

ENQA report to BFUG, 26-27 January, Riga

Highlights of ENQA's activities since the BFUG meeting in April 2014

1. Statutory issues: ENQA Board and membership

The ENQA General Assembly took place on 16 -17 October in Zagreb, Croatia. On this occasion, Pdraig Walsh (QQI, Ireland) was re-elected as the ENQA President for a maximum term of three years. Christoph Grolimund (OAQ, Switzerland) was re-elected and Teresa Sánchez Chaparro (Executive Director of Commission des Titres d'Ingenieur, CTI, France) was elected to her first term. At the Board meeting following the General Assembly on 26 November, the ENQA Board approved the co-option of Christina Rozsnyai (Hungarian Accreditation Committee), until the General Assembly of 2015.

The General Assembly endorsed the renewal of full membership of seven agencies, and the admission of three new agencies:

A3ES - Agency for Evaluation and Accreditation of Higher Education, Portugal

KAA - Kosovo Accreditation Agency, Kosovo

Unibasq - Agency for the Quality of the Basque University System, Spain

NEAA (National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency, Bulgaria) was granted the status of "Full member under review".

The GA also endorsed the decision to admit two new affiliates: NCFHE - National Commission for Further and Higher Education, Malta and UK-Ämbetet - The Swedish Higher Education Authority, Sweden. These changes brought ENQA's membership total to 43, and that of affiliates to 48.

In October 2014 ENQA adopted a procedure for agencies whose membership expires during the first half of 2015 and who plan to undergo an external review according to the revised ESG (rather than the current ESG). The transitional arrangements have been posted on the ENQA website and are available here: <http://www.engq.eu/index.php/reviews/transitional-arrangements-for-engq-reviews-in-light-of-the-revised-esg/>.

In November, the ENQA Board adopted a complaints policy in order to appropriately respond to concerns from individuals or organisations relating to 1) a full member's compliance with the ESG or

2) the integrity of the external review and decision-making process on the basis of which an agency was admitted as a full member of ENQA. The policy was published online and is available here: <http://www.enqa.eu/index.php/enqa-agencies/members/full-members/enqa-complaints-policy/>.

2. ENQA projects

EQArep final conference on the use and usefulness of QA reports

The ENQA-led, EU-funded project “Transparency of European higher education through public quality assurance reports (EQArep)” terminated on 23 September with a final dissemination conference that took place in Brussels. The programme included the presentations of the results of the two surveys on “Stakeholders’ requirements for transparency” and “Publication of QA results: purpose, structure and content”, as well as a panel discussion with the key stakeholders, and the sharing of the project’s final outcomes. Lively discussions took place around the topic of how stakeholders perceive and use QA reports, as well as how QA reports play a role in fostering the transparency of European higher education.

The final report, including the findings of the project, was distributed at the final conference. This report is available for downloading on the [ENQA website](#).

Quality assurance of cross-border higher education (QACHE)

The ENQA-led QACHE project under Action 3 of the Erasmus Mundus programme aims to reinforce a dialogue within Europe and between Europe and other world regions on QA of cross-border higher education, and thus enhance mutual understanding of different approaches to cross-border higher education and its QA.

During 2013-2014, a collection of good practices and information through three online surveys was done by approaching quality assurance agencies in Europe, Arab countries, and Asia-Pacific, and higher education institutions in France, Germany, Spain and the UK. Preparation of country reports and identification of case examples and good practices took place in the four European core provider countries, as well as Australia. Three regional events have been organised:

- European Experts’ Forum, 5-6 November 2014, London, UK.
- Gulf Regional Seminar, 19-20 November 2014, Manama, Bahrain.
- Asia-Pacific Regional Seminar, 22-23 January, Macau, China

The project will result in a toolkit and a report on current QA practices of cross-border higher education. A final dissemination event will take place in Paris in October 2015.

