

What do agencies provide? – *Main outcomes of the survey „Use and usefulness of quality assurance reports“*

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Project EQArep

aims to

- *map and compare systematically the current publication practices across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA);*
- *explore the different needs of stakeholders for transparent and comparable information and*
- *develop guidelines for different types of quality assurance reports in the EHEA.*

ESG 2.5.: Reporting

„Reports should be *published* and should be written in a *style* which is *clear and readily accessible* to its intended readership. Any decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports should be easy for a reader to find.“

„In order to ensure a maximum benefit from external quality assurance processes, it is important *that reports should meet the identified needs of the intended readership*. Reports are sometimes intended for different readership groups and this will require *careful attention to structure, content, style and tone*.

In general, reports should be *structured* to cover description, analysis (including relevant evidence), conclusions, commendations and recommendations. There should be *sufficient preliminary explanation* to enable a lay reader to understand the purposes of the review, its form, and the criteria used in making decisions. Key findings, conclusions and recommendations should be easily locatable by the readers.

Reports should be published in a readily accessible form and there should be opportunities for readers and users of the reports (both within the relevant institution and outside it) to comment on their usefulness.“

Current situation and practices of external QA-reports across the EHEA and views of agencies –

Methodology of the survey on “use and usefulness of QA reports”:

- questionnaire for all ENQA-agencies (during summer 2013), sent to 86 bodies (41 full members; 45 affiliates), number of responses: 50
- in-depth-analysis of a sample of around 20 reports
- workshop with agency-representatives (January 2014)

Construction

- distinction between **institutional** and **programme** external QA reports

but WITHOUT

differentiating further between accreditation and evaluation/audit



Construction

- **comprehensive report:**

An extensive review report which documents the full analytical outcomes of a given external QA assessment procedure, be it at institutional or programme level, be it written by academic experts, agency employees or an external technical secretary; an in-depth analysis on which the main findings are based is made explicit and represents a characterizing element of this type of reporting. Often this is the primary report.

- **summary report(s):**

Any summarizing form of reporting the outcomes of an external QA assessment procedure, be it a summary, a description, a table of comparative data, a final procedural report, web text or other possible types and forms of descriptive or schematic reporting. All kinds of derivative forms of a primary comprehensive report are included here.

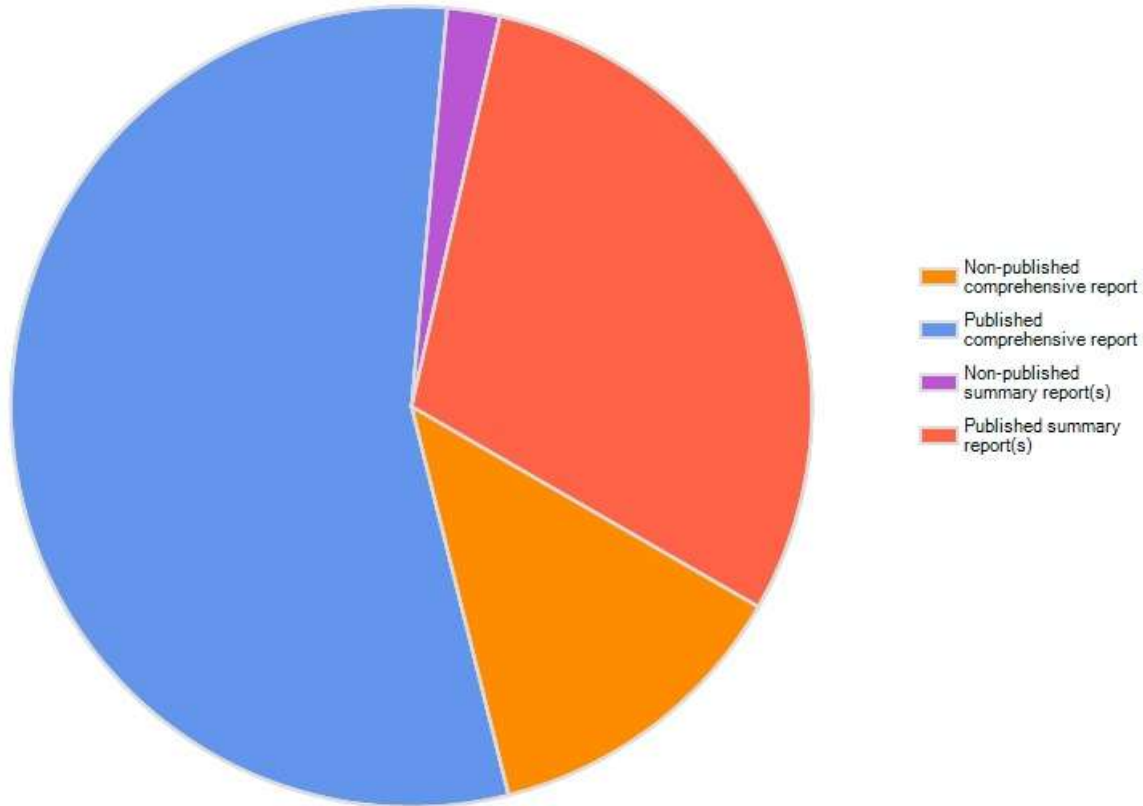
Questionnaire: Use and Usefulness of QA reports

