First meeting of the Thematic Peer Group C on Quality Assurance (TPG C on QA)

<u>Minutes of the meeting</u>

28th-29th of November 2024

Ghent, Belgium

Nr.	Country/Organisation	Name
1.	Albania	Xhiliola Bixheku
2.	Albania	Erjon Xhako
3.	Austria	Jürgen Petersen
4.	Belgium – Flemish Community	Jens Dissevelt
5.	Belgium - Flemish Community (expert IMINQA project)	Jana Vandeputte
6.	Belgium - Flemish Community (expert IMINQA project)	Ruth Lamotte
7.	Belgium: Flemish Community (former TPG C co-chair, expert IMINQA project)	Liesbeth Hens
8.	Bulgaria	Eliza Stefanova
9.	Business Europe	Inga Lapina
10.	Croatia	Josipa Dragičević
11.	Czech Republic	Tereza Křepelová
12.	Denmark	Camilla Badse
13.	EHEA Secretariat	Petrişor L. Țucă
14.	ENQA	Anna Gover
15.	EQAR	Aleksandar Šušnjar
16.	EQAR	Blazhe Todorovski
17.	EQAR	Giorgi Munjishvili
18.	ESU	Levente Varga
19.	EUA	Cecilia Biaggi
20.	EUA	Maria Kelo
21.	EUA	Thérèse Zhang
22.	EURASHE	Ana Tecilazić
23.	Eurydice/ EACEA, WG on Monitoring Co-chair	David Crosier
24.	France (co-chair)	Sophie Guillet

TPG C on QA_1_HU_IS_Minutes of meeting_27-28.11.2024

Nr.	Country/Organisation	Name
25.	France (co-chair)	Solange Pisarz
26.	Germany	Andreas Braun
27.	Germany	Peter Zervakis
28.	Greece	Georgia Protogerou
29.	Iceland	Sigríður Geirsdóttir
30.	Latvia	Jolanta Silka
31.	Luxembourg	Patricia Marx
32.	Malta	Giacomo Annese
33.	Montenegro	Milica Kavedzic
34.	Norway	Hege Brodahl
35.	Romania (co-chair)	Cristina Ghitulica
36.	Romania (co-chair)	Antonela Toma
37.	Romania (expert IMINQA project)	Iordan Petrescu
38.	San Marino	Monica Cavalli
39.	Slovak Republic	Vojtěch Przybyla
40.	Slovenia	Maja Milas
41.	Sweden	Ulf Hedbjörk
42.	Switzerland	Claudia Di Lecce
43.	United Kingdom - Scotland	Laura Porter

Belgium - French Community was online.

Republic of Moldova was absent

The meeting starts at 14:07 CET.

1. **Welcome & Introduction by the Co-chairs**

The Co-chairs from Romania and France introduced the meeting and welcomed the participants. The director of the Industries Museum gave a presentation about the museum.

2. **Adoption of the agenda**

   Documents: Agenda for the meeting

TPG C on QA_1_HU_IS_Minutes of meeting_27-28.11.2024

The Co-chair introduced the agenda, which was agreed upon without any remarks.

3. Tour de table

Participants introduced themselves, outlining their background and interests in joining this group. Furthermore, participants introduced their country's priorities in the field of quality assurance, starting from the commitments in the Tirana Ministerial Communiqué.

Albania emphasised the need for the QA agency to apply for membership in ENQA. The Albanian representative expressed their focus on enhancing digital tools in quality assurance processes and on refining and strengthening national quality assurance procedures to meet international standards.

Belgium Flemish Community identified as key priorities the consolidation of existing quality assurance frameworks to ensure coherence and efficiency and the active involvement of stakeholders in these processes. The representative also stressed the importance of advancing digitalisation in quality assurance and making legislative adjustments to meet evolving demands in higher education.

Belgium French Community outlined their new framework focusing on institutional follow-up and strengthening internal QA. They also prioritise providing more support to institutions to help them adapt to evolving QA requirements.

