Single Accreditation of Joint Programmes: Turning the Bologna Guideline into Reality – Concluding Remarks

Aurelija Valeikienė, Inga Juknytė-Petreikienė, Achim Hopbach

The Vilnius conference brought together more than one hundred stakeholders from 18 countries of the European Higher Education Area to discuss the implementation of the common European policy regarding the single accreditation of joint programmes. Specific institutional experiences and legislation of particular countries based on the case of the consortium of the *European Joint Masters' Programme in Strategic Border Management*, implemented by six European higher education institutions in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, the Netherlands, Spain, and coordinated by Frontex, the European Union Border and Coast Guard Agency, were examined. The Vilnius conference clearly demonstrated the high degree of complexity of single accreditation of joint programmes and highlighted the many issues still to be tackled. Two years after the adoption of the *European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes* (2015), its application seems to be very slow and far below expectations. It was said that, to overcome hurdles, it is necessary to coordinate attempts in the domain of accreditation of joint programmes by thinking outside the "national boxes" and to bring this work together with the demands, needs and experiences of international consortiums of higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies across the European Higher Education Area.

The conference had two missions: to identify obstacles still existing for single accreditation of joint programmes, and to propose possible solutions. The objectives of the event were reached by presenting and discussing various viewpoints and experiences, and suggesting ways forward in the existing and accepted diversity of European higher education systems to reinforce implementation of the European Approach on the ground. Conference participants identified issues for organizations and institutions responsible for the quality assurance in higher education to address both nationally and internationally. These issues are presented below.

Work already done

In building and sustaining the European Higher Education Area, joint programmes are considered to be a hallmark of togetherness, and are thus received as such. They continue to attract considerable political attention and investment, and were accepted by higher education institutions as a large educational, scientific, cultural, and social project, supported by other stakeholder organizations. Yet despite this, there are many challenges with transforming the idea into academic reality and delivering the added value of cooperation.

As recorded in the Bucharest Communiqué, the encouragement for higher education institutions to further develop joint programmes and degrees was backed by the resolve of the Ministers of Education to remove obstacles to cooperation and mobility that stem from the national contexts. This led to the Bologna Follow-Up Group commissioning an ad-hoc expert group to develop policy for a specific European accreditation approach for joint programmes. The ad-hoc

working group came to the same conclusions as the ENQA members[49], namely that the problems hindering both joint programmes and joint degrees lie mainly in national regulations for approval of programmes to be applied in quality assurance and recognition.

More specifically, the working group observed that:

- *Several national quality assurance processes* are costly, time consuming, occur at different times at institutions, parts of programmes are subject to different criteria and procedures, different panels visit different institutions and as a result programmes in their entirety are not evaluated, and programmes retain multiple accreditations;
- *A joint quality assurance process* can experience time and cost savings, but the quality assurance agencies still need to coordinate and compare evaluation frameworks, an international panel may or may not produce one review report, and there is no guarantee that the results will be accepted in higher education systems of institutions involved in the various mandatory procedures they are subject to;
- *The Single quality assurance procedure* represents a step forward with one process coordinated by one agency, the commissioning of one expert panel visiting just one location and producing one report; and the evaluation framework consisting of two parts: the European shared component (the "core") and the relevant national components (the "plus"). The backbone of the European element is reliance on ESG50, QF-EHEA51 and ECTS52. The national component would consist of additional nationally applied criteria in order to meet nation state requirements for accreditation.

The ECA consortium, in its own right, has identified the challenges for joint programmes as being political ones, related to information, of a procedural nature, or grounded in criteria. Based on the lessons learnt, especially of the JOQAR project that is considered as the most profound on quality assurance of joint programmes, *the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes* was proposed by the ad-hoc group formed by the Bologna-Follow-up Group. The draft was discussed with stakeholders and subsequently adopted by the Ministers of Education at the Yerevan meeting in 2015.

