

## ENQA NEWSLETTER – ISSUE 3 / December 2012

---

Dear colleagues,

How does quality assurance make a difference? This was the theme of this year's European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF), which took place in November in Tallinn. During the interesting paper sessions and workshops, questions around the purpose and impact of quality assurance were discussed. If one conclusion should be drawn from the Forum, it might be that we need even further discussions about the expectations from quality assurance and about the consequences. We should keep in mind that both are closely linked. We have to realise that the expectations from different stakeholders get more and more diverse, and, consequently so do possible consequences. Bjørn Stensaker raised a very important point when he stated that quality assurance agencies might be considered as rather conservative when they emphasise the 'core' purpose of quality assurance while participants of political discussions ask for new approaches, for new answers to new – or even to the already existing – questions. We should not thoughtlessly wipe away that statement as just provocative. It will be a challenge for all of us to be as responsive to new questions and demands as possible and at the same time to be careful not to throw away the baby with the bath water. Interesting discussions are lying ahead of us and ENQA will strengthen its efforts in facilitating these discussions by contributing with its expertise.

Achim Hopbach  
ENQA President

## News from ENQA

### The 2012 ENQA General Assembly organised with OAO in Switzerland

ENQA's 2012 General Assembly was organised in cooperation with the Swiss Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education (OAO), and was held on 18-19 October, 2012 at the University of Basel, Switzerland.

The General Assembly was open to all ENQA members, affiliates and invited guests. The first day was reserved for presentations and discussions about ENQA's current and forthcoming projects, as well as important and relevant issues in European quality assurance. The second day was dedicated to the Association's organisational and administrative matters, such as the budget, work plan and priorities for the year 2013.

The General Assembly agreed to apply an indexation of 3% to the membership and affiliate fees from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013 onwards. The Membership fee has thus been raised from 4,500 EUR to **4,635 EUR per annum** and the Affiliate fee from 2,250 to **2,317 EUR per annum**.

### New Board following the 2012 ENQA General Assembly

The General Assembly elected new members of the ENQA Board on October 19, 2012. The newly elected Board members are:

- **Tove Blytt Holmen**, Deputy Director General and Head of Department of quality assurance, NOKUT, Norway (3-year term)
- **Caty Duykaerts**, Head of the Executive Unit, AEQES, Belgium (1-year term)
- **Helka Kekäläinen**, Secretary General of FINHEEC, Finland (re-elected for a second 3-year term) and re-elected as Vice President
- **Rafael Llavori**, Head of Unit on International Relations, ANECA, Spain (re-elected for a second term)

**Fiona Crozier**, Assistant Director, Development and Enhancement Group of QAA, UK, was re-elected as Vice President.

### The 2012 European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF) – How is our work making a difference?

The 7<sup>th</sup> European Quality Assurance Forum, co-organised by ENQA, ESU, EUA and EURASHE, took place at **Tallinn University, Estonia, on 22-24 November 2012** and brought together around 400 higher education stakeholders from approximately 50 countries to discuss the latest developments and trends in quality assurance (QA). This year's Forum was entitled **"How does quality assurance make a difference?"** and explored specifically the impact of external and internal QA on higher education policies and institutional realities. In addition, the paper sessions, workshops and plenaries explored new developments in quality assurance such as the increased international dimension of external QA. New approaches to quality assurance in various countries and institutions were also presented and participants were given an opportunity to update their knowledge on recent European policy developments. One of the conclusions of the final plenary was that QA, as a whole,

is a highly politicised field, and by no means an exact science, but perhaps this is part of its appeal to those involved in QA.

Next year, the EQAF will be hosted by the **University of Gothenburg in Sweden, from 21 to 23 November 2013.**

**For further information:** [http://www.eua.be/EQAF\\_Tallinn.aspx](http://www.eua.be/EQAF_Tallinn.aspx)

### **New edition of the “Guidelines for external reviews” published**

An updated version of the ENQA “Guidelines for external reviews of quality assurance agencies in the EHEA” has been adopted by the ENQA Board and is now available on the ENQA website. Among other things, the revised edition takes into account the new policy for agency reviews and changes to the membership structure.

