

# Quality assurance of higher education in the European Higher Education Area - developments and ways forward

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# Structure of the presentation

1. Principles of the Bologna process and QA in the European Higher Education Area
2. European Standards and Guidelines
3. ENQA as a policy maker and membership organisation
4. ENQA's messages to the ministers in 2018

# The European Higher Education Area (AREA)

The **Bologna Process** is a series of ministerial meetings and agreements between European countries designed to ensure comparability in the standards and quality of higher education qualifications. Through the **Bologna Accords**, the process has created the [European Higher Education Area](#), in particular under the [Lisbon Recognition Convention](#). It is named after the place it was proposed, the [University of Bologna](#), with the signing of the [Bologna declaration](#) by Education Ministers from 29 European countries in 1999, forming a part of [European integration](#).

([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bologna\\_Process](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bologna_Process))

# The European Higher Education Area (AREA)

As the main objective of the [Bologna Process](#) since its inception in 1999, the European Higher Education Area was meant to ensure more comparable, compatible and coherent systems of higher education in Europe. Between 1999 - 2010, all the efforts of the Bologna Process members were targeted to creating the European Higher Education Area, which became reality with the Budapest-Vienna Declaration of March 2010.

([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European\\_Higher\\_Education\\_Area](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Higher_Education_Area))

# Bologna tools

In the last two decades, several instruments have been developed and implemented at the European, national, regional and institutional levels, such as:

- ENIC and NARIC networks
- European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)
- Diploma Supplement (DS)
- The overarching and national qualifications frameworks (QFs)
- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG)

# The European Higher Education Area (AREA)

- 48 countries
- Europe is diverse!
- Education policies in Europe based on subsidiarity
- The Bologna Process a voluntary process
- Non-implementation to be discussed at the Ministerial Meeting in Paris 24-25 May 2018
- Report on implementation of key commitments to be published for Paris 2018

# Bologna Key Commitments: QA in conformity with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG):

Institutions granting degrees assure the quality of their programmes leading to degrees following the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG 2015).

External QA is performed by agencies that have demonstrably complied with the standards and guidelines stipulated in the current ESG. This is best ensured where only those agencies registered on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) are allowed to operate in the country.

# European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)



PART 1. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

PART 2. EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

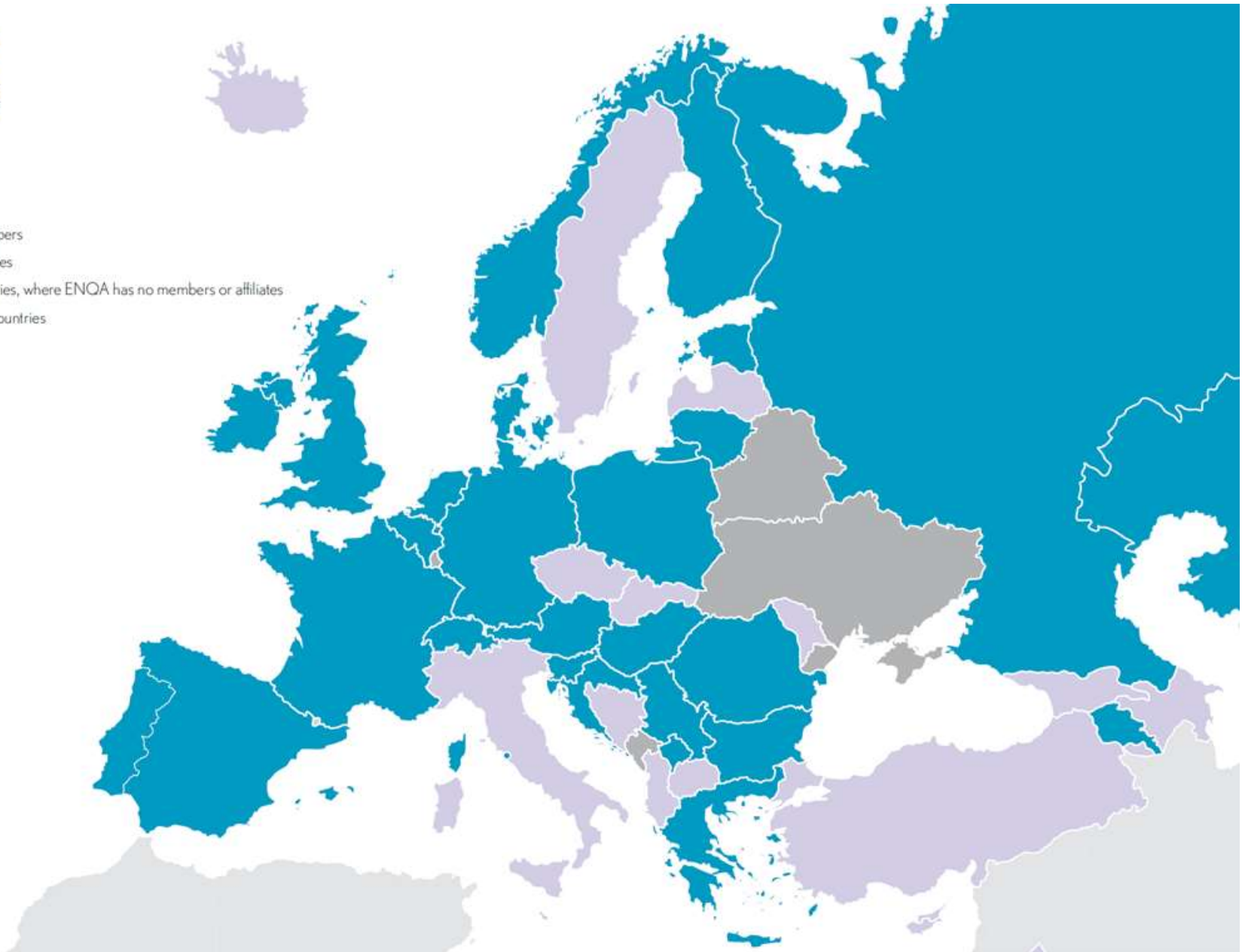
PART 3. QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES



# Quality assurance in the Bologna process

- An action line in the Bologna Process since the beginning (1999)
- **2005:** Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG)
- Proposed by the E4 Group (ENQA, ESU, EUA, EURASHE = the core stakeholders)
- **2012:** Decision to revise the ESG by 2015 taking account of developments since 2005
- Revised version adopted by the ministers in 2015.
- This time drafted by the E4 together with EQAR, Education International and BusinessEurope.

- ENQA members
- ENQA affiliates
- EHEA countries, where ENQA has no members or affiliates
- non-EHEA countries



# Main principles for QA in Europe

- **Higher education institutions have primary responsibility** for the quality of their provision and its assurance
- QA responds to the **diversity** of HE systems, institutions and programmes (as well as of agencies:
- QA supports the **development of a quality culture**
- QA **involves stakeholders** and takes into account the expectations of all stakeholders and society

# Main principles for QA in Europe

- Standards and guidelines for QA, not quality as such
- Apply to **all higher education** offered in the EHEA regardless of the mode of study or place of delivery (TNE, e-learning, short courses...)
- Thus all types of e-learning included as well as all phases included in a learning process (e-assessment)
- Apply to **all types of QA** activities and agencies (quality audits, programme accreditation, institutional assessment...)

## Main principles for QA in Europe

- Quality assurance can serve a variety of purposes: enhancement – accountability
- Standards generic, not specific → they provide **the framework and common basis** for national and institutional activities

## Main principles for QA in Europe

- Independence of QA agencies (not parts of the ministry)
- Provides **transparent and independent information** on the quality of HEIs and programmes → but is it accessible and easy to use?
- **External and internal QA build on each other** (one is not complete without the other)

# European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

- Umbrella NGO for European quality assurance agencies
- Network in 2000; association in 2004
- Structure: Board, General Assembly, Secretariat
- 52 Members in 28 countries, 55 Affiliates in 31 countries



# European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

- Co-operation within E4 (European University Association, European Students Union, European Association of Institutions in Higher Education)
- Consultative member in the Bologna Follow-up Group since 2005
- Founding member of the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)



## Goals (2016-2020)

- ENQA is representative of the diversity of quality assurance agencies throughout Europe
- ENQA supports the continuous development of independent and trustworthy quality assurance agencies operating in line with agreed standards throughout Europe
- ENQA provides advice and represents the interests of its members in the policy-making process

## ENQA's role in practice

- Policy development, the voice of QA agencies
- ENQA Agency Reviews
- A space for dialogue for quality assurance practitioners
- Membership services
- Projects with global reach

# Global reach of ENQA's activities

- Quality Assurance of Cross-Border Higher Education (QACHE): <https://qache.wordpress.com/>
- EU Support to Higher Education in ASEAN Region (SHARE): <http://share-asean.eu/>
- Modernizing and Enhancing Indian eLearning Educational Strategies (MIELES)
- Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA): <https://haqaa.aau.org/>



# EHEA Ministerial Conference – ENQA's messages to ministers:

- Pleased to report solid progress
- External quality assurance systems are practically ubiquitous in the EHEA
- An increased complexity in the structure and functions of the agencies (mergers, added responsibilities..)
- Already created tools need full support from governments (such as the European Approach for the QA of Joint Programmes)

# EHEA Ministerial Conference – ENQA's recommendations to ministers:

- To safeguard appropriate levels of autonomy for agencies to operate.
- To support responsible development of cross-border quality assurance.
- To encourage student participation in QA.
- To ensure that regulations allow for full publication of review reports.

# EHEA Ministerial Conference – ENQA's messages to ministers:

ENQA envisages an EHEA where all students have access to high-quality education and can achieve qualifications that are recognised worldwide, a goal which is furthered by ensuring that its members work in line with the ESG 2015.

Thank you!

