

## **ENQA-Report to BFUG, 13-14 October 2011, Cracow**

In the current work period (September 2010 to October 2011) ENQA focused on current developments in and future challenges to quality assurance in the EHEA.

### **Position paper on transparency tools**

HEIs face a steadily growing interest amongst students and all stakeholders of higher education and the public at large in accessing detailed and reliable information on individual study programmes, faculties and higher education institutions, and especially on the quality at programme and institutional levels. Also in the political arena information on higher education has reached the top end of the agenda, not the least triggered by the debate about whether rankings contribute to the public call for reliable information. ENQA, as the voice of quality assurance agencies, participates actively in the discussion about transparency in HE. At its Members' Forum on 4 March 2011, ENQA adopted a "position paper on transparency tools" which examines the nature and purpose of such transparency tools, and in particular the relationship to quality assurance. The paper concludes by stating that

"Bologna transparency tools, quality assurance and rankings/classifications serve different but partly overlapping purposes, use different methodologies, provide different types of information." However they support each other to a certain extent. It is misleading to consider them as alternatives.

The full document can be downloaded under

<http://www.enqa.eu/files/QA%20and%20Transparency%20-%20Final.pdf>

As a follow up on this topic ENQA will focus in the coming months on strengthening the transparency function of external quality assurance by exploring ways to enhance accessibility of quality assurance reports by different stakeholders.

### **Mapping the implementation and application of ESG (mapESG)**

Without doubt the most influential part of ENQA's work in the past months was the mapESG project. ENQA, together with its E4 partners (EUA, EURASHE and ESU) conducted a mapping exercise in order to analyse the implementation and application of the ESG, notably of all three parts of the ESG. As a major outcome, the E4 organisations will submit a report to the Bologna ministerial meeting in Bucharest 2012. The report will contain the analysis and recommendations as to the revision of the ESG. Preliminary results will be presented in the thematic session on quality assurance during the BFUG meeting in Cracow; the final report will be presented at a launching event on 17 January 2012 in Copenhagen, prior to the BFUG meeting.

### **Quality assurance of joint programmes**

Joint programmes turn out to be a major mean for developing further the European dimension in higher education. However, in terms of quality assurance, HEI face problems in implementing such programmes because of different



national regulations to be applied. Experience in quality assurance of joint programmes gathered in the last couple of years clearly shows that the quality assurance procedures based on the ESG provide enough flexibility to design adequate quality assurance procedures for joint programmes. The difficulties lie more with national regulations for curriculum design and other features in the context of national approval mechanisms. ENQA organised a seminar in September 2011 in order to analyse the existing experience. The main conclusion from the seminar is to recommend a specific European quality assurance approach to Joint degree programmes in order to overcome the national obstacles against introducing such programmes.

### **Report for Bucharest 2012**

The core activities of ENQA especially as regards future developments will result in a report to be submitted to the Bologna ministerial conference in Bucharest 2012. The report will focus on core issues such as the relationship between quality assurance and transparency tools, the European dimension of quality assurance and will give recommendations regarding quality assurance in Joint degree programmes.

### **Relocation to Brussels**

In summer 2011 ENQA was transformed from an association under Finnish law with a secretariat in Helsinki to an association under Belgian law with a secretariat in Brussels. The proximity to other key players in European higher education and especially to the main stakeholders on quality assurance will enhance collaborations.

### **Perspectives**

The 2011 General Assembly is to take place on 6/7 October in Bucharest. The proposed work plan for 2011/2012 focuses on the current developments in the field of qualifications frameworks and its implications on quality assurance, transnational education, impact of external quality assurance, and not the least support for recently established agencies or agencies in statu nascendi.

Finally, one major upcoming event shall be mentioned here. The next European Quality Forum, jointly organised by EUA and its E4 partners EURASHE, ESU and ENQA will take place on 17-19 November 2011 in Antwerp. This year the discussions will be guided by the main theme "Quality and Trust: at the heart of what we do." The registration is still open. <http://www.eua.be/eqaf-antwerp.aspx>

### **Future contribution to the BFUG working agenda 2010-2012**

ENQA participates actively in the following BFUG working groups:

- Qualifications Frameworks
- International Openness
- Recognition
- Transparency mechanisms

and thus shares its stakeholder's view on some of the most pertinent developments in the current term.

