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# Newsletter

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**STAFF EXCHANGE**

## CEENQA News

CEENQA's **15th anniversary workshop and general assembly in Krakow**, hosted by the University Accreditation Commission and the Polish Accreditation Committee on May 13-14, was attended by 48 participants. The assembly accepted the new **Latvian agency AIKA**, raising CEENQA **membership to 29**.

The general assembly **re-elected three Board members** and elected **Achim Hopbach**, Managing Director at AQ Austria as a new Board member.

Another topic at the general assembly was to **launch a staff exchange among CEENQA members**. Since the meeting, **Martina Vidláková**, from the Czech Accreditation Commission has conducted a survey among CEENQA members to gauge interest in staff exchange and the process will begin in spring 2017.

The topic of the workshop was the "**Quality Assurance of Transnational Higher Education**". **Nora Skaburskiene**, Acting Director of SKVC, Lithuania, spoke on "**Why transnational accreditation matters for CEENQA members: Introduction in the topic and presentation of questionnaire results**", where in addition to analysing the challenges posed by staff exchange schemes she presented the results of a questionnaire on transnational accreditation conducted among CEENQA members. **Achim Hopbach**, discussed the "**Challenges of transnational accreditation for quality assurance agencies**", and **Fabrizio Trifiro** presented "**The Quality Assurance of Transnational Education: a UK Perspective**". Finally the presentation by **Mark Frederiks**, Coordinator for international policy at NVAO, The Netherlands, and titled "**The joint accreditation of master programs as a challenge for transnational accreditation**" illustrated the topic with a project coordinated by



the European Consortium for Accreditation ECA that involved a joint master program of the Universities of Salzburg, Pavia and Ljubljana and seven western Balkan universities.

CEENQA is currently taking calls among members to host the 2017 meeting

On other news, in the summer, CEENQA came out with a **new print Directory**, which in addition to the current membership and their backgrounds sums up the 15-year history of the network.

Finally, as an **affiliate of ENQA**, there are currently **two members on the ENQA Board**. Christina Rozsnyai continues the office until 2017, **Nora Skaburskiené is up for re-election** at the ENQA General Assembly on 21 October.

For more information please read the President's Message below.

## Message from the President

**Dear Colleagues,  
Dear Friends of CEENQA,**

Many greetings from our Düsseldorf headquarters. I first of all would like to inform you, that **Stefanie Lochbaum**, who had taken care of CEENQA matters in the course of the past 18 months, has recently left ASIIN and moved back to southern Germany. As of today my coworker **Marlene Roggan** will take over and will be next to Christina Rozsnyai and myself your point of contact.

Looking into the immediate future, it's important to note that we will have a considerable **changeover on the leadership** and board membership level **next spring**. As you will be aware of, my third and final term as president will come to an end as will the engagement of our cherished "founding" general secretary Christina; also the term of a considerable number of board members will expire. We will therefore have to prepare the "handing over" of responsibilities;

In view of our **annual workshop and general assembly 2017**, we need enough planning to prepare for the program; here again I encourage members to suggest **potential topics** of general interest to CEENQA members, so that the conference planning committee can model a suitable conference program and identify potential speakers.

It is also worth a reminder, that in a few weeks the next round of the **ERASMUS PLUS tenders will be published**; the inclusion in a potential bid will be a win- win situation, as CEENQA could continue to engage in its European project activities which have been a success story in the last couple of years and it will also increase the chances to be successful in submitting the bid of an individual CEENQA members.

I am also happy to announce the start of **our staff exchange under the leadership of board member Martina Vidlakova**. I can report about my own recent experience of hosting a Kazakh intern within ASIIN and this proved to be a very fruitful experience for both sides. Hopefully this will turn out to be an instrument to bring CEENQA members closer together and learn from each other's experiences.

