

State of Implementation of the EHEA Key Commitment on External QA

**Legislative alignment with the ESG: the path towards meeting
the EHEA key commitment on QA in the Western Balkans**

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Quality framework of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)



QF-EHEA & ECTS	qualifications framework with learning outcomes and ECTS credit ranges
ESG	common standards for internal and external quality assurance (QA)
European Approach	specific standards and procedures for single, integrated external QA of joint programmes
EQAR	official register of agencies that substantially comply with ESG
DEQAR	higher education institutions & programmes quality-assured in line with ESG

EHEA Key Commitments



- 1) A Three-Cycle System compatible with the QF-EHEA and scaled by ECTS
- 2) Compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC)
- 3) Quality Assurance in conformity with European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)

Institutions granting degrees assure the quality of their programmes leading to degrees within the three-cycle system following the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG 2015).

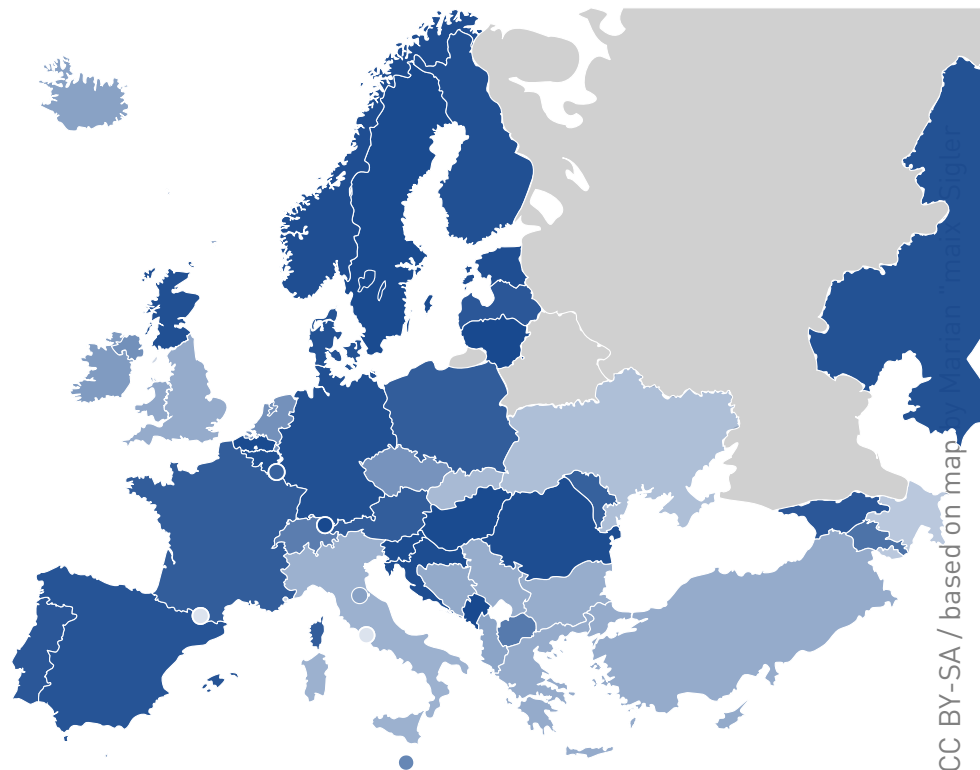
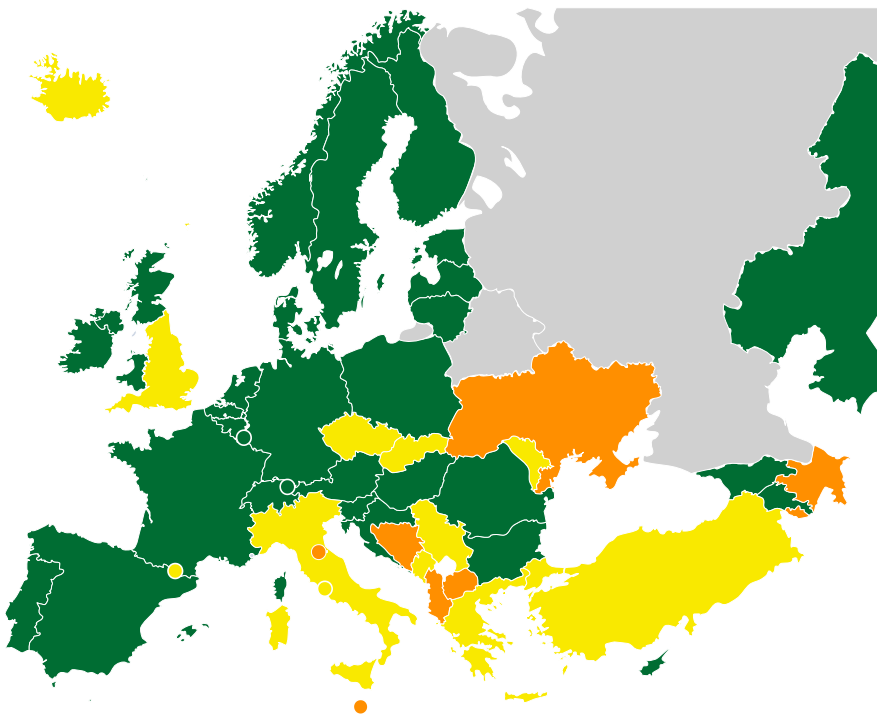
External quality assurance (be it at programme or institutional level) is performed by Agencies that have demonstrably complied with the standards and guidelines stipulated in the current ESG. This is best ensured where only those agencies registered on the **European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)** are allowed to operate in the country.

