



## **BFUGB13 3d**

1 September 2006

For the attention of the Bologna Follow-Up Group Board  
Helsinki, 1 September 2006

### **Report of the E4 Group on Quality Assurance 21 August 2006**

1. This report from the E4 Group (ENQA, ESIB, EUA, and EURASHE) updates the BFUG Board on progress on the Bologna Process action line on quality assurance since the previous BFUG Board meeting in Vienna in June 2006.
2. E4 is working to meet the request of the Bergen communiqué that “the practicalities of implementation (of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area) be further developed by ENQA in cooperation with EUA, EURASHE and ESIB with a report back to us through the Follow-up Group”.
3. Since June 2006, the E4 group has met once, on 21 June. Its next meeting will take place on 29 August.

### **The Register of European Quality Assurance Agencies**

4. At its meeting in April the E4 Group appointed Mr Bastian Baumann (Germany) as a consultant for the project. Mr Baumann started to work on the project immediately and submitted his final report – which addressed the practicalities of implementation of the Register – to the E4 group in time for the June meeting. He interviewed for this report the E4 members, quality assurance agencies, students, the European Commission, employers’ and employees’ bodies, professional experts, legal experts, some BFUG members and representatives from extra-EU countries. The consultant planned to do a second round of interviews but this proved impossible due to the tight timeline. It was also difficult to address all the legal and financial questions without knowing where the Register would in the end be established.
5. The E4 Group found the report by the consultant very useful. During the initial discussion the E4 members agreed on the main purposes of the register, including:
  - promoting student mobility by providing a basis to increase trust among the higher education institutions;
  - providing a basis for governments to authorise the higher education institutions to choose any quality assurance agency from the register when the need would arise;
  - providing the higher education institutions with the possibility to choose between different agencies;



- serving as an instrument to improve the quality of the quality assurance agencies and to increase mutual trust between them.

6. When discussing the report further the E4 members reached an agreement in principle on several basic questions related with the Register, including, for example: location, legal form, ownership and organisational structure. Because the time for the meeting was limited, the E4 members decided to conduct an email discussion, before the next meeting in August, on the more operational questions that were still left open.

7. The E4 Group decided to write - on the basis of the questions that had been agreed upon, and of those to be discussed via email – a report on the main principles of the Register to be submitted to the BFUG meeting of October. A more complete report would then be drafted by the E4 for the BFUG meeting of March 2007.

### **Peer reviews of agencies**

8. The E4 Group is currently discussing how to avoid duplication between the Register reviews and the ENQA membership reviews.

9. The ENQA member agency HETAC (Higher Education and Training Awards Council, Ireland) was the first agency whose full ENQA membership was reconfirmed in August 2006 on the basis of the review results of a national external review. The ENQA Board examined, through a Board working group, the results of this review that had been completed in May and decided to support the reconfirmation of HETAC's full membership. The ENQA Board is preparing to examine the results of at least five other national reviews of its members before the end of this year.

### **Implementation of the European Standards and Guidelines**

10. ENQA will organise, in collaboration with the Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance network, a seminar on the contents and implementation of the European Standards and Guidelines in Vienna on 4-5 December 2006.

### **Quality assurance forum 2006**

11. ENQA, ESIB, EUA and EURASHE are busy preparing for the Quality Forum entitled "Embedding Quality Culture in Higher Education". The Forum will be hosted by the Technische Universität München, and will take place on 23-25 November 2006. The collaboration between the Steering Group of the Forum and the host institution has been fruitful and the practical arrangements are proceeding swiftly.



12. Though the German BFUG representatives will contribute to the Forum, they have decided not to participate in its Steering Group. The German representatives are planning to organise a separate seminar on Quality Assurance, to take place in Berlin on 15-16 February 2007, and have invited the E4 representatives to participate in it.

13. By the deadline of 31 May more than 70 papers had been received from different countries, institutions and ENQA member agencies to be presented at the Forum. Consequently, it will be necessary to organise several parallel sessions. The registration for the Forum will be opened soon.

### **Forthcoming meetings**

The E4 Group meetings in the second half of 2006 will take place on 29 August (chaired by ENQA) and 2 November (chaired by EUA).

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