Bulgaria underlined the need to modify current legislation in higher education to better address national and European requirements.

Austria's priorities focus on revising the higher education system and implementing necessary changes. The Austrian representative highlighted transitioning from programme-based evaluations to institutional evaluations, promoting academic integrity, advancing digitalisation in quality assurance, and addressing these priorities comprehensively.

Croatia mentioned they are developing a new quality assurance framework and strengthening internal quality assurance systems. They are also aligning the national qualifications framework with the EQF and work on the development of microcredentials and fostering joint programmes. Additionally, they stressed the importance of aligning study programmes with labour market demands.

Czech Republic noted that the current quality assurance agency will cease operations by 2025, following a decision by the newly elected parliament. As a consequence, plans are underway to transition to a new agency, focusing on ensuring its independence throughout the process.

Cyprus specified amendments to enhance the independence of the QA Agency, particularly in terms of financial autonomy and the ability to recruit personnel. Additional efforts were aimed at overcoming challenges in establishing joint degrees and offering programmes in other languages. The Cyprus representative also stressed the facilitation of branch campuses set up by foreign universities in Cyprus.

Denmark informed about their new quality assurance concept centred on institutional reviews and offered to support other countries in achieving their goals.

ESU emphasised their work on developing and promoting new methods for including students in EQA and IQA processes, aiming to enhance inclusivity and student engagement in quality assurance systems.

EUA explained their focus on the implementation of micro-credentials to support national reforms and emphasised the pivotal role of universities in driving these initiatives.

EURASHE highlighted their commitment to supporting HEIs in implementing effective quality assurance processes. The EURASHE representative also mentioned that they have a community of practice in QA. It was noted that their role includes developing their institutional and political systems as well as fostering internal innovations.

EQAR's key priorities included supporting countries in achieving their quality assurance goals, addressing implementation gaps, promoting cross-border quality assurance, encouraging the European Approach for the quality assurance of joint programmes ('EA'), and fostering trust in national and European quality assurance systems.

BusinessEurope highlighted their view of higher education as a service to society and its critical connection to the labour market. The BusinessEurope representative emphasised the integration of micro-credentials and the promotion of mobility between the higher education system.

Finland stressed the importance of cooperation in the European Higher Education Area and quality assurance for European university alliances. Key priorities for Finland also included micro-credits, developing a new quality assurance model and aligning these efforts with the upcoming ESG review.

France highlighted the quality assurance of European University Alliances as a major priority. The French representative stressed the need for simplification in quality assurance processes and ensuring continuity in institutions mission, particularly in areas such as pathways in education, research, lifelong learning and their third mission of community engagement.

Germany emphasised the application of criteria set by the German state, focusing on their revision and implementation to improve quality assurance. Priorities included decreasing control, focusing more on enhancement-oriented approaches, strengthening quality culture, and ensuring good study conditions. The German representative also highlighted the importance of reinforcing academic integrity in alignment with the principles of the ESG.

Greece mentioned that its priorities include revising quality assurance processes, conducting thematic analysis, and establishing new quality standards to ensure continuous improvement in higher education.

Hungary explained they would work on designing an integrated accreditation tool, facilitating the transition to institutional-level quality assurance processes and simplifying procedures to increase system efficiency and effectiveness.

Iceland highlighted their focus on the evaluation by ENQA, which they were undergoing. The Icelandic representative also informed about plans to increase staffing to strengthen quality assurance efforts.

Latvia outlined its transition towards institutional accreditation, focusing on developing methodologies, guidelines, and criteria to support this shift. Additional priorities included implementing risk-based monitoring to ensure effective oversight and quality assurance.

Luxembourg informed about the adoption of the new education law and further steps including developing new accreditation criteria.

Malta was focusing on implementing the recommendations received from the ENQA evaluation.

