

European Quality Assurance
Register for Higher Education



Recognising International Quality Assurance Activity in the European
Higher Education Area (RIQAA)

Findings from the Survey on cross-border activities of QAAs

Seminar on Cross-Border Quality Assurance,
Bayreuth, 29/30 April 2014

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Lifelong
Learning
Programme

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RIQAA Work Plan (2013/2014)

1. Desk research mapping recognition of EQAR-registered QAAs across the EHEA
2. Qualitative analysis on the rational for international activity of (EQAR-registered) quality assurance agencies
 - Survey “Cross Border Activities of QAAs” (February – March 2014);
 - A seminar for quality assurance agency representatives (*Bayreuth, 29-30 April 2014*)
3. Overview of 12 institutional experiences with international quality reviews
4. Final project report & final conference (*Rome, 16-17 September 2014 - TBC*)

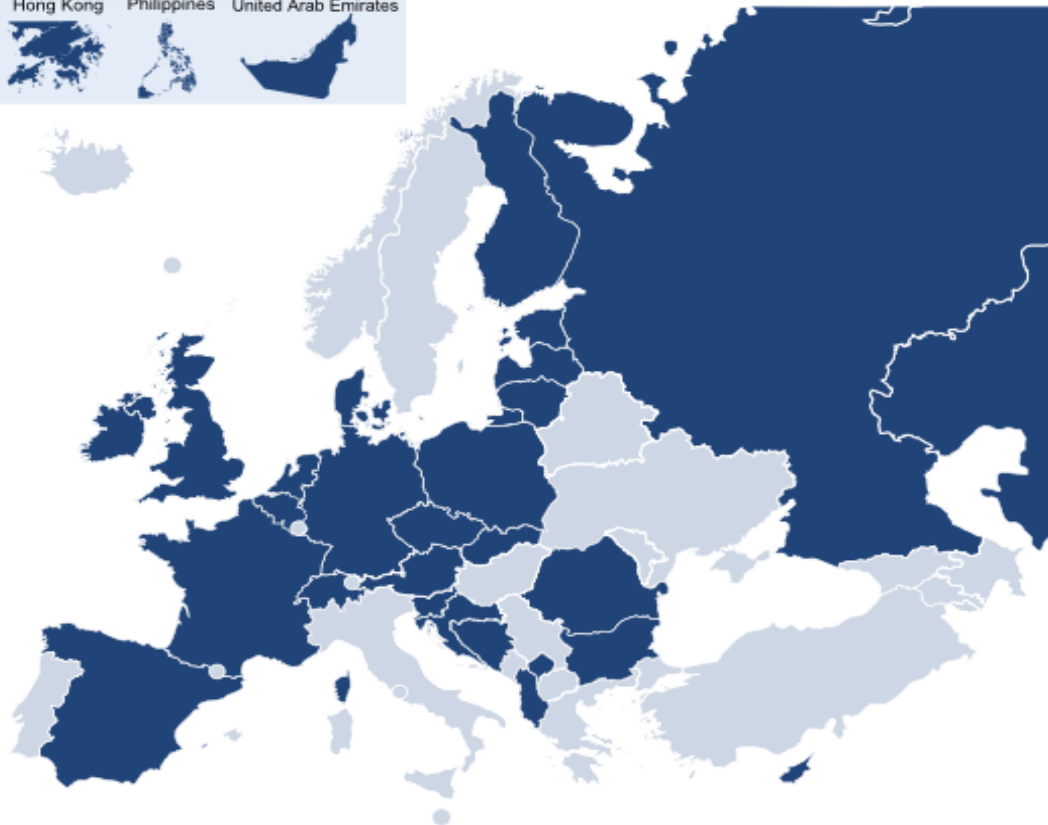
Outline of the presentation

1. Background, Scope, Methodology of the Survey
2. Overview of international activities of QAAs
3. Overview of cross-border external QA activities
4. Challenges, opportunities and measures to facilitate the cross-border EQA activities of QAAs.

