



CEENQA

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

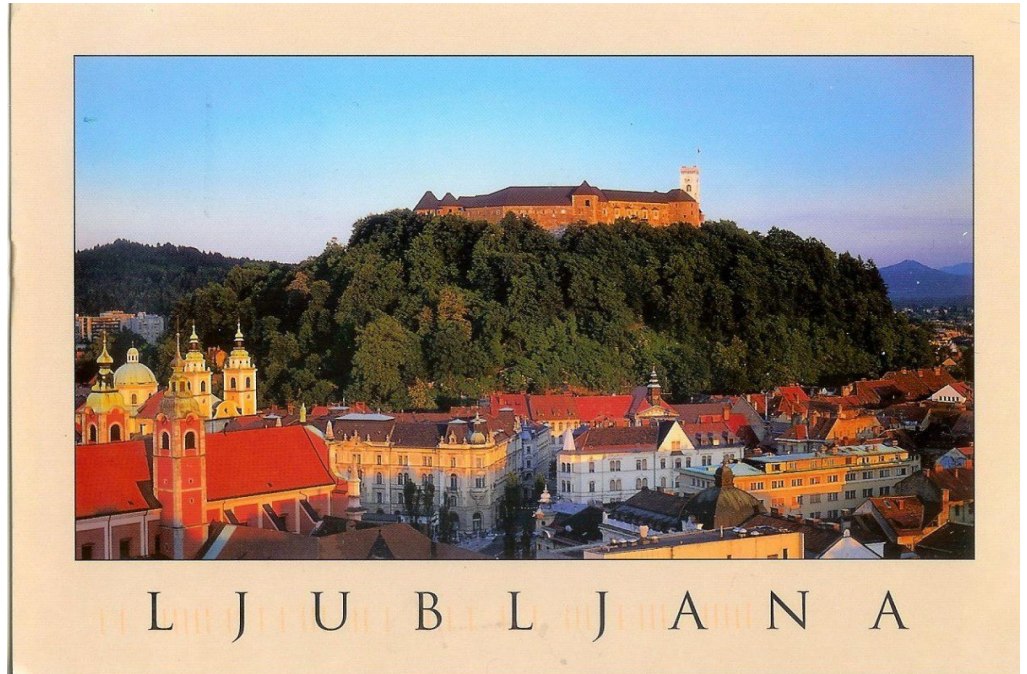


Newsletter

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Host of the next annual CEENQA Conference

CEENQA News

CEENQA welcomes its new staff member, **Viktorija Börner**, who takes over the international projects and financial issues in the Düsseldorf office from **Mila Zarkh**. At the same time, CEENQA thanks Mila wholeheartedly for her considerable time and dedication in moving the projects on and ensuring CEENQA's success in the projects with her contributions.

An important event has taken place since the last Newsletter was published: the German quality assurance agency **evalag** has joined CEENQA as its 27th member. At the same time, the European agency for public administration accreditation **EAPAA** has left CEENQA, citing the need for cost-effectiveness at a small



organization, especially after it has entered EQAR.

The CEENQA general assembly and workshop titled “Impact of Quality Assurance and Accreditation” in Ljubljana, Slovenia on 23-24 May in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The event is hosted by member agency SQAA. Members will receive the programmes and registration information by mail, but they can also be accessed for others on the CEENQA website at www.ceenqa.eu. For registration forms, please write to the Secretary General at rozsnyai@mab.hu.

Finally, one to two-page agency background information is now available from most CEENQA members under the agency names in the Members column of the website www.ceenqa.eu, for those agencies who returned the members forms so far. The information should be available for all members shortly and will then be compiled into a brochure.

Message from the President

Dear Members of CEENQA,

Dear Colleagues,

CEENQA is now only a few weeks away from meeting at its Annual Assembly and its preceding traditional international workshop, which both will take place in Ljubljana, Slovenia on 22/23 May 2015 on invitation of the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. After consulting with the CEENQA members, the overall topic of the workshop has been set to be “Impact of Quality Assurance and Accreditation”. We are delighted to have attracted a variety of high-class speakers to share their experience from different stakeholder perspectives such as Prof. Dr. Theodor Leiber from EVALAG, informing about the results of the IMPALA project, Josep Grifoll from AQU Catalunya, reporting from the “ENQA Working Group on Impact”, Heli Mattisen, director of CEENQA member Estonian Higher Education Quality (EKKA) analyzing how HEIs perceive the impact of external review as well as Dr. Ivan Leban, Director of our host agency, taking on the industry perspective; last but not least Mr. Blazhe Todorowki, Member of the Executive Committee of the European Students Union, will provide the students perspective on the topic.

