

Upgrading the EQAR Knowledge Base

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TPG C meeting

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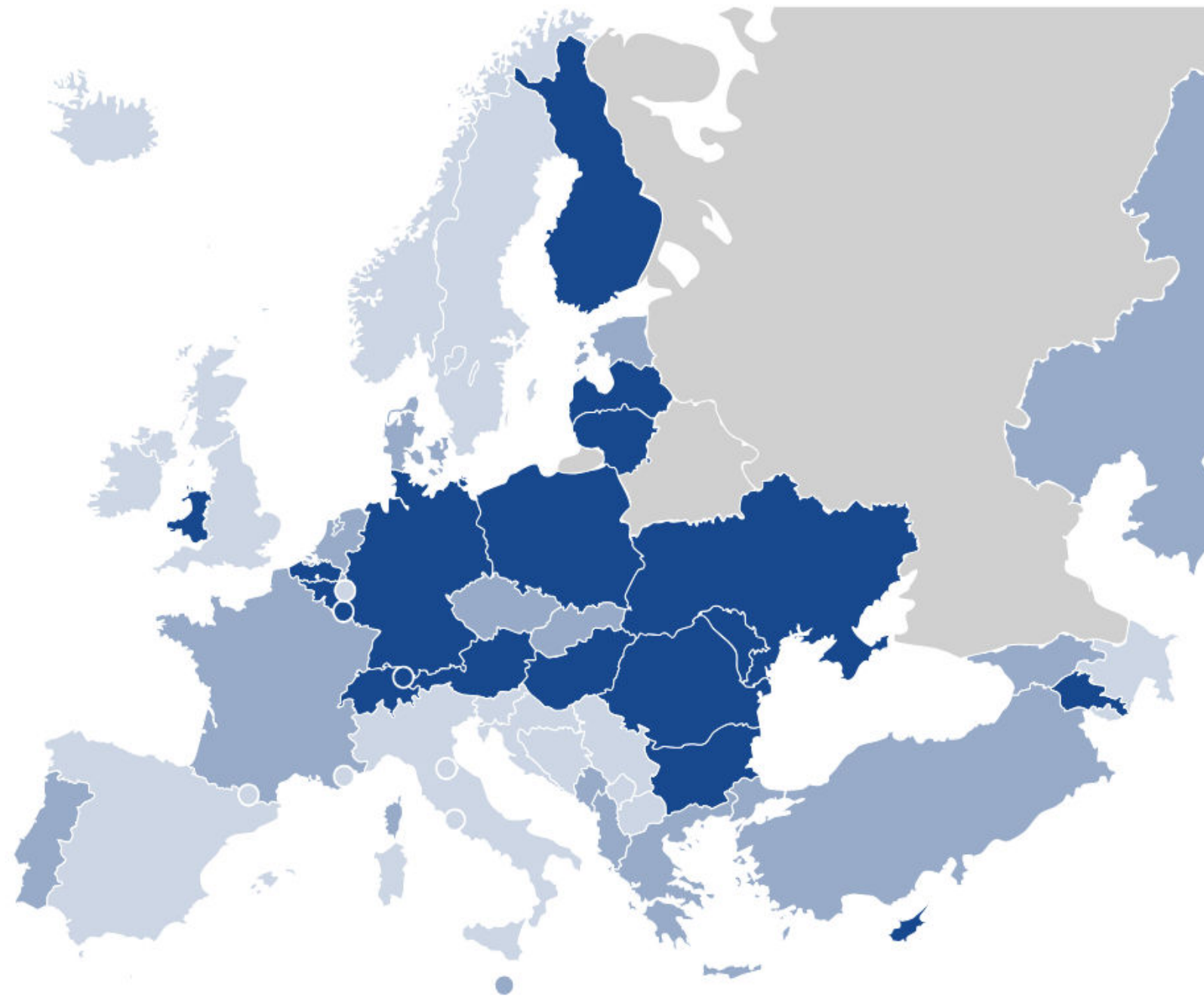
Starting point: initial plans

Three key dimensions of the upgrade

- 1) For **existing content**: is there a need to expand this information provision? If yes, with which data or information?
- 2) For **existing content**: which methodological aspects (e.g. data provision, data validation, data visualisation...) need to be improved?
- 3) Which **new content** is relevant for the user and should therefore be added to the Knowledge Base?

