



European
Commission

European Higher Education Area (EHEA) Cluster Meeting

Impact of the EHEA projects

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Higher education

European Education
and Culture
Executive Agency

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Foreword

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For the past 25 years, more and more countries from within and beyond the EU have been working together with the objective of bringing their higher education systems closer to each other. Indeed, the

Bologna Declaration was signed in 1999 with the objective of creating an open and inclusive European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

Considerable progress has been achieved in aligning Bachelor, Master and Doctoral programmes; developing tools and good practices for mutual and more automatic recognition of diplomas and qualifications; as well as in establishing measures for rendering higher education systems more reliable and robust. Not least, the social dimension and fundamental academic values have become central elements of the EHEA.

Erasmus + has been supporting this effort with dedicated collaborative projects benefitting from about EUR 15 million for the period 2014-2025. Their results have been pivotal in making the

European Higher Education Area (EHEA) a reality. I am proud that EACEA has been responsible for the implementation of these projects and for the policy impact they have brought.

This report presents the outcomes of a cluster event, co-organised by the European Education Executive Agency (EACEA) and the European Commission's DG Education and Culture (EAC) in June 2023, which brought together the last 40 EU-funded EHEA projects. The event reiterated the EU added-value and the positive spill-over effect that joint efforts can bring, not only within Europe but also beyond.

More is yet to come as we move towards the next Ministerial Conference on 29 and 30 May 2024 in Tirana. EU funding support will continue to play a role in stepping up cooperation among ministries and all higher education stakeholders, for removing existing barriers, and for supporting national reforms. EACEA will remain committed to accompany its beneficiaries along this process by providing tailored guidance and training.

Sophie Beernaerts
EACEA Director




Table of contents

1. Background	5
2. Quality Assurance and Automatic Recognition for enhancing transnational cooperation	6
3. National Qualifications Frameworks and Micro-Credentials: Empowering life-long learning and employability – opportunities and challenges	10
4. Inclusion and fundamental academic values in the European context and global dimension	13
5. Conclusions	16

Annex I: Agenda

Annex II: List of projects

01

Background

Since the beginning of this century the contribution to the development of the European Higher Education Area has been a central objective of EU policy-making. The main vehicle for support to national policy in recent years has been the Erasmus+ programme, which has overseen several rounds of projects since 2014.

Throughout this period, we count 84 Erasmus+ EHEA projects involving education ministries and other key higher education stakeholders, focusing on areas such as: the Bologna transparency tools, quality assurance, learning mobility, innovation in teaching & learning, fundamental academic values, automatic recognition, fostering employability.

With the first cluster event taking place back in 2018 and gathering the first two generations of projects, a second one was organised in June 2023 to take stock of the achievements and challenges faced by the last 40 EHEA projects (running between 2018-2024).

This report aims to summarise the discussions conducted in this last forum, in the topics of quality assurance and automatic recognition; National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) and micro-credentials; as well as inclusion and fundamental academic values. It concludes with main findings by the participants. The event agenda and a booklet containing key information about the 2018, 2019 and 2021 EHEA projects are further provided.

Disclaimer:

Views and opinions expressed are those of the event participants only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education Executive Agency (EACEA).

Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

02

Quality Assurance and Automatic Recognition for enhancing transnational cooperation

A) Contribution of the EHEA projects to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG)

In the past years and especially since the revision of the ESG in 2015, higher education has changed significantly.

Discussions are being held around the scope of the ESG and the extent to which they should be revised in order to ensure that they reflect the evolving higher education landscape, with regard to: transnational cooperation, such as European Universities and joint degrees; lifelong learning, such as micro-credentials; and cross-cutting issues, such as the green and digital transitions, social inclusion and academic freedom.

*The **Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance** in the EHEA (ESG) provide a framework for internal and external quality assurance, which contributes to transnational higher education cooperation by building trust and strengthening transparency between higher education systems.*

The QA-FIT project - Quality Assurance Fit for the Future – led by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in collaboration with European Students' Union (ESU), European University Association (EUA), European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education

(EQAR), and other partners, is designed to respond to this discussion. The different stakeholders are being surveyed and results will be used to make any recommendations to ministers at the Bologna ministerial conference in May 2024.

Progress in the area of ESG has been achieved thanks to:

- BPGQA-0 and BPSGQAS projects, namely the Bologna Peer Support Group “Organisation” and “Staff Mobility” between 2018 and 2020, which supported the work of the previous Thematic Peer Group C on Quality Assurance (TPG C on QA), which ran until 2020. The matic orientations identified by the members of the group included legislative framework in line with the ESG, internal quality assurance, enhancement-oriented use of the ESG, the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes and cross-border Quality Assurance;
- SEQA-ESG 1&2 projects, which supported QA agencies and national authorities in different countries (Albania, the Czech Republic, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, and Slovakia for SEQA-ESG1 and Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Ukraine for SEQA-ESG2) to create an ESG-compliant QA system;
- The Roadmap project “Road Map for Implementation of Institutional Assessment”, which contributed to improving the quality assurance system in Latvia in compliance with the ESG;

- The IMINQA project “Implementation and Innovation in QA through peer learning”, which is supporting the work of the current Thematic Peer Group C on Quality Assurance (TPG C on QA), including through staff mobility, peer learning activities (PLAs) and sub-groups on European Universities, micro-credentials and digitalisation.



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B) Application of Automatic Recognition

At EU level, Member States agreed to put in place automatic recognition in the 2018 Council Recommendation on automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods abroad. At EHEA level, the Thematic Peer Group on the Lisbon Recognition Convention (TPG B) works to further automatic recognition through peer learning, including a thematic focus on digitalisation, qualifications held by refugees, alternative pathways and the Diploma Supplement. Some countries present different methods to apply automatic recognition.

For example, Benelux countries apply automatic recognition since 2015 for Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees and since 2018 for all HE diplomas in the three countries. It is based on a treaty signed by the Benelux countries who have changed their legislation accordingly. In concrete terms, it means that there is no need of a procedure for the recognition of diplomas between those countries. Automatic recognition is also in place among countries of the Baltic region (Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania). The two groups of countries signed a declaration of intent in 2019 to extend the recognition between both regions, and this has now been implemented.

*The original definition in the 2014 report of the EHEA Pathfinder Group on **Automatic Recognition** is the basis for the current use of the concept in the EHEA: “Automatic recognition of a degree leads to the automatic right of an applicant holding a qualification of a certain level to be considered for entry to the labour market or a programme of further study in the next level in any other EHEA-country (access)”. Despite the clarity of the definition, automatic recognition has yet to be fully implemented.*

Progress in the area of **Automatic Recognition** (AR) has been achieved thanks to:

- The DEQAR project’s “Database of External Quality Assurance Results”, led by EQAR, which has led to the development of a database of higher education institutions and programmes that have been subject to external quality assurance as well as easy access to the corresponding reports;
- The TRACER project “Transparency of Croatian Qualifications for Enhanced Recognition”, led by the Ministry of Science and Education of Croatia, which offered technical solutions for the digitalisation of the Diploma and Diploma Supplement, in an effort to remove obstacles to the recognition of qualifications.

It also provided support to HEIs in Croatia in upgrading their Diploma Supplements, in line with international best practices;

- The I-COMPLY project, which was designed to tackle the challenges of insufficient compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC). Partners from five countries (Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland and Ukraine) worked together to achieve full compliance with the Convention, through a review of the infrastructure for recognition in these countries, implementing and evaluating necessary actions, and peer learning activities;
- STREAM, the “European Platform for Good Practice in Recognition of Foreign Qualifications”, which streamlines region-wide recognition processes and enhances knowledge of good practice in recognition. It provides concise training materials, based on the EAR-HEI manual, including many examples and exercises from daily recognition practice.

It appears that recognition of credits from learning mobility periods is still difficult as it is not always automatically recognised - There have been certain cases reported where credits acquired during an exchange might be recognised but not the exams. Students would have to take the exams again when back in their institution of origin. The mobility of students and/or staff, has been at the core of several projects, including:

- *3-IN-AT - “INternationalisation/INclusion/INnovation: Towards high-quality inclusive mobility and innovative teaching & learning in an internationalised Austrian Higher Education Area”;*
- *BPSGQAS - “Bologna Peer Group on QA: staff mobility”;*
- *EPFIME - “Enhancing a thought-out Policy and Framework on Inclusive Mobility across Europe”.*

C) Key challenges in the implementation of Quality Assurance and Automatic Recognition

The first challenge identified regarding automatic recognition is the confusion between access and admission. Automatic is often confused with instantaneous and recognition has nothing to do with admission requirements to access HE. Indeed, it appears that HEIs are worried that their autonomy would be endangered with automatic recognition when thinking they would have to admit any student in their institution (access vs admission).

Moreover, access and admission are often not separated by HEIs. The admission process can be hindered by HEIs, which may deliberately deny admission to students depending on where (country but also HEI) their qualification comes from. There is some reluctance in accepting diplomas coming from somewhere else and thus the criteria for admission are intentionally overridden because of prejudice, reputation, or just fear of difference.

In addition, often it is not clear to the student applicant which entity is responsible for recognition: sometimes HEIs are in charge, other times ENIC-NARICs, or the pertinent ministry.

Other obstacles pertain to the national regulatory frameworks which attribute responsibility to different actors in the system. For the recognition process to be made compatible with the concept of automatic recognition may often mean that higher education institutions are required to give up their decision-making competence on recognition, while maintaining their competence for admission decisions. Changes in legal frameworks and processes also take time (large consultation process, etc.).

European Universities can act as role models for automatic recognition and quality assurance of transnational cooperation.

Furthermore, while recognition is included in the ESG, it represents only one part of one standard. Moreover, as the document was drafted before steps were taken to advance the objective of automatic recognition the focus is on fair recognition and correct implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention rather than on automatic recognition. In a future revision of the ESG, it is likely that this standard will be updated. Preparation for this work has taken place within the Thematic Peer Group on the Lisbon Recognition Convention (TPG B on LRC), relevant work has been conducted in the context the LIREQA project “Linking Academic Recognition and Quality Assurance”. The project was aimed at contributing to fair recognition of qualifications by developing recommendations to relate academic recognition to both internal and external quality assurance¹.

An additional difficulty relates to the type of QA that is undertaken in countries. Some QA agencies work only at programme level while, recognition processes are often generally centralised at institutional level.

Moreover, around 25% of QA agencies in the EHEA function as NARICs – which facilitates the relationship between QA and recognition. However, in other cases, QA agencies and NARICs have not established regular communication.

Another specific issue identified relates to the recognition of EQF5 qualifications², given that in many countries they refer to short-cycle tertiary qualifications, while in other countries they cover qualifications that are categorised as VET post secondary qualifications. To address this issue, CHAIN5, the ‘community of practice for level 5’, started a working group on QA in which ENQA is collaborating³.

The aim is to see how different countries view the implementation of a national level 5 area and at the same time to understand how many QA agencies deal with it. A reflection on a more unified QA approach at this level is being made.



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- 1 The recommendations are available on the European University Association website: https://eua.eu/downloads/content/lireqa_recommendations_final_version_web.pdf
- 2 EQF level 5 qualifications are equivalent to the completion of the first cycle of tertiary education, which includes bachelor's degrees and other similar qualifications.
- 3 More information about CHAIN5 can be found on the following link: <https://www.chain5.net/activities/>

03

National Qualifications Frameworks and Micro-Credentials: Empowering life-long learning and employability – opportunities and challenges

A. The European Qualifications Framework within the existing national education and training systems

National and European changes are being introduced in parallel, with the European Qualifications Framework enhancing the transparency and recognition of qualifications, and national qualifications increasingly aligning with the broader European framework. Through working on European projects, the understanding of the EQF has increased, and so too has the relevance of national qualifications frameworks. Notably those countries that were struggling to grasp the importance of common structural elements have learned how this may help expand higher education horizons through the experience of peers. Overall, this has helped to support individuals in learner mobility, promoting internationalisation and deepening cooperation in the European context.



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The European Qualification Framework (EQF), set up in 2008 and revised in 2017, is an 8-level, learning outcomes-based framework for all types of qualifications. It serves as a translation tool between different national qualifications frameworks and helps improve transparency, comparability and portability of people's qualifications.

The EQF covers all types and all levels of qualifications and the use of learning outcomes makes it clear what a person knows, understands and is able to do. As it is closely linked to national qualifications frameworks, it provides a comprehensive map of all types and levels of qualifications in Europe, helping to secure mutual trust in Europe's qualifications.

Within projects, the starting point has always been to focus on learner needs. This has involved developing processes to identify and distinguish the variety of individual learner needs, and then relate them to wider societal needs. Following this mapping exercise the challenge is then to work out how these needs can be fulfilled within the wider higher education mission.

B. Micro-credentials within the National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs)

The **Council Recommendation** of 16 June 2022 **on a European approach to micro-credentials** for lifelong learning and employability introduces **three building blocks** - namely the common definition, standard elements and principles for design and issuance of micro-credentials - that are meant to ensure quality, transparency and uptake of micro-credentials. Higher education institutions will not be the only providers of micro-credentials, but nonetheless they need to identify the areas of most relevance for them. With regard to quality assurance of micro-credentials in the higher education sector, Bologna tools can and should be used in the effort to integrate micro-credentials within higher education institutions.

*In the ever-changing society and labour market there is clearly an increasing demand for skills. There is also a growing belief that **micro-credentials** offer a targeted and flexible way of providing those skills to learners. A higher education offer of micro-credentials that is clearly presented in terms of the qualification level, required knowledge and expected learning outcomes allows individuals to acquire **specific knowledge, skills and competences that are currently in demand**. Thus, employees are able to upskill or reskill efficiently, and to focus on the specific skills needed in a particular context.*

National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) are part of the European infrastructure and can integrate micro-credentials if processes are developed to recognise and align them within the existing framework. Some of the work that is required is rather technical. For example, mapping the learning outcomes and competencies of the micro-credentials against the existing qualifications

framework involves identifying the relevant levels, descriptors, and criteria for each micro-credential.

Similarly quality assurance is key for micro-credentials to be accepted both within and between countries. Where higher education institutions have developed robust internal quality assurance there is no need for burdensome processes to be imposed. Rather the principles of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) can be applied in a way that is simple and pragmatic.

Progress in the aforementioned inter-connected areas has been achieved thanks to several projects (Microbol, IMINQA) that involve key European stakeholder organisations (such as EUA, EURASHE, ESU, ENQA and EQAR). Their work has helped to ensure that there is a common understanding and coherent messaging on these topics.



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C. Key challenges in the use of micro-credentials

*The **European approach for micro-credentials** has contributed to establishing a common definition for micro-credentials, as well as identifying the common characteristics of a European micro-credentials framework, and a roadmap of actions to ensure the take-up, validation and recognition of such courses.*

However, one of the main challenges of integrating micro-credentials is to identify the pathways for learners to progress from one qualification to another. Micro-credentials can be integrated into these pathways, providing learners with opportunities to upskill, specialise, or gain specific competencies.

For example, the connection between higher education institutions and employers at local, regional, national and international levels may not

always be sufficiently robust to guarantee a good match of labour market needs and the offer of micro-credentials.

Linked to this issue, awareness of the micro-credentials being offered by higher educational institutions may be limited, and the value of different micro-credentials may not be well understood. The speed of development of micro-credentials could also pose other challenges, for example: the creation of a large number of different micro-credentials in a short period may lead to confusion, and make it difficult to distinguish relevant and valuable micro-credentials.