31 questions relating to

- Type of assessments conducted and reports published
- Purpose of publication and intended/desired readership
- Editing and publication practices
- Structure
- Content
- Usability and utility
- Perspectives

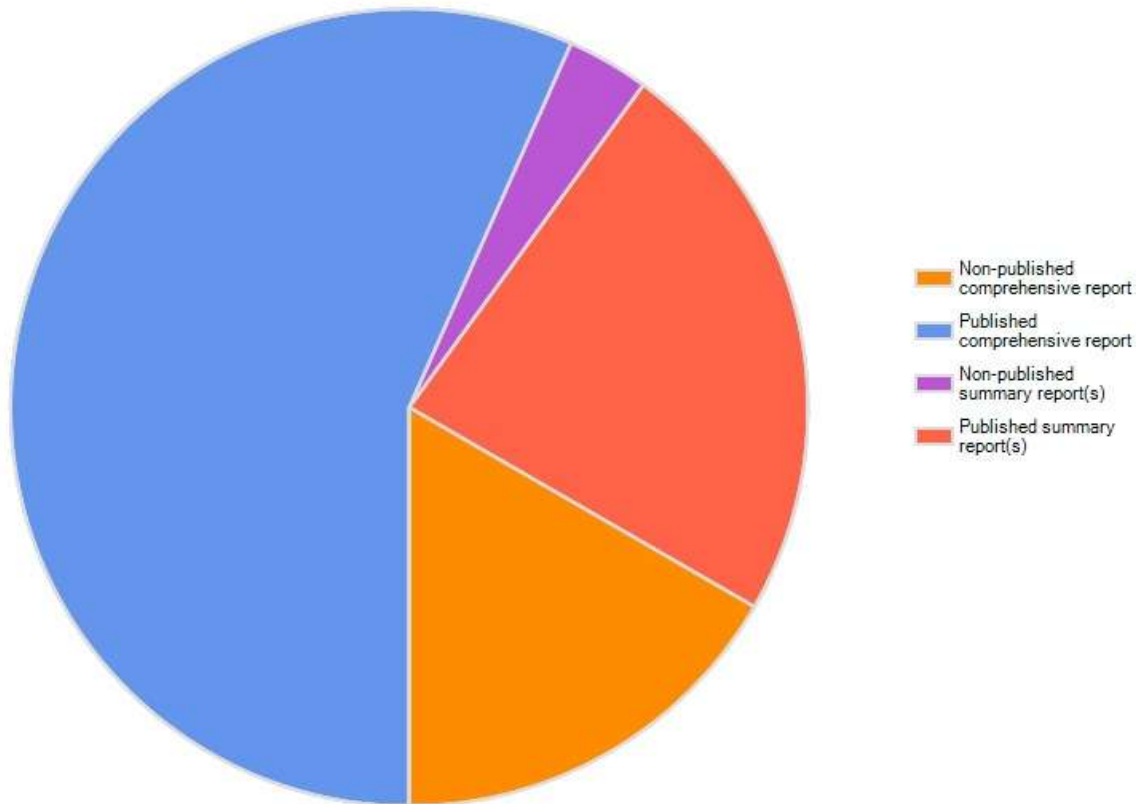
Type of reports published - institutional

What kind of report is issued for the institutional review / assessment? (Please choose as many options as applicable)

