



Introduction to the European quality assurance framework

Maria Kelo
Tia Loukkola
21 November 2019

#EQAF



For **WiFi** access

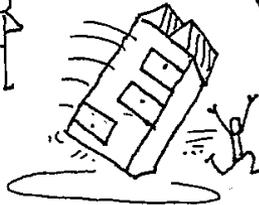
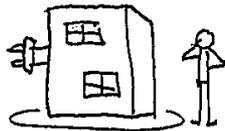
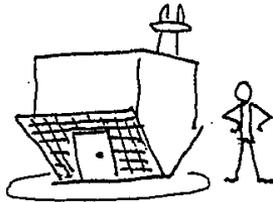
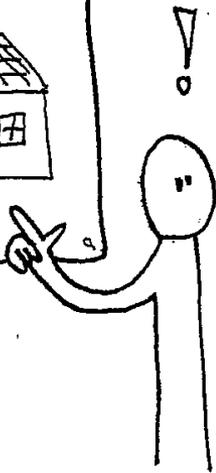
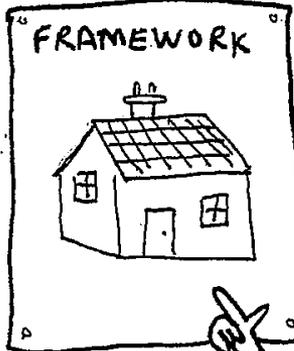
- use **Eduroam** *or*
- connect to **TUB-Guest**, open a browser and use login data on your participant badge

Key milestones

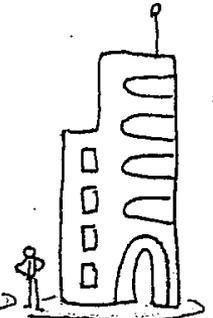
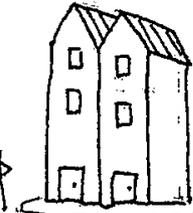
- QA: one action line in the Bologna Process
- 2005: Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG)
 - Proposed by the E4 Group (ENQA, ESU, EUA, EURASHE)
- 2006: European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF)
- 2008: European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)
- 2015: ESG 2015 adopted
 - Proposed by the E4 Group, EQAR, Education International and BUSINESSEUROPE

ESG and status of QA

THE FRAMEWORK FOR BOLOGNA IS THERE - BUT PEOPLE AREN'T REFERRING TO IT!



WE DON'T WANT GENERIC QA SYSTEMS, BUT IT HELPS TO REFER TO THE BOLOGNA FRAMEWORK



Patrick Sanders 2009



ESG in short

- Reference framework for agreed practice in QA in Europe
- Three parts covering
 - Internal QA within HEIs
 - External QA carried by QAAs
 - Internal QA within QAAs
- Focus on quality assurance of higher education
- Principles for QA in the EHEA
 - HEIs have primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and its assurance
 - QA responds to the diversity of higher education systems, institutions, programmes and students
 - QA supports the development of a quality culture
 - QA takes into account the needs and expectations of students, all other stakeholders and society

- In your opinion, which is the most important principle?
 - HEIs have primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and its assurance
 - QA responds to the diversity of higher education systems, institutions, programmes and students
 - QA supports the development of a quality culture
 - QA takes into account the needs and expectations of students, all other stakeholders and society

Go to: www.menti.com

Code: 42 77 54



Diversity of external context and approaches

- Different cultural contexts, history, and traditions
- Different levels of autonomy and capacity of HEIs for IQA
- Different levels of independence and capacity of QAAs for EQA

Different types of agencies and methods

- Evaluation, audit, accreditation...
- Programme level and / or institutional level
- Subject specific / multidisciplinary
- European, national, and regional agencies

Outcomes of quality assessments vary

- Permission to operate/award degrees
- Impact on funding
- Recommendations for improvement



Yellow snow is also snow.

