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# Newsletter

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University of Zagreb (photo by D.Z., 2007)

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## CEENQA News

The annual meetings of CEENQA were held this year on 28-29 April 2017 in **Zagreb**, generously hosted by the **Croatian Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE)** in close cooperation with the **University of Zagreb**.

The workshop on 28 April discussed **“Ways forward to make external quality assurance a more efficient process”**. Following a warm welcome by Professor Damir Boras, the Rector of the University, the key note was given by Nora Skaburskiene, SKVC (Lithuania) and Maria Weber, AQ Austria. Afterwards, the speakers focused on supporting IT processes for efficient external quality assurance such as a Europe-wide database of external quality assurance results and suitable IT systems for administering external quality assurance. Finally, Case Studies for efficient external quality assurance in CEENQA member agencies were presented. It was especially striking this year how many changes in legislation and quality assurance procedures affect member agencies.

The **presentations** by the speakers are available on the CEENQA website <http://www.ceenqa.org>. It is also important to note that **CEENQA's website** will be **re-launched** in the course of the next weeks.

Finally, the **Albanian agency APAAL** generously confirmed to host the upcoming **Workshop and General Assembly in 2018**.



## Message from the President

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

Taking the opportunity of this newsletter, I would like to **thank the members for electing me as President** of CEENQA for the period of one year at the General Assembly hosted by the Croatian Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE) in Zagreb, Croatia. It is a great honour and responsibility to continue organizing CEENQA activities with the standards raised by previous President and Secretary General. I would also like, on your behalf, to pay respect to **my predecessor Iring Wasser** who has led our Network so capably over the past years and say many thanks to **Christina Rozsnyai** who stepped down as **Secretary General after 16 years** of committed service.

I am also happy to officially introduce **CEENQA's new Secretary General - Marleen Roggan**, who was appointed at the General Assembly in Zagreb. Marleen will provide continuity in CEENQA activities. She has a background in public management and is project manager for international and European projects at the German Accreditation Agency ASIIN. Moreover, she takes care of the management of the Technical Committee for Mathematics (and previously Mechanical Engineering and Process Engineering) and has co-ordinated and conducted numerous national and international accreditation procedures.

The Board of CEENQA welcomes **two re-elected members** and **a new one: Martina Vidlakova** from the National Accreditation Bureau for higher Education Czech Republic (NAB), **Ivan Leban** from the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (NAKVIS-SQAA) and the newly elected Board member - **Duska Radmanovic** from the Higher Education Agency of Republica Srpska (HEAARS).

In terms of CEENQA membership composition, I am pleased to inform you, that The National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation (**ANQA from Armenia has been accepted as new member of CEENQA**). Unfortunately, the University Accreditation Commission (UAC) from Poland was dissolved as an organisation and has withdrawn its membership from CEENQA. We also try to encourage other agencies, namely, from **Moldova, Azerbaijan** and **Georgia** to discuss the possibility of joining our Network and will assist in this process to the best of our abilities.

CEENQA continues its activities in a number of European projects: **ALIGN project**, which aims to enable Armenian, Russian, Ukrainian HEIs to achieve alignment of academic programs with NQFs and QA agencies to check the alignment of academic programs with NQFs; the **QUAERE project**, with the task to improve the Internal and External Quality Assurance System in the Ukraine. Another three projects proposals were submitted with the participation of CEENQA during the last call.

In this issue, we are happy to share the major developments and progress of CEENQA's activities as well as those of our members during the first half of 2017.

Thanks for your continued support,

**Nora Skarburskiene**



## Upcoming Events

**4-8 September** QUAERE project: Piloting visits in Lviv and Kiev (Ukraine)

**5-6 September** ALIGN project: Piloting visit to Moscow State Pedagogical University (Russia)

**October** ALIGN project: Final dissemination visits (Ukraine)

**9-10 October** ALIGN project: Final conference in Yerevan (Armenia)

**23-25 November** 12th European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF) in Riga

## Calendar

### September 2017

MO	TUE	WED	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	

### October 2017

MO	TUE	WED	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					

### November 2017

MO	TUE	WED	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			

## News from Members and Partners

### AIKA/AIC concluded the first set of expert training seminars

On April 20th and May 10th, 11th and 12th, the Quality Agency for Higher Education (AIKA) / Academic Information Centre (AIC) has organised the first set of comprehensive training seminars for the Latvian experts included in the experts' database of the Agency. In total, 62 experts were trained (including 12 student representatives and 8 representatives of employers). The expert training consisted of two parts – full day theoretic seminar and half day practical simulation (role-play).

