

UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE



**Quality in Higher Education &
Transparency tools
12th UNICA BOLOGNA LAB Meeting**



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Context

Almost constant **reform process** (Bologna reforms, but not only)

Diversification

- Programme (Master s degree programmes seminar in Berlin, October 2011; EUA studies) - EUA identified e.g. *Academic Master, Consecutive or Continuation Master, Conversion Master, Joint Master, Lifelong Master, Professional Master, ...*
- Institutional
- Higher education and research systems are becoming more complex and consequently less intelligible for stakeholders.
- Need to obtain valid information on higher education (nationally as well as across national borders) is increasing

Overall Bologna structure model implemented in the most common programmes in the Bologna countries, Eurydice 2009/2010



- 180+120 credit (3+2 academic years) model
- 240+120 credits (4+2 academic years) model
- 240+90 credits (4+1.5 academic years) model
- 240+60 credits (4+1 academic years) model
- No dominant model
- Not applicable

Source: Eurydice.

Transparency tools (1)

- **Transparency** appears in the Bologna Process as a desired characteristic of future EHEA implemented with the help of tools
 - in the **Berlin Communiqué (2003)** in connection to **Diploma Supplement**;
 - in the **Bergen Communiqué (2005)** as a principle of **EHEA**;
 - in the **Leuven Communiqué (2009)** in connection to **qualification frameworks**
- In **Leuven Communiqué (2009)** the traditional Bologna instruments (Diploma Supplement, ECTS and QFs) a **concept change** in the same document with mentioning establishing the ***multidimensional transparency tool***



Transparency tools (2)

- Transparency tools is an overarching term for those tools that have been developed and that bring information about orientation, attempt and results of activities of higher education institutions (van Vught & Westerheijden 2010).
- **The Transparency Tools Working Group** understands transparency tools as having the function to address individual information needs of the public in regards to higher education matters.

Existing (transparency) tools in the Bologna Process

- **Qualification is multidimensional**
- **Diploma Supplement - description**

Mutually interlinked tools

- **Learning outcomes**
- **ECTS**
- **Qualification Frameworks**
 - Two meta frameworks at European level – ECTS is key element for 1st and 2nd cycle; 3rd cycle discussion – expressed in standard years
 - National level qualification framework – can contain more detailed national credit arrangements
- **Quality Assurance**

We have agreed them already 10, 5 years ago! What is the stage of implementation???



