



BFUGB12 3a

Bologna Follow-Up Group Board

Vienna, 13 June 2006

Report of the E4 Group on Quality Assurance

1. This report from the E4 Group (ENQA, ESIB, EUA, and EURASHE) updates the BFUG Board on progress on the Bologna Process action line on quality assurance since the previous BFUG Board meeting in Vienna in January 2006.
2. E4 is working to meet the request of the Bergen communiqué that “the practicalities of implementation (of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area) be further developed by ENQA in cooperation with EUA, EURASHE and ESIB with a report back to us through the Follow-up Group”.
3. Since January 2006, the E4 group has met twice, on 9 February and on 18 April. It will next meet on 21 June.

The Register of European Quality Assurance Agencies

4. At its meeting in February the E4 group considered the terms of reference for the register consultancy project. A list of consultant candidates was drawn up from proposals of the E4 members. It was decided that all candidates would be contacted and asked to send their CV and a project plan to the E4 group at their earliest convenience. The budget of the project was agreed upon; the European Commission and the government of Switzerland have both generously made available 10.000 EUR to fund the project.
5. At its meeting in April the E4 Group appointed Mr Bastian Baumann (Germany) as a consultant for the project. It was agreed that Mr Baumann should start the project right away and submit the final report to the E4 group by its meeting on 21 June 2006.
6. The consultancy report will address the practicalities of implementation of the European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies. The starting point for the report will be the Standards and Guidelines for the Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and the Bergen Communiqué. More specifically the report will include
 - a description and analysis of the models envisaged thus far (and any others that might emerge in the course of the project), including discussion of
 - o the potential use and value of each model
 - o ownership



- legal requirements and implications, including potential liabilities
 - the operational requirements of each model, including
 - administrative requirements
 - logistics
 - costs and funding requirements
 - implementation issues
 - a risk analysis for each model
- specimen pages (or other “visualisations”) of each Register model examined
 - suggestions on how to develop a manageable scheme in a short timeframe

7. The consultant will have face-to-face interviews with

- E4 members who represent the views of individual HEIs, quality assurance agencies and students
- the European Commission
- employers’ and employees’ bodies
- relevant professional experts
- relevant legal expert(s)
- some BFUB members on the basis of an open call
- representative(s) from extra-EU countries

8. The consultant’s report will not make a recommendation on the model to be adopted and will be internal to the E4 group. E4 will draft, on the basis of the consultant’s findings, its final report to the BFUG.

Peer reviews of agencies

9. The group has discussed at length the cyclical peer reviews currently required by ENQA for its membership purposes and their possible relationship to the future register review procedure. The group recognises that agencies should not be subject to more than one peer review scheme; ENQA will communicate to its members the possibility that its membership reviews might, in due course, need to articulate formally with the register process.

For now, ENQA has invited representatives of ESIB, and EUA or EURASHE (as appropriate) to nominate members to its review teams, when an agency peer review is undertaken by ENQA.

Implementation of the European Standards and Guidelines

10. A recently conducted survey by ENQA has revealed that most of the ENQA members have begun the process of implementation of the ESG and are planning to undergo an external review within the next one to three years.



Quality assurance forums 2006 and 2007

11. ENQA, ESIB, EUA and EURASHE are co-organising with the German representatives of BFUG a Forum entitled "Embedding Quality Culture in Higher Education". The Forum will be hosted by the Technische Universität München, and will take place on 23-25 November 2006. The main objective of this event is to bring together all HE stakeholders to discuss at European level how internal QA procedures should be adapted to the changing higher education environment and the implications of this development for external evaluation procedures. A call for paper was sent to members of all four organisations as well as to European societies in HE research on 7 March 2006. A preparatory meeting with the German authorities to discuss the QA forum will take place on 7th June and they are invited to join the next meeting of the organising committee of the QA forum on 21-22 June.

12. At its meeting in April E4 agreed to submit a Socrates grant proposal for a second QA Forum in 2007. The aim of the Quality Forum 2007 will be to look at the ESG as a document to be interpreted in a wider HE policy context. The Forum will explore how to create ownership of the text in individual universities and QA agencies and how the shared values will be reflected in local realities. The Quality Forum 2007 will deal with the ESG as a guiding philosophy in the framework of the Bologna Process and Lisbon Agenda and not as a checklist.

E4 chairmanship, membership and forthcoming meetings

13. At the suggestion of the President of ENQA, the chairmanship of the E4 group is being shared on a rotating basis. EUA chaired the meeting on 9 February, EURASHE the meeting on 18 April and ESIB will take the chair on 21 June.

14. The E4 Group meetings in the second half of 2006 will take place on 29 August and 2 November.

15. E4 has invited a representative of the BFUG Secretariat to attend E4 meetings as an observer starting from the meeting in April.

Peter Williams
President, ENQA
24 May 2006