Netherlands emphasised the need to reduce the administrative burden associated with quality assurance by balancing EQA and IQA. The Dutch representative also mentioned the importance of thematic evaluations of quality assurance systems, alignment with the ESG, promoting the

European Approach for the quality assurance of joint programmes and promoting discussions on the European degree.

Norway mentioned it was focusing on reviewing the evaluation process as part of the fourth cycle of periodic evaluations. The review aims to adapt to the specific characteristics of institutions and adopt a more development-oriented approach.

Romania informed that with the adoption of the new law on higher education, the focus lies on finalising all subsequent legislation on higher education, ensuring alignment with European trends. The main areas of interest included micro-credentials, short-term programs and dual education.

San Marino mentioned its efforts to review their higher education institution through assessments carried out by a QA Agency.

Slovenia highlighted its focus on transitioning towards quality enhancement by fostering trust and collaboration with HEIs and recognizing evolving needs. The Slovenian representative informed about the integration of AI in their analytics department, conducting several thematic analyses and introducing legislation to make quality assurance more fit for purpose. Other priorities included micro-credentials, revising evaluation procedures and addressing institutional development.

Sweden emphasised institutional reviews and initial accreditation for programmes with the inclusion of programme samples as priorities. The Swedish representative outlined efforts in thematic evaluations, micro-credentials, digitalisation and peer-learning both within the country and internationally. Additional priorities included transnational education, cross-border quality assurance, the European Approach, addressing risks of digitalisation, promoting academic freedom, and strengthening collaboration with society. The Swedish representative also raised concerns about evaluation fatigue and administrative burden, emphasized the importance of the quality assurance of research and exploring the role of AI in QA processes. Security issues and ensuring responsible internationalisation were discussed as critical topics in Sweden. Sweden also underlined the need to link QA with recognition processes to ensure cohesion and effectiveness.

Switzerland presented their recent efforts, including the accreditation of programmes for certain professions, such as in the medical field, which had been completed last year. Other priorities included the development of micro-credentials, fostering European University Alliances and exploring the concept of a European degree. They also addressed challenges related to digitalisation and AI in QA processes.

UK – Scotland highlighted the development of a new tertiary education method and emphasised the importance of digitalisation in QA. Other priorities included cross-border quality assurance, promoting academic integrity and advancing micro-credentials.

4. **Report on TPG C activities 2021-2024**

Documents: [presentation Report IMINQA TPG C on QA](#)

Liesbeth Hens from the Ministry of Education and Training of the Belgium - Flemish Community and co-chair of the former TPG C 2021-2024 made the presentation of the TPG C activities for the period 2021-2024. Following the presentation, the Co-chairs opened the floor for questions and comments.

Austria asked whether a conclusion could be provided on the previous action plans, asking how they could be improved in future cycles, given that some countries had not completed these plans by the end of the previous cycle.

EURASHE asked a question related to a recommendation from the report about frequent changes to national legislation in Member States. Their interest focused on the extent to which these changes comply with ESG principles or respond to emerging trends.

The former Co-chair noted the differences in implementation between countries. It was noted that while there are ministerial commitments, legal and practical constraints may delay the achievement of the objectives. The need for continued political support, adequate funding and collaboration between stakeholders was highlighted. The former Co-chair also stressed the importance of integrating technological advances and aligning action plans with strategic objectives and emerging needs to improve results in future cycles.

The session ended with the Romanian Co-chair expressing gratitude to Liesbeth Hens for her contribution as a co-chair and the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training for coordinating the IMINQA project and hosting the first meeting of TPG C in the new cycle.

5. **Bologna Process implementation report**

   Documents:

- [Presentation BPIR TPG on QA](#)
- [Bologna Process Implementation Report](#)

David Crosier from Eurydice/ EACEA and co-chair of the WG on Monitoring gave the presentation of the Bologna Process Implementation Report. Following the presentation, the Co-chairs opened the floor for questions.