Diploma Supplement

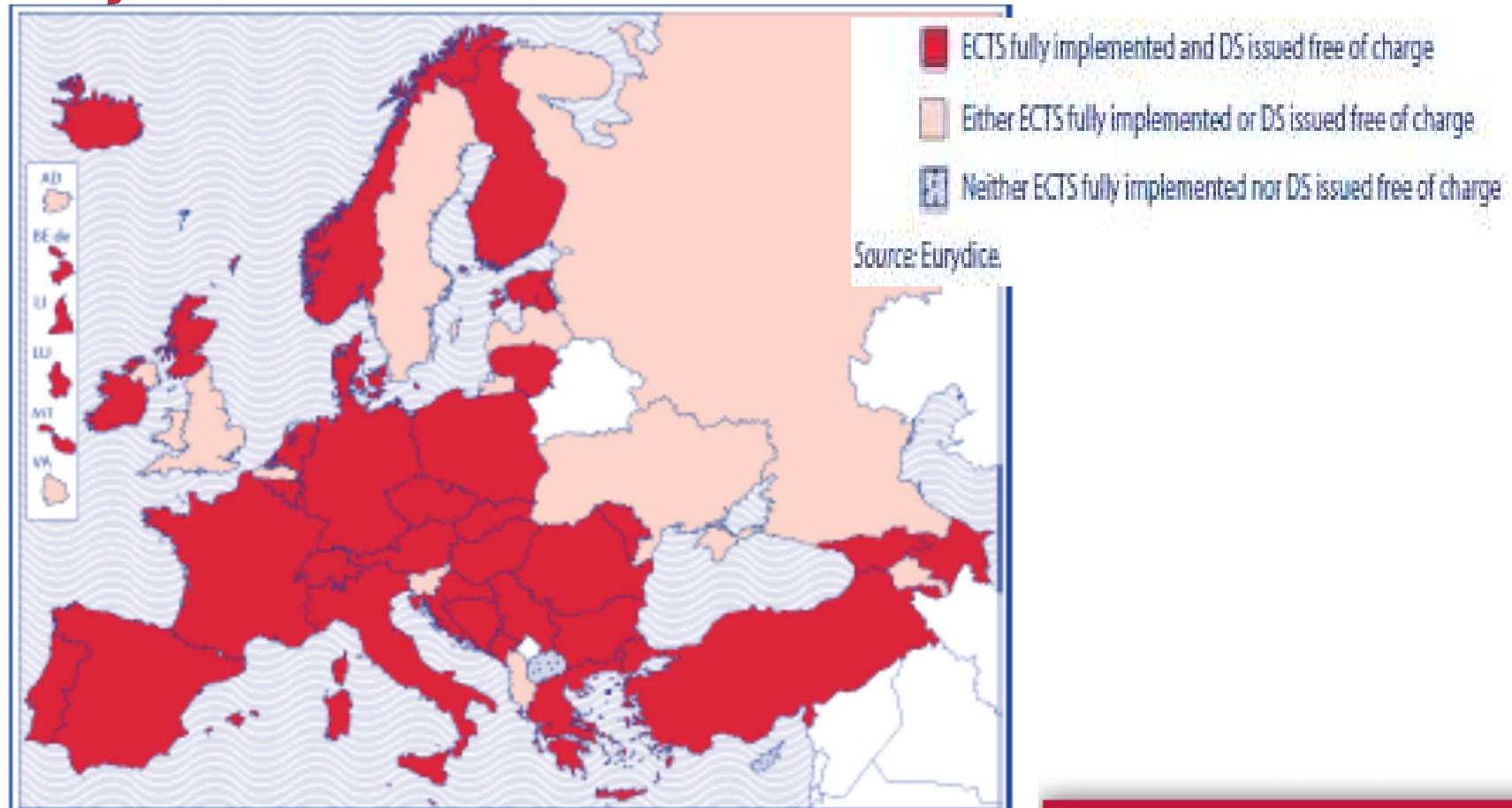
- **Target audience:** graduates, HEIs, recognition authorities, employers;
- **Purpose:** facilitate mobility, recognition (academic as well professional) and employability;
- Many countries fail to issue the document **automatically and free of charge;**
- Majority of HEIs issue the Diploma supplement in the language of instructions and English or in English (see Eurydice 2008/09);
- **Almost no evidence on Diploma Supplement is used by employers and/or HEIs;**



ECTS

- **Target audience:** students and their parents, HEIs (faculty and administrative staff);
- **Purpose:** designed to facilitate mobility (transfer function) - recognition, in 1989 as a pilot scheme in the Erasmus programme
 - **transfer & accumulation function; 2004 Key features and ECTS Users Guide - workload connected to courses, modules,...**
 - **2009 Key features & ECTS Users Guide – new approach & challenge: workload connected to learning outcomes;**
- permeability in the degree programme/ among the programmes.

Implementation of ECTS and Diploma Supplement, Eurydice 2009/10





Learning Outcomes (LOs)

- LOs are statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do after successful completion of a process of learning. They relate to level descriptors in national and European qualification frameworks .
- **Two possible approaches:**
 - Threshold information (minimum);
 - Reference points (expected).
- **Target audience:** students, HEIs , employers
- **Purpose and linkage with other Bologna tools:**
 - LOs are basis for for ECTS allocation; they are constituent of qualification levels;
 - Necessary for pedagogical/methodological changes to move towards student centred learning ;
 - NQF design (most difficult step 8: *Study programmes have been re-designed on the basis of the learning outcomes included in the NQF*).

National Qualification Framework (NQF)

- **Designed to help classify, explain, show relationships and establish standards (accountability) between different qualifications**
- **They can do much more including:**
 - help modernise education;
 - improve recognition and mobility;
 - improve access and social inclusion;
 - help adjust to demographic change – lifelong learning perspective;
 - direct the development of qualifications;
 - improve transparency and accountability;
 - enhance flexibility.
- **Countries should not lose sight of what they want their NQF to achieve and that this is reflected in their design**
 - Just a transparency tool;
 - Means of reform initiatives - carefully consider their value added.

Quality Assurance

- **Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in EHEA, 2005 (ESG)**
- **European Quality Assurance Register, 2008 (EQAR)**
- **EUA Policy Statement on QA in EHEA**
- **Mapping the implementation and application of the ESGs (MAP-ESG)**
- **Identifying barriers in promoting the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance at institutional level - IBAR Project**



Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in EHEA (1)

- Internal quality assurance at HEIs – *seven standards*
- External quality assurance of HE – *eight standards*
- Quality assurance of external quality assurance agencies - *eight standards*
- The **standards** „reflect basic good practice across Europe“ but do not provide guidelines about „what should be examined or how activities should be conducted“
- The **guidelines** provide additional information, explain more detail meaning etc.