In this regard, communication and transparency are vital. It is therefore crucial for project partners to establish communication channels with the higher education community, actors, employers, and other stakeholders. This helps create awareness about the value and relevance of micro-credentials, and to ensure that the work pioneered in projects is sustained beyond the project lifetime.



04

Inclusion and fundamental academic values in the European context and global dimension

A. Promoting inclusion and fundamental values in higher education

The projects have focused on raising awareness and sensitising stakeholders to the importance of internationalisation, inclusion and fundamental values in higher education. Through workshops, conferences, social media campaigns and other dissemination activities, they have created platforms for dialogue and knowledge exchange, facilitating a better understanding of the significance of these issues for the overall functioning of higher education systems.

*By promoting a culture of **open dialogue, critical thinking, and respect for diverse perspectives**, the projects have helped foster an environment where **fundamental values** can thrive.*

Progress in the areas of inclusion, fundamental values and internationalisation in higher education has been achieved thanks to:

- The NewFAV project “New building blocks of the Bologna Process: fundamental values”, which is contributing to the work of the BFUG Fundamental Values Working Group which is working to establish definitions and a common understanding of the fundamental values within the EHEA, namely academic freedom, institutional autonomy, public responsibility

of and for higher education, participation of students and staff in higher education governance or academic integrity. Statements on the fundamental values are planned to be adopted in Tirana by the Ministers responsible for higher education. The NewFAV project aims to develop a monitoring framework with indicators to measure and assess these fundamental values.

- The BWSE FORward and BWSE FOR2030 projects “Bologna with Stakeholders Eyes”, which emphasise the active involvement of students in shaping policies and providing recommendations. They aim to publish the new edition of Bologna With Student Eyes with policy recommendations that address fundamental values and the social dimension in higher education.

- The PLAR-U-PAGs project “Peer Learning Activities and Resources to Underpin the Principles and Guidelines for Social Dimension”, which facilitates collaboration among stakeholders, including higher education institutions and agencies, to develop resources and tools that support social dimension policies. It fosters peer learning and the exchange of good practices to enhance inclusivity in higher education.

- EPFIME “Enhancing a thought-out Policy and Framework on Inclusive Mobility across Europe” and PLAR-4-SIMP “Peer Learning Activities and Resources for Social Inclusion in Mobility Programmes”, which have provided important inputs towards the inclusion of students with disabilities and disadvantaged students in international mobility.

- The START project “Social Inclusion, Tolerance, Acceptance and Realization for all sTudents”, which seeks to create indicators that include vulnerable groups, such as refugees, migrants, and students with disabilities, in quality assurance processes. By advocating for the inclusion of vulnerable groups in quality assurance, START aims to create a more equitable and supportive higher education environment that recognises and respects the diversity of its student population.
- The 3-IN-AT and 3-IN-AT-PLUS projects “INternationalisation/INclusion/Innovation”, which focus on internationalisation efforts and innovative practices, such as microcredentials, to promote inclusivity in higher education. They address the challenge of including students with non-academic backgrounds and aim to create an inclusive learning environment.
- PROFFORMANCE “Assessment tool and Incentives for Developing Higher Education Teachers’ Performance” and PROFFORMANCE PLUS, which aim at supporting quality enhanced Learning and Teaching, in order to create quality culture to support teaching practices, including an assessment tool. The assessment tool on the different skills of teachers that is currently being translated in several languages will contribute to creating a culture of excellence in higher education.

B) Key challenges in promoting inclusion and diversity in higher education

One challenge relates to the definition and identification of the specific target groups for inclusion initiatives. As different countries may have different definitions and understandings of who constitutes a disadvantaged or underrepresented group, including limits in what data can be collected regarding such groups, the lack of clarity can hinder effective policy development and implementation.

Reaching and engaging with vulnerable groups effectively emerged as another significant challenge.

Collaborating with organisations dedicated to supporting these groups and representing their interests can enhance outreach efforts and ensure that policies and initiatives are tailored to address the specific needs of vulnerable populations.

Involving universities, student representatives, and other stakeholders in the process is crucial for creating comprehensive outreach strategies. By leveraging their expertise, stakeholders can develop effective communication channels, disseminate information about available support and opportunities, and build trust and rapport with vulnerable groups. These collaborative efforts can bridge the gap between marginalised communities and higher education institutions, enabling better access and participation.

Other challenges pertain to policy development and institutional support. This includes guidelines and frameworks that institutions can follow to ensure equal opportunities, access and support for all students. It also requires institutional commitment and resources to effectively implement these policies.

The “Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA” (P&Gs) were adopted by Ministers of Higher Education in the Rome Ministerial Conference, November 2020. There are ten Principles and Guidelines covering all policy issues related to the social dimension. Principles should be understood as high-level statements that serve as a basis for the conceptualisation of different policies for social dimension enhancement. Guidelines are recommendations intended to advise policy makers on how the principles should be implemented in practice.

Structural and institutional barriers that prevent marginalised students from accessing and succeeding in higher education are still present. These may include socio-economic factors, educational inequalities and

cultural biases. By recognising and addressing these barriers early, institutions can create pathways that ease the transition of underrepresented students into higher education. Additionally, raising awareness of these systemic barriers among educators and policymakers is vital to drive systemic change and create a more inclusive higher education system.

C) The role of international / European cooperation in promoting fundamental values in higher education

As the fundamental values are strongly linked to national understandings, having a common view within the European Higher Education Area and within other frameworks that EHEA members are part of (e.g. European Research Area, European Education Area) is vital.

The work done by the Fundamental Values Working Group, supported by the NewFAV project aims at providing such common understanding which can become a reference point for any future developments in promoting fundamental values.

In this context, international cooperation is key. By building networks and partnerships with organisations, experts, and institutions both within and outside of EHEA, they amplify the reach and impact of their initiatives. The collaborative approach facilitates the exchange of good practices, the sharing of experiences, and the development of joint initiatives furthering the fundamental values of higher education. It further strengthens the global policy dialogue, helps to address global challenges or to enhance mobility and exchange programs, which can all play a role in promoting fundamental values in higher education, sometimes even indirectly.



05

Conclusions

The event demonstrated the added value of the EU support in all of the above-mentioned policy areas. Despite ongoing challenges (e.g. non-uniform definition and application of concepts like automatic recognition or fundamental values, limited national support for the sustainability of the project results, etc.), the projects are really making a difference, as they have been contributing to:

- the implementation of the Bologna Process Key Commitments at national level. As a result, a number of concrete policy measures have taken shape, sometimes in the form of new legislation, and sometimes through developing other top-level policy approaches;
- trust building and mutual understanding, thus laying foundations for future policy reforms. To this end, peer learning was widely acknowledged and highly valued;
- development of EU policy making through elaboration of policy ideas that can enrich European discussions. This holds true not only for established thematic areas, such as quality assurance, but also for emerging ones, like micro-credentials;
- supporting actions like the European Universities, to test EHEA policies through practical and innovative inter-institutional cooperation;

- the establishment of relevant key initiatives in higher education in countries and areas beyond the EU (e.g. Central Asia Higher Education Area, HE policy reforms in Ukraine);
- awareness-raising, targeted to the 'end' user communities, i.e. students.

In terms of impact tracking, the combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators, stakeholder feedback and performance indicators has been systematically used by the projects to allow for an evaluation of their initiatives and the outcomes achieved. And whereas the impact is not always easy to assess in the short term, it is still evident. The success of projects is related to their capacity to engage different systems in putting in place concrete measures to support implementation in the different national contexts. The level of ownership and engagement that has been generated among the project partners is very high, and this has led to significant progress.

Overall, the event was highly appreciated and reiterated the need for similar clustering efforts to continue, with a view to enhancing synergies; limiting the possibility of duplicating work; and broadening the impact of the EHEA projects.

Annex I: Agenda

Erasmus+ KA3: Support to the implementation of EHEA reforms
Cluster Meeting: "Impact of the results of the EHEA projects"
Brussels, 20 June and 21 June 2023

Address: Rue Joseph II n° 70 – 1000 Brussels - meeting room 00/13

1st DAY

9:00 – 9:30	Registration
9:30 – 10:15	Welcome and objectives of the event José-Lorenzo Valles - Head of Unit EACEA A.1 Policy Context: latest developments on Commission's Policy Priorities – followed by questions Vanessa Debiais-Sainton – Head of Unit EAC B.1
10:15-10:30	Presentation of the workshops' session Anila Troshani - Head of Sector, EACEA A.1
10:30 -11:00	Coffee break
11:00 – 12:30	Impact of EHEA projects – Parallel workshops 1st PART <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quality Assurance and Automatic Recognition for enhancing transnational cooperation• National Qualifications Framework and micro-credentials for skills development and employability• Inclusion and fundamental academic values in the European context and global dimension
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 15:00	Impact of EHEA projects – Parallel workshops- 2nd PART
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee break
15:30 – 17:30	Feedback from rapporteurs and discussion
18:00	Reception at 'CIBACCO", rue Philippe Le Bon 15, 1000 Bruxelles

2nd DAY

Impact of Peer Support approach

David Crosier - Studies and Analysis Manager, EACEA.A.6

Examples to be presented:

9:00 – 10:00

- **Supporting Ukrainian higher education through the Bologna process**
Svitlana Shytikova, National Erasmus+ office in Ukraine
- **Kazakhstan contribution to launch the Central Asia HE area**
Aitzhan Kulumzhanova, Head of Internationalization of Higher Education Office of the Higher Education Development National Center of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan

10:00 – 10:30

ENIC-NARIC activities and synergies with EHEA projects

Lucie Antonizzi Trojanova - Policy Officer, EAC B.1
Chiara Finocchietti - Deputy Director of CIMEA, Italy

10:30 – 11:00

Coffee break

11:00 – 12:00

The European Approach of Quality Assurance in European Universities alliances: Sharing Insights and Recommendations from EUniQ project

Maria Luisa Garcia Minguez – Deputy Head of Unit, EACEA A.1
Liesbeth Hens - Flemish Ministry of Education and Training
Emily Palmer – Secretary General UNA Europa

12:00 – 12:30

Wrap up and final conclusions

José-Lorenzo Valles - Head of Unit EACEA A.1

12:30 – 13:30

Lunch

AFTERNOON SESSION (only for 2021 EHEA projects)

13:45 – 15:00

Management of the projects

15:00 – 16:30

Bilateral meetings with project coordinators:
EAC + EACEA Project managers and financial officers (upon prior request)

Annex II: List of projects

No	Project Title	Project Acronym	Year
1.	Enhancing a thought-out Policy and Framework on Inclusive Mobility across Europe	EPFIME	2018
2.	Thematic Peer Group on the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention in EHEA countries	TPG-LRC	2018
3.	Developing a European Approach for Comprehensive QA of (European) University Networks	EUniQ	2018
4.	Bologna Peer Group on QA: organisation	BPGQA-O	2018
5.	Bologna Peer Group on QA: staff mobility	BPSGQAS	2018
6.	Recognition of Prior Learning in practice, RPL in practice	RPLip	2018
7.	Effective partnership for enhanced recognition	EPER	2018
8.	"Internationalisation/INclusion/INnovation: Towards high-quality inclusive mobility and innovative teaching & learning in an internationalised Austrian Higher Education Area."	3-IN-AT	2018
9.	Social and International Dimension of Education and Recognition of Acquired Learning	SIDERAL	2018
10.	Effective involvement of stakeholders in external quality assurance activities	ESQA	2018
11.	Implementation of LRC COMPLIant recognition practices in the EHEA	I-COMPLY	2018
12.	Facilitating the Use of Bologna Tools for Higher Education Institutions and Quality Assurance organisations	FaBoTo+	2018
13.	Peer Group A: qualifications frameworks (umbrella project)	PGA	2018
14.	Peer Learning Activities and Resources for Social Inclusion in Mobility Programmes	PLAR-4-SIMP	2020

No	Project Title	Project Acronym	Year
15.	Empowering Higher Education in Adopting Digital Learning---	POWERHEAD	2020
16.	Spotlight on recognition	SPOT	2020
17.	Enhancing the Coverage and Connectivity of QA in the EHEA through DEQAR	DEQAR CONNECT	2020
18.	Microcredentials linked to the Bologna key commitments	Microbol	2020
19.	Bologna With Stakeholders Eyes For a Stronger Future of the Bologna Process	BWSE FORward	2020
20.	Supporting European quality assurance agencies in meeting the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area	SEQA-ESG	2020
21.	Better Academic Qualifications through Quality Assurance	BAQUAL	2020
22.	Bologna hub peer support	bologna hub PS	2020
23.	Transparency of Croatian Qualifications for Enhanced Recognition	TRACER	2020
24.	Leadership and Organisation for Teaching and Learning at European Universities	LOTUS	2020
25.	Assessment tool and Incentives for Developing Higher Education Teachers' Performance	PROFFORMANCE	2020
26.	Road Map for Implementation of Institutional Assessment	RoadMap	2020
27.	Bologna Hub Peer Support II	BHPS II	2021
28.	Peer Learning Activities and Resources to Underpin the Principles and Guidelines for Social Dimension	PLAR-U-PAGs	2021
29.	Qualifications Frameworks for trust, transparency and diversity – TPG A	QUATRA – TPG A	2021

No	Project Title	Project Acronym	Year
30.	Quality Assurance Fit for the Future	QA-FIT	2021
31.	IN-GLOBAL Enhancing Internal Knowledge and Global Dialogue of EHEA	IN-GLOBAL	2021
32.	MicroNet	MicroNet	2021
33.	INterconnection/INnovation/INclusion: Austrian contributions to the EHEA 2030	3-IN-AT-PLUS	2021
34.	New building blocks of the Bologna Process: fundamental values	NewFAV	2021
35.	Implementation and Innovation in QA through peer learning	IMINQA	2021
36	Social Inclusion, Tolerance, Acceptance and Realization for all students	START	2021
37	TPG-LRC Constructing Recognition in the EHEA	TPG-LRC CoRE	2021
38	Professionalism and high performance in Higher Education - Enhanced PROFFORMANCE toolkit for 21st century teachers	PROFFORMANCE PLUS	2021
39	Supporting European QA Agencies in meeting the ESG II	SEQA-ESG2	2021
40.	Bologna with Stakeholders Eyes for an Innovative, Inclusive and Interconnected EHEA by 2030	BWSE FOR2030	2021

Enhancing a thought-out Policy and Framework on Inclusive Mobility across Europe (EPFIME)

Partners

The EPFIME project was led by the Ministry of Education and Training of Belgium/Flemish Community in collaboration with

- the Support Centre for Inclusive Higher Education in Flanders (SIHO), Belgium
- the Association for Higher Education Access and Disability (AHEAD), Ireland
- the Erasmus Student Network (ESN)
- the Irish Universities Association (IUA), Ireland

Project description and activities

The specific objective of this project was to develop a thought-out policy/framework on inclusive mobility at European/national/regional/institutional level. This would allow national authorities and higher education institutions to collaborate more strongly in order to achieve a year-on-year increase in the numbers of students with a disability participating in mobility programmes, and to assure the quality of support services for both incoming and outgoing students with disabilities during exchange programmes.