EHEA Key Commitment & coverage of systems in DEQAR



29 EHEA countries (22 of EU-27) **fully realise** the key commitment

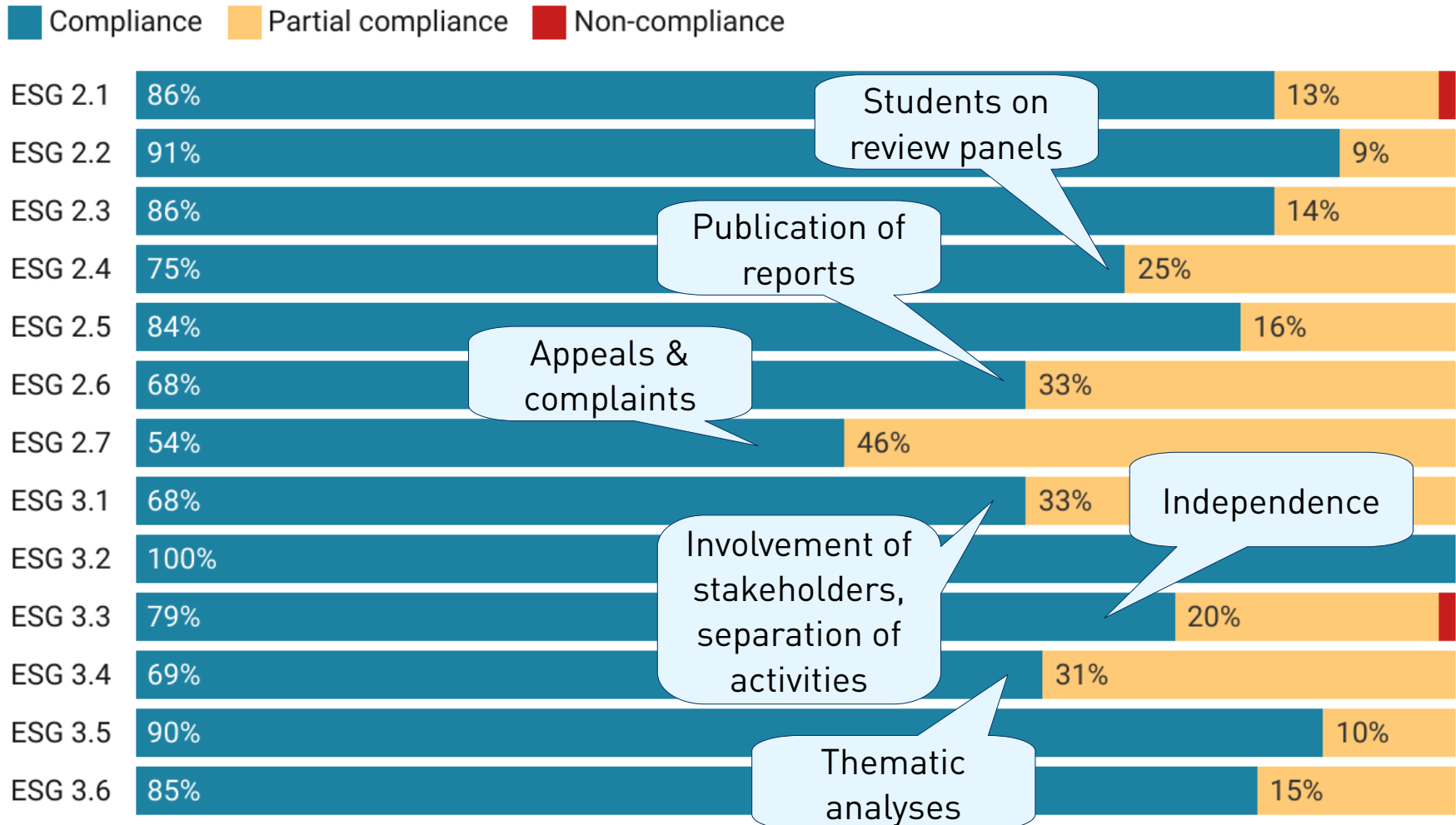
DEQAR: 83 265 reports on 3 283 HEIs; 26 EHEA systems comprehensive coverage (> 50% of HEIs)