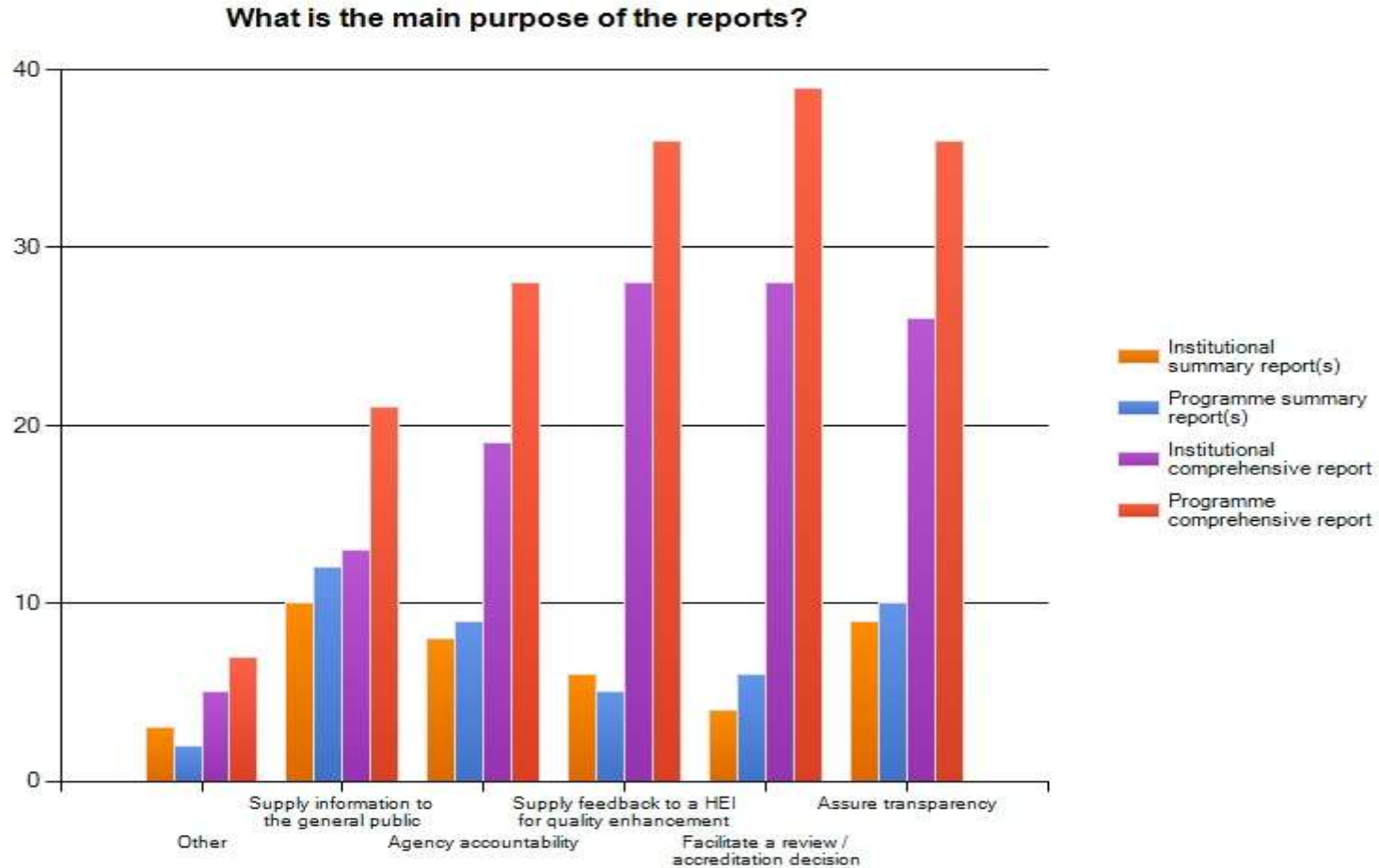


Type of reports published - programme

What kind of report is issued for the programme review / assessment? (Please choose as many options as applicable)