**Iring Wasser**



## Upcoming Events

**4 November, Brussels, Belgium seminar for new staff of QA agencies on QA at European level**

**17-19 November 2016, Ljubljana, Slovenia European Quality Forum EQAF**

**25 November 2016, Bern, Switzerland AAQ Institutional Accreditation Day**

**12-13 December, Athens, Greece TeSLA project seminar “Social dimension of e-learning – Addressing challenges through QA”**

## Calendar

### October 2016

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

### November 2016

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

### December 2016

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

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## CEENQA Project

### CEENQA Staff Exchange Survey

by **Martina Vidlakova**



With the goal of capitalizing on its potential as a platform for mutual learning, CEENQA has embarked on preparation of a **staff exchange scheme** for its members. As announced at the General Assembly in May 2016 in Krakow, a **survey** was created to shed more light on the interest of member agencies to participate and on their expectations from the proposed scheme. The survey results showed that there are at least **13 agencies** willing to participate in staff exchange in the near future. The respondents were more in favour of a short study visit scheme, but several expressed interest **also in a longer internship** scheme that might enable direct involvement of the staff member in the host agency’s activities. Regarding the working language of exchange, the survey found that English is generally accepted but some exchanges could be carried out using Russian, German, Croatian, and other languages.

Staff exchange could greatly benefit the participating agencies not only in terms of sharing of experience and good practice, learning and gaining fresh new ideas, but also in individual staff development, knowledge acquisition in specific areas, and



establishment contacts and cooperation in the Central and Eastern European area. The survey also pointed to some **challenges** to exchange, which include financial issues, worries about a language barrier and even absence of participating staff members from their work. These challenges need to be effectively addressed in the arrangements between the hosting and sending agencies.

CEENQA is expected to provide organizational support, i.e. mainly serve as a platform to provide and share information on exchange and help link suitable interested agencies. In the longer term, the scheme could become more developed and the role of CEENQA could also become more analytical. At this time, CEENQA is preparing to launch a call for agencies seeking to send their staff members on exchange in the Central and Eastern European area in 2017 and also for agencies willing to host staff members that have not identified themselves in the survey. The future participants of staff exchange will be invited to contribute their experience to the newsletter and to share it with the other members.

Interested agencies who have not identified themselves in the survey can express their interest to participate by writing to **Martina Vidláková** at [martina.vidlakova@nauvs.cz](mailto:martina.vidlakova@nauvs.cz).

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## News from Members

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### A New Quality Assurance Agency in the Czech Republic

As a result of major legislative change, the Accreditation Commission Czech Republic (ACCR) ceased to operate as of 31 August this year. The newly amended Higher Education Act established a new quality assurance agency under the name of **National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education (NAB)** as well as introduced significant changes to the quality assurance system. Unlike in the previous period, **higher education institutions** will be able to apply for institutional accreditation alongside **programme accreditation**. The NAB gained new competencies as compared to the ACCR, most importantly it will have the authority to not only issue expert statements on applications for accreditation, but also to **grant accreditation and apply sanctions**, which used to be reserved to the Ministry of Education. The NAB will also perform evaluation of higher education institutions and audit of their compliance with legal provisions in their activities. The agency consists of a 15-member Council, an Appeals Committee and an Office, in which all staff members are the former staff of the Secretariat of the ACCR. The NAB will seek membership in CEENQA in hopes of joining its members in regional cooperation and mutual learning.

### Unified State Exam

#### as one of the best practices in the education quality evaluation in Russia

#### Dr. Lemka Izmailova - Director of Russian National Accreditation Agency and Anna Krechetova - Analyst

Annually one of the most extensive evaluation procedures at the federal level - the **Unified State Exam (USE) is conducted in Russia**. It is aimed at implementing a high priority task in the sphere of the education quality evaluation, designated in the state program of the Russian Federation "Development of Education for 2013-2020" as foreground, namely "to ensure the compliance of testing and assessment materials, and technologies for safety provision of the exams of high importance" with the international standards of quality.



The pilot procedure for the introduction of USE was **launched in 2001 in 5 regions of Russia**. By 2003, the procedure involved 47 regions, and by 2006 - 79 regions of the Russian Federation. Since 2009, USE is the only form of state final examination in school and the main form of entrance exams to educational organizations of higher education.

