THE ROMANIAN AGENCY FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION
*Member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education - **ENQA***
*Registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education - **EQAR***

Parallel Session 2: Perspectives on QA
International academic cooperation: sustaining the spirit of the EHEA through quality assurance

Quality assurance role in sustaining international academic cooperation within the European Higher Education Area

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European Quality Assurance Forum 2025

Hosted by Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary, 12-14 November 2025

CONTENT

EHEA: Transforming Education Together

BOLOGNA PROCESS

- Europe of knowledge.
- Greater **compatibility** and **comparability** of the systems of higher education:
  - ⊠ *promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies*
  - ⊠ easily readable and comparable **degrees**
  - ⊠ two main **cycles**
  - ⊠ system of **credits** (ECTS)
  - ⊠ **mobility** for students and staff
  - ⊠ correspondence with **the market/society needs**
  - ⊠ European dimensions in higher education.

1999
The Bologna Process
Bologna declaration
signed by 29 states

1998
Sorbonne
Declaration

1988
Magna Charta
Universitatum

BOLOGNA PROCESS

- **Policies and reforms are agreed at European level**, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, and, afterwards, **implemented at national level**, reaching every higher education institution.

  - ✓ **Voluntary cooperation framework,** with no legally binding provision, except for the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

  - ✓ Sharing same **values**.

- The [Bologna Follow-Up Group](#) (BFUG) is the executive structure supporting the Bologna Process in-between the [Ministerial Conferences](#).

1999
The Bologna Process
Bologna declaration
signed by 29 states

EHEA SET-UP

- 2001: vital role that quality assurance systems play in ensuring high quality standards and in facilitating the comparability of qualifications throughout Europe. They emphasized the necessity of close European cooperation and mutual trust in and acceptance of national quality assurance systems.

✓Ministers also pointed out that quality is the basic underlying condition for trust, relevance, mobility, compatibility and attractiveness in the European Higher Education Area.

- 2003: The quality of higher education has proven to be at the heart of the setting up of a European Higher Education Area.

EHEA SET-UP

- 2005:

⊠ **three priorities** – the degree system, <u>quality assurance</u> and the recognition of degrees and periods of study;

⊠ we urge higher education institutions to continue their efforts to enhance the quality of their activities through the systematic introduction of <u>internal mechanisms</u> and their direct correlation to external quality assurance;

⊠ introducing the proposed model for <u>peer review of quality assurance agencies</u> on a national basis, while respecting the commonly accepted guidelines and criteria.

- 2007: The ESG have been a <u>powerful driver of change</u> in relation to quality assurance

2005

Standards and Guidelines for
Quality Assurance in the European
Higher Education Area

European Association for Quality Assurance
in Higher Education

EHEA SET-UP

- The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was founded in **2010** with 47 members.

- The membership to the BFUG is based on the membership in the EHEA.

  ✓ ENQA consultative member to the BFUG and stakeholder organisation for quality assurance in the EHEA (since 2005).

EHEA DEVELOPMENT

- 2012: Quality assurance is **essential for building trust** and to reinforce the attractiveness of the EHEA's offerings, including in the provision of <u>cross-border education</u>.

- 2018: In order to **unlock the full potential of the EHEA** and ensure the implementation of Bologna key commitments, we are adopting a **structured peer support approach** based on solidarity, cooperation and mutual learning. In 2018-2020, thematic peer groups will focus on three key commitments crucial to reinforcing and supporting quality and cooperation inside the EHEA.