Results and impact

To this end, the consortium and experts developed a multi-use ‘toolbox inclusive mobility’ that contains the following tools:

1. A research report and policy booklet with recommendations. This documentation introduces a sustainable European framework on ‘inclusive mobility’ and focuses among others on the criteria and the requirements to develop a sustainable policy at European/national/institutional/regional level.
2. A framework and self-assessment tool to stimulate institutions of higher education, ministries of education and national agencies to monitor their status on inclusive mobility and to optimise themselves permanently.
3. A guideline ‘inclusive mobility’ comprising supportive materials, to support institutions of higher education to incrementally implement a sustainable inclusive mobility strategy in which the needs of both incoming and outgoing students with disabilities are assessed thoroughly and met accordingly.
4. A website ‘inclusive mobility’ which allows national authorities and institutions of higher education across Europe to easily register, in a transparent/uniform way, their information on funding, regulations, and support services for different types of disabilities. Students with a disability who are considering to study abroad, can easily find essential information here. Apart from meeting the reported needs of students with disabilities across Europe, the website also facilitates institutions of higher education and national authorities to collaborate more strongly in assuring the transferability of support services.

As such, it offers a unique hub in Europe to support all stakeholders involved in inclusive mobility: students, higher education institutions, national agencies for Erasmus+ and ministries of educations. The platform offers stakeholders the opportunity to share detailed information about strategies, processes and support services for inclusive mobility in the European Higher Education Area. The work in the EPFIME project not only builds on efforts made in the past regarding inclusive mobility (the MappED! Platform), the projects' results will also be taken on board in further projects (PLAR-4-SIMP, PLAR-U-PAGs). The Inclusive Mobility toolbox is being continuously updated and enriched with new resources by project partner SIHO.

Website

This information has been compiled on the online platform <https://inclusivemobility.eu/about>

Thematic Peer Group on the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention in EHEA (TPG-LRC)

Partners

- Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca, Italy (Coordinator)
- Conferenza dei Rettori delle Università Italiane, Italy
- CIMEA, Italy
- Ministria e Arsimit dhe Sportit, Albania
- Center for Educational Services, Albania
- National Institute for Higher Education, Belarus
- Sihtasutus Archimedes, Estonia
- France Education International, France
- The Ministry for Education and Employment, Malta
- National Commission for Further and Higher Education, Malta
- Ministry of Education and Science, Ukraine
- State owned company "Information and ImageCentre", Ukraine
- The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)
- European Students' Union (ESU)
- European University Association (EUA)

Project description and activities

The objective of the TPG-LRC project was to foster the full implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) in the EHEA countries being part of the Thematic Peer Group B (TPG B), which is one of the three thematic groups established to facilitate the implementation of the Bologna key commitments in the period 2018-2020. Based on a peer- to-peer approach, the project encouraged sharing of knowledge and best practices among the TPG B members and consultative members, focusing on implementation of the key principles of the LRC. To this purpose, the project supported the organisation of three TPG B meetings and three open seminars on fraudulent qualifications and digitalisation, substantial difference and information provision in line with the LRC. Moreover, the TPG-LRC project foresaw the opportunity to implement peer learning activities through staff mobility.

Results

- Support to institutional activities of the TPG B.
- Foster the involvement of stakeholders in the field of recognition.
- Peer support and staff mobility among the TPGB members.

Impact

The main impact is to contribute to the Bologna Process reforms implementation, especially referring to the key commitment 2 on national legislation and procedures compliant with the LRC. This was carried out by

laying solid foundations on a number of topics that were still to investigate and tackled, such as students' involvement in recognition procedures, substantial differences, and the role of HEIs. The impact of the project was around three main circles: the inner circle is the TPGB and its member. Through the TPGB meetings and the staff mobility/PLAs, the project supported the exchange of practices and the implementation of LRC at national level involving Ministries and national authorities. The larger circle is made in primis by HEIs, as they are responsible for academic recognition of qualifications in many EHEA countries, by students, and by ENIC-NARIC centres and all the stakeholders.

Website

More info is available on: <https://www.cimea.it/EN/pagina-tpg-lrc> and <https://ehea.info/page-peer-group-B-LRC>

Developing a European Approach for Comprehensive QA of (European) University Network (EUniQ)

Partners

The EUniQ project was coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Training of Belgium/Flemish Community in cooperation with 8 QA agencies, 6 ministries and 3 European stakeholder organisations and in consultation with European Universities. (from Latvia, Belgium, France, Romania, Albania, Bulgaria, Georgia, Slovenia, Serbia, Armenia, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden).

Project description and activities

The aim was to develop and trial an assessment methodology for European Universities resulting in a development roadmap for QA of European Universities. The objectives of the project were to explore various approaches to assess the quality of European Universities, to demonstrate the feasibility of organising assessments of European Universities, to develop an assessment methodology that takes into account the policies regarding the European Universities Initiative, to undertake four pilot assessments of European Universities, and to, as a result, produce a development roadmap for QA of European Universities.

Results and impact

All project objectives have been achieved:

- The methodology for the QA of European Universities has been explored and agreed through meetings with the project partners (ministries, QA agencies, European stakeholder organisations) and European Universities.
- Two papers from the 6 ministries have informed the methodology and provided guidance for the formulation of principles for the QA of European Universities.
- In 4 pilot evaluations of European Universities the feasibility of the developed methodology has been tested and adjustments to the methodology were made after evaluation of the pilots.
- The resulting European Framework for Comprehensive QA of European Universities makes it possible to evaluate European Universities and these alliances can also apply the European Framework for evaluating their internal QA system themselves. The QA Development Roadmap clarifies how the European Framework can be applied and which steps European Universities can take to start an evaluation according to the Framework.

QA agencies have benefitted from participating in this project by co-developing the QA methodology for European Universities. QA agencies that have not participated in the project have been informed on the European Framework and Roadmap through the webinar and final conference in which they have participated and other dissemination activities. They have also been informed through the project partner ENQA.

The Roadmap shows how they can evaluate a European University when this is requested from them. National authorities have benefitted from this project by reflecting on a QA methodology for European Universities and making an inventory of obstacles for the implementation of a European Framework and of cross-border QA more generally.

The European stakeholder organisations that were involved in the project (ENQA, EUA, ESU) are engaged in the policy discussions related to European Universities. Their project participation has informed their policy perspectives regarding the QA European Universities based on the experiences of European Universities in the pilots and the discussions and reflections with other stakeholders including ministries, QA agencies and experts. Throughout the project, the partnership organised several peer support activities, from a Peer Support Newsletter to three large-scale Peer Support Events. Since the partnership included eight QA agencies, six HE ministries, and the European stakeholders' associations EUA, ESU, and ENQA, the partnership represented the main actors for QA in the European HE Area. The project integrated its activities into the work and schedule of the Bologna Thematic Peer Group on QA. The leading cochair of this Thematic Peer Group was the submitting national authority of this project.

Website

<https://www.nvao.net/en/eunig>

Bologna Peer Support Group: organisation (BPGQA-0)

Partners

The Bologna Peer Support Group: organisation project was led by the Ministry of Education and Training Belgium/Flemish Community in collaboration with:

- the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth of Cyprus
- the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement of Georgia.

Project description and activities

The peer group offered a platform for policy dialogue among equal partners, mutual exchanges of ideas and practices, sharing knowledge, mutual learning and understanding regarding the implementation process (the context, the policy/policies adopted and the measures translating the key commitments at the national level). The countries that have successfully implemented the key commitment, or a specific part thereof, remained ready to deliver peer support to other countries in their efforts to implement reforms further and better, and were also ready to invite peers to discuss their adopted policy and how it is put in practice.

Three overall meetings of the peer support group on quality assurance were organised and as there were three co-chairs of the peer group, each co-chair chose to organise one meeting in its country (Georgia, Cyprus and Belgium – Flemish Community). The project supported the work of the Peer Group on QA by enabling all participating countries and organisations to participate in the meetings and activities, The co-chairs took into account the needs of member countries as indicated in the Implementation Scorecard (Bologna Implementation Report 2018) and in the survey conducted by the BFUG Secretariat in summer 2018, and a budget was offered for travel, accommodation and organisation.

Results and Impact

This project allowed countries that were advanced in ESG implementation to provide examples of how they had achieved their success, while also sharing pitfalls and unforeseen challenges that other countries might not expect. It gave ministries and quality assurance agencies the opportunity not only to evaluate their own practices, but also to connect with their peers at various levels - individually and with institutions facing the same challenges as them. Countries have increased their knowledge of quality assurance across the EHEA, identified common challenges and made contact with experienced colleagues who can provide even more support and exchange of expertise in the future. The project and its activities have expanded the concept of peer support not only between individuals, but thus also between countries. It has increased confidence in the peer support system and paved the way for future cooperation between countries on quality assurance.

Several other ongoing KA3 quality assurance projects are simultaneously supporting the work of the peer group or have been strengthened by the cooperation that has emerged from the peer group's activities. Among these are the staff mobility project, the EUNIQ project and the ESQA project.

All the member countries of the peer group have contributed to the action plan of the peer group, in which they explained their goals towards 2020 and the concrete actions that they would take nationally or together with their international peers. This action plan is to be found in: [Action Plan TPG C QA 2018 2020 Update 08102020.xlsx](#).

Website

<http://www.ehea.info/page-peer-group-C-QA>.

Bologna Peer Group on QA: staff mobility project (BPSGQAS)

Partners

The Bologna Peer Group on QA: Staff Mobility project was led by the Ministry of Education and Training Belgium/ Flemish Community in collaboration with:

- the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth of Cyprus
- the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement of Georgia.

Project description and activities

The project started as a 2-year project and was later extended by 6 months, due to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis.

Through a system of mobility of staff members working in the field of quality assurance in higher education within national authorities (ministries), quality assurance agencies and/or stakeholder organizations, this project facilitated peer support in the Bologna Peer Support Group on Quality Assurance. All flows and directions of staff mobility between ministries, quality assurance agencies and stakeholder organizations were possible. In doing so, the system supported the professional development of staff by offering a work placement in another country. Each staff mobility focused on specific needs of the home country. Through 'job shadowing', observation periods and/or training at a quality assurance partner organisation, ministry or agency abroad, each mobile peer further developed their competencies in quality assurance. It was expected that the individual staff mobilities would contribute to a full implementation of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) in each country.

Results and impact

The 'Bologna Peer Group on QA: staff mobility project' enabled 25 mobilities (22 physical and 3 virtual) between QA agencies, ministries of education and BFUG stakeholder organisations across Europe. The project was severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in only a third of the 81 planned mobilities taking place. Nevertheless, the project had been a success:

- The project enabled individual participants to develop their expertise in implementing Bologna commitments by learning from the experiences of other colleagues at other institutions. It gave them the opportunity to get to know each other and made it easier to establish contacts for further exchange and cooperation.
- The Staff mobilities brought together representatives from numerous quality assurance agencies, ministries and stakeholder organisations. This allowed them to meet their counterparts in other countries and compare their institutional procedures and internal practices with those of their peers. Information and expertise were exchanged during the mobilities, allowing ministries and agencies to learn from each other and improve their own practices.

- Moreover, the project has increased confidence in the peer support system and paved the way for future cooperation between countries on quality assurance.

Both mobile staff and hosts highly appreciated the project. Reports from the staff mobility participants indicated that the project provided the right context for mutual exchange of ideas and practices, knowledge sharing, mutual learning and understanding regarding the quality assurance process. The results of this project have been included in the ongoing work of the Thematic Peer Group C on QA in its work programme 2021-2024. As such, the follow-up project IMINQA again includes a system of staff mobility.

Website

<https://www.ehea.info/page-peer-group-C-QA>

Recognition of Prior Learning in practice (RPL in practice)

Partners

- Ministry of Education and Research, Sweden
- Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR), Sweden (Coordinator)
- Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria
- Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, Austria
- Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, Iceland
- Rannís The Icelandic Centre for Research, Iceland
- Ministry of Science and Education, Croatia
- Cork Institute of Technology/Munster Technological University, Ireland
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
- The Irish Universities Association (IUA)
- European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)

Project description and activities

The objective was to put the already existing policies and guidelines for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to work and, through structured peer learning, encourage the participating countries and HEIs to develop quality assured and consistent processes/working methods to recognise non-formal and informal learning that suited the conditions in their countries.

The project had participants representing ministries of education and research, government agencies and HEIs. The objective of the project was to tackle this gap between policy and practice at all levels. The project ran parallel to some of the participants' own national development projects (e.g., Austria, Iceland and Croatia) on validation, which contributed to mutual exchange. This added value to both the national developments in these countries and the project itself and led to cross-pollination between the projects.

Participating HEIs:

- University of Gothenburg, Sweden
- Royal Institute of Technology, KTH, Sweden
- Universität für Bodenkultur Wien, Austria
- FH Campus Wien, Austria
- Pädagogische Hochschule Oberösterreich, Austria
- University of Iceland, Iceland
- Iceland University of the Arts, Iceland
- University of Rijeka Faculty of Law, Croatia
- Algebra University College, Croatia
- Cork Institute of Technology/Munster Technological University, Ireland
- Mary Immaculate College (MIC), Ireland

Results

With the limited number of countries represented (5) and HEIs (12) the project focused on disseminating the working method and tools developed in the project. Through conferences, webinars, a developed self-assessment template for institutions, inspirational films, report etc the project has reached outside the project group and has contributed to raise awareness but also to provide tools for implementation.

Impact

The main impact of the project derived from the working method of peer learning. The participating HEIs and their staff benefitted from the exchange of best practices, which has enabled them to improve their methodology of RPL. HEI participants also gained confidence and first-hand experience from other participants. The mix in the group contributed to better understanding of challenges in implementation between national organisations/ ministries and HEIs. Throughout the project, in the surveys, webinars and at the final conference the need for further networking and peer learning has been pointed out as crucial for continued implementation of RPL. The European RPL Network coordinated by AQ Austria started as a result of this project.

Website

<https://www.uhr.se/en/start/about-the-council/what-uhr-does/projects/rpl-in-practice-project/>

Effective partnership for enhanced recognition (EPER)

Partners

- Ministry of Science and Education, Croatia (Coordinator)
- Ministry of Education and Science, Republic of North Macedonia
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, Serbia
- Ministry of Education, Montenegro
- Centre for Information and Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Project description and activities

The EPER project was focused on capacity building and preparation for the full implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention in the project partner countries. The project activities also addressed obstacles and opportunities for mutual cooperation in the area of recognition of foreign higher education qualifications in the project partner countries.

Results

Project outcomes include following:

- Improved recognition procedures and implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention in the project partner countries
- Compendium on EU experience and recognition practice
- Guide to the implementation of Recommendations on the recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in refugee-like situation.

Impact

Better understanding of recognition procedures in the project partner countries and awareness on the need to fully implement the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Closer regional cooperation in the area of recognition and implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Website

<https://mzo.gov.hr/istaknute-teme/odgoj-i-obrazovanje/visoko-obrazovanje/razvoj-visokog-obrazovanja/157>

INternationalisation/INclusion/INnovation: Towards high-quality inclusive mobility and innovative teaching & learning in an internationalised Austrian Higher Education Area (3-IN-AT)

Partners

3-IN-AT was coordinated by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF) in collaboration with:

- Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation (OeAD), as affiliated entity of the ministry, responsible for project coordination and implementation
- Ministry of Science and Education, Croatia
- European University Association (EUA)
- European Students' Union (ESU)
- Rectors' Conference of Swiss Universities

External Monitoring by AQ Austria – Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria

Project description and activities

In cooperation with consultative members of the Bologna Follow-up Group (EUA and ESU), Switzerland and Croatia, the work programme offers the Austrian higher education institutions a wide range of consultancy, training and information. It follows the results of the Bologna Process Implementation Report 2018, and the priorities of the Paris Communiqué as well as the suggestions of the Austrian higher education institutions and the national quality assurance agency AQ Austria. As in both preceding projects, AQ Austria is not only providing thematic input but also accompanying the project with external monitoring.

