

ENQA report to the BFUG, 24-25 May 2017, Gozo

Highlights of ENQA's activities since the Bratislava BFUG meeting

1. ENQA membership and ESG compliance reviews

The ENQA Members' Forum took place on 4-5 May 2017 in Oslo, Norway. On this occasion, the ENQA General Assembly endorsed the renewal of membership of six agencies and admitted three new members: **ANQA** - National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation, Armenia; **IAAR** - Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating, Kazakhstan; and **IQAA** - Independent Kazakh Agency for Quality Assurance in Education, Kazakhstan.

The recent decisions on membership are based on external reviews on compliance with the ESG that have been conducted in line with ENQA's revised procedure, the main principles of which have been laid out in the [Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews](#).

In addition, the General Assembly endorsed the Board's decision to admit six new affiliates:

- **ADEE** - Association for Dental Education in Europe, Ireland
- **ANO** - Accreditation and Nostrification Office of the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan
- **CEEMAN** - International Association for Management Development in Dynamic Societies, Slovenia
- **EURAS** - Eurasian Universities Union, Turkey
- **NAB** - National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education, Czech Republic
- **Russian Register** - Certification Association, Russia

2. ENQA projects

Linking Academic Recognition and Quality Assurance – LIREQA – project

ENQA is a partner in a recently started project called LIREQA, which aims at contributing to fair recognition of qualifications by developing recommendations to relate academic recognition to both internal and external quality assurance. The project brings together communities of credential evaluators, represented by ENIC/NARIC networks and centres, communities of quality assurance specialists, represented by national/regional external quality assurance agencies and their association ENQA, and higher education institutions (HEIs). LIREQA will follow up the work of the ENQA working group on QA and recognition. The project aims to map the state of affairs in QA and recognition across Europe; to create a set of recommendations to address fair recognition of qualifications via external and internal quality assurance; and to build capacity of ENIC/NARIC centres, QA agencies, and HEIs on this topic. More information can be found here: <http://www.engq.eu/index.php/linking-academic-recognition-and-quality-assurance-lireqa/>

EQUIP project brings together QA agencies to discuss challenges with the ESG 2015

In the framework of the project "[Enhancing Quality through Innovative Policy and Practice](#)" (EQUIP), in which ENQA is a partner, a series of focus groups are being organised. The focus groups will verify and further consolidate the evidence collected through previous project activities about implementation challenges with the ESG 2015 and aim to share good practice and discuss the proposed approaches to solving these challenges and their applicability in different contexts. Each of the focus groups addresses six different stakeholder groups: 1) universities, 2) universities of applied sciences and university colleges (professional higher education), 3) academics, 4) QA agencies, 5) students, and 6) ministries. Five of the focus groups have taken place already – for students, universities, academics and QA agencies – and have provided insight for those remaining.

ENQA was in charge of organising the focus group addressed to QA agencies, which took place on 3-4 May 2017 in Oslo, Norway, in conjunction with the ENQA Members' Forum. About 20 representatives of QA agencies gathered to discuss current issues in quality assurance. The participants exchanged experiences with specific challenges in the way their own system or organisation approaches QA, sharing possible solutions. The group also worked on the concepts of quality and higher education and on the impact and innovative solutions related to the ESG 2015.

The outcomes of the focus groups will be used to develop a study examining the implications concerning the introduction of the ESG 2015, innovative approaches to their implementation, and recommendations to individual stakeholder groups.

TeSLA project for assuring e-assessment processes in online and blended environments

Since January 2016, ENQA has been involved as a partner in a Horizon 2020 project called "An Adaptive Trust-based e-assessment System for Learning" (TeSLA) which aims to develop a system that facilitates online examinations in such a way that guarantees authentication and authorship. In January and March of 2017, ENQA - together with AQU Catalunya and EQANIE, the quality assurance organisations of the TeSLA project - conducted a round of expert training sessions. More than 40 experts, including quality assurance professionals, academics, students, and technicians, were trained in order to evaluate the quality of three successive pilots which will be carried out to test in the partnering universities the e-assessment models and technologies developed within the project. The experts will collaborate and check the assessment methodology and perform on-site and online interviews in the participating universities, providing feedback and recommendations for improving further pilots and for assisting the overall implementation of the TeSLA system. The panels' final evaluation report will also comment on what should be considered in the quality assurance of e-learning and e-assessment.

SHARE project on QA in the ASEAN

ENQA continues its work as a partner in the large-scale, EU-funded "Support to Higher Education in ASEAN Region" (SHARE) project, which aims to enhance the harmonisation of the ASEAN higher education area through the formulation of ASEAN higher education frameworks, taking into account the EU experience and work already under way across the ASEAN area through international partnerships and to support mutual recognition and student mobility among HEIs in the ASEAN area. ENQA is currently coordinating four pilot agency reviews in the region (Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines) and contributed to a training session of QA agencies for the preparation of their self-assessment reports. A training for European and ASEAN external assessors will be organised in September 2017 in Kuala Lumpur.

HAQAA initiative to support QA in Africa

ENQA has continued its capacity-building work in Africa, with the EU-funded Harmonising African Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA) Initiative. The HAQAA Initiative aims at supporting the harmonisation of higher education programmes and the creation of a revitalised African higher education area. This is done through enhanced intra-African collaboration and, more specifically, by supporting the development of a harmonised quality assurance and accreditation system at the institutional, national, regional, and Pan-African continental levels.

In this framework, ENQA oversees the work of the technical working group, consisting of quality assurance experts from different African regions plus one EHEA expert. The group is currently devising the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA), which can be considered one of the main outputs of the Initiative. The first draft of the ASG-QA has been translated into English, Arabic, French, and Portuguese, and it will be widely consulted across the African higher education community during spring 2017.

In addition to these projects, ENQA has started to work on a number of other EU-funded projects since the beginning of the year. Details on all projects can be found on the ENQA website: http://www.enqa.eu/index.php/projects/enqa_partner/

3. Key considerations for cross-border quality assurance

ENQA, in collaboration with ESU, EUA, EURASHE, and EQAR, has developed the “Key considerations for cross-border quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area”, which aims to provide information and support to higher education institutions and QA agencies that are willing to engage in cross-border quality assurance activities.

The document was initially released within the LinkedIn group, “Quality Assurance in European Higher Education”, created by the E4 group. The LinkedIn group is designed to be a useful platform for connecting the European QA community for the exchange of practice, discussion of current issues, and the sharing of ideas. The group is open to all for relevant contributions and comments, and it currently has over 250 members.