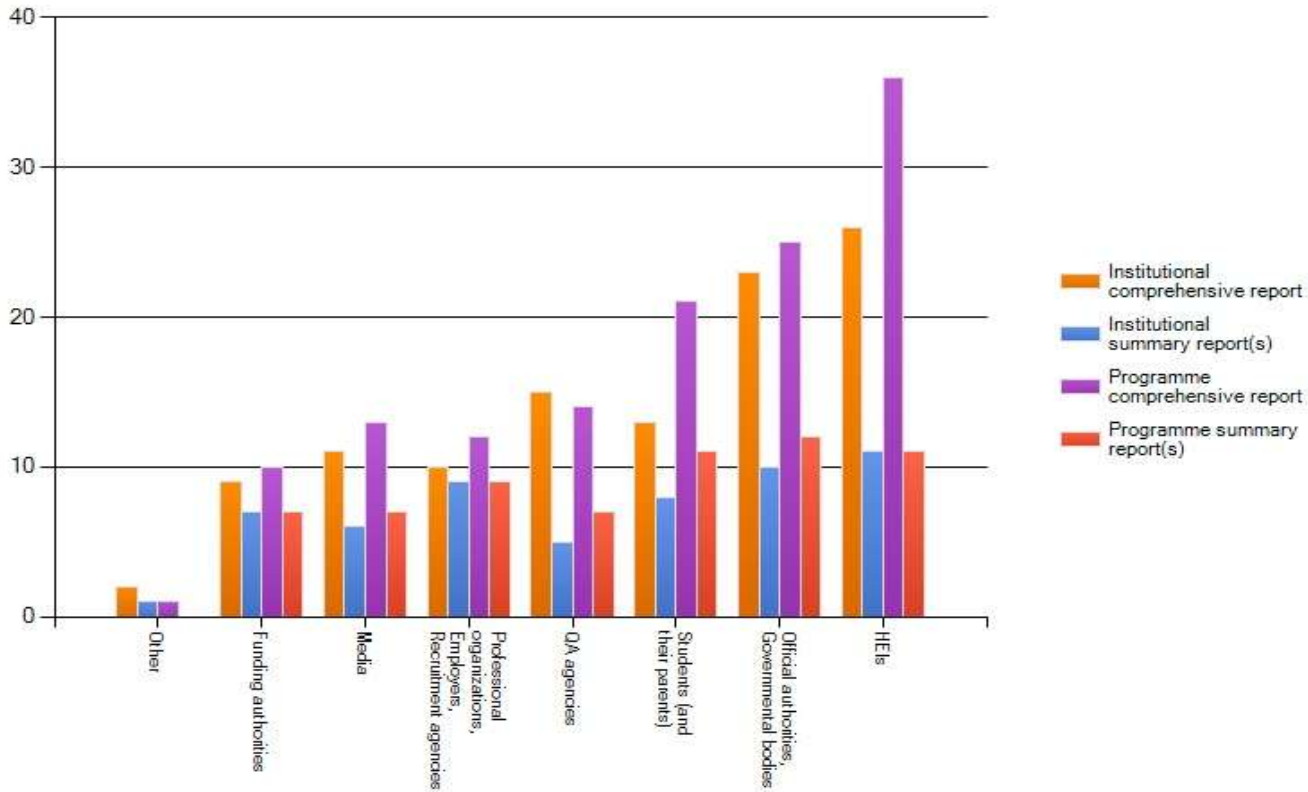


Main purpose of the reports



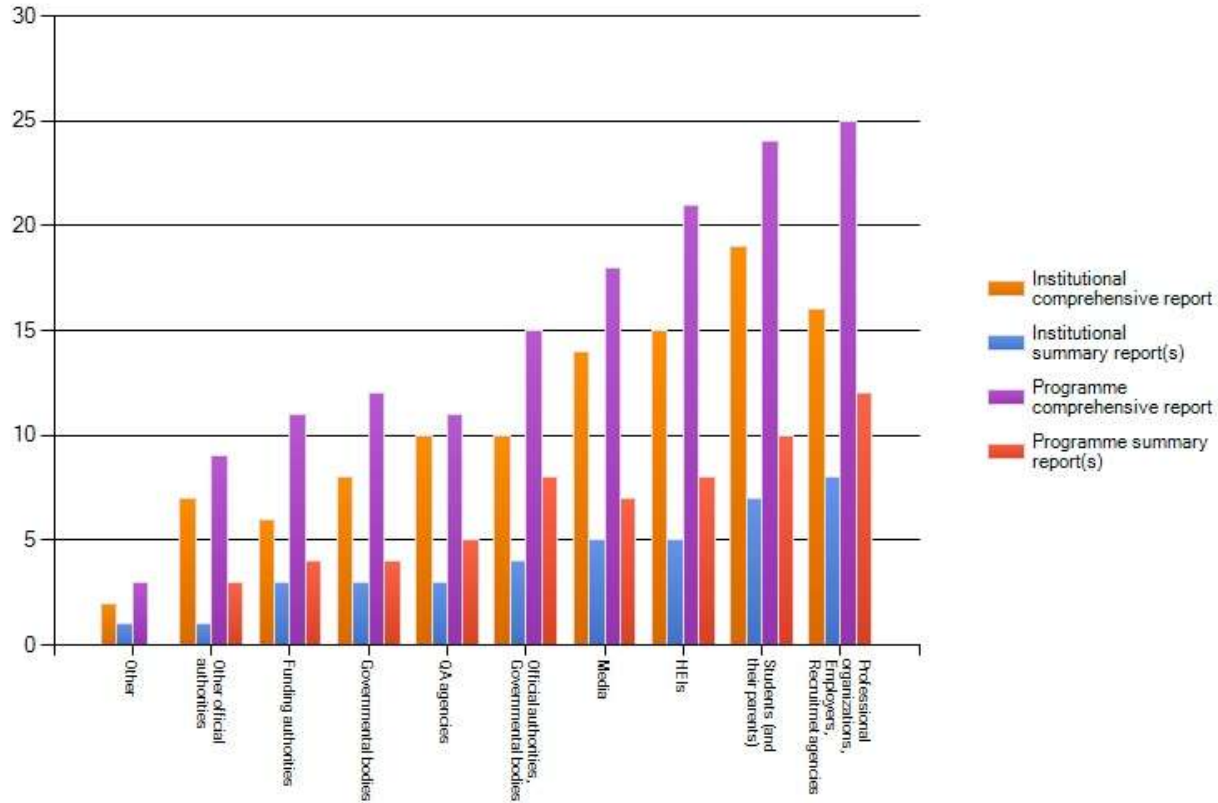
Supposed user-groups of reports

In your opinion, which stakeholder groups currently tend to use your published reports?