Initial ideas

- ✓ Make the methodology for certain information provision more clear and precise. Specifically, make clearer rules for delineating between categories that are not full alignment or implementation in e.g. CBQA, European Approach, ESG compliance...



CBQA

- Recognising EQAR-registered agencies as part of the national external QA requirements
- Recognising foreign agencies based on their own framework/requirements
- Not recognising foreign agencies as part of the national external QA requirements

Initial ideas

- ✓ Use more structured data architecture (pre-set categories) in order to make the information provided more (re)usable by other organisations.
- ✓ Add new information points:
 - Types of accreditation (institutional / programme, *ex ante* / *ex post*)
 - External QA of micro-credentials (short units of learning)
 - ...
- ✓ Structure data collection: (bi)annual updates with the HE ministries?

Results of the self-analysis survey

- Approximately **80% of respondents** (25 EQAR members) used the EQAR Knowledge Base so far.
- Usefulness rated at **4.31** on a scale of 1-5.
- **No additional topics proposed to be added.**
- Suggestions for maintaining or enhancing relevance (responses from members):
 - Information on regulation relevant for QA is somewhat useful, but it is questionable whether it can be effectively kept up to date.
 - There is potential for more detail or nuance about the practical implementation of legal frameworks, e.g. condition for CBQA and EA.
 - Focus on keeping the data as up-to date as possible and cooperate with member states if they wish to update the information.

Relevance of different information

- Ranking of relevance of different **existing topics** (on a scale 1-5):
 - Information on the ESG in general (4.60)
 - Information on QA in specific higher education systems (4.52)
 - Information on the of European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes (4.36)
 - Information on cross-border QA (4.32)
 - Information on regulation on external QA (4.20)
- Ranking of relevance of different **new topics** (on a scale 1-5):
 - Information on external QA of transnational education (4.56)
 - Information on the level at which external QA is conducted (4.52)
 - Information on the use of external QA in recognition of qualifications (4.36)
 - Information on external QA of micro-credentials (4.28)

Modifications to existing information provision

Current structure



The Knowledge Base is currently organised in 7 sections including information on:

- 1) Country profiles (for every EHEA member country)
- 2) Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in EHEA (ESG)
- 3) Quality assurance in Europe
- 4) Cross-border quality assurance
- 5) European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes
- 6) Bologna Process & EHEA
- 7) Accreditation mills

1. Country profiles

[eqar.eu](#) > [Knowledge base](#) > [Country information](#) > **Germany**



Knowledge base

Country information

— **Germany**

ESG

QA in Europe

Cross Border Quality Assurance

European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes

Bologna Process & EHEA

Accreditation mills

Germany

EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA - EHEA

VIEW 463 INSTITUTIONS WITH 57293 REPORTS

Governmental membership

Germany has been a Governmental Member of EQAR since February 2008.

Map: [EHEA countries by governmental membership](#)

General information on higher education

The tertiary education sector in Germany includes universities and equivalent institutions of higher education (Technische Hochschulen/Technische Universitäten, Pädagogische Hochschulen, theological colleges) Fachhochschulen (universities of applied sciences) and colleges of art and music.

A number of establishments outside the formal higher education systems are offering equivalent higher education degrees: higher education offered by the Federal Armed Forces; Verwaltungsfachhochschulen offered by Länders and Berufsakademie where professional academies combine academic training with practical professional

1. Country profiles

Information	Information type	Source	Changes
General information on higher education	Unstructured	Relevant ministry	Data collection: annual updates with the ministries If possible: connect to other databases with HE information.
National external quality assurance requirements	Unstructured	Relevant ministry	Data collection: annual updates with the ministries Establish a link between the national requirements and the methodologies of the QA agencies. Change data type to: semi-structured
EHEA key commitment	Semi-structured	EQAR (QA agencies registered)	Enhance precision of indicators for categories; ensure that four categories are clearly and understandably distinguished. Change data type to: structured (with textual descriptions added)
Cross-border quality assurance	Semi-structured	Relevant ministry	Data collection: annual updates with the ministries Enhance precision of indicators for categories; ensure that three categories are clearly and understandably distinguished. Change data type to: structured (with textual descriptions added)
European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes	Semi-structured	Relevant ministry	Data collection: annual updates with the ministries Enhance precision of indicators for categories; ensure that three categories are clearly and understandably distinguished. Change data type to: structured (with textual descriptions added)

