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Freiburg, May11, 2022

## Follow up report

Dear President, dear colleagues

as provided for in the President's letter on the Reconfirmation of membership of AHPGS in ENQA dated May 11, 2020, the AHPGS hereby comments on the Areas for development named in the Annex.

It should be noted that, in accordance with the political requirements and specifications in Germany, almost all AHPGS activities since spring 2020 have taken place virtually under Corona conditions. The establishment of structures to ensure virtual activities have been accompanied by extraordinary challenges for the AHPGS. In addition to the internal necessities, the preparation of the experts and the universities were necessary, which was connected with numerous training and preparation measures, especially in 2020. These challenges, e.g., creation of an adequate infrastructure in the office and in the home office, conversion of already planned on-site visits from presence to virtual, preparation of the experts (in particular regarding technical requirements) and technical coordination with the universities, were connected with economic imponderables.

In discussing the required changes in the pandemic work situation with the committees and adopting suitable strategies early on, the AHPGS showed a quick and efficient reaction to cope with the given restrictions. Thus, the AHPGS conducted on-site visits virtually already in spring 2020. As of today, it can be stated that the AHPGS has

been outstandingly successful in holding its own during the Corona Pandemic, which has now been ongoing for two years.

The robustness of the organization and the independence of the organization's sponsors have proven their worth and have certainly contributed to the agile response to the challenges, which the AHPGS has shown.

In this context, the recommendation to

*ESG 3.1 Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance*

*AHPGS is recommended to develop a more robust approach to strategic planning, supported by a financial plan which demonstrates sustainability, improvement and forward planning. Furthermore, AHPGS is recommended to broaden the integration of international expertise in their Governing bodies.*

seems somewhat inappropriate. In this particular situation, the AHPGS has been able to respond adequately to the challenges and has demonstrated the ability of its board and management to function.

In all proceedings since 2009, the AHPGS has made an effort to demonstrate that, unlike agencies that are, for example, state or association funded, the AHPGS as an organization is funded solely from the income generated by its statutory activities. This funding structure is due to the fact that the AHPGS has been recognized as a non-profit cooperation for 20 years. Accordingly, strict regulations are deployed on the financial possibilities of the AHPGS. During the last 20 years, and especially in the economically challenging last two pandemic years, the AHPGS has proven that it is able to manage sustainability, improvement and forward planning successfully within the frame of the given structures.

In the sense of a "robust approach to strategic planning", it is currently being discussed to what extent experiences from the past years can also be used in the future, for example for meetings of the committees, for webinars for training of experts, acquisition and consultation of universities, for demand-related meetings of the Accreditation Commission.

The recommendation to integrate international expertise into the governing bodies will certainly remain on the agenda and is planned to be the subject of a next General Meeting in presence. Nevertheless, it is to be noted that according to the legal requirements the board of the AHPGS is elected from the ranks of the members. Furthermore, it is to be noted that in the boards and committees of the last 20 years members from Austria and Switzerland were and are represented regularly.

### *ESG 3.4 Thematic analysis*

*AHPGS is recommended to include the intended thematic analysis resource-wise already into a working plan beyond 2021. AHPGS is recommended to reconsider the target audiences for their reports and make sure that the system level reflections will also be useful for policy makers and QA professionals within this system.*

The AHPGS has ensured the regular preparation of thematic analyses by board resolution and outlined this to ENQA. Since 2020, the AHPGS has produced four thematic analyses and one article in the journal Public Health Forum on the topic of nursing and accreditation, which was in high demand due to the Nursing Reform Act. The last two thematic analyses dealt with the satisfaction of assessors and universities with virtual on-site assessments in the context of accreditation. The AHPGS has thus taken up a currently highly topical subject and made it generally available, combined with the expectation that the results are not only relevant for the AHPGS but are also useful to third parties and the system level and are perceived as useful. In addition to the publication on the AHPGS websites, references to publications (Public Health Forum, INQAHEE Newsletter, Newsletter GAC, etc.) are widely distributed.

### *ESG 3.6 Internal quality assurance and professional conduct*

*AHPGS is recommended a further formalisation of its internal feedback mechanism.*

The AHPGS understands this recommendation as a permanent challenge and faces it. However, it should also be noted that these processes are to be observed in the context of government regulations (home office / contact restrictions).

### *ESG 2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance*

*AHPGS is recommended to develop more widely all the criteria of Part 1 in the international assessments. To demonstrate compliance with ESG Part 1, the agency should undertake a mapping exercise that clearly indicates that all standards are addressed.*

The AHPGS sees the challenge and faces it. At present, it should be noted that, due to Corona, virtually no international assessments have taken place since 2020.

### *ESG 2.3 Implementing processes*

*AHPGS is recommended to take a more active role in the follow-up of the conditioned assessments outside Germany.*

The AHPGS immediately took up this recommendation and formalized it in its contracts for the implementation of accreditation and assessment procedures. Follow up procedures take place - regardless of whether the AHPGS makes the final accreditation decision or not.

*ESG 2.4 Peer-review experts*

*AHPGS is recommended the intensification and further improvement of the training provided by the agency, for new and experienced members. Furthermore, AHPGS is recommended to expand the recruitment of experts, increasing transparency and widening accessibility.*

The AHPGS has conducted almost all assessments virtually since 2020. Overall, this involved intensive preparation and training for the team and also for the experts. The AHPGS purchased external training to specifically convey and ensure the competencies of the AHPGS consultants.

The recruitment of the experts was of course also limited since 2020 and very dependent on their willingness to engage in the virtual processes.

In 2020 and 2021, the AHPGS has advertised (open call) and conducted three online trainings for experts.

*ESG 2.7 Complaints and appeals*


*AHPGS is recommended to establish a body to deal with complaints which is independent from both the accreditation commission and the executive board.*

*Furthermore, AHPGS is recommended to review the complaints procedure to include common elements of a complaints procedure and use the procedure as a means of stimulating agency improvements.*

This recommendation was implemented immediately by setting up a corresponding committee which held its constituent meeting in June 2020.

There have been no complaints or appeals to date.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow background. The signature appears to be 'G. Reschauer' written in a cursive style.

Georg Reschauer  
AHPGS Managing Director