European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes

October 2014
approved by EHEA ministers in May 2015

Joint programmes are a hallmark of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). They are set up to enhance the mobility of students and staff, to facilitate mutual learning and cooperation opportunities and to create programmes of excellence. They offer a genuine European learning experience to students. Joint degrees express the "jointness" also in the awarding of the degree.
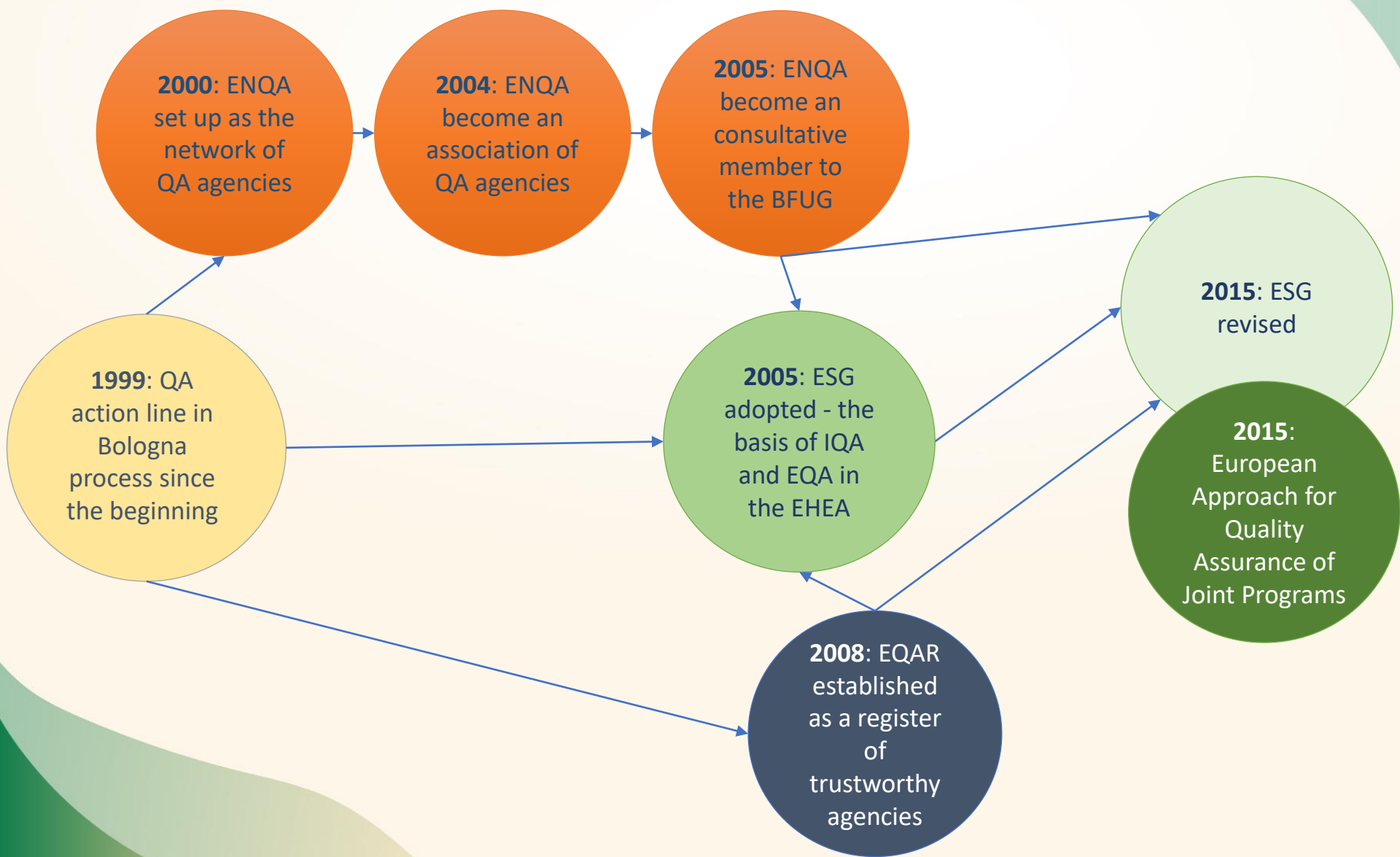
The present European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes has been developed to ease external quality assurance of these programmes. In particular, it will:

ESG 2015

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

EHEA DEVELOPMENT

ESG

- The standards for quality assurance are divided into three parts:
  - ✓ Internal quality assurance
  - ✓ External quality assurance
  - ✓ Quality assurance agencies
- The focus of the ESG is on quality assurance related to **learning and teaching** in higher education, including the learning environment and relevant links to research and innovation.

ESG 2015

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

ESG
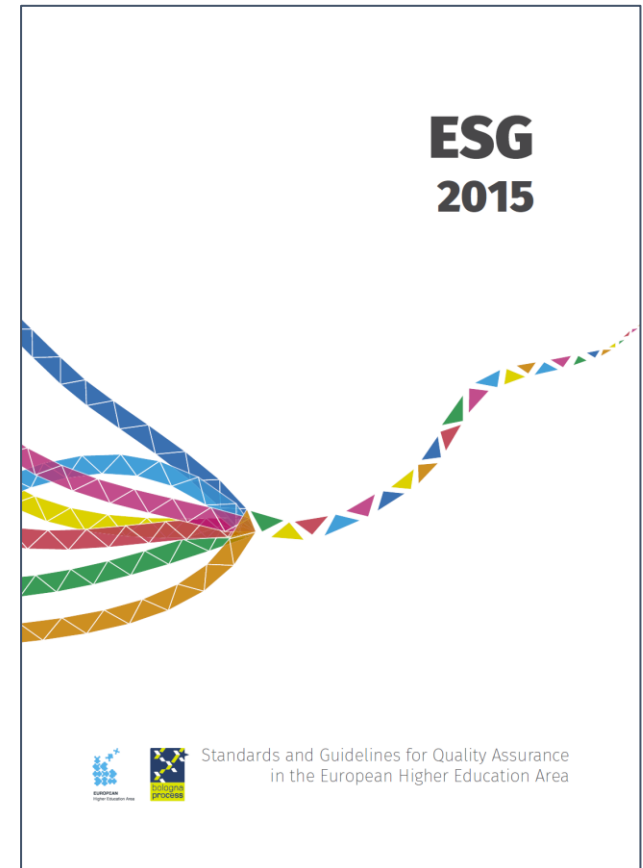
The ESG are based on the following **four principles** for quality assurance in the EHEA:

- Higher education institutions have primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and its assurance;

- Quality assurance responds to the diversity of higher education systems, institutions, programmes and students;

- Quality assurance supports the development of a quality culture;

- <u>Quality assurance takes into account the needs and expectations of students, all other stakeholders and society.</u>