(ENQA, 2005)



Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in EHEA (2)

- Purpose of ESG (ENQA, 2005)
 - To improve the education available to students;
 - To assist HEIs managing and enhancing their quality and, thereby, to help to justify their institutional autonomy;
 - To form a background for quality assurance agencies in their work;
 - To make external quality assurance more transparent and simpler to understand for everybody involved.

European Quality Assurance Register, 2008

- Decision of the Ministers 2007 (London Communiqué)
- Established 2008
- **Target audience:** national governments, HEIs, students, wider public
- **Purpose:**
 - Clear, and credible information on quality assurance agencies;
 - For an agency necessary to fulfil given criteria – evaluation against European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in EHEA.
- **Objectives:**
 - Support student mobility;
 - Avoid untrustworthy agencies;
 - **Role for future - to give HEIs and national governments a possibility to chose any agency from the Register (e.g. for joint degrees);**
 - To improve the quality of work of national agencies for quality assurance – build confidence in Europe.

EQAR – evaluation 2010/11- main questions (BFUG X/2011)

1. Are the organisational structures and methods of EQAR fit for purpose in the light of the agreed objectives? Have they functioned effectively and efficiently in practice?
2. What has been the initial impact of EQAR? Is it in line with the desired goals?
3. What improvements are desirable? How might the organisation develop and act further with a view to best achieving its missions and objectives?

Self-Evaluation Report

- Interviews: governments and stakeholders;
- Surveys: QA agencies and website visitors;
- Self-analysis by EQAR Self-Evaluation Group;
- Site Visit by the Evaluation Panel (May 2011)
 - Interviews: EQAR committees, governments, stakeholders & QA agencies.



EQAR – evaluation 2010/11 – Preliminary results 1 (BFUG X/2011)

- EQAR was put in place, structure fits for purpose;
- Register Committee successfully established and safeguarded its independence;
- In this phase, focus on operations and putting in place procedures;
- In the next phase a more strategic focus – aiming at achieving the wider objectives required;
- Trust and confidence in EQAR's procedures.



EQAR – evaluation 2010/11 – Preliminary results 2 (BFUG X/2011)

- Further efforts needed to make transparent:
 - Eligibility requirements and substantial criteria for inclusion;
 - Decision-making on applicants;
 - Different roles of EQAR and ENQA.
- Only national authorities have the competence to recognise/accept registered quality assurance agencies and their results/decisions.
- Follow-Up and Implementation:
 - Adopted by EQAR members in January 2012;
 - Then submitted to BFUG and Ministers, together with the Evaluation Report.



EUA Policy Statement on QA in EHEA – key principles

- **Primary responsibility** for quality assurance **lies with universities themselves**;
- Institutional quality management requires a **comprehensive, all-encompassing approach**;
- Quality is contextual;
- The ultimate goal of all quality assurance – both internal and external – is to enhance quality thus **promoting trust among stakeholders**;

EUA Policy Statement on QA in EHEA –principles for implementing internal and external QA processes

■ **Internal QA:**

- Shared values and attitudes about quality, **no simple managerial processes rather quality culture**;
- ***Fit for purpose***;
- Leadership and academic community cooperation;
- Ensure central data collections and analysis;
- Ensure appropriate leadership and staffing;

■ **External QA:**

- Balance between autonomy and accountability (promoting institutional audits or evaluations);
- ***Fit for purposes*** – **ensure diversity of institutions**, purposes;
- Self-evaluation phase, confidentiality of some parts of the process, transparency of results.



Objectives of the ESG

- to encourage the development of higher education institutions which foster vibrant intellectual and educational achievement;
- to provide a source of assistance and guidance to higher education institutions and other relevant agencies in **developing their own culture of quality assurance;**
- to inform and raise the expectations of higher education institutions, students.
- ***„It is not the intention that these standards and guidelines should dictate practice or be interpreted as prescriptive or unchangeable.“***

IBAR Project (2011-2013)



Identifying barriers in promoting European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance at institutional level



IBAR Project (2011-2013)



Lifelong Learning Programme *Education and Culture DG, EACEA*

Co-ordinator: Czech Republic, **Centre for Higher Education Studies,**
Partners:

- United Kingdom, University of Strathclyde
- Latvia, University of Latvia
- Poland, Warsaw School of Economics
- Portugal, Center for Research in Higher Education Policies
- Slovakia, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra
- The Netherlands, University of Twente, Center for Higher Education Policy Studies