- In your view, what should be the main purpose of EQA?
 - Guarantee minimum standards of higher education quality
 - Provide reliable and independent information on quality of education
 - Support constant enhancement/improvement of higher education
 - Support development of internal quality assurance
 - Allow institutions to demonstrate their quality externally

Go to: www.menti.com

Code: 42 77 54



Constant evolution of QA

Frequent reforms in external QA approaches, motives varied

- National and/or European requirements
- Expectations of stakeholder (more HEI autonomy, enhancement orientation, role of students etc.)
- “to keep the momentum”, going beyond minimum standards (excellence)
- Profiling and specialisation of agencies
- Internationalisation and cross-border activities
- Changes in HE and in HE policies
 - elearning, SCL, work-based learning
 - European University networks
 - research and T&L

→ The challenge of keeping standards without impeding innovation





What is EQAR?

- Founded 2008 by E4 organisations at Ministers' request
- Mission: enhancing trust and confidence in EHEA
- Main role: to manage a register of QA agencies that comply substantially with the ESG
 - Currently 48 registered agencies from 27 countries
- Complementary activities to maintaining the Register:
 - Monitoring status of legal frameworks for external QA in Europe
 - Monitoring cross-border QA developments
 - Database of external QA results by the registered agencies



ENQA or EQAR?

ENQA	EQAR



ENQA or EQAR?

Has QA agencies as members

ENQA or EQAR?

ENQA	EQAR
Members: EHEA QA agencies	Members: National governments and European stakeholder organisations
Acts in the interests of its members	Acts in the “public interest”
Main activities: Representation and support to members, policy making, projects, development of QA, etc.	Main activity: manage a public official register of ESG compliant agencies



ENQA or EQAR?

Founded by main European stakeholder organisations

ENQA or EQAR?

ENQA	EQAR
Members: EHEA QA agencies	Members: National governments and European stakeholder organisations
Founded by the QA agencies (2000)	Founded by the E4, within the Bologna Process (2008)
Acts in the interests of its members	Acts in the “public interest”
Main activities: Representation and support to members, policy making, projects, development of QA, etc.	Main activity: manage a public official register of ESG compliant agencies
Grew alongside the BP; a consultative members of the BP	Born out of the BP (the first legal entity)



ENQA or EQAR?

