



# Key Considerations for Cross-Border Quality Assurance

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We will...

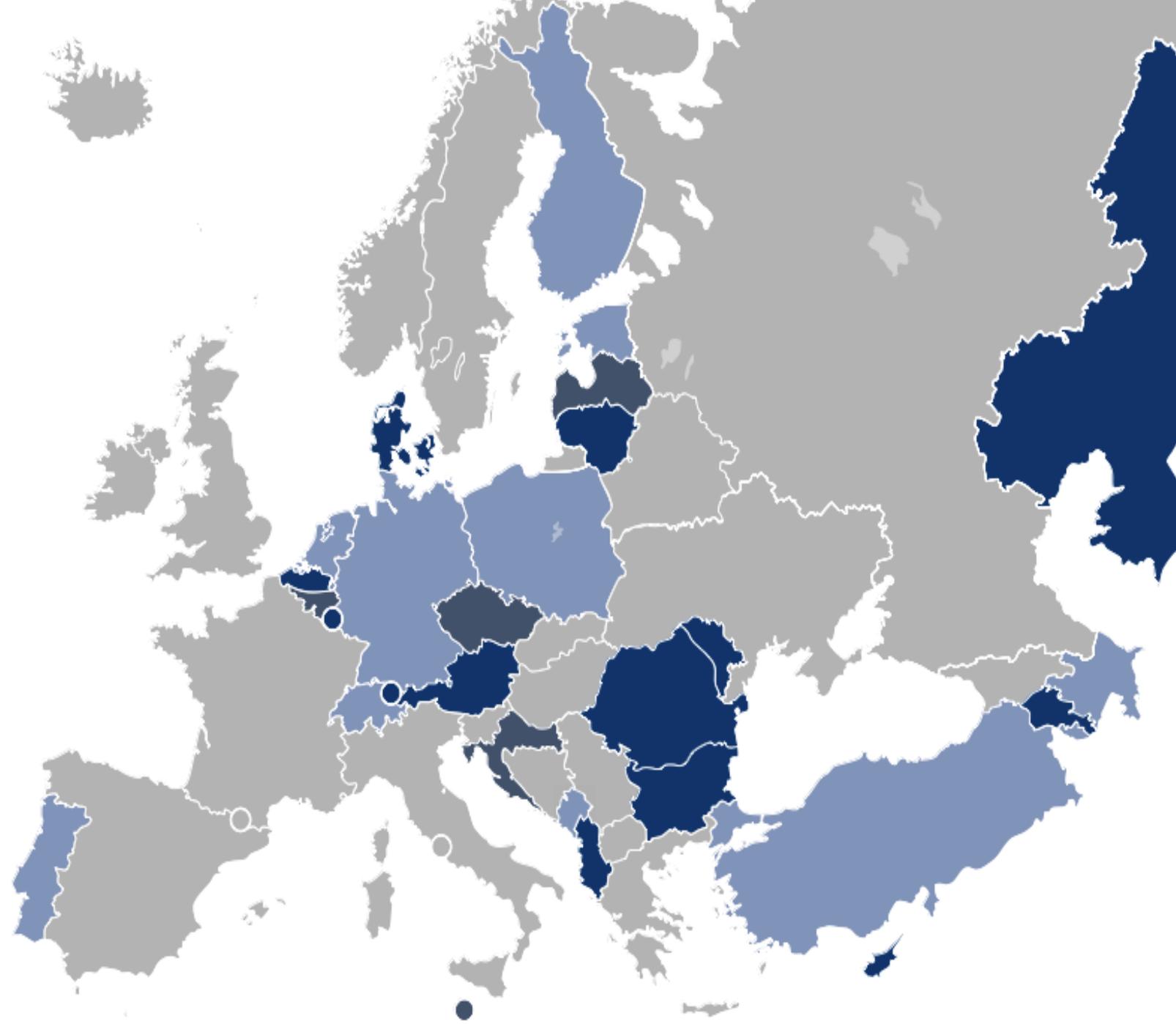
- Introduce
- Involve
- Inform
- Illustrate