In as far as current information about CEENQA activities are concerned, I am happy to report that apart from the April edition of our newsletter we have



consulted with our members and assembled an **updated “portrait” of each member agency** (see also in the News column above) giving relevant information about various categories (legal base, membership structure, services provided, international networks) in a uniform way on our CEENQA homepage. This constitutes an important step forward in **presenting CEENQA members to outside stakeholders** in Europe and beyond.

I am also happy to officially introduce CEENQA’s **new staff member**, who will provide continuity in the manifold CEENQA activities: **Viktorija Börner** has taken on the responsibilities of former CEENQA project manager **Mila Zarkh** who is now on maternity leave. Viktorija has a background in both **business administration and transatlantic relations**; she has worked at a private institute for higher education that implements study abroad programs in Europe prior to joining CEENQA. Viktorija is excited to manage CEENQA’s continuous involvement in the various EU-projects with **BIHTEK**, **ALIGN** and **QUALITAS** being of her top priorities for the upcoming months. For BIHTEK, currently an extension of the project duration is applied for, so that the final round of site visits to all eight Bosnian partner universities will be conducted in fall of this year. The visits intend to monitor the project progress as well as overall project management and will be joined by CEENQA board member **Nora Skaburskiene**. CEENQA’s task as work package leader three in the ALIGN project includes a set of In House **trainings scheduled for Armenian, Ukrainian, and Russian accreditation agencies starting June 2015**. The trainings will support the national partners in the development and application of mechanisms for checking alignment of HEI’s academic programs with national qualification frameworks.

Prior to leaving CEENQA, Mila Zarkh has assisted in submitting an **additional project proposal** to the **European Commission**. The project aims to **develop an IT-based quality assurance platform for effective introduction and application of the European e-Competence Framework (e-FC) in the East European Higher Education sector**. The creation of an open IT-based quality assurance platform is in line with the EU Modernization Agenda. In case of funding, the new platform will be an effective means to support the accreditation processes at international level by providing a tool that will facilitate the transfer to the e-FC into quality assurance procedures at Eastern European HE sector while also supporting HEIs to adjust their study programs to the current and emerging labor market needs of the IT sector. As soon as there are news from the selection process, we will report back to members.



Finally, in this edition of CEENQA's April newsletter you will find a summary of INQAAHE's biannual meeting in Chicago including the regional networks meeting, in which CEENQA plays a prominent role.

I am looking forward to meeting you soon in Ljubljana!

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Events

31 March Second Global Conference for Specialized and Professional Accreditors in Chicago, U.S.A.

30 March – 3 April INQAAHE Biennial Conference

3 April INQAAHE Regional Network Meeting

16-17 April ENQA Members' Forum in Córdoba, Spain

14-15 May Ministerial Conference and Bologna Policy Forum in Yerevan, Armenia – Finalization of the new ESG

23-24 May CEENQA general assembly and workshop titled "Impact of Quality Assurance and Accreditation" in Ljubljana, Slovenia

Note in your calendar:

Registration for EUA/IEP evaluations is open until **3 July 2015**

Calendar

March 2015

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April 2015

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May 2015

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News from Members and Partners



NCPA issues a new reference book

On behalf of the National Centre for Public Accreditation we are happy to inform our colleagues about the publication of the **latest reference book "The Best Educational Programmes of Innovative Russia"**.

This reference book represents the result of a unique Russian project, which allows to **identify the best programmes** which are recognized by the national academic and professional communities as the most trustworthy and can therefore be recommended to employers, applicants and their parents. The project was organized and conducted by the Guild of Experts in Higher Education, the National Centre for Public Accreditation and the publishing house "Accreditation in Education".

In **2014, the English version** of this reference book was published for the first time. This decision was made in response to the internationalization of higher education in Russia.

We hope that the reference book "The Best Educational Programmes of Innovative Russia" will be of great interest for prospective students and will contribute to the development of student academic mobility.



ASHE completes a project on recognition of prior learning

The Croatian Agency for Science and Higher Education has completed an EU-funded project aimed at developing the framework for **recognition of non-formal and informal learning in Croatian higher education**. The project, titled [Competitive Croatian Higher Education for Better Employment](#) and implemented with two Croatian HEIs ([UNIST](#) and [UCACE](#)), resulted in **two publications**: a [research on the EU and global best practices](#) and [Guidelines for Implementation](#).