No reports 10% of HEIs in ETER/national list 100%

CC BY-SA / based on map

ESG Compliance: typical challenges



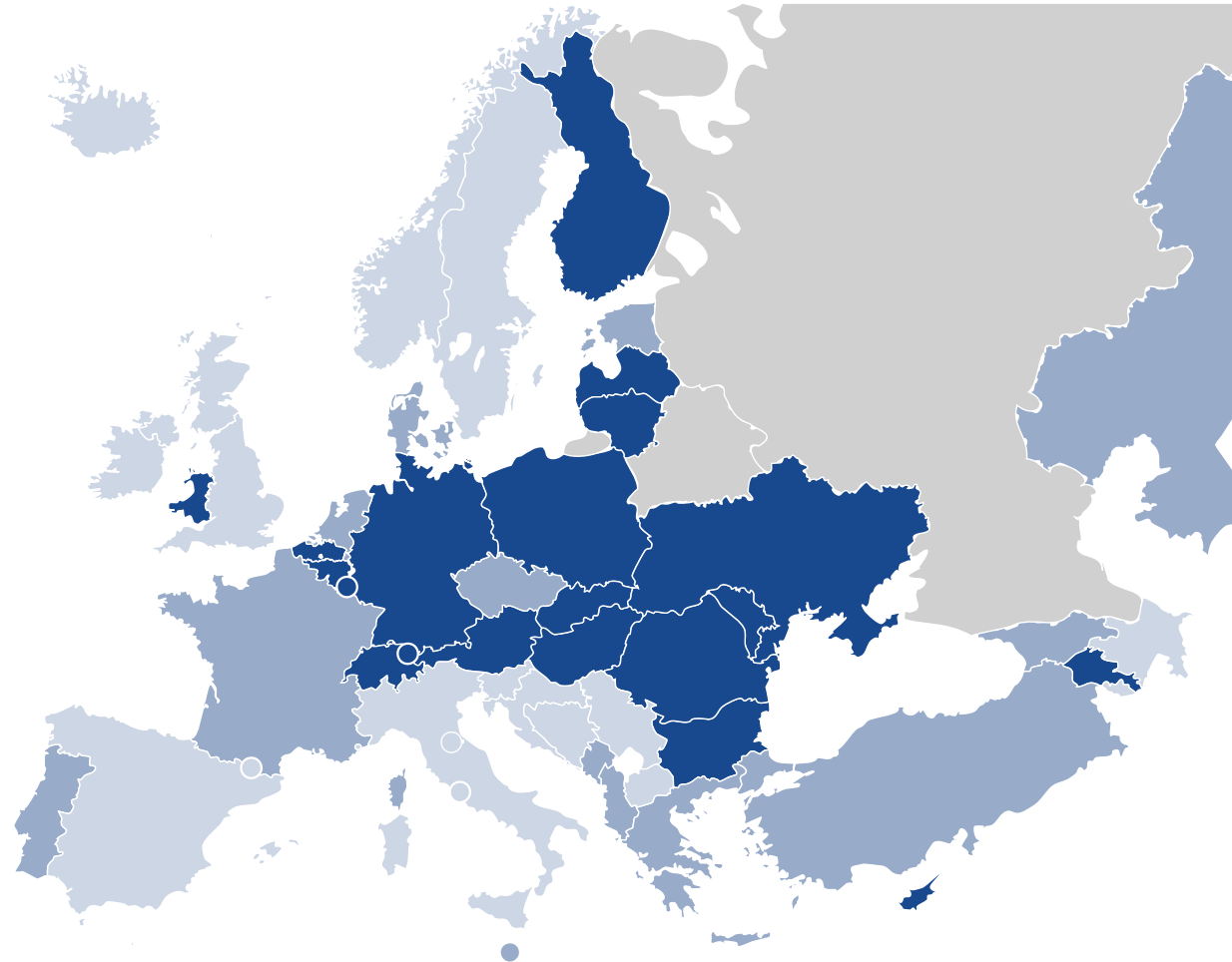
Recognition of external QA results across borders



