

# Developments in external QA systems, overview of ENQA and highlights of ESG 2015

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*Reforming the higher education QA system: results and steps forward*

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# Guiding questions

- How to make quality assurance a tool for development and not a bureaucratic burden?
- What are the potential benefits for the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement to be reviewed and the granted ENQA full membership (and be listed on EQAR)?
- How important are the revised ESG (2015) ?
- What are the present trends in EQA? Lessons learned from the first reviews against ESG 2015

# Overview of ENQA

In an attempt to answer the question about the benefits for a QAA of being a full member of ENQA...

# European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education –ENQA

- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)
- Umbrella NGO for European QA agencies
- Network in 2000; association in 2004
- Move from Finland to Belgium 2011
- Structure: Board, General Assembly, Secretariat
- Membership organisation



# ENQA – affiliates (51 in 30 countries)



# ENQA Mission statement

- to contribute significantly to the **maintenance and enhancement of the quality of European higher education** at a high level.
- to act as a major **driving force for the development of quality assurance** across all the Bologna signatory countries.
- ENQA promotes **European co-operation in the field of QA in higher education** in order to develop and share good practice in QA and to foster the European dimension of QA.

# Objectives

ENQA's purposes are essentially threefold:

- **As a membership organisation, to represent its members** at the European level and internationally, especially in political decision making processes and in co-operations with stakeholder organisations;
- to function as a **think tank** for developing further quality assurance processes and systems in the EHEA;
- to function as a **communication platform** for sharing and disseminating information and expertise in quality assurance among members and towards stakeholders.



# Strategy 2016-2020

- ENQA is **representative of the diversity** of quality assurance agencies throughout Europe
- ENQA **supports the continuous development** of independent and trustworthy quality assurance agencies operating in line with agreed standards throughout Europe
- ENQA **provides advice and represents the interests** of its members in the policy-making process
- ENQA is the **preferred partner for reviews** against agreed European standards
- ENQA is **a key source** of reliable information, expertise and know-how on quality assurance
- ENQA contributes to the **enhancement and innovation of quality assurance**

# Activities

- **Dissemination of information** on experience, good practice and new developments in the field of quality assessment and QA in HE to stakeholders
- Organisation of **events**
- ENQA has **working groups**
- **Active in European and international projects**
- **Publication of reports**
- Co-operation within **E4** (EUA, ESU, EURASHE)
- Consultative member in the **Bologna Follow-up Group** since 2005 (QA as one pillar of EHEA since the beginning in 1999)
- Founding member of the **European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)**
- Coordination of **external reviews** of QA agencies

# The benefits of being reviewed?

- Beyond its obvious outcomes of gaining ENQA full membership and EQAR listing...
- An opportunity of benchmarking and benchlearning (increase one's professionalism, coherence and autonomy)
- Gaining legitimacy within one's country or region and abroad

# Highlighting ESG 2015

In an attempt to answer both ...

the question of avoiding bureaucracy to implement creative and meaningful quality assurance

and...

the question of the intended impact of ESG 2015

***ESG = criteria by which both membership in ENQA is granted (or reconfirmed) and listing within EQAR is admitted***

# Quality Assurance in the Bologna process

ENQA's role:

- ENQA aims to have a **stronger role in the development of QA** ensuring that ENQA supports *internal quality assurance* and the development of *quality culture*
- ENQA aims to support the creation of a quality (assurance) culture, where the importance of quality assurance will be accepted as a major element in constantly improving the education provision (and not as an external “control” or useless bureaucracy!) while the primary responsibility of QA lies with the institutions

# ESG – Key milestones

*2000 ENQA was established as the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education*

- **Berlin Communiqué 2003** called upon ENQA, in co-operation with the EUA, EURASHE and ESU to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance, and to explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance agencies

*2004 ENQA was transformed into the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education*

- **2005 Bergen Ministerial conference:**
  - adopted the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) (developed with E4 partners)
  - endorsed the proposal to create a European register of QA agencies
  - accepted ENQA as consultative member in the Bologna follow-up Group

*2008 the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) was established, with the E4 as founders and members of the Executive Board*

# ESG 2015 – Key milestones

MAPPING THE IMPLEMENTATION  
AND APPLICATION OF THE ESG  
(MAP-ESG PROJECT)

Final report of the project Steering Group



2010  
Budapest-  
Vienna  
ministerial  
conference

2012  
Bucharest  
communiqué:  
mandate to E4  
group + EI,  
BusinessEurope  
and EQAR

May 2015  
Yerevan  
Ministerial  
conference



# Lessons learned from this

In terms of process and outcome (the document itself):

- Reflexivity, lucid analysis and quality loop (scope, aims, usability, impact, clarity, terminology)
- Higher education evolutions and diversity of contexts
- Importance of consulting (democratic values as well as the need for more awareness and ownership of the ESG)
- Participative and cooperative process: three more stakeholder bodies in the revision work
- Implementing a *monitoring system* of the ESG 2015



# Running: the EQUIP project (*Enhancing Quality through Innovative Policy & Practices*)

## The project aims at

supporting and promoting a consistent, efficient and innovative embedding of the ESG 2015 at grass-root level.

It identifies the challenges  
It works collaboratively  
with all stakeholders and  
policy-makers to propose,  
share and discuss the  
applicability of new  
solutions

### *The ESG as a tool for change*



Join us to

- Learn more about the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) directly from their authors
- Benefit from exchanges with peers on good practices
- Overcome challenges in translating the ESG into practice

# the EQUIP project

## Activities and results

- webinars and workshops
- analytical report highlighting the innovative aspects of the ESG 2015
- promotion of the ESG to the entire HE community
- surveys and focus groups
- study on implementation challenges, solutions and policy impact
- put forward European-level policy recommendations to stakeholder groups to feed in the discussions up to the 2018 EHEA Ministerial Conference (Paris, 23-25 May)



<http://www.equip-project.eu/>

# Trends in EQA and present challenges

Observations based on the results of the recent 17 ENQA agency reviews

- The reviews against ESG 2015 show an increasing **diversity** in the systems of quality assurance in the EHEA and a changing role and profile of QAAs.
- Focus on Learning & Teaching, and also a reinforced responsibility of HEIs in implementing efficient QA (institutional > programmatic)
- The reviews still show critical analysis and recommendations for a few key issues such as **independence of agencies, involvement of students, publication of reports**: independence (that depends on many different elements such as an agency's legal status or funding and governance structure) is sometimes limited by organisational or structural specificities, while involvement of students and full publication of reports are hindered by national legislation. Another ESG that some agencies struggle with is about « thematic analysis » (3.4)

## Hinting at ENQA's message to the Paris Cf...

In its future message to the Ministers of HE, ENQA will certainly urge the governments of member states to make sure that existing regulations do not contradict (or hinder from happening) the requirement of TRANSPARENCY (all reports resulting from external QA processes should be published and be accessible to all interested stakeholders), and that they proactively encourage STUDENTS PARTICIPATION in QA at all levels, and above all, create and safeguard necessary conditions to enable QA agencies to work with appropriate levels of INDEPENDENCE and AUTONOMY.



Thank you!

