



# CEENQA

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN NETWORK  
OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

May 2012  
Vol.1 No.1

# Newsletter

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## CEENQA News

Welcome to the first edition of the CEENQA Newsletter! CEENQA would like to publish its newsletter three or four times a year. It is sent to members and external stakeholders who are invited to announce it to their membership. It is also posted on the CEENQA website.

The objective of the newsletter is **to inform members and others about each other's activities, such as meetings, conferences or projects and initiatives that may be of interest, as well as higher education developments, changes in legislation, participation in international projects**, etc.

The CEENQA News column is for information on CEENQA as an organization, while the Upcoming Events section provides an overview of coming meetings of CEENQA or any of its members or of other quality assurance events.

Any suggestions for additional topics are welcome! Please write to Christina Rozsnyai, Secretary General, at [rozsnyai@mab.hu](mailto:rozsnyai@mab.hu).

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**CEENQA continues to play a role in international QA networking**

## Message from the President

Dear Members of CEENQA,  
Dear Colleagues,

It is my great pleasure to address you in this first edition of the newly established CEENQA newsletter. About a year ago, at our last general



## Working groups to strengthen services to members

assembly in Split, the question was raised whether (the then called) CEEN, **the oldest accreditation network in Europe**, would continue to remain a loosely knitted network of quality assurance/accreditation agencies in Central and Eastern Europe or move forward to establish more permanent institutional support structures. Over the course of the past 12 months, in my view we have made at least some progress towards realizing the second option.

An important step was of course the official registration of CEENQA e.V. on the 30th of June 2011 as a non for profit legal body according to German law. We also established a number of permanent **working groups under the leadership of a board member to improve services to CEENQA members**. Among these services are those related to CEENQA public relations with the freshly designed website, the newly created logo and this newsletter being thus far the most important elements, the CEENQA secretary general being in charge of this line of action. Other vital initiatives are the planned database of good practice and the creation of a regional pool of CEENQA experts/peers, from which all members hopefully will benefit in the future. Further topics on the CEENQA agenda are related to questions of mutual recognition in its different facets, and the idea to work together on European tenders in a coordinated fashion, **pooling the resources and strengths of CEENQA members**. While a lot of work remains to be done, we know have the institutional structures in place and persons in charge, with whom CEENQA members can liaise.

We also had discussed the necessity that CEENQA becomes even **more visible in the international arena**. For this reason we are now updating our already existing links with ENQA, ECA and INQAAHE, by resigning our agreements as new legal entity. The Central and Asian Network for Quality Assurance and Accreditation (CANQA) has voiced an interest to associate it closer with us and we therefore will check out the possibilities for future cooperation. As to the liaison with regional networks, CEENQA has now for the third time in a row been presented at the networking meeting of the International Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (INQAAHE), the last time in Melbourne at the beginning of mid April 2012. On this occasion **all regional QA networks agreed to establish a joint working group, in which modes of future financial support will be discussed**. This is important as the so called GIQAC funding of the Worldbank/UNESCO, designed for capacity building projects of regional networks, will come to an end in summer of this year and alternative sources of funding have to be secured to follow up on the useful initiatives financed over the past three years. Whereas it was too late, to have CEENQA participate in the GIQAC tender, as a well respected member of the INQAAHE family of regional networks we will make sure that CEENQA will contribute and gain on equal terms with its sister organizations around the world.

We are now a few days away from having the CEENQA workshop on new developments in European Quality assurance on the 11th of May in Sarajevo, followed by our general assembly on the 12th. On behalf of the CEENQA members I already would like to thank our Colleagues from Bosnia and Herzegovina for hosting and the Austrian Development Agency for supporting this event. We all are looking forward to these encounters where we will continue our discussions about a bright future for CEENQA.

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## Upcoming Events

### MAY 11-12

CEENQA workshop on May 11 and general assembly on May 12, 2012 in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The meetings will be hosted by the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance. CEENQA will welcome two new members who joined since the last meeting in 2011, the Higher Education Planning, Evaluation, Accreditation and Coordination Council YÖDAK of North Cyprus and Accreditation Agency for Study Programs in Health and Social Science AHPGS. CEENQA now has a total of 23 member agencies.

### JUNE 14-15

The E-TRAIN project trains the trainers in a workshop for agencies. It also has developed a knowledge base for experts and QA staff.

On 14 and 15 June there will be a dissemination conference organised by ANECA in Madrid.

<http://www.eaconsortium.net/main/events/detail/e-train-dissemination-conference-madrid-14-15-june-2012/19>

## Calendar

### MAY

MO	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SU
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

### JUNE

MO	TUE	WE	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

### JULY

MO	TUE	WE	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

## News from Members

### The new agency brings together the competences of three existing agencies

#### AQAustria operating since 1st of March 2012

The external quality assurance of Austrian higher education has been subject to reform that led to the creation of the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria (AQAustria). The new agency brings together the competences of three existing agencies:

- the Austrian Agency for Quality Assurance (AQA) being responsible for quality audits for public universities and carrying out procedures inside and outside Austria
- the Fachhochschul Council (FHR) as the public authority for the accreditation of universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulen) and their study programmes
- the Austrian Accreditation Council (ÖAR) as the public authority for the accreditation of private universities and their study programmes

The new Federal Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (HS-QSG), came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2012 and regulates basic principles and procedures for external quality assurance of public universities, universities of applied sciences



and private universities. **Through the new law, public universities as well as universities of applied sciences are subject to periodic audits of their internal quality management system.** New universities of applied sciences as well as new study programmes in this sector will need to be accredited by AQAustria. Private universities and their programmes continue to be subject to periodic institutional and programme accreditation.