Results

Internationalisation and mobility have received increased attention since the launch of the HMIS2030 strategy. The event brand "Dialogue on innovative higher education teaching" has been established as a forum for discussions on topics of learning and teaching gathering ministerial representatives and those of HEIs. Awareness of the implementation of Bologna tools like the ECTS has increased, as shown by more activities by HEIs which lagged behind in certain aspects of implementation.

Impact

Enhanced implementation of the Bologna Process in the Austrian HE area and beyond, especially with respect to internationalization and mobility as well as innovative teaching and learning and the social dimension.

Website

<https://oead.at/en/expertise/european-higher-education-area/3-in-at-2019-2021>

Social and International Dimension of Education and Recognition of Acquired Learning (SIDERAL)

Partners

- Ministry of Science and Education, Croatia (Coordinator)
- Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, Austria
- Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR)
- European Students' Union (ESU)

Project description

The objectives of the project 'Social and International Dimension of Education and Recognition of Acquired Learning' were threefold – the support the implementation of the Croatian National Plan for the Enhancement of Social Dimension in Higher Education 2019-2021, contribution to further developments of recognition of prior learning within the framework of social dimension, and the support of the BFUG Advisory Group on Social Dimension (facilitating AG meetings and related PLAs). The peers from Austria and Sweden contributed through the evaluation of studies that were developed through the project related to vulnerable and under-represented groups of students and recognition of prior learning, as well as a standardized methodology for monitoring educational and professional paths of students.

Results

1. The Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA.
2. The study Student Life during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown: European-wide insights.
3. The study On Underrepresented and Vulnerable Groups of Students: Contributions to the Enhancement of the Social Dimension of Higher Education in Croatia.
4. The Methodology for collecting data on educational and professional pathways of students according to their social and economic status.
5. Draft of the Guidelines for drafting general acts of higher education institutions for the recognition of prior learning in Croatian higher education institutions.

Impact

Improvement and better understanding of the social dimension in the European Higher Education Area and at the national level, as well as recognition of prior learning in higher education in Croatia.

Website

[Ministarstvo znanosti i obrazovanja - Razvoj visokog obrazovanja \(gov.hr\)](https://www.mz.gov.hr/)

Effective involvement of Stakeholders in External Quality Assurance Activities (ESQA)

Partners

- Ministry of Education - Romania (Coordinator)
- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), Belgium
- European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)
- European Students' Union (ESU)
- Agentia Romana de Asigurare a Calitatii in Invatamantul Superior (ARACIS), Romania
- Haut conseil de l'Evaluation de la Recherche et de l'Enseignement Superieur (HCERES), France
- National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (NEAA), Bulgaria
- The Danish Accreditation Institution (DAI), Denmark
- Agentia Nationala de Asigurare a Calitatii in Invatamantul Profesional (ANACEC), Moldova

Project description and activities

The objective of the project was to support the activity of Thematic Peer Group C on quality assurance (TPG C), established by the Bologna Follow-up Group, by tackling the theme The role and engagement of stakeholders in internal and external quality assurance. This theme was established as a topic of interest by the members of the group.

It was mainly addressed the stakeholders' involvement at the level of external quality assurance activities, aiming to find ways to deepen and make more effective their involvement at European Higher Education Area (EHEA) member countries level, according to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). As external and internal quality assurance processes are interlinked, the involvement of stakeholders was analysed in a holistic manner.

Firstly, it was aimed to increase knowledge at quality assurance agencies and national authorities from the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) countries level, in the field of stakeholder engagement. To encourage actions that improve stakeholder engagement, by making it more effective, was developed a Guide providing practice-based guidance. Its purpose is to inspire a positive development and is not intended to prescribe standards to be copied and complied with.

The long-term objective of the project is to bring important changes in the practices of quality assurance agencies related to stakeholders' involvement, which will result in increased relevance and impact of quality assurance activities in higher education.

Results and impact

The project promotes the diversification of stakeholders' (SH) involvement in QA activities across EHEA and provides the means for making the involvement of stakeholders effective. It is expected to bring important changes in the practices of QA agencies related to stakeholders' involvement, which in the long term will result

in increased relevance and impact of QA activities in higher education.

The study leads to increased knowledge at quality assurance agencies, higher education institutions, students' federations and higher education national authorities from countries in the EHEA level, related to stakeholders' involvement. It can also be used for benchmarking and for the development of recommendations in evaluation activities, by ENQA and ESU panel members in external evaluation of quality assurance agencies.

The peer-review activities helped each agency partner in the project to properly assess the status of stakeholders' involvement in their QA activities while identifying the strong and weak points, by valorising the way in how peers, with experience in the field, are critically analysing all QA procedures and processes within the agency, during a no stake process. The diagnosis workshops brought in the perspective of the various representatives of stakeholders' organisations from the host countries. They stimulated external stakeholders' interest in becoming actively involved in QA activity in higher education.

The peer-learning activity led to increased knowledge of Thematic Peer Group C on Quality Assurance members in what concerns stakeholders' involvement in quality assurance activities in countries across EHEA. Still, it was also an opportunity to share their own experience. The best practices presented were a source of inspiration for the QA agencies, for improving their own procedures and practices.

The Guide is an essential tool meant to promote the diversification of stakeholders' involvement in quality assurance activities across EHEA and provide the means for making the involvement of stakeholders effective. It is expected to bring important changes in the practices of quality assurance agencies related to stakeholders' involvement, which in the long term will result in increased relevance and impact of quality assurance activities in higher education. The Guide provides guidelines primarily to the QA agencies and national authorities in the EHEA, to strengthen dialogue and co-operation with stakeholders and their effective involvement in QA processes. Still, it can be inspirational for countries and regions outside Europe.

The two stakeholders' organizations representing students and professional higher education institutions in the partnership are specifically using the provisions of the Guide in their activities, to empower their members to increase participation in higher education and quality assurance processes and activities. ENQA supports QA agencies members or affiliates to increase the efficiency of stakeholder's involvement in their own QA procedures.

The implementation of the Guide for Effective Stakeholders' involvement in Quality Assurance at the level of agencies members in the consortium, with the assistance of the stakeholders' organizations members in the partnership, should lead to increased and effective collaboration with stakeholders at the national level.

Website

<https://esqa.ro/>

Implementation of LRC COMPLiant recognition practices in the EHEA (I-Comply)

Partners

Coordinators:

- ENIC-NARIC, The Netherlands (project management)
- Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, The Netherlands (formal coordinator).

Project team:

- ENIC-NARIC Italy
- ENIC-NARIC Lithuania
- ENIC NARIC Poland, ENIC-NARIC Ukraine
- Ministry of Education and Science Ukraine

Steering group of experts:

- ENIC-NARIC Denmark
- ENIC-NARIC Estonia
- ENIC-NARIC France
- ENIC-NARIC Norway

Project description and activities

I-Comply was a 2-year project (2019-2021) that aimed to tackle the challenges of insufficient compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC), which was highlighted earlier in the Bologna Implementation Report 2018.

Its main aim was to establish practical compliance with the LRC (streamline recognition practices). To achieve this, the project consisted of two tiers:

- Focus on legal and practical implementation of the LRC in five partner countries (Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland and Ukraine).
- Focus on a European wide perspective in three peer learning activities on how to support recognition practices at higher education institutions, automatic recognition and the implementation of LRC article VII (refugees).

Results

1. A compendium of good practice and recommendations.
2. Various instruments that were developed, which are useful for any country in the EHEA that wishes to move towards further compliance:
3. A scorecard to map the current state of practical and legal implementation with the LRC (self-evaluation).

4. Guidelines to produce a chart of the national infrastructure on recognition.
5. Roadmap to implement measures to achieve compliance (KPIs: areas of improvement).
6. Reporting template to review measures.

Impact

During the final seminar the main outcomes of the project were shared and discussed with a broad group of stakeholders in order to exploit the results. The seminar was attended by over 90 persons, including Ministries of Education, ENIC-NARIC centres, National Quality Assurance Agencies, Rectors conferences, National student organizations and European umbrella organizations.

The results of the I-Comply project were also communicated and presented to the Bologna working group Thematic Peer Group B (implementation of the LRC) and taken aboard as input for the Erasmus+ project I-AR (Implementation of Automatic Recognition in the Networks), coordinated by Nuffic.

Website

<https://www.nuffic.nl/node/415>

Facilitating the Use of Bologna Tools for Higher Education Institutions and Quality Assurance Organisations (FaBoTo+)

Partners

- Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, The Netherlands (Coordinator)
- The Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education (Nuffic), The Netherlands
- Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie, The Netherlands
- Uni.GE, Georgia
- Centre for Vocational Education & Training Studies, Russia
- Institute for Leadership Innovations and Development, Ukraine
- German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Germany

Project description and activities

According to the Bologna Process Implementation Report 2018 The Netherlands appears to have fully implemented the EHEA-reforms. However, while the essential Bologna instruments are in place there are still weaknesses in the implementation of the Bologna agenda. The FaBoTo+ project aims to address these weaknesses, while collaboration with other countries to implement the Bologna tools. By doing this, FaBoTo+ goes beyond the previous projects by addressing systematically the dialogue and peer learning with other countries of the EHEA. These weaknesses are described by the Dutch team of Bologna experts (playing a great role in the project) in the “testimony” document Bologna thorough Bologna Experts ‘Eyes 2018. The most important problems/challenges identified were related to the use of transparency documents such as ECTS, the course catalogue, use of learning outcomes and the diploma supplement. In addition the Ministry of Education identified obstacles for implementation in a Government ‘s publication on internationalisation of HE and vocational education. These obstacles included the development and delivery of joint/ multiple and double degree programmes and the connection between HE and vocational education and training. Further the progress report shows on European level the implementation of joint programmes within the EHEA is still to be improved.

The implementation of most WPs of the project took place during the COVID period.

Results and impact

1. Quality and recognition of joint programmes in the EHEA through the European Peer Learning (PLA) event that identified good practice and solutions to the challenges for implementation of the European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes. Furthermore, the updated JDAZ guide offering an overview of all relevant issues coordinators of joint programmes have to deal with, offered support to the development of joint programme partnerships.

2. Introduce, stimulate and streamline the application of the Bologna tools in Dutch HEIs and thus strengthen the EHEA, through:

- a network of Bologna Experts that served as catalysts for sharing good practice on the practical

implementation of the Bologna tools by Dutch HEIs. This network has over the last decade proven to be a very successful method to implement Bologna tools.

- Identifying ICT challenges at HEIs when implementing Bologna reforms and continue the dialogue with ICT providers for HE.
- continued dialogue between ECVET and Bologna experts to facilitate smooth transition for students from vocational training to tertiary education and making optimal use of talents in the EHEA.

3. Create a wider potential for partnerships through the ECHE trainings and conference in The Netherlands, Ukraine, Georgia and Russian Federation, thus contributing to more transparency and higher quality in mobility activities funded by the Erasmus+ programme.

Website

<https://www.erasmusplus.nl/faboto>

Many documents are not at the project website anymore. They are recently updated and are now available under the website page of the Erasmus Charter Higher Education (ECHE) Documents on the Diploma Supplement, The Bologna module 2023 and the Course Catalogue in practice. Another document on the Modernization of Higher education in 2021 produced under the FaBoTo + project has been updated and is also available on the ECHE website page under the name Modernisation in Higher Education in 2023:

<https://www.erasmusplus.nl/subsidie/hoger-onderwijs/uitvoering/erasmus-charter-higher-education>

Peer Group A: qualifications frameworks (umbrella project) (PGA)

Partners

- Ministry of Education Youth and Sports, Czech Republic (Coordinator)
- European Students' Union (ESU)
- Dum Zahranicni Spoluprace, Czech Republic
- Stiftung zur Forderung der Hochschulrektorenkonferenz, Germany

Project description

The Czech Republic, an active member of the Bologna process from 1999, was one of the cochairs and thus one of the leading countries in the peer support group A “Qualification framework and ECTS”. The group A focuses on a three-cycle system compatible with the overarching framework of qualifications (hereinafter “QF”) of the EHEA and first and second cycle degrees scaled by ECTS. The group was composed out of well experienced countries where ECTS and QF have been well implemented and from countries where this key commitment was still at the beginning of the long journey before the final implementation. The aim of the project was to coordinate the activities of the peer group, support communication and cooperation among the peer group members and help them to achieve progress in the given area.

Results

TPG A was successfully launched. The umbrella project analysed all the difficulties that member states faced when implementing QF and ECTS. It organised meetings and other activities during which it supported member states in improving and collaborating in the subject of QF and ECTS. The project gave a great opportunity for other member states to learn from each other. Many of them reported progress and updated their work plans.

Impact

Mutual help and support are expected to have an overall positive impact on the level of implementation of key commitments in the individual member states and eventually in the European Higher Education Area as a whole. The impact is rather long-term and further work periods of peer groups are necessary. However, it is noted that as a direct effect from the project, Kazakhstan, one of the TPG A members, managed to reach considerable progress and finalized its NQF and prepared the self-certification report.

Website

<https://ehea.info/page-peer-group-A-QF>

Peer Learning Activities and Resources for Social Inclusion in Mobility Programmes (PLAR-4-SIMP)

Partners

The PLAR-4-SIMP project was led by the Ministry of Education and Training Belgium/Flemish Community, in collaboration with

- the Support Centre for Inclusive Higher Education in Flanders
- the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research of Austria
- the Erasmus Student Network (ESN)

Five individual experts each brought their own complementary and vast expertise and knowledge to the consortium.

Project description

The general objective of this project was to support national authorities and higher education institutions across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in the reform of their policies and practices to widen the participation of students from disadvantaged backgrounds in mobility programmes.

Activities and Results

To achieve this goal, the PLAR-4-SIMP consortium organised two peer learning activities (PLA) on social inclusion in mobility programmes. The peer-to-peer support and counselling approach did not only allow the PLA participants – ministry representatives, international and inclusion officers, higher education institutions from 14 EHEA countries – to learn from each other and to draw up plans to optimize their policies and practices, but also contributed to a shared ownership and commitment between national authorities and stakeholders of the different member states on the topic.

Apart from the PLAs, the project partners also published the following documents and resources:

- a peer learning report, which brings an overview of the peer learning activities and recommendations on comprehensive policies to tackle inclusion in mobility programmes.
- a comprehensive policy report and database on national social inclusion measures and practices that have been implemented across the EHEA to widen the participation of students from underrepresented groups in mobility programmes, in which innovative inclusive policy measures have been highlighted. As such, it allows EHEA countries to be more aware of the (lack of) inclusive aspects in their respective mobility programmes and practices and to optimize their policies.
- a communication package to promote the benefits of outward mobility towards students of disadvantaged groups in a uniform and inclusive way, allowing national authorities, higher education institutions and student organisations to reach out to more students from disadvantaged groups.

- an e-learning training package to equip staff of higher education authorities and institutions with the right skills, knowledge, attitudes and tools to best organise inclusive student mobility in the 21st century, in a way that wouldn't be possible when only providing face-to-face training.

Impact

All outcomes have been integrated on the platform InclusiveMobility.eu and are directly implementable. As such they contribute to a more inclusive new Erasmus programme in the short term. The outcomes of this project have led to more transparency in current developments in social inclusion in mobility programmes and will support higher education authorities and institutions to implement more social inclusion measures within their mobility policies and practices. The website also provides a tool to meet the reported needs of disadvantaged students across Europe. It serves as a platform where students can find information about international mobility, accessibility aspects, information about different countries, testimonials by other students, different types of mobility, etc.

