

ENQA report to the BFUG, 11-12 April 2024, Belgium

Highlights of ENQA's activities since November 2023

25 March 2024

ENQA (the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) is the designated stakeholder organisation of quality assurance agencies in the EHEA. ENQA represents their interests internationally, supports them nationally and provides them with comprehensive services and networking opportunities. Under ENQA's umbrella, the community of agencies drives innovation in quality assurance and refines quality assurance processes.

1. ENQA MEMBERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

In the past five months, ENQA has welcomed three new members: the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (SAAHE), Slovakia, the Central Asian Association for Accreditation of Education (CAAEE, Kazakhstan – formerly known as KAZSEE), and the Independent Agency for Recognition and Quality Assurance in Education (ARQA, Kazakhstan). This brings ENQA's membership to 60 agencies in 32 countries in the EHEA, as well as 43 affiliates in 53 countries worldwide. There are ENQA members and/or affiliates in 45 out of the 47 EHEA countries (excluding Russia and Belarus).

2. LATEST ENQA ACTIVITIES

Publications on micro-credentials

ENQA has published the report '[Quality Assurance of Micro-credentials](#)', which has been prepared by the ENQA working group on this topic. The report gives an overview and examples of how the quality assurance of micro-credentials is being addressed in the EHEA and provides detailed considerations for the application of the ESG to micro-credentials. Recommendations are aimed at both education providers and quality assurance agencies, and reflect the range of operating contexts as well as the synergies between internal and external quality assurance.

Also on the topic of micro-credentials, an IMINQA project working group, led by ENQA, has published '[Reflective Questions for Internal and External Quality Assurance of Micro-credentials](#)'. The document aims to guide stakeholders in developing or reviewing their internal and external quality assurance policies and processes by provoking internal discussion and reflection. The IMINQA project supports the work of the Bologna Process Thematic Peer Group on Quality Assurance.

Paper on quality assurance of transnational education

ENQA has published a [paper](#) on 'Protecting the interests of student on transnational education programmes: the role of transparent quality assurance' authored by Anna Gover (Director) and Douglas Blackstock (President). The paper explores the key concerns and barriers to the implementation of current tools, and makes suggestions regarding the role of quality assurance agencies in protecting student interests and the role of inter-agency cooperation in building trust in transnational cooperation. The key messages from the paper were presented at the European Quality Assurance Forum (November 2023), and at an event connected to the UNESCO Intergovernmental Conference of the States Parties to the Global Convention (March 2024).

QA-FIT project activities

The ENQA-coordinated QA-FIT project (Quality Assurance Fit for the Future) has continued its activities to explore in more detail key issues for the future of quality assurance in the EHEA, and

specifically to gather further evidence to inform the upcoming revision of the ESG. Focus groups have been held with the main stakeholder groups, and further papers are being prepared, exploring views on quality assurance and internationalisation, and the future of the ESG. The project continues over the next six months with the preparation of a final publication, a policy brief, as well as webinars and a policy event in Brussels. All project resources are available [here](#).

Webinar and briefing note on the Bologna Process

On 13 March 2024, ENQA held a webinar exploring the status quo of the Bologna Process commitment related to quality assurance, on the basis of data from the Bologna Process Implementation Report and Bologna with Student Eyes. The recording and resources are available [here](#). In parallel, ENQA published a [briefing note](#), providing a short and easy-to-read overview of the EHEA and the Bologna Process, and how they function.

SEQA-ESG activities support Bologna Process key commitment on quality assurance

In February 2024, ENQA conducted the last peer-counselling visit as part of the [SEQA-ESG 2 project](#), thus concluding the first activity stream of this project. The project aims to support quality assurance agencies in meeting the expectations of the ESG.

Five visits have taken place between April 2023 and February 2024, one for each of the project partners in Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Ukraine. These visits have convened representatives from the local agency, the ministry in charge of higher education, higher education institutions, students, and other relevant stakeholders.

In collaboration with ENQA, the participating agencies (AHERS, HEA, NAQA, NEAQA and TKTA) developed visit programmes according to their specific needs. Building on the conclusions of the peer-counselling visits, each participating agency is currently drafting an action plan aimed at addressing the remaining obstacles at system level on the road towards ESG-compliance.

ENQA-SIACES project to strengthen trust between quality assurance systems

ENQA and SIACES (Ibero-American System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) have launched the [ESG-PBP Alignment project](#). The overall objective of this initiative is to strengthen mutual trust between the European and Ibero-American regions by establishing a dialogue about their respective frameworks for quality assurance and quality enhancement in higher education: the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area ([ESG](#)) and the Principles of good practices in quality assurance systems ([PBP](#)). The project will publish a comparative report analysing the degree of concordance and discordance between the ESG and PBP, and will explore potential for further alignment between the two frameworks.

The project is running from February 2024 until the first half of 2025, is coordinated by ANECA (Spain), and involves several more quality agencies from both regions, including CNA-Chile (Chile), CNA-Colombia (Colombia), CONEAU (Argentina), A3ES (Portugal), ANVUR (Italy), HCERES (France), and QAA (UK).

Preparations for the project coincided with ENQA's input to the 2024 University Congress in Cuba in February 2024, where meetings with SIACES and other local stakeholders were also held. This work forms part of ENQA's broader international engagement, including through projects, partnerships and event contributions with relevant bodies in Africa, North and South America, the Gulf region and the ASEAN region.

3. ENQA AGENCY REVIEWS

In 2024, ENQA expects to coordinate 16 external peer reviews of quality assurance agencies. The review process assesses the compliance of agencies with the ESG, in line with the Bologna Process key commitment on quality assurance, and also provides recommendations for further development.

At the end of 2023 ENQA published a [thematic analysis](#), based on recent review reports, which explores the various ways in which agencies engage institutions in follow-up activities after external quality assurance procedures, as well as the different models for handling complaints and appeals.

4. UPCOMING EVENTS

Webinar ‘QA agencies and ENIC-NARICs – cooperation models and opportunities’ will take place on 8 April. This [webinar](#), co-organised by ENQA and the ENIC-NARIC network, will explore the different cooperation models and opportunities for enhancing communication and exchange between quality assurance agencies and ENIC-NARICs.

ENQA Members’ Forum 2024 will take place on 18-19 April in Hannover, Germany. The [Forum](#) will address the topic of ‘Quality Assurance and Change’.

ENQA General Assembly 2024 will take place on 24-25 October in Valletta, Malta.

European Quality Assurance Forum 2024 will take place on 24-26 November, hosted by the University of Twente in the Netherlands. This year’s Forum will focus on the theme of ‘Enhancing education, research and societal engagement through quality assurance’ and will offer an occasion to discuss the interconnection of the three missions. A [call for contributions](#) is currently open.

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