

Future Developments, Ensuring the quality of higher education - general problems and approaches

Remarks by EQAR

Promoting the quality of higher education and science
12 January 2024
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EHEA: the Commitments

- 1) A Three-Cycle System compatible with the QF-EHEA and
- 2) Scaled by ECTS
- 3) Compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC)
- 4) Quality Assurance in conformity with European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)

EQAR was created to further the development of the EHEA

EQAR and the EHEA Commitments



- EQAR members: 54 governments (*KH since 2012*)
- EQAR is administered by the E4: EUA EURASHE ENQA ESU
- EQAR evaluates AGENCIES (*58 registered*)
- EQAR operates DEQAR (*95,000+ reports*)

EQAR is independent and operates in the public's interest

EQAR Mission Recognition // LRC



The Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC)

- 50 signatories
- Promotes fair recognition of academic qualifications
- Complemented by UNESCO's *Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications* (2023)
- A step towards automatic recognition

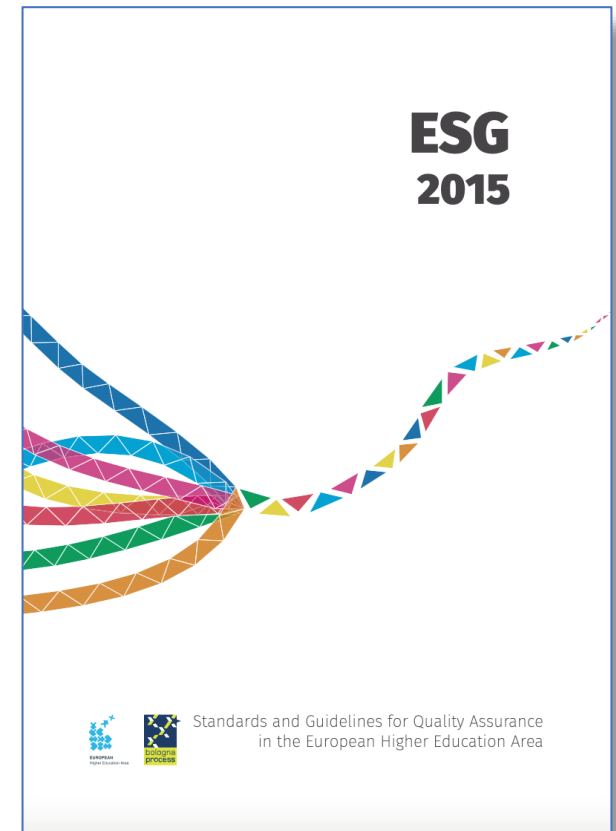
EQAR Mission

QA // ESG



*Quality Assurance
conforming to the European Standards and
Guidelines (ESG)*

- The EHEA policy document on QA
- QA activities: - accountability
- enhancement
- Trust & quality culture
- Impending revision



The ESG: the State of Play



The 2015 revision

- Developing a culture of quality enhancement
 - Student-Centred approach
 - Focus on stakeholder involvement (all)
 - Taking into account the latest T&L developments (LOs)
 - Enhanced internationalization: international collaboration, mobility, and the recognition of qualifications across borders
- = more inclusive, more diverse, more transnational, recognizing all forms of delivery

The ESG: the State of Play

Next Revision

Aim: to further contribute to the advancement of QA and recognition in the EHEA

- Short term revision (2026?)
- No major revision needed
- No drastic reduction in scope

For example:

- Need to accommodate varied forms of delivery
 - Addressing instances of evaluation fatigue
 - Balancing accountability and enhancement
- } QAA, systems

The ESG: the State of Play



Yet...

Aim: to further contribute to the advancement of QA and recognition in the EHEA

... What about...

