ARACIS
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ARACIS EXPERIENCE ABOUT ENQA COORDINATED REVIEW

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HOW ARACIS PREPARED FOR THE ENQA - coordinated REVIEW?

Why ENQA full membership? European dimension, improved responsibility for the agency becomes a must

Previous experience:
- three external evaluations: national, ESU and EUA coordinated! Same standards ENQA - ESG! Same conclusion: substantial compliance.

Philosophy:
- national and international evaluations: not only to judge upon compliance with the ENQA/ESG standards but also to improve the activity of the agency.
Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

HOW ARACIS PREPARED FOR THE REVIEW?

Understanding (1):
- twofold role of evaluation: objective judgment on the level of compliance with prescribed standards AND further quality enhancement and institutional development of the agency
- need for realistic self-evaluation reports (describing reality in the local context; attention to details)
- importance of permanent dialogue with the panel performing the review
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HOW ARACIS PREPARED FOR THE REVIEW?

Understanding (2):

- ESGs/ENQA standards represent reflections of undisputed good practices all across Europe, but should not be translated directly or used solely as a checklist.

- Any national agency is expected to develop its own policies that best serve the interests of the national Higher Education System, in compliance with the ESG and European QA policies.
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HOW ARACIS PREPARED FOR THE REVIEW?

Understanding (3):

UNDECLARED (!) CHALLENGING THINGS:

- try “to anchor” an international review panel to the national academic reality and previous efforts, judged in an unfamiliar and sometimes surprising context
- terminology: what English?
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HOW ARACIS PREPARED FOR THE REVIEW?

Preparing the visit of the panel:
- Logistics for the visit: travel, accommodation, space for meetings, other;
- Documents (SER, additional);
- Staff: be ready for interviews but do not stop current activities;
- Being nice but not pushy!
Additional questions asked (review panel, before the visit)

- What are the human and financial resources available to the Agency?
- How is student involvement in the quality assurance processes ensured?
- How is the governing structure organized?
- What are the selection and appointment procedures for the expert panel members? What is the composition of the panels?
- How is the Competition Commission appointed?
- How is the independence of the Council members from the HEIs effectively ensured?
Additional questions asked (review panel, before the visit)

- What is the difference between “evaluation” and “review” in the activities of ARACIS?
- How are the reports made public?
- How is the quality policy of the Agency made public?
- What are the internal feedback mechanisms of the Agency? Are there any follow-up or improvement?
- Which were the sources used in drafting the Code of professional Ethics?
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VISIT OF THE ENQA - NOMINATED PANEL (3 days)

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS THE ENQA REVIEW PANEL REQUIRED TO CONDUCT (1):
1. executive board;
2. dept. of quality assurance + the dept. of accreditation;
3. some chairs (and/or members) of permanent commissions;
4. the consultative committee;
5. ARACIS-staff;
6. evaluators, possibly one or two also from outside Romania;
VISIT OF THE ENQA - NOMINATED PANEL (3 days)

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS THE ENQA-REVIEW-PANEL REQUIRED TO CONDUCT (2):

7. representatives of public and private universities + rectors conference;
8. teacher trade union;
9. students (preferably also a few who participated in evaluations);
10. stakeholders (e.g. employers);
11. representatives of the Ministry (and/or Parliament/Senate);
12. **representatives of the two private QA agencies and EDU-CER (common meeting)** challenging the activity of ARACIS;
13. final meeting with the board.
How ARACIS benefits from the review process?

Main conclusions:

ARACIS was encouraged:

- to continue the work of improving the quality of its evaluations by recognizing its efforts and good recommendation for the future
- to seek further European recognition of the Agency
How ARACIS benefits from the review process?

Recommendations:

- *Internal QA procedures should be more developed.* A further opening up of the work of ARACIS to the outside world is recommended. ARACIS should have a clear description and implementation of its internal QA system. The appeals procedure should be more clearly described;
How ARACIS benefits from the review process?

Recommendations:

- A system-wide analysis should be developed;
- Stakeholder participation in the Council: the Council should incorporate views from outside the HE community.
ARACIS would like to thank ENQA and the ENQA-coordinated panel for the excellent collaboration, support, patience and fair judgment.
Thank you for your attention