Knowledge base

[Country information](#)

ESG

[QA in Europe](#)

[Cross Border Quality Assurance](#)

[European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes](#)

[Bologna Process & EHEA](#)

[Accreditation mills](#)

[eqar.eu](#) > [Knowledge base](#) > [ESG](#)

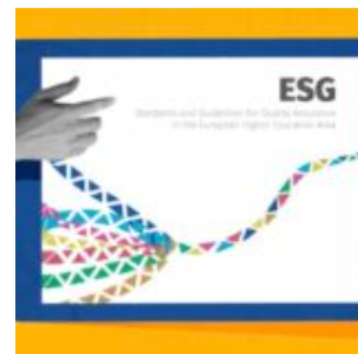
Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)

“The ESG are a set of standards and guidelines for internal and external quality assurance in higher education. The ESG are not standards for quality, nor do they prescribe how the quality assurance processes are implemented, but they provide guidance, covering the areas which are vital for successful quality provision and learning environments in higher education.”

“The ESG should be considered in a broader context that also includes qualifications frameworks, ECTS and diploma supplement that also contribute to promoting the transparency and mutual trust in higher education in the EHEA.”

ESG Revision 2027

The ESG are currently undergoing a revision process which will be finalised by the end of 2026 (read more below about the revision process). The new version should then be adopted by the EHEA Ministers at the Ministerial Conference in Romania/Moldova in 2027.



Policy on Transition to the Revised ESG 2027

Since the ESG revision will impact the EQAR registration process, provisions were developed for a transition period.

[Read more](#) ▾

3. QA in Europe

eqar.eu > Knowledge base > QA in Europe

Knowledge base

Country information

ESG

QA in Europe

Cross Border Quality Assurance

European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes

Bologna Process & EHEA

Accreditation mills

QA in Europe

External QA activities in line with the ESG

EQAR gathers data on external QA activities both via the [DEQAR](#) database but also through the annual monitoring of the registered agencies' external QA activities e.g. evaluation, accreditation, audit.

Before the launch of DEQAR, EQAR used to publish, on a yearly base, the “Annual Updates on the external quality assurance activities of EQAR-registered agencies” (see below).

You can now find comparable data (and more) either directly through [DEQAR](#) (make sure you also go [here](#) – for more filter options) or on the [DEQAR infographics](#) page.

2019 - Policy Brief on external QA activities in line with the ESG



2014-2019 Annual updates on external QA activities of EQAR-registered agencies



3. QA in Europe

Information	Information type	Source	Changes
List of external QA activities in EHEA countries	Structured	EQAR (DEQAR: list of agencies' activities and QA reports)	Update the information. Improve the readability of charts. Potentially add new charts.

4. Cross-border quality assurance

eqar.eu > Knowledge base > Cross Border Quality Assurance > Map: System Openness to CBQA

