



Bologna with Student Eyes 2024: overview on Quality Assurance

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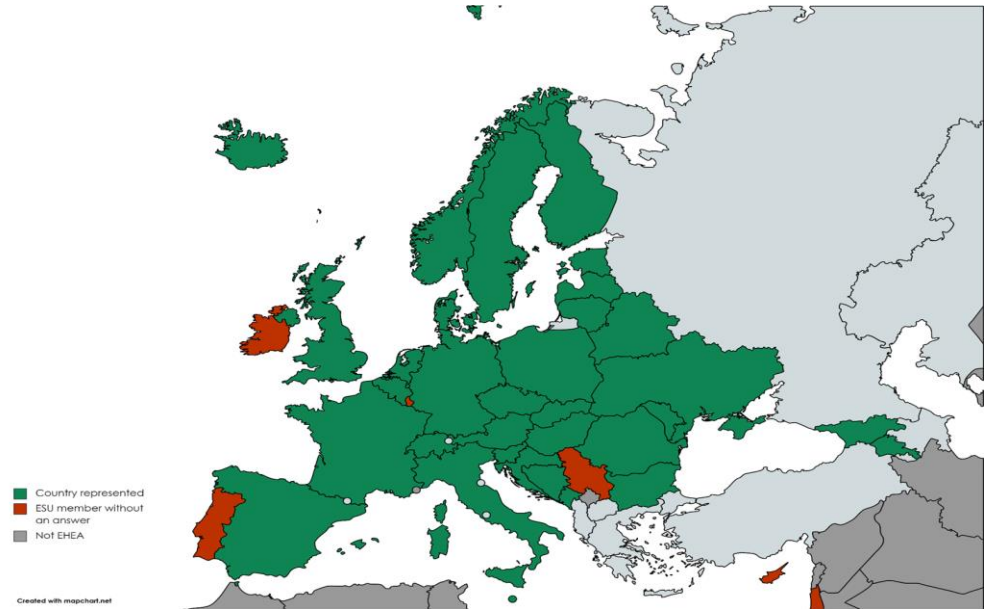


About BWSE

- ❑ **Flagship publication of ESU** since 2003, collecting data about the perception of national unions of students related to the implementation of the Bologna Process
- ❑ Part of **BWSEFOR2030** project
- ❑ **New surveys**, to ensure capturing of new themes and trends, as well as link with BPIR. Fine-tuned with three focus groups
- ❑ **Data** analysed and cross-checked with the support of experts. For QA, linked with **QA FIT data**
- ❑ **BWSE has the following thematic chapters:** General perception about the Bologna Process, Social Dimension, Fundamental Values, Student Participation, Key commitments, Quality Assurance, Learning and Teaching, Internationalisation & Mobility, Higher Education in emergency (including Covid and Ukraine)

DATA COLLECTION

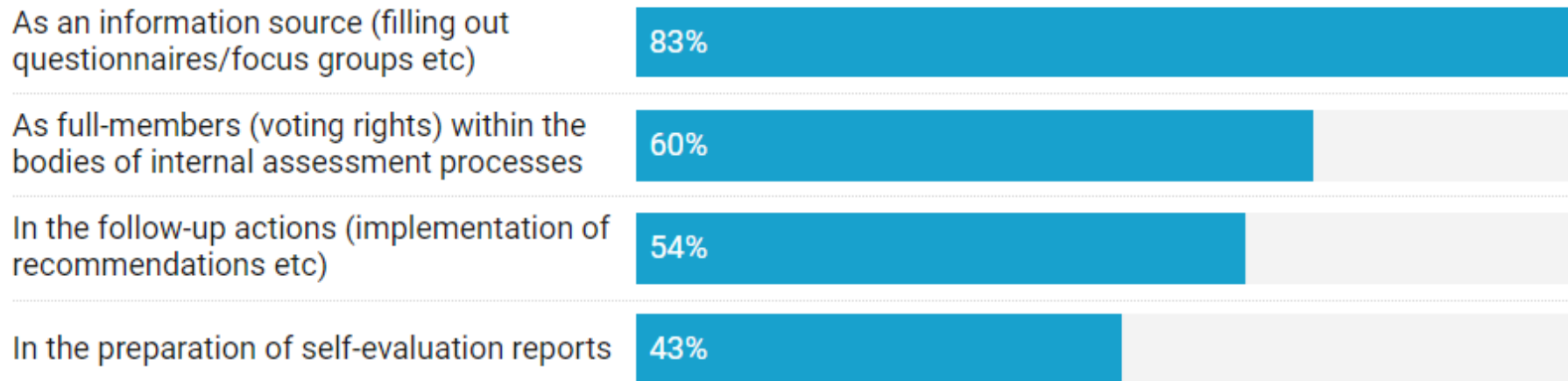
- ✓ **Data collected** from 37 national unions of students, from 33 members of EHEA.
- ✓ One answer from a **non-EHEA territory**: Faroe Islands.
- ✓ **Two answers for:**
 - ✓ **Belgium** (Flanders/Wallonia),
 - ✓ **UK** (England/Scotland)
 - ✓ **Finland** (HE/VET)