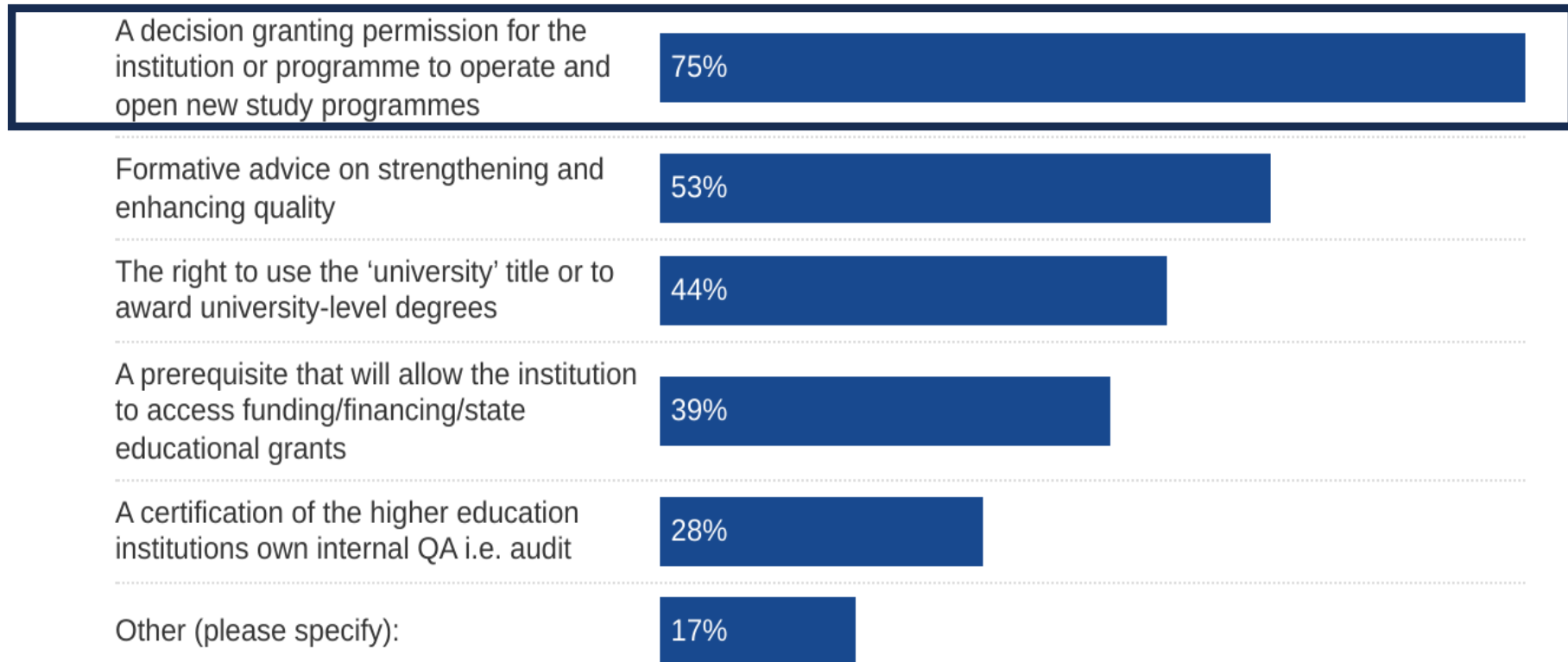
- the QA of European University Alliances?
- Recognition?
 - Strong demand by all stakeholders
 - Support student mobility
 - Facilitates international cooperation between institutions

[Project IMINQA]

[TPG LMRC CoRe]

Future Developments 1

What is the main role of Quality Assurance?