1. Background, Scope, Methodology



- Survey carried out between February – March 2014
- 85 QAAs contacted, 42 QAAs responded
- 26 EHEA & 4 non-EHEA (see map)



- Countries where responding QA agencies are based
- Countries with no respondents



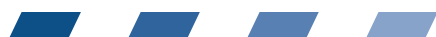
Scope:



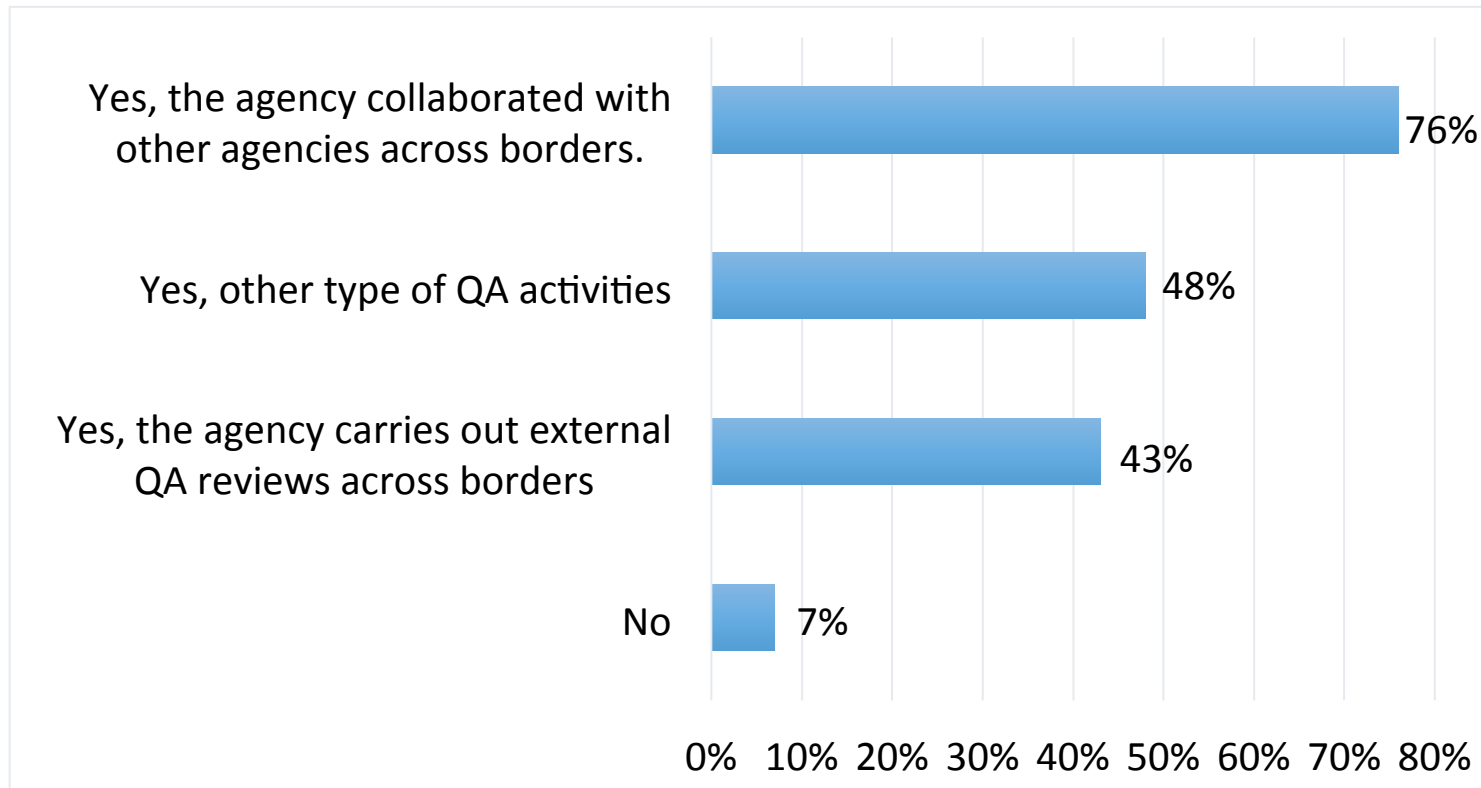
To extend our understanding on the EQA activities of QAAs within different national contexts, in particular on the practices and procedures employed by agencies and their rationale for cross-border external QA activities.

Profile of QAAs:

Wide range of QAAs

- national, international, or regionally established
 - carrying out reviews (audits, accreditation, or evaluation) for specific disciplines or across different fields of study
 - 24 out of 42 QAAs are listed in EQAR
 - Only 3 QAAs with no international QA activity
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2. Overview of QAA's international and EQA activities



Type of international QA activities:



- international projects (CeQuint, QUEST, Grossroads, MULTRA, ECAPEDIA, IMPALA, Twinning, NOQA, GICAQ project, QACHE, ESABIH);
- involvement in different European (ENQA, CEENQA, ECA, REACU) or other international networks/associations (INQAAHE, ANQAHE);
- development of new legislation or new national QA systems, in exchanging experts;
- 14 out of 39 international active responding QAAs have also established collaboration activities with non-EHEA partners (e.g Nuffic project in Yemen, GIQAC project funded by World Bank and supported by Unesco, USAID in Ethiopia).

