

**Minutes of the meeting**  
**The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the TPG C on QA**  
**17th of April 2026, online**

List of participants

No.	Member state/ Consultative member	Name	Last Name
1.	Andorra	Paula Przybylowicz	Vidal
2.	Armenia (Co-chair)	Varduhi	Gyulazyan
3.	Armenia	Liana	Alaverdyan
4.	Austria	Jürgen	Petersen
5.	Belgium – Flemish Community	Joachim	van Oost
6.	Belgium-French Community	Eva	Vaudolon
7.	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Maja	Macan
8.	Bulgaria	Eliza	Stefanova
9.	EUA	Cecilia	Biaggi
10.	Business Europe	Inga	Lapina
11.	Croatia	Josipa	Dragičević
12.	Croatia	Karmen	Marinić
13.	Denmark	Steffen	Westergård Andersen
14.	Education International - ETUCE	Andreas	Keller
15.	ENQA	Goran	Dakovic
16.	ENQA	Cristina	Ghițulică
17.	ENQA	Nathalie	Lugano
18.	EQAR	Blazhe	Todorovski
19.	EQAR	Aleksandar	Šušnjar
20.	EURASHE	Ana	Duplava
21.	EURASHE	Jakub	Grodecki
22.	European Commission	Yann-Maël	Bideau
23.	European Commission (external expert)	Colin	Tück
24.	Estonia	Liia	Lauri
25.	ESU	Urszula	Lis
26.	France (Co-chair)	Sophie	Guillet
27.	France (Co-chair)	Solange	Pisarz
28.	France	Nathalie	Roques
29.	Georgia	Ketevan	Inanashvili
30.	Germany	Peter A.	Zervakis
31.	Greece	Maria	Lampropoulou
32.	Hungary	Levente Péter	Lakatos
33.	Ireland	Bryan	Maguire
34.	Italy	Marilena	Maniaci
35.	Kazakhstan	Rauza	Mendaliyeva
36.	Latvia	Jolanta	Silka

37.	Lithuania	Aurelija	Valeikienė
38.	Lithuania	Kristina	Sutkutė
39.	Luxembourg	Patricia	Marx
40.	Malta	Giacomo	Annese
41.	Moldova	Nadejda	Velisco
42.	Montenegro	Milica	Kavedzic
43.	Netherlands	Tinka	Thede
44.	Norway	Hege	Brodahl
45.	Poland	Jakub	Brdulak
46.	Portugal	Maria João	Manatos
47.	Romania	Aila	Veli
48.	Romania (co-chair)	Antonela	Toma
49.	San Marino	Monica	Cavalli
50.	Slovakia	Peter A.	Ondreicka
51.	Slovenia	Maja	Milas
52.	Sweden	Maya (Maria)	Wikse
53.	Switzerland	Katrin	Meyer
54.	United Kingdom - Scotland	Laura	Porter
55.	EHEA Secretariat	Petrișor L.	Țucă

Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Finland, North Macedonia and Spain were absent.

The meeting started at 13:04 CEST

### 1. Welcome by TPG C on QA Co-chairs

The Co-chairs from France, Armenia, and Romania welcomed the participants and opened the meeting.

### 2. Adoption of the agenda

Documents: [TPG C on QA 4 CY NO 2-Agenda](#)

The agenda of the meeting was adopted without any modifications.

### 3. Tour de table

A tour de table was held, during which participants briefly introduced themselves and indicated the country, organisation or institution they represented.

### 4. Report on the 3<sup>rd</sup> TPG C meeting held in Brasov

Documents: [TPG C on QA 4 CY NO 4-3rd-meeting-report](#)

The EHEA Secretariat presented the overall feedback for the previous TPG C meeting, which was overwhelmingly positive. No questions or comments were received from TPG C members.