The state final examination in the form of USE is one of the mechanisms of **social monitoring and evaluation of the education quality in Russia**, and it is being constantly improved. So far, in 2014 the Federal Service for Supervision in Education and Science developed a set of measures aimed at ensuring the objectivity and transparency of the state final examination procedure, as well as at enhancing confidence in the exam results. The principles of objectivity and transparency which are communicated in the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) are at the forefront of the organization and conduct of the state final examination in Russia. In order to implement them a system of measures was developed, comprising:

1. Continuous improvement of testing and assessment materials (TAMs) – TAMs are developed by a large team of experts. Every year pilot demonstration variants of TAMs are published for public and professional discussion, and the received comments and suggestions are considered at the meetings of scientific and methodological councils.
2. Use of secure communication channels for data transmission - all communication channels (for example, if the key for decoding TAMs is transmitted) are coded. A limited number of people have access to the communication channels, which excludes an unauthorized use of the information resources;
3. A government authority provides storage and delivery of testing and assessment materials – transportation of the examination materials to all regions of the country is carried out by the Federal Communications Agency. In 2016 TAMs were delivered to 52 regions of the Russian Federation directly to the exam stations and by the test time. This ensures the safety of examination materials and eliminates the possibility of access to TAMs by unauthorized persons;
4. Implementation of public control at the exam stations and in the regional centers of the information processing. Under the Federal Law № 212-FZ of July 21, 2014 "About the principles of public control in the Russian Federation" annually over 1000 federal public observers and about 150 federal experts carry out monitoring of the USE procedure during state final examination.
5. Operation of a specialized portal of video monitoring and organization of the system of online surveillance. In order to improve the efficiency of public control over the procedures of state final examination a portal of video monitoring "smotriego.ru" was developed, it allows viewing broadcasts during the exam in all 85 regions in online mode as well as putting suspicion marks on violation of the state final examination procedure. In 2016 more than 75% of the exam stations provided on-line broadcasts of USE with 5664 online observers involved;
6. Timely publication of USE results after the check-up of works. USE results are publicly available on a dedicated request (in a personal account of a USE participant). Check-up of works and publication of results is carried out within 2 weeks from the date of the exam.

Today, we can say that USE as a whole has an impact on the higher education system in the country which is manifested in several aspects. One of them is the introduction of the minimum act scores for admission to educational organizations of higher education. Minimum act scores is a minimum sum of scores for the subjects of entrance exams, which entitles a graduate to take part in the competition for admission to the university. This measure allows effective carrying out of the selection of applicants who are more prepared to be trained in a specific specialty of study programs of higher education. The second aspect is associated with the opportunity of an entrant to **remotely apply for the competition in several HEIs**. It has a great social impact for the Russian



Federation taking into account the large territory scale of the country. The availability of such alternative resulted in the increase in the share of talented graduates from rural schools enrolled at leading HEIs of the country by 2-3 times compared with the 1990s of the previous century. According to the outcomes of the study conducted by the All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center in 2016 the citizens' confidence in USE results has increased, and the improvements in the system of students' knowledge assessment by means of USE have been recognized.

The Russian system of state final examination meets all the challenging demands in the sphere of public control and evaluation of the quality of students' training in educational organizations of general education. An objective, transparent and reliable procedure of USE, as well as a flexible system of state final examination allow for effective management of the education system in the country.

## SKVC News



Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Educations (SKVC) **analysed all new study programmes** submitted to the Centre since 2010. The analysis covers general statistics of new programmes, number of programmes in different areas of sciences. Analysis also reflects the success rate of new study programmes being accredited from the first time upon submission. Additionally, there is a historical component in the analysis reflecting the accreditation decision of these programmes as running programmes, indicating what happened with new study programmes in the following years, how many of them were unregistered or successfully/unsuccessfully accredited. The analysis gives information about universities and colleges in Lithuania which submitted the biggest number of new study programmes for registration during the years.