**To download the new edition please visit:** [http://www.enqa.eu/files/Guidelines\\_for\\_external\\_reviews\\_of\\_quality\\_assurance\\_agencies\\_in\\_the\\_EHEA.pdf](http://www.enqa.eu/files/Guidelines_for_external_reviews_of_quality_assurance_agencies_in_the_EHEA.pdf)

### **News from ENQA Members & Affiliates**

#### **ASFOR: A new accreditation process for masters in business & management**

In 2011, ASFOR – the Italian Association for Management Development, which has been developing its “Master Accreditation Process” since 1989, started a feasibility study for the **development of a new accreditation system for the Italian Higher Education Masters of Science**, specifically dedicated to programmes in Business and Management. To this end, ASFOR analysed a number of international accreditation systems, such as AMBA and EPAS for individual programmes, and EQUIS and AACSB for institution, as reference points, as well as the ESG. From this methodological basis and consolidated know-how, conceptual schemes and quality requirements were designed and specifically adapted to the Italian HE system.

In a period where international students mobility is becoming a widespread reality, it is important to make visible the quality of the ASFOR accredited programmes also at the international level and, through the scheme developed by ASFOR, make them recognisable and comparable to students, families and the corporate world and institutions.

**For further information:** [www.asfor.it](http://www.asfor.it)

#### **CeQuint project – how to assess the quality of internationalisation?**

In October 2012, a consortium of 14 partners from 11 countries started a new project called “Certificate for the Quality of Internationalisation” (CeQuInt). The partnership consists of 12 quality assurance agencies from 10 European countries, and of the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). The project is led by the European Consortium

for Accreditation (ECA) and the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) is the coordinating agency.

The overall aim of the project is **to assess, reward and enhance internationalisation**. CeQuInt aims thus to provide programmes and institutions insight into their level and quality of internationalisation and provide them, where necessary, with recommendations for improvements. The project is based on a framework agreed by the consortium, focuses on improvement and excellence, and builds on NVAO's experience with the assessment of internationalisation.

The project will develop an assessment framework (i.e. methodology) that can be used to assess the internationalisation of a programme or an institution. The framework and methodology are then tested in a series of twelve pilot procedures. Panels of experts will thereby test and evaluate the developed assessment framework. A positive assessment by an expert panel will lead to the award of the **European Certificate for Internationalisation**. This certificate confirms that a programme or institution has successfully included an international and/or intercultural dimension in the purpose, function and delivery of its education.

The final objective is to ensure that the European Certificate for Internationalisation will lead to a significant **improvement in the transparency of internationalisation**. Higher education institutions will be kept informed about the progress of the project through workshops, conferences and publications. Additionally, a European platform will be developed to share good practices in the field of internationalisation.

**For further information:** <http://www.eaconsortium.net/main/projects/cequint>

### **NCPA: Conference on the 'Implementation of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance Systems'**

The conference on the *Implementation of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance Systems* was held jointly by the National Center of Public Accreditation (NCPA) and the Guild of Experts in Higher Education on 9-10 November 2012, in Moscow, Russia. For the seventh time, this annual event gathered over 150 representatives of the Russian academic and research communities, HEIs' senior management and leaders of internal quality assurance units.

The conference focused on new developments in Russian and European quality assurance and covered a wide range of issues from stakeholders' expectations regarding quality of higher education to university ranking and use of education support schemes. The **development of public accreditation system as an alternative to state accreditation** in Russia was of particular interest to the audience due to considerable changes within the national system of higher education. The conference was also an opportunity to communicate and exchange with international colleagues.

Various aspects of quality assurance were addressed during the two days of the conference: Internet-based testing in higher education, quality standards, challenges of learning outcomes assessment, student self-government, efficiency monitoring of implementation of the Federal State Educational Standards.

For further information:

[http://ncpa.ru/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=224%3A2012-11-07-06-20-14&catid=29%3Asections&Itemid=332&lang=en](http://ncpa.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=224%3A2012-11-07-06-20-14&catid=29%3Asections&Itemid=332&lang=en)

### CEENQA: Next General Assembly and workshop in Romania

The 2013 General Assembly and workshop of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA) are scheduled for 31.05-01.06 2013. Non-members are also welcome to attend the workshop.

The meetings will take place in Romania and will be hosted by ARACIS.

For further information: [www.ceenqa.net](http://www.ceenqa.net)

### News from ENQA partners

#### EURASHE: policy papers on mobility and on quality assurance and transparency tools

On 25 October, EURASHE published two policy papers: the **EURASHE Policy Paper on Mobility** and the **EURASHE Policy Paper on Quality Assurance and Transparency Tools**. Both papers are the results of the Work of EURASHE's working groups which developed the papers through extensive consultations inside EURASHE.