In the theoretic seminar on April 20th the Head of the Latvian Agency prof. Andrejs Rauhvargers presented the strategic directions of the agency, Deputy Head Jolanta Silka explained the quality assessment procedures that currently exist in Latvia, the other representatives of Agency presented the criteria for assessing study directions and study programmes and the principles for including experts in the database and selecting them for certain procedures. Director of the Lithuanian Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) and member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) Board Nora Skaburskiene outlined the importance of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and shared the experience of SKVC in the collaboration with





experts and also some good tips for more effective work during assessment procedures.

For the practical trainings all participants were divided in three groups and the trainings took place on May 10th, 11th and 12th. The participants of each group received a homework – abstract from an actual self-assessment report. During the training participants were divided in smaller groups (each representing a separate assessment panel) and were asked to follow certain steps and simulate evaluation procedure – starting from task division and continuing with analysing the self-assessment report, planning site visit, formulating questions for interviews and preparing the experts report.

All experts who had participated in both seminars received certificates and will be given priority when selecting experts for the assessment procedures. The feedback received from all participated experts was very positive and they really appreciated such trainings. It should be noted that such experts trainings were organised the first time and Agency is planning to organise similar sets of training seminars regularly. The next experts training will be held in Autumn 2017.

The trainings took place in the framework of ESF project "Support for Meeting the Requirements Set for EQAR Agency" No.8.2.4.0/15/I/001.

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## **AIKA/AIC participates in exchange visit to EKKA**

In April 2017 two assessment coordinators from Quality Agency for Higher Education (AIKA)/ Academic Information Centre (AIC) Latvia participated in exchange hosted by the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (EKKA).

The representatives of Latvian agency observed two assessment procedures of study programme groups coordinated by EKKA – "Journalism and Information" and "National Defence".

Both representatives concluded that systems are generally similar but also identified some differences that could be discussed and possibly implemented in the Latvian system. The main difference was that in Estonian system experts do not recommend the term for accreditation therefore representatives of institutions are more open and ready to discuss their weaknesses and consider the experts visit as a tool to improve their study programmes. In Latvian system the experts team is supposed to also give a recommendation for accreditation term therefore in some cases the institutions are not as open.

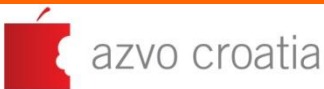
It was found out that the Estonian agency has already introduced the mechanism for follow-up on how institutions implement experts` recommendations, however the Latvian agency has also started this practice since Spring 2017.

Both representatives concluded that the schedule of the assessment visit was quite tight in order to improve further exchanges there should be more time devoted specifically for discussion/information exchange with the hosting agency.

On behalf Latvian agency we would like to express our gratitude to the Estonian colleagues for the warm welcome and possibility to shadow their procedures and would also like to express our willingness and ability to host colleagues from other countries.

Exchanges took place in the framework of ESF project "Support for Meeting the Requirements Set for EQAR Agency" No.8.2.4.0/15/I/001.





## ASHE/AZVO News

### Croatian Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE) hosted CEENQA Annual Assembly



The annual assembly of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA) with the additional programme was held in Zagreb, Croatia, on 28th and 29th April 2017, hosted by the Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE).

This two-day event brought together about 50 experts in quality assurance of higher education who discussed the topic of ways to enhance external quality assurance at the national and European level.

CEENQA is the oldest organisation for quality assurance in higher education in Europe, founded in 2001. It currently has 29 agencies-members from 20 different Central and Eastern European countries cooperating in the field of development and coordination of quality assurance activities, thus contributing to the development of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

Croatian Agency for Science and Higher education has been a full member of this respected network since 2008, actively participating in its activities.

### ASHE reconfirmed its full membership in ENQA

The Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE) successfully underwent an international external review coordinated by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) thus proving its compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in European Higher Education Area (ESG) necessary for reconfirmation of ENQA membership.

According to the external review report, ASHE is: "A well-established and recognized national Agency in Croatia whose role in support to improve quality assurance in the country's higher education institutions is to be emphasized. Its activity is legally established and the procedures and criteria are defined by the Agency."

ASHE has been commended for the quality of the staff, its involvement in the activity of the Agency and the level of knowledge of the national and international practices in quality assurance. In the report, the panel strongly praises ASHE for its collaboration with different stakeholders involved in its activities and for the high participation of international experts in the panels of the different procedures. The panel furthermore commends ASHE for the role of the coordinator as a person who ensures consistency of the process and helps experts with interpretation the relevant criteria as consistently as possible and considers this to be one the examples of good practice.