The main idea of the created framework, described in detail in the Guidelines, is to fully integrate the recognition with the [Croatian Qualifications Framework](#), thus enabling recognition only for the learning outcomes and qualifications which are already listed there, and only for institutions that pass additional quality checks. The full implementation of the framework is expected in the following period.



Report from Chicago: INQAAHE Biannual Conference

The **biannual conference of INQAAHE** (International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education) took place in Chicago from **01-03 April 2015** with the theme **"Changing Landscape of Higher Education: New Demands on Quality Assurance"**. Four keynote speakers as well as several paper presentations analysed the theme from different angles. **Judith Eaton**, President of the US Council for Higher Education Accreditation (**CHEA**) elaborated different aspects of **diversity in higher education**, from new methods of teaching and learning as well as assessment, new providers of education to changes in the student body as well as diverging and changing expectations from governments. This growing diversity in turn **calls for adapted and possibly more flexible approaches to quality assurance**. While most external quality assurance systems have been set up to review traditional, class-based degrees and/or public or non-for-profit higher education institutions, agencies now have to take into account realities such as distance- or online education, non-degree courses, competence-based assessment or for-profit providers. Furthermore, agencies have to determine their role and position in relation to rankings and data-based benchmarking. Additional issues discussed in the following sessions analysed how **internationalization** of higher education stipulated **modified approaches to external higher quality assurance**, both in programme and institutional accreditation. Another element of internationalization discussed concerned the activities of agencies operating outside of their original jurisdiction, for example with regard to the **recognition of international accreditation decisions**. Furthermore, the different, possibly conflicting, **expectations of the entities under the stakeholders** at home were analysed. The need for a joint understanding of the expected quality expectations and a joint learning approach were highlighted. Last but not least, the conference also addressed the **quality assurance of the external QA agencies themselves**. In this case, a focus was put on external validity of QA defined as its impact on the quality of higher education proper. The keynote speech and subsequent sessions also analysed how agencies should deal with **risks in their methodology**, such as the question how authentic the review site and the data are presented in order to make the programme or institution under review look good. Finally, examples of **how agencies can implement changes in their criteria** and procedures in the trade-off between the needs for adjustment and for consistency were presented.

Regional Networks – now Quality Assurance Networks



As part of INQAAHE's strategy of **collaboration with regional networks such as CEENQA**, INQAAHE offered a meeting platform in the frame of this year's conference. While the majority of the networks has, in fact, a regional approach, **a few are also subject-based**, the **INQAAHE Board has decided to re-assess its cooperation**: thereby, the **networks will be offered a strategic partnership**, rather than membership as quality networks. During the session, the **networks from the Caribbean, Africa, the Arab region, Asia and CEENQA presented their current activities**. Most networks put a **focus on sharing good practice and capacity building** of agency staff members but suffer from a lack of financial resources. As **subject-specific networks** both the **EASPA** and its US-sister network **ASPA** participated in the meeting highlighting current issues as discussed above.



EASPA's Second Global Conference for Specialized and Professional Accreditors

Under the umbrella and with the **support of INQAAHE**, the **Second Global Conference for Specialized and Professional Accreditors** took place in **Chicago, IL, on 31 March 2015**. As last year, it assembled representatives of subject-specific and general quality assurance agencies and experts from all world regions. In addition to member organizations of EASPA from the fields of informatics and tourism, its American sister organisation ASPA and several of its members from different subject areas (e.g. interior design, public policy, athletic training, library association, Montessori education, pharmacy, healthcare, therapy, dental, engineering) as well as **European agencies and organisations** were present. Further participants came from agencies, university networks and higher education institutions in the **Caribbean, Africa and the Arab World** as well as **Asia, the Pacific Islands and Central and Latin America**.

The conference centred on the themes of **transnational disciplinary qualification frameworks and learning outcomes for regional integration processes**, and related processes in **benchmark development** and their link to **mutual recognition agreements**. Successful examples of regional and continental quality assurance networks and their tools were presented.