Website

<https://plar4simp.inclusivemobility.eu/>

Empowering Higher Education in Adopting Digital Learning (POWERHEAD)

Partners

The POWERHEAD project was led by the Ministry of Education and Training Belgium/Flemish Community in collaboration with

- the Department of Higher Education, Innovation and Science of Latvia
- the Flemish Educational Council (Vlor) was an active actor in this project, as third linked party.

Project description and activities

The POWERHEAD project (Empowering Higher Education in Adopting Digital Learning) initially formulated the aim of exchanging knowledge and good practices between countries that have implemented digital learning in different ways.

The central questions of the POWERHEAD project were:

How can digital learning in higher education be stimulated? How can national governments support higher education institutions on digital learning, given their autonomy? How can higher education institutions further shape their digitalisation policy?

The objective of the project was to design guidelines for a policy on digital learning in higher education at two levels: guidelines for a national policy on digital learning in higher education and recommendations for higher education institutions. In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, the proposed objectives of the project remained relevant: designing a structural policy on digital learning in higher education on two levels: guidelines for a national policy and recommendations for higher education institutions.

Results and impact

As results, to be mentioned a first background paper on digital learning in higher education. This builds upon previous work of the Flemish Education Council and international publications and insights. This paper has been discussed by the transnational steering group, including representatives from the Latvian project partners as well as international experts. The result of this meeting was a final background paper on digital learning in higher education. Secondly an inventory was set up in each participating country of the needs of higher education institutions in order to develop a thought-out policy on digital learning. Identification of the needs that are common in the participating countries lead to a common needs analysis. In addition, guidelines for national authorities and recommendations for higher education institutions to support and stimulate further implementation of qualitative digital learning in higher education. Finally, a video presenting the project and a one pager (poster) for each set of guidelines was developed.

Website

<https://www.vlor.be/powerhead>

Spotlight on recognition (SPOT)

Partners

- EUA - European University Association, Belgium (Coordinator)
- Crue Universidades Españolas, Spain
- HRK – Hochschulrektorenkonferenz, Germany
- The Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education (Nuffic), The Netherlands

Project description

The project aimed to support staff at higher education institutions who are responsible for recognition processes and decisions by enhancing their capacities in terms of recognition procedures in compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

The project adopted a transnational peer-learning approach through which university staff involved in recognition processes and decisions receive information, training and support in self-assessing and enhancing their recognition practices' compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Activities, results and impact

- The following activities took place in the context of the project:
- The establishment and continuous development of the Academic Recognition Hub, an online space gathering relevant material on academic recognition.
- An online training course attuned to the needs of university staff in charge of academic recognition. The course consisted of several modules equipping recognition practitioners with substantial, practical knowledge about good practice in recognition.
- Multiple online and on-site events targeting university staff in charge of academic recognition from across the European Higher Education Area. These events included three webinars with a focus on 1) ensuring fair and transparent recognition procedures through Bologna Process tools, 2) the quality assurance of recognition procedures, and 3) the “Spotlight on recognition” self-assessment tool (see also next point below); two online focus groups on 1) substantial differences and 2) digitally facilitated recognition procedures for the purposes of information dissemination, peer-learning and exchange of good practice, and to test the self-assessment tool developed through the project; a bilingual online workshop in Spain specifically tailored to the needs of recognition practitioners from Spanish higher education institutions; and a final on-site project conference in Brussels.
- The development of a self-assessment tool to encourage institutions and their staff to reflect on how to improve their recognition practices in a self-guided and, thus, formative and sustainable way. The tool is available in English, French, German and Spanish.

Website

<https://eua.eu/resources/projects/785-spotlight.html>

Enhancing the Coverage and Connectivity of QA in the EHEA through DEQAR (DEQAR CONNECT)

Partners

- European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), Belgium (coordinator)
- CIMEA, Italy
- National Centre for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas (CNRED), Romania
- The Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education (Nuffic), The Netherlands
- Centre International d'Études Pédagogiques (CIEP), France
- Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE), Croatia
- Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO), The Netherlands
- Akkreditierungs, Zertifizierungs und Qualitätssicherungs Institut (ACQUIN), Germany
- Agencia para la Calidad del Sistema Universitario de Castilla y León (ACSUCYL), Spain
- Agence pour l'évaluation de la qualité de l'enseignement supérieur (AEQES), Belgium
- Academic Information Centre (AIC), Latvia
- ANQA, Armenia
- AQ, Austria
- Commission des Titres d'Ingénieur (CTI), France
- EAEVE, Austria
- Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC), Hungary
- The non-profit institution independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating (IAAR), Kazakhstan
- Independent Kazakh Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (IQAA) Kazakhstan
- MusiQuE, Belgium
- National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE), Georgia
- The National Centre for Public Accreditation (NCPA), Russia
- Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC), Lithuania

Associated partners:

- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)
- ESU
- European University Association (EUA)
- European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)

Project description and activities

DEQAR CONNECT consisted of two main strands:

- to expand the coverage to EHEA countries in DEQAR
- to enhance the connectivity by exploiting existing synergies in the use of DEQAR data and maximise the use of the information on QA results.
-

Within the first strand:

1. create an impetus for QA agencies that have not yet received support through the initial DEQAR project.
2. Provide peer support and counselling to agencies in linking up with DEQAR.
3. implement efficient methods for submitting data to DEQAR in all participating agencies.

Within the second strand the project had the objective to:

1. Integrate information available through DEQAR in the recognition/credential evaluation workflow.
2. Enable the use of DEQAR quality assurance data for the Europass Accreditation Database.
3. Explore further opportunities to connect with digitalisation and data platforms and initiatives.

In addition to the technical core and transversal to both strands, the objectives of the DEQAR CONNECT project was to further support the activities of the BFUG Thematic Peer Groups (TPG) on QA and on Recognition, or their succeeding bodies in the post-2020 BFUG working structure and enhance DEQAR's visibility and relevance among all stakeholders.

Results

- 16 EQAR-registered agencies participated in the project; Six agencies that had never done an upload to the database have done so during the project.
- DEQAR's coverage was improved substantially: more than doubling the number of stored reports, covering 40% more higher education institutions now than in 2019 and increasing the number of higher education systems where all or most HEIs are in DEQAR from 14 to 24.
- Three out of four ENIC-NARIC project partners established connection to DEQAR, and integrated data in their workflows.
- Two ENIC-NARIC project partners are currently using the DEQAR data for evaluating and recognizing qualifications.
- An interface that connects DEQAR with the Europass database was created -The interface is available to all countries and allows to re-use the data already present in DEQAR within the European Digital Credentials for Learning (EDC, former Europass Digital Credentials) infrastructure.
- Facilitated EBSI adoption: external QA results from DEQAR are directly now usable by HEIs through an automatically issued Verifiable Accreditation (VA);
- The DEQAR CONNECT conference (organised in the second half of the project) was well received and attended by 182 participants.
- Policy brief on the state of external QA in EHEA published. Downloaded approx. 90 times from EQAR's website. Main findings disseminated in different events and the relevant working groups on QA.
- DEQAR digital label created for every report in the database. File can be downloaded by the HEI through the public interface.
- Two researchers analysed DEQAR data and published posters with main results at the DEQAR seminar.
- DEQAR was promoted during the lifetime of the project in 35 events (25 by EQAR, and 10 by project partners).
- Since the beginning of the project, 221 posts (including social media, website news items, newsletters and other website mentions).

Impact

The expansion of the database (Strand 1) surpassed the expectations with the database growing by more than 57% in terms of number of reports. Out of 50 registered QA agencies in EQAR at that time, 44 have uploaded reports in the database at some point (project target: 39).

DEQAR CONNECT advanced also beyond the project tasks and activities, including the following:

- New QA agencies uploading in DEQAR and establishing formal mentorship system.
- The Advisory Group discussed the role of DEQAR in registering non-traditional, alternative providers offering micro-credentials or similar.
- Offering peer support for additional ENIC-NARICs.
- DEQAR set out QA indicators in ETER.
- Verifiable Credentials were adopted as a future- proof technology to make DEQAR data available as a general-purpose digital label and within the EBSI ecosystem.

Website

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

Micro-credentials linked to the Bologna Key Commitments (MICROBOL)

Partners

The project was led by the Ministry of Education and Training Belgium/Flemish Community in collaboration with:

- the Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland
- associazione CIMEA, Italy
- European University Association (EUA)
- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

Project description

The main project objectives of MICROBOL were:

- Raising awareness on the topic of micro-credentials at governmental level.
- Checking whether the current Bologna tools are applicable for micro-credentials and/or propose changes for adaptations on European level.
- Creating a common European framework for micro-credentials within the EHEA.

Activities, results and impact

The Work Packages were designed to support these project goals. The MICROBOL project managed to raise awareness on the topic of micro-credentials at governmental level. As mentioned in the dissemination report, MICROBOL events targeted specifically national policy makers, including the BFUG members of the 49 EHEA countries. The meetings and events of the project were well attended from a broad range of European countries. On these meetings and events, policy makers of all EHEA countries discussed not only the relation between micro-credentials and the key commitments (and related Bologna tools) themselves, but also the definition of micro-credentials, the aim, the contribution to LLL, stackability, digitalisation and the way micro-credentials can enhance inclusion in higher education.

A common European framework for micro-credentials in the EHEA was published as the final objective of the project. The framework represents the consensus reached up to that point and builds on the input of the project partners and experts, as well as all the persons involved in the project through the three working groups. The framework was well received during the final conference of the project, that took place on 8 March 2022. At the start of the project, a desk research was carried out to identify questions such as: What types of micro-credentials do exist? Who are main providers? How about “open badges”? The experts provided extra knowledge and helped to create a basis for this overview. They made a systematic review of the Bologna tools (a matrix) to show how they can help address the important challenges and how they can be used for the foreseen ‘new’ kind of learning.

A kick-off conference was organised on the topic of micro-credentials to create awareness among BFUG members and Bologna Peer Support Group members about the new forms of teaching and learning, the needs for more inclusiveness of higher education through offering flexible learning and the digitalisation of

HE. Three working groups were established: QA, Recognition and ECTS & QF. Based on the results of the desk research and the survey, the discussions in the working groups, and the set of recommendations, a common European framework on micro-credentials was written. It builds on the expertise built up in working groups, a European wide survey and general interaction with numerous partners in the field. This text represents the consensus reached so far on micro-credentials in relation to the Bologna key commitments. It shows how the Bologna key commitments are applicable to micro credentials, as it zooms in on Quality Assurance, Recognition and Qualifications Framework and ECTS. In order to provide an easy-to-read overview, a one-pager with key information was published alongside the framework. The common European Framework for Micro-credentials was presented during the final conference 8 March 2022 in a hybrid form. In total, 480 people had registered to the event.

Website

<https://microbol.microcredentials.eu/>

Bologna With Stakeholders Eyes For a Stronger Future of the Bologna Process (BWSE FORward)

Partners

- ESU (Coordinator)
- European University Association (EUA)
- European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)
- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)
- Croatian Ministry of Science and Education
- Ministry of Education and Science of Armenia
- National Commission for Further and Higher Education of Malta
- European Quality Assurance Registered for Higher Education (EQAR), associated partner

Project description and activities, results and impact

The project is framed by the 2018 Bologna Implementation Report and Paris Communiqué and the well-known ESU's Bologna with Student Eyes publications produced by surveying ESU's national unions. The overall goal is to update the latest version of Bologna with Students' Eyes publication (2018), analysing the new scenario, requirements for education and training and implementing it from the students' perspective in cooperation with stakeholders. The project intends to support external researchers, including technicians and experts required to analyze the information collected in assembling BWSE 2020. The BWSE2020 will be the 8th publication and will present results, together with recommendations that will be written and discussed to allow countries to take further actions to make the implementation of the Bologna agreements more successful. Peer-learning activities will be organised with the involvement of different actors that play a role within the Bologna Process (20-year crossroad) and discuss the problem areas and seek solutions beyond 2020. A final conference, bringing together the experience of EU Institutions and Bodies, Ministries and Students will address the results of BWSE and the outcomes of the mutual learning to identify which topics require particular attention and present suggestions for a stronger future of the Process.

BWSE 2020 publication updated and upgraded. PLA(s) encouraged discussions between stakeholders and key actors in the Bologna Implementation. PLA(s) contributed to identifying the challenges that hamper the advancements in implementing the Bologna Process commitments. Bologna process commitments: a way forward (Final Project Paper). Continuation with the BWSE 2030 project, which is currently being implemented. Final Conference gathering a big and diverse audience and very strong experts.

The BWSE FORward project consortium recognises the importance of the Bologna process on the Higher education sector and the effect it has on the day-to-day lives of everyone participating in the sector. As a result of the discussions, collaborations, and exchanges within the project, the consortium has asserted unequivocally that all stakeholders must continue to do their utmost to ensure that higher education flourishes, advances, and fosters an equitable and democratic environment that meets the needs of all students, regardless of their background. The recommendations and findings of the project and its consortium are being utilised to argue for the project's continuance and propose its continuation. The project puts one of the biggest outputs of ESU, the

Bologna With Students' Eyes, at the centre of the debate amongst key stakeholders in the EHEA. It helps also to provide input on how to concretise the EU policies on higher education, research and innovation and the tools which can support the participation of stakeholders and empower cooperation among them. Finally, Ministries partners in the project are using the recommendations to forecast the Bologna implementation reforms, and also those Ministries who attended the PLA(s), were not partners of the project but were interested in sharing and exchanging ideas and views and good practices with others.

Website

<https://eua.eu/resources/projects/795-bwse-forward.html>

<https://esu-online.org/projects/bologna-with-stakeholders-eyes-for-a-stronger-future-of-the-bologna-process-bwse-forward/>

Supporting European QA Agencies in meeting the ESG (SEQA-ESG)

Partners

- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), coordinator
- Albanian Quality Assurance Agency (ASCAL), Albania
- Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (MESY), Albania
- Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MSMT), Czech Republic
- National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE), Malta
- National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (ANACEC), Moldova
- Agency for Control and Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ACQAHE), Montenegro
- Ministry of Education (MPS), Montenegro
- Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (SAAHE), Slovakia
- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (MSVVaS), Slovakia

Project description

The project aimed to support quality assurance (QA) agencies and national authorities in six countries (Albania, the Czech Republic, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, and Slovakia) to create an ESG-compliant QA system. To reach this key objective, the project identified five specific objectives, including achieving legal frameworks in line with ESG compliance, aligning QA processes to the ESG peer-review method, connecting national criteria with the ESG, promoting appropriate methods and criteria for the involvement of peer reviewers, and promoting the involvement of stakeholders in external QA.

The project ran from 1 June 2020 to 30 November 2022

Activities and results

A mix of different activities was implemented to achieve the objectives of the project. This included peer counselling visits to identify areas of need and action through policy dialogue, the preparation of action plans to address these issues, four peer learning workshops to address specific thematic areas related to the ESG through expert input, peer learning exercises and exchange of good practice, six staff mobilities to support the professional development of the staff of the participating QA agencies, and finally the drafting of action plans for the external review against the ESG of the involved QA agencies.

The project was designed to build on the project's main objective and use the exploitable results to reach this objective. Participants were asked to define how they would ensure the exploitation of the obtained knowledge and experience. For this, they needed to submit the national action plans (early in the project) and at the end, deliver the QA agencies' action plans for the external review. Further to this, it needs to be noted that the participating QA agencies were not expected to officially start the review process against the ESG by the end of the project. However, the QA agencies from Malta, Moldova and Slovakia decided on this in autumn 2022 thus before the end of the project. Finally, the partners from all six involved countries stated that the project raised awareness and made compliance with the ESG one of the key priorities for the respective systems.

