

European Quality Assurance
Register for Higher Education



European Quality Assurance Infrastructure – ESG & EQAR

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Networking Visit of SEE QA Experts

Outline



1. European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)
2. European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)
3. ESG Principles Often Challenging

European Standards and Guidelines for QA (ESG)



- Adopted by Bologna ministers in 2005 based on a proposal by the key stakeholders (ENQA, ESU, EUA, EURASHE)
- Agreed principles for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)
- The ESG are not:
 - Prescribed procedures, but general principles
 - Standards for education content (see EQFs and NQFs)

ESG: Essential Principles



Three parts:

1. Institutions should have systematic internal QA processes with clear roles for all stakeholders, including quality of academic staff, information systems, support services, etc.
2. External QA should be transparent and fit for purpose, based on predefined criteria, periodic, include relevant stakeholders and follow-up
3. External QA agencies should be independent, equipped with sufficient resources and have accountability procedures in place

Outline



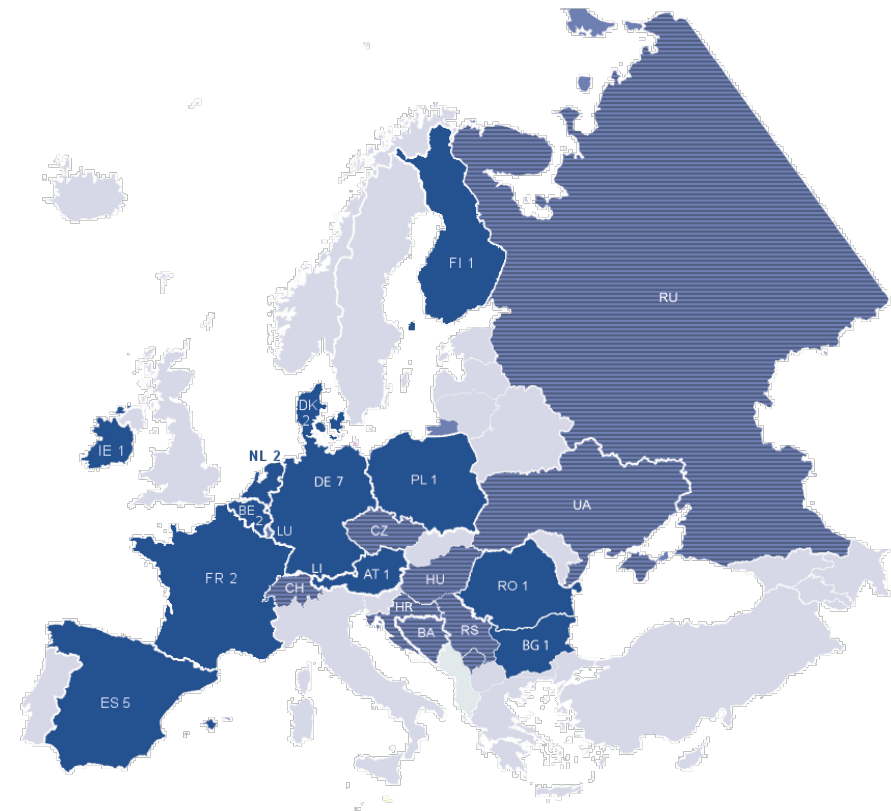
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European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)



Register of quality assurance agencies that comply substantially with European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG)

- Founded in 2008
- Voluntary for agencies
- External review of agencies by independent experts
- 26 agencies registered



EQAR – Objectives



Transparency

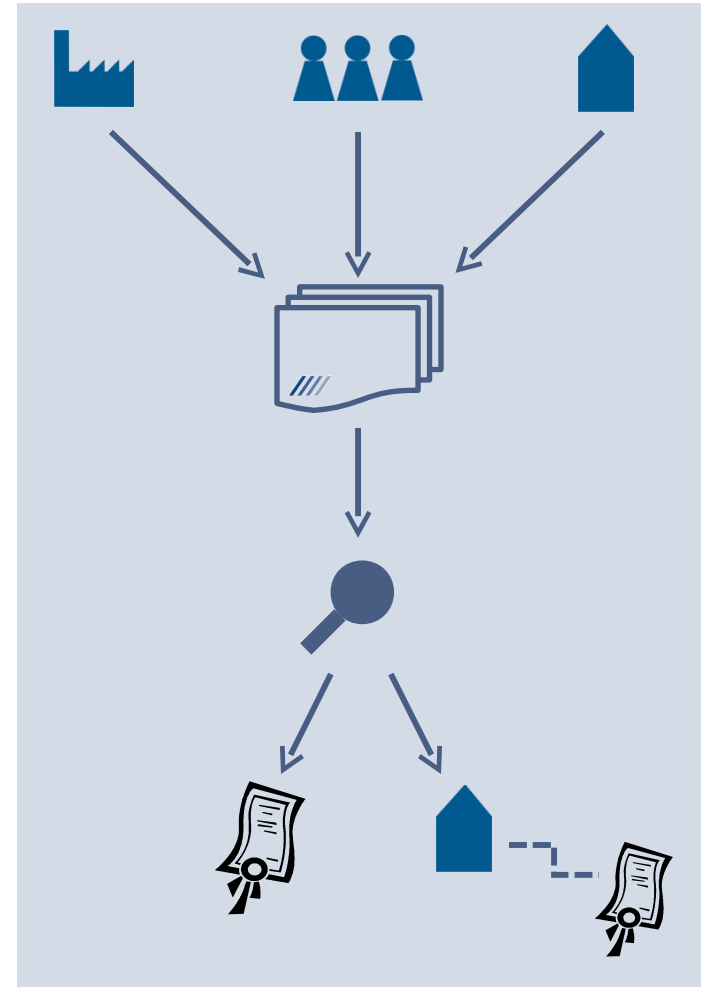
- Information on bona fide agencies
- Prevent illegitimate agencies („accreditation mills“) from gaining credibility