ESG 2015

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
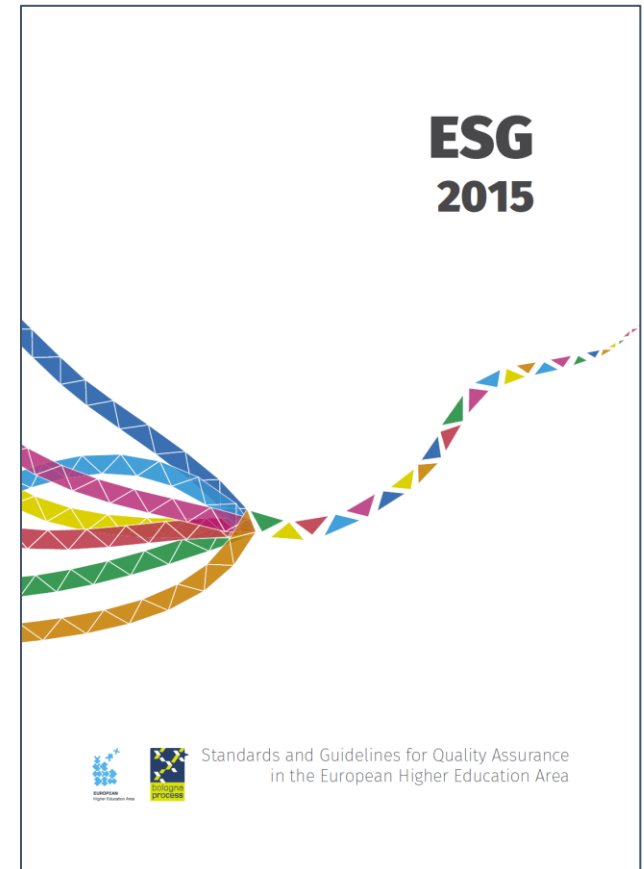
ESG AND BOLOGNA COMMITMENTS

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Quality assurance policies are most effective when they reflect the relationship between research and learning & teaching and take account of both the national context in which the institution operates, the institutional context and its strategic approach. Such a policy supports

…

- **academic integrity and freedom** and is vigilant against academic fraud;

….

Building on our rich and diverse European cultural heritage, we are developing an EHEA based on institutional autonomy, **academic freedom**, equal opportunities and democratic principles that will facilitate mobility, increase employability and strengthen Europe's attractiveness and competitiveness.

Together we are engaged in a process of voluntary convergence and coordinated reform of our higher education systems. This is based on public responsibility for higher education, **academic freedom**, institutional autonomy, and commitment to integrity.

1.2 Design and approval of programmes

Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended **learning outcomes**. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the **Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.**

✓ define the expected student workload, e.g. in ECTS;

Adoption of a system essentially based on **two main cycles**, undergraduate and graduate. Establishment of a **system of credits** - such as in the **ECTS** system – as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility.