Impact

The main impact of the project was the provision of targeted and specific support to the participating countries to establish ESG-compliant QA agencies and to thereby improve the country's implementation of the Bologna Key Commitment on QA. The project therefore had a direct impact on supporting the EHEA and the collaboration of HEIs within it since it tackled the work of QA agencies (and thus the related HE systems within which they operate) that are not yet compliant with the ESG.

Website

Further information: <https://www.enqa.eu/projects/supporting-european-qa-agencies-in-meeting-the-esg-seqa-esg/>

Better Academic Qualifications through Quality Assurance (BAQUAL)

Partners

- Ministry of Science and Education, (MSE), Croatia (Coordinator)
- Ministry of Education and Science of Republic of North Macedonia (MON)
- Agency for Control and Quality Assurance of Higher Education of Montenegro (AKOKVO)

Project description

The aim of the BAQUAL project was to encourage the application of qualifications frameworks in internal and external quality assurance procedures in higher education. Objectives were to develop a qualification standard per country; use the qualification standard in developing/updating a study program; pilot the assessment of the study program using the standard and to create a web resource that can also be used after the end of the project.

Activities and results

MSE developed the occupational standard for teaches in higher education, while MON and AKOKVO conducted research on the teaching competencies of teachers in higher education. Each country developed a qualification standard for teachers in higher education and programs for the improvement of teaching competencies of teachers in higher education. The experts reviewed programs and based on their reviews programs were updated. Three online workshops were held for sharing the experience on the process of using the qualification frameworks for internal and external quality assurance procedures in higher education. A portal was developed where all relevant information is available in four languages, as well as the Manual with examples of good practice in the process of creating qualification standards and programs related to the improvement of teaching competencies of teachers in higher education.

Impact

The BAQUAL project enabled countries to explore the possibilities offered by their qualification frameworks in the area of quality assurance in higher education. Members of project teams and working groups can transfer their experiences to their colleagues, as well as work on the refining and changing the procedures in order to achieve quality in higher education. MSE occupational standard was validated and entered in the CROQF Register. MON qualification standard was validated and entered in the MQF Register. Furthermore, mutual links between involved countries and contacts have been established, which will enable further work on the development of the higher education system through peer learning.

The project can serve as an example for other countries to use the tools of national qualification frameworks for quality assurance in higher education, as well as a valuable source of information about the qualification frameworks of Croatia, Montenegro and Macedonia. Qualification standards entered in the registers of

national qualification frameworks also enable easier interconnection and recognition of qualifications at the international level. The developed qualification standard can be used by HEIs as basis for developing their own program for improving teachers' teaching competencies.

Website

<https://www.baqual.hr/en>

Bologna hub Peer Support (Bologna hub PS)

Partners

- Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Germany (coordinator)
- German Academic Exchange Service, Germany
- Conferencia de Rectores de las Universidades Españolas, Spain
- Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, Albania
- Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, Georgia
- Ministry of Education and Science, Ukraine
- European Student Union, Belgium

Project description and activities

The main objective of the project “bologna hub peer support” (2020-2022) was to foster the implementation of the Bologna key commitments and the application of the Bologna tools at higher education institutions throughout the EHEA. To this end and based on the idea to establish “a structured peer support approach based on solidarity, cooperation and mutual learning”, the project aimed at setting up a pool of European Bologna Experts (including national Bologna Experts, HERE-Experts and other higher education experts) to support institutions in the entire EHEA with the implementation of Bologna reforms through methods of peer-learning. These experts had different profiles and were thus able to cover a broad range of topics to adequately address the specific needs of each higher education institution. Website:

Results

Based on the individual needs of higher education institutions, the experts provided tailor made counselling during on-site or digital visits at those institutions which applied for an expert peer support mission.

Peer support was offered for the Bologna key commitments:

- Implementation of the three-cycle Bachelor-Master-Doctorate degree structure
- Recognition of qualifications in compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention
- Quality assurance in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

Further issues were addressed such as:

- ECTS for student-centred teaching and learning
- Use of Diploma Supplements
- Formulation of Learning Outcomes
- Curriculum development/modularisation
- Innovative approaches to learning and teaching (e.g. digitalisation)
- Mobility and internationalisation

Impact

A total of 28 HEI across the EHEA – in Albania, Germany, Estonia, France, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Poland, Sweden, Spain and the Ukraine – received expert counselling in the course of the project period. Thus, at the impact level, the project contributed significantly to the proper application of Bologna key commitments and other Bologna tools at HEI.

Website

<https://eu.daad.de/programme-und-hochschulpolitik/bologna/bologna-hub-peer-support>

Transparency of Croatian Qualifications for Enhanced Recognition (TRACER)

Partners

- Ministry of Science and Education, Croatia (Coordinator)
- The Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs, the Department of the Dutch Ministry of Science, Culture and Education

Project description and activities

The project TRACER was focused on removing obstacles to recognition of qualifications issued by the accredited higher education institutions in Croatia, both for the purpose of accessing further studies and the labour market. The project offered technical solution for the digitalisation of the Diploma and Diploma Supplement and provided support to higher education institutions in Croatia in upgrading their Diploma Supplements in line with international best practice.

Results

During the implementation of the project several important policy documents were developed:

- Feasibility study for the Digital Diploma Supplement Platform in Croatia
- Draft By-Law on Diploma and Diploma Supplement
- Guidelines for issuing Diploma Supplement in Croatia

Impact

- Capacity building for digitalisation of Diploma and Diploma supplements
- Stakeholder's synergies for further development of the digital Diploma and Diploma Supplement in Croatia.
- Legal framework for the digitalisation for the Diploma and Diploma Supplements.

Website

<https://mzo.gov.hr/vijesti/pocetak-provedbe-projekta-tracer-transparency-of-croatian-qualifications-for-enhanced-recognition/3791>

Leadership and Organisation for Learning and Teaching at European Universities (LOTUS)

Partners

- European University Association (EUA), coordinator
- Irish Universities Association (IUA)
- Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU Vienna)
- Ministry of Education and Culture (MinFin), Finland
- European Students' Union (ESU)
- European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)

Associated partners

- Association Européenne des Conservatoires (AEC)
- European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU)
- European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE)

Project description

The LOTUS project aimed to contribute to capacity building and strategic change management for learning and teaching at higher education institutions across Europe. The project also aimed to discuss and demonstrate the potential of various actors (ministries, university associations, student and staff unions, etc.) to support transformation and innovation in learning and teaching.

LOTUS was led by EUA in partnership with a diverse consortium of higher education institutions, national rectors' conferences, education ministries and organisations actively involved in learning and teaching across Europe.

LOTUS was co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Commission, as an initiative to support the implementation of European Higher Education Area (EHEA) reforms. LOTUS ran between September 2020 and November 2022.

Activities and results

LOTUS offered two strands of activities:

- A Leadership Development Programme (LDP) (WP3) addressed senior institutional leadership, and processes and conditions at HEIs to implement L&T strategies. A total of 54 HEIs of different profiles, organised under two cohorts (28 HEIs in 2021 and 26 HEI in 2021-2022) worked together towards their own strategic goals while supporting each other through a peer-learning and problem-solving approach. In the LOTUS context, "leadership in teaching" was understood as both an (individual) agency to develop strong strategic oversight, coordination and implementation for learning and teaching, and as a collective, institutional capacity to address organisational development and gear it towards enhancement.

The methodology of the LDP was prepared through a work package (WP2) dedicated to desk research, with the resulting report providing directions for conducting the LDP.

The first LDP cohort took place between January and October 2021, and the second LDP cohort between October 2021 and June 2022. For each cohort, an induction and a debriefing workshop was offered. In addition to exchanges in small Leadership Working Groups (LWG) of 5-6 HEIs each, HEIs participating in the LDP were offered with workshops and self-learning modules on transversal issues related to leadership in teaching.

- A Policy Dialogue (WP 4) explored how different stakeholder groups in L&T can support institutional developments, facilitate interinstitutional exchange and collaboration, and contribute to national and European policy development. A series of policy dialogue meetings were organised – fed with lessons from the LDP: webinars by the Finnish Ministry of Education (September 2021), a first European policy dialogue event gathering 64 participants (October 2021), a lunch session at the 2022 European Learning and Teaching Forum, an online policy dialogue workshop organised by IUA, and in person policy dialogue workshops organised by WU in Vienna, and MinFin in Finland. LOTUS project had notably established a dialogue with the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) Working Group in L&T by inviting the co-chairs to join some of the policy dialogue activities. These activities were complemented by a thorough study published in February 2022 on national developments in L&T in 30 countries of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), based on interviews with national experts, as well as by a dissemination conference in September 2022 and a final report from the project.

In addition to these two strands, the project consortium carried out project management and dissemination activities as per the work plan. This included various Expert Voice articles written by project partners and participants of the project activities.

Impact

As a final outcome of the project, the final publication provided a synthesis of key messages arising from the Leadership Development Programme as well as from the policy dialogues. Lessons learnt and good practices resulting from the project can be useful to the sector at large, through dissemination during the project, and beyond. The findings of the project were useful in the context of the BFUG Working Group on L&T where EUA presented the key messages from the project not only once. Great interest was also raised by the study on National Developments in Learning and Teaching in Europe which provides a comprehensive overview for policymakers on major policies and initiatives in supporting learning and teaching.

Project impact is also noticeable at the level of 54 individual institutions who participated in the Leadership Development Programme. Majority of these HEIs reported in their feedback and evaluation follow-up initiatives being developed at their institutions. A few of the LWGs from both cohorts have also informed EUA about regular meetings they still have even after the completion of the leadership development programme.

The high interest from HEIs and other stakeholders alike towards the LOTUS project generally confirms that the conversation on leadership in teaching is not ending, but probably just starting to raise interest within HEIs across the EHEA.

Website

<https://eua.eu/resources/projects/786-lotus.html>

Assessment Tool and Incentive Systems for Developing Higher Education Teachers' Performance (PROFFORMANCE)

Partners

The consortium was led by the Ministry for Innovation and Technology of Hungary with its affiliated entity, Tempus Public Foundation.

- Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research
- Ministry of Science and Education, Croatia
- Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Czech Republic (Affiliated entity: DZS Centre for International Cooperation in Education as Erasmus+ National Agency)
- Foundation Tempus (Erasmus+ National Agency), Serbia
- The National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement, Georgia

Project description and activities

The PROFFORMANCE project aimed to improve quality of teaching and learning in the participating countries and throughout the whole European Higher Education Area. High quality teaching and learning is the cornerstone of higher education. Labour market relevant, up-to-date knowledge of the graduates, well-working international cooperation, sustainable and rentable higher education institutions all depend on how higher education educators are prepared to meet requirements of the legal-professional context, to solve societal-economical-environmental challenges, to satisfy needs of all stakeholders of higher education. Academic staff needs support to meet all these requirements but also recognition for their achievements in their teaching and learning related activities. PROFFORMANCE project addressed these two important goals.

The main objective of the project was to reconcile EHEA policy goals with needs and ambitions of the higher education institutions. Project activities primarily targeted higher education teachers and their institutional management to provide them navigation on competences, roles and tasks needed for high quality education by elaborating a complex system for assessment, development, and incentives for educators.

Results

- The benchmarking report „The landscape of higher education teachers' performance”, on T&L strategies, good practices and lessons learnt on assessment-development-incentive systems of teacher support in HEIs.
- The PROFFORMANCE Assessment Tool: The 3-dimensional, multi-aspect Assessment tool evaluates HE teachers' performance providing data for multi-level decision making on the quality enhancement of T&L. It covers a wide range of teachers' roles, tasks, competences in 6 thematic areas, special priorities in 4 areas (digitalization, inclusion, internationalization, sustainability) and examines teachers' performance from 3 points of view: the teacher self, peers and students.
- The PROFFORMANCE teaching excellence database consists of best practices in T&L submitted to the 1st PROFFORMANCE international higher education teacher award.

Website

<https://profformance.eu/en/profformance-2020-2022>

Road Map for Implementation of Institutional Assessment (RoadMap)

Partners

- Ministry of Education and Science, Latvia (Coordinator)
- Ministry of Education and Research, Estonia
- Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education, Estonia
- Academic Information Centre, Latvia

Project description and activities

The project addressed one of the specific key commitments of the Bologna Process, i.e. quality assurance in compliance with the ESG. Its main objective was to improve the quality assurance system in Latvia and introduce a regular institutional accreditation as the main quality assurance procedure that would decrease the current overlap among the different quality assurance procedures and reduce the administrative burden as well as the costs of assessment procedures.

Results

To raise awareness of external quality assessment procedures and to gain knowledge about institutional assessment and its benefits, the project analysed the quality assurance systems and legal frameworks of several European Higher Education Area countries, as well as explored the vision, needs and experience of the parties involved in quality assessment by organising workshops for higher education institutions, policymakers and social partners with the participation of international experts. Its main result is the development of a concept for a smooth transition to cyclical institutional accreditation of higher education institutions in Latvia.

Impact

The project has contributed to improving the quality assurance system in Latvia in compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). It has further contributed to strengthening the internal mechanisms of Higher Education Institutions, and to increasing trust in them. Based on the work conducted by the project on the cyclical accreditation of higher education institutions in Latvia, appropriate regulations and guidelines are expected to be developed at national level.

Website

<https://www.izm.gov.lv/en/project-activities>

Bologna Hub Peer Support II (BHPS II)

Partners

- German Academic Exchange Service, Germany (coordinator)
- Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Germany
- European University Association, Belgium
- Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Greece
- European Students' Union (ESU)
- Conferencia de Rectores de las Universidades Españolas, Spain (associated partner)
- German Accreditation Council, Germany (associated partner)
- Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, Albania (associated partner)

Project description and activities

Building on the achievements of the project “Bologna Hub Peer Support” (2020-2022), the main objective of the proposed project “Bologna Hub Peer Support II” (2022-2024) is to continue to foster the implementation of the Bologna key commitments and the application of the Bologna tools at higher education institutions throughout the EHEA. To further pursue “a structured peer support approach based on solidarity, cooperation and mutual learning”, this project will build on the already existing pool of experts which has been set up in the context of the predecessor project, while similarly enabling the inclusion of additional experts. At least 30 HEI in the entire EHEA will be supported in the implementation of Bologna reforms through methods of peer-learning by around 25 European Bologna Experts.

In addition to the peer support missions, three major project events are planned to foster the cooperation among the BHPS II-Experts as well as external experts (e.g. National Bologna Teams). A series of additional online seminars shall feed into the discussions at policy-level and give the project a new dimension. In between the events, a standing online platform shall facilitate continuous exchange. Outputs and results will be shared with external stakeholders via the project’s website and a series of podcasts.

Results

All these activities shall contribute to the following expected results: (1) more even implementation of the Bologna reforms at HEI across the EHEA (2) improved application of EHEA tools enhancing recognition, quality assurance, supporting mobility and internationalisation at HEI across the EHEA (3) enhanced cooperation between national authorities, EHEA consultative members and stakeholders in the implementation of reforms (4) stronger public awareness of initiatives which support the implementation of reforms in the EHEA (5) stronger links, mutual exchange and effective synergies between relevant experts.

Impact

More thorough understanding and implementation of the three Bologna Key Commitments.

- Improved application of European Higher Education Area tools enhancing recognition, quality, supporting mobility and internationalisation at higher education institutions across the EHEA.

