

# **Regional Framework for QA in Europe. The European Standards and Guidelines: From development to Implementation**

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## **ENQA at a glance:**

Umbrella NGO for European QA agencies in HE, founded in 2000

### **Purpose:**

- **as a membership organisation, to represent its members** at the European level in political decision making processes;
- **to function as a think tank** for developing further quality assurance in the EHEA;
- **to function as a communication platform** for sharing and disseminating information and expertise in quality assurance

### **Membership:**

- 40 Full members, 12 Candidate members
  - 30 Associates, 4 Affiliates
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# **The European Standards and Guidelines at a glance**



Bologna ministerial conference Bergen 2005:

Ministers “adopt **standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area...**”, which are “designed to be applicable to all higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies in Europe, irrespective of their structure, function and size, and the national system in which they are located” drafted by ENQA, EUA, EURASHE, ESU”

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## **The European Standards and Guidelines at a glance:**

### **ESG part I:** Internal quality assurance

Cyclical reviews, stakeholder involvement, Quality of programmes, staff, assessment procedures...

### **ESG part II:** External quality assurance

Cyclical review, predefined standards, stakeholder involvement, robustness, enhancement orientation, publicity...

### **ESG part III:** Quality assurance agencies

Independence, recognition by public body, stakeholder involvement, predefined standards, internal QA, cyclical external review...

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## What the ESG ARE:

- Generic, not specific, standards and guidelines
- A view of what should be done, not how it should be done
- A source of assistance and guidance

## What the ESG are NOT:

- Prescriptive
  - A checklist
  - A compendium of detailed procedures
  - A European quality assurance system
- ESG provide a “common understanding” of quality assurance in higher education in the EHEA
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## **Strategies of implementation**



Strategies of implementation vary according to national differences in responsibility over quality assurance. ESG are partly transferred into the legal framework (Hungary), others (Sweden, the United Kingdom and Germany) handle the ESG as non binding recommendations

- depends partly on maturity of national QA system
- Newcomers tend to put ESG into legally binding regulations

Drivers of implementation

In general: major role of agencies

Part I: HEI as main drivers, but also agencies

Part II and III: agencies as main drivers

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ENQA requires compliance with ESG as precondition for full membership.

The European Register for Quality Assurance requires compliance with ESG as precondition for being listed.

➤ Use of ESG as mixture of guiding principles and compliance tool

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## **Level of implementation**



## Independent evaluation of the Bologna Process

(March 2010)

“Internal and external quality assurance functioning according to ESG was found early in 2009 already in a large group of jurisdictions (16 of 48), all from among the 29 original signatories.

It should be noted though, that in many countries the actual proportion of higher education institutions with *regular internal quality assurance (18/48)* or checked even once by external quality assessment (25/48) are far less than full.”

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## **ENQA report “Learning from agency reviews”**

(January 2011)

Since 2005 more than 42 external reviews of agencies against ESG parts II and III have taken place (as pre-condition for ENQA full membership)

But:

13 countries in EHEA without agencies (4 small countries won't set up an agency)

8 agencies still without external review

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## **E4 project “mapping the implementation and application of ESG” (mapESG)**

(report due in January 2012)

Consultation of ENQA seems to reveal that

- ESG part II and III can be applied in/adapted to different political, legal, and cultural settings without compromising the basic values.
  - Approaches other than generic and principle based approaches might fail as regards applicability in different legal, political and cultural frameworks.
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## **Role in regional co-operation**



ESG provide a “common understanding” of quality assurance in higher education

- among countries of EHEA
  - among stakeholders
  
  - QA based on ESG fosters recognition of qualifications
  - ESG foster mutual trust
  
  - QA based on ESG as precondition for eligibility of programmes for participating in exchange programmes (ERASMUS Mundus etc)
  
  - Compliance with ESG precondition for full membership in ENQA, and for being listed in EQAR
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**Thank you for your attention**

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