

# Conference on the Quality Assurance of Cross-Border Higher Education

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## Regional views on cross-border higher education from Europe, Arab Region, and Asia-Pacific: The European perspective

Rafael Llavori de Micheo

ANECA, Spain



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■ **QACHE Project: The European “approach”**

## Is there a European “approach” on QA-CBHE?

- European Higher Education Area is considered by QAAs and stakeholders as a “special” CBHE case
- Based on trust after more than 15 years of collaboration and definitions of tools
- More than national but not completely transnational: “a third way” in comparison with relations with other regions (Asia-Pacific, Latin America)

The “Ianus dilemma”



## Is there a European “approach” on QA-CBHE?

- The risk of CBHE in Europe is not represented normally by bogus HEIs acting as a degree mill
- Main risk perceived by governments and QAAs: a HEI coming from countries with a recognised HE system offering qualifications without matching the quality of the home-institution
- Paradox: main risk could come from the national QA system and the national legal framework
- Solution: setting up fences to defend the system from occasional bad practices from HE providers but stifling different forms of internationalisation of HE practices

## Is there a European “approach” on QA-CBHE?

- The main trend is to actively “push” and engage HE institutions abroad
- In combination to develop highly attractive national HE systems for international students

**Paradox: Not all the systems are as “open” to receive foreign providers as they are to encourage other systems to open their borders to receive their own institutions**



# The QAAs survey and the country reports: basis for a diagnosis

## The survey: goals

- To map the role of agencies in QA of CBHE...if any
- Criteria and procedures used for QA of CBHE (if any)
- Identify good practices to be shared
- The impact of international guidelines (if any)
- To collect information for QACHE's outcomes:
  - The toolkit for QA agencies and HEIs
  - To develop CBHE QA principles and guidelines

# The survey: technical details

1. 39 European QA agencies (ENQA members)
2. Responses: 33 QA agencies (100%)
3. Blank or incomplete: 6 questionnaires (18%)
4. Refusal to publish results: 12 QAAs (36%)
5. 38 questions gathered in 5 groups
6. Average number of response/question (38): 17
7. Nr questions below 11 responses: 3 responses
7. Average response/question 35: 24

# The survey: “clusters” of questions

1. Tipology of CBHE practices and jurisdiction for QQAs
2. Specific QA regulations / framework of exported CBHE
3. Recognition/authorisation issues
4. Information and students’ protection
5. QAAs collaboration and networking

# Who filled up the survey?

- 22 countries

- Switzerland (2)
- Holy See
- Poland
- Croatia
- Denmark (2)
- Austria
- Spain (4)
- Georgia
- France
- Finland
- Hungary
- Kazakhstan
- Czech Republic
- Italy
- Armenia
- Norway
- Germany (2)
- Slovak Republic
- United Kingdom
- Romania
- Ireland (2)
- Belgium

## Conclusions of the European QAAs Survey

- No news  $\neq$  good news at all
- No news = lack of information
- Scattered data and frameworks to present them for comparative purposes
- We were at the beginning of the journey in terms of clarifying the setting
- Really a blurred picture that surely needs to be refocused and clarified

## Conclusions of the European QAAs Survey: (2)

- Challenges raised in the survey. (In the “others” column)
  - The cost of collaboration
  - Troubles on recognition (ENIC-NARIC colaboration)
  - Language barriers (EMOI-British Council or do we have other ways to do that)
  - Particularities from cultural contexts
  - Methodological QA differences
  - ... (Fill-in at your will)....