Austria raised a question related to demographic changes and their impact on higher education markets. The Austrian representative sought clarity on how demographic shifts influence enrollment trends and whether these changes are consistent across countries.

The Co-chair of the WG on Monitoring emphasised that demographic trends vary significantly across countries. He noted that while some countries are experiencing a demographic downturn, others continue to see growth in student numbers. Furthermore, he pointed out that countries with particularly large student populations have a substantial influence on the overall data. He clarified that there is no universal trend, as countries have different trajectories. While some are moving towards a demographic decline, the period covered by the report reflected a mixed picture, with varying patterns across the EHEA.

The Romanian co-chair raised a question concerning the reported trends in the student-to-staff ratio across countries. She noted a decrease in student numbers year-on-year and highlighted shifts between scientific disciplines, expressing interest in European and OECD statistics to better understand these dynamics. She asked how such differences are assessed and if they reflect the realities across countries.

The Co-chair of the WG on Monitoring explained that measuring student-to-staff ratios is a highly complex issue due to variations in how countries define and report academic staff. He

TPG C on QA_1_HU_IS_Minutes of meeting_27-28.11.2024

provided examples, noting that modern institutions often employ many staff members on short-term contracts, which are not consistently reported in national data, leading to an incomplete picture. Additionally, he highlighted discrepancies in the treatment of PhD candidates—some countries employ PhD students through contracts and include them in staff statistics, while others do not.

Romanian co-chair asked another question about the report's findings on the relationship between investment in public education and labour market employment. She inquired whether higher investment correlates with higher graduation rates and improved employment opportunities for graduates.

The Co-chair of the WG on Monitoring noted that analysing the link between public education investment and employment outcomes is challenging due to limited and inconsistent national statistics. He explained that many countries do not report sufficient data, making it difficult to draw conclusive insights. While some factors appear to influence completion rates and employment outcomes, the data does not present a clear or uniform pattern across countries.

6. BFUG 2024-2027 Work Programme

Documents:

- [EHEA Work Programme 2024-2027 presentation](#)
- [Bologna Follow-Up Group HU IS Work Programme 2024-2027](#)

The Romanian Co-chair presented the EHEA Work Programme 2024-2027. Following the presentation, the Co-chairs opened the floor for questions.

Sweden appreciated the clarity of the structures outlined in the Work Programme. The Swedish representative highlighted the challenge of addressing social dimension, noting its complexity compared to other established areas such as recognition and quality assurance, as social dimension is transversal and much more difficult to address systematically. He raised a question about the relationship between TPG C and D, particularly how information sharing and collaboration between the groups could be improved in the new cycle. Drawing from his experience in the previous period, he remarked that there was limited visibility of the BICG's work and suggested enhancing the mechanisms for exchanging information across groups to better align efforts on interconnected themes.

The Romanian Co-chair highlighted the ongoing discussions on the role of QA in addressing the social dimension. She noted that social dimension issues can be taken in other monitoring, as provided for in the [Principles and Guidelines for Strengthening the Social Dimension of HE in EHEA](#). However, she noted that further efforts are needed to integrate these issues into quality assurance processes effectively.

ESU highlighted their findings from the QA FIT project, pointing out that students identify some elements of the social dimension in quality assurance process, especially in the context of student support services. ESU emphasised the importance of integrating social dimension factors into QA practices to respond holistically to students' needs. Furthermore, ESU mentioned that the operationalisation of Annex 2 of the Rome Communiqué is a priority, underlining its relevance for advancing the social dimension in higher education.

EUA reflected on the establishment of the BICG in 2018, explaining that this group was conceived as an arbiter to ensure coherence and alignment between different areas within the TPGs Although the thematic groups and specific themes operate independently, they are interconnected, requiring constant communication and alignment to avoid diverging directions. EUA highlighted the need to reconcile different organisational cultures and approaches to promote alignment between thematic groups and to ensure the structure and coherence of BICG reports.

