

# **European Developments in Quality Assurance – an Overview**

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Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, 29 April 2009:

„Striving for excellence in all aspects of higher education, we address the challenges of the new era. This requires a constant focus on quality.

...

We ask the HEI to pay particular attention to improving the teaching quality of their study programmes at all levels. This should be a priority in the further implementation of the ESG.

...

Transnational education should be governed by the European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance as applicable within the European Higher Education Area and be in line with the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education.

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Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, 29 April 2009:

These (multidimensional) transparency tools need to relate closely to the principles of the Bologna Process, in particular quality assurance and recognition, which will remain our priority...”

...

We ask the E4 group (ENQA-EUA-EURASHE-ESU) to continue its cooperation in further developing the European dimension of quality assurance and in particular to ensure that the European Quality Assurance Register is evaluated externally, taking into account the views of the stakeholders.”

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Anything interesting? Anything new?

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Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Stocktaking report, 29 April 2009

“While the implementation of external quality assurance is proceeding at a rapid pace, development of internal quality assurance (QA) systems at HEI s is progressing more slowly, especially because in some countries the internal QA systems are still thought to amount only to writing a self-assessment report for external review.

...

It is surprising that quality assurance agencies from only 22 countries are full members of ENQA. Given that full membership of ENQA requires compliance with ESG , this suggests that the standards and guidelines for external quality assurance and the work of QA agencies may not yet be fully implemented in some other countries.”

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## **Quality Assurance in the Bologna Process is consolidating**

### **programmatically**

ESG part I is only partly implemented

ESG part II to a large extent implemented

But:

Although 31 agencies have been reviewed successfully against ESG by now, ESG part III is not yet implemented in quite a number of countries

➤ **Implementation of ESG is one of the most significant current European developments in Quality Assurance!**

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Bergen Communiqué, 19 Mai 2005:

Ministers “adopt standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area...”, which are “designed to be applicable to all higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies in Europe, irrespective of their structure, function and size, and the national system in which they are located

- Most important milestone in the development of quality assurance in higher education since the mid-nineties
- Common understanding of quality assurance

But:

**Significance of effects on procedures and systems, to HEI and agencies was underestimated!**

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ESG 2005, foreword:

“It must be emphasised that the report is no more than a first step in what is likely to be a long and possibly arduous route to the establishment of a widely shared set of underpinning values, expectations and good practice in relation to quality and its assurance, by institutions and agencies across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). What has been set in motion by the Berlin mandate will need to be developed further if it is to provide the fully functioning European dimension of quality assurance for the EHEA.”

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## Quality Assurance in the Bologna Process is consolidating

### Institutionally

ENQA consolidated as association

- added a political function to its original functions; also became consultative member of the BFUG
- grew from 34 full members in 2005 to 41 full members at present
- finishes 1<sup>st</sup> round of external reviews of agencies by 2010
- ...

Non-member agencies are catching up.

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## **Quality Assurance in the Bologna Process is consolidating**

### **Institutionally**

EQAR (as the only European body created by the Bologna Process) develops slowly but surely

- Its underpinning association has 32 members (E4 as founding members, social partners Business Europe and Educational International, and 26 governmental members)
  - 9 agencies have been listed so far, next round of admission is in September 2009
  - Will be evaluated by an external panel by end of 2011
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## **Quality Assurance in the Bologna Process is consolidating**

### **Institutionally**

E4 continue their cooperation, even without specific mandates from BFUG

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## **Quality Assurance in the Bologna Process is consolidating**

### **Institutionally**

Networks like CEE Network, the Nordic Network, the European Quality labels, and projects like ECA and the working group on Quality Audits continue their work and thus contribute significantly to the development of the European dimension of quality assurance

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## **New challenges: QA in a changing world**

### **Programmatically**

New subject matters: LLL, joint programmes

New(?) issues: LO, student assessment

Remember QPP:

36 out of 48 agencies changed their approach recently or are about to do so; 27: significant changes (8 referring to ESG, 3 switching to another approach, 16 adding another approach)

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## **New challenges: QA in a changing world**

### **New demands from**

- wider public
- politics/ministries

### **Purposes:**

Quality assurance

Quality enhancement

Recognition

Public information

Funding

Comparison/Ranking

- Purposes get blurred: disconnection of purpose and design of quality assurance (Rf QPP report 2008)
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## New challenges: QA in a changing world

### Purposes:

...

Comparison/Ranking

Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, 29 April 2009:

“We note that there are several current initiatives designed to develop mechanisms for providing more detailed information about higher education institutions across the EHEA to make their diversity more transparent. ... These transparency tools **need to relate closely to the principles of the Bologna Process, in particular quality assurance and recognition**, which will remain our priority...”

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ENQA position paper to the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve conference 2009:

**“ENQA recognises that priorities for the future need to take into account the changing nature of higher education nationally, in the EHEA and globally. The increasing emphasis on lifelong learning, transnational education, e-learning and the changing nature of the student body itself, to name but a few, will impact on the teaching, learning and assessment of students and, thus, on the quality assurance of those processes. It will also be important for this changing context within which we work to be communicated effectively to all stakeholders.”**

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**Thank you  
for your attention!**

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