1999: Bologna Declaration
2007: London Communiqué
2015: Yerevan Communiqué

ESG AND BOLOGNA COMMITMENTS

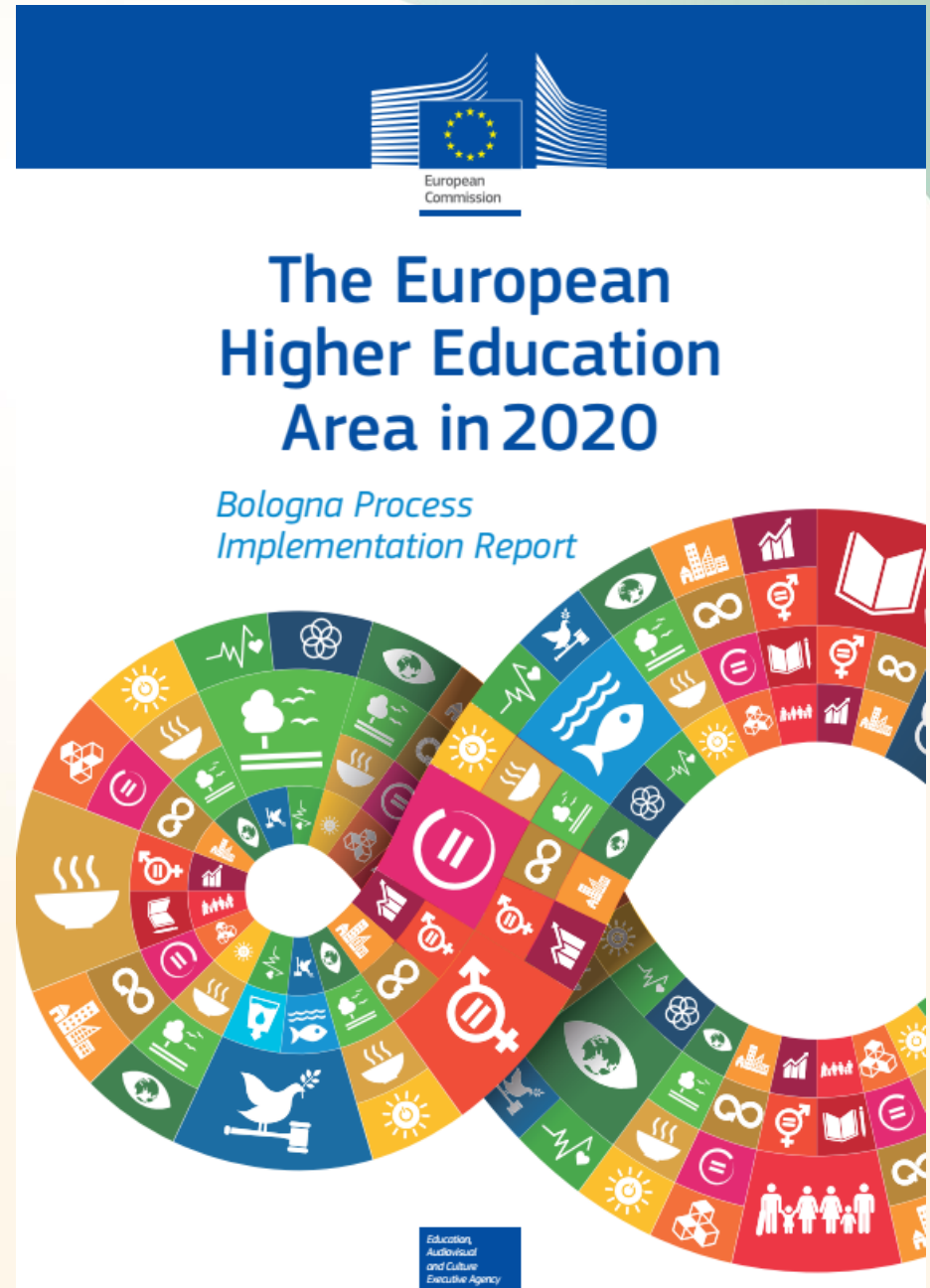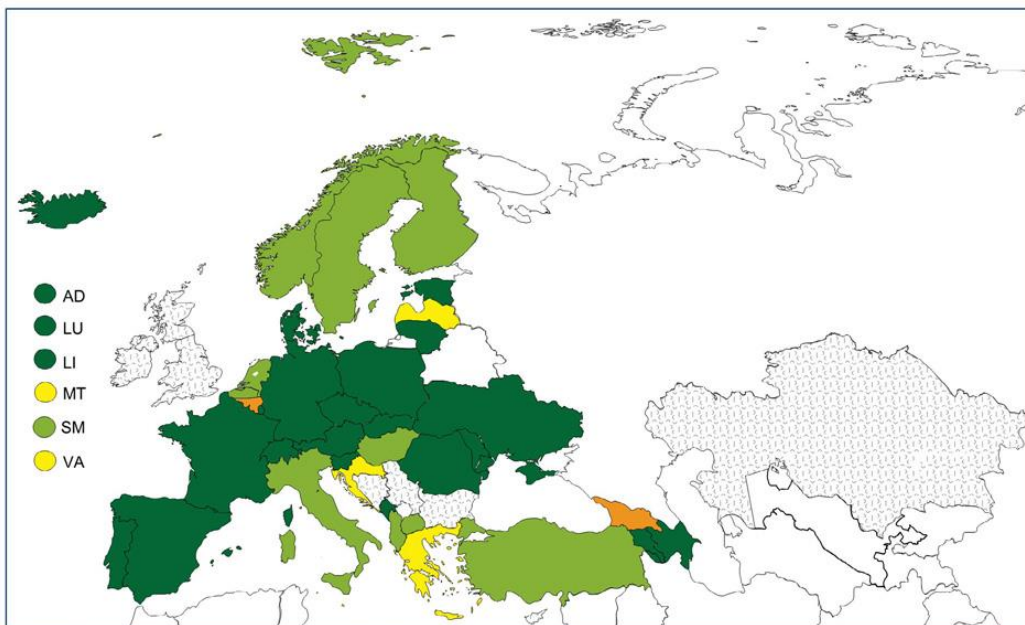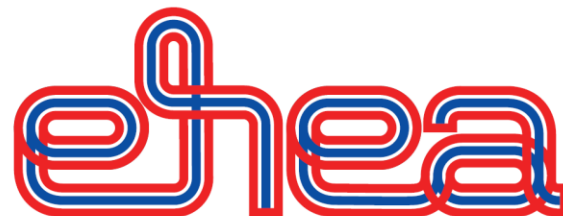|	
1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.	Ministers affirmed that students should participate in and influence the organisation and content of education at universities and other higher education institutions.
1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification. ✓ Students need to receive documentation explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.	Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, also through the implementation of the Diploma Supplement...
1.6 Learning resources and student support Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.	Ministers also reaffirmed the need, recalled by students, to take account of the social dimension in the Bologna process. *1999: Bologna Declaration* *2001: Prague Communiqué*

