# Update on EQAR Activities

## for the 11/12 April 2024 BFUG meeting

## Contents

## 1. Register

**At the December 2023 meeting, the EQAR Register Committee** concluded that the following agencies demonstrated their substantial compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG).

Approved applications:

- **AKAST –** Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Canonical Programmes of Studies in Germany
- **ARACIS** – Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
- **MAB** – Hungarian Accreditation Committee
- **SAAHE** – Slovak Accreditation for Higher Education

See also:

- Full list of the Register Committee decisions

- Database of precedents, featuring various search/filter options and including relevant excerpts of RC decisions.

- Key statistics on the application process and ESG compliance (make sure to scroll down to view all the different charts).

## 2. EQAR Members Dialogue (9-10/11/2023, Granada, Spain)

The 13th EQAR Members' Dialogue "EQAR, quo vadis?" was hosted by the University of Granada in the Advanced Technical School for Building Engineering.

The Members' Dialogue was centred around the QA-FIT Focus Group for ministries and input on EQAR Strategy 2024-2028 and these topics were covered extensively, generating fruitful discussions and insightful comments from participants.

Other topics also passed the revue, ranging from the European Degree to the European Approach for QA of Joint programmes, QA of micro-credentials, the European Credentials for Learning and the European Blockchain Initiative (EBSI), using DEQAR data. More information on the outcomes of the Members Dialogue can be found [here](#).

## 4. Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR)

DEQAR is the Database of External Quality Assurance Results on activities performed by EQAR-registered quality assurance agencies. DEQAR collects their reports and decisions (i.e. accreditations and evaluations) on higher education institutions mainly based in the EHEA, but also beyond.

| Key Statistics (March 2024) The DEQAR Website continues to attract ca. 3000 page views monthly, making up over a third of the total traffic to EQAR's website. | | |
|---|---|---|
| | November 2023 | March 2024 |
| Reports | 92 657 | 97 197 |
| Institutions | 3 617 | 3740 |
| Agencies* | 50 | 55 |
| Coverage** | 31 | 31 |

*Number of agencies that have at some point uploaded reports in DEQAR

** EHEA systems where DEQAR includes reports on at least 50% of the institutions listed in the European Tertiary Education Register ([ETER](#)), except where this does not represent a substantial part of the HE system:
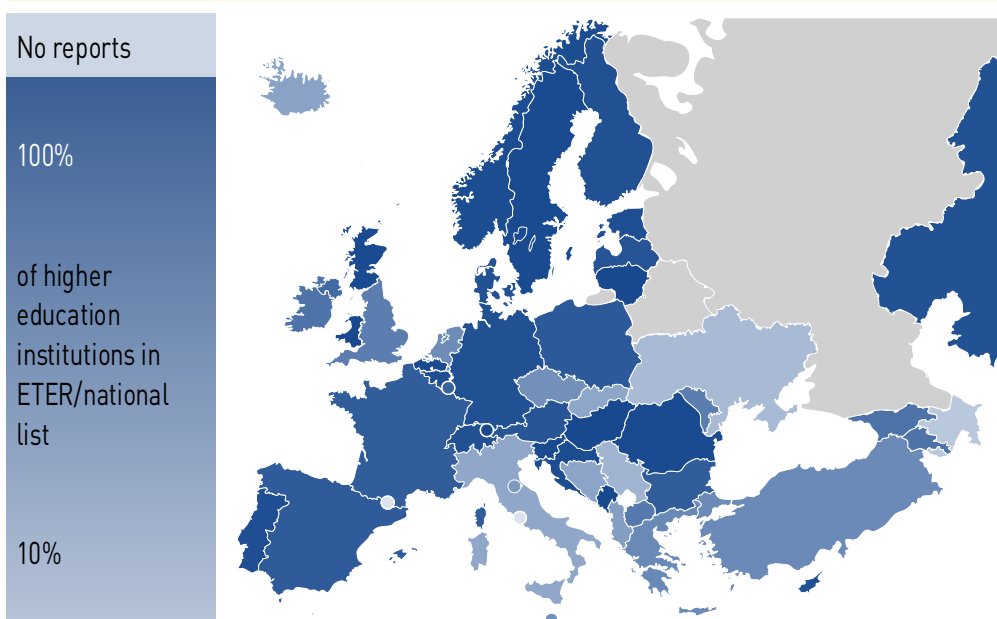
Figure 1: DEQAR coverage (percentage of HEIs with QA reports)

Updates from DEQAR:

- The number of higher education systems covered well as a result of EQAR agencies upload of external QA reports in March is twenty nine: Austria, Belgium (Flemish Community), Belgium (French Community), Bulgaria, Denmark,  Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Northern Ireland (UK), Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Scotland (UK), Spain, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, and Wales (UK).

- Few **ENIC-NARIC** centres are **integrating information on accredited higher education institutions from DEQAR into their workflows**, with a view to speeding up the recognition process for qualifications issued by HEIs present in DEQAR.