In the meantime, to advance fair recognition of joint degrees, new tools were developed, such as the European Area of Recognition (EAR) Manual[53] (endorsed by Ministers of Education with the Bucharest Communique in 2012), its spin-off being the European Recognition Manual for HEIs[54] (2nd edition produced in 2016), and the Revised Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees and the Explanatory Memorandum[55] (approved by the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee in February 2016). To help further develop practices of members of ENIC[56] and NARIC[57] networks and to bring recognition into line with the best international approaches, SQUARE[58] standards and guidelines[59] were created and have already been voluntarily tested by a third of members.

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49 ENQA (2012), Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (ENQA workshop report 19)
50 Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
51 Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area
52 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
53 http://ear.enic-naric.net/emanual/
54 http://eurorecognition.eu/Manual/EAR%20HEI.pdf
55 http://www.enic-naric.net/fileusers/Revised_Recommendation_on_the_Recognition_of_Joint_Degrees_2016.pdf
56 European Network of Information Centres in the European Region, the latter being defined by joining the Council of Europe Cultural Convention
57 National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union
58 System of Quality Assurance for the Recognition Networks
59 http://www.enic-naric.net/fileusers/SQUARE%20Protocol%20FIN.pdf

The *European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes* fills the gap with new quality assurance instruments. Its essential characteristics are:

- Joint programmes should be based on the agreed tools of the EHEA, namely ESG and QF-EHEA, as well as ECTS,
- Quality assurance should be implemented in an integrated manner, both in relation to internal quality assurance within HEIs, consortium members, and in relation to their external quality assurance procedures.

More specifically, two methods of application were proposed:

- In the event cooperating higher education institutions require external quality assurance at programme level, they should select a suitable quality assurance agency from the list of EQAR-registered agencies and in case follow the notification procedures as required for regulated professions falling under the EU directive 2005/36/EC and its successor 2013/55/EU;
- In the event all cooperating higher education institutions are subject to external quality assurance at institutional level only and have "self-accrediting" status, they may use the European Approach in setting up joint internal approval and monitoring processes for their joint programmes.

Current status

As noted by EUA, in several systems where HEIs have self-accrediting powers or external QA is carried out at institutional level, programme accreditation regulations do not pose a challenge. Yet the reality on the ground is that, to cite EQAR, while only seven EHEA states implement institutional level procedures and another seven states run both approaches (both programme and institutional level reviews), the vast majority of countries – 34 to be precise – still exercise programme-level evaluations. Thus, regulatory obstacles persist – and are likely to remain.

Among the countries where all or some HEIs are subject to external quality assurance at institutional level, the European Approach is available to institutions by virtue of them being autonomous. This is the case of Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, Ireland, Malta, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and the UK. So, in theory, if HEIs from these countries embark on the creation of the joint programme, they might not be facing any challenges of external quality assurance. It would be interesting to find out if among the approximately 2 500 joint programmes currently running there is any external quality assurance. Unfortunately, currently no such universal register[60] exists that would enable us to search for this information. We are talking here about challenges to fulfil external quality assurance obligations that higher education institutions in 40 countries of EHEA might face, and this means a challenge of a massive scale.

As demonstrated in the case of the *European Joint Masters' programme in Strategic Border Management*, sometimes HEIs are having difficulties just to learn for how long their external review results are valid within some jurisdictions, not to mention other essential questions, such as:

- programme entry requirements,
- programme volume in ECTS and number of learning hours per ECTS,
- structure of the qualification and the profile,
- provisions for recognition/validation of prior learning,
- pass mark and the common grading system,
- title to be awarded,
- specifications on the parchment and Diploma Supplement.

Lastly, higher education institutions and external quality assurance agencies face

60 Some information on Erasmus Mundus joint programmes is available via ECA consortium, but there is not an exhaustive list of all joint programmes in EHEA. See http://ecahe.eu/w/index.php/Erasmus_Mundus_Master_programmes

financial challenges both in the implementation of the programme and its quality assurance; therefore, both national and European Union support is regarded as vital. Quality and cooperation do have costs attached.

Another aspect to add and be noted by conference participants is that at the moment there still are countries where other ENQA-reviewed and EQAR-registered agencies are not allowed to operate at all, or where certain additional conditions should be met. There was speculation that this may be happening due to such underlying reasons as lack of mutual trust or control over public funds' spending (where programme evaluation results are linked with funding allocations).