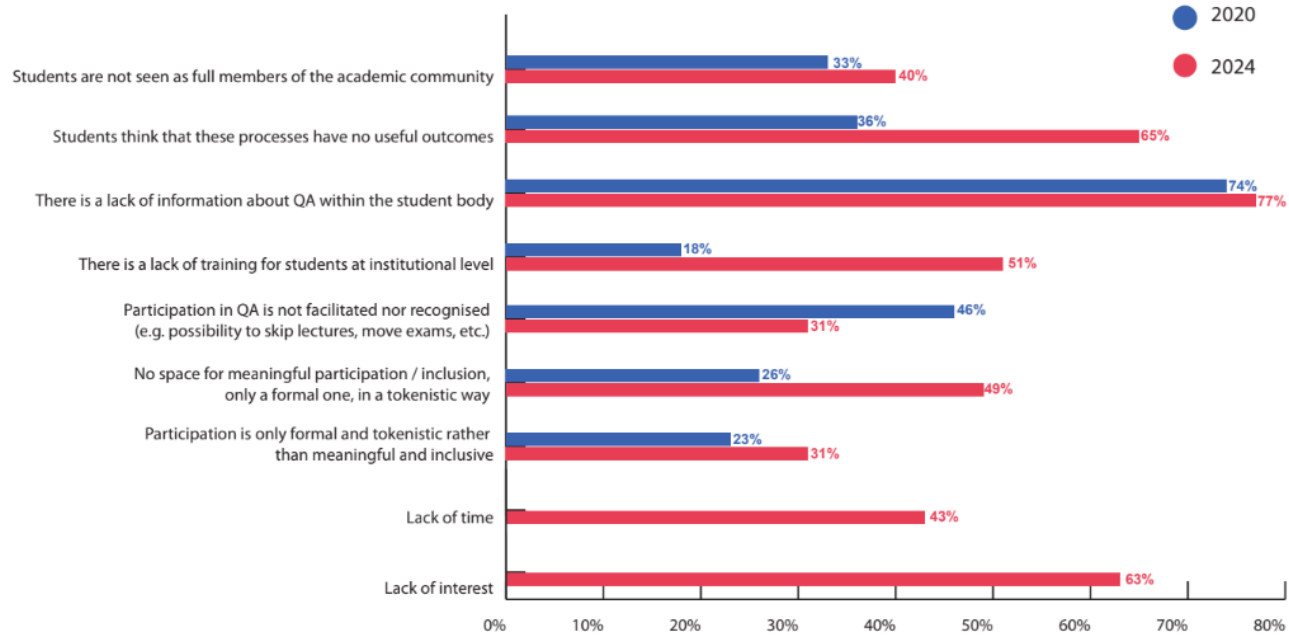
Quality assurance

If students are involved in internal QA processes, how are they involved?