To lay the ground, **EASPA's secretary Ms. Jana Möhren** presented an overview of recent developments in Europe and a comparative analysis of corresponding activities in higher education in South East Asia with a view to fostering regional integration. Based on the **European model** of the European Higher Education Area



and many of the tools developed and implemented to achieve it, **similar instruments have been or are currently being set up in South East Asia**, for example a common credit system, support programmes for student mobility, joint quality assurance principles and frameworks as well as qualification frameworks. The participants agreed that these tools constitute the basis for the envisaged easy recognition of degrees and qualifications and that in the next period **greater emphasis will be put on the actual facilitation of mobility of students and workers**. One achievement in this context is the **Mutual Recognition Agreement recently signed by the 13 agencies** authorized to award the European Accredited Engineering (EUR-ACE®) label whereby they accept each other's accreditation decisions in respect of Bachelor and Master engineering degree programmes which they accredit.

The example of the benchmarks developed in the fields of business administration and informatics as presented by the Inter-University Council of East Africa (IUCEA) provided a **model of how subject-based benchmarks can be implemented** in a setting of **different higher education and quality assurance systems**, normally focussing on a more generic approach, in a particular region.

Ms. **Lorna Parkins**, the executive director of the Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Education in Medicine and Other Health Professions (CAAM) added the successful example of how a subject-specific and regional agency operates in a changing higher education sector with diverging interests from students, national agencies and the profession as well as new players such as private (for profit) higher education providers.

In line with the above mentioned mutual recognition agreement, the German Association of Engineers (VDI) has **implemented a professional card for engineers, the engineerING card**, in Germany. Supported by the European Federation of National Engineering Associations, **seven countries currently issue the card** which provides **comparable and verified information** about the educational profile and professional experience of **engineering practitioners** thereby facilitating the recognition of qualifications internationally for employers and professionals.

In the final part of the conference, a number of subject-specific agencies and networks presented their approaches to quality assurance: The International Center of Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality Education (THE-ICE), represented by CEO **Pauline Tang**, is an Australian-based network operating globally with a strong membership of HEIs in Europe and Asia. Having successfully passed THE-ICE accreditation, member



HEIs can in particular profit from the **annual survey of student satisfaction**. The results of the survey allow the HEIs to benchmark themselves against other members' performance.

Ms. **Daniela Iacona**, Sr. Manager, International Relations & Board Operations of **ABET**, the US accreditation agency specialized in engineering, engineering technology and computing, presented the objectives as well as the limitations of international mutual recognition and the principles of substantial equivalency in the form of international alliances.

The European Quality Assurance Network for Informatics Education (**EQANIE**) was represented by its past and founding President, Prof. Dr. **Uli Heiss**. He detailed the founding process of EQANIE supported by financing from the European Commission as well as its two operating models: firstly, offering **accreditation for informatics/computer science degree programmes** directly at interested HEIs, and secondly, the **authorization of national agencies to award the Euro-Inf® Quality label on behalf of EQANIE** when their criteria can be aligned with EQANIE's learning outcome statements.



IEP concludes coordinated evaluations in Romania and Montenegro and presents the system reports

EUA's Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) is pleased to announce the completion of the **coordinated evaluations** of higher education institutions in **Romania** and **Montenegro**.

In **Romania**, IEP undertook the largest coordinated evaluations exercise to date. The evaluation was part of a framework project contracted by the Romanian government in December 2011. **Altogether 70 public and private universities**, with a profile ranging from polytechnics and multidisciplinary social sciences to highly specialised military, arts, architecture, medical and veterinarian universities, took part in the evaluations. The findings of this coordinated evaluation are now available in the **system report**, which was launched during the project's **final conference in Bucharest on 31 Oct 2014**. The report covers a wide range of areas including: **how to stimulate institutional change, assure quality, secure sustainable funding, invest in people, promote student-centered learning, internationalise, increase research capacity and engage with society** and it also includes a set of policy recommendations from IEP for policy



makers in Romania. The [full report](#) can be downloaded [here](#).

In [Montenegro](#), the Ministry of Education commissioned IEP to carry out coordinated evaluations of [10 higher education institutions](#) in the country during the course of 2014. This exercise was funded by a broader World Bank supported project with the overall objective to [strengthen the quality and relevance of higher education and research](#) in Montenegro. The system review highlights shared issues and challenges at system level, and provides recommendations aiming to contribute to capacity building and the improvement of the Montenegrin higher education. The [full report](#) can be downloaded [here](#).

The Institutional Evaluation Programme offers institutional evaluations to higher education institutions as well as conducts coordinated evaluations at national or regional level. The [registration period for the 2015-2016 round of IEP evaluations is open until 3 July 2015](#).

For more information on the IEP, please visit: www.eua.be/iep.