As acknowledged by external quality assurance agencies that tried to apply the European Approach and subsequently often had to settle on only the single quality assurance procedure, flexibility is needed – otherwise we are all stuck in local regulations and old cultural habits.

Testimonies received from recognition centres as well as members of ENIC and NARIC networks also support the view that flexibility is desired and indeed possible following the principle that equivalence is not sought, but full recognition should be granted unless substantial differences are demonstrated. The concept of substantial difference is meant to accommodate minor differences between the countries and qualifications awarded.

Proposed solutions

As was demonstrated during the conference, **there is still a need to imbed into national legislation an agreed European definition of a joint programme and a joint degree.** In 2015, it was estimated that 11 countries had not developed explicit notions of joint programmes and joint degrees[61]. This is to be done with the aim to clearly identify cases where the European Approach is or will be applicable as to not interfere with other programmes offered. While there is promotional work to be done by international organizations, these efforts should be supplement with proposals from QA agencies, which as a rule are well versed in reading and interpreting legislation and therefore could take up an intermediary role in the dialogue with local decision makers.

Further, **awarding of joint degrees should be clearly allowed by national legislation.** Currently only a subset of joint programmes result in the award of joint qualifications, more often HEIs combined with issuing double or multiple degrees. **These awards should come with a Diploma Supplement in an agreed format, following the Council of Europe/UNESCO/European Commission template.**

Participants of the conference agreed that **there is still a need to promote the European Approach in political and academic circles,** as well as a need to promote the Ministerial commitment made on behalf of Bologna Process states two years ago, so that it is widely accepted by both the local authorities and HEIs. Higher education institutions themselves and their associations – EUA, EURASHE and EAIE – are seen as the primary agents for this task of increasing awareness, followed by the quality assurance agencies and their ENQA and ECA associations, and the EQAR register, as secondary.

It is worth reminding the relevant decision makers that **the issue is not about translating the European Approach into the national legislation, but abandoning the latter in favour of the European Approach – as this was the commitment of the Ministers in Yerevan**. Security and trust in the European Approach is backed by the requirement that only such procedures

61 European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015. The European Higher Education Area in 2015: Bologna Process Implementation Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Page 218. Full text at https://media.ehea.info/file/2015_Yerevan/73/3/2015_Implementation_report_20.05.2015_613733.pdf

are unconditionally accepted that are implemented by external quality assurance agencies, which themselves are subject to ENQA reviews and registration in EQAR. On the part of the quality assurance agencies, some work might be needed to learn how to directly apply the European Approach, instead of applying their regular procedures, and correspondingly train their own staff and brief experts.

Ministers should be further encouraged to fulfil the obligation they took upon themselves in Bucharest to allow EQAR-listed agencies to operate in their jurisdictions. Without this promise being translated into national legislation, due to the voluntary nature of Bologna Process, not all HEIs will be able to freely choose the agency through which they would satisfy external accountability requirements.

While the *European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes*, as its title says, is focused on quality assurance, to some extent it also defines the standards for the quality of the programme – these are described in Part B of the document. Thus, the Approach is able to tackle part of the problems that joint programmes face, but only partially. Under the Approach "the institutions awarding the degree(s) should ensure that the degree(s) belong to the higher education systems of the countries in which they are based". The latter requirement sends the HEIs back to the confusing scenario of trying to please all nationally embedded regulatory authorities – a task that has been proven as unrealistic to fully accomplish. Therefore, there is a need to fill the gap – **continue discussions and come up with more precise definitions for the quality of the joint programmes**. As demonstrated by the example of the *European Joint Master's Programme in Strategic Border Management*, national regulations regarding both quality assurance and the quality of the joint programme are different and hard to reconcile; the consortium had to lobby for some locally embedded restrictions to be lifted, or lost some partners on the way. Luckily, some European projects concerned with the experiences of external quality assurance agencies and HEIs, including ImpEA coordinated by the ECA consortium, are already in the pipeline and are expected to provide further input on the subject.

