

# RIQAA Final Conference / EQAR Members' Dialogue

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Ligia Deca (PhD candidate, Policy Expert UEFISCDI)

# Why now?

- EHEA and EU ministerial commitments
- Interest of QAAs and HEIs
- Internationalization as a major driver for HEI strategic efforts
- 'Hot potatoes' in need of being addressed: joint degrees and cross-border HE provision
- Diversification of the ways to achieve international prestige
- Wider debates: Why Europe?

# Why bother?

- Trust building – impacts on recognition and cooperation;
- Internationalization;
- Quality enhancement;
- Consolidation of institutional quality culture;
- Fitness for purpose (mission of HEI, type of QA process, timeline etc.);
- EHEA build-up;
- Genuine areas in need of cross-border cooperation: joint degrees and cross-border HE provision.

# Competing pressures

- Balancing openness of HE systems to cross-border QA provision and public responsibility of higher education;
- Recognising the role of QAAs in HE systems – difficult path and internationalization of QA should not be an additional threat to their existence;
- Balancing minimum standards and quality enhancement;
- Association of QA processes with legal consequences;
- Stakeholder involvement.

# Other uncomfortable truths

- Prestige seems to be a predominant motivation...
- LEARNING CURVE: Not all existing cross-border QA initiatives were perfect – need to find mechanisms to take that into account;
- National HE arrangements are still adjusting (sometimes incoherent or insufficient);
- Market logics tend to be insufficient to contribute to trust building among QA key players and sometimes affect transparency;
- Consolidation of the EHEA will not come with aggressive marketing of either HE provision or QA labels.



Way forward

# European actors should...

- Look at policy coherence:
  - the ERASMUS MUNDUS QA approach, EMQA does not reference the ESG;
  - Reflect on the link between QF-EHEA, EQF and the European framework for QA and learn from other regional initiatives;
- Do not try to use QA as a way to push other policy priorities, while at the same time demand for full openness of national systems;
- Observe parallel developments and how they influence each other: performance based funding and opening up national HE systems for cross-border QA provision.

# National authorities should...

- Allow for QA to contribute to trust building – further open up national HE systems for cross-border QA, while setting-up the proper legal framework to make national requirements and processes transparent;
- Use the EHEA QA framework: take advantage of the revised ESG and become involved in EQAR as a way to gain trust in EQAR listed agencies;
- Reflect on the role of QA within national systems, with a particular focus on quality enhancement and the role of international QA provision.



# Internationally operating QAAs should...

- Be clear about their processes and criteria (in line with the ESG), while establishing the extent in which they can be adjusted for cross-border QA;
- Make public all reports, even those on which other actors take final decisions (as well as considerations stemming from cross-border QA processes);
- Make cross-border QA (if existing) part of their 'normal activity', including covering them in the regular self-evaluation and providing follow-up measures;
- Consult and cooperate with national