Plenary 2 / Plénière 2

"Ensuring Quality Education"

Speech by
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Quality assurance is the key for quality education, provided it is not restrictive and leaves space for sector- and subject-specific approaches.

The involvement of stakeholders is a major feature of higher education in the countries of the EHEA. Higher education is preparing future citizens on a social, professional and personal level, who, as young graduates, have to find their place in society next to reaching their full **personal development.** It is, therefore, logical and even desirable to also involve those actors in society who have an impact on the graduates' professional development and careers. Higher education institutions offering professionally oriented programs of study, place high value on **responsiveness to needs of students going into the workplace** and **on employability** that businesses and local communities seek from the graduates.

A system of governance fitting for 'quality education' should, therefore, include **preparation for the labour market,** in varying ways, depending on the specific mission of the different higher education sectors and institutions, and should be based on the three fundamental pillars of higher education, which are **teaching, research** and **service to the community**.

A sound basis for quality assurance in European higher education is laid in the *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance*, as they are adopted in the 47 countries of the EHEA, and which serve as a quality threshold for higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies, while at the same time support quality enhancement.

Quality Assurance and **Accreditation, implementing the** *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance* in both **Internal** and **External Quality Assurance** at **all types of higher education institutions**, on one hand, and **the fourfold mission as positioned by the Council of Europe**, on the other, **safeguard quality higher education, irrespective of whether it is publicly or privately managed.**

The complementary role of public and private higher education institutions would only be maintained if they uphold the **same standards of quality in teaching, research and service to the community,** preparing so their students for life **as active and productive citizens in a democratic society.**

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