Recognition of results from suitable foreign agencies based on ESG & EQAR registration

Specific national requirements/conditions for recognition of cross-border QA

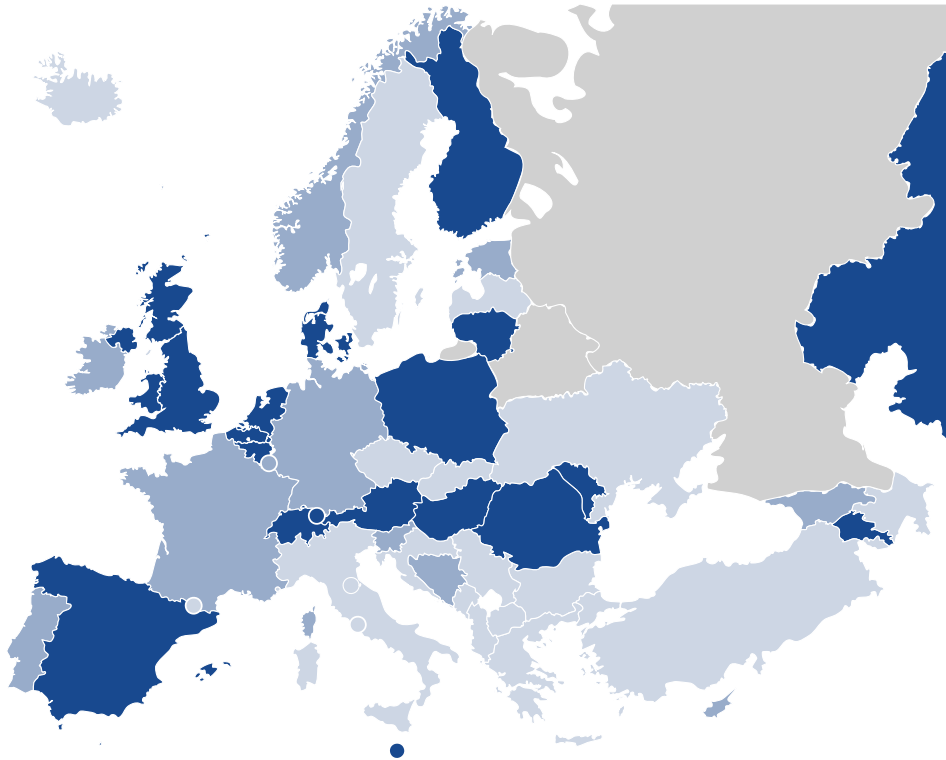
Cross-border QA not recognised within the obligatory external QA framework