EHEA DEVELOPMENT

The European Higher Education Area in 2020

Bologna Process Implementation Report

The development of higher education quality assurance systems has been one of the most significant features and drivers of change in the EHEA.
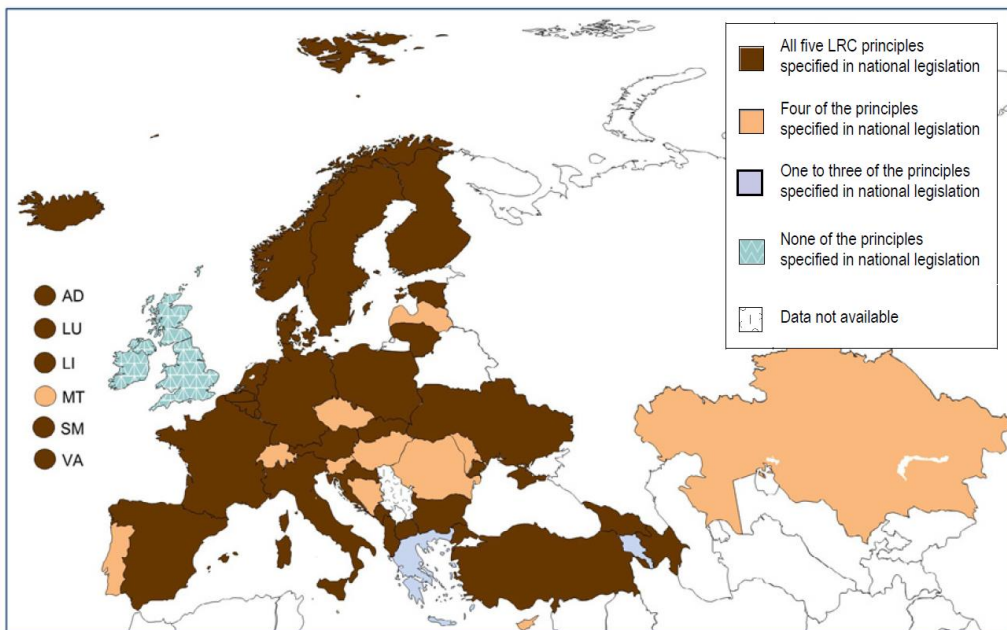
EHEA DEVELOPMENT
Degree structures

The European Higher Education Area in 2024

Bologna Process Implementation Report

ehea

European Education and Culture Executive Agency

Legend (map):
- AD
- LU
- LI
- MT
- SM
- VA

All the following elements are fulfilled:
- o >90% of first-cycle programmes comply with agreed ECTS workload for the first cycle (at least 180 ECTS);
- o >90% of second-cycle programmes comply with agreed ECTS workload for the second cycle (between 60-120 ECTS);
- o <20% of students are enrolled in integrated/long programmes;
- o There are no programmes outside the Bologna degree structure, other than integrated programmes.

3 out of 4 commitments are fulfilled; 2 out of 4 commitments are fulfilled; 1 out of 4 commitments are fulfilled

None of the commitments are fulfilled; Data not available

EHEA DEVELOPMENT
Implementation of LRC

All five LRC principles specified in national legislation
Four of the principles specified in national legislation
One to three of the principles specified in national legislation
None of the principles specified in national legislation
Data not available

AD
LU
LI
MT
SM
VA

The European
Higher Education Area
in 2024

Bologna Process
Implementation Report

ehea

European Education
and Culture
Executive Agency

1) applicants have right to fair assessment;
2) there is recognition if no substantial differences can be proven;
3) legislation or guidelines encourage comparing of learning outcomes rather than programme contents;
4) in cases of negative decisions the competent recognition authority demonstrates the existence of substantial difference;
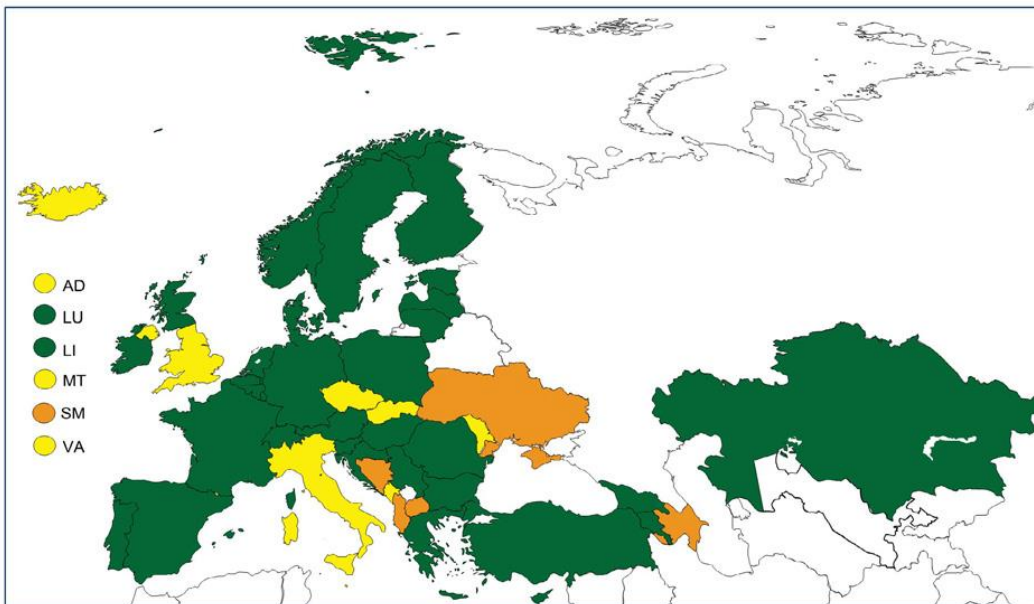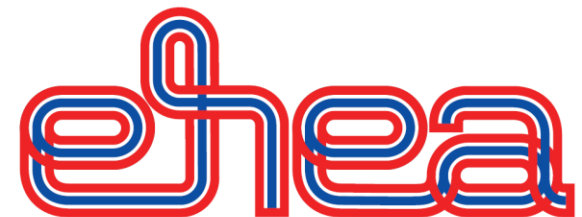5) applicant's right to appeal of the recognition decision.

