The European Dimension of Quality Assurance – Reality or a Figment of the Imagination?

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Outline presentation

1. Introduction: the European policy context (EU, Bologna)

2. Progress on the European dimension so far (follow-up 2009 Report European Commission)

3. Conclusion
European Policy Context

• EU Modernisation Agenda for higher education: more quality is needed

• Bologna Process: make higher education more comparable, mobile, trustworthy and transparent

• Two Recommendations EP and Council (1998 and 2006) on need for stronger European cooperation on QA
Progress Report: main developments national and EU level

1. Strong growth in QA infrastructure.
2. Increased quality culture
3. Increased awareness European Standards and Guidelines
4. Creation of European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)
But: a real European dimension is still missing
Suggestion 1 of the Report: Make the QA infrastructure more efficient and transparent for users
Suggestion 2 of the Report: Make ESG's more coherent with the Bologna framework (3-cycles, ECTS)
Suggestion 3 of the Report: Stimulate cross-border QA (e.g. by Quality Seals, recognition joint degrees)
Work in progress (1)

- Evaluation EQAR:
  
  - is EQAR fulfilling its purpose as stimulator of EU dimension QA or does it only deliver a marketing label?
  
  - are the ESG’s the right instrument for EQAR to meet its objectives?
  
  - are the roles of the different European stakeholders QA transparent enough?
Work in progress (2)

- ESG mapping project E-4: input for a possible revision.

  *NB call for stonger EU dimension seems to be absent in the discussion*

- Accreditation of joint degrees: several initatives (TEAM, JOIMAN, EUA Guidelines)

  But still no common (basic) policy line Bologna Ministers should agree on
Concluding remarks (1)

• Considerable progress at both national and EU level has been made: QA infrastructure (organisations, tools) in place.

• However, a real European dimension, linked to the goals of Bologna, is still very much absent.

• Better use/fine tuning existing instruments (e.g. ESG,) and more political commitment (e.g. on role EQAR, single accreditation joint degrees) within Bologna needed to stimulate European dimension and to meet Bologna goals
Concluding remarks (2)

- Commission can have a facilitating role (funding of organisations, instruments, provision of strategic papers) and will continue its call for a stronger European dimension ("frapper toujours")
Concluding remarks (3)

- But the different stakeholders and governments within the Bologna Context are finally responsible for letting the European dimension really happen (or not). Who takes the lead?
Thank you for your attention!