New study programmes in Lithuania are **evaluated in two different ways before accreditation**: with external evaluation and without external evaluation. The second part of analysis is dedicated for reflections of external evaluation results. This part also provides information on which areas of assessment were evaluated most critically by reviewers while evaluating new study programmes.

Full analysis can be found here:

<http://www.skvc.lt/uploads/documents/files/EN%20versija/Quality%20Assurance/Analyses/Analysis%20of%20new%20study%20programmes%20submitted%20to%20SKVC%20in%202010-2015.pdf>



## RS HEAA applies for ENQA membership

Higher Education Accreditation Agency of Republika Srpska has **applied for full membership** in the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (**ENQA**).

RS HEAA has signed a contract on external review with ENQA which anticipates the on-site visit by an independent expert panel sometime at the beginning of 2017 and adoption of the Expert panel report in September 2017. External review is conducted with reference to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in European Higher Education Area (ESG), thus checking whether all Agency activities are harmonised with the ESG.

At the same time, RS HEAA has also submitted an official application for the inclusion in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (**EQAR**).



## Croatian agency launches a new EU-funded project

The Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE) will implement the **project Improvement of quality assurance and enhancement systems in higher education** financed from the European Social Fund within the framework of the Operational Programme Efficient Human Resources from June 2016 to the end of 2018.

The main objective of the project is to **increase the quality and efficiency of Croatian higher education institutions** by developing a new **model for internal and external quality assurance** which would be adjusted to the Croatian Qualifications Framework and the integration of universities.

Specific objectives are the improvement of external quality assurance and internal processes of ASHE, and the improvement of internal quality assurance systems at Croatian higher education institutions. They will be achieved by carrying out activities such as the establishment of a **new model of re-accreditation, programme evaluation for the Qualifications Framework** and the new model of initial accreditation, monitoring graduate employability, the improvement of an integrated system for providing information on higher education, training, etc.

This project will contribute to the achievement of some of the strategic objectives in the field of higher education, defined by the European and national strategic documents such as the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems, the Strategy for Education, Science and Technology, etc.



## HEA created a set of documents in the field of development and quality assurance in higher education

Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance (HEA) has created **new documents related to development and quality assurance in higher education**. Four new documents were created which are *Criteria for accreditation of study programs*, *Decision on norms for determining minimal standards in higher education*, *Recommendations on criteria and standards to the ministry of Republic of Srpska, cantonal ministries and Brčko District for establishment and closure of higher education institutions and re-structuring of study programmes* and *Recommendations on criteria for the licensing of higher education institutions and study programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina*.

These documents are the result of development plans of the Agency in the field of accreditation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, study programs at the first place, and they are part of a new systematic approach of the Agency in strengthening recommendations to relevant ministries of education in BiH within the competencies of the Agency which are in accordance with the Framework Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Criteria for accreditation of study programs in Bosnia and Herzegovina represent a new, more modern and comprehensive criteria based on the new European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance** (Yerevan, 2015). They include criteria for accreditation of study programs at first, second and third cycle. Criteria strongly encourage reform of transition from input-planning of higher education to the result-based planning. The document also establishes the practice of clear defining the objectives and learning outcomes so their consistent application could encourage development of study programs and increase the quality of education.



The second document, *Decision on norms for determining minimal standards in higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina* is amended by standards for internal and external quality assurance of study programs. While the standards for external quality assurance are more related to the procedures of the accreditation process, standards for internal quality assurance focus on development and give clear guidance to higher education institutions on how to develop and provide quality in higher education which precondition is quality of study programs.