International review panel chaired by Professor Jürgen Kohler, PhD, professor of law at Greifswald University, Germany, and a former president of the German Accreditation Council addressed the following ASHE activities during the external review: initial accreditation of higher education institutions and programme, re-accreditation of higher education institutions and study programmes, re-accreditation of doctoral study programmes and audit of higher education institutions. During a site-visit in October 2016 the panel held meetings with ASHE management and employees, representatives of higher education institutions, foreign and Croatian experts, students, as well as the representatives from the industry, Ministry of Science and Education and others.

### EQAR confirms ASHE inclusion

The EQAR (European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education - EQAR) Board approved the inclusion of the Croatian Agency for Science and Higher Education in the Register. ASHE has thus received another confirmation of its reliability and accountability for external quality assurance procedures within Croatia and EHEA in line with the ESG.





ASHE was first included in the Register in 2011, and this is its first renewal of inclusion. It is based on the international evaluation conducted by an ENQA panel in 2016, which also served as the basis for renewing ASHE ENQA membership.

The report on ASHE evaluation is available at the ENQA website and the EQAR decision is available [here](#).

### **ASHE awarded the MAMFORCE standard for implementing family responsibility and gender equality policies**

On the 23rd November 2016, the Agency for Science and Higher Education received the MAMFORCE STANDARD as part of the project In Pursuit of Full Equality between Men and Women: Reconciliation of Private and Family Life. The Agency thus became the first organisation from the public sector to receive this standard as a confirmation of implementing family responsibility and gender equality policies.

MAMFORCE STANDARD is awarded to organisations that have passed an independent review of their working conditions and the practice of human resources management, and which will use the received recommendations to implement new practices regarding the responsibility towards the employees' family obligations and to enable uniform gender representation in managerial positions.

„ASHE became involved in this project in order to raise awareness of existing good practices of human resources management, as well as to identify possibilities for further development“, stated Vesna Dodiković Jurković, PhD, Assistant Director of ASHE, during the awarding of the standard.

The project included several phases: filling out questionnaires about the policies, practices and measures that support family responsibility and gender equality; conducting an employee survey that gives insights into their perception of existing practices, interviewing the employees, and developing recommendations for further improvement.



## **SKVC News**

### **Workshop about improving the study programmes with students involvement**

On June 13th in Vilnius SKVC organized an interactive workshop for representatives of higher education institutions. The topic was "Study programmes improvement with the help of students' feedback".

Specialists from Higher education institutions that are responsible for internal quality assurance, also the Heads of study programmes committees and other specialists involved in improvement of study programmes took part.

The workshop discussed about the involvement of students and other shareholders into enhancement of education process applying the participatory approach. It was also discussed about importance of involvement of these audiences into feedback process and the impact on quality culture.

Dr. Karl Ledermüller, the Head of the Evaluation and Quality Enhancement Unit at the WU Vienna University of Economics and Business, introduced the report on the research related to collection and usage of student feedback data.

Mg. Vanja Perovšek, the Advisor of University Office for Quality Assurance, Analyses and Reporting at the University of Ljubljana, together with the assistant Jaka Kovač presented the analysis of the research regarding the case of improving the quality of education by involving the students and applying the participatory approach.

The interactive format of the workshop allowed the participants to be fully involved into discussion. During the whole workshop the participants were involved in solving different tasks prepared by lecturers, held discussions in small groups and presented the results of



their discussions.



Independent agency for  
accreditation and rating

## IAAR News

### **IAAR is the first Kazakh full member agency of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)**

On the eve of 25th anniversary of Kazakhstan's independence, our agency has received an international European recognition and became the first Central Asian agency, which received a status of full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). In such a high appraisal of the agency's activities, undoubtedly, not only the agency's employees, but also the expert community of IAAR, all stakeholders actively involved in the accreditation process deserve credit.

IAAR as a full member of the association is called upon to promote the policy, standards, strategic objectives and recommendations of ENQA nationally, to promote European cooperation in the field of quality assurance, to contribute to the harmonization of the European Higher Education Area. The high status now allows IAAR to conduct international accreditation of universities in Kazakhstan, countries that signed the Bologna Declaration, as well as in the countries of the Central Asian region.

It is noteworthy that international accreditation gives Kazakhstan universities the opportunity to position themselves much more competitively, to confirm their high status and compliance of the education provided with truly world standards. On the one hand, this makes it possible to improve public opinion about a university, attract talented young people for admission, on the other hand, to strengthen the authority of the national accreditation body.