- Since March 2024, **QA agencies can store accreditations and evaluations on other (alternative) providers** (i.e. providers not having degree awarding powers but offer programmes at QF level 5-8) and **micro credentials** (i.e. programmes of small volume not leading to full recognised degree).

- All DEQAR data is now uploaded to the European Digital Credentials for Learning (EDC) by default. As a result, all HEIs covered in DEQAR are able to issue accredited digital credentials in EDC.

Further general information on DEQAR can be found at:

https://www.eqar.eu/qa-results/infographics/

## 5. Projects where EQAR is involved

### IMINQA

**The Implementation and Innovation in QA through Peer Learning (IMINQA)** project is a three year ERASMUS+ co-funded project (May 2022 – April 2023) led by the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training in partnership with ENQA, ARACIS (on behalf of Romania) and EQAR.

**IMINQA's third PLA** on the **European Approach for the QA of Joint Programmes** was held in Brussels on 13th September 2023, hosted by the Flemish Government. EQAR has set the agenda, contacted speakers and drafted a preparatory analysis on the PLA topic.

At the IMINQA meeting of the **WG on micro credentials** on 17th January 2024, EQAR presented the latest expansion regarding information on other providers and micro credentials in the DEQAR data model. In the second part,  the participants were asked to reflect on the concrete research questions and offer guidance on the upcoming feasibility study on quality labels for alternative providers. In addition, EQAR presented the initial desk research on quality labels issued by EQAR registered agencies and asked the participants to share further examples.

## QA FIT

The **QA FIT project** is led by ENQA having as partners EUA, EURASHE, ESU, EQAR, FINEEC, Irish University Association, ANOSR (NUS from Romania) and the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (associate partner). The projects activities include a desk research, four surveys on the ESG implementation, four reports and four focus groups including one with national ministries (led by EQAR), a final report, a final webinar and then a final policy event in Brussels (autumn 2024). EQAR was in charge of drafting the survey for the national ministries. All surveys have one common, almost identical part for all stakeholders, followed by specialised questions for each group.

The survey to national ministries was launched in November 2022, together with three other surveys targeting each stakeholder group (higher education institutions, national student unions and quality assurance agencies). The ministry survey collected a total of 36 valid responses representing a good share of the total possible answers (78%) from EHEA members.

EQAR and the project partners have each published a paper resulting from the analysis of the four surveys. The draft papers have been reviewed by the QA Steering Committee, the QA FIT Expert Board and results have been further further discussed with relevant stakeholders. The paper coming out of the ministry survey results has been present to EQAR members at the last General Assembly in Stockholm. The **published paper and the presentation** of the paper can be found here.

At the moment the stakeholders are working on finalisation of two papers focused on the cross-cutting topics resulting from all four surveys. A Focus Group for EQAR members, has been organised during the EQAR Members' Dialogue in November 2023 where members discussed the findings from the surveys and initial findings by the cross-cutting papers. The agenda and the presentations can be find on the following link.

## TPG LRC CORE

The project is led by the Information Centre on Academic Mobility and Equivalence (CIMEA) and aims to **support the work of the TPG B**. Other project partners include: HARNO, FEI, Nuffic, UHR, EUA, ESU and the Prime Minister Office – Albania. Main activities involve panel discussions and peer learning activities on common challenges (i.e. recognition of knowledge gained through alternative pathways, micro credentials, digitalisation of recognition workflows, European Degree etc.) and research that will further enable the peer learning.

EQAR is leading the **work group on digitalisation of recognition tools**. The group is organised **3 peer learning webinars** in autumn 2023 – each focusing on one of the phases of the recognition process. The first webinar focused on the input phase of the recognition process and included presentations by the ENIC NARIC Netherlands (Nuffic), ENIC NARIC Norway (NOKUT) and ENIC NARIC Italy (CIMEA). The second webinar was organised by EQAR and focused on the throughput phase, with a presentation of the ENIC-NARIC Poland (NAWA) focussing on their new system and the integration of DEQAR data in their recognition workflow, as well as a presentation from the side of EQAR on the

new features in DEQAR on Micro-credentials and alternative providers. A third webinar took place in November and invited .

Main findings from each of the webinars will feed into publication on digitalization of recognition tools, which will, on one hand present good practices, and on another offer practical advices for digitalising recognition workflows. Main idea is that ENIC NARICs, recognition offices at HEIs and other actors in the field use the document as a guide/blueprint for digitalising their processes.

EQAR, along with EUA, ESU, Nuffic, HARNO and CIMEA, contributes to another work group in the project, **on quality assurance of recognition processes.**

In the past period, EQAR has contributed toward the development of the first draft of the study undertaken by EUA regarding the internal quality assurance of recognition processes at higher education institutions.

On another hand, as part of the work group, EQAR is currently concluding a first draft of a qualitative analysis that dwells deeper into the work of EQAR's registered agencies and seeks information on how they evaluate the work of HEIs in relation to ESG 1.4 (Student admission, progression, recognition and certification).  The main source of information are reports stored on DEQAR. The research will build on the findings of an earlier analysis of DEQAR reports and how QA agencies cover the ESG 1.4.