3. ENQA working groups

Impact of quality assurance

The topic of impact of quality assurance is of high importance to many ENQA member agencies. In the times of crisis, and a call for higher efficiency of public spending, it has become necessary to demonstrate the impacts that quality assurance has in the different national contexts. During the project, the working group carried out a number of activities, including collecting good practices on how QA agencies measure the impact of their processes; analysis of changes and improvements in methodologies and what is the link between them and the expectation of greater impacts; exploring how impact in different areas is analysed by QA agencies (identification of stakeholders involved); and detecting interests for future developments on how QA agencies deal with impacts in different areas (teaching, managing, HE policy). The work of the group provided important input for a European project on measuring impact (IMPALA). The main findings of the research carried out by the group were published in the ENQA publication series in early 2015.

Stakeholder involvement in quality assurance practices

The main purposes of the working group were to set up a debate to identify new ways of promoting the active involvement of the different particular stakeholders related to the external quality assurance processes within the EHEA apart from HEIs; as well as to map existing features of good practice from different academic and professional traditions all over Europe. The ultimate goal of the working group was to define ways of improving their involvement from a European perspective while being sensitive to the national requirements in the different contexts. The working group conducted a desk-based “stocktaking” study and a survey of stakeholders at national level. The results will be published in the ENQA publication series in early 2015. The report will also make recommendations to the Board of ENQA and to nationally-based ENQA member agencies on how they can each develop and deepen the engagement, and give reflections on the way forward, obstacles and/or challenges for involving other stakeholders in the future.

Excellence and quality assurance

The notion of excellence is rapidly gaining ground on political and institutional level and quality assurance is expected more and more to play a role in defining and certifying excellence. The idea of creating a working group on Excellence grew out of the findings of the “Quality Procedure Project – visions for the future” project in 2012 which pointed out a clear need of the current quality assurance procedures to focus on the concept of excellence in teaching and learning. The overall aim of the Excellence working group was to discuss the concepts of excellence in higher education and its implications for quality assurance. In order to achieve its aim, the working group analysed the existing review literature on excellence and identified different approaches and criteria of excellence in relation with quality assurance. In August 2014, the results of the group’s work were published in a final report with recommendations to the ENQA Board on how the concept of excellence can be treated in the ESG, as well as to quality assurance agencies on how to disseminate further the concept of excellence and continue debating on this topic.

Knowledge on Part 3 of the ESG

The working group was established by the ENQA Board with the purpose of performing analysis on how the QA agencies align with part III of the ESG and what can be done to improve their position

and tackle the challenges encountered when complying. In addition, the group will collect best practices of QA agencies in complying with part III of the ESG.

As a part of their main task to analyse the compliance of the QA agencies with part III of the ESG, the group members examined the self-evaluation reports and the review reports with positive outcomes of 24 QA agencies (as well as three negative reports) that underwent an external review between 2010 and 2013. The results of the analysis were presented at the seminar on “European QA agencies’ ways to comply with the ESG in an international perspective, adhering to the European dimension: Shaping the future together” in June 2014. The seminar addressed the topic of how QA agencies comply with the ESG, how do they tackle the challenges posed by certain criteria (system-wide analysis, resources and independence) and what are the best practices they have adopted. Furthermore, the seminar gave information on the revision process of the ESG and its current status, explored the themes of resources, independence and system-wide analysis, as well as the link between the national priorities and the European level needs.

The 4th ENQA Quality Procedures Project

In 2014, ENQA launched the 4th edition of its “Quality Procedures Project”. The project aims at providing information regarding the existing internationalisation policies at national level, as well as strategies and tools implemented by QA agencies across the EHEA. More specifically, it aims at analysing the role of QA in the internationalisation of HE, learning from the various agencies’ approaches to internationalisation (methodology), providing a state-of-the-art of internationalisation of QA, identifying shared practices and cooperation between national QA agencies. To this aim, a survey was sent to ENQA members and affiliates in June 2014 asking them about the current methodologies and strategies of internationalisation of QA in their agencies. The survey will provide information on both QA activities that go beyond borders (internationalisation abroad) and the concept of internationalisation at home. The project will result in a publication to be released in early 2015.