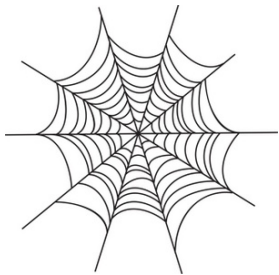
3. Overview of EQA activities of agencies across borders (17 respondents) :



Profile of QAAs carrying out reviews across borders:

- 16 of 17 QAAs coming from EHEA
- 15 of 17 QAAs are listed in EQAR (approximately half of all EQAR-registered agencies)

A dense web of reviews:



The EQA activities (accreditation/audit/evaluation) spanned across 33 EHEA and 28 non-EHEA member countries and territories

Since 2010 the EQA reviews were carried out

- from ten to 30 different countries (other than their own) each year.
- 79 cross-border external QA reviews in the EHEA and 36 external reviews in non-EHEA countries and territories

Status and recognition of EQA activities:



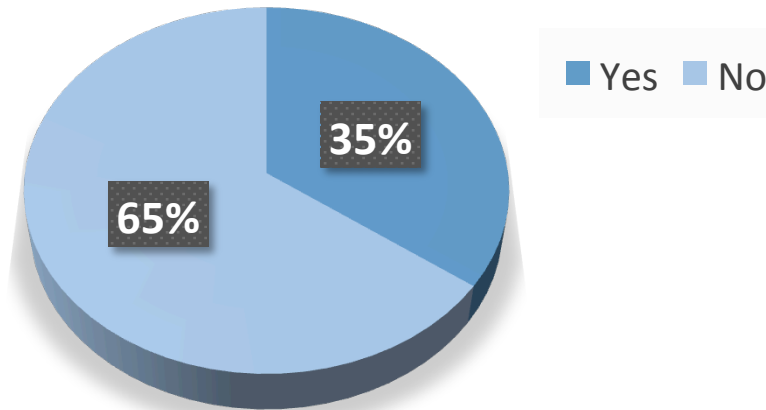
	(1) Outcome/decision directly recognised	(2) Final decision by national QA body
(A) All HEI's, all external QA	LI, RO, <i>FI</i>	AL, AM, BE-fl, KAZ <i>EE, ME, NL</i>
(B) Some HEI's or some types of external QA only	AT, <i>CH</i>	LT, <i>PT</i>
(C) Only joint degrees or specific circumstances	DK, PL	DE

Additionally the EQA reviews can:

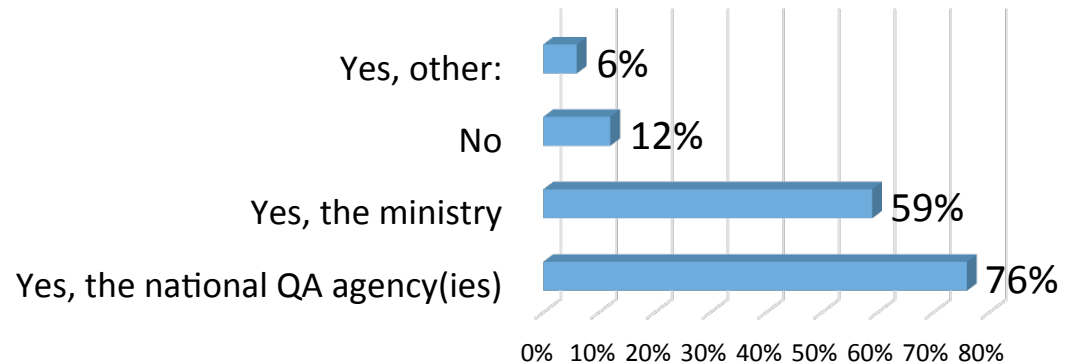
- take the form of cooperation with the nationally recognised QA body (AEC collaboration with ANQA, ZEVa, SKVC etc.)
- or to gain an additional external feedback (IEP reviews, evalag review of an institution in Hungary)

Some findings:

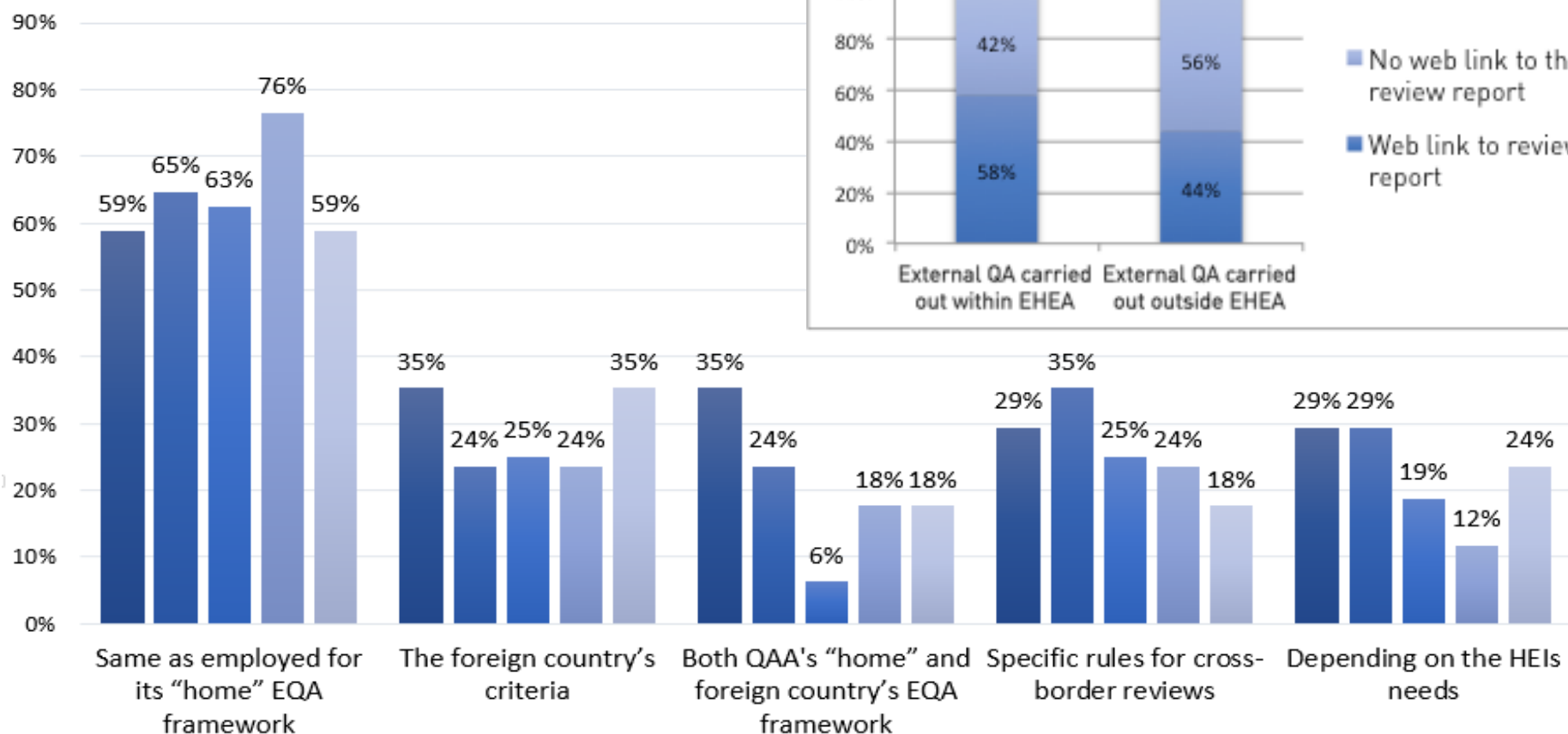
Does your agency have specific policies regarding cross-border QA reviews?



Have you contacted other HE competent authorities from the country of the reviewed institution?



Criteria and processes employed by QAAs across borders



- a) Criteria for decisions and formal outcomes
- b) Composition of the expert group
- c) Publication of reports
- d) Appeals or complaints procedure
- e) Follow-up activities



4. Challenges, opportunities and measures to facilitate the EQA activities across borders



QAAs perceived benefits for engaging in a EQA across borders



- gaining a better understanding of other HE systems
- improving QAAs own criteria and procedures;
- broadening the understanding of quality (e.g. quality enhancement vs. quality assurance) and quality assurance policies and regulations within EHEA and non-EHEA countries/territories;
- expanding their own network;
- increasing their flexibility and adaptability to other national systems;
- increasing their national and international profile.