Uses the ESG as criteria for agencies

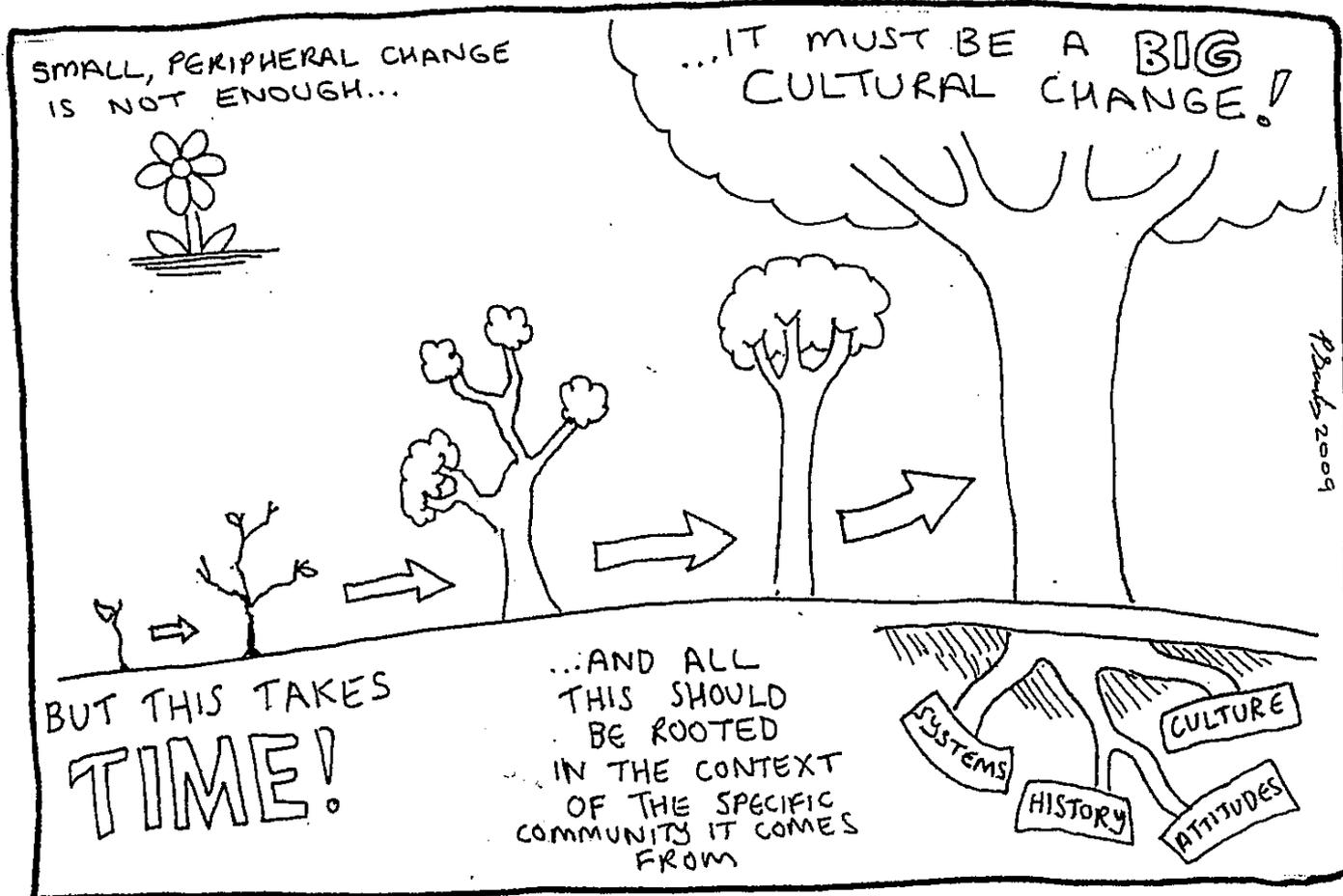
ENQA or EQAR?

ENQA	EQAR
Members: EHEA QA agencies	Members: National governments and European stakeholder organisations
Founded by the QA agencies (2000)	Founded by the E4, within the Bologna Process (2008)
Acts in the interests of its members	Acts in the “public interest”
Main activities: Representation and support to members, policy making, projects, development of QA, etc.	Main activity: manage a public official register of ESG compliant agencies
Grew alongside the BP; a consultative members of the BP	Born out of the BP (the first legal entity)
ESG as membership criteria (ENQA reviews)	ESG as registration criteria (mostly ENQA reviews)