## ENQA News

### **SHEILA assists universities to become better users and custodians of digital data**

One of the challenges identified in the SHEILA project "Supporting Higher Education to Incorporate Learning Analytics" which higher education faces in the adoption of learning analytics (LA) – understood as the measurement, collection, analysis, and reporting of data about learners and their contexts, for purposes of understanding and optimising learning and the environments in which it occurs - is the limited availability of policies to address issues of privacy and ethics. In this regard, SHEILA partners are working on a policy development framework to assist European universities to become more mature users and custodians of digital data about their students. The team has performed a series of activities to identify the current practices and issues on the matter including a group concept mapping study conducted with LA experts; a survey about institutional readiness which was distributed to 46 higher education institutions; and interviews with 64 senior leaders from 51 different higher education institutions.

Results from these activities have so far indicated that numerous higher education institutions are either observing the development of LA or have engaged with it practically, but most institutions are at an exploratory stage without a defined strategy or monitoring framework for LA. Early adopters, however, are likely to elevate the culture and encourage dialogue around LA among researchers and practitioners.

### **Former ENQA Board member Karl Dittrich becomes president of EQAR**

Following decisions made in early 2017 to replace the previously rotating presidency (held by the E4 as the EQAR's founding members) and separate position of Register Committee chair with a single President, the EQAR General Assembly, including representatives of the key European stakeholder organisations as well as 38 ministries of higher education, unanimously elected Karl Dittrich as EQAR President for a term of three years. Karl will be the first to hold the position following the changes in the



organisational structure of EQAR; his term will begin on 1 July 2017.

Karl started his career as a political scientist and lecturer in Leiden, Florence, and Maastricht. He chaired the Executive Board of the University of Maastricht from the 1990s until the early 2000s. He was the inaugural chairman of the Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation (NVAO) from 2005 to 2012 and in that capacity also a member of the Board of ENQA. Recently, Karl has chaired the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU), a position from which he will retire in October 2017.



## EQAF News

### Registration for EQAF is now open

Registration is now open for the 12th European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF), which will take place on 23-25 November 2017 in Riga, hosted by the University of Latvia. The deadline for the early-bird registration fee is 9 October 2017. After this date, late registration fees will apply; however, capacity is limited, and registrations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. To register, please visit the EQAF website. To register, please visit the [EQAF website](#). Here you will find a preliminary programme and further information about the Forum. You can also stay up to date with the latest news by following [@EQAF](#) on Twitter.

Under the title of "Responsible QA – committing to impact", the Forum will focus on the need for quality assurance, whether aiming at accountability or enhancement, to be carried out in a transparent and responsible manner. Forum organisers are seeking proposals for paper sessions and workshops from QA practitioners in higher education institutions and QA agencies, students, and researchers in the field. Selected contributions will also receive one reduced fee for attending the Forum. The deadline to submit contributions is 24 July 2017.

### About EQAF

EQAF has been co-organised by [ENQA](#), [ESU](#), [EUA](#) and [EURASHE](#) since 2006 and has become the largest annual gathering of the European higher education QA community. EQAF aims to bridge national boundaries by facilitating a Europe-wide discussion on current trends and forthcoming developments in research, policy and practice. EQAF provides a unique opportunity to share experiences and network with a wide range of stakeholders, including representatives from higher education institutions and QA agencies, students, researchers and policy makers from across Europe and beyond.

## CEENQA Projects

### News on CEENQA Projects

As far as the **ALIGN project (Achieving and checking the alignment between academic programs and qualification frameworks)** is concerned, a project meeting took place in June in Gent (Belgium) at which the state of the project was presented and the final steps were defined and agreed. The next task in which CEENQA will be involved is the remaining **piloting visit in Russia at the Moscow State Pedagogical University** which will take place on **5 – 6 September 2017**. CEENQA will contribute with an appropriate expert from their member agencies. The final dissemination events will take place in Ukraine presumably beginning of October. The final project meeting is scheduled for 9-10 October 2017 in Yerevan.

Regarding the project **QUAERE (Quality Assurance System in Ukraine: Development on the base of ENQA standards and guidelines)**, the development of criteria for reviewing





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degree programmes and development of a template for the Self-Assessment-Report (SAR) has been completed. A training workshop took place in Greece in May in order to prepare 8 Ukrainian universities to develop their Self-Assessment-Report based on the criteria for selected degree programmes. CEENQA members will be asked to nominate relevant experts and staff members for the piloting visits planned for **November and December 2017**.

Last but not least **three project applications with CEENQA as partner** have been handed in. The outcomes will be published in our next newsletter.

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