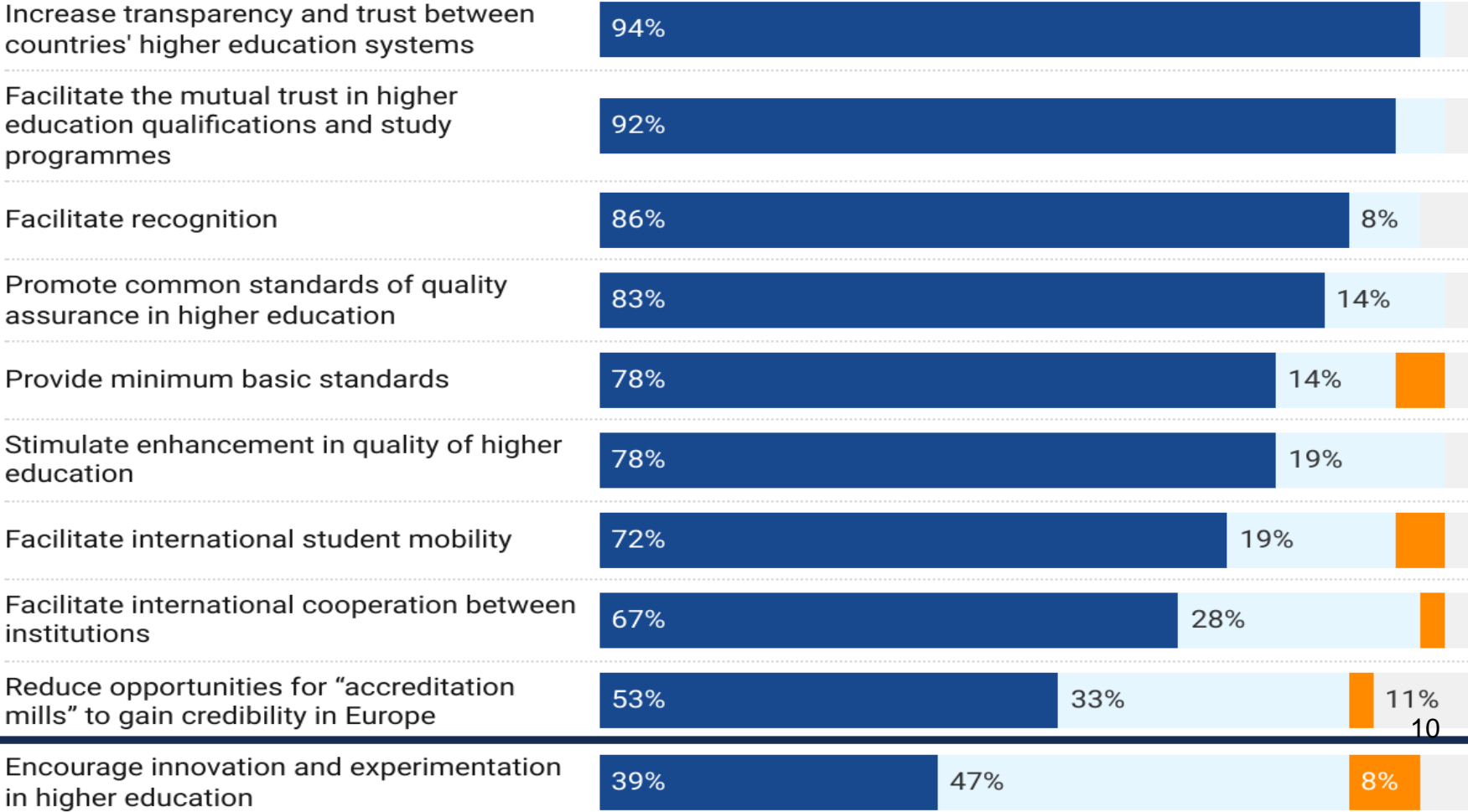


Future Developments 2



How important do you consider the following purposes of a European QA Framework?

Very important Quite important Not important I do not know

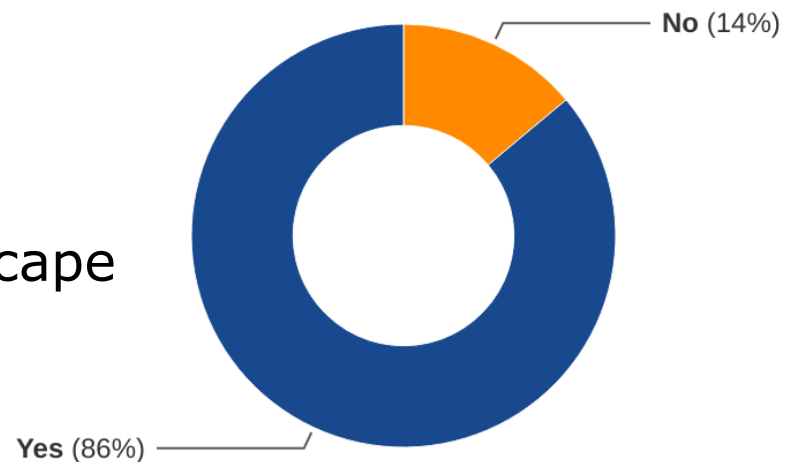


Future Developments 3

The regulatory role of ministries

- QA is indispensable to accreditation
- What is the use of QA?
- *The QA paradox!*

A moving landscape



Have the external QA approaches or criteria been revised in your higher education system in the last 10 years?

