

# Considerations on the European Higher Education Area and possible ways forward

**ENQA General Assembly  
Astana, 18 October 2018  
Karl Dittrich**

# Content of my speech

1. Hail to Bologna and the EHEA
2. But now: forward again!
3. What about universities?
4. And what about QA itself?
5. And what about values?
6. And what about us, ENQA and EQAR?
7. Conclusions

# Hail to Bologna and the EHEA!

- First a shock
- Then taking the opportunities
- Impressive results
- A successful “European” project
- True supporter
- Quality assurance has been a success

# But now: forward again!

- A lot of work needs to be done
- Signatures count!
- Bologna has become overloaded
- Back to the key commitments
- Be honest in describing the state of affairs
- Threat for “splendid isolation”

# But now: forward again!

- “Education” belongs to national authorities
- “European universities” might be an answer
- QA should facilitate
- But divides should become smaller
- Brain gain is also brain drain
- Go for steady alliances
- QA should contribute to honesty and realism

# What about universities?

- Universities have to be realistic and honest
- Rankings are dangerous and one-sided
- Teaching quality not measured
- Universities are diverse! Show it!
- Student population more diverse than ever
- New providers are more lean and agile
- And IT helps...

# What about QA itself?

- Diversity of systems
- Trend towards external QA on institutional level
- But: program evaluation is still the heart
- Danger of for-profit HE

# What about QA itself?

- QA has brought fear
- Loss of prestige is great
- Internal systems become more control-oriented
- Risk- and innovation-aversion
- Too much accountability?
- Risk-free means more regulations and control

# What about QA itself?

- QA becomes overloaded
- Stick or carrot?
- Preference for the carrot
- But kick the rascals out!
- QA  $\neq$  quality culture
- Data have to be interpreted

# What about values?

- Teaching and research need “freedom”
- Institutional autonomy is key
- Independency of agencies
- Topic for QA?

# What about us?

- EQAR and ENQA have different roles
- We are complementary
- One opinion on compliance?
- But two separate decisions
- Support QA and internationalisation
- Bring governments and agencies together

# Conclusions and thanks