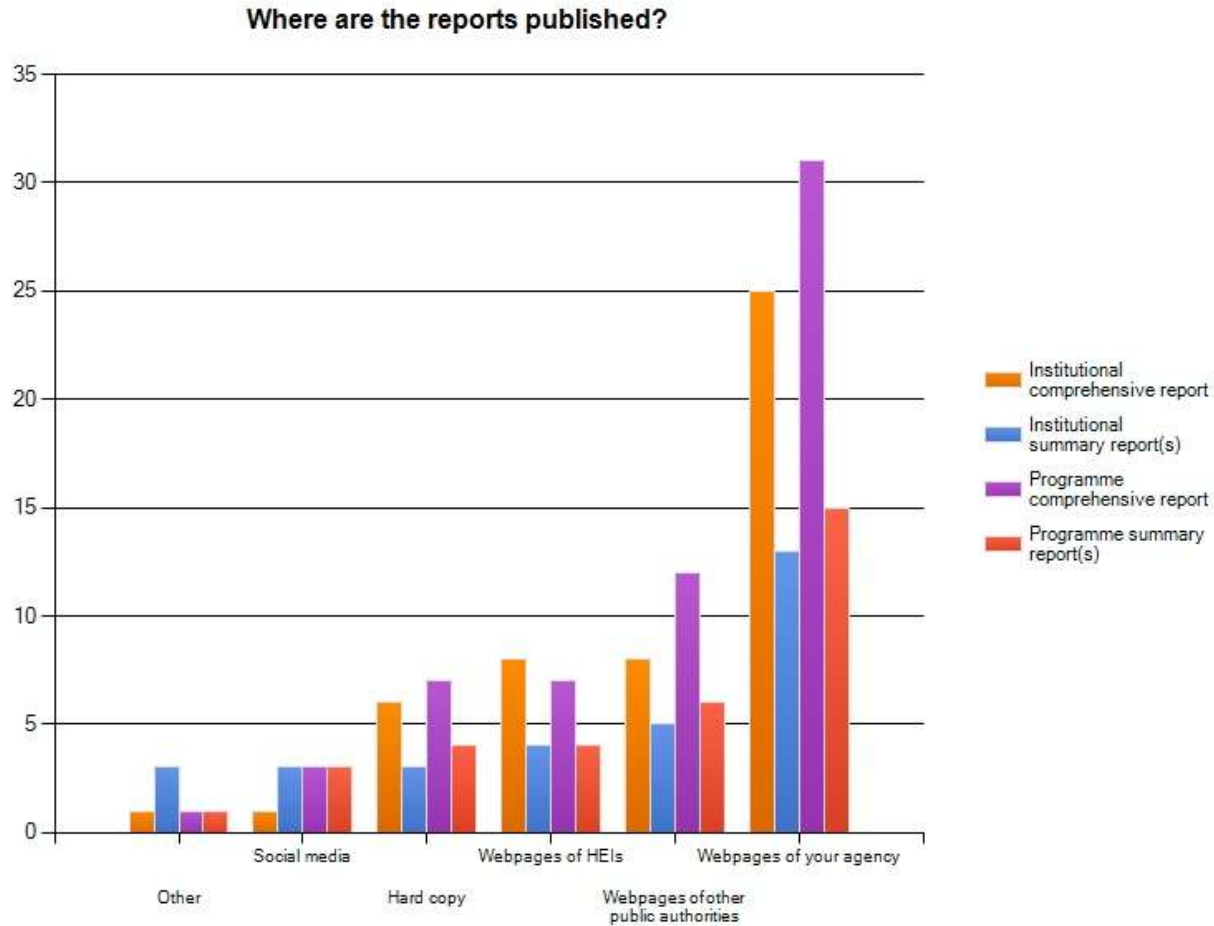


Desired future-readership

Who might be your potential or future readership? Which stakeholder groups would you like to use your reports more?