European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes



Implementation in legal framework:

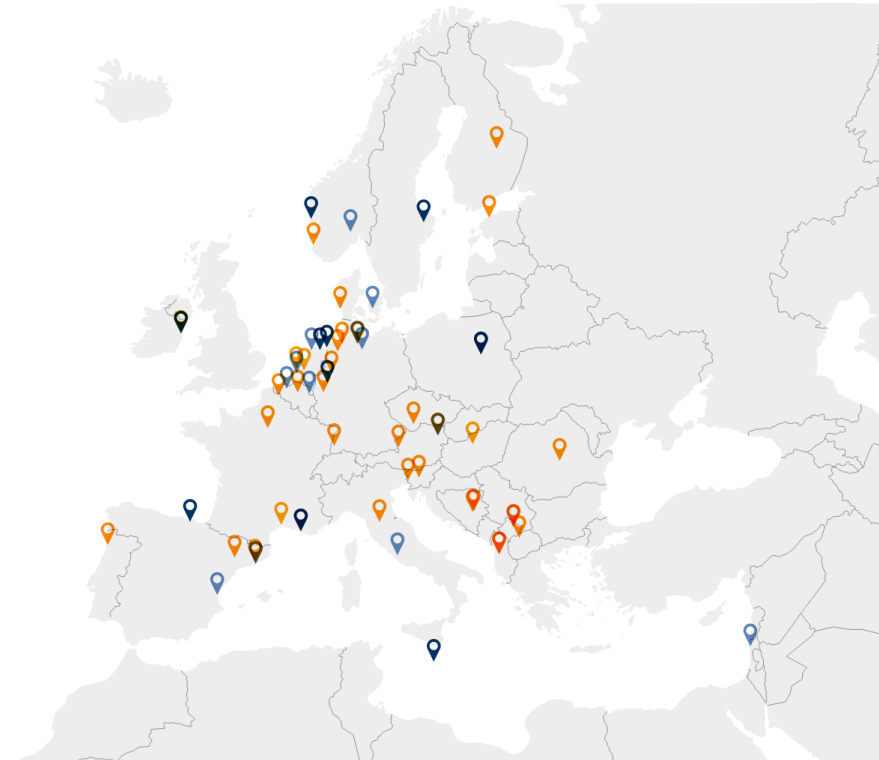


■ All HEIs able to use

■ Some HEIs/subject to specific conditions

■ Cannot be used for required external QA

Uptake by institutions:



Map: Colin Tück • Source: DEQAR • Created with Datawrapper

Importance of legal frameworks for QA



- Legal provisions needed on essentials
 - Overall design: types of accreditation, status, consequences
 - Agency status, organisational structure
 - Safeguard agency independence (nomination, dismissal, ...)
 - Key areas to be covered by QA standards
 - Key features, e.g. publication of reports, appeals, ...
 - Cross-border recognition of external QA
 - Use of the European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes
- Better to avoid
 - Procedural and methodological details in laws
 - Provisions that make system too inflexible
 - Provisions that contradict specific ESG

(IMINQA analysis and peer-learning activity, Sep 2022)

Key challenges for WB6 QAAs



- **Align standards with ESG Part 1:** standards mirroring ESG in substance, avoid too much reliance on quantitative standards
- **Reliability and transparency** of full process: quality of review reports, consistent and transparent decision-making
- **Follow-up** procedures during accreditation cycles
- Lack of **complaints and appeals** in line with ESG
- **Internal QA** processes
- **Resources:** need for strong professional staff to support the agencies' QA processes
- **Independence:** appointments of boards, directors, staff; safeguards against arbitrary dismissal

(SEQA-ESG meetings, RCC mock reviews, ENQA reviews, EQAR decisions)



eqar 

Thank you