# Introduce

- ESG 2015, context
- Draft, review, feedback, 2017
- CBQA ≠ QA CBHE
- RIQAA, EQAR, ENQA
- Inspire, incite change

# System openness to EQAR-registered agencies

- Recognising EQAR-registered agencies as part of the national requirements for external QA
- Recognising foreign agencies with own/specific framework
- Discussions ongoing
- Countries not recognising external QA by foreign agency



## Involve & Inform

- Groups
- Key considerations
- HEI / QAA
- Top 3
- Exchange

Legal context & consequences

Motivation/why to engage?

Agreement on reference points

Knowledge of local system

Knowledge of culture/academia...

... and terminology

Understanding of process (QAAs)

...duration, visits, plan, weight

Local specificities (student inv. ...

... corruption) & cultural cues

*Think outside usual mindset*

Why choice foreign QAA (HEI)?

### A. Engaging in cross-border QA

What is the rationale for engaging in cross-border QA?

Which QA agency is fit for purpose for this specific case?

What is the legal framework prescribing?

What other aspects (beyond the legal framework) need to be considered beforehand?

Has the institution communicated its decision to undergo cross-border QA to relevant stakeholders?

### C. Addressing the results of cross-border QA

If applicable, what is the recognition process of a cross-border QA decision?

### B. Carrying out cross-border QA

Will the agency need to modify its procedures as a result of the cross-border setting?

What sort of preparation supports successful cross-border QA?

How are the peer-review experts selected and trained?

Are the practical specificities of carrying out cross-border QA clear for both parties?

What are the complaints, appeals and follow-up processes?

Recognition (legal context)

Resources (replace, add on)

*Student perspective – recognition*

*...within country of decision*

*Employability, regulated prof.*

Learn from other countries

...(as a motivation/enhancement)

Providing flexibility by QAAs

...(actively learning local context)

Student inv./how to take part?

Undue burden on QAA

...(forced to do more)

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Work load (QAA/HEI)

Compulsory/voluntary

Motivation/why do it?

Special case of JP

(hidden) logic behind regulations

...

Courtesy: inform local agency

Fundamental difference in having

...foreign & mandatory process

Due diligence

HEI as awarding body

... acting under ESG part II

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What are the complaints, appeals and follow-up processes?

## Engaging in

### **What is the rationale for engaging in cross-border QA?**

An institution planning to engage in cross-border QA should thoroughly consider the aims of the process and the expected added-value. It should consider whether it will be part of the national mandatory QA or be in addition to an external QA procedure required in the national legal framework; and how this choice fits in its long-term QA strategy. An agency should similarly consider and reflect on the aims and reasons for engaging in such activities and whether they fit with its scope of activities. If a joint programme is being reviewed, a procedure under the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes should be undertaken.

Engaging in

### **Which QA agency is fit for purpose for this specific case?**

The chosen agency should be EQAR-registered in order to ensure that it operates in accordance with the ESG. The institution should look carefully at the procedures the chosen QA agency uses to ensure that they are appropriate for the institutional context, that they are compatible with the aims and expected benefits of the process and that, if necessary, they meet any national legal requirements. The agency should consider whether it is in a position to carry out the external QA requested by the higher education institution.

Engaging in

### **What is the legal framework prescribing?**

The cross-border QA activity may be contingent on the national higher education framework and other specific national regulation. In case cross-border QA is part of national mandatory QA, the institution and QA agency should consult and involve as appropriate national regulatory bodies (such as ministries or accreditation councils). It is important that information about legal frameworks and national criteria is readily available and that both the institution and the QA agency inform themselves to ensure a proper understanding of the legal framework.

