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Revision of ESG Processes, timelines and structures

At the Ministerial Meeting in Bucharest, on 26 and 27 April 2012, the ministers decided:

“We acknowledge the ENQA, ESU, EUA and EURASHE (the E4 group) report on the implementation and application of the “European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance” (ESG). We will revise the ESG to improve their clarity, applicability and usefulness, including their scope. The revision will be based upon an initial proposal to be prepared by the E4 in cooperation with Education International, BUSINESSEUROPE and the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), which will be submitted to the Bologna Follow-Up Group.”

After the Bucharest Ministerial Conference the E4 invited Education International, BUSINESSEUROPE and the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) to a meeting (10th July in Brussels), where the seven organisations agreed on the process, timelines and structure for the preparation of the initial proposal for the revised ESG to the BFUG.

Structure

The cooperating stakeholders take the process forward in consensus and as equal partners through a **Steering Group** which is composed of one representative of each of the seven organisations. The proposals for revising the ESG will be discussed and agreed upon in the Steering Group meetings. The Steering Group is also responsible for ensuring proper consultation and will **agree on and maintain liaison with the BFUG**. It will meet regularly throughout the revision process.

A smaller **Drafting Group** of four experts, involved previously in the MAP-ESG project, will carry out the drafting of the ESG and preparation of the Steering Group meetings. ENQA will perform the **secretarial function** for the Steering Group meetings.

Main steps and timelines in preparing the initial draft on revised ESG to the BFUG

1. Steering Group members discuss fundamental issues to set a basis for a common approach to the concrete revision of the ESG (September 2012).
2. Steering Group members, **members of the BFUG**, and other interested parties (open call) are requested to submit concrete proposals for Standards/Guidelines to be revised (by end October 2012).
3. A synopsis of the proposals received, taking into account also the outcomes of the MAP-ESG project will be prepared and analysed in order to identify consensual and controversial issues and support thus the discussion of the steering group (by end December 2012).
4. The Steering Group will discuss and agree on modifications to the ESG or issues to be further discussed and/or explored and the Drafting Group will translate the discussions into consistent wording between the Steering Group meetings (January to December 2013).

During the process the Steering Group may decide that certain focus group discussions with external experts are necessary in case of substantial differences and/or uncertainties regarding specific items.

The initial proposal will be presented to the BFUG in its meeting in early 2014.

Reporting to the BFUG

The Steering Group will report regularly on the progress of its work to the BFUG Working Group on Qualification Frameworks, Recognition, Quality Assurance and Transparency so to enable ongoing discussion and feedback, thus ensuring that BFUG members have every opportunity to contribute to the preparatory work as it proceeds.