State of play of the European Quality Assurance system

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Several EU supported transparency initiatives

- **European Data Collection project** *(www.eumida.org)*

- **Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO)**

- **Mapping diversity of university profiles** *(www.u-map.eu)*

- **Quality Assurance (ENQA, EQAR, ESG's)**

- **Feasibility study on a multi-dimensional global ranking** *(www.u--multirank.eu)*

Quality Assurance

- QA vital in making European Higher Education more attractive, trustworthy and transparent

- Need for a stronger European and international dimension to enhance mobility and quality

- QA lacks transparency, comparability and a more pro-active end-user approach

Commission's view on QA

Education and Culture DG

Progress Report 2009: suggestions to strenghten international dimension

1. Make the QA infrastructure more efficient and transparent for users

2. Make European Standards and Guidelines more coherent with Bologna framework (3-cycles, ECTS)

3. Stimulate cross-border quality assurance (e.g by clear recognition principles for cross-border education, joint- and double degrees, and by developing European quality seals)

Emphasis on quality

Modernisation Agenda

- Focus on improving quality and relevance
  - Graduate employability
  - Tailoring learning modes to a diverse student body
  - Motivating and rewarding excellent teachers
  - Programmes informed by and adapted to labour market needs

- New initiatives
  - Multi-dimensional information and ranking tool
  - Quality framework for traineeships

Emphasis on quality

Education and Culture DG

Programmes

- Support of EU programmes for HE QA
  - E4 activities (e.g. MAP-ESG)
  - EQAR
  - Erasmus Thematic Networks
  - Erasmus Mundus and QA of joint degrees

- Development of QA in higher education: a priority since 2008

European QA system: challenges

- **Conclusions of 2009 Progress Report still valid**

    – QA infrastructure more efficient and transparent, Link with Bologna tools, European-wide initiatives

    – The impact of the sectoral approach

- **Countries should allow their HEIs to be quality assured by international QA agencies (EQAR)**

    – Importance of the recognition of qualifications internationally rather than the trust for mutual recognition of QA assessments

    – Key: Link between QA and recognition of qualifications

    – The role of ESG: MAP-ESG project

- **More focus on end users, including students and teachers, and not just QA agencies or institutional leaders**

European QA system: challenges

- **Non-traditional HE: need for open, flexible and transparent education**

  – Broader European perspective in QA procedures, Don't focus just on national realities

  – Access to HE: need for VET-HE bridges

- **Strengthening links between the HE expert communities on Bologna, ECTS, rankings and QA**

  – But also joint European cooperation between transversal policy instruments: EQF, Key Competences Framework, ECVET and EQAVET

- **Franchise education**

Example: QA and LLL

- **Stronger EU dimension needed in VET + HE:**
  QA systems should position themselves internationally and be more transparent and comparable (to stimulate mobility)

- **But QA systems are very different within the sector, between sectors and between countries (in QA tradition, size of institutions, student population, extent of state control, priorities etc.)**

- **What they have in common is the common language of learning outcomes.**
  The link with the EQF/NQF could act as catalyser for constructing bridges

Example: QA and LLL

- **Focus should not be on building one integrated QA system for all sectors**

- **But rather on more transparency and better understanding of the different QA systems**

- **And on practical cooperation between main QA actors of different sectors, in particular on resolving bottlenecks for recognition of qualifications,**

- **Need to discuss about which bridges are needed for assessment, validation and recognition of qualifications obtained in education**

Constructing a European QA system: Next steps from the Commission

- **Next Progress Report**

- **Follow-up of projects (e.g. MAP-ESG) and initiatives (e.g. EQAR strategic approach)**

- **EU programmes: QA as a priority**

- **Ensure cooperation between all EU tools and 'communities', including QA**

Erasmus for All:
Cooperation projects and sectoral approaches

- **Knowledge Alliances:** structured partnerships between higher education institutions and businesses, which develop innovative ways of producing and sharing knowledge, foster creativity and entrepreneurship and design and deliver new curricula and qualifications.

- **Sector Skills Alliances:** Sectoral projects between businesses and education and training providers to create new sector-specific curricula, to develop innovative ways of vocational teaching and training and to put the EU wide recognition tools into practice.

- **Knowledge Alliances and Sector Skills Alliances/ institutions and enterprises involved**
  - 400 alliances and 4 000 institutions

Concluding remarks

- **The Commission acknowledges the work being done by European QA seals**

    – Explicitly mentioned in the 2009 Progress Report

    – Clear examples of impact, especially on end-users

- **Some networks were created as a reaction to adapt QA to sectoral needs**

    - The sectoral approach is more relevant in Erasmus for All and will continue to be supported
    - Potential to solve other challenges (even if partially) such as Franchise Education issues
    - Sectoral approach in the Ranking initiative

- **New QA challenges would require stregthening the link with other Bologna tools and communities of experts**