Background of the activity (project proposal)



- adoption of European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) developed by E4 Group (ENQA, EUA, EURASHE, ESU) in 2005;
- ESG implementation in general;
- importance of quality assurance agenda within EHEA building;
- ministers acknowledgement (Berlin Communiqué) that **„primary responsibility for quality assurance in education lies with each institution itself“**;
- significantly **less attention paid to ESG implementation processes at institutional level** than to cross-national comparative studies;
- **intention to fill knowledge gap in this field;**



IBAR project's objectives



- **description of policy practise** at institutional level (selected 4 HEIs in each country);
- **analysis of the impact and identification of barriers** of the ESG Part 1 implementation in domains: access, student participation, institutional governance and management, employers including private sector, staff, information systems, quality and secondary education;
- **comparison of similarities and differences** in the ESG Part 1 implementation (national case studies, comparative case studies);
- **formulation of recommendations on ESG Part 1 modification;**
- **publication** of the book and the final synthesis report;
- **dissemination** of examples of good (best) practice.



Project Mapping the implementation and application of the ESGs (MAP-ESG) – 1



E4 Group: ENQA (co-ordinator), EUA, EURAHSE, ESU

Project purpose:

after five-year experience – **how the ESG have been implemented and applied** in the 47 Bologna signatory countries,

- * on national level,
- * in higher education institutions (HEIs) and
- * in QA agencies.

Project Mapping the implementation and application of the ESGs (MAP-ESG) – 2



Project objectives:

- to assess the ESG interpretation and application ;
- to find how the reality meets their original aims;
- to know about developing **areas of HE not covered in the current ESG version;**
- to map experience of various stakeholders;
- **to learn if ESG revision/modification is needed.**



Meeting IBAR and EUA representatives in Brussels



(Sept. 2011) It was agreed that:

- HE institutions had not yet had **sufficient time to implement ESG** and to gain enough experience with their use.
- The **longer timescale for potential ESG revision** (or rather improvement) would therefore benefit all parties.
- EUA current view: “**The ESG was a valuable tool if considered as generic principles and guidelines** (as suggested in the contemporary version). The context of higher education institutions in Europe is highly diverse, in a variety of ways, and no single monolithic approach to quality and/or specific requirements would be feasible.”
- EUA: “It is anticipated that Ministers may wish to propose that **revisions/modification to ESG would be considered at the following Ministerial meeting in 2015.**”

MAP-ESG project : current situation and results IBAR project: expected results



Lifelong Learning Programme

MAP-ESG

- draft Final report – debate/consultation for one month (Oct./Nov. 2011), Final report expected (Jan. 2012) ;
- presentation of results at Quality Forum (Antwerp, Nov. 2011);
- **launch of the findings to the large audience at Dissemination conference (Copenhagen, Jan. 17, 2012);**

IBAR

- recommendations of IBAR project – to be made **by Dec. 2013 – proper time to be considered by and fed into the suggestions put forward by EUA to the group preparing the revised ESGs**



Preliminary IBAR project results – 1



Barriers to implementation of ESG – institutional policies (tentative conclusions based mostly on study of documentation, to be verified during the next project stages)

So far in most countries:

- **There is no specific policy for implementing the ESG for internal quality assurance in HEI;**

(Exceptions: recommendations to accreditation bodies and to external experts; NL - National policy clearly orients HEIs towards adoption of the principles of the ESG)

- **Most of the contents of ESG is implicitly present in the institutional policies;**

- **Some institutions have started work on inscribing ESG as such into their quality management or quality assurance systems.**

Preliminary IBAR project results -2



Central administrative bodies of institutions under survey

- do not consider implementation of ESG an obligation;
- are reluctant to invest extra effort (to perhaps create additional bureaucracy);
- are not resistant to quality assurance as an issue;
- deal with quality matters in a regular way, only according to the understanding of authorities of each institution.

In general there is:

- a shortage or lack of communication between different involved actors concerning ESG;
- not enough practical advice on how to develop a proper quality culture.

Preliminary IBAR project results – 3



Access to higher education – area not covered by ESG

Recommendations:

- **include access as a key dimension of a revised set of Standards and Guidelines;**
- encourage higher education institutions to take 'ownership' of access, embedding a culture of good practice in this area;
- introduce greater capacity for HEIs to choose their students directly;
- encourage HEIs to track their students;
- improve outreach measures;
- promote inclusion.
- <http://www.ibar-llp.eu>



- Thank you for your attention