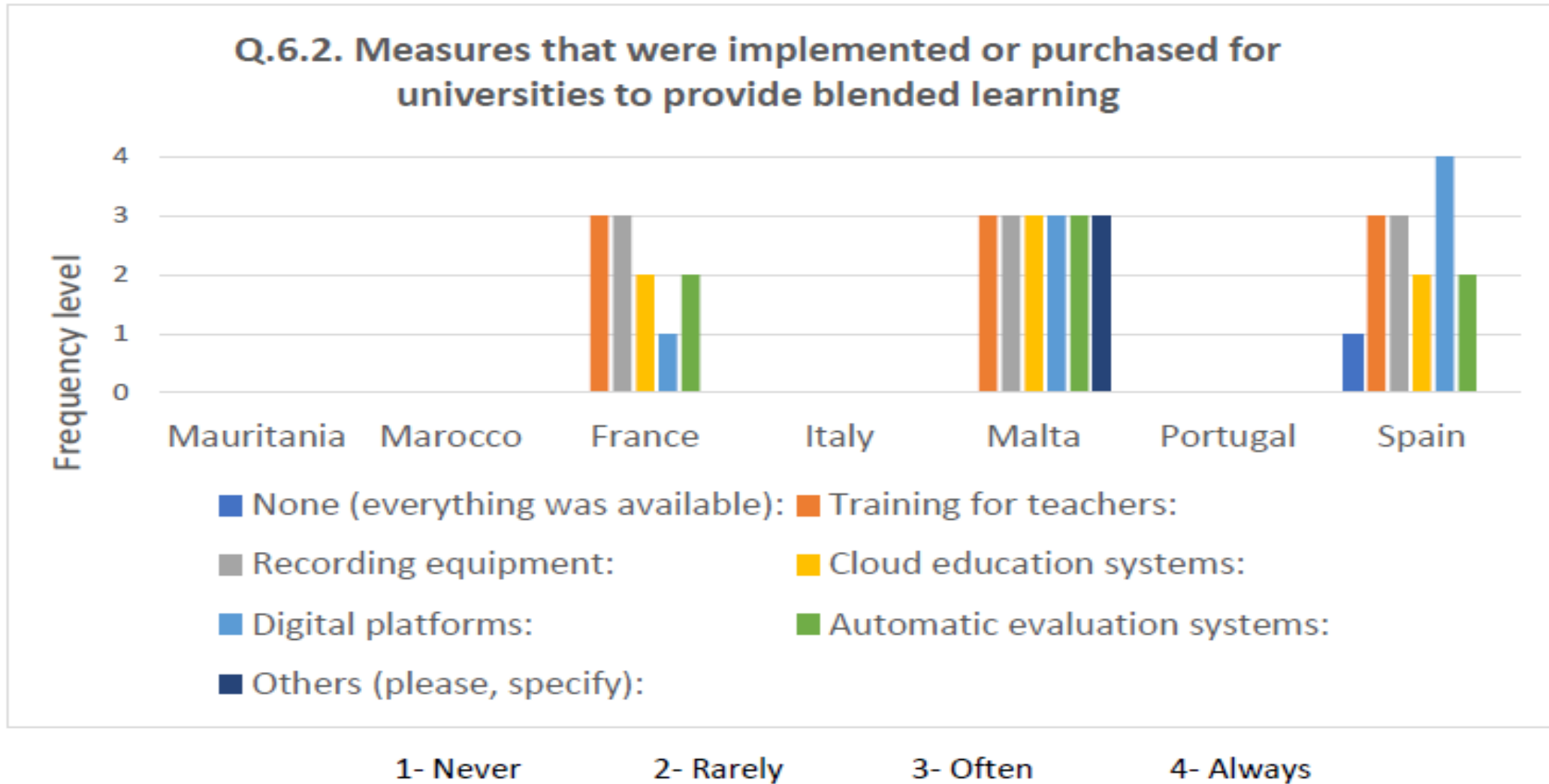
# Conclusions of the Survey (XXIII)



Q.6.1. Indicate what measures were used to reduce the "digital divide" among university students

Frequency level

Mauritania    Marocco    France    Italy    Malta    Portugal    Spain

- Distribution of PC or tablets to students:
- Internet cards for PCs or mobile phones:
- Payment of connections to the Internet:

1- Never        2- Rarely        3- Often        4- Always

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# Conclusions of the Survey (XXIV)



Q.6.2. Measures that were implemented or purchased for universities to provide blended learning

1- Never    2- Rarely    3- Often    4- Always

# Conclusions of the Survey (XXV)



Q.9.1. The main reasons for this improvement are:

Legend:
- **Access to better educational material:** (blue)
- **Access to better recorded lectures:** (orange)
- **Access to courses not available locally:** (grey)
- **More flexibility in the education process:** (yellow)
- **Personalisation of curricula:** (light blue)
- **Others (please, specify):** (green)