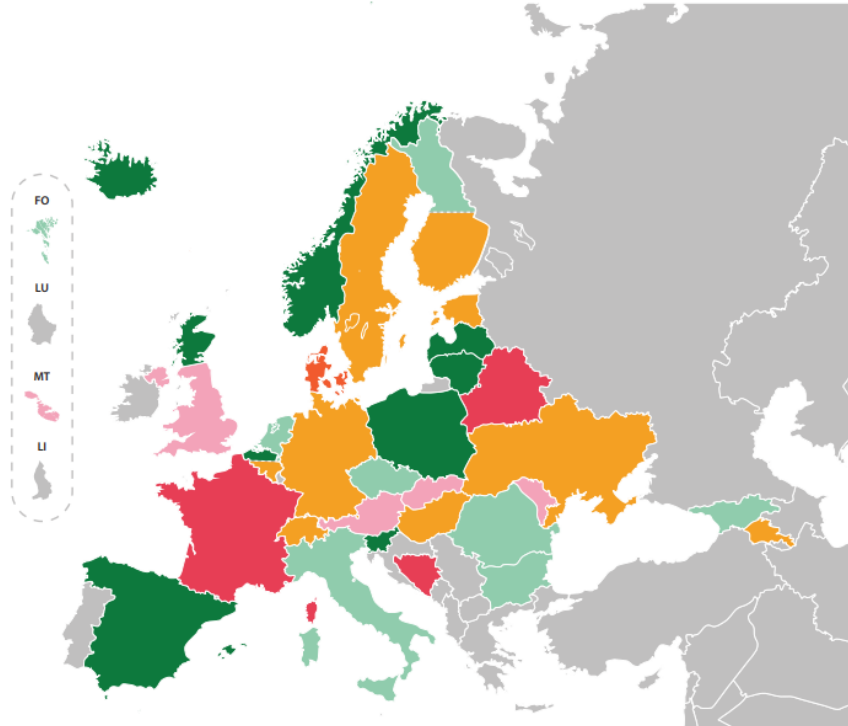
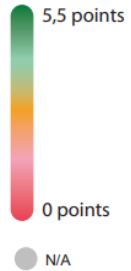
- ❑ The most common form of participation: as an **information source**. BUT only in 15% of cases the results of these surveys are published and in 10% students report follow-up.
- ❑ In comparison with 2020, **participation of students** as full members with voting rights within internal QA bodies **increased** from 46% to 60.
- ❑ In 5 higher education systems (**Iceland, Faroe, Georgia, Belgium - French community and Italy**) student participation in internal QA bodies reaches levels of **over 25%**, while in **Sweden, Romania and Slovenia** it settles around **20-25%**.
- ❑ In Belarus, Bosnia Herzegovina, Switzerland, Austria, United Kingdom and Slovakia, NUSes declare students are generally not present in internal QA bodies
- ❑ On another note, **73% of higher education institutions** declared 'increasing student and staff satisfaction' as one of the main purposes of their internal quality assurance system (EUA & EURASHE, QA FIT)