### 5. Reporting from the XCVII and XCIX BFUG meetings

The EHEA Secretariat presented updates from the recent BFUG meetings, noting briefly that the meeting hosted online by Cyprus in March 2026 had addressed the revision of both the Standards and Guidelines on QA in the EHEA (ESG) and ECTS User's Guide.. Since both documents would

be discussed separately in the meeting, the updates therefore focused on two additional topics. Regarding fundamental values, the EHEA Secretariat explained that data collection was ongoing, with a public consultation for academic communities aiming to provide a broader picture on the de facto implementation of EHEA fundamental values. Members were encouraged to contribute to the public consultation, open until the 10<sup>th</sup> of May, particularly in relation to academic integrity and its connection with quality assurance, as reflected in the Tirana Communiqué. On a different note, regarding the Bologna Process Implementation Report, the Secretariat informed participants that the survey had been circulated to BFUG members, with a deadline of 4<sup>th</sup> of May for BFUG representatives to submit their questionnaires. In this sense, a new indicator on the quality assurance of transnational education had been included in the 2027 report.

The Co-Chair from Armenia informed members that a meeting with the authors of narrative sections for the BPIR had taken place the previous day. She explained that guiding points were expected from Eurydice, after which a draft contribution would be prepared by the 11<sup>th</sup> of September. Once received, the guidance would be shared with TPG C members to decide how to proceed.

## 6. Up-date on the ESG revision

Documents: [TPG\\_C\\_on\\_QA\\_4\\_CY\\_NO\\_6-Presentation-ESG-revision](#)

The presentation was delivered by Cristina Ghițulică from ENQA on behalf of the ESG revision Steering Committee. Following the presentation, the floor was opened for questions and comments.

United Kingdom (Scotland) asked for clarification regarding the proposed wording of Standards 3.5 and 3.6, particularly the reference to the separation of activities and the distinction between activities in-scope and out-of-scope of the ESG. She expressed concern that, without clearer definitions, the wording could unintentionally limit enhancement-oriented activities carried out by quality assurance agencies, such as national reviews, thematic reviews or sector-support initiatives. She underlined that such activities should not compromise external reviews but should continue to support quality culture and the broader principles of the EHEA and ESG.

ENQA confirmed that the comments raised in the BFUG meeting, including the issue mentioned by the United Kingdom (Scotland), had been brought to the Steering Committee's attention. However, she noted that no in-depth discussion had yet taken place on the definition of activities within or outside the scope of the ESG. The point was noted again and could be raised at the next Steering Committee meeting in June.

ETUCE referred to the proposed wording of Standard 1.5 on teaching staff, particularly the replacement of "permanent employment" with "long-term employment". He asked for clarification on the rationale behind this change, stressing that "long-term" remained vague and could be interpreted differently. He also expressed concern that the wording might allow institutions to comply with the ESG without having any permanently employed teaching or research staff.

ENQA explained that the replacement of "permanent employment" with "long-term employment" was largely based on BFUG feedback, as employment arrangements vary considerably across national systems. She acknowledged that comments from governments and stakeholders may be contradictory and that finding wording which is acceptable to all remains challenging. She invited further comments to be submitted during the next consultation phase.

Poland referred to their written comments and welcomed the discussion on expanding the standards, including through possible references to artificial intelligence. However, he noted that less attention seemed to have been given to standards proposed for removal, particularly Standard 3.2 on legal status. He expressed concerns about the potential consequences of removing the requirement for agencies to be formally recognised by the states, since this could allow agencies to operate according to market logic rather than as mission-driven bodies serving higher education as a public good. As such, Poland invited a deeper discussion on the standards proposed for deletion in the revised ESG.

ENQA explained that the original rationale for deleting Standard 3.2 was that, in some cases, there may be no clearly identifiable national authority responsible for formally recognising a quality assurance agency, particularly when agencies operate internationally and are not linked to a specific national system. She acknowledged, however, that concerns had also been raised that removing this requirement could open the door to less credible providers of quality assurance. She clarified that the Steering Committee considered the key issue to be the transparency and clarity of the outcomes of agencies' procedures. In this sense, agencies should clearly communicate whether the results of a review may be used for accreditation or only for enhancement purposes. She added that, given the previous application of this standard and the absence of significant non-compliance cases, the Steering Committee had so far maintained its position.

Lithuania expressed strong support for the concerns raised by Poland regarding the legitimacy of providers of external quality assurance. She acknowledged that national agencies with clear mandates and international or subject-specific agencies may require different considerations, but argued that this should lead to a more nuanced formulation of the standard rather than its removal. She emphasised that the ESG should not unintentionally open the door to unreliable or "bogus" QA providers. Referring to previous experiences with institutions approaching agencies with practices close to those of "accreditation mills", she encouraged the Steering Committee to take additional time to further develop the standard instead of deleting it.