- Enhanced cooperation between national authorities, EHEA consultative members and stakeholders in the implementation of reforms.

Website

<https://eu.daad.de/programme-und-hochschulpolitik/bologna/bologna-hub-peer-support>

Peer Learning Activities and Resources to Underpin the Principles and Guidelines for Social Dimension (PLAR-U-PAGs)

Partners

The PLAR-U-PAGs project is led by the Ministry of Education and Training Belgium/Flemish Community in collaboration with

- Support Centre Inclusive Higher Education in Flanders (SIHO)
- Institute for the Development of Education (IDE) in Zagreb, Croatia
- Ministry of Education, Science and Research of Croatia
- European Students' Union (ESU) and three individual experts, each with their own area of expertise.

Project description

The specific objective of this project is to support national authorities and higher education institutions across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in the implementation of the Principles and Guidelines (PAGs). The PAGs constituted an annex to the 2020 Rome Communiqué and expressly spelled out the key principles for social dimension enhancement for the EHEA in the next decade.

Activities, results and impact

In order to attain this objective, the consortium will:

- organize four peer learning activities (PLA) on the PAGs to strengthen mutual learning and deepen the exchange of practices between EHEA countries in different implementation stages. Ministry representatives and higher education institution representatives will be supported to draw up national implementation/action points on how to overcome their specific PAGs related challenges.
- create a toolkit on the PAGs, based on identified needs. This interactive web application will include information on the PAGs, as well as innovative and feasible policy tools at the university and European level, allowing higher education institutions and public authorities to reflect on their institutional/national approach on the different PAGs and to identify action points to facilitate the implementation of each PAG. To underpin principle 5, a specific framework and guideline on how to enhance student mental health will also be made available.
- develop a scholarship portal, attuned to the needs of higher education authorities, institutions and students from disadvantaged, underrepresented or vulnerable groups. The portal will collect counselling and guidance information on student financial aid available in the EHEA countries.

The project is currently well under way: after two successful editions, a third PLA will be held in June 2023. The toolkit and the scholarship portal are also under construction. In order to communicate and disseminate project results and progress to all relevant target groups, the project partners will:

- liaise with and support the activities of the BFUG WG on social dimension. The main results of this project will also be incorporated in the final output related to the work of the BFUG WG SD 2021-2024 and will be made available at the EHEA portal.

- Hold an international dissemination conference during the last month of the project (May 2025), with a target audience of 300 relevant stakeholders. The main aim of this event will be to highlight the output of the PLAs and to give participants the opportunity to get to know the toolkit and the scholarship portal, so that they can subsequently implement these tools in their organisations.
- Integrate all project outcomes on the platform: Inclusive Higher Education.

As the partners and experts will continue their involvement in this topic after the duration of this project, a wide acceptance and adoption of the tools in the higher education setting across EHEA will be guaranteed. In this way, this project can ensure that a European cooperation network arises that promotes the transparent and uniform sharing of information, concerning the support and guidance of underrepresented, disadvantaged and vulnerable students.

Website

<https://www.ehea.info/index.php>

Qualifications Frameworks for trust, transparency and diversity (QUATRA – TPG A)

Partners

- Academic Information Centre, Latvia (Coordinator)
- Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation
- Estonian Ministry of Education and Research
- The Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research of Austria (associated partner)
- National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE), Georgia (associated partner)

Project description and activities

The aim of the project is to enhance cooperation between national authorities, members of Thematic Peer Group A of European Higher Education Area (EHEA TPG A) and stakeholders in developing common European standards for quality and transparency and to ensure the fulfilment of the key commitments that are essential for the functioning of the EHEA.

The main objective of the project is to provide the EHEA member states with opportunities for peer learning and exchange of best practices by organising various peer learning activities and working groups on key priorities of qualifications frameworks, and to provide specific recommendations on various qualification framework related topics.

Results and impact

- Arranging four Thematic Peer Group A on Qualification Frameworks (TPG A) meetings.
- Arranging four peer learning activities on key priorities implementing qualification frameworks (micro-credentials and use of qualification frameworks by stakeholders, implementation of qualification frameworks and ECTS – focus on learning outcomes, self-certification, assessment of learning outcomes on programme level).
- Setting three working groups on qualification framework related topics (self-certification, short cycle higher education, as well as micro-credentials) to ensure more intensive discussions in order to provide specific recommendations on the related topics.
- International conference.

The main results of the project are the organised peer learning activities on qualification framework topics as well as recommendations developed by the members of three working groups (micro-credentials, self-certification, short cycle).

The project results will have impact on implementation of reforms which are related to the Key Commitment on Qualifications Framework of the Bologna process, enhancing the sustainable development goals regarding micro credentials, learning outcomes, self-certification and short-cycle higher education. The project will provide immediate benefits to the EHEA member countries after the peer-learning activities. The PLAs will give an opportunity for the countries to discuss the key topics and share experience and learn from each other on the best practices and challenges that countries face at national level.

Website

<https://aic.lv/en/par-aic/projects/quatra-tpg-a>

Quality Assurance Fit for the Future (QA-FIT)

Partners

- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), coordinator
- European Students' Union (ESU)
- European University Association (EUA)
- European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)
- European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)
- National alliance of student organisations in Romania (ANOSR RO)
- Finnish education evaluation centre (FINEEC)
- Irish universities association (IUA)
- Ministry of education and science of Georgia (MOESGE), associate partner

Project description

The QA-FIT project aims to gather comprehensive evidence on the current implementation of internal and external quality assurance, including the use of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). It will consult stakeholders on the fitness for purpose of the current EHEA quality assurance framework, including its responsiveness to recent and emerging developments in higher education. The results of the project are expected to feed into a recommendation to the Bologna Process Ministerial Conference regarding the future development of the ESG.

Activities and results

The project consortium has already conducted surveys to map activities and perspectives among the main quality assurance stakeholders, namely higher education institutions, students, quality assurance agencies, and ministries. The results will be presented in a series of papers and webinar in summer 2023. Forthcoming activities and outputs include a series of stakeholder focus groups and other consultations to explore issues arising from the surveys in more depth and gather input on directions for the development and use of the ESG. The final outcomes will be presented in a publication and at a conference. The results will also inform a recommendation on the future development of the ESG for inclusion in the Bologna Process Tirana Communiqué in spring 2024.

Impact

The main expected impact is that the project will provide the basis for a revision of the ESG, which will have widespread implications at all levels and for all stakeholders in European higher education. The project ensures that the future changes are made on the basis of solid evidence and in-depth consultation across the section. More immediately, the results of the mapping exercise are already being used by the main stakeholder representative bodies to inform current activities with members and wider policy discussions in the Bologna Process Follow-up Group and the European Union.

Website

<https://www.enqa.eu/projects/quality-assurance-fit-for-the-future-qa-fit/>

Enhancing Internal Knowledge and Global Dialogue of EHEA (IN-GLOBAL)

Partners

- Associazione CIMEA, Italy (Coordinator)
- Ministry of Education, Romania
- University Politehnica of Bucharest, Romania
- Prime Minister Office, Albania (Associated partner)

Project Description and impact

The IN-GLOBAL project aims at improving knowledge sharing within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and at strengthening Global Dialogue on Higher Education policy. The project consortium promotes events and activities designed to involve the wider higher education community more closely with the work of the EHEA, and to receive input from it, thus enriching EHEA policies and initiatives and making them more relevant and more effective. The project is also geared to reinforcing international and interregional dialogue on higher education values, policies and reforms, and supports a better communication about the “Key Commitments” fundamental for building the EHEA’s inclusiveness, innovation and interconnectedness, and its links with other world regions.

Activities and results

- Support to the Task Force on Enhancing Knowledge Sharing in the EHEA community in its activities.
- Support to the Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue in its activities.
- Promotion of stakeholders’ HE events, participation in conferences (re)presenting the EHEA, organisation of events.
- Report on stakeholders’ perception of the Bologna Process and EHEA.
- Focus Groups to gather good practice examples of knowledge sharing and communication.
- Translation of the Rome Communiqué in the EHEA languages.
- Report on EHEA promotion activities of the Bologna Process.
- Guidelines on the internal and global communication of the EHEA.
- EHEA Toolkit for Bologna events.
- Updated lists of national and international stakeholder contacts.

Website

<https://www.in-global.eu/>

The establishment of a European transnational peer support and learning network for university micro-credentials (MicroNet)

Partners

- Irish Universities Association (IUA), coordinator:
- MicroCreds partners –
- University of Galway
- University of Limerick
- University College Cork
- University College Dublin
- Trinity College Dublin
- Dublin City University
- Maynooth University
- European University Association (EUA)
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
- European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU)
- European University of Post-Industrial Cities (UNIC)
- This project has support from Ireland's Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS).

Project description

MicroNet is a European transnational peer support and learning network for university micro-credentials, comprising innovative and change-making higher education consortia, led by the IUA. Our consortia (IUA, EUA, QQI, UNIC and ECIU) has the potential and influence to drive awareness, delivery and acceptance of micro-credentials as a learning tool fit for 21st century European citizens, aligning with the direction of the European Skills agenda (European Commission, 2020 – Action 10 on Micro-credentials) and showcasing our common drive to a climate neutral Europe (European Green Deal, European Commission, 2019). Each partner has strategic directions and priorities (e.g., Sustainable Development Goals, superdiversity, institutional changes in the context of micro-credentials mobility, stacking and portability, etc.) which strongly align themselves to the development of micro-credentials as transnational mobile learning opportunities for European citizens wishing to upskill or reskill, particularly in the post-pandemic and current socioeconomic and geopolitical landscapes. QQI are a key aspect of MicroNet due to the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) acting as a robust model, in addition to the Irish regulatory framework and associated mature QA environment.

With the adoption of the Recommendation (Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability, 2022) on the approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability by the European Commission, our MicroNet partners consider it appropriate for our network across the EHEA to:

1. Promote awareness and understanding of micro-credentials,

2. Share good policy and practice approaches to quality assurance for micro-credentials using the Bologna tools, and
3. Develop and grow understanding and support for micro-credential learner mobility and pathways across the EHEA, including the use of the Bologna tools and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to support access to and the portability and stacking of credentials.

Activities

Completed and future activities of MicroNet include:

- Conferences, seminars, workshops and stakeholder meetings designed to build a shared ownership and commitment between the partners.
- Study visits and follow-up studies, analyses and dissemination material including digital assets.

Results and impact

Acquiring and developing new skills and competences is essential for European citizens to enable active participation in a modern Europe, ensuring continued personal, social and professional development and safeguarding employability and socio-economic innovation. With the implementation of the 2022 European Commission recommendation on micro-credentials, it is appropriate now to build upon what has been achieved through the establishment of the MicroNet European transnational peer support and learning network for university micro-credentials.

The MicroNet project seeks to promote and advance the key objectives of the European Commission through common standards in micro-credentials, increasing awareness and ensuring quality, transparency, cross-border comparability, recognition and portability, ensuring that micro-credentials reach their full potential.

Website

<https://www.iua.ie/ourwork/learning-teaching/microcreds/micronet/>

INterconnection/INnovation/INclusion: Austrian contributions to the EHEA 2030 (3-IN-AT-PLUS)

Partners

- Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation (OeAD), Austria
- Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation, Austria
- Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, Iceland
- Ministry of Science and Education, Croatia
- Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (ŠMSM), Lithuania
- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)
- European University Association (EUA)
- European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)
- German Rectors' Conference (HRK nexus)
- The Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education (Nuffic), The Netherlands
- Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR), Sweden
- The Icelandic Center for Research (RANNIS), Iceland
- Technological Higher Education Association (THEA), Ireland
- Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI), Romania
- University of Gothenburg, Sweden

3-IN-AT-PLUS 2022-2024 is the fourth project of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF), Unit IV/11 to support the implementation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in Austria and internationally. As for the predecessors, the OeAD, Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation is responsible for coordination and implementation of the project as affiliated entity.

Project description and activities

Inclusive – innovative – interconnected: 3-IN-AT-PLUS addresses the integral aspects of the Rome Communiqué 2020 with a sound involvement of 13 project beneficiaries that have been selected by based on their needs according to a survey among all BFUG WG Members. Promoting Interconnected, the project pushes further internationalisation and mobility as a hub to quality in teaching and learning, reflecting the flexibility of curricula, the quality and output of staff mobility and elaborating a tool kit for HEIs both on virtual internationalization, and on blended mobility formats in alignment with Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programmes. Beneficiaries will stimulate the discussion on virtual and blended mobility on national and European level and further facilitate HEIs' exchange. 3-INAT- PLUS further draws attention to innovation, e.g. to innovative teaching and learning formats, offering dialogues, onsite visits and grassroot activities at HEIs that call for peers from the EHEA. A national needs analysis among Austrian HE stakeholders pointed out a strong interest in Micro-credentials, as well as digital transformation in learning, teaching and assessment methods. Outcomes of an international PLA on Micro-credentials – in connection with the EC recommendations and EUROPASS digital-credentials – will be reported back to the BFUG TPG B.

3-IN-AT-PLUS will advance the European network of Recognition of prior learning with six partner countries

(Austria, Sweden, Ireland, Iceland, Croatia and Germany) plus EUA, ENQA and EURASHE – for the first time coordinated by the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria. A comparative study (Lithuania, Romania, and Austria) on non-traditional students and their pathways into and through HE meets the concept of inclusion. The outcomes will be discussed at a PLA open to members of the EHEA and reported back to the BFUG.

Results

Increased awareness of a variety of topics of the Bologna Process, such as internationalization and mobility, innovative learning and teaching and the implementation of Bologna tools like the ECTS among a variety of stakeholders. The establishment of a sustainable European network for RPL.

Impact

Enhanced implementation of the Bologna Process in the Austrian HE area and beyond, especially with respect to internationalization and mobility and RPL.

Website

<https://oead.at/en/expertise/europaeischer-hochschulraum/3-in-at-plus-2022-2024>

New building blocks of the Bologna Process: fundamental values (NewFAV)

Partners

- The Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI), Coordinator
- Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research

Associated partners:

- European University Association (EUA)
- European Students' Union (ESU)
- Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe (UNICA network)
- German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

Project description

The project aims to support the implementation of the Bologna Process commitments, in line with the Rome Communiqué and contribute to the BFUG Fundamental Values Working Group, by proposing a set of indicators on monitoring and assessment of fundamental values. The project also aims to analyse the concept of micro-credentials, especially from the perspective of contributing to the principle of social inclusion, while addressing the public responsibility of higher education.

Activities and results

- Mapping report on the existing indicators on FV
- Analysis of the existing options that can help in building open and flexible learning paths
- Five Peer learning activities
- 3 mutual learning workshops
- Assessment of the relevance and limitations of current indicators
- Grid for programme design
- Technical policy framework of indicators to measure and assess Fundamental Values
- Four piloting reports
- Piloting methodology
- Two workshops with stakeholders and public institutions
- Publication - "Technical framework to monitor and asses fundamental values"

Impact

By May 2023, we managed to have impact at different levels: individual, institutional, national and international. Through the events and deliverables, the project managed to have around 220 participants from students, academic and administrative staff, and representatives from the Romanian Ministry of Education, Norway, Germany and France Ministry. Through the events, online communication but also through the project experts

and task forces, we have raised awareness on fundamental values and micro-credentials. We have managed to involve in the project more than 60 Romanian and European universities, different national and international stakeholders, representatives from European and national student organizations.