10. Main barriers for students regarding their involvement in internal QA



8. Involvement of students in internal QA processes

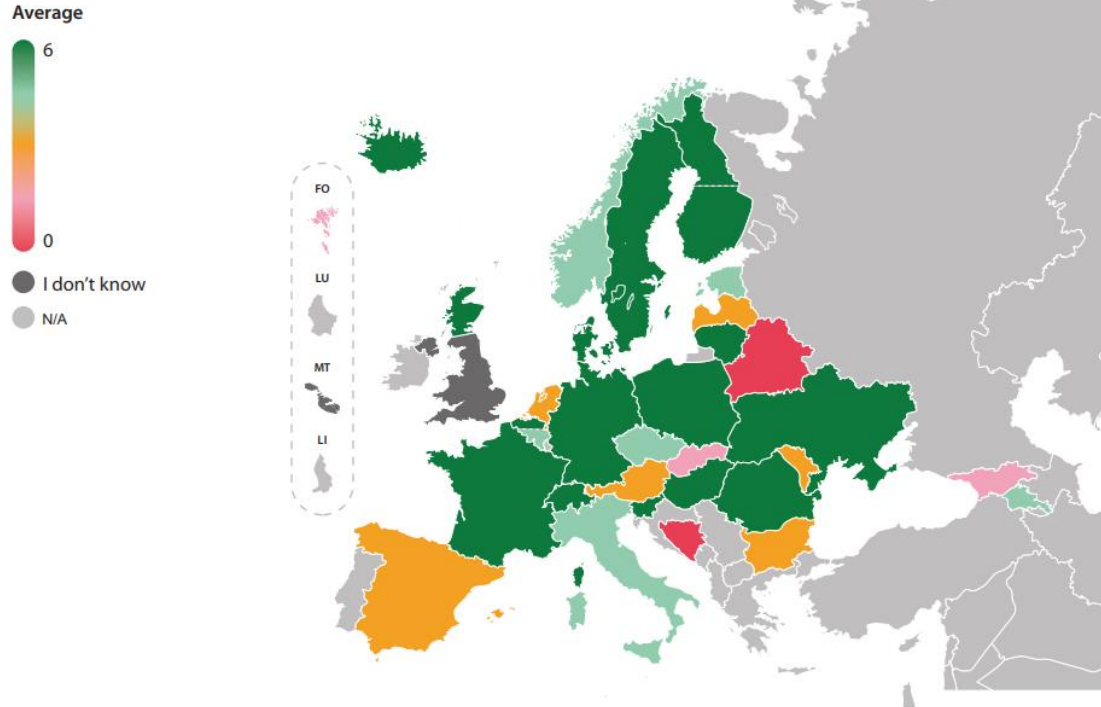
Average



Indicators:

- students as an information source (1p)
- students in the follow-up actions (1p)
- students in the preparation of self-evaluation (1p)
- observers in QA bodies (0.5p)
- full-members in QA bodies (2p)

11. Involvement of students in external QA processes



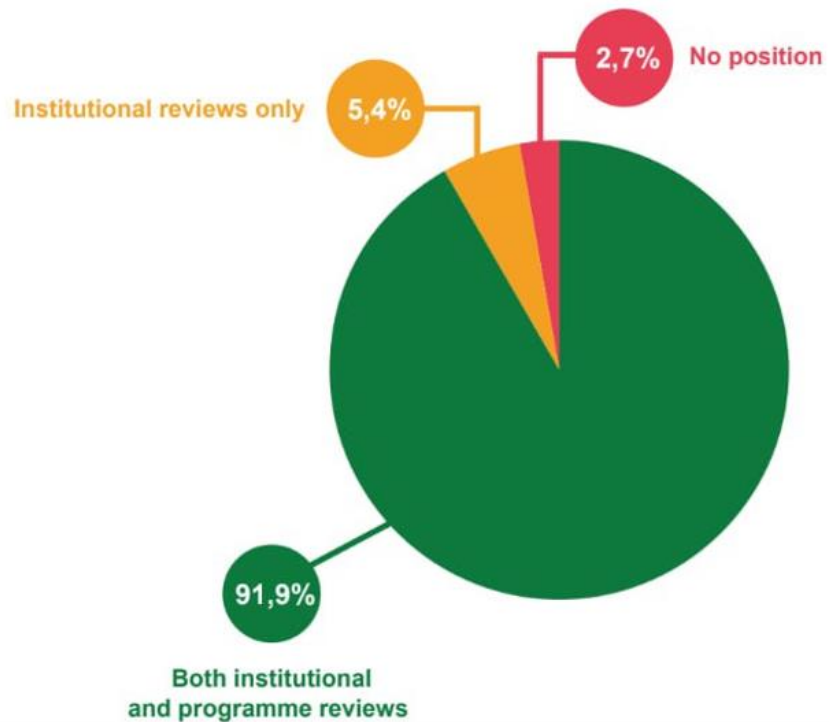
Indicators:

- participation in external review panels (1.5 p)
- participation in external QA follow-up procedures (1p)
- participation in the design and revision of methodologies (1p)
- participation in the governance structures of QA agencies (1p),
- participation in the decision-making body responsible for approval of external review reports, either within QA agency or another accreditation body (1p)
- participation in consultations organised by QA agencies (0.5 p)

- ❑ NUSes reported a **lack of equal footing** with other panel members in Bulgaria, Lithuania, Armenia, Italy, Netherlands, Slovakia.
- ❑ **Relevant differences** with BPIR: Bosnia, Georgia, Spain, Netherlands.
- ❑ In 6 higher education systems (Spain, Switzerland, Germany, Romania, Lithuania and Latvia) the **QA pools are managed by the National Union of Students** or the NUS has a leading role in managing the pool. **Co-management roles** of the NUS together with the QA agency can be found in three systems (Austria, Poland and Sweden)
- ❑ The **main barriers** in the participation of students in **external QA** are **similar** to the ones mentioned for internal QA, evidencing especially the lack of time, interest or information (55-60%), lack of training (40%). While for internal QA the factor of believing that IQA has no useful outcomes is among the highest, it fares at only 29% for external QA.
- ❑ **QA FIT:** 59% of surveyed NUSes agreed or somewhat agreed that one barrier to realise the potential of the ESC is to ensure that changes after external QA are systemic and 65% of NUSes indicated the lack of a follow-up after external QA