Knowledge base

Country information

ESG

QA in Europe

Cross Border Quality Assurance

— Background

— Key considerations

— **Map: System Openness to CBQA**

— Cross-border QA activities

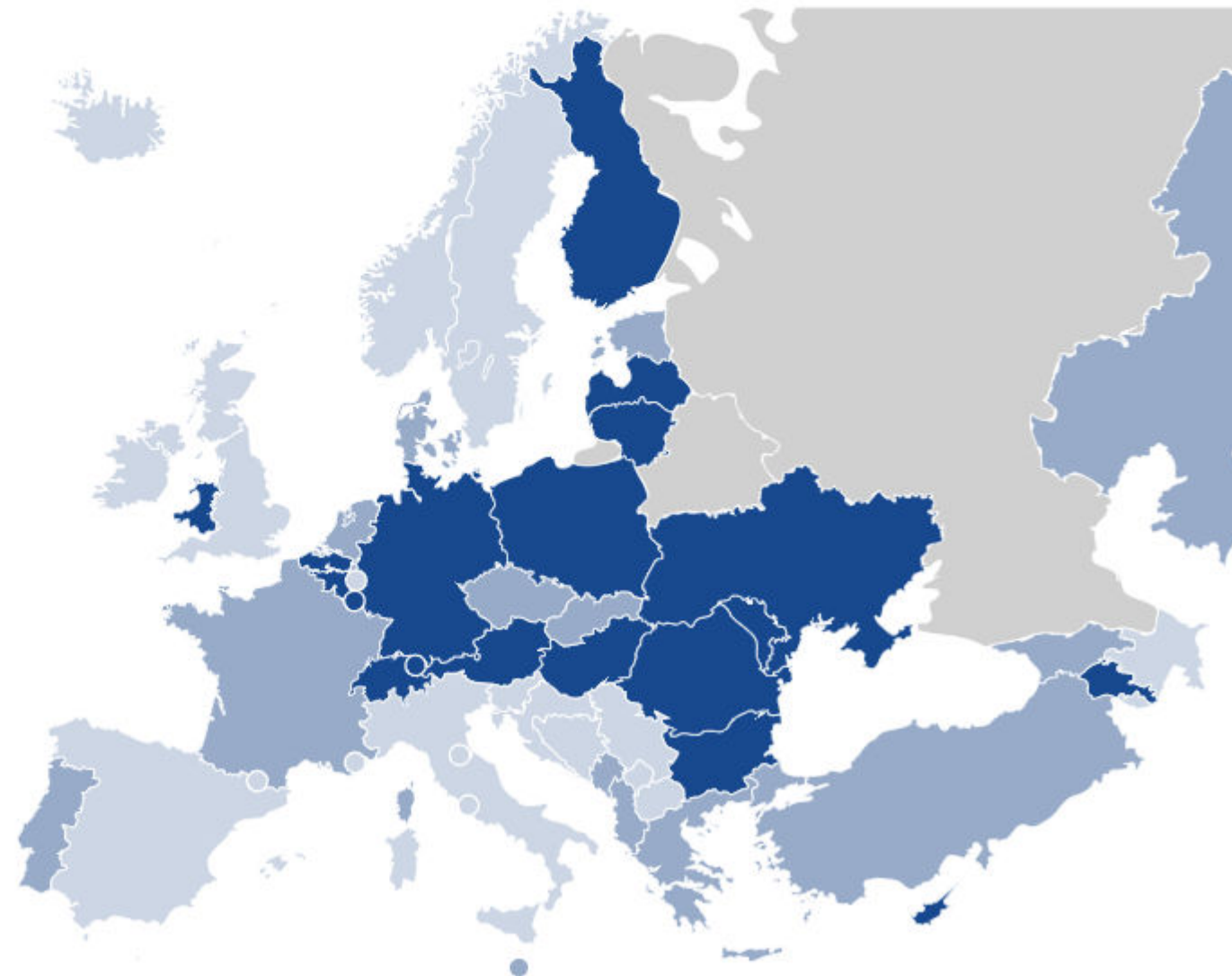
European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes

Bologna Process & EHEA

Accreditation mills

Mapping system openness to Cross Border Quality Assurance

The map below shows the EHEA countries where (some or all) higher education institutions can use a suitable EQAR-registered agency for their mandatory external quality assurance. Please consult the information on each country for specific requirements, conditions or restrictions.



Recognising EQAR-registered agencies as part of the national external QA requirements