At national level the most important impact is related to the new higher education law (which is still the process of approval) which includes details about micro-credentials, fundamental values and defines joint/double/multiple diploma. The discussion during the PLA (5 December) in Bucharest was very timely as the Romanian Government was in the process of elaborating a new higher education law. The presence of the Minister of Education, and representatives from other institutions has contributed to the way fundamental values are reflected in the forthcoming higher education law (e.g. the Higher Education law includes definitions for fundamental values compatible with the proposed definitions and with the discussions during the PLA). Moreover, the project deliverables have provided an important start to the debates in the FV WG as senior content experts have participated and presented the findings during the meetings. Deliverables from T2 and T3 will serve as support and future work of the Fundamental Values Working Group and will also serve as technical approach for the preparation of the next Ministerial Conference in 2024.

Website

<https://uefiscdi.gov.ro/new-building-blocks-of-the-bologna-process-fundamental-values>

Implementation and Innovation in QA through peer learning (IMINQA)

Partners

The Implementation and Innovation in QA through peer learning project is led by the Ministry of Education and Training Belgium/Flemish Community in collaboration with:

- Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS)
- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education AISBL (ENQA)
- European Quality Assurance Registered for Higher Education (EQAR)

The three co-chairs of the Bologna Thematic Peer Group C on QA for the period 2021-2024 (Belgium/Flemish Community, Romania, Kazakhstan) are also involved in the project as project partners or expert.

Project Description

The IMINQA project is the umbrella project to support the work of the Bologna Thematic Peer Group C on Quality Assurance during the working period 2021-2024. The project will focus on: quality assurance in the broad sense and thereby work on the implementation of the key commitment on QA within the Bologna Process in all EHEA countries and on innovating the QA systems within the EHEA to be able to follow up transformation in higher education.

Activities and results

In order to support the work of the Bologna Thematic Peer Group C on Quality Assurance, the consortium will:

1. organize six TPG meetings, as they are core to the main objectives of the project.
2. offering two calls of Staff Mobility in which representatives of ministries and QA agencies of peer group member countries can further develop their competencies with regard to QA through 'job shadowing', observation periods and/or training at a quality assurance partner abroad.
3. Organize three peer learning activities (PLAs) discussing different topics based on the needs of many countries, such as alignment of the legal framework with the ESG and cross-border QA.
4. In addition, three thematic topics will be addressed: the QA of micro-credentials, the QA of European Universities and the Digitalisation of QA procedures and processes.

With three successful editions of the TPG so far, two successful PLAs, the launch of the second staff mobility call and several writing groups on QA of micro-credentials and of European universities, the project is well on its way. In addition, work is also currently underway to map digital QA procedures in several countries. In order to communicate and disseminate all project results and progress to all relevant target groups:

- the main results of the project will be publicly accessible on the EHEA website (European Higher Education Area and Bologna Process (ehea.info))

- the results of this project will also be included in the final policy paper related to the work of the TPGs/BICG/BFUG and will be presented towards the EHEA ministers of education, for example through input for the Communiqué at the Ministerial Conference in 2024 (Albania).

Impact

As quality assurance remains an important commitment within the Bologna process, all results and outcomes of the projects will continue to be used and implemented at national level, by the countries involved in TPG C. European university alliances, micro-credentials and digitisation of quality assurance are topics that are and will continue to be of interest at European and policy level, project results in these areas will be taken into account in policy development at EHEA and national level, in the short and medium term.

Website

<https://www.enqa.eu/projects/implementation-and-innovation-in-quality-assurance-through-peer-learning-iminqa/>

Social Inclusion, Tolerance, Acceptance and Realization for all sTudents (START)

Partners

- Ministry of Education and Science, Bulgaria
- The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS)
- The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (NEAA), Bulgaria
- The Bulgarian Council on Refugees and Migrants

Project description

The Social inclusion in higher education is one of the main pillars of the Bologna Process and as such special attention has been given to it in the 2020 Rome Communiqué. In fact, this is the mission of universities, which permeates all other activities and proves to be a key starting point for the development of various institutional strategies and policies.

The current project is focused not only on making concrete proposals for policies, instruments and legislative changes, but also on providing the necessary level of understanding, which will facilitate the transition to more open and inclusive academic communities. The necessary trainings and information campaigns will be organized to ensure the correct understanding and application of the normative documents, as well as to increase the level of personal competence among the academic and administrative staff.

Activities and results

1. Developed and introduced indicators for measuring the quality of the academic environment in relation to students from vulnerable groups (with a focus on migrants and students with disabilities).
2. Prepared Guidelines and (policy) recommendations concerning the Credit Transfer and Accumulation System use, the qualifications framework and the introduction of validation and microcredentials in the Higher Education practise.
3. Developed and tested pilot mechanisms for validation of prior learning and integration of microcredentials in the higher education system, including catalogue and register for microcredentials and validation of prior learning.
4. A more active and inclusive academic environment, with a clear commitment to the personal and professional development of students and oriented towards regional contribution and economic growth.

Impact

The project will provide opportunities for enhancing the quality, attractiveness and relevance, of the higher education in the specified EHEA countries and will improve its international aspect and level of inclusion as required by the Rome Communiqué. The project will also offer a mechanism to ensure appropriate conditions for inclusion, adaptation, successful education and completion of the higher education degree by students

from historical diaspora, as well as foreign students but also for other students facing psychological, cultural or other similar challenges during their studies. The other pillar is focused on the validation process as a means for insuring complete personal and professional realization as well as providing better possibilities for full inclusion of each member of the society.

The ambition of the project team is to make a valuable contribution to the development of the higher education policies and best practices, which will complement the measures taken at the national levels. This will be ensured through the use of various tools such as conference, trainings, the creation and the publishing of a Good Practices Compendium, other formal and informal means for information exchange. Last but not least, the project will ensure a better dialogue between students, student councils and the academic community, as well as greater involvement of the higher education institutions in the development of contemporary higher education policies in the EHEA.

As the project will institutionalize specific indicators for QA related to students from vulnerable groups (including students with disabilities), it will improve not only the HEI access conditions for these students, as well as enhancement of the learning forms and outcomes, but will lead to constant change of the perceptions towards the students from vulnerable groups. Regarding the students with disabilities the aim is to improve their personal and professional realization as people with equal life chances as the other students. It will raise the awareness at the public opinion level about the need to address the specific needs of the students from vulnerable groups as a social goal in the long term.

Website

<https://startproject.bcrm-bq.org/>

TPG-LRC Constructing Recognition in the EHEA (TPG-LRC CoRE)

Partners

- CIMEA, Italy (Coordinator)
- HARNO, Estonia
- FEI, France
- The Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education (Nuffic), The Netherlands
- Swedish Council for Higher Education (UHR)
- European Students' Union (ESU)
- European Quality Assurance Registered for Higher Education (EQAR)
- European University Association (EUA)
- Prime Minister Office, Albania (Associate)

Project description

This project aims to support the implementation of the Bologna Process focusing on its key commitment 2 on national legislation and procedures compliant with the Lisbon Recognition Convention in the countries of the TPG B. All project activities, which are carried out through a peer-to-peer approach, are focused on the priorities enshrined in the Rome Communiqué and built on the work done within the previous TPG-LRC project. Against this background, project partners are working on the “6 specific thematic indications” for the TPG B, with particular emphasis on: alternative pathways, digital technology for the recognition agenda and the Diploma Supplement, and automatic recognition. Five TPG B meetings and three public seminars are destined to delve into these topics, which constitute then the main objects of the resulting project publications.

Activities and results

- Support to the TPG B group activity to more even implementation of the LRC.
- Enhance ownership and information between national authorities, higher education institutions and other relevant stakeholders.
- Strengthen cooperation and sharing of practices between stakeholders involved in recognition processes.

Impact

Contribute to the Bologna Process reforms implementation, especially referring to the key commitment 2 on national legislation and procedures compliant with the LRC. This will be achieved working on topics that are considered as priorities for the TPG B and in line with EU priorities and recommendations. All the project activities will be carried out in close cooperation with the BICG, that will provide guidance and indications if needed, in order to maximize their impact and effectiveness. The peer support approach will help finding ways forward to the implementation of the LRC. Furthermore, cooperation among different stakeholders such as national authorities, ENIC-NARICs, HEIs and students will be enhanced. The dialogue among peers will also help the TPG B members and consultative members to go forward with the common standards to implement

recognition practices in compliance with the LRC and national legislation for which the TPG B in the previous mandate (2018-2020) has laid the foundations.

Website

<https://www.cimea.it/EN/pagina-tpg-lrc-core>

<https://ehea.info/page-peer-group-B-LRC>.

Professionalism and high performance in Higher Education - Enhanced PROFFORMANCE toolkit for 21st century teachers (PROFFORMANCE PLUS)

Partners

The consortium is led by the Ministry of Culture and Innovation of Hungary with its affiliated entity, Tempus Public Foundation.

- Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research
- Ministry of Science and Education, Croatia
- Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Czech Republic (Affiliated entity: DZS Centre for International Cooperation in Education as Erasmus+ National Agency)
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MESTD), Serbia
- Foundation Tempus (Erasmus+ National Agency), Serbia

Associated partners:

- Academic Cooperation Association
- European Students' Union (ESU)
- Higher Education Authority, Ireland
- The National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement, Georgia
- Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia
- Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal
- Széchenyi István University, Győr, representing RUN-EU European University Alliance, Hungary

Project description and activities

The main objective of the project is to facilitate transformation and increase the competitiveness of higher education in the EHEA and the consortium partners' countries by quality enhancement of teaching and learning through supporting higher education teachers' performance - in line with the main commitments and new priorities of EHEA. The project focuses on HE teacher development by translating policy objectives into teachers' competencies (knowledge, skills, attitudes). Teachers need special capacities not only to fulfil their tasks and roles in their activities but for the competence development of students. Digital and transversal skills, ability to use universal design in planning courses and curricula to meet diverse students' and end consumers' needs, sustainability in everyday life, and the profession.

Results and impact

The PROFFORMANCE+ project aims to further develop the process in various ways:

1. Promotion to raise awareness and encourage the usage of the PROFFORMANCE toolkit in EHEA countries and vertically at EHEA/EU/national/HEI/teacher level and in a 360-degree coverage: stakeholders around the teachers (peers, students, managers, external partners).

2. The assessment tool shall be further developed to a well-rounded assessment system including digitalization, inclusion, internationalization, sustainability.
3. A new formative toolkit (training module for teachers) will consist of a course portal, a best practice database, guidelines and manuals which will be available for individual or institutional trainings.
4. The networking and knowledge exchange forums at all possible channels will contribute to the international exchange of knowledge, to cooperation in teaching, research, and 3rd mission activities.

Website

<https://proformance.eu/>

Supporting European QA Agencies in meeting the ESG (SEQA-ESG II)

Partners

- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), coordinator
- Agency for Higher Education of Republic of Srpska (AHERS), Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance of Bosnia and Herzegovina (HEA), Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Education Quality Assurance Agency (TKTA), Azerbaijan
- National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance (NAQA), Ukraine
- National Entity for Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NEAQA), Serbia

QA agencies are the only partners in this project. However, no agency can be fully successful in its work without an enabling legal framework and the support of the national authorities. Cooperation between these two key stakeholder groups for external QA. This project will therefore bring in national authorities as “support partners” that will cooperate with the agencies to achieve ESG compliance.

Project description

The project’s main aim is to support Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Ukraine in achieving ESG compliance, including through the establishment of independent QA agencies. To reach this key objective, the project has five specific objectives, including the establishment of legal frameworks that support and enable ESG compliance by the agencies, the alignment of the methodology and processes to the four-stage peer-review method described in the ESG, the connection of national/agency criteria with Part 1 of the ESG and promoting appropriate methods and criteria for the involvement of peer reviewers as well as the adequate involvement of stakeholders.

Activities and results

A mix of different activities will be implemented to achieve the objectives of the project. This includes peer counselling visits to identify areas of need and action through policy dialogue, the preparation of action plans to address these issues, four peer learning workshops to address specific thematic areas related to the ESG through expert input, peer learning exercises, and exchange of good practice, six staff mobilities to support the professional development of the staff of the participating QA agencies and finally the drafting of action plans for the external review against the ESG of the involved QA agencies.

The SEQA-ESG 2 project has been designed from the very start to build on the project’s main objective (i.e., to create an ESG-compliant QA system in the five higher education systems) and use the project’s exploitable results to reach this objective. More specifically, all involved QA agencies will be asked to define, as part of the project, how they will assure the exploitation of the obtained knowledge and experience. For this, they will need to submit national action plans (early in the project) and at the end of the project, submit action plans for the

external review against the ESG of the participating agencies.

Impact

The main impact of the project is the provision of targeted and specific support to Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Ukraine in order to establish ESG-compliant QA agencies and to thereby improve the country's implementation of the Bologna Key Commitment on QA. The project has a direct impact on supporting the EHEA and collaboration of HEIs within it, since it will tackle the work of QA agencies (and thus the related HE systems within which they operate) that are not yet compliant with the ESG.

Website

<https://www.enqa.eu/projects/supporting-european-qa-agencies-in-meeting-the-esg-seqa-esg-ii>

Bologna with Stakeholders Eyes for an Innovative, Inclusive and Interconnected EHEA by 2030 (BWSE FOR2030)

Partners

- European Students' Union (ESU), coordinator
- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)
- European University Association (EUA)
- European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)
- Croatian Ministry of Education and Science
- Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
- European Quality Assurance Registered for Higher Education (EQAR), associate partner
- ECHO (associate partner)

Project description, activities and results

Building on the work of the first round of the project BWSE FORward, the follow-up project BWSE FOR2030 aims to continue supporting the implementation of reforms in the European Higher Education Area. It will do so by organising three peer-learning activities (PLAs) that will address the three topics of an inclusive, innovative and interconnected EHEA; a focus group with EHEA stakeholders in reshaping and reorganising the BWSE survey targeted at the National Unions of Students; the publication of the Bologna With Student Eyes 2024 edition, which will give the perspective of the student unions on the implementation of the Bologna Process and will feed into the drafting of the Bologna Process Implementation Report; a set of policy recommendations developed ahead of the Tirana Ministerial Conference in 2024.

Exchange knowledge on good practices for capacity building: during the 2020 Rome Ministerial Conference, Ministers for Higher Education set the vision towards building an inclusive, innovative and interconnected European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2030, able to underpin a sustainable, cohesive and peaceful Europe. Therefore, the project will kick off with 3 peer learning activities to be hosted in each of the national partner countries and themed by one of the 3 goals outlined in the Communiqué. Build up trust in the Bologna Process through cooperation and partnership: following the Peer Learning Activities, the next phase of the project will go on to assess and review the BWSE survey through 3 Focus Groups with a target group aiming to be composed of a mixed cohort of ESU's national unions of students, diverse stakeholders of the education sector (representatives of Ministries, HEIs and HE agencies) as well as analysts of past BWSE publications. Develop policy based on evidence and broad stakeholder dialogue.

Impact

The project is expected to have an impact on enhancing the quality of the Bologna With Student Eyes publication, in terms of data gathering and analysis, which will have a positive effect in the drafting of the Bologna Process Implementation Report. Via the peer learning activities, furthermore, the Ministries and the stakeholder involved will be reflected on the three key terms of inclusive, innovative and interconnected EHEA,

which will be translated in policy recommendations that will be of help for the implementation of the Bologna reforms in the countries whose ministries are partners of the project, and that will input the discussion about the Ministerial Communique for the Tirana 2024 Ministerial Conference and the priorities for the EHEA for the policy cycles 2024-2027 and 2027-2030.

Website

<https://esu-online.org/bwse-for2030/>

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