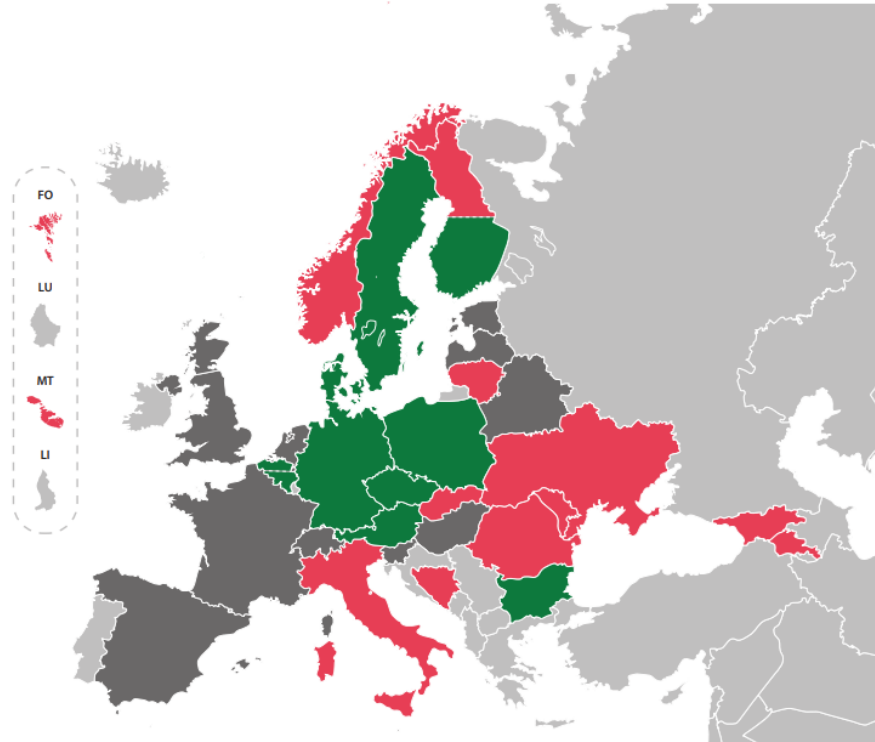
- In 69% of cases, students are involved with **full rights in the governing bodies** of the QA agency, while in 10% of cases they are observers
- The **average participation rate** of students in the governing bodies of QA agencies is around 10 to 15%. The results of the BWSE show a participation rate of over 25% in Georgia, and a participation between 20-25% in Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway and Malta
- **Best practice** on student involvement in QA: Romania
- In Bulgaria, the selection process for student experts is conducted via contacting universities and rectors, which raises **concerns on the transparency** of the process. Lack of transparency is also raised by the Danish union.
- In Slovakia **training does not take place regularly**, i.e., between 2017 and 2023 no training has been conducted for new student experts. Several unions also pointed out instances of inadequate and poor management practices in conducting the training for students.

Q1. Preference for types of external reviews to be implemented in the national context



6. Does your NUS believe that in your national context there should be additional national requirements on the use of the European Approach to Joint Programmes (EA)?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- N/A



19% unions disagree that another agency should operate in their country for the mandatory reviews, while 8% say that should be the case only if a suitable agency is not active in their country.

- There is a need for a further deepening of the integration and implementation of the core elements of the ESGs and the commitments related to QA in the Bologna Process
- The next cycle in the Bologna Process should also see the revision of the ESGs, in order to adapt it to new trends and challenges in higher education and QA, especially linked to social dimension and fundamental values, and to make the standards and guidelines, as well as their application clearer.
- One area which needs enhanced emphasis is the growing offer of transnational education.
- We also highlight the importance of finally integrating the use of the European Approach to the Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes in national legislation. This should serve as an easy step, but with a crucial impact for boosting transnational cooperation in education delivery.
- While notable progress has been made in student participation in external QA, the student participation in internal QA is still in many cases tokenistic, only as a facade or limited to consumeristic approaches.
- For external QA, the lack of training is one of the biggest barriers, not compensated by the fact that there has been no progress in the establishment of the QA pools.
- In order to promote cross-border QA, there needs to be better comparability of practices for implementing ESGs, especially when QA agencies evaluate cross-border.



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