



THEMATIC PEER GROUP ON QUALITY ASSURANCE (TPG C ON QA)

First Meeting, Hosted by Belgium Flemish Community, Online*

Wednesday, June 30, 2021

13:30-17:00 (Brussels time)

Minutes

List of Participants

Country/Organization	Name	Last Name
Austria	Jürgen	Petersen
Azerbaijan	Ilham	Humbatov
Belgium Flemish Community (Co-chair)	Magalie	Soenen
Belgium Flemish Community	Liesbeth	Hens
Belgium Flemish Community	Mariëlle	van Heumen
Croatia	Marina	Cvitanušić Brečić
Cyprus	Yiannis	Kasoulides
Czech Republic	Jana	Pistorova
Czech Republic	Martina	Vidláková
EI - ETUCE	Karin	Amossa
ENQA	Maria	Kelo
EQAR	Melinda	Szabo
EQAR	Colin	Tück
ESU	Jakub	Grodecki
EUA	Elena	Cirlan
EURASHE	Vaidotas	Viliunas
Eurydice	David	Crosier
European Commission	Klara	Engels-Perenyi
European Commission	Yann Mael	Bideau
Finland	Helka	Kekäläinen
France	Helene	Lagier
Georgia	Khatia	Tsiramua
Georgia	Lasha	Margishvili
Germany	Katrin	Mayer-Lantermann
Iceland	Una	Strand Viðarsdóttir
Ireland	Bryan	Maguire
Italy	Alberto	Ciolfi
Italy	Cecilia	Bibbò
Latvia	Jolanta	Silka
Luxembourg	Isabelle	Reinhardt
Malta	Viktoriia	Maltseva



Malta	Stefan	Sant
Moldova	Velisco	Nadejda
Norway	Philipp Emanuel	Friedrich
Poland	Jakub	Brdulak
Romania (Co-chair)	Daniela Cristina	Ghițulică
Romania	Radu	Damian
Russia	Elena	Gorbashko
San Marino	Monica	Cavalli
Slovak Republic	Peter	Ondreička
Slovenia	Maja	Milas
Sweden	Ulf	Hedbjörk
Switzerland	Laura	Beccari
BFUG Secretariat (Head)	Enida	Bezhani
BFUG Secretariat	Kristina	Metallari

Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Spain, Ukraine, UK (Scotland) did not attend the meeting.

Welcome and introduction to the meeting by the Co-chairs

The Co-chairs welcomed all the members of the Thematic Peer Group on Quality Assurance (TPG C) to the first meeting of the 2021-2024 work period. Magalie Soenen (Co-chair) emphasized that the main goal of this peer group is to take into account the needs of all country members and consultative members. To this end the Co-chairs organized a survey (two different templates were used for the countries and organizations) and the outcome of the survey would be shared in this meeting. As there would be a call from Erasmus+ to support the work of this group, it is crucial that all members' needs are clear, so that they can be accommodated through this extra financing. As, the work plan needs to be prepared, the goals and outcomes for the end of 2024 should be clearly determined as well.

Daniela Cristina Ghițulică (Co-chair) shared that the Co-chairs will aim to organize activities that are relevant to this group's work. Although many of the countries have achieved specific standards, there is always room to learn, to improve and to do things differently. She further emphasized the importance of learning from each other and for relying on the members to invest time in sharing their experiences. Even though it might not bring added value in the short-term in some members' organizations for instance, if the objective of this group is achieved, all group members will finally achieve a better and higher quality education. Thus, in the long term, the work and success of this group will be beneficial for everyone.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda of the meeting was adopted without changes.

For more detailed information, please see [TPG C on QA PT AD 1 Draft Agenda](#)

2. Tour de Table

All members of the TPG C introduced themselves and informed the group on their respective roles within the institutions they represent.



3. Quality Assurance in the Bologna Implementation Report 2020

David Crosier introduced an overview of Quality Assurance (QA) within the Bologna Process for the previous work period. He emphasized the evolution of quality assurance, highlighting that at present, almost all countries have internal and external QA systems in place in a system-wide scale. The key indicators on QA and their progress throughout the 2018/9 period were explained and areas for further improvement were identified, concluding that QA ought to be further developed in relation to the fundamental values, social dimension, micro credentials, HEI networks/alliances and sustainable development goals, with the latter to be embedded in different thematics, in view of being more explicitly included in a revised future version of the ESG. Internal QA, European Approach of QA, and QA of European Universities, for example, are thematic orientations where this topic could be included.

For more information, please see: [TPG C on QA Bologna Implementation Report 2020](#)

4. From 2018 to 2021: State-of-play of TPG C

An overview of the TPG C state-of-play was introduced, beginning with the set up and composition of TPG C on QA, as well as its work method for the 2018-2020 period. An overview of the three meetings of the past work period was presented. For more details on these meetings, see the dedicated EHEA website section, <http://www.ehea.info/page-TPG-C-on-QA-Meetings-2018-2020>. The current TPG C set up and guidelines for TPGs were discussed, with emphasis on the overall aim of the group to achieve full implementation of the Key Commitments (KCs).