EHEA DEVELOPMENT
Quality assurance

The European Higher Education Area in 2024

Bologna Process Implementation Report

Legend:
- AD
- LU
- LI
- MT
- SM
- VA
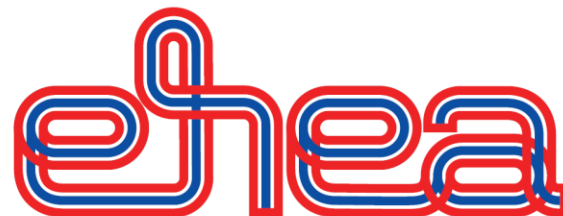
|	
(dark green)	A fully functioning quality assurance system is in operation nationwide, in which all higher education institutions are subject to regular external quality assurance by an agency that has successfully demonstrated compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG) through registration on EQAR.
(yellow)	A fully functioning quality assurance system is in operation nationwide, but only some higher education institutions are subject to regular external quality assurance by an agency that has successfully demonstrated compliance with the ESG through registration on EQAR.
(orange)	A quality assurance system is in operation nationwide, but has not yet been fully aligned to the ESG.
(red)	No quality assurance system is in operation.

IMPORTANCE OF EUROPEAN QA FRAMEWORK

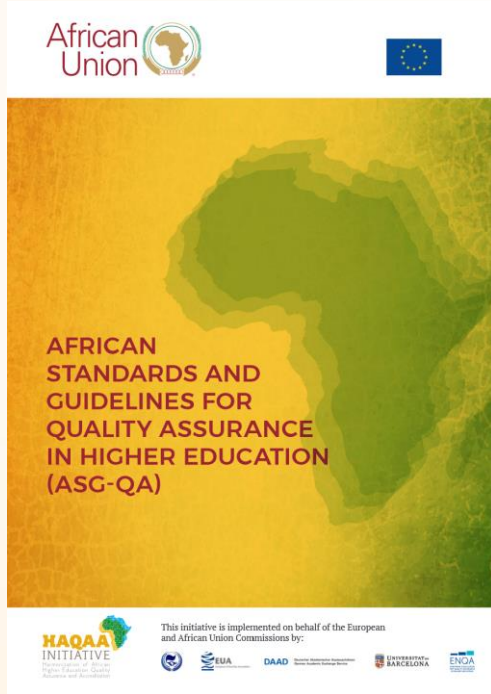Importance for the European QA framework to facilitate international cooperation between institutions
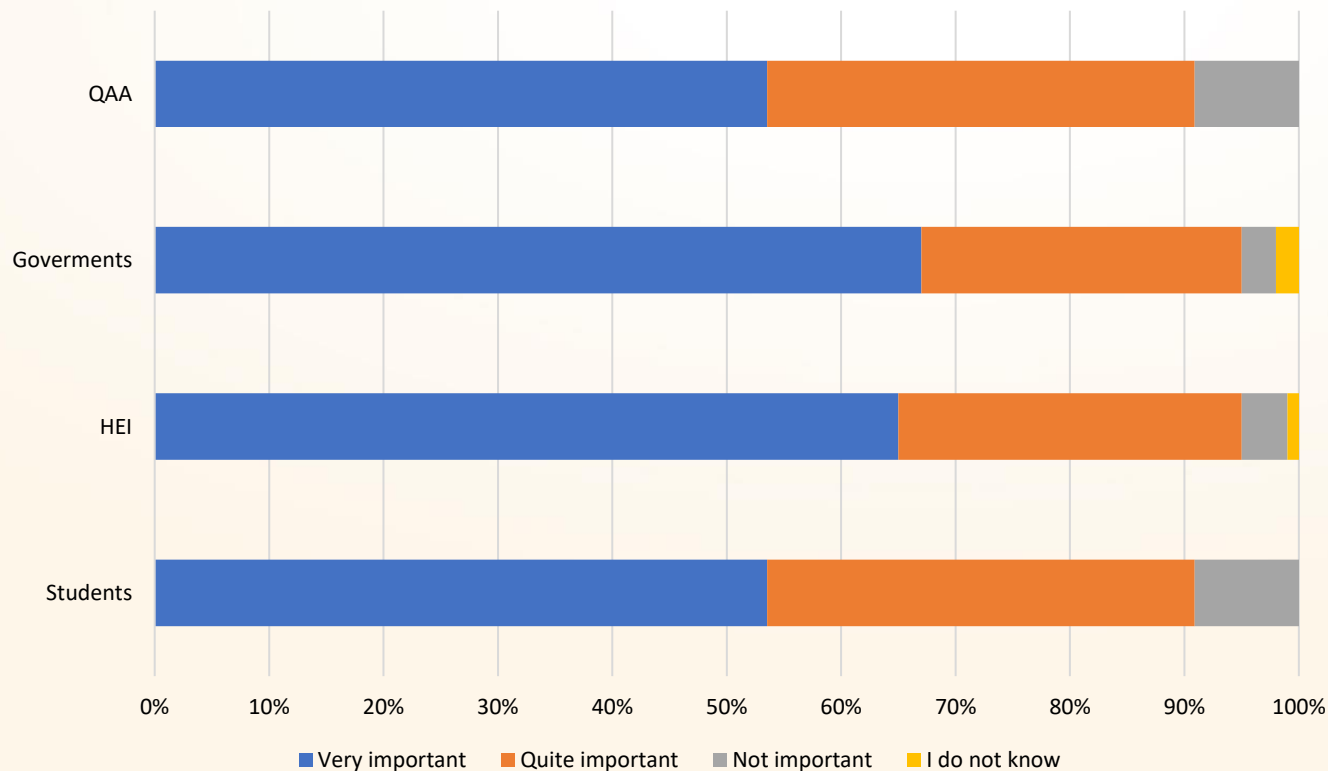
ESG TO SUPPORT TRUST

