

ENQA report to the BFUG 26-27 September 2024, Hungary

Highlights of ENQA's activities since April 2024

ENQA (the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) is the designated stakeholder organisation of quality assurance agencies in the EHEA. ENQA represents their interests internationally, supports them nationally and provides them with comprehensive services and networking opportunities. Under ENQA's umbrella, the community of agencies drives innovation in quality assurance and refines quality assurance processes.

I. ENQA MEMBERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

ENQA's membership currently stands at 60 agencies in 32 countries in the EHEA, as well as 41 affiliates in 52 countries worldwide. There are ENQA members and/or affiliates in 45 out of the 47 EHEA countries (excluding Russia and Belarus).

Elections for ENQA's governing Board will take place at the General Assembly meeting on 24-25 October 2024 in Malta.

2. LATEST ENQA ACTIVITIES

ENQA's message to the Tirana Ministerial Conference

In advance of the 2024 Bologna Process Ministerial Conference, ENQA published its [message](#) to the Ministers of the EHEA. In the message, ENQA highlighted quality assurance as a prominent success story of the EHEA, while recognising that there is still work to be done, both in meeting existing commitments and in ensuring that the shared framework remains fit-for-purpose in the changing higher education environment.

In this context, ENQA calls on Ministers to take action on three key issues:

- Ensure that national legislative frameworks allow quality assurance agencies to operate in compliance with the ESG;
- Enable international collaboration by reducing national-level barriers in quality assurance and higher education while enhancing transparency;
- Maintain the relevance and added value of external quality assurance by allowing quality assurance agencies to implement flexible and enhancement-oriented approaches.

The key points of the message were delivered in a [speech](#) to delegates by ENQA's President, Douglas Blackstock. He highlighted that the recommendations address the topics raised by quality assurance agencies as being crucial to enable them to meet European level expectations; provide the accountability and transparency necessary to support recognition, mobility and international cooperation; and support higher education institutions and students with responsive and enhancement-led approaches to external quality assurance. ENQA members and affiliates regularly cite national legislation as being a significant barrier in achieving these aims — therefore, action by national authorities is key to success.

QA-FIT project draws to a close

The ENQA-coordinated QA-FIT project (Quality Assurance Fit for the Future) has continued its activities to explore in more detail key issues for the future of quality assurance in the EHEA, and specifically to gather further evidence to inform the revision of the ESG

In May 2024, the project consortium published two papers exploring perspectives on key issues for quality assurance. The paper '[The future of the ESG](#)' summarises the data collected from individual stakeholder groups with the objective of identifying and analysing commonalities and divergences in the perceptions of the ESG, and exploring key questions to be addressed in the revision. The paper '[Quality assurance and internationalisation](#)' explores the state of implementation of the various quality assurance policies and tools that support internationalisation, and discusses how current quality assurance arrangements both facilitate and inhibit international activities of higher education institutions..

In early September a [webinar](#) was held to present the above papers and discuss the future of the European quality assurance framework. A [Policy Brief](#) has been published, which gives insights into the project outcomes in the context of the quality assurance priorities set out by the EHEA and the European Union.

On 7 November 2024, a final project [event](#) will be held in Brussels to gather higher education stakeholders and policy-makers to discuss the current context for quality assurance and reflect on how the EHEA framework can evolve to remain responsive and relevant, drawing on the findings of the project activities. In conjunction with this, a final paper will be published that will propose some principles for the revision of the ESG.

Revision of the ESG gets underway

Following the mandate from the EHEA Ministers in the Tirana Communiqué, the first concrete steps for the revision of the ESG have been taken. A Steering Committee and a Drafting Group, have been established, consisting of representatives of the ESG authors. The first meeting of the Steering Committee will take place at the end of September, at which a roadmap for the revision process, including consultations with stakeholders and the BFUG, will be agreed. Approval of the final version by the BFUG is expected in 2026, followed by adoption at the 2027 Ministerial Conference.

3. ENQA AGENCY REVIEWS

In 2024, ENQA is coordinating 17 external peer reviews of quality assurance agencies. The review process assesses the compliance of agencies with the ESG, in line with the Bologna Process key commitment on quality assurance, and also provides recommendations to the agencies for their further development.

ENQA is currently engaged in an external review of its Agency Review service. The review will assess ENQA's compliance with the ESG, following the principle of cyclical peer review, and will follow up on the outcomes of the previous external review in 2019. The review is being coordinated by the Knowledge Innovation Centre, who were selected following an open tendering process. ENQA is currently finalising its self-assessment report. A panel of experts will conduct a site visit in December 2024 and will then provide a written report with analysis and recommendations. Further information about the review is available [here](#).

4. UPCOMING EVENTS

ENQA General Assembly 2024 will take place on 24-25 October in St Julien's, Malta. The [event](#) will address the topic of 'Quality assurance beyond the ESG' and elections for the Board will take place during the statutory part of the meeting.

QA-FIT project closing event will take place on 7 November 2024 in Brussels, Belgium. The [event](#) will gather higher education stakeholders and policy-makers to discuss the current context for quality assurance of higher education and reflect on how the EHEA framework can evolve to remain responsive and relevant, drawing on the findings of the project activities.

European Quality Assurance Forum 2024 will take place on 24-26 November, hosted by the University of Twente in the Netherlands. This year's [Forum](#) will focus on the theme of 'Enhancing education, research and societal engagement through quality assurance' and will offer an occasion to discuss the interconnection of the three missions. The early registration deadline is 20 September and the final registration deadline is 24 October.

ENQA Members' Forum 2025 will take place on 10-11 April in Paphos, Cyprus.

To stay updated on all ENQA's activities, subscribe to the quarterly news Bulletin through the link on ENQA's website [here](#).