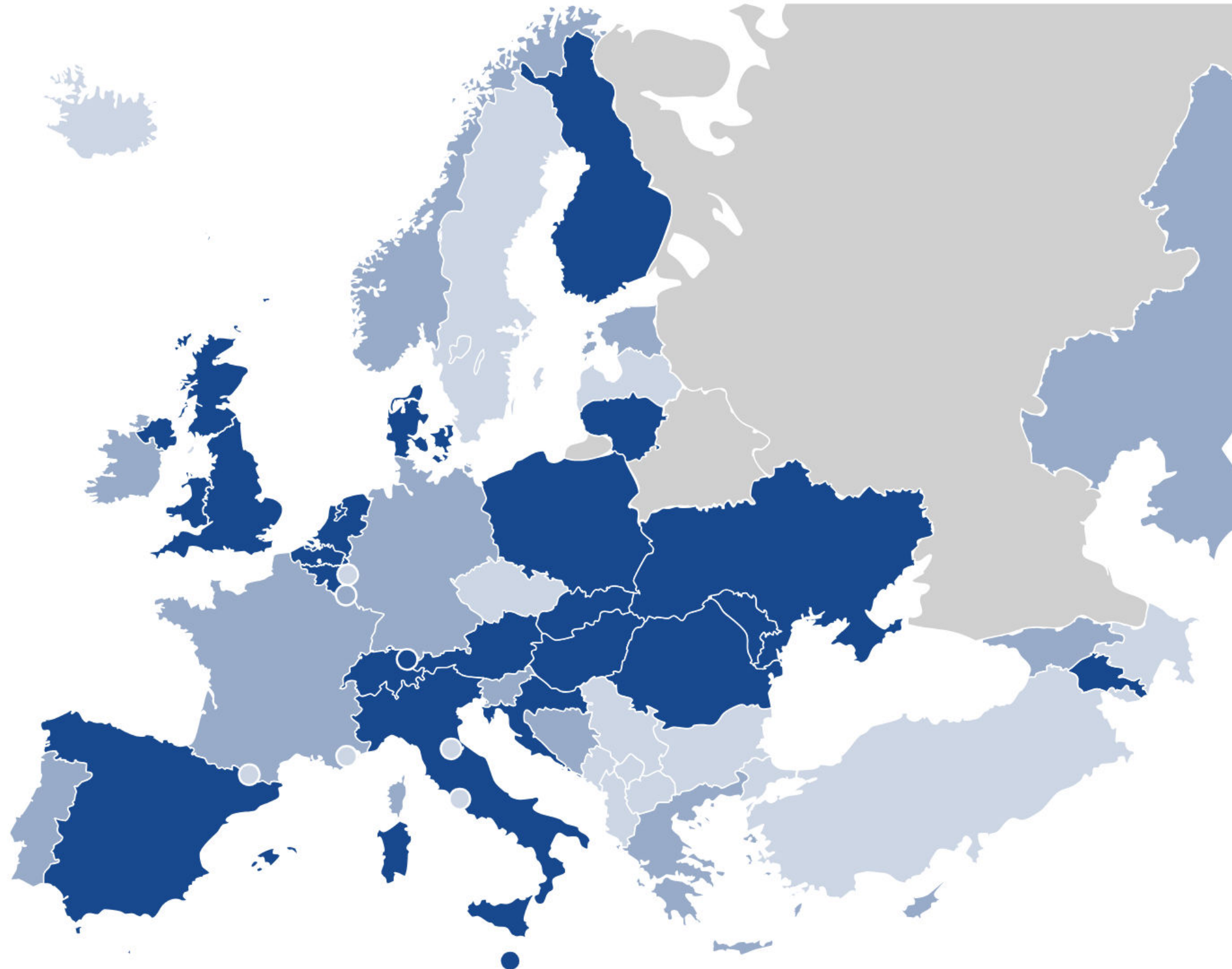
Recognising foreign agencies based on their own framework/requirements

Not recognising foreign agencies as part of the national external QA requirements

4. Cross-border quality assurance

Information	Information type	Source	Changes
Map: System Openness to CBQA	Semi-structured	Relevant ministry: country profile (see above)	Data collection: annual updates with the ministries Enhance precision of indicators for categories; ensure that three categories are clearly and understandably distinguished. Change data type to: structured (with textual descriptions added)

5. European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes



- European Approach available to all higher education institutions
- European Approach available to some higher education institutions or only under specific conditions
- European Approach not available to higher education institutions

5. European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes

Information	Information type	Source	Changes
National implementation	Semi-structured	Relevant ministry: country profile (1.F above)	Data collection: annual updates with the ministries Enhance precision of indicators for categories; ensure that three categories are clearly and understandably distinguished. Change data type to: structured (with textual descriptions added)

6. Bologna Process & EHEA

eqar.eu > Knowledge base > Bologna Process & EHEA

Knowledge base

Country information

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Bologna Process & EHEA

Since 1999, European governments have been working closely together to allow Europe's diverse education systems to articulate better with each other and thus to establish a **European Higher Education Area (EHEA)**.

Every two or three years a Ministerial Conference is organised in order to assess the progress made within the EHEA and to decide on the new steps to be taken. Ministers decide at Ministerial Conferences about the central aspects of the EHEA, including its further developments and commitments by its member countries. A communiqué is adopted at each Ministerial Conference that outlines decisions taken by the Ministers.

The Bologna Follow-Up Group – BFUG – is the executive structure supporting the Bologna Process in-between the Ministerial Conferences. **EQAR is a non-voting member of the Bologna Follow-Up Group.**

7. Accreditation mills

Knowledge base

Country information

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European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes

Bologna Process & EHEA

Accreditation mills

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Accreditation and diploma mills

Distinguishing reputable from disreputable higher education providers can be a challenging undertaking in an age characterised by a surge of online higher education provisions and by higher education trends becoming more and more 'borderless'.