For further information:

Policy paper on Mobility

[http://files.eurashe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/EURASHE\\_Policy\\_Paper\\_Mobility\\_Oct2012.pdf?918048](http://files.eurashe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/EURASHE_Policy_Paper_Mobility_Oct2012.pdf?918048)

Policy paper on Quality Assurance and Transparency Tools

[http://files.eurashe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/EURASHE\\_Policy\\_Paper\\_QA\\_TT\\_Oct2012.pdf](http://files.eurashe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/EURASHE_Policy_Paper_QA_TT_Oct2012.pdf)

#### ECA: Handbook for training of experts

In 2010, the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) started an EU funded project "E-TRAIN" aiming at training and facilitating the sharing of knowledgeable, and internationally experienced experts in QA procedures. In October 2012, as a result of this project, ECA published a handbook for the training of panel members for external quality assurance procedures.

The handbook gives practical guidelines on how to organise effective training sessions for panel members and covers all steps of the training process. The **handbook is addressed to quality assurance agencies, higher education institutions, and also individual experts.**

For further information and to download the handbook: <http://www.eaconsortium.net>

### INQAAHE call for hosting the biennial conference in 2014

INQAAHE is seeking expressions of interest from its member agencies in hosting the biennial Conference in 2014. Applications to host the Conference should be submitted **by 15 February 2013**. The call details and specifications can be consulted on the INQAAHE website.

For further information:

[http://www.inqaahe.org/admin/files/assets/subsites/1/documenten/1354887575\\_call-for-hosting-inqaahe-2015.pdf](http://www.inqaahe.org/admin/files/assets/subsites/1/documenten/1354887575_call-for-hosting-inqaahe-2015.pdf)

### YES EUROPE (ERASMUS FOR ALL) – text adopted by the CULT Committee of the EP

The culture and education committee (CULT) of the **European Parliament adopted recently the new “YES EUROPE” (also known as ERASMUS For All) programme** for youth, education, and sport. If an agreement can be reached between the European Commission, European Parliament and the European Council, more than five million pupils and students of all ages should have better access to mobility and cooperation abroad thanks to a planned **€18 billion in EU funding for the years 2014 to 2020** for the programme.

A new feature in this programme is that students wishing to take a masters degree in a different EU country will be able to apply for a loan which will be guaranteed from a new facility under the YES Europe programme. MEPs stipulated that this new facility will complement rather than replace the other student grants or funding mechanisms that exist at local, national or European level.

For further information:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/cult/home.html>

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fNONSGML%2bIM-PRESS%2b20121126IPR56408%2b0%2bDOC%2bPDF%2bV0%2f%2fEN>

### Funding for ERASMUS 2012 and the 2013 EU Budget – crisis averted

On 23 October, the European Commission asked the European Council and the European Parliament to urgently bridge a €9 billion shortfall in the 2012 EU budget; without this cash injection, several of its funding programmes, including the flagship Erasmus student exchange scheme, would have been at risk. An agreement between the European Parliament and the European Council was reached on **12<sup>th</sup> of December, meaning that a €6 billion top-up will be provided now** to pay the most pressing needs, with the rest (€2.9 billion) to be paid in 2013. For most beneficiaries such as Erasmus students, researchers and businesses, this means that everything that should have been paid in 2012 will be paid in 2013. The funding held over until next year will cover bills for structural funds' projects, in particular those subject to payment suspensions.

The European Parliament and the Council also **agreed on a total budget of €132.8 billion for 2013**. This is €5 billion below the Commission's proposal, which was based on estimates from the 27 Member States themselves. With the extra held over from 2012, the Commission fears that the EU will face another budget shortfall next autumn. The bulk of the EU budget in 2013 will be spent on supporting economic development and competitiveness in Member States (35.5% is allocated to the cohesion policy) and support for farmers (33.1% goes to the Common Agricultural Policy). **Funding for ERASMUS amounts to around 0.4% of the total EU budget.**

**For further information:**

[http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/vassiliou/headlines/press-releases/2012/12/20121212-the-eu-averts-funding-crisis-for-erasmus\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/vassiliou/headlines/press-releases/2012/12/20121212-the-eu-averts-funding-crisis-for-erasmus_en.htm)

### **European Commission strategy to address new challenges on education in times of crisis**

On 20 November, the European Commission launched its **“Rethinking Education” - strategy**. The strategy proposes priority areas to be addressed at all educational levels in order to respond better to the challenges posed by the economic crisis, and a high unemployment coupled up with a skills miss-match. In fact, the Commission argues that while the European Union is facing youth unemployment of close to 23%, there are at the same time, more than 2 million vacancies that cannot be filled, indicating a need for a “radical rethink on how education and training systems can deliver the skills needed by the labour market”.