## Country reports:

- France
  - Germany
  - Spain
  - United Kingdom
- 
- Various scenarios showing the diversity of the European HEIs activities in CBHE
  - Similar deregulated settings in QA of CBHE
  - Different QA “attitudes” towards out-bound delivery

# Blurred picture...or slightly out of focus?



## How can contribute ENQA to focus the picture?

- No blueprint but ENQA believes that: QAAs networks are a useful framework to create favourable conditions for good practices in CNHE
- Networks can also act as an active clearing-house to promote transparency and share information about the HE systems
- ENQA should align its strategy concerning recognition in the terms defined by the Lisbon Recognition Convention (1999)
- Need to clarify the roles of ENQA and EQAR to avoid duplicity or confusion among the European and overseas stakeholders

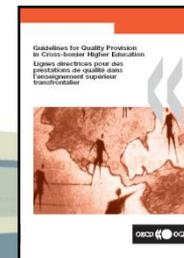


# 3. Conclusions

- QAAs as a trustworthy source of information for both students and (foreign) providers
- An useful tool of information for decision makers at the national and international level
- Code of good practices on QA in CBHE for the benefit of students interested in enrolling a foreign programme (TEQSA document)
- Cooperation with UNESCO transparency portal and similar initiatives

- Student protection as a priority in dealing with QA of CBHE
- “Collateral damages” to students could result from bona fide HEIs and fair practices derived from lack of information  
Student protection vs market-driven practices?
- QAAs claim for a framework to act: regional networks?
- Need to promote OECD/UNESCO Guidelines: updated?
- Need to develop good practices/broad guidelines:

## **QACHE’s Toolkit**

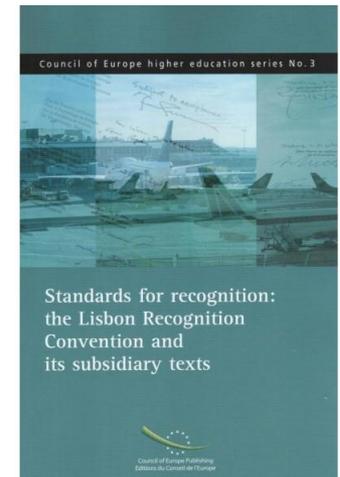


## What about recognition?

- Different actors: governments, ENIC-NARIC network, QAAs, HEIs
- Legal framework-rooted
- Strengthening collaboration/cooperation between QAAs and ENIC-NARIC network (ECA framework)
- Sthrengthening political initiatives towards the existing international recognition frameworks:

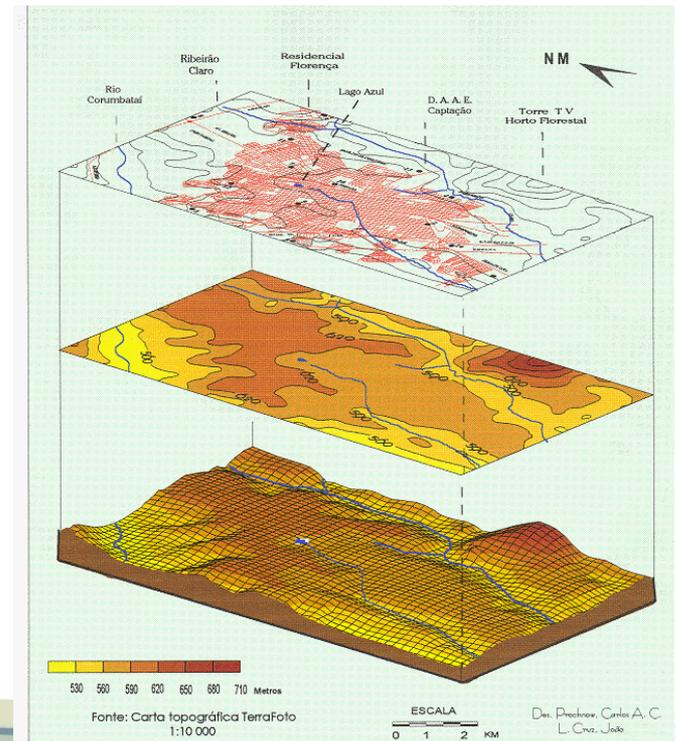
### *Lisbon Recognition Convention*

- Can we lend a hand from our positions?