EQAR inquired how an organisation operating as, or close to, an accreditation mill could successfully pass an evaluation against the ESG, given the requirements of Parts 2 and 3. He invited further reflection on whether compliance with all other standards would not, in practice, prevent such providers from being considered legitimate and thus render the discussion about Standard 3.2 moot.

## 7. Presentation of the draft 3 of ECTS users guide

Documents: [TPG C on QA 4 CY NO 7-Presentation-draft-3-ECTS-users-guide](#)

The presentation was delivered by Yann-Maël Bideu, representative of the European Commission, and Colin Tück, external expert of the European Commission. Following the presentation, the floor was opened for questions and comments.

Lithuania asked whether any initiatives were currently underway, beyond the revision of the ECTS Users' Guide itself, to promote the wider use of ECTS at doctoral education level. The representative of the European Commission explained that no specific initiative was currently being undertaken by the Commission in relation to the wider use of ECTS at doctoral level. However, he noted that colleagues from the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation were working on improving the recognition of doctoral degrees across the EU and were discussing whether ECTS could support this objective. He stressed that these were still early consultations

and that no decision had yet been taken on whether ECTS should be further promoted or potentially regulated for doctoral programmes.

ENQA asked whether the comments previously raised by ENQA on the implications of awarding ECTS for non-higher education provision, particularly in relation to recognition in higher education, had been considered. He further asked whether additional reformulation was planned, especially regarding provision at EQF levels 5 to 8 outside higher education. The European Commission confirmed that the comments had been received and clarified that the final wording had not yet been drafted. However, the general direction would be that for EQF levels 6, 7 and 8 the ESG would be considered the applicable quality assurance framework, while for level 5 this would depend on how the provision is defined within each national system.

## 8. Presentation of the results of the 1st mobility call

Documents: [TPG C on QA 4 CY NO 8-Presentation-1st-mobility-call](#)

The presentation was delivered by Aila Veli from ARACIS (Romania). Following the presentation, the floor was opened for questions and comments.

Slovakia asked two questions regarding the implementation of the approved mobility. First, he explained that although Slovakia's application had been successful, it had been difficult to agree on suitable dates with the host agency and asked whether the mobility could take place later. Second, referring to the usefulness of previous two-step mobilities, he asked whether the agency would be eligible to apply again in the second call, possibly with different staff members.

ARACIS explained that each country may benefit from a maximum of two mobile staff members for the entire programme. Since Slovakia had already proposed two staff members, a new application would normally not be possible, although this could be reconsidered on a case-by-case basis for a later call, depending on the remaining budget and available places. Regarding the timing of the approved mobility, she clarified that if the host organisation agrees to receive the participants later than initially planned, Slovakia should inform the Staff Exchange Committee by email, and this should not raise major difficulties.

Lithuania asked for clarification on whether the mobility opportunity was available at country level and whether beneficiaries did not necessarily have to be members of TPG C. ARACIS clarified that the staff mobility programme is designed for countries participating in TPG C. As such, staff from quality assurance agencies, ministries or other relevant stakeholders may benefit from the mobility, provided that their country is part of TPG C.

## 9. Presentation of the policy brief on the quality assurance of flexible learning pathways developed as part of the TPG C

Documents: [TPG C on QA 4 CY NO 9-Presentation-of-policy-brief-on-QA-flexible-learning](#)

The presentation was delivered by Sophie Guillet and Solange Piszczak as French Co-chairs. Following the presentation, the floor was opened for questions and comments, with no issues raised.

French Co-chairs mentioned that flexible learning pathways had been discussed at the last BICG meeting, generating interest due to its transversal nature, which allows it to be analysed through the lens of all TPGs: A on national qualifications frameworks, B on recognition, C on quality

assurance, and D on the social dimension. The possibility of a joint publication has been discussed, but no official decision has been made yet.

#### **10. Work of the TPG A on flexible learning pathways**

Documents: TPG\_C\_on\_QA\_CY\_NO\_10-Presentation-of-TPG-A-work-on-flexible-learning.

The presentation was delivered by Jakub Grodecki from EURASHE. Following the presentation, the floor was opened for questions and comments.