This kick-off meeting aimed to consider the needs of the member countries, as indicated in the implementation scorecard and the survey. The deadline for the general Work Plan of TPG C was set for October 31, 2021.

Among the projects carried out during the 2018-2020 work period, the 'staff mobility' project was briefly outlined. This project aimed to support the professional development of staff, offering short-term placements at other QA agencies/ministries/organizations. Discussions will take place at a later stage to see whether the mobility initiative can be continued under the next Erasmus+ Program and be made available to countries that did not participate in it during 2018-2020. The staff mobility project is still running until mid-November 2021. Interested countries can participate in a mobility until the end of July. More information about the project is to be found on the [peer group webpage](#).

As part of the stakeholders' involvement project, a [guide](#) was developed on efficient involvement of stakeholders in external QA activities. Additionally, a webinar was organized in cooperation with EURASHE.

For more detailed information about the project, please see: www.esqa.ro

5. Overview of Questionnaire/Survey results & Discussion on Work Plan

An overview of a questionnaire distributed to the members prior to the meeting was presented: It aimed to:

- Evaluate the progress and status of implementation of QA by each country in light of the Rome Communique statements;



- Define the priorities for the 2021-2024 work period to recognize and establish new activities, as well as continue to work on specific topics established during the last work period;
- Develop projects for the work of this TPG.

29 responses (23 country members, 6 consultative members) were received out of 47 members to the TPG C. The Co-chairs encouraged all the countries to complete the survey, so that a suitable Work Plan can be properly formulated. Therefore, the questionnaire will remain available for another 2 weeks, following the kick-off meeting.

The main points of the presentation included:

- Status of implementation of priorities in the field of QA established by the Rome Communiqué;
- Identification of top priority topics, detailing specific actions for each priority;
- In the framework of the implementation of the ESGs, achievements and challenges for the indicated standards, as a way to connect countries that have developed best practices with countries that have experienced challenges and want to work more on the respective topic(s);
- Potential topics to be developed within the projects to be submitted in the framework of ERASMUS+.

It was observed that as many QA agencies are members of this WG, responses collected through the questionnaire reflected their respective interests. Thus, the main challenges/issues that were identified, were mainly recognized as agency-related issues, with more focus on the technical context.

It was underlined that in filling the questionnaire, the country representatives should reflect on the interest of their countries, rather than their agencies' viewpoint. The members who represent agencies should have a close dialogue with their ministries at a political level and can discuss what can be achieved considering the mandate of TPG C.

The aim of the TPG C in the Bologna Process context was highlighted, stating that the work involves mainly the development of reform processes and legal frameworks, as well as policy-making at a national and European level and macro strategic issues. As part of the Bologna Process, through its work, TPG C should aim to enable governmental policy collaboration to ease QA across all the EHEA. The technical issues that were identified through the questionnaire could be tackled within the staff mobility program.

In conclusion, the survey results will be taken into consideration when drafting the Action Plan.

For more detailed information, please see: [TPG C PT AD 1 Initial Questionnaire Results](#)

6. Supporting Erasmus+ project(s)

6.1. Umbrella project to support the work of TPG C

The Co-chairs shared that an application for an umbrella project, similar to the project from the previous work period, will be submitted to support the work of TPG C. As a broad set of activities is being planned to be carried out for the 2021-2024 work period, several meetings (online and in presence) will be planned and peer learning activities will be organized on specific topics to



be further decided. Staff mobility projects planned for the last work period could not be fully organized due to Covid-19 travel restrictions. However, there was great demand from many members for this topic to be included in the new project application. Therefore, it will be included and various mobility forms can be used: virtual/physical, short or combined/joint mobility. A suggestion was made to plan joint mobility for countries that want to work on a specific topic.

For countries that wish to organize sub-group activities for target topics, two projects are currently still running:

1. EUniQ: The project end date is mid November 2021, however, more work remains to be done by TPG C. Hence, the project area focusing on QA in the context of European University alliances or university alliances in general can be further elaborated during the current work period. (QA of European Universities - <https://www.nvao.net/nl/eunIQ>)
2. MICROBOL: This project links to the goal of the new Erasmus+ Program and the EHEA to increase access to continuous learning with great focus on micro-credentials. This topic can be respectively incorporated into the umbrella project to be proposed.

Similarly, other topics that may arise in the meantime can be also added to the umbrella project.

6.1. Use of the ESGs Project (ENQA)

ENQA is taking the lead in the preparation and coordination of the ESGs project and a Call will be launched soon. The project focuses on how the ESGs have been used, what issues have been identified with the use of the ESG and whether they are still fit for their initial purpose and to what extent, by taking a forward-looking approach in the implementation process.