Trust

- Enhance mutual trust amongst QA agencies and institutions
- Institutions to choose a QA agency

Recognition

- Acceptance of QA results and decisions
- Support recognitions of qualifications and periods of study



EQAR Use in National Legislation



Austria: universities can choose freely from amongst registered agencies for periodic audit

Denmark: recognition of external QA procedures by EQAR-registered agencies for Danish degrees offered abroad & recognition of accreditation for ERASMUS Mundus joint programmes

Germany: for joint programmes, nationally-recognised QA agencies can “ratify” decisions

Lithuania: review can be conducted by any EQAR-registered agency as basis for an accreditation decision by the national QA agency

Romania: after initial accreditation by national agency, institutions can choose from EQAR-registered agencies for periodic evaluation

EQAR and ENQA



- **EQAR's objective**
 - managing a list of QA agencies substantially complying with the ESG
 - enhancing trust and confidence
 - providing clear and reliable information on QA agencies
 - promoting the mutual acceptance of QA decisions
 - ➔ decisions: a “snapshot” of agencies at a given time
- **European Association for Quality Assurance in HE (ENQA)**
 - contributing to the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of European higher education
 - acting as a major driving force for the development of QA across all the Bologna signatory countries
 - ➔ working with its members to enhance their operation and contribute to the continuous development of external QA systems

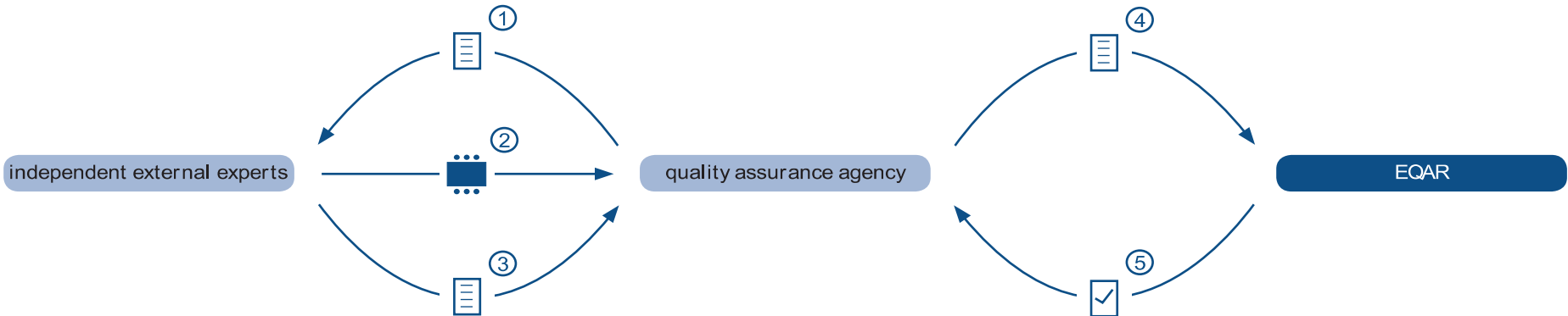
External Review of QA Agencies



- Similar to typical institutional/programme review
- Coordinated by ENQA (or, for EQAR, another independent organisation or a national authority)
- Analysis of and conclusions on the compliance with the ESG (parts 2 and 3)
- Evidence base: self-evaluation and site visit, including interviews with agency's stakeholders
- Report by a panel of QA experts, including at least an academic, a student and an international expert

External Review and EQAR Application Process

eqar



① self-evaluation report ② site visit by external experts ③ external review report ④ application to EQAR ⑤ acceptance or rejection

1. **self-evaluation** produced by the QA agency
2. **site visit** by independent review team(QA professionals, students and academics)
3. external **review report** according to ESG parts 2 & 3
4. **application** for inclusion on EQAR
5. **decision** by EQAR Register Committee

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ESG Principles Often Challenging



- External QA processes (ESG 2.4 & 3.7)
 - International experts – language
 - Training and preparation of experts
 - Participation of students
- Publication of reports (ESG 2.5)
 - Availability, but also readability and accessibility
- Follow-up (ESG 2.6)
 - Sometimes narrow and focussed on formal conditions

ESG Principles Often Challenging (cont'd)



- Resources (ESG 3.4)
 - Financial resources for operations and projects
 - Strong and sustainable staff basis
- Independence (ESG 3.6)
 - Operational independence
 - Not only about formal rules, but actual situation
 - Link with resources and external experts



Thank you for your attention!

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