

Institutional Accreditation: ENQA's viewpoint

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Background information on ENQA

- Network in 2000; association in 2004 open to agencies in the EHEA
- Membership association for European QA agencies: 43 Full members, 5 Candidate members
- 26 Associates and 3 Affiliates since 2006
- Structure: Board, General Assembly, Secretariat
- Co-operation within E4 (EUA, ESU, EURASHE)
- represents the interests of its members in the EHEA and internationally:
 - ▶ consultative member in the BFUG
 - ▶ member of INQAAHE regional representatives' forum

Background information on ENQA (cont.)

- External reviews of ENQA member agencies by 2010
 - Elaboration of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) in consultation with EUA, EURASHE and ESU
 - One of the founding members of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)
 - 2 representatives in the Register Committee
 - 1 representative in the Executive Board
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European standards and guidelines (ESG)

- Drafted by ENQA in consultation with EUA, EURASHE and ESU
- Approved by the Bologna ministerial conference in Bergen in 2005
- Introduced **internationally accepted standards** for quality assurance in higher education
- Introduced a **peer review system** for quality assurance agencies:
 - ▶ Cyclical reviews of agencies, based on ESG, every five years for (reconfirmation of) full ENQA membership and/or for being (re)listed in EQAR

European standards and guidelines (ESG) (*cont.*)

Extract from the ENQA Position Paper:

- The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) form the overarching framework of quality assurance in the EHEA. The ESG recognise the primacy of national systems of higher education and the importance of institutional and agency autonomy within those national systems. The four-year experience in the implementation of the ESG has provided clear evidence of their usefulness and applicability in various national contexts and within differing organisational missions and setups.

European standards and guidelines (ESG) (*cont.*)

Structure

1. Internal QA within HEIs (Part 1)
 2. External QA of higher education (Part 2)
 3. Operation of external QA agencies (Part 3)
- The 3 parts are interconnected to one another.
 - Institutions *and* agencies have to undergo a cyclical external review.
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European standards and guidelines (ESG) *(cont.)*

The form of external quality assurance varies from system to system and can include:

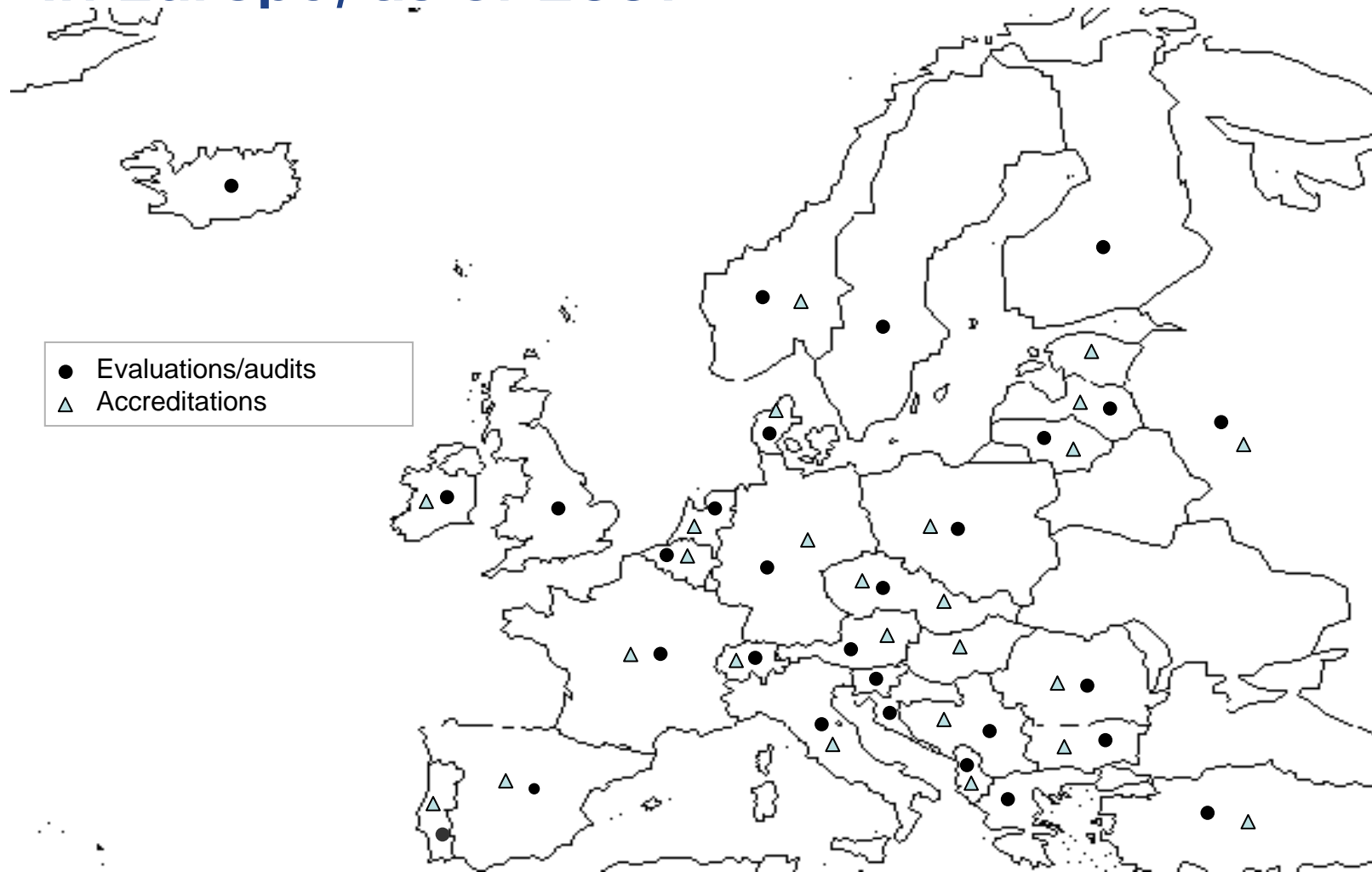
- institutional evaluations of different types;
 - subject or programme evaluations;
 - accreditation at subject, programme and institutional levels;
 - and combinations of these.
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European standards and guidelines (ESG) (*cont.*)

