Bern, 8 November 2017

Dear colleagues,

I would like to take the opportunity, on the occasion of my first Note from the President, to sincerely thank ENQA’s membership for the confidence they have shown in me by electing me as ENQA’s President at the General Assembly in Sèvres last month. For those of you unable to attend, herein you may find a summary of the decisions taken at the event, as well as at recent Board meetings. Please be informed that minutes from the General Assembly and Board meetings, once approved, are available on the ENQA website in the Members’ Area.

1. General Assembly 2017

The Board is pleased to welcome its newest elected members, Sofija Pekic Quarrie from the Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (CAQA, Serbia) and François Pernot from the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCERES, France). Members present at the General Assembly in October also re-elected Christoph Grolimund for his second full term on the Board. Christoph Grolimund was elected as ENQA President, Caty Duykaerts and Nora Skaburskiené were elected as Vice Presidents, and Anne Flierman was appointed as Treasurer.

Members present at October’s General Assembly endorsed the Board’s decisions to renew the memberships of the following seven agencies: the Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute (ACQUIN, Germany), the Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programmes (AQAS, Germany), the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency (AQU Catalunya, Spain), the Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA, Germany), the National Accreditation Agency of the Russian Federation (NAA, Russia), the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO, the Netherlands), and the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC, Lithuania). The reports and other materials relating to the reviews are available on the Review Reports and Decisions page of the ENQA website.

The General Assembly endorsed the Board’s decision to grant affiliate status to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE, United Kingdom).

The General Assembly also appointed new members to the Appeals and Complaints Committee: Heli Mattisen from the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (EKKA, Estonia) and Ruben Topchyan from the National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation (ANQA, Armenia), the latter serving in the capacity of alternate member. Karena Maguire from Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI, Ireland) will serve a second term, and Rafael Llavori from the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain (ANECA, Spain) will move from alternate member and begin his first term as a member.

The 2018 work plan, presented and approved alongside the 2018 budget, features a few noteworthy activities (to be pursued, budget permitting), including a series of webinars on topics identified from this past spring’s survey to members, networking and staff development opportunities for mid-level
and early senior staff of ENQA member agencies, and two new events – a workshop on learning outcomes and their role in external quality assurance and a seminar for ENQA affiliates preparing to undergo an external review against the ESG. ENQA relies on its members and affiliates to volunteer themselves as hosts for its events, so please be reminded that any agencies interested in acting as such are kindly requested to contact the ENQA Secretariat.

2. Members and affiliates

At its October Board meeting, the ENQA Board reconfirmed the membership of the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain (ANECA, Spain) and granted affiliate status to the Eurasian Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education and health Care (ECAQA, Kazakhstan). Decisions from the October Board meeting are expected to be endorsed during the meeting of the General Assembly at the Members’ Forum in April 2018.

3. Projects and working groups

ENQA’s Working Group VII on Quality Assurance and Recognition published its final report, entitled *Current practices on external quality assurance of academic recognition among QA agencies*. The report presents the findings of the group’s research into determining the state of the art where QA agencies and issues of academic recognition are concerned, a topic of importance since the adoption of the ESG 2015.

The report reveals that 60 percent of ENQA’s member and affiliate QA agencies have only occasional or no contact whatsoever with their relevant ENIC-NARIC centre. Concerning the agencies’ external quality assurance methodologies, 23 percent have an explicit focus on recognition, 12 percent focus on outcomes and metrics, and 65 percent have no explicit focus or are in transition. The working group’s survey and subsequent interviews have revealed that recognition is not currently a priority for most QA agencies – and in cases where it is – there are integration challenges. The report includes some final recommendations, with further work on the topic being taken up by the EU-funded LIREQA project.

4. ENQA meetings and events

Kindly mark your calendars for the next Members’ Forum, taking place in Zaragoza, Spain, on 19-20 April 2018. The event will be hosted by the Aragon Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ACPUA). Further information about the programme and registration are expected to be announced in January.

The 2018 General Assembly will be hosted by the Independent Kazakh Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (IQAA) on 18-19 October 2018 in Astana, Kazakhstan.
On behalf of the Secretariat, I would like to thank the agencies that participated in the recent survey on quality assurance and work-based learning. The findings will be included in a report for the Integrating Entrepreneurship and Work Experience into Higher Education (WEXHE) project, in which ENQA is a partner.

You may look forward to the next Note from the President following the December Board meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Christoph Grolimund
President of ENQA