AQAustria operates on the basis of broad competences in the area of quality assurance. The Agency's Board consists of 14 national and international independent experts, and has elected Prof. Anke Hanft (University of Oldenburg, Germany) as its President. Christina Rozsnyai, Secretary General of CEENQA, is one of the international members of the Board.

### **New HAC continues new and old program and institutional accreditation**

### **New Hungarian Accreditation Committee is launched**

With the higher education act CCIV/2011 a new HAC with 18 members was inaugurated on March 1, 2012. The tasks of the HAC specified in a government decree on quality evaluation and development will go into effect on September 1st. The Committee is to provide its opinion on the request of the Education Authority on applications for establishing and launching new programs, doctoral schools, and on applications for university professor positions. The currently running institutional accreditation procedures and evaluations for the accreditation of teacher training programs continue according to plan.

As an additional task, the HAC will phase in the accreditation of two-year vocational training programs offered at higher education institutions, whose credits are transferable into higher education programs.

### **ARACIS finalizes a new evaluation methodology**

### **The new methodology of external evaluation, an important document in the Romanian higher education system**

The quality assurance concept in higher education institutions, as it was formulated by the Bologna Declaration, as a premise of creating the European Higher Education Area, represents the main priority of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS). Placing Romanian universities and ARACIS in the European Higher Education Area ensures confidence regarding the academic and professional recognition of Romanian diplomas, accorded by Romanian Education Research, Youth and Sport Ministry.

Nowadays, ARACIS is finalizing a new evaluation methodology. This new document focuses more on:

- evaluation of bachelor programs, evaluation of master domains, evaluation of doctoral domains, institutional evaluations;
- advising universities;
- involvement in the education projects (with emphasis focused on student preparation for employment, Life Long Learning, international masters, the real participation of students in university life by decisions or committees);
- international relations with ENQA, EQAR, CEENQA, INQAAHE and other organizations involved in quality assurance in higher education.

In brief, the basic principle of this new methodology are: **European reference, institutional responsibility, fitness for purpose (establishing a proper subset of**



**relevant standards and indicators), institutional autonomy and diversity, focusing on results, institutional identity, cooperation with all components of educational system, improving quality and independence of the agency.** On this basis, ARACIS will continue to develop the principles and approaches of academic quality assurance, in accordance with the law, in order to strengthen them, in the benefit of the Romanian universities and students as well.

For ARACIS, transparency of information and decisions is very important. This quality will be ensured so that the public can follow the way of developing a quality assurance system in Romanian higher education system according to the National Education Law, as part of the European Higher Education Area.

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### **ASHE joins ENQA and EQAR**

#### **Croatian ASHE joins ENQA and is listed in EQAR**

The Croatian Agency for Science and Higher Education, responsible for all external quality assurance procedures in Croatian higher education, became an ENQA full member in October 2011, and was listed in EQAR in the November of the same year, which promoted into a fully recognized external quality assurance agency in the European Higher Education Area.

This was primarily a result of the years of ASHE work on developing legal, professional and administrative platform for external quality assurance in Croatian science and higher education. ASHE efforts were recognized by an external review panel, presided by Professor Seamus Puirseil, former president of Irish HETAC and former ENQA vice president. The panel performed an external review of ASHE and finalised a report in August 2011, assessing ASHE with the highest grades and finding it compliant with the ESG. ASHE expects the international recognition of its work also to improve the international standing of Croatian science and higher education.

#### **Croatia launches a national portal for foreign students**

After fully joining the European Union Lifelong Learning Programme, the Republic of Croatia launched. **Study in Croatia, a portal in English aimed at foreign students considering Croatia as a study destination. The portal contains a list of accredited study programs, detailed information on the Croatian higher education, the application and administrative procedures, student life and exchange programmes.**

The portal was introduced as a part of an action plan aimed at increasing the percentage of foreign students in Croatia - currently amounting 0,3% in comparison to the 6.7% European average. The action plan includes a number of measures improving promotion of Croatian higher education and research and removing administrative obstacles, and is implemented by the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports with the support of the Agency for Science and Higher Education and other partners and stakeholders.

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### **PKA now Polish Accreditation Committee**

#### **PKA changes name, scope and membership**

On the 1st of October 2011 amendment to the Polish Law on Higher Education came into force. Due to new regulation former State Accreditation



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Committee became Polish Accreditation Committee (however Polish acronym remain the same - PKA) and scope of its activities were broadened. Since October 2011 **PKA Committee assess not only the quality of programs but also the quality of faculties (institutional evaluation).**

In addition, the internal structure of PKA has changed - PKA is now composed of 70 - 90 members (at least 30% women) who are organized in 8 sections for domains of sciences and arts.

## Other

This rubric is open to any additional topics or actions suggested by members or other interested readers.