The ESG supports trust in HE qualifications
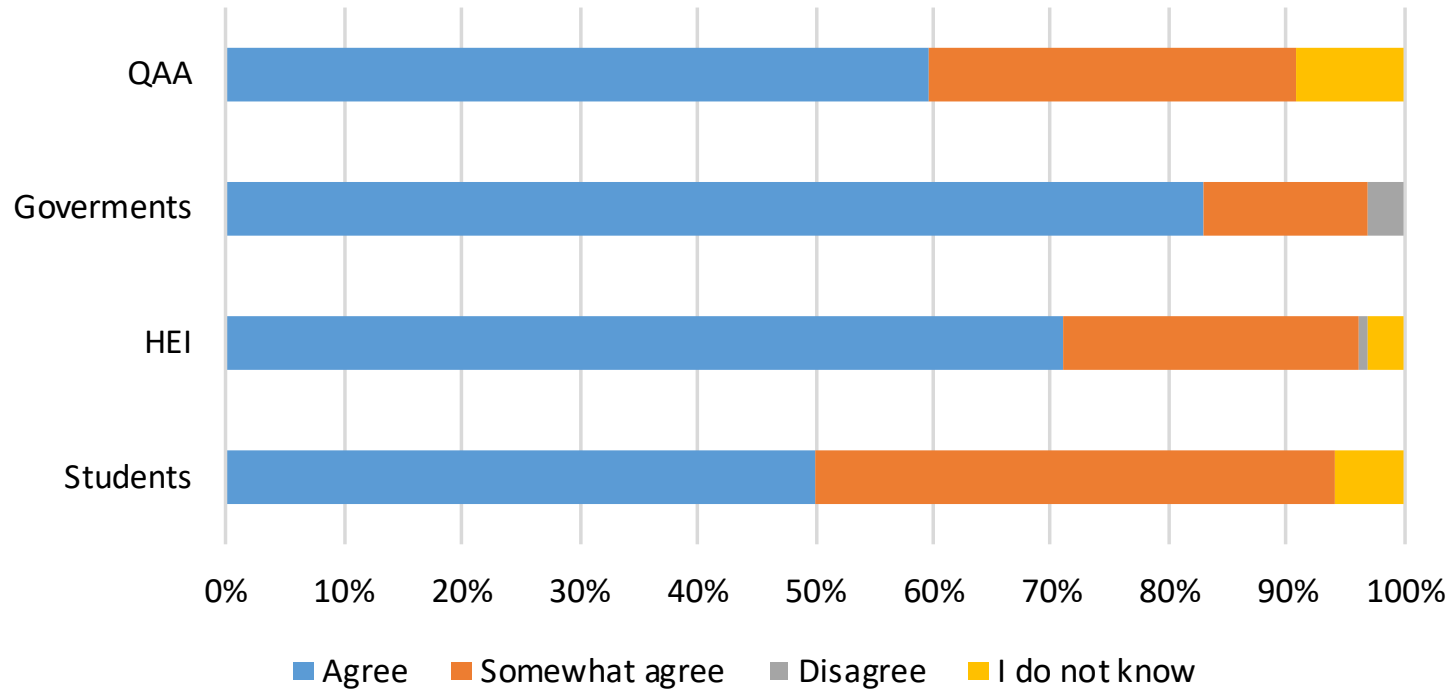
GLOBAL FRAMEWORKS FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

AFRICAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION (ASG-QA)

ASEAN QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

Andorra | Argentina | Bolivia | Brasil | Colombia | Costa Rica | Cuba | Chile | República Dominicana | Ecuador | El Salvador | España | Guatemala | Honduras | México | Nicaragua | Panamá | Paraguay | Perú | Portugal | Uruguay | Venezuela

