

## **Synthetic report of HERE Seminar**

### ***The European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) in practice: Implications for HEIs and higher education systems***

19-20 October 2016

Lviv, Ukraine

#### **A- General presentation**

##### **I- Introduction:**

The *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG) are the basis for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

In Yerevan in 2015, Bologna ministers endorsed a revised version of the ESG (ESG 2015), which included a number of updated and amended elements to which stakeholders will need to adopt in the near future. This includes a stronger focus on the role of institutions in taking charge of quality assurance.

In the Bologna countries covered by the SPHERE Initiative, the ESG are of direct relevance, and many governments, HEIs and social actors are seeking best practice and the advice on how to best implement them. In other HERE countries, particularly in the Southern Mediterranean, European QA standards, guidelines and practices also have an impact. Systems are looking towards Europe as they build and reform their own QA systems.

##### **II- Aim of the seminar:**

This HERE seminar aims at generating awareness for the ESG 2015 amongst HERE. It intends to support HERE to promote QA reform in their countries, and embed 'quality culture' at grass-root level – the level of HEIs – as well as in cooperation with governments, QA agencies and all pertinent stakeholders.

##### **III- Target:**

The HERE members, who are in leadership positions in their HEI, the Higher Education Ministries and QA agency officials. In addition, the seminar will address the role of students in QA, thus student HERE a very welcome.

##### **IV- Learning outcomes (LO):**

- Generate awareness for the ESG 2015, what they consist of, how they have been prepared and endorsed and how they are being implemented in different European countries
- Discuss and debate in particular the institutional responsibility for QA and the need to prepare a generation to handle this responsibility and to build their capacity
- Learn about the conditions for building dynamic QA systems that take into account national and regional needs and interests, as well as the changing HE landscape

## **B- Sessions and Workshops**

### **I- Plenary Sessions:**

- ***Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area: Where are we now?***  
General intro to ESG 2015: The key issues – Colin Teuck, European Quality Assurance Registrar (EQAR)  
[Click here for PP](#)
- ***Regional collaboration in external QA: The role of agencies***  
Therese Zhang, Deputy Director, Higher Education Policy, EUA and formally programme manager at AEQES - Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, Belgium  
[Click here for PP](#)
- ***Students in focus***  
Presentation: *Adam Gajek, European Students Union (ESU)*
  - New standard on student centered learning
  - The role of students in external and internal QA[Click here for PP](#)
- ***The changing higher education sector: New challenges for QA systems***  
*Input presentation and chair: Therese Zhang, EUA*  
[Click here for PP](#)
- ***Institutional Responsibility for QA: Building quality culture***  
Sirpa Suntioinen, Quality Manager, University of Eastern Finland  
[Click here for PP](#)

### **II- Working groups on thematic issues:**

- Ensuring student participation in QA
- The role of agencies/external QA in supporting institution
- Regional/international collaboration
- Building capacity for institutional QA

## **C- Issues**

### **I- Core features of the ESG:**

- Diversity of systems
- Students, stakeholders, society
- Student-centered learning
- Transparency and mutual understanding

- Internal - external QA: University and ministry/agency
- Changing the culture of education in universities/quality culture
- Autonomy
- Fit for purpose

#### **II- Shared difficulties:**

- Involving students in QA systematically
- Linking QA to the development of LO based approaches
- Building capacity of institutions to implement their own QA processes
- Internationalizing QA

#### **III- Propositions: Conditions for building institutional quality culture capacity:**

- Institutional support of higher management: policy of the university and its strategy
- Leadership of the process: well informed, skilled, patient, knowing how to manage change and to coach
- Sustainability of QA structures
- Resources for the quality management
- Mobilization, engagement, involvement of individuals from different levels and sectors, starting from the university community, stakeholders, students, administrative and academic staff
- Manage tensions, find equilibrium between: tradition and change and top-down/bottom –up issues
- Coordination between Management system and Quality Management System

#### **IV- Propositions: concrete steps that HERE could take:**

- Organize seminars, workshops, round-tables for students, administrative and academic staff, high management specifically, workshops on benchmarking for management
- Organize study visits
- Propose TAMs in QA capacity building, especially regional projects
- Disseminate (on the Webpage): good practices (national, regional, international), documents
- Participate in identifying national priorities
- Do pilot studies
- Communicate, formally and informally with ministers and presidents of universities
- Participate in national commissions

#### **V- Issues to further explore:**

- QA versus Rankings
- Relevance of ranking for QA? How can rankings be used? QA, rankings and student choice
- More support for institutional capacity building- Potential study visit?

- Good practice in evaluation of SCL
- Facilitating the participation of international peers in the evaluation teams
- QA and graduate/doctoral studies