7. **Quality Assurance fit for the future: Policy brief and final paper and the ESG revision**

Documents:

- [ESG revision process and structures](#)
- [QA FIT Agencies Perspective](#)

Anna Gover from ENQA made the presentation. Following the presentation, the Co-chairs opened the floor for questions.

The Netherlands asked a question about the availability of draft texts of the revised ESG and the opportunities for Member States to provide feedback in the revision process, mentioning the role of member states in the TPG C and the complexity of reflecting on the review of ESG proposals. ENQA clarified that a draft text for the new ESG would be publicly available in the public consultation phase. She stressed the importance of proactive communication between quality assurance agencies and national ministries to discuss the possible implications of proposed changes in each country's context. ENQA highlighted that BFUG meetings and consultation processes would provide additional opportunities to review draft texts and provide feedback. She encouraged Member States to work with colleagues involved in the revision process to ensure comprehensive and well-informed contributions. EUA emphasised the importance of collecting input for the ESG revision, as directed by the BFUG. She clarified that while input from countries, organisations, and individuals is encouraged, the process must remain manageable to avoid inconsistencies. Countries can submit feedback collectively through their ministries, while individuals and organizations can provide input during public consultations. Ultimately, the outcomes would be presented to the Ministerial Conference for approval.

The Swedish representative highlighted the importance of early preparation for the ESG revision, noting that 2027 might seem distant, but the process demands significant readiness from countries and agencies. He emphasized that membership and registration with EQAR are crucial, as the revision could influence how agencies are organised or assigned tasks. He also pointed out that discussions should address methodologies for reviewing agencies, including considerations for developments like AI, which may impact quality assurance processes.

ENQA explained that the final version should be approved by the BFUG in 2026 and noted a grace period of approximately 18 months for agencies undergoing reviews shortly after the new ESG is adopted. This period allows agencies to adjust to the updated standards while maintaining their EQAR registration and ENQA membership.

TPG C on QA_1_HU_IS_Minutes of meeting_27-28.11.2024

EQAR referred to the importance of real-time consultation mechanisms, emphasising that they regularly engage in dialogue with stakeholders through annual events and structured discussions. EQAR indicated that these mechanisms are already shaping the ongoing ESG revision discussions.

ENQA concluded the discussion by explaining that the revised ESG will remain high-level, avoiding overly detailed prescriptions for particular tools or methodologies. This approach ensures that the ESG are relevant and adaptable to future developments, such as advancements in AI, online learning, and other evolving practices. Institutions and agencies will be guided to implement policies that address these topics without the ESG becoming outdated due to specific mentions of particular technologies or methods.

8. TPG C Action Plan 2024-2027

Documents: [Presentation priorities 2024-2027](#)

The Romanian Co-chair made the presentation. Following the presentation, the co-chairs opened the floor for questions and interventions.

The representative from Latvia expressed interest in the European Approach for the Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, noting its significance over the past decade. She highlighted that many countries have initiated the practical implementation of this approach and suggested that it would be beneficial to gain deeper insights into its application and share experiences. Additionally, she pointed out that while questionnaires are valuable, too many questions are often included, leading to delays or incomplete responses. She suggested optimizing the design of questionnaires to ensure timely and effective feedback.

The French Co-chair agreed with the points raised, acknowledging the high number of surveys conducted so far. She emphasised the need for practical tools and strategies to streamline feedback collection, highlighting the importance of gathering input from stakeholders at all levels.

Austria expressed concerns about the multitude of working groups and topics, asking whether some topics could be streamlined or excluded. The Austrian representative suggested that existing formats and groups might already cover some of the issues raised, potentially reducing duplication.

