

EURASHE's POSITION



EURASHE's Position on the European Level of Quality Assurance (QA) & Accreditation

2005

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I. Policy statement: EURASHE's position



- The **Bologna process** embodies QA both as a means **to ensure/measure** and **to improve the quality** of European higher education.
- EURASHE firmly believes in the **necessity** of QA, comprising internal & external QA, and accreditation, **as interlinked processes**.
- There is an intensified European discussion on QA, which is justly placed within the Bologna process, since it is a declaration **to affirm the quality of EHEA**.
- EURASHE believes a **European level of QA and Accreditation** is thus a logic and necessary consequence of the Bologna process.

I. Policy statement: conceptual framework



European level:

- **Formulating generic BA & MA standards** as threshold basic quality to be refined by national accreditation
- **International recognition of degrees** based on generic, European standards and of accreditation bodies and procedures
- **Europe-wide** code of principles and practice for QA agencies and accreditation bodies, as well as monitoring mechanisms

I. Policy statement: policy goals



Policy goals at European level:

1. Developing a European dimension in order to affirm and improve the quality of EHEA by formulating generic, European standards.
2. In the meantime taking into consideration rapidly growing diversity of missions, goals and curricula
3. Preserving and extending institutional autonomy while meeting the demands for accountability to all its stakeholders, including students, prior learning, subsidizing authorities and work fields of graduates.
4. Avoid a big bureaucracy, burdensome QA mechanisms and promote cost-effective QA procedures.
5. Set up a Europe-wide code of principles and practice for QA and accreditation bodies, while managing diversity of QA procedures.
6. Ensure the role of all stakeholders, including the HE sector, in any future monitoring scheme.

II. Up-dated principles: QA, accreditation & standards



Policy goals at European level:

1. Developing a European dimension in order to affirm and improve the quality of EHEA by formulating generic, European standards.

Up-dated principles:

1. For EURASHE there is a clear link between Internal QA, External QA and Accreditation.
2. Any standards which are set should focus on both internal and external QA.

II. Up-dated principles: diversity



Policy goals at European level:

2. In the meantime taking into consideration rapidly growing diversity of missions, goals and curricula

Up-dated principles:

3. The European level should respect the national/regional diversity in QA and Accreditation.

II. Up-dated principles: autonomy & accountability



Policy goals at European level:

3. Preserving and extending institutional autonomy while meeting the demands for accountability to all its stakeholders, including students, prior learning, subsidizing authorities and work fields of graduates.

Up-dated principles:

4. The European level should ensure the preservation of institutional autonomy while meeting the demands for accountability. The institutional choice for a QA agency should be guaranteed where nationally applicable.⁸

II. Up-dated principles: management & operation



Policy goals at European level:

4. Avoid a big bureaucracy, burdensome QA mechanisms and promote cost-effective QA procedures.

Up-dated principles:

5. The management and operation of the European register should be light, cost-effective and independent.

II. Up-dated principles: transparency & independency



Policy goals at European level:

5. Set up a Europe-wide code of principles and practice for QA and Accreditation bodies, while managing diversity of QA procedures.

Up-dated principles:

6. Any registration system needs to distinguish between the criteria, the process of assessment and the operation of the register. The registration system should be clear, transparent, independent and non-politicised.
7. The registration should be based on a review report of independent experts.

II. Up-dated principles: stakeholders



Policy goals at European level:

6. Ensure the role of all stakeholders, including the HE sector, in any future monitoring scheme.

Up-dated principles:

8. EURASHE wishes to explicitly include stakeholders such as the students and employers when agreeing on the criteria.

Quality Assurance in cooperation with other stakeholders



EURASHE fully supports the ENQA report prepared for the Bergen meeting about the standards and guidelines for QA, including the establishment of a European register of quality assurance agencies and the European Register Committee. This report results from a consultation among the E4 Group (ENQA, EUA, ESIB and EURASHE). We strongly emphasize our willingness to continue these efforts and would like to broaden the scope of cooperation and consultation within E4 to other fields than QA.

Within this framework EURASHE gives particular emphasis to the following aspects of QA, which it has already raised in relevant discussions with ENQA, ESIB and EUA.

- a) the independence of external agencies should be safeguarded by including the nomination and appointment of each agency's council or board independently from governments, higher education institutions and organs of political influence.
- b) all aspects of QA agencies (e.g. council/board, external experts and determination of outcomes) must reflect all types of HEIs.
- c) the role of the European Register Committee should include monitoring continuous compliance with the admission requirements, conditions and European standards.