Ireland asked whether flexible learning pathways should be understood primarily as domestic challenges within each national higher education system or as issues linked to learner mobility between systems. He noted that the emphasis would differ depending on whether the focus was on internal flexibility, allowing learners to move within a national system, or on international mobility, where learners may begin a qualification in one country and continue their studies in another. He suggested that the two dimensions were connected, but that distinguishing between them would help clarify the policy and quality assurance implications.

The French Co-Chair explained that the work had so far focused mainly on the national implementation of flexible learning pathways, particularly from a quality assurance perspective. She agreed that national and European dimensions are closely interlinked, especially through the role of the ESG, which survey respondents considered to support flexibility either fully or to some extent. She noted that the topic would benefit from further exploration through a more transversal approach, including recognition and labour market perspectives. She underlined that flexibility within one national system raises important questions about how learning achievements or qualifications are recognised in other countries, suggesting that a deeper follow-up project could further address these issues.

Lithuania asked to what extent the topic of flexible learning pathways and the survey results had been discussed with national authorities. She noted that many of the issues addressed within TPG C were highly relevant for ministries and other public bodies, such as research councils, and asked whether further insights could be shared on this aspect. The French Co-Chair explained that the policy brief was designed precisely to facilitate dialogue with national authorities and to share the survey results in an accessible format. She agreed that the topic could only be meaningfully addressed in cooperation with national authorities and stressed that this was one of the added values of TPG C. Members were encouraged to pursue the same objective nationally.

EURASHE reflected on the limited confidence of institutions in developing flexible learning offers, including micro-credentials and modular programmes. He noted that practices differ considerably across Europe, with some institutions building programmes from modules and others developing broader micro-credential strategies, but without a common model. He underlined that quality assurance agencies and institutions are still learning together how to address flexibility, while current criteria do not always explicitly capture these developments. He considered that the forthcoming ESG revision could help provide clearer reference points and also linked flexibility to recognition challenges, particularly where smaller learning opportunities, associate degrees or other non-traditional formats do not easily correspond to existing qualifications in other systems. From EURASHE's perspective, stronger European-level guidance could increase institutional and agency confidence. He added that further evidence will be collected through future work on lifelong learning, with preliminary results expected by autumn.

## 11. Update on the EQAR knowledge base

Documents: [TPG C on QA 4 CY NO 11-Presentation-EQAR-knowlegde-base](#)

The presentation was delivered by Aleksandar Susnjar from EQAR. Following the presentation, the floor was opened for questions and comments.

Lithuania suggested improving the visibility of the information on accreditation mills and diploma mills, particularly the section explaining EQAR's role and the type of information it provides.

## 12. Update of the working group on cross-border quality assurance

Documents: [TPG C on QA 4 CY NO 12 Presentation-WG-CBQA](#)

The presentation was delivered by Goran Dakovic and Nathalie Lugano from ENQA. Following the presentation, the floor was opened for questions and comments.

The French Co-chair asked whether, although the two documents were intended for voluntary implementation, agencies conducting cross-border quality assurance would have any incentive to take the Code of conduct and Key considerations into account when undergoing ENQA review, and whether review experts would also be encouraged to consider them.

The ENQA representative clarified that ENQA reviews are conducted against the ESG, which define the scope and terms of reference of the review. Since the Code of conduct and Key considerations are not part of the ESG, they cannot formally be assessed within that process. However, he noted that the Working Group had discussed how to promote these voluntary but valuable documents, including through future TPG C work and possible references in the Ministerial Communiqué.

## 13. Next steps

The French Co-Chair presented the next steps for TPG C. She recalled that the deadline for the second staff mobility call is 5 June and encouraged members to coordinate with potential host countries before applying, noting that applications are made at country level and may involve agencies, ministries or other stakeholders. She also announced a webinar on the quality assurance of European University Alliances on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October, followed by a TPG C meeting and related seminar in Yerevan on 16–18 November. A mapping of expectations regarding QA of European University Alliances is expected in December. ENQA used the opportunity to remind participants that the deadline for applications to the ROQA peer-learning activity had been extended until Sunday, 19 April. The activity, addressed to national authorities and focused on the topic of TNE, will take place in Rome on 15–16 June.

## 14. AOB

No additional items were raised under Any Other Business.

The meeting ended at **16:43 CEST**.