Secretaría General Iberoamericana
Secretaria-Geral Ibero-Americana

LAS BUENAS PRÁCTICAS EN LOS SISTEMAS DE ASEGURAMIENTO DE LA CALIDAD
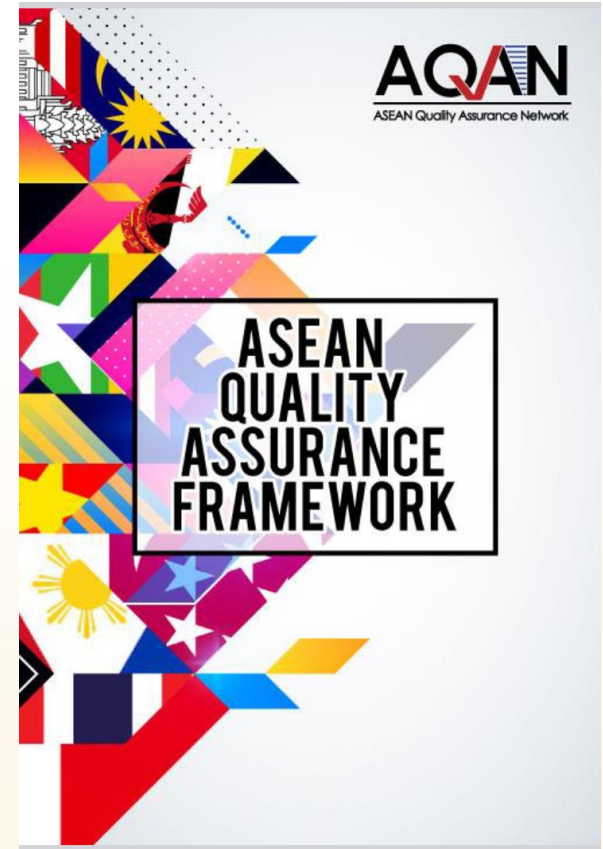
ISG International Standards & Guidelines

GLOBAL FRAMEWORKS FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

Proposals for future alignment
of the quality assurance frameworks
of the European Higher Education Area
and the Ibero-American Knowledge Area

Andorra | Argentina | Bolivia | Brasil | Colombia | Costa Rica | Cuba | Chile | República Dominicana | Ecuador | El Salvador | España | Guatemala | Honduras | México | Nicaragua | Panamá | Paraguay | Perú | Portugal | Uruguay | Venezuela

Secretaría General Iberoamericana
Secretaria-Geral Ibero-Americana

**LAS BUENAS PRÁCTICAS EN LOS SISTEMAS DE ASEGURAMIENTO DE LA CALIDAD**

Comparison of the quality assurance
reference frameworks
of the European Higher Education Area
and the Iberoamerican Knowledge Area

GLOBAL FRAMEWORKS FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

Global Gateway

Funded by the European Union

COMPARABILITY STUDY OF ASEAN QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK (AQAF) AND EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES (ESG)

AQAN
ASEAN Quality Assurance Network

ASEAN QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

CONCLUSIONS
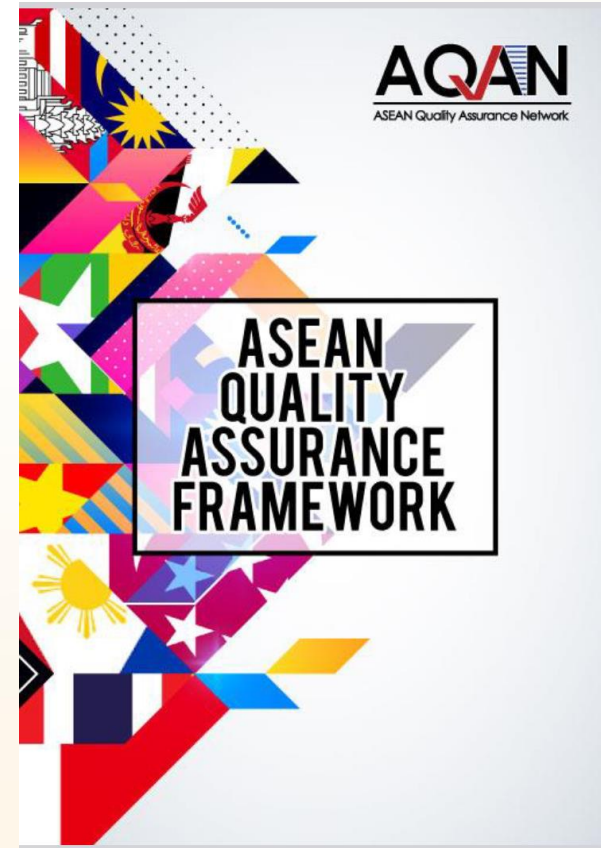
- Quality of education is a prerequisite for successful international academic collaboration, which should lead to further enhancement of quality.

- While the responsibility for the quality of education stays with the higher education institutions themselves, and rely on internal quality assurance procedures and the quality culture to be maintained and further developed, external quality assurance procedures have a key role in building trust between higher education systems and institutions.

- Quality assurance proved to be a key driving factor for building the EHEA, as part of a coherent framework of policies and reforms meant to increase comparability and compatibility of higher education systems of the member countries.

- Preoccupations for alignment between frameworks for quality assurance in different globe regions are undergoing, as considered to promote global cooperation in higher education.

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Thank for your attention!

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https://www.linkedin.com/company/aracis/