There is still work to be done **to establish joint programmes as a brand of particular European importance**. This task has several dimensions, including universal registration and visibility via some designated gateway, but more importantly, assuring that joint programmes are really associated with excellent teaching and learning. Unfortunately, evaluation results to date do not support the view that all joint programmes are of exceptional quality. This is the challenge to be taken up by HEIs themselves, which are primarily responsible for quality of their provision. ENQA and ECA as associations of quality assurance agencies, are well positioned to support mutual learning of HEIs through presentation of evaluation results and analysis of the conditions that led to these. Peer learning from developments in various EHEA countries in the form of seminars or projects is very important.

If the advice of the conference participants and European stakeholders represented herein is taken up to completely elevate the joint programmes from the national contexts and to exempt them from the national requirements, agreement is also needed that this new type of European joint degree is explicitly recognised by local authorities as comparable to the qualifications assigned to the first-, second- or third-cycle and corresponding national degrees. These European qualifications may or may not be included in the national qualification frameworks, but proper wording in national legislation or any other kind of recognition guidelines needs to be explicitly included, thereby securing students' rights to full recognition of such degrees at home, throughout the EHEA, and in regions beyond.

Stocktaking on national implementation and close monitoring by the BFUG working structure and by the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee must continue. Approaching BFUG and providing input towards relevant reporting is a task for all consultative partners of the Bologna Process,

and the moment for this is approaching with the Ministerial meeting in Paris less than a year away.

The conference participants are also conscious that there are still questions associated with implementation of joint programmes with non-EHEA countries, but left these for exploration on other occasions.

Concluding remarks

Stakeholders present at the Vilnius conference, including higher education institutions, external quality assurance agencies, ENQA, EUA, EURASHE, ESU, EQAR, ECA, and ENIC/NARIC networks universally acknowledged that solutions to aid implementation of joint programmes and the application of the European Approach for Quality Assurance should be actively sought by both following top-down and bottom-up approaches.

The organisers of the Vilnius conference hope that the event gave a boost to finding solutions for single accreditation of joint programmes by inducing, triggering and reinforcing national discussions for making the legal regulations of joint programmes more flexible and compatible with the already adopted *European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes*. Revision of national legislation on higher education and resolution of issues stemming from other legislation, when national administrative law has to be applied in accreditation procedures, is inevitably required. Legal actions are needed to guarantee that commonly agreed quality assurance decisions concerning joint programmes are fully and formally accepted in all countries concerned, which removes the burdensome obligation for joint programmes to undergo accreditation according to the various legislation of all the countries involved.

We believe it is possible to overcome the existing barriers in the accreditation of joint programmes in Europe by demonstrating political will, by promoting and raising awareness of the issue (communicating) and by researching the status quo and ways forward – this approach would address the issue of trust. Trust comes with working together.

Annex: Contributors

INTRODUCTION



Dr Inga Žalėnienė

Inga Žalėnienė graduated from Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania in 2001. After graduation she joined the Department of Law at the "Lithuanian Savings Bank" listed company and worked as a legal adviser while lecturing in the field of Family Law at Mykolas Romeris University.

Dr Žalėnienė completed PhD studies in Law in 2006. She was then appointed as Vice-Dean of the Law Faculty of Mykolas Romeris University in 2009 and responsible for the development of education policy, formation and coordination of research groups, organization of scientific project activities, and planning and accounting of scientific results. Dr Žalėnienė was appointed Vice-Rector for Research and International Relations in 2012, then Vice-Rector for Education and Research in 2017, and currently holds this position.

In 2016, Dr Žalėnienė was elected Administrative Board Member of the International Association of Universities, a UNESCO-based international association of higher education institutions. As administrative board members, the Vice-Rector and other board members of the IAU ensure that the decisions of the General Conference are implemented and guide the work of the International Universities Bureau.



Françoise Profit

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Françoise Profit is Head of the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) Secretariat.

She was Head of the Office of Medical and Paramedical Studies in the French Ministry of Education, Higher Education and Research in charge of structural reforms in that field, and in particular the changes generated by the application of the Bologna Process to medical/paramedical studies.

Françoise was Deputy Head of the Office in charge of Masters and Doctoral Studies in the French Ministry of Education, Higher Education and Research. In 2012–2013, she was a national delegate in the ad-hoc working group on the third cycle member of the Bologna Process in charge of promoting quality, transparency, employability and mobility in the third cycle. From 2011 to 2013, she was project manager in charge of the national pedagogical call for tender in the framework of the French programmes of excellence.