Documents *Recommendations on criteria and standards to the ministry of Republic of Srpska, cantonal ministries and Brčko District for establishment and closure of higher education institutions and re-structuring of study programmes* and *Recommendations on criteria for the licensing of higher education institutions and study programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina* provide clear guidance to regulate this area, in order to **harmonize regulations which define opening, closing and licensing of higher education institutions**, and the establishment of study programs. In preparing recommendations legal arrangements of competent education authorities were considered as well as examples of good practice that exist in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

New documents are expression of strategic commitment, guidance and vision for the development of the new management of the Agency, headed by the HEA director **prof. dr. Enver Halilovic**. They are based on an analysis of the current situation in this area, but with a focus on the development needs and reform processes in higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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## News from Partners

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### ENQA News

#### Registration is open for the ENQA seminar on the social dimension of e-learning

In the framework of “TeSLA - An adaptive trust-based e-assessment system” project in which ENQA is a partner, ENQA is organising a seminar entitled “[Social dimension of e-learning – Addressing challenges through QA](#)” in Athens, Greece, on 12-13 December 2016.

ENQA is pleased to invite its members, affiliates, and other interested stakeholders to participate in this event to discuss **plagiarism and fraud, accessibility, the social dimension of e-learning, and quality assurance** and to learn more about the TeSLA project. [Registration](#) for the fee-free event is open until 23 November 2016. Participants are kindly requested to consult the [event webpage](#) for information concerning the programme, accommodation, and practical elements.

#### Registration open for the ENQA Seminar for QA agencies on the European dimension of quality assurance

This autumn, ENQA will offer a [seminar](#) geared towards new staff of QA agencies or those who are interested in learning more about the context of quality assurance at the European level. The seminar will take place during the afternoon of 3 November and morning of **4 November** in Brussels, Belgium.

The programme aims to **inform participants about relevant topics such as the Bologna Process**, the European Commission’s priorities concerning quality assurance and higher education, the role of the main stakeholder bodies (including the E4 and EQAR) in the European Higher Education Area, and the purpose of the Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). **Participation is open to**







**ENQA members, affiliates, and other interested stakeholders.** There is a participation fee of €220 per person.

### ENQA publishes Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews

Following a thorough revision process, ENQA has finalised and published the [Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews](#), which **describes ENQA's new external review model and the main principles for the ENQA Agency Reviews** considering the ESG 2015. It also functions as a **practical handbook** for agencies and external reviewers. The guidelines include a convenient timeline which was created in cooperation with EQAR, and it is supplemented by additional materials available on the [ENQA website](#).



### EQAF 2016 registration deadline approaching

Registration is still open for the 11th European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF), which will take place **on 17-19 November 2016 in Ljubljana, Slovenia**.

It is important to register as soon as possible as capacity is limited and registrations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

To register, please visit the [EQAF website](#). Here you will also find the programme, abstracts of papers and workshops, as well as further information about the Forum.

The 2016 EQAF, entitled **"Quality in context – embedding improvement"**, will be **hosted by the Slovenian Student Union and the University of Ljubljana**. Through a mix of plenary and parallel sessions, the Forum will combine presentations of current developments in quality assurance (QA) with practice-oriented and research-based discussions that will take place in paper sessions and workshops. Specifically, EQAF 2016 will examine the different disciplinary, institutional and national contexts and cultures to which QA has to be tailored and will consider how policies and practices are adapted to respect diversity and remain fit for purpose.

EQAF has been co-organised by [ENQA](#), [ESU](#), [EUA](#) and [EURASHE](#) since 2006 and provides a unique platform for the higher education and QA communities to monitor, shape and anticipate developments in the field. The main purpose of the Forum is to foster a dialogue on QA that bridges national boundaries and leads to a truly European discussion on QA in higher education, and to create a common European understanding of QA through discussions and networking among different stakeholder groups.



### AAQ Institutional Accreditation Day

The Swiss quality assurance agency in higher education (AAQ) is planning on Friday 25 November 2016 the **first conference of a biannual serial named "AAQ Institutional Accreditation Day"**. The event will focus this time the **theme of communication of internal quality assurance within higher education institutions**, linked with the creation or reinforcement of a **quality culture**. This topic is particularly relevant for Swiss institutions, considering that communication of iQA is among the requirements for institutional accreditation under the new law.

Attendance is open to anyone **interested from other countries in Europe**. Please contact:

AAQ Institutional Accreditation Day

25 November 2016

Bern, Switzerland

<http://aaq.ch/aaq-institutional-accreditation-day-2016/>