By publishing a white list of credible quality assurance agencies, [EQAR](#) seeks to reduce opportunities for disreputable providers – the so called 'diploma and degree' mills as well as 'accreditation mills' – to gain credibility. [EQAR](#) thus endeavours to further enhance the confidence of students, institutions, the labour market and society in general in a high quality education provision in the European Higher Education Area.

What are 'diploma and degree mills'?

'Diploma mills' or 'degree mills' refer to different (often online based) entities or organisations who claim to offer degrees, diplomas, or certificates in exchange for a sum of money, while offering no real preparation and assessment of knowledge, skills or abilities.

These entities are not recognised by any national authority in higher education although they may claim recognition by different degree awarding bodies such as accreditation mills.

New information provision to be developed

Expanded structure

The Knowledge Base to be organised in 11 sections including information on:

- 1) Country profiles (for every EHEA member country)
- 2) Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in EHEA (ESG)
- 3) Quality assurance in Europe
- 4) Cross-border quality assurance
- 5) European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes
- 6) Bologna Process & EHEA
- 7) Accreditation mills
- 8) Information on external QA of transnational education**
- 9) Information on the level at which external QA is conducted**
- 10) Information on the use of external QA in recognition of qualifications**
- 11) Information on external QA of micro-credentials**

8. Information on external QA of transnational education

Information	Information type	Source and description
General information and policies on TNE	Unstructured	Public information on what TNE is, what are the existing European policies and practices on TNE, how does it link with external QA tools etc.
General information on higher education	Structured	EQAR information on the geographical scope (locations) of educational provision and on cross-border provision, based on DEQAR data
Map of TNE provision	Structured	DEQAR data

9. Information on the level at which external QA is conducted

Information	Information type	Source and description
General information and explanation	Unstructured	Public information on different models of external QA (with focus on programme vs. institutional dimension) and key European trends in this area.
Legislative provisions on different levels of external QA	Semi-structured	Relevant ministry: country profile (section 1 above). Different categories will be introduced, e.g.: only institutional, only programme, mix of institutional and programme etc.
Agencies' activities on different levels	Structured	EQAR data from DEQAR on the number (absolute and relative) of external QA procedures at different levels.

10. Information on the use of external QA in recognition of qualifications

Information	Information type	Source and description
A) General information and policies on links between QA and recognition	Unstructured	Public information: European policies and practices related to importance of external QA for recognition, links with ENIC NARIC information.
B) Legislative provisions on use of external QA data in recognition	Semi-structured	<p>Relevant ministry: country profile (section 1 above). Different categories will be introduced, e.g.: mandatory use of external QA data, optional use of external QA data, external QA data not used etc.</p> <p>Question: is there reference to EQAR registration (yes/no)</p>

11. Information on external QA of micro-credentials

Information	Information type	Source and description
A) General information on micro-credentials	Unstructured	Public information on European policies and practices on micro-credentials. Building on that, policies and activities related to external QA of micro-credentials.
B) Legislative provisions on use of external QA data in recognition	Semi-structured	Relevant ministry: country profile (section 1 above). Different categories will be introduced, e.g.: mandatory external QA of micro-credentials, optional external QA of micro-credentials, micro-credentials not subjected to external QA. Furthermore: how each country defines micro-credentials and are alternative providers subject to mandatory external QA?
C) Agencies' activities on evaluating micro-credentials	Structured	DEQAR data on the number and geographical scope of external QA procedures dealing with micro-credentials.

Proposed next steps

- Final modifications to the initial draft of the upgrade
- EQAR shares the upgrade plan document with the TPG C: by 29 April 2026
- Document open for feedback: until 18 May 2026
- Finalised upgrade plan document: by 8 June 2026
- Implementation starts in autumn 2026, completed in early 2027

www.eqar.eu



Thank you!

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European Quality Assurance
Register for Higher Education

The EQAR logo features the word 'eqar' in a lowercase, blue, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a graphic consisting of four parallel, slanted blue lines of varying lengths, creating a sense of motion or a stylized 'E'. Below the main logo, the full name 'European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education' is written in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font.