From 2004 to 2010, she was Head of the French ENIC NARIC centre for recognition of foreign qualifications. She was involved during that time in the network as a participant in projects and as President of the ENIC network from 2007 to 2009 and President of the MERIC network in 2010.

As an expert, she contributed to many studies, especially the Study on the Diploma Supplement as seen by its users in cooperation with ENQA and on professional recognition in the framework of the publications of the Council of Europe. She acted as independent consultant for the PAP ESR project in 2015 aiming to implement the Bologna tools in Algeria.

Françoise Profit holds a Licence in French Literature and Language (Paris III Sorbonne Nouvelle, France), a Maîtrise in French Linguistic (Paris III Sorbonne Nouvelle, France) and a Master's in Information-Communication/Documentation (Conservatoire national des arts et métiers, Paris, France).

Dr Giedrius Viliūnas



Currently Vice-Minister at the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania.

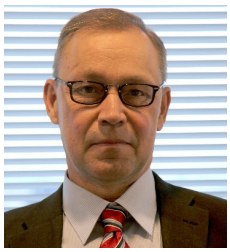
2010–2016 Vice-Rector for Education at Mykolas Romeris University, Assistant Professor of the Institute for Political Sciences of MRU. 2009–2010 Head of the Department of Research Policy at the Research Council of Lithuania, 2007–2009 Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, 2002–2007 Public and Professional Adviser to the Minister of Education and Science.

From 1989 until 2007 he held the positions of lecturer, researcher and associate professor at Vilnius University, 1996–2006 headed the Department of Lithuanian Literature.

Dr Viliūnas was serving as a board member and expert in various strategic and advisory bodies, including, among others, the Council for Evaluation of Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions, State Commission of Lithuanian Language, Lithuanian Research Council, Lithuanian State Science and Studies Foundation, CREST committee of the European Commission and Council of the European Union, Higher Education Council of Lithuania. He is currently the country representative in the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) of the European Higher Education Area, member of the Board of Governors of the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission.

Dr Viliūnas has authored and edited more than 10 books, a number of research and policy papers on science, higher education, and Lithuanian literature.

Henrik Wärnhjelm



Henrik Wärnhjelm is the Head of Frontex Training Unit and hence responsible for Frontex's training activities, i.e. the development and implementation of common educational standards, pre-deployment training, training support for border and coast guard functions, and the development and maintenance of networks and infrastructures for education and training.

Before joining Frontex in 2012 Henrik was the District Commander of West Finland Coast Guard district for almost 10 years. In this position he was responsible for all operational activities of the border guard in Western Finland. His work experience in the field of border management extends from 1980. He has been responsible for a wide range of duties, from the performance of daily border and coast guard tasks to the planning and management of border and coast guard training as well as the management of the operational and administrative processes. He has also gained experience in the activities of other security-related organisations and in the development of interoperability and cooperation.

As a former member of the management team of the Finnish Border Guard, he has actively contributed to the development and implementation of strategies in the field of border management. He is a general staff officer and holds in addition a Master's in political science with a focus on international maritime law.

PLENARY CONTRIBUTIONS



Anemona Peres

Anemona Peres is programme manager in the Frontex Training Unit, leading the Educational Standards Area. She is responsible for the development and implementation of common core learning standards for border guard education and training at all levels across the EU, promoting good practice in training design and quality assurance. Most recently she was project manager of the European Sectoral Qualifications Framework for Border Guarding (SQF), and of the European Joint Master's in Strategic Border Management.

She has worked for over 14 years as a psychologist and training officer within the Romanian Border Police, providing psychological assistance to the operational missions, and advising on organisational development, work psychology and training matters. She has designed and delivered courses for further training of border police senior officers and police trainers in Management and Organisational Development, Judicial Psychology and Training Methodology. Starting in 2005, at the Headquarters of the Romanian Border Police, she was in charge of the EU pre- and post- accession assistance programmes as Head of the Capacity Building component and programme manager for the Schengen Facility.