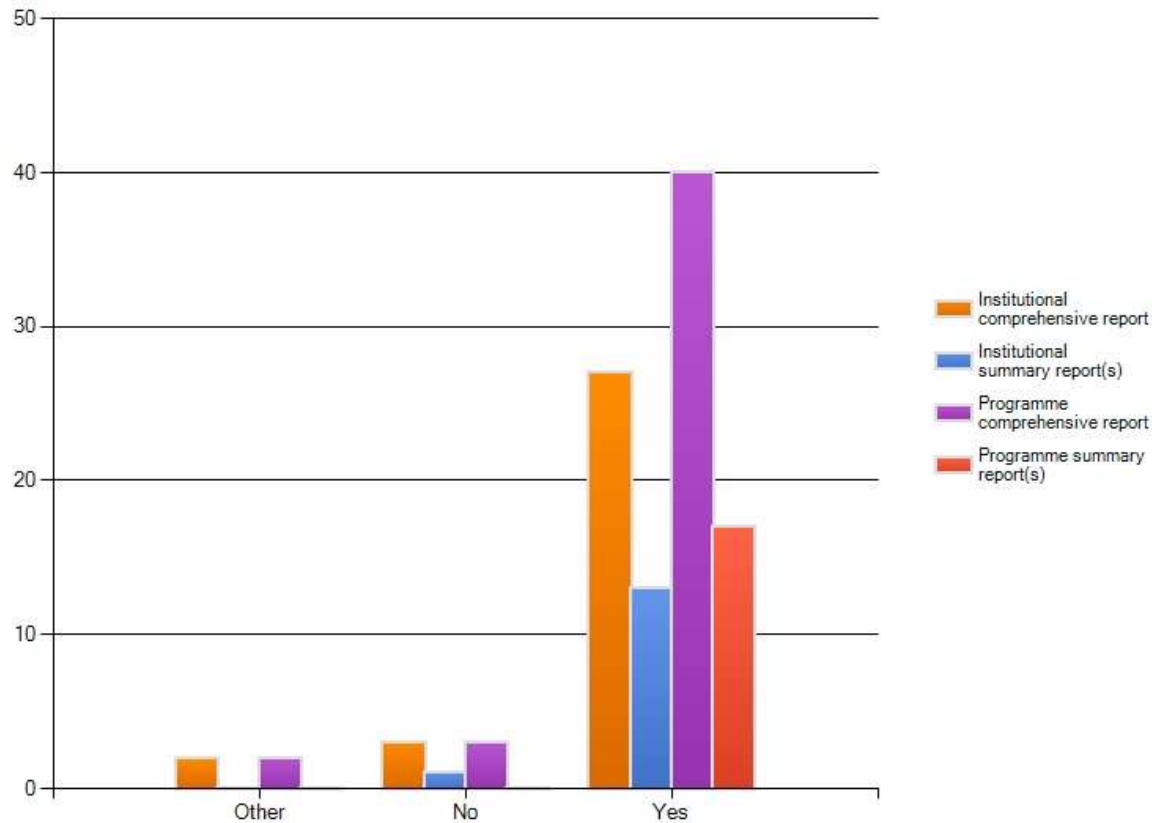


Where the reports are published



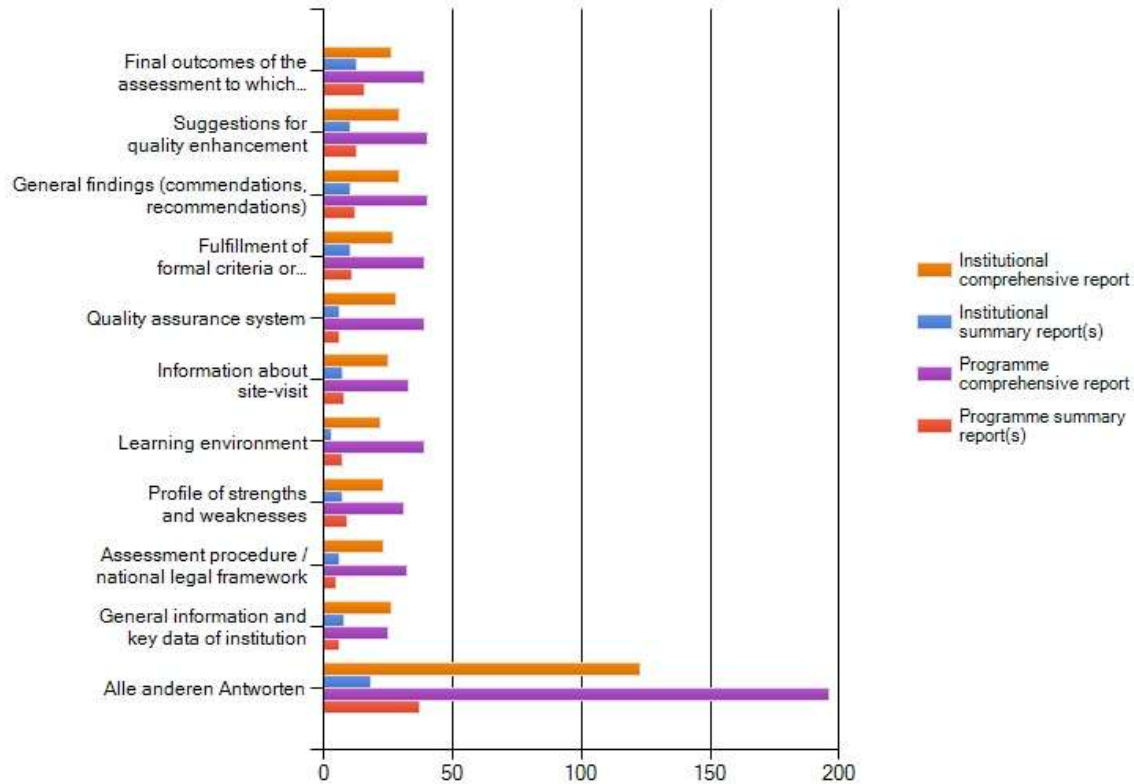
Availability of a template

Does your agency have a template for the writing of reports?



Content

What information does your agency systematically provide in the reports?



Key findings – few surprises

QA-reports *vary greatly* between countries and agencies, but also between programme and institutional (as well as between comprehensive and summary) reports and even within a single agency in terms of editing practice, structure, content, length, readability, accessibility etc.

and are (at the moment) *not comparable* at all.

Views on the quality of QA reports

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- Clear structure
- Introduction to the framework and standards/guidelines
- Information on procedure/review team/author(s)
- Detailed information about HEI/programme
- Adequate complexity-reduction (without oversimplification)
- Careful use of terminology/language
- Pleasant layout
- Easily accessible

Possible risks and challenges

- Transparency itself: misuse or manipulation of information
- Comparability/ benchmarking
- Loose the actual purpose of the reports out of sight/ overrating the potential value and interest for wider public/ lay reader
- Oversimplification
- Standardization: Comparing apples with oranges
- Language-issues

On the way towards....

European standards and guidelines
for external QA reports

and
a common template?





Thank you!