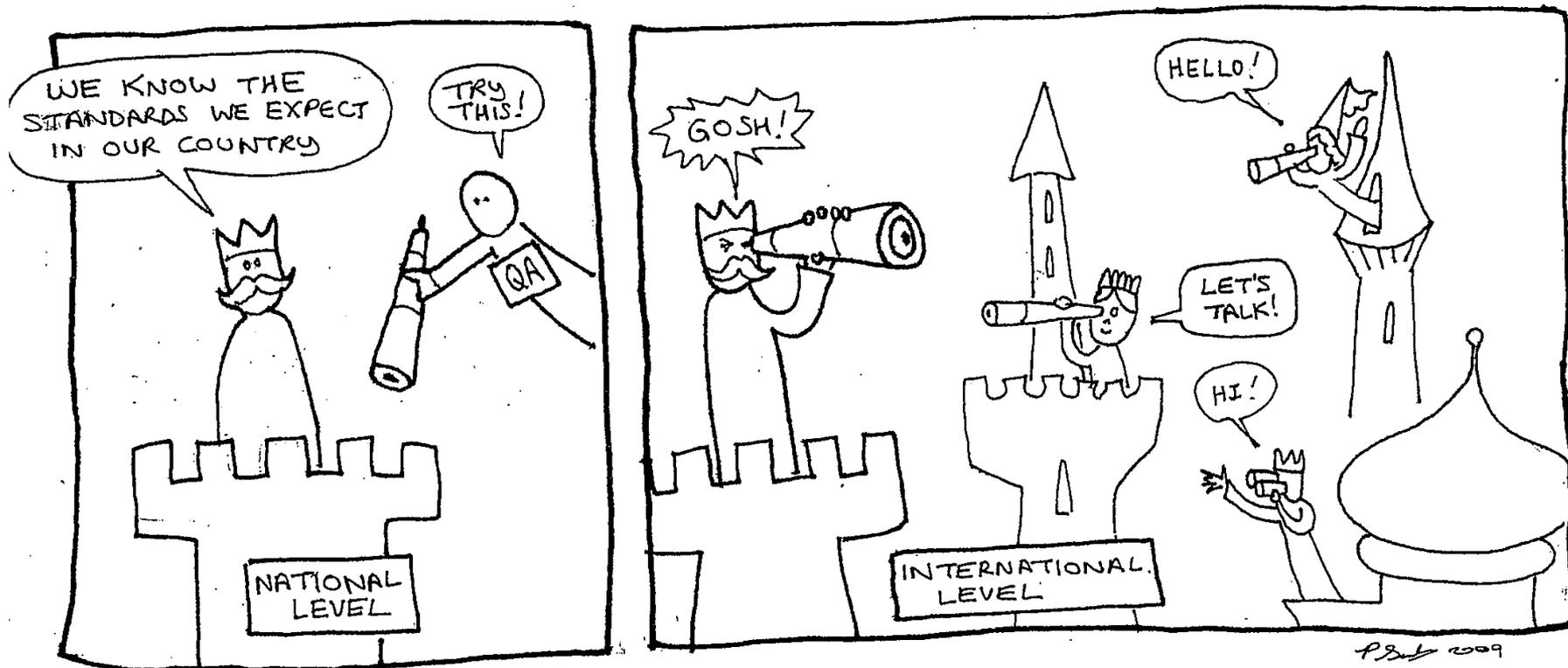


Internal quality assurance

- Institutional responsibility for quality (assurance)
- Increased emphasis on internal QA: ESG Part1 & shift towards institutional external QA in some systems
- Two approaches to internal QA
 - aligned with strategic management: QA as a means to support the achievement of institutional goals
 - explicitly linked to defining and assessing the learning outcomes and ensuring these are aligned to the national qualification framework
- Novelty in the ESG 2015: student-centred learning
- Quality culture the aim, yet remains challenging



Some newer policy additions



WE NEED TO STIMULATE CROSS-BORDER Q.A.



Cross-border QA

- Cross-border QA = QA agencies operating across borders
- Will to promote this mentioned in the Ministerial Communiqués
- HEIs could choose an agency that suits their profile among EQAR-listed agencies
- According to EQAR web-site today
 - In 15 systems all HEIs can choose a suitable EQAR listed QA agency
 - In 13 systems can choose EQAR-listed agency, but need to follow national requirements
 - 21 countries do not recognise foreign agencies as part of their national external quality assurance systems at all
- If interested, check Key considerations for Cross-border Quality Assurance developed by the E4 Group and EQAR



QA of joint programme

- Developing joint programme a policy goal at European level
- Challenges identified include external QA, in particular in programme accreditation countries
- European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes adopted in 2015
 - External QA based purely on criteria derived from the ESG Part 1
 - One exercise carried out by EQAR listed agency - all countries involved recognise the results of this exercise
- Relatively limited impact so far
 - In 20 systems use of European approach is not permitted and external QA is based on programme-level accreditation
 - In 13 systems all HEIs can use the European Approach