Europe should give an example and take the lead in showing other regions that the correct articulation of the Bologna tools discussed amongst the HE stakeholders favours CBHE

EHEA for more than a decade has contribute not only to set up a real HE setting but also allow and foster (bio-)diversity in terms of HE systems and academic traditions.





# 4. (Possible) Way forward

## **QA networks can strive for:**

- a balance between public interest through information
- improving evidenced-trust among systems avoiding the traditional barriers and difficulties to internationalisation of HE

## **QA networks can support CBHE through their processes:**

- UNESCO-World Bank: GIQAC Project
- INQAAHE: Clearinghouse project in web-site

**National QQAs as members in the networks can put forward agreements sharing responsibility on QA of CBHE**

# Regional approaches to QA of CBHE



## World Bank and UNESCO: GIQAC Project.

The Global Initiative for Quality Assurance Capacity (GIQAC) to support higher education in developing countries and in countries in transition.

### ENQA:

- Project in the Balkans to promote the use of the ESG and their future reviews to become ENQA full members.
- Capacity building for QAAs in the Caucasus region, with the same objective.

Other GIQAC projects for QA networks: APQN; AfriQAN; ANQAHE; RIACES

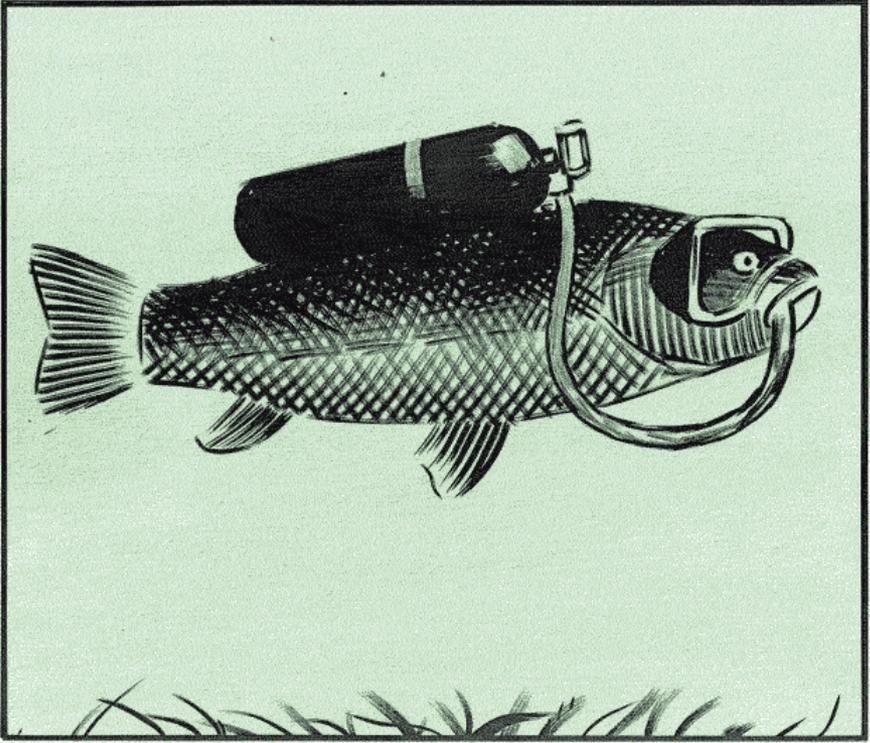
QA technicalities on **Mutual Recognition**. Some good practices where recognition and simplification of accreditation procedures is taking place coordinated by QAAs.

The examples range from Europe to Latin America and the global context represented by INQAAHE.

- ECA: JOQAR Project
- EUA: ALFA-PUENTES (European-Latin America)
- APQN: MR on Transnational Education Reviews, Toolkit

**Whatever initiative coming from QA networks will be accomplished, it has to be fit for purpose and flexible to meet different region's expectations and problems and *shared* by the regional stakeholders**

**Fitness for purpose?**



elroto.elpais@gmail.com

# Thank you for your attention

[rllavori@aneca.es](mailto:rllavori@aneca.es)