1- Strongly Disagree    2- Disagree    3-Agree    4- Strongly agree

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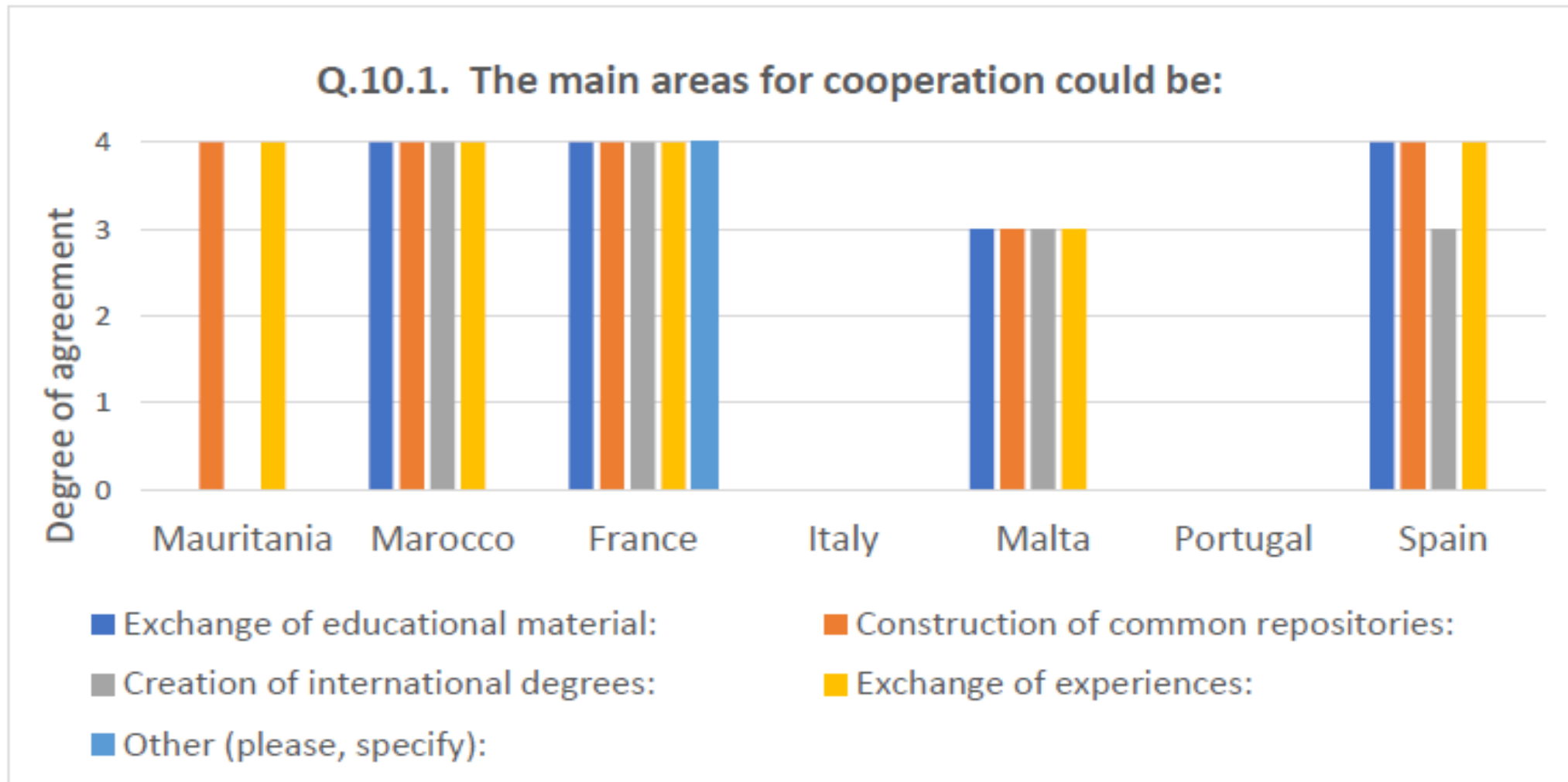
# Conclusions of the Survey (XXVI)

**The survey indicates that cooperation in the context of the Dialogue 5+5 could be appropriate to increase the use of blended learning**

a. Explicitly mentioned by Mauritania, Morocco, France, Malta and Spain
b. Mainly for exchange of experiences, education material, common repositories.
c. Cooperation could be supported by the development of European universities (France)

**Suggestion for future work in Dialogue 5+5:**

Continue the discussion in the GSO to reach consolidated conclusions for the next Ministerial Conference in 2022.

# Conclusions of the Survey (XXVII)



Q.10.1. The main areas for cooperation could be:

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# Conclusions of the Survey (XXVIII)

## Next steps on A7

- To review the collected data during this seminar
  - ✓ If possible, to complete data when necessary
- To discuss the preliminary conclusions of the report and the suggestions
- To elaborate a second version of the report
  - ✓ by adding information from delegations
- To present the refined version in the GSO meeting