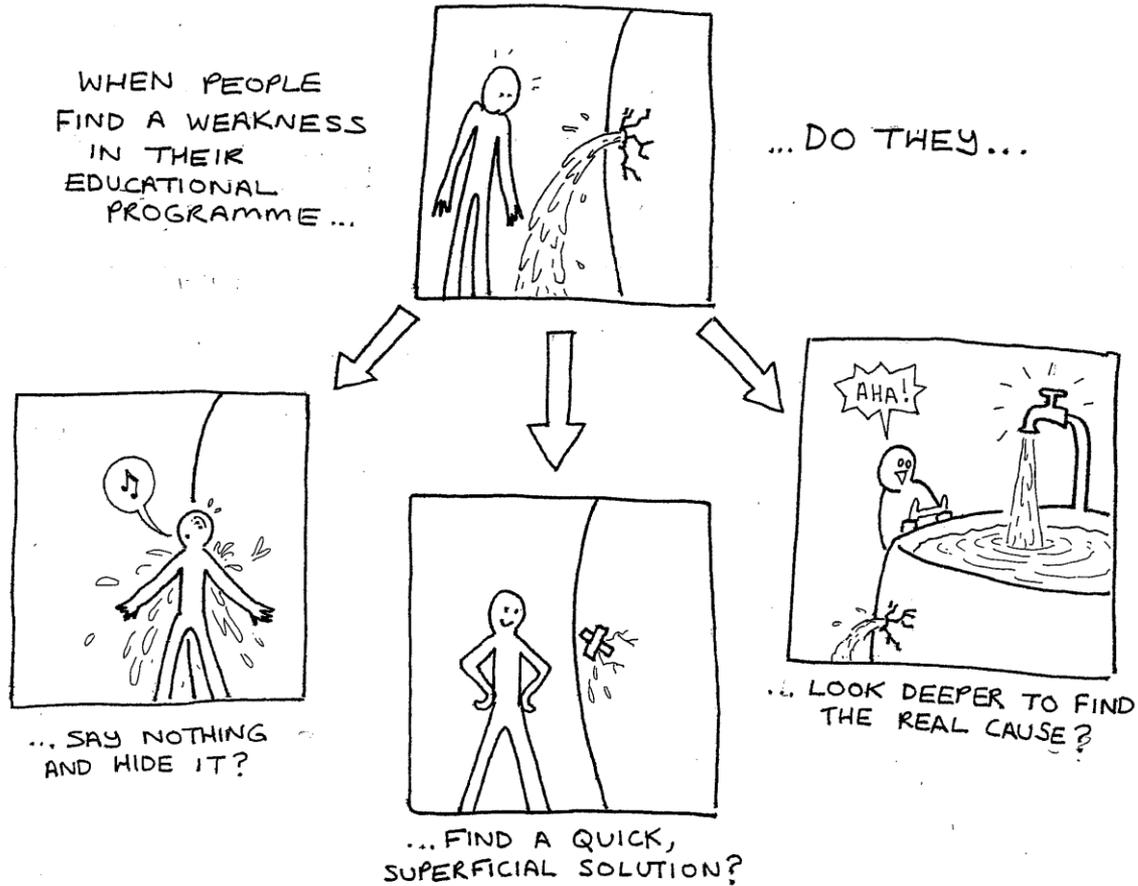


EQAF's role then?

- EQAF has been organised by the E4 organisations since 2006
- Fosters dialogue and exchange of practice between QA actors
- Biggest QA event in Europe bringing together wide-range of QA stakeholders
- Relies on participant contributions
 - Keep an eye on the Call for contributions
 - Provide feedback after the event
 - Engage in discussions during and outside the programme

Conclusion

- What makes European QA different?
 - Emphasis on student (and stakeholders at large) participation
 - Regional collaboration (although increasing also in other parts of the world)
 - Recognition of the role of internal QA
 - Transparency of external QA reports
- Is QA a success story?
 - For you tell us...



Some useful links

- [ESG 2015](#)
- [European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes](#)
- [Key considerations for cross-border QA](#)
- www.engq.eu (external QA)
- www.eqar.eu (external QA, Register, DEQAR)
- www.eua.eu (internal QA, quality culture etc)
- www.eurashe.eu (internal QA with focus on professional HE)
- www.esu-online.org (student participation in QA)