Future Developments 4

The ambition of European university alliances

- September 2017, Sorbonne University
- One of the key pillars of the European Education Area.
- Aim: 500 universities involved
- Generously funded by the European Commission (€14.4 million for each alliance over 4 years)

Future Developments 4

The alliances' urgent demands

- Joint degrees: what QA processes?

Or: how to quality assure a degree that is designed by up to 10 HEIs?

→ Funding?

→ Tools?

→ Methodology?



Future Developments 5

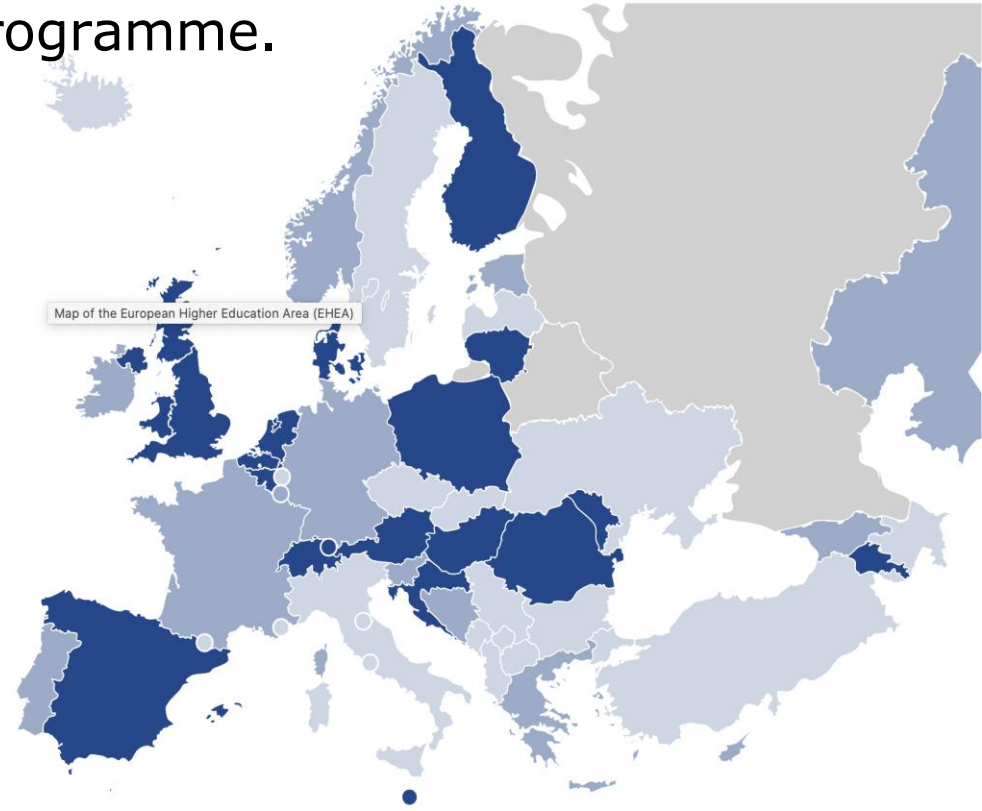
The European Approach

A single evaluation by an EQAR-registered agency will assure of the entire joint programme.

Or: theory vs. practice

23 programmes have been uploaded to DEQAR so far

Yet: an instance where accountability meets enhancement



Future Development 5: EQAR's Proposals

EQAR calls on ministries to:

1. Use the outcomes of relevant E+ funded projects :
 - EUNIQ (2019 – 2021); IMINQA (2022 – 2024) : QA of university alliances
 - QAFit: Evolution of the ESGs
2. Take action to address challenges...
 - Remove obstacles to effective transnational cooperation
 - Enhance trust between higher education systems and institutions
 - Reflect on the building blocks towards joint European degrees
 - Strengthen automatic recognition to ensure seamless mobility,
3. ... while avoiding
 - Provisions that make the organisation too inflexible (laws)
 - Provisions that contradict specific ESGs

DO NOT


- Create new tools
- Add new requirements on top of the EA

DO

- Align the EU and the EHEA
- Use the set of Bologna tools; incorporate them to an overarching framework
- Invest in the existing tools
- Use EQAR as a basis for trust in HE provisions
- Use DEQAR as an enabler of automatic recognition

Future Developments 6

More...