Ms Peres holds several degrees in psychology and education from West University of Timisoara, Babes Bolyai University Cluj Napoca and the University of Nottingham. She is currently working on a doctorate in quality assurance and validation of European border guard qualifications and its impact on harmonisation of border guard education and training across the EU.



Dr Inga Juknytė-Petreikienė

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Inga Juknytė-Petreikienė has worked for over 17 years in higher education with responsibility for the development and implementation of the HEI quality assurance system, including overall coordination of internal and external quality evaluation and improvement of study programmes in Bachelor's and Master's degrees. She has extensive project writing and administration experience. She managed national and international projects designed for the development of the internal quality assurance systems, the development of quality culture, the integration of international/intercultural dimensions into higher education, the preparation and implementation of joint programmes, development of teachers' intercultural competence, the improvement of quality of higher education and the creation of the internationalization assumptions in Lithuanian higher education institutions. She is an expert on assessment of quality and internationalisation of HEIs and study programmes.

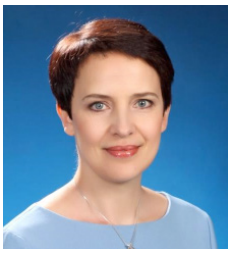
For almost ten years Inga has had an academic interest in the quality assurance and internationalization of higher education. She has been appointed for the term 2015 to 2021 as Chair of the Quality Assurance Committee by the Governing Board of the European Joint Master's programme in Strategic Border Management implemented by a consortium of six European HEIs and the EU Frontex agency.

Inga Juknytė-Petreikienė holds a Bachelor's and Master's in Political Sciences (Klaipėda University, Lithuania), a Master's in Management (Vilnius University, Lithuania), as well as a PhD in Educational science (Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania).

CONFERENCE SESSIONS

Accreditation practices of joint programmes around European Joint Master's programme in Strategic Border Management

Nora Skaburskienė



Nora Skaburskienė has worked in the field of quality assurance since 2001. She became the Head of Institutional Review Division in 2009 and served as the Acting Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education in Lithuania from 2013. In 2017 she was elected as SKVC Director.

Currently, Nora is a board member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and the Network of Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA). She is also involved in the working group of the ENQA on the quality assurance of e-learning and is an acting member of the National Bologna Follow-Up Group.

Nora has extensive experience in coordinating study programme assessments while also managing the work of the Division. She has contributed to the drafting of various legal acts and methodologies. She has wide-ranging experience of participating in local and international projects, with the tasks varying from research activities, training, to leading project teams. For two years she acted as the national representative of Lithuania in the EC 7FP "People" Committee.

Nora graduated in Communication and Information Sciences from Vilnius University (Lithuania).

Dr Andrejs Rauhvargers

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Andrejs Rauhvargers was born 1952 in Riga, Latvia and has a PhD in Chemistry from the University of Latvia and held a post-doctoral fellowship at Jyväskylä University, Finland.

He has been the Head of the Quality Assurance Agency of Latvia since 2015.

Before moving to the Quality Agency he was Secretary General of the Latvian Rectors' Conference and professor at the University of Latvia. Andrejs has also served as the Deputy State Secretary at the Ministry of Education, participating in the development of the legislation for higher education. He was closely involved in the establishment of a system for higher education quality assurance in Latvia and coordination of this work with the neighbouring countries of Estonia and Lithuania as well as in establishing systems for recognition of the foreign credentials of Latvia.

For six years Andrejs was Senior Advisor at the European University Association. He is a member of the Bologna Follow-Up Group and since 2005 has chaired the working group studying the progress in the 'Bologna' countries and preparing the Bologna Stocktaking reports published between 2005 and 2015.

He also has international experience in the field of recognition of foreign qualifications: from 1997 he has served as president of the European Network of Academic Recognition Centres (ENIC) and from 2001– of the Intergovernmental Committee of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and has written a number of publications in the field of recognition and various Bologna Process aspects.

Andrejs has also been co-editor of several volumes of the Council of Europe Higher Education series.

Since the very beginning of the Bologna Process in 1999, he has worked to help ensure that the European Higher Education Area will be a reality, particularly in the fields of joint degrees, qualification frameworks and recognition of qualifications.