Engaging in

**What other aspects (beyond the legal framework) need to be considered beforehand?**

While acknowledging the benefits that would result from cross-border QA, the institution should also consider aspects such as resources, public procurements procedures, language matters, as well as additional workload before committing to cross-border QA. Similarly, the QA agency would benefit from assessing its expertise and capacity to conduct cross-border QA, maintaining its professional standards and integrity.

Key Considerations for Cross-Border Quality Assurance – draft – 25/07/16

Engaging in

**Has the institution communicated its decision to undergo cross-border QA to relevant stakeholders?**

The institution should ensure that the decision to undergo cross-border QA and the reasons behind choosing a foreign agency are properly communicated to the institutional community, including students. The purpose and goals of the cross-border QA procedure should be clear for all involved. The full awareness and commitment of institutional stakeholders will support a meaningful cross-border QA process.

Carrying out

**Will the agency need to modify its procedures as a result of the cross-border setting?**

Once the QA agency has decided to engage in cross-border QA, it should consider whether its procedures remain the same in a cross-border context. While the ESG provide a framework for all QA activities in the EHEA, they may be implemented in different ways in different contexts. Specific adaptations might be required based on the legal framework and the education system's traditions and structure. Any alterations to the agency's procedures should remain in line with the ESG and be made publicly available.

Carrying out

### What sort of preparation supports successful cross-border QA?

A preliminary meeting between the agency and the institution can help ensure a shared understanding of the national and institutional context and the forthcoming QA process. The preparation would normally also include a formal agreement outlining i.a. the aims of the procedure and responsibilities of all parties. For further background information in preparing the procedure, the agency should inform itself of previous external QA reports and decisions concerning the institution.

## Carrying out

### **How are the peer-review experts selected and trained?**

The QA agency should ensure the transparent and appropriate selection and training of the peer-review experts. Specific training and briefing of peer-review experts is particularly important if they are working in an unfamiliar context. The institution may also brief the peer-review experts on relevant contextual issues. The institution and the peer-review experts should be sensitive to cultural and contextual differences.

## Carrying out

### **Are the practical specificities of carrying out cross-border QA clear for both parties?**

The practicalities of cross-border QA set out in the formal agreement between both parties may include aspects such as language considerations and specificities of the site visit(s). The QA agency should clarify any language requirements in conducting cross-border QA. This has implications on the composition of the team of peer-review experts. The institution should consider the time and resources required to provide, if necessary, translations of relevant documents and interpretation during the site visit(s). Both the QA agency and the institution should clarify in advance the particular arrangements for the site visit(s).

Communication between the agency/team of peer-review experts and the institution should address various issues, which may include, in addition to language aspects, the length of the site visit(s), time allocated for interviews and selection of interviewees.

## Addressing results

### **If applicable, what is the recognition process of a cross-border QA decision?**

The agency and institution should take into account any additional steps necessary for the recognition by the relevant national bodies of any decision following the completion of a cross-border QA procedure that is part of the national mandatory QA. Furthermore, in the context of qualifications frameworks, the outcomes of cross-border QA might have an impact on the recognition of the institution's qualifications nationally and internationally. While the style of reporting varies from one QA agency to another, any requirements of national criteria should be addressed in the structuring and contents of the report to ensure its recognition if the process is part of the national mandatory QA. The agency should ensure the publication of and access to the full report.

## Addressing results

### **What are the complaints, appeals and follow-up processes?**

The QA agency should consider cross-border specificities in its complaints and appeals processes, based on the ESG. Further, in case of substantiated concerns about an agency's compliance with the ESG, EQAR's Complaints Policy should be referred to. Both the QA agency and the institution should be aware of their respective responsibilities to ensure a proper follow-up to the external QA process. If the process is part of the national mandatory QA, the institution should consider whether there is any discrepancy or incompatibility between the agency's follow-up procedure and any national requirements (e.g. timeframes for subsequent procedures).

Illustrate

- Questions?

Key Considerations for Cross-Border Quality Assurance  
draft – 25/07/16 – [download](#)

ESG 2015 – [download](#)

Thank you 😊



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