. Moreover, activities will be planned to determine the expectations on QA as a whole, by internal and external agencies and from stakeholders' perspective.

6.2. Project for countries that have not implemented the ESGs yet (ENQA)

ENQA is also taking the lead on a follow-up of the SEQA-ESG project. The main objective of this project is the implementation of the ESGs in a selection of additional 6 countries, where the main objective of the project is to support QA agencies and national authorities to create an ESG-compliant QA system. As this project is very beneficial for both agencies and countries, a follow up for the selected countries and other countries that are a step away from achieving an EQAR-registered agency status should be carried out. ENQA can establish dialogue with agencies and ministries on the key goals and objectives of the project.

More information on the SEQA-ESG project can be found at:

<https://www.enqa.eu/projects/supporting-european-qa-agencies-in-meeting-the-esg-seqa-esg/>

6.3. Bologna with Stakeholders' Eyes (ESU)

The project will be a continuation of the past work of ESU (<https://www.esu-online.org/?project=bologna-with-stakeholders-eyes-for-a-stronger-future-of-the-bologna-process-bwse-forward>). Its overall goal is to focus on the students' perspective on the development of the Bologna Process, with great focus on QA. The information will be collected in cooperation with the stakeholders, by looking into past achievements of students, whilst preparing a reflective analysis of the current challenges. Organizing a sub-chapter or a side



activity could be dedicated to mapping and strengthening the capacity of existing student QA pools within agencies and countries. Overall, the project will take on a forward-looking approach, involving other stakeholders and countries, to allow for cross-disciplinary and cross-border cooperation.

6.4. Work-based learning, recognition of prior learning and micro-credentials (EURASHE)

The work of this project should focus not only on the engagement of universities at a European level, but also at a regional level.

Other suggestions for topics and angles that were mentioned following the presentations of new potential projects included capacity building and the inclusion of the opinion of teachers on QA. The importance of building closer connections between ministries and agencies was also highlighted.

More information on QA projects/processes can be found:

- ESQA, stakeholder engagement information - <https://esqa.ro/>
- The recently completed ImpEA project and the related practical toolkit for the use of the European approach for joint programs: <http://impea.online/>

In the above-mentioned questionnaire, the members were asked to express their interest on a list of topics that may translate into potential projects. A challenge to the potential projects was the lack of availability by countries to coordinate the projects. Thus, it was suggested to conduct a match-making process on the different topics identified. As all contact details and information are already available to the TPG C members, they will communicate among themselves on choosing a coordinator.

Discussions took place on whether the QA in the European Universities could overlap with other initiatives. For instance, the European Commission is currently conducting a study on the European degree concept, which is covered within the context of the European Universities. The content of this potential project was pointed out as a way of focusing on topics that are not being covered and implemented elsewhere. The Co-chairs clarified that the topics, although similar to other occurring projects, will focus on the Bologna Process context and not on an institutional level. Regardless, it was argued that if the outline and program of these potential projects include topics that are being covered by consultative members beyond/outside the EHEA, it would still be recommended to pursue a new area of interest in which progress has yet to be made. To conclude, there should be constant communication and coordination among all country members and consultative members, to avoid overlaps.

The BFUG Secretariat clarified the communication process among the members of the group, stating that this is done through the Co-chairs, the Secretariat, as well as via the website. The BFUG Secretariat suggested that the TPG C members share information on the ongoing projects with them, so that this information can be distributed to other WGs during their respective meetings, as a way of providing more coverage and visibility to the projects.

7. Wrap up and way forward

It was concluded that the questionnaire will be available for another 2 weeks for all the countries that have yet to complete it. In addition, any country that has already completed the survey but wishes to change its answers, can reach out to the Co-chairs. All the input from this survey



will be gathered and analyzed to formulate the Work Plan and the umbrella project. The deadline for new project proposals is expected to be in October (exact timing to be confirmed).

During the previous 2018-2020 work period, TPG C on QA developed an Action Plan template, which is still available on the EHEA website at <http://www.ehea.info/page-TPG-C-on-QA-Meetings-2018-2020>. This is an Excel-format document, in which all countries insert information in their dedicated/respective sheets (goals, topics, concrete actions to be taken). A similar format will be used for this work period as well, and the Co-chairs will follow-up in the upcoming months with a template. They will also provide explanations on how to fill in this format, considering the work to be done during this work period, as well as already pre-fill some parts of this template based on the survey responses received. A general work plan of the WG itself will also be developed.

The next meeting, be that virtual or physical will be organized in the fall. The staff mobility project dissemination conference will take place in October - specific date to be decided.

8. AoB

As no other business was raised, the first TPG C meeting was concluded.