Dr Mark Frederiks

Dr Mark Frederiks is coordinator of international policy and a member of Team Flanders of NVAO, the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders. Since 2004 he is also Coordinator of the European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA). For five years he was Administrator of the International Network of QA Agencies INQAAHE. He was a member of the Bologna Expert Group that prepared the European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes which was adopted by the EHEA Ministers in Yerevan. Mark coordinated four EU funded projects and was an expert in QA reviews in Austria, Germany, Ireland, Slovenia and Sweden. He coordinated the verification of the alignment of the Dutch and Flemish NQFs with the EHEA QF, participated as an expert in the NQF verification committee in Portugal, and advised on the NQF in Georgia.

Before joining NVAO, Mark worked with the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences, and was a researcher at CHEPS/University of Twente and Open University UK. He has (co-) authored some 40 publications in the field of quality assurance in higher education.



Sandra Marcos Ortega

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Sandra Marcos Ortega is Head of International Affairs and Institutional Quality at ACSUCYL (Quality Assurance Agency for the University System in Castilla y León) Spain. She has a Master's in Information Systems Management and Bachelor's degree in Information Management. She has 12 years of experience in management and design of internal and external quality assurance processes in higher education in both the national and international spheres, as well as in the management and development of international projects in cooperation with quality assurance agencies in the European area and beyond.

Since 2015 Sandra has been Chair of the IQA-ENQA Group (Standing Committee of ENQA). For three years she has also been a member of the IQA Group of ENQA and of the KP3 (Knowledge on part 3 of the ESG). She was a member in ACSUCYL´s Advisory Board 2007–2015. She is responsible for the management of the design, development and follow-up of strategic plans; design, implementation and development of the Management Quality System in ACSUCYL according to the ISO Standard 9001; carrying out of audits of the Management Quality Systems in Quality Assurance Agencies for Higher Education; assessment and accreditation of university degree programmes. She has managed more than 400 assessments in the last two years and developed audits at Universities as well as guides and procedure manuals for higher education institutions.

Lagle Zobel

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Lagle Zobel has been a lawyer of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (EKKA) since 2010.

Lagle is responsible for drawing up draft decisions for the EKKA Quality Assessment Council and ensuring the compliance of EKKA's assessment regulations with national legislation and regulations on the assessment of higher education. She cooperates with lawyers of the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research in amending legislation and provides legal advice to educational institutions and experts in external evaluation issues.

In 2015 Lagle accompanied an assessment panel as an observer on a study visit at the Netherlands Defence Academy during the accreditation process of the European Joint Master's in Strategic Border Management, opened in cooperation with Frontex. Subsequently, she made proposals to the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research for amending the legislation concerning joint study programmes.

Since 2014 she has been actively involved as a part-time expert in the legal component of several EU Twinning projects in Armenia and Azerbaijan. In 2015 she participated in the development and implementation of accreditation of Master's of law study programmes in the Republic of Moldova.

Lagle Zobel holds a Master's in law from the University of Tartu, Estonia.

Two years after Yerevan: progress so far

Tia Loukkola

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Tia Loukkola is the director of Institutional Development at the European University Association (EUA). In this capacity she has overall responsibility for the Association's activities that aim to support EUA's member universities in developing their institutional capacity in quality assurance, doctoral education and learning & teaching. In the field of quality assurance this includes the management of EUA's Institutional Evaluation Programme, the European Quality Assurance Forum and various projects run by the association as well as representing EUA in European level policy discussions, and recently in the revision of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

Tia is a regular speaker at higher education conferences in Europe and beyond and has authored several publications and articles in her field of expertise.

Before joining EUA in April 2008 she worked at the University of Turku in Finland for 10 years in various capacities both in faculty and central administration. She holds a Master's in French and culture from the same university.



Colin Tück

Colin Tück is the Director of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). He has been working for EQAR since October 2007, initially as Project Manager on behalf of its founding members (ENQA, ESU, EUA and EURASHE).

He was a member of the Steering Group for the revision of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), and is a co-author of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint programmes.