- Drive towards enhancement
 - Freedom, esp. related to internal QA and recognition
 - Diversity (cf. alternative providers of microcredentials)
 - Digitalisation, combined with more security
 - User-friendliness, to better serve the community
- 

Kazakhstan in the EHEA

Openness

- 16 registered agencies operating or having operated (automatic recognition of reviews by registered foreign agencies)
 - Register 1
 - registered in an OECD country
 - EQAR registered
- 3 registered “home” agencies, more applying
- European Approach accessible to some HEIs

Kazakhstan in the EHEA

Liberalisation

- An increasing number of quality agencies authorised to operate
- and seeking EQAR registration
- a government target of 10

→ A specific case in the EHEA

Registered in EQAR:

Germany: 10 agencies
Spain: 10 agencies
Kazakhstan: 3 (so far)

Kazakhstan in the EHEA

EQAR's position

- Entirely up to the system to decide!

EQAR's experience lies only with working on and applying the ESG

- the case of Spain
- the case of Germany
 - the question of funding (ESG 3.4)
'Agencies should have adequate and appropriate resources both human and financial, to carry out their work'

Kazakhstan in the EHEA

EQAR's position

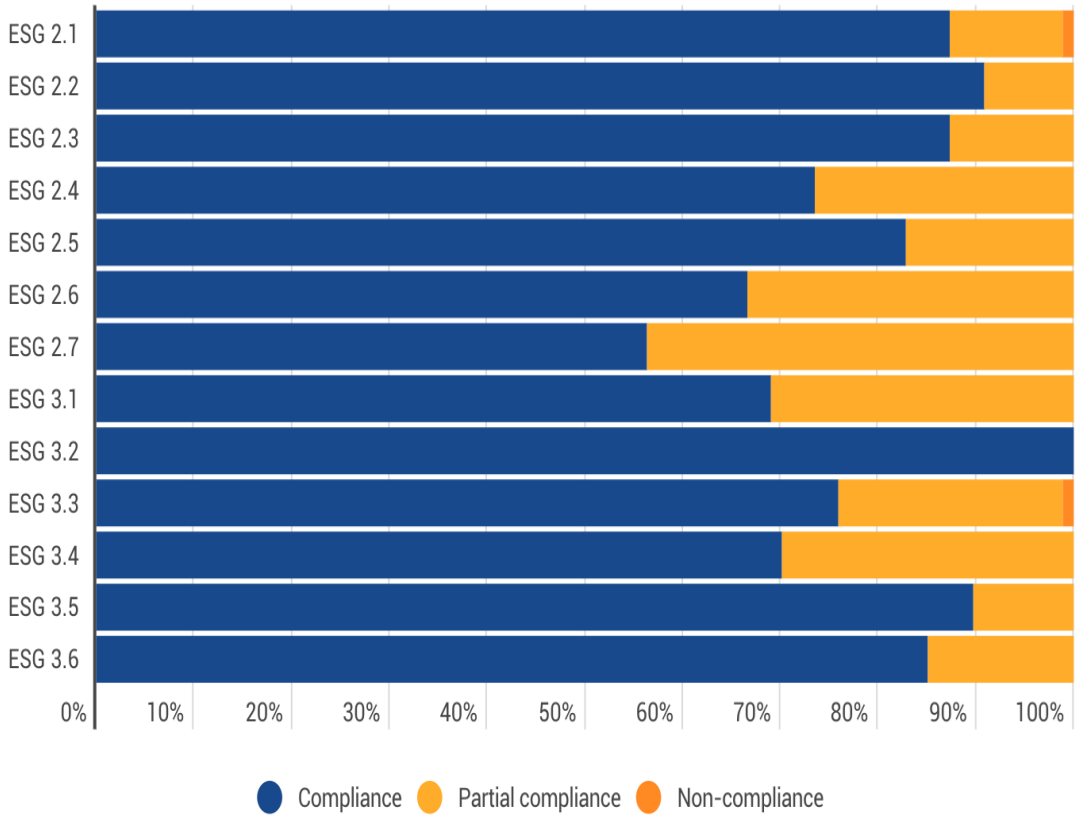
- Entirely up to the system to decide!
- the future of QA in the EHEA:
 - competition or collaboration?
 - excellence vs. elitism

ESG Compliance: typical challenges



- Students on review panels
- Publication of reports
- Appeals & complaints
- Stakeholders involvement, separation of activities

- Independence
- Thematic analyses
- Resources





Thank you for your attention!

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