HEIs motivation for turning to a foreign QAA for an EQA review

- To get an evaluation that fits their own profile
- To improve the mobility of their graduates and recognition of their degrees;
- To accredit joint programmes;
- To improve their international recognition and reputation;

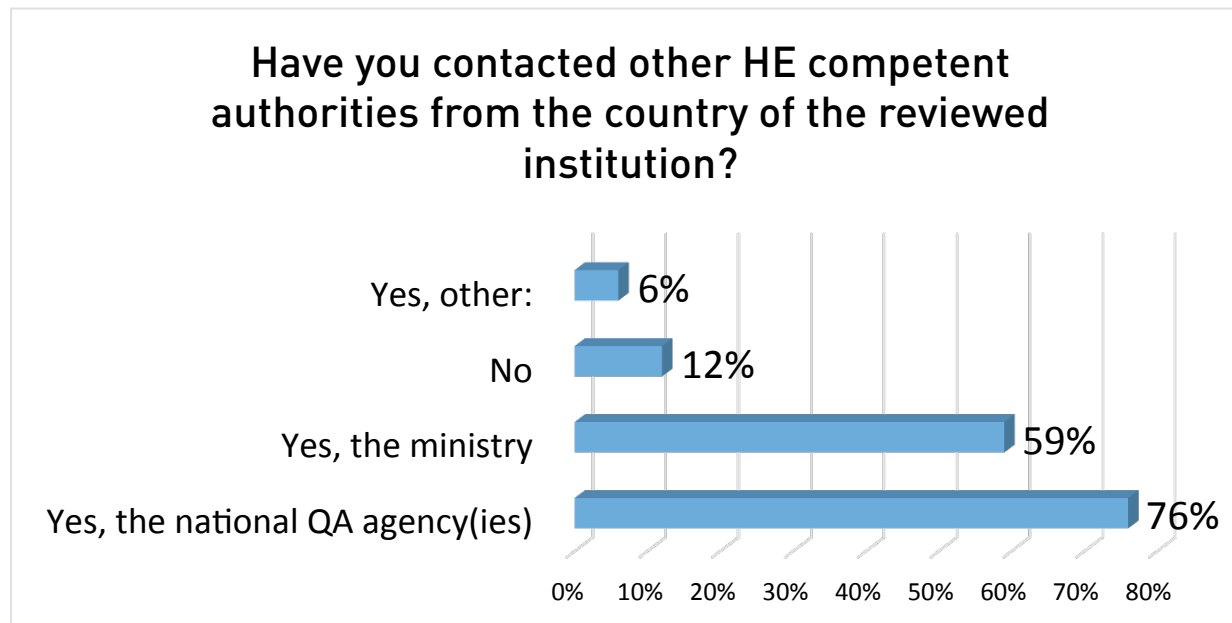
Challenges of cross-border QA reviews

- Gaining a clear understanding of the higher education system where the HEI operates;
- Managing the right balance with the national required criteria and their own criteria;
- Finding suitable peers for the review and in overcoming language barriers;
- Adapting and gaining recognition of their external quality assurance procedures in a country with a restrictive or unclear national legislation.

Overcoming challenges



QAAs have approached national authorities and/or local QAAs to clarify the requirements of the national EQA framework and ensuring mutual trust



Measures to facilitate EQA activities of agencies across borders (39 respondents)



At international level:

- Promoting the ESG as the core element of trust and recognition within the EHEA.
- Development of procedures/policies for the recognition of accreditation decisions of joint programmes.
- Direct financial resources to QA agencies to support international quality assurance activities and reviews.
- Establishing and agreeing on trans-national quality seals and common policies for the publication of evaluation reports.
- Organisation of international benchmarking seminars.
- Developing a data-base of international experts.
- EQAR-registration as a reference for cross-border external QA reviews.
- Promoting the use of standardised information on each countries requirements on cross-border reviews to facilitate QAAs first contact with that country and dissemination of results from cross-border reviews.
- Regulation to prevent the negative effects of a possible “marketisation” of QAAs activities across borders.

Measures to facilitate EQA activities of agencies across borders (39 respondents)



At national level:

- Ensuring a more flexible and transparent national regulation for the work of foreign QAAs.
- Making available national rules and criteria in a widely spoken language.
- Encouraging national agencies to cooperate with field specific international QAAs.
- Raising awareness on the benefits of recognising the diversification of QA practices and removing the strains for HEIs who are duplicating these reviews.

QAA's perception on the reasoning for countries to open up their HE system to cross-border EQA (39 respondents)



- improvement of the national systems of education;
- fostering the ingoing and outgoing mobility for students and employees;
- ensuring international recognition of higher education institutions and study programmes;
- improving the transparency and comparability of higher education systems and reducing the risk of "inbreeding".

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