

Marianne Coessens
President
Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (AEQES)

Bonn, 26 September 2011

ENQA Full Membership of AEQES

Dear Mrs Coessens,

I am pleased to let you know that, at its meeting of 9 September 2011, the Board of ENQA agreed to grant AEQES's Full membership of ENQA for five years from 9 September 2011.

On the basis of its scrutiny of the final review report on AEQES, the ENQA Board and its Review Committee agreed that AEQES met the necessary requirements for being granted ENQA Full Membership.

Though the ENQA Board concluded that AEQES is in substantial compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines, it found that there were some areas for development, included in Annex 1 to this letter. AEQES should submit a progress report on these areas no later than September 2013, and they will also be considered in conjunction with the next external review.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me or the ENQA Secretariat.

Please accept my congratulations to AEQES for being granted Full Membership in ENQA.

Yours sincerely,



Achim Hopbach
ENQA President



Annex 1: Areas for development

The Board suggests that, in addition to the other panel's recommendations, AEQES should pay particular attention to the following questions:

- Cyclical reviews: a 10 year-evaluation cycle is too long and should be shortened to five or six years;
- Resources: the financial resources are considered by the panel sufficient for AEQES to fulfil its core tasks with effectiveness. Nevertheless, the panel considers that the human resources are insufficient for the evaluations foreseen. The Board strongly recommends to improve the flexibility of staff enrolment in order to be able to accomplish collateral activities important for its mission such as developmental activities addressed to training activities or another quality analyses, as well as to face a more demanding situation in the future;
- AEQES should initiate discussions with the ministry on the possibilities of separating its staff recruitment and hiring procedures and full budgetary independence beyond the annual budget allocation and financial reporting to ensure accountability of public funds;
- AEQES should develop a more substantial follow-up process in coordination with stakeholders; include students in the evaluation committees; and translate the quality handbook and the instructions to experts into English;
- Part one of the ESG could be more apparent if the agency was to set standards for quality, against which evaluations could take place.