ENQA Criterion 1 – Activities (ESG 3.1, 3.3)

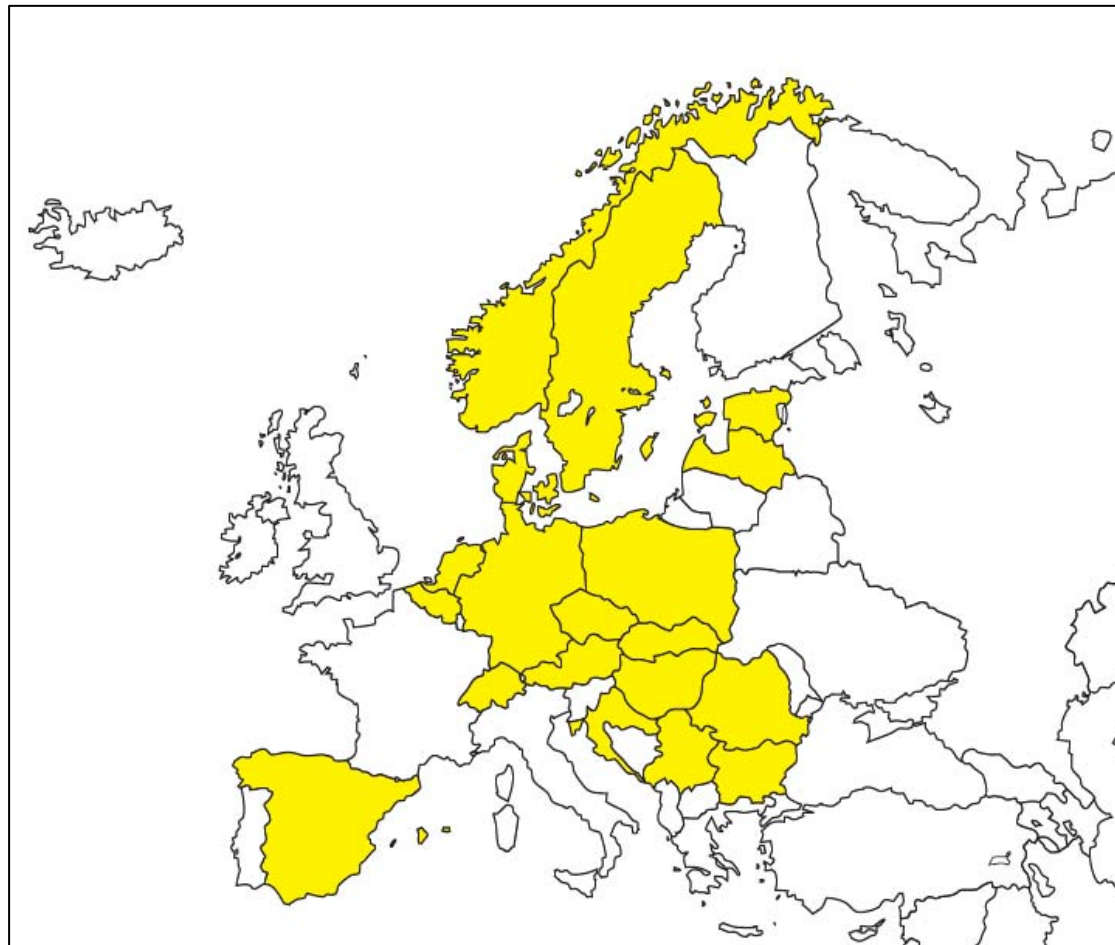
- Standard: Agencies should undertake quality assurance activities (at institutional or programme level) on a regular basis. The external quality assurance of agencies should take into account the presence and effectiveness of the external quality assurance processes described in Part 2 of the European Standards and Guidelines.
- Guidelines: The external quality assurance activities may involve evaluation, review, audit, assessment, accreditation or other similar activities and should be part of the core functions of the member.