The “Rethinking Education” strategy wishes to encourage Member States to **take action to ensure that young people develop the skills and competences needed by the labour market** and to achieve the national targets for growth and jobs. In particular the strategy underlines the importance of developing transversal skills and basic skills at all levels, especially entrepreneurial and IT skills; boosting foreign language learning; building of a “world-class vocational education and training systems”; improving the recognition of qualifications and skills; and increasing access to education via open educational resources. In addition, the Commission calls for a targeted use of funds to maximise return on investment, in particular in vocational and higher education, and highlights the necessity of a combination of public and private sources of funding.

In terms of higher education, the Commission calls for **closer coherence between the various existing tools**, such as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), the European credit transfer systems (ECTS and ECVET), and the existing quality assurance frameworks. To make the EU more attractive to students and researchers, the Commission claims, better approaches to recognition are needed, as well as improvements in the application and assessment of learning outcomes.

**For further information:**

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/20121120\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/20121120_en.htm)

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-12-1233\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-1233_en.htm)

### EQAVET Quality Cycle: new online tool

The "EQAVET quality cycle" is a new online tool developed by the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) network which helps Member States and vocational education and training providers to enhance the quality of their training offer.

The tool is **based on the guidelines of the European quality assurance reference framework for VET** and is designed to help to adapt the guidelines to the situation in each country. Furthermore, the tool aims at assisting VET systems and providers to **evaluate their own approach to quality assurance** and examine how other Member States and VET providers in Europe are operating a quality assurance system. It also encourages exploring ideas on designing a national, regional or an institution quality assurance system.

The tool is accessible via internet on the EQAVET network website at [www.eqavet.eu](http://www.eqavet.eu).

**For further information:**

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/20121016b\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/20121016b_en.htm)

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/doc/eqavet\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/doc/eqavet_en.pdf)

### CHEA addresses the issues of academic freedom and internationalisation

The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) have released an **advisory statement on Accreditation and Academic Freedom to address the role that accreditation can play in sustaining and enhancing academic freedom** in the context of institutional and programme reviews. It is also aiming at stimulating discussion among institutions, faculty and accrediting organisations on the importance of academic freedom. The statement provides guidance to CHEA institutional members, recognised accrediting organisations and AAUP members.

In September 2012, the CHEA launched an international division, the so-called **CHEA International Quality Group (CIQG) to meet the needs for advancing the understanding of international quality issues**. The aim of the division is to promote and facilitate dialogue between colleges and various organisations worldwide to improve quality assurance in higher education. Membership in the CIQG is open to universities, accreditors, businesses, government agencies and foundations worldwide. The CIQG provides its members with a platform to learn from each other, share information on quality standards, identify trends in quality assurance, and promote international cooperation in improving academic quality in higher education. The CHEA has appointed an advisory Council who will be responsible for providing guidance on what issues the CIQG should focus on. The first advisory Council meeting took place in December this year.

**For further information:**

[http://www.chea.org/news/NR\\_2012.11.20\\_CHEA\\_and\\_AAUP.htm](http://www.chea.org/news/NR_2012.11.20_CHEA_and_AAUP.htm)

<http://www.cheainternational.org/>

## Upcoming ENQA Events

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Members' Forum, 25-26 April 2013, Prague, Czech Republic**

The ENQA Members' Forum 2013 is organised in cooperation with the Accreditation Commission of the Czech Republic, and will be held on 25-26 April, 2013 in Prague, Czech Republic at the Charles University.

More information will be made available on ENQA website in early 2013, but please book the dates for this important event for all ENQA members and affiliates!

## Associated Events

### **CHEA Annual Conference, January 28-31, Washington DC, US**

The Annual Conference of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) will take place on 28-31 January 2013 in Washington DC. It will bring together speakers and participants from colleges and universities, accrediting organisations, government, higher education associations and the public to address the theme of "Accreditation, Higher Education and the Innovation Environment: Moving Beyond the Present".

The CHEA 2013 Annual Conference will be followed by the inaugural Annual Meeting of the CHEA International Quality Group (CIOG), a new forum for colleges, universities, accrediting and quality assurance organisations and others worldwide to address issues and challenges focused on quality and quality assurance in an international setting.

**For further information:**

[http://www.chea.org/2013%20Annual%20Conference/2013\\_Conferences.asp](http://www.chea.org/2013%20Annual%20Conference/2013_Conferences.asp)

### **ACA European Policy Seminar: What's new in Brussels?**

The Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) is holding the first European Policy Seminar of 2013 on 24 January in Brussels. The seminar will focus on the latest developments on European policies and programmes, thus the title "What's new in Brussels?".

**For further information:**

<http://www.aca-secretariat.be/index.php?id=633>