Prior to joining EQAR Colin was involved in quality assurance-related topics as a member of the European Students Union's (ESU, formerly ESIB) Bologna Process Committee and of the Executive Board of the National Union of Students in Germany (fzs).



Dr Achim Hopbach

Achim Hopbach has been working in higher education since 1997. Before taking up his current post as Managing Director of the Austrian Quality Assurance Agency (AQ Austria) in 2012, he was the Managing Director of the German Accreditation Council for 7 years.

Achim held and holds various positions in quality assurance agencies and associations, such as President of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) from 2009 to 2013; member of the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) from 2005 to 2013; member of the University Quality International Board (UQAIB), Dubai, since 2015; member of the Board of the Agency for the Evaluation and Promotion of Quality in Ecclesiastical Faculties (AVEPRO), Holy See, since 2016.

He works on international consultancy projects, including in Southeast Asia and Africa and has published numerous articles on the Bologna Process, quality assurance and qualification frameworks.

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Jürgen Petersen joined ZEvA (Central Evaluation and Accreditation Agency Hanover) in 2011 and currently heads ZEvA's division of institutional accreditation. In addition to national and international accreditation and QA-procedures he is responsible for strategic development and the capacity building of peers/experts. Since 2012 he has been a member of ECA's (European Consortium for Accreditation) Board which he has chaired since 2016.

Before joining ZEvA, Jürgen worked in several positions in higher education institutions (University of Göttingen, University of Zürich, Goethe-University Frankfurt/M.) and was involved in the development, implementation and teaching of study programmes in the Social Sciences.

He has been a researcher in several projects, including "Polling and Political Representation in a Comparative Perspective" (Swiss National Science Foundation) and "The Political Class in Advanced Democracies" (VolkswagenStiftung) and took part in the strategic development of further individual and cooperative projects. His research interests now include higher education reforms as policy processes, including their socio-political basis.

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Allan Bruun Pedersen is a senior adviser at the Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science, the Danish ENIC-NARIC Office.

He is an experienced recognition expert and elected Vice President of the Lisbon Recognition Convention Bureau. He was previously President and Vice President of the ENIC network, the recognition network of the Council of Europe and UNESCO.

Allan is currently a member of two BFUG working groups, one on implementation of structural reforms dealing with recognition, qualifications frameworks, quality assurance and transparency tools, and the other on the revision of the Diploma Supplement.

He was also previously a member of several BFUG working groups and of the pathfinder group on automatic recognition.

He has appeared as an expert on recognition at numerous conferences in Europe and beyond and as a consultant on recognition projects in Georgia, Germany and other countries. He is also in charge of the National Contact Point for the Danish Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning.

Allan holds a Master's in History and Eastern and Central European Studies from Copenhagen and Roskilde University.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS SESSIONS

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Aurelija Valeikienė has been Deputy Director of the Center for Quality Assurance in Higher Education since 2004, and also Head of the Lithuanian ENIC/NARIC.

She was a member of various working groups drafting national legislation in credentials evaluation and quality assurance of higher education in Lithuania. In 2012–2015 she was a national delegate in the working group on structural reforms in the Bologna Process, encompassing topics of national qualifications frameworks, quality assurance, recognition of qualifications, and transparency. From 2015 to 2018 she is serving on the BFUG Advisory Group to Support Belarus on the Roadmap to EHEA.

Aurelija served as treasurer and board member, then as President of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA). She was a member of the ENQA Board as well as several working groups on staff development, quality assurance and recognition of qualifications, and internal quality assurance for quality assurance agencies. She contributed towards developing a revised model of quality agency reviews against ESG-2015.

She acts as an independent consultant and expert for the Council of Europe, the World Bank, ENQA, the European Training Foundation, and other organisations. She has extensive project writing, administration and management experience and has served as an expert in 13 international projects.

Aurelija holds a Bachelor's in Philosophy (Vilnius University, Lithuania) and a Master's of Science in Management (New York University, USA).

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Single Accreditation of Joint Programmes – Turning the Bologna Guideline into Reality

Conference Report 2017

May 30–31, 2017
Mykolas Romeris University
Vilnius, Lithuania

MYKOLAS ROMERIS UNIVERSITY

European Joint Master's in Strategic Border Management

SKVC

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