EUA highlighted the importance of sharing experiences among agencies during the implementation of joint programmes. She noted that regulatory changes are critical for the success of the European Approach, emphasizing that the decision to implement such changes ultimately lies with the EHEA countries. EUA underlined that TPG C should focus on implementation rather than on topics such as European Universities Alliances, which, while relevant, do not fall under the responsibility of this group. EUA also reflected on the increased excitement and involvement surrounding this topic, urging participants to remain mindful of the broader regulatory and political contexts.

EQAR addressed the ongoing requests from countries for advice on implementing the European Approach. EQAR acknowledged that while some countries have fully integrated the European Approach into their systems, others remain significantly behind. They emphasized that for some

countries, the topic may not seem pressing due to open systems with few legal barriers, while also highlighting the importance of the working structures within TPG C to provide targeted support to countries lagging in implementation.

The WG on Monitoring Co-chair highlighted the need to support the implementation of discussions and recommendations made within the group at the national level. He pointed out that the governments represented in TPG C are responsible for translating these decisions into action. He stressed that while some solutions may seem simple, their implementation often requires persistent effort and follow-up, whereas the group's role is to push for these solutions to be implemented.

Slovenia shared their agency's focus on areas such as IT and data management, improving methodologies, and enhancing QA systems. The Slovenian representative emphasised the importance of building trust in HEIs and integrating direct assessment into QA practices.

Sweden acknowledged the challenges of addressing cross-border issues and systemic inefficiencies. The Swedish representative pointed out to the complexity of dealing with different levels of governance and the frustrations that arise when progress is hindered. Reflecting on past projects, such as initiatives related to European alliances, he suggested that some topics could benefit from being consolidated under a single umbrella framework. This approach could streamline cross-border activities, joint programmes, and related initiatives, making them more manageable and impactful. He also stressed the importance of not only debating these issues within the group, but also finding mechanisms to implement meaningful changes.

The Netherlands raised a question regarding the diversity of members involved in the group. She noted that discussions on the European Approach may vary depending on the involvement of agencies and the capacity to implement the European Approach may vary significantly depending on whether the agency has a more established institutional structure.

The Romanian Co-chair responded by underlining that the aforementioned issue touches on the basic structure of the group, where the members are both the ministries of education and the quality assurance agencies. She mentioned that although representatives of the agencies may attend, the discussions and decisions at this level are shaped by the ministries. She considered that this distinction can sometimes create gaps in the implementation and alignment processes, underlining the importance of ensuring coherence between the ministries and the respective agencies.

9. **Quality Assurance to foster academic integrity**
   Supporting Cultures of Academic Integrity: The role of quality assurance agencies **in promoting and enhancing academic integrity and ensuring learning**

   Documents: Presentation ENQA WG academic integrity
   Report from ENQA

Anna Gover from ENQA delivered the report presentation. No questions or interventions were raised following the presentation.

10. Global Academic Integrity Network (GAIN) presentation and activities

Documents: GAIN presentation

Gráinne Mooney from QQI, the coordinator of GAIN, made the presentation. Following the presentation the co-chairs opened the floor for questions.

The France Co-chair from HCERES raised a question regarding differences in how Europe approaches academic integrity compared to other regions, such as the US and Australia. She inquired whether there are specificities unique to Europe and asked for reflections on how these might influence the broader international approach.

The speaker highlighted the variability in approaches to academic integrity, not only between regions like Europe and the US, but also within individual countries. She noted that the level of engagement depends heavily on the legal frameworks and mandates of agencies. Countries with strong legislative support, like Australia, are often at the forefront of academic integrity efforts. She emphasized that GAIN provides a platform for agencies to learn from each other, helping those with less defined roles to develop their engagement in this area. She described the maturity of academic integrity efforts as varying across countries, with some agencies just beginning their journey.

Sweden explained that in their country academic integrity is traditionally connected more closely to research than to education. He highlighted the constitutional protection for researchers and their freedom to choose research topics. However, he pointed out to emerging concerns around security issues tied to international collaboration and responsible internationalisation. He mentioned challenges such as ensuring protection for students and researchers from countries with limited legal safeguards, emphasising the need to address these alongside academic fraud.

Romania shared their country's experience as a founding member of GAIN. She explained how the examples of other countries have inspired their measures to combat academic fraud. Specifically, they addressed the issue of essay mills and contract cheating, noting that essays are often not authored by students themselves. Romania highlighted their efforts to work with advertising platforms and financial institutions to block payments to such providers, showcasing a proactive approach to combating academic fraud.

Sweden reflected on the evolving role of quality assurance agencies, emphasizing their shift from a control-and-compliance approach towards one focused on enhancement and support. He noted that Sweden has been on this journey for over a decade, promoting trust, flexibility, and institutional autonomy while reducing direct oversight.

11. Trends 2024 report

Documents:

- Trends 2004 report European higher education institutions in times of transition

- [Presentation of Trends 2024 report](#)

Thérèse Zang from EUA made the presentation. Due to technical issues, the discussion on the presentation could not be concluded.

End of day 1

Start of day 2

12. **Conclusions of the focus groups on the QA of the European Universities Alliances, organised within the IMINQA project**

Documents: [Presentation Focus groups on QA of European Universities](#)

Liesbeth Hens from the Belgium Flemish Community and Co-chair of the former TPG C 2021-2024 made the presentation. Following the presentation the co-chairs opened the floor for questions.

Austria asked about the next steps following the focus groups' conclusions, with the former Co-chair explaining that while the next six months would involve further discussions, the emphasis would be on initiating a policy debate concerning EQA at the alliance level. The former Co-chair advocated for focusing on supporting the development of IQA processes within the alliances and highlighted the existing European Approach for Joint Programmes, which offers a ready-to-use procedure. In this sense, she mentioned the importance of empowering alliances to evolve organically and suggested that prioritising EQA might not be timely at this stage. Sweden referred to the recent French Senate report evaluating the European Universities Initiative, noting its recommendations on institutionalising governance, ensuring sustainability, and mainstreaming the alliance model.

The French Co-chair highlighted the strong cooperation between both quality assurance agencies and ministries in ensuring alignment and a unified voice when discussing the processes and outputs of the European Universities Alliances. She noted the ongoing discussions at both national and European levels, including with the European Commission, about the role and diversity of missions within alliances, emphasising their contribution to the internationalisation of institutions.

13. **Feasibility assessment on the establishment of quality label for all providers that operate in alignment European Approach to Micro-Credentials for Lifelong Learning and Employability**

Documents: [Feasibility Study - QL for MCs EQAR](#)

Giorgi Munjishvili from EQAR made the presentation. Following the presentation, the co-chairs opened the floor for questions.

Sweden noted that the diverse opinions and ideas within the group, influenced by different national contexts and methodologies, made the achievement even more significant. He highlighted the importance of determining whether the quality label is genuinely in demand.

TPG C on QA_1_HU_IS_Minutes of meeting_27-28.11.2024

The French Co-chair inquired about the next steps, asking who should be responsible for deciding the direction forward. She emphasised the importance of clarifying responsibilities, particularly regarding the involvement of quality assurance agencies and policymakers.

EQAR acknowledged the diversity of responses and the challenge of exploring every possible scenario during the study. The EQAR representative explained that the paper aimed to present a range of possibilities rather than definitive answers, serving as a foundation for further discussion and decision-making. EQAR considered that future discussions should prioritise minimising bureaucracy, utilising existing tools where possible, and maintaining dialogue with providers and stakeholders. While the paper provides the groundwork for decision-making, the next steps involve determining whether to pursue the proposed quality label and shaping the approach collaboratively.

Cyprus addressed the diversity in frameworks across countries, asking how the quality label would apply to micro-credential providers. He inquired whether agencies qualified to oversee micro-credentials would operate at the national level or whether a centralized approach would be considered. He highlighted the complexity of such an environment and asked how this would impact the structure and oversight of quality assurance for providers.

EQAR acknowledged that the study addressed the question of which entities should oversee the quality label. They noted that differences in national frameworks and legislation might require adjustments in some countries. EQAR explained that policy changes may be necessary, either at the national level or within specific agencies, to accommodate the quality label framework. They also stressed out that while the study explored these complexities, the practical implementation would need to align with the existing status quo and adapt to diverse national contexts.

14. Report on the digitalisation of QA processes

Documents: [Presentation of Digitalization of QA processes](#)

Iordan Petrescu, IMINQA expert from ARACIS, made the presentation. It was discussed and decided that observations and, most importantly, concrete examples of good practices should be share, as it was repeatedly mentioned that concrete examples would be more beneficial than theoretical approaches.

15. Recommendations for the digitalisation of QA processes

Documents: [Brief of the parallel session](#)

16. Conclusions from the break-out sessions

The first group, moderated by Patricia Marx and Ulf Hedbjork, presented the key takeaways from their group discussion. On data privacy and sharing, the discussion emphasised the importance of ensuring data privacy while enabling data sharing across different systems and balancing accessibility and security in digital platforms. On data quality and security, the group focused on the importance of maintaining high standards for data quality within agencies, with

cybersecurity identified as a critical area. Regarding good practices in system development, QAAs shared experiences, with some developing systems entirely from scratch, while others relied on external experts. Despite different approaches, all QAAs prioritized robust design to ensure system reliability.

The second group, moderated by Aleksandar Susnjar and Juergen Petersen, presented the key takeaways from their group discussion. On strategies for digitalisation, they highlighted the importance of strategic planning, with internal processes, such as policy collection and workflow efficiency, deemed critical. On interoperability and data alignment, they highlighted the need for aligning data collection processes, models, and structures across systems and encouraged integration between agency systems and larger databases, like those of the EHEA. Regarding the cost-benefit analysis, the group discussed challenges in comparing custom in-house software solutions with generic commercial platforms and noted difficulties in accurately assessing the cost-benefit ratio of different approaches. Finally, reflecting on the use of AI in QA processes, the group started by acknowledging the transformative potential of AI, while emphasizing its limitations and risks. They shared an example where AI inadvertently compromised confidentiality by sharing meeting transcripts without proper authorization, with a distinct positive example of an agency handling 5000 evaluations in one cycle, leveraging AI for summarizing large volumes of materials to support reviewers. They urged caution in relying on AI, stressing the importance of preserving core QA principles like peer review and direct human interaction.

The third group, moderated by Tereza Krepelova and Yiannis Kasoulides, presented the key takeaways from their group discussion. On digitalisation of QA agencies, they noted that some agencies are at an early stage, with digitalisation limited to publishing procedures online. They discussed whether digital tools and platforms enhance the overall QA process or add complications and burdens for stakeholders. On the risks and benefits of online evaluations, they noted that while online evaluations are useful in emergencies, physical site visits should remain the standard for most QA activities. In this sense, they considered concerns about maintaining procedural quality and community engagement when replacing physical visits with online methods. On the role of AI in QA and assessments, they concluded that AI could support the evaluation of student knowledge and assist QA agencies in assessments, but its use must be carefully managed to avoid misuse. They also highlighted the need to view AI as a skill to be integrated in QA practices rather than a threat. Finally, discussing training and resources for QA agencies, they arrived to the conclusion that many QA agencies lack IT departments or resources to independently implement digital solutions. The group emphasised the need for more training on digital tools and the creation of shared platforms for collaboration and knowledge exchange and suggested prioritising interaction platforms, resource sharing and mutual support.

17. **Next steps**

   Documents: [Presentation with next steps of TPG C on QA](#)

The Romanian co-chair presented the future steps for TPG C on QA. No questions or interventions were raised following the presentation.

18. AOB

There was no other business.

The Co-chairs thanked everyone for their contribution.

The meeting ended at 13:42 CET.