Quality assurance and accreditation agencies in Europe, as of 2007



Accreditation in Europe

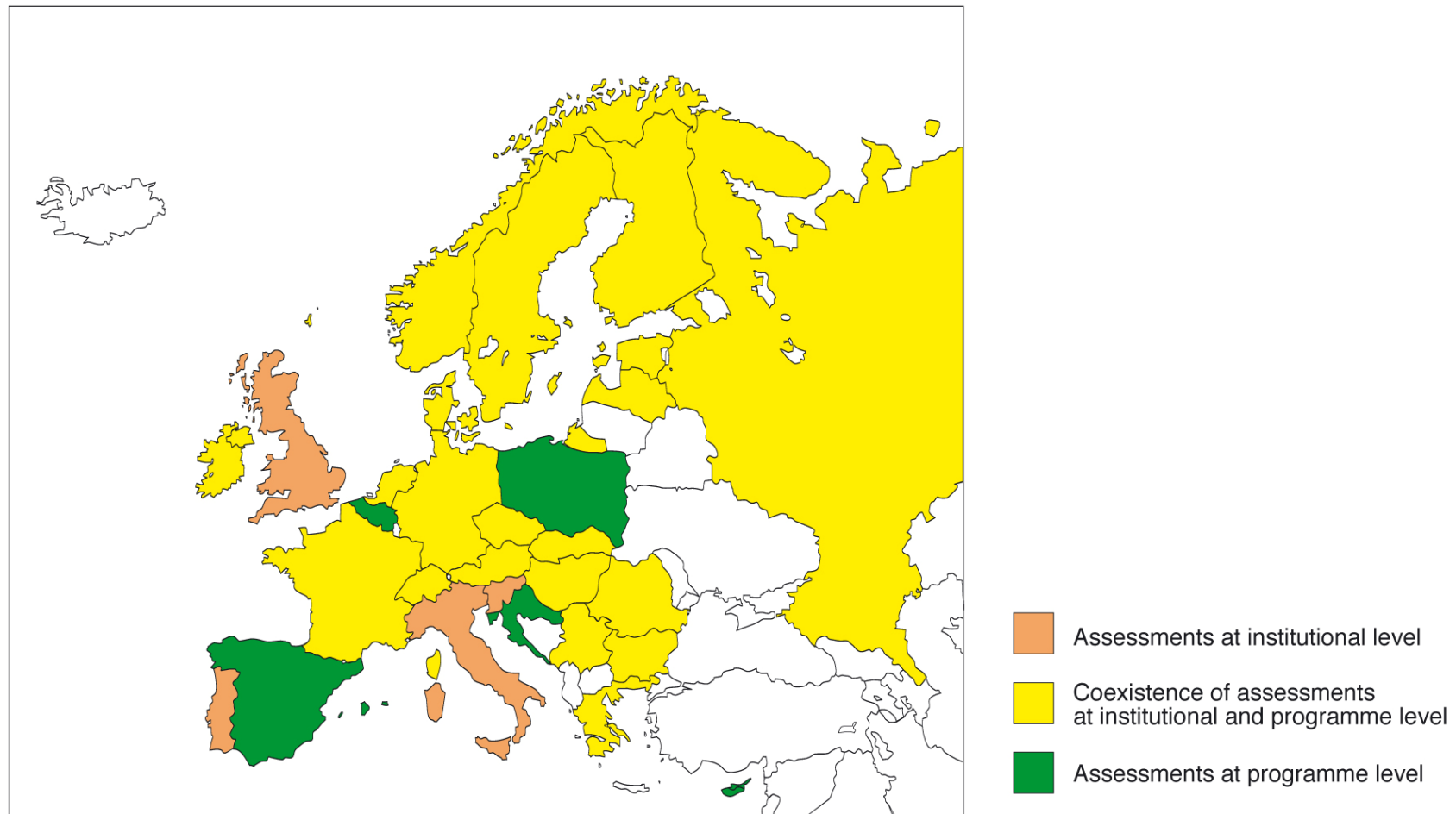
A survey on current practices – 2008



 Accreditation

Programme vs. Institutional assessments in Europe

A survey on current practices – 2008



ENQA survey (2007-2008)

Quality Procedures in the European Higher Education Area and Beyond - Second ENQA Survey

- questionnaire, 51 agencies from 30 EHEA countries
- Increasing number of agencies
- changing agency's structure, methods, activities, QA approach -> dynamic landscape
- Most common external QA procedures are **evaluation** and **accreditation**, followed by **audit**
- 65% programme approach, 40% institutional approach, 90% are not confined to only one approach

ENQA survey (2007-2008) (*cont.*)

Quality procedures in the EHEA and beyond

- Almost every agency that accredits institutions also accredits programmes, and half of them also evaluate programmes and institutions, and audit institutions.
 - Accreditation of programmes is more frequently carried out than accreditation of institutions
 - most institutional accreditations are carried out in cycles of five or six years.
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ENQA survey (2007-2008) *(cont.)*

External QA leads to formal consequences (approval, funding) in more than 75% of cases.

e.g. approval is a formal consequence in:

- 90% of accreditations
 - approx. 80% of evaluations and audits
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ENQA survey (2007-2008) *(cont.)*

Areas addressed in the quality procedures

The five highest impacting items

- programme level procedures:

qualifications of staff; curriculum/syllabus; facilities and resources; internal QA procedures; mission/goals.

- institutional level procedures:

internal QA procedures; management, organisation; mission/goals; qualifications of staff; facilities and resources.

➤ **Addressing learning outcomes in (external) QA is only at the beginning.**

Institutional vs. Programme oriented approaches to QA*

Institutional Approach

- assesses the internal monitoring and quality assurance arrangements
- allows for more flexibility in terms of structure, content and implementation of study programmes
- emphasises the autonomy and the primary responsibility of the institutions for their quality

Programme Approach

- transversal comparison between subjects possible
- better information about programmes offered, recognition of joint degrees
- more resources needed (time and money), extra bureaucracy
- limited effect in improving the institution's management of teaching and learning quality

*ENQA workshop report *Programme-oriented and institutional-oriented approaches to quality assurance: new developments and mixed approaches*

Examples of countries with institutional accreditation

- **Bulgaria** (NEAA) only inst accreditation
- **Germany***: prog. -> inst. ("system accreditation")
- **Norway***: prog. + inst., accreditation + audit
- **Austria** (AAC) inst accreditation in all private institutions
- **Hungary** (HAC) prog. and inst. accreditation

Trend*: scrutiny of institutional QA + selective programme reviews

Shift of emphasis: external -> internal

Type of institutions that must undergo institutional assessment varies from one country to another

* ENQA workshop report *Programme-oriented and institutional-oriented approaches to quality assurance: new developments and mixed approaches*

Current QA activities in Europe

- most countries now have quality assurance or accreditation agencies
 - mixture of programme accreditation, institutional accreditation, and non-accrediting external quality assurance reviews
 - some countries are moving/have moved from programme focus to institutional focus
 - some moving the other way
 - increasing use of European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)
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Importance of QA at international level

Development of common standards, guidelines and principles

(ex: INQAAHE GGP and ESG)



Harmonisation and convergence of QA processes

- Facilitate comparison and understanding between national QA systems
- Facilitate comparison and recognition of degrees and results of external QA activities
- Build and promote mutual trust
- Improve mobility
- Increase transparency for students, employers and the society as a whole

Conclusions

- ▶ ENQA does not recommend any one external QA procedure over another!
 - ▶ wide variety in the approaches to quality assurance (QA)
 - ▶ The fitness for purpose approach should be adapted to the culture of each country and Higher Education Institution (HEI)
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**Thank you
for your attention**

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