

Update on EQAR Activities

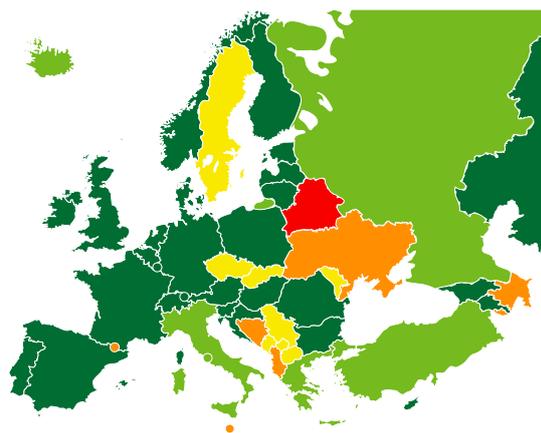
for the 25 June 2020 BFUG meeting

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1. Register and EHEA Key Commitment

Currently, 49 agencies are registered on EQAR, demonstrating their substantial compliance with the ESG. As a result, **28 EHEA countries fully implement the key commitment on external quality assurance**, ensuring that all higher education in the country is regularly reviewed in line with the ESG, by an EQAR-registered agency.



In 6 countries, ESG compliance of such regular external QA has not (yet) been evidenced through EQAR registration of (all) agencies. 7 countries ensure external QA in line with the ESG, but not regularly or not for all HEIs. Another 7 countries have not yet established systems of external QA in line with the ESG.

An up-to-date map and overview of detailed information per country can be found in EQAR's knowledge base of EHEA legal frameworks for QA at:

<https://www.eqar.eu/kb/country-information/>

At the EQAR Register Committee on 16 March, held virtually, the Committee concluded that the following four agencies demonstrated their substantial compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG), all of them renewals of registration:

- **ACSUG** – Agency for Quality Assurance in the Galician University System (Spain) ACSUG participates in the DEQAR database

[ACSUG REPORTS IN DEQAR](#)

- **AHPGS** – Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Sciences (Germany) [AHPGS REPORTS IN DEQAR](#)
- **NCPA** – National Centre for Public Accreditation (Russia) [NCPA REPORTS IN DEQAR](#)
- **VLUHR QA** – Quality Assurance Unit of the Flemish University and University Colleges Council

The full decisions of the Register Committee can be found under the following link:

<https://www.eqar.eu/register/decisions/>

The Register Committee is currently revising its Policy on the Use and Interpretation of the ESG, based on feedback gathered from registered agencies, external review coordinators and expert panel members, as well as its own reflections. The General Assembly of 26 June will be invited to provide feedback on the draft revised policy.

The decisions of the Register Committee of 22 June will be published on the website by 30 June.

2. Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR)

2.1 State of Play

The Database for External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR) continues to grow and develop. In June 2020, DEQAR crossed the mark of 50 000 quality assurance reports on higher education in Europe, consolidating its coverage. DEQAR coverage is also expected to extend to a number of new countries during the coming months.

The latest DEQAR statistics as of 17/06/2020:

- 51 437 reports on 2 423 higher education institutions from 44 EHEA countries, and 450 reports on 95 non-EHEA institutions.
- Comprehensive coverage¹ achieved in: Belgium (Flemish community), Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Slovenia.

¹ In these systems DEQAR includes reports on at least 50% of the institutions listed in the European Tertiary Education Register, ETER, <https://www.eter-project.com/>.



Figure 1: DEQAR coverage measured as the share of HEIs with QA reports

Further general information on DEQAR can be found at:

<https://www.eqar.eu/qa-results/deqar-video/>

<https://www.eqar.eu/qa-results/infographics/>

2.2 DEQAR CONNECT: Enhancing the Coverage and Connectivity

The DEQAR CONNECT project kicked off in March 2020 and focuses on two of the EHEA key commitments, supporting quality assurance and automatic recognition inside the EHEA.

As a reminder, DEQAR CONNECT aims to:

1. Expand coverage to EHEA countries currently under-represented in DEQAR, by supporting the participation of agencies that could not join DEQAR in the first stage.
2. Enhance connectivity by exploiting existing synergies and exploring new opportunities to use DEQAR data directly in the recognition workflow, digital credentialing and elsewhere.

Transversal to both strands, additional activities will boost the visibility of DEQAR and feed relevant information and analysis into the work of the future Bologna peer-support group dealing with QA.

<https://www.eqar.eu/kb/projects/deqar-connect/>

Because of COVID-19, some of the initial activities (2 workshops) had to be postponed. To start of the project with something other than just emails, two webinars were held:

- Kick-off webinar for quality assurance agencies (QAAs) on 11 May**
 Apart from getting to know one another, the webinar was used to show the agencies (17) the structure, back-end and workflow of the database as well as an overview of the project, and lastly to make an inventory of the (technical) needs of the agencies for the data submission. More information on the QAA webinar can be found on:
<https://www.eqar.eu/deqar-connect-kick-off-webinar-for-qa-agencies/>
- ENIC NARIC webinar on 18 May**
 This time our ENIC NARIC project partners CIMEA, Nuffic, France Éducation Internationale (formerly CIEP) and CNRED were present to discuss and exchange information on how to use DEQAR data directly in the recognition workflow.
 After an introduction by EQAR on the structure, back-end and workflow of the database, each partner gave an overview of their own digital platform/system and on their ideas where the DEQAR API would be best put to use and how. More information on the ENIC NARIC webinar can be found on:
<https://www.eqar.eu/enic-naric-webinar-deqar-connect/>

4. COVID-19 consequences

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, EQAR staff keep working from home to a large extent for the time being. In order to answer pressing questions from registered agencies, a special page was created on the EQAR website. Most notably, it was clarified that virtual site visits are perfectly in line with the ESG in these times, and that extending accreditation periods and postponing re-evaluation procedures are equally ESG-compatible approaches. The page will be updated when needed and if further questions arise.

<https://www.eqar.eu/covid-19/>

EQAR participated and gave a presentation at the ECA Webinar on Covid-19 of 26 May. The presentation “Adaptation to external QA procedures in light of the COVID-19 pandemic” was held for around 50 representatives from quality assurance agencies members of the European Consortium for Accreditation, gathered to share experiences on how are QA agencies are responding in adapting their operations during COVID19.

6. New Policy and Project Officer

Staff interviews were held for the Policy and Project Officer position that was advertised in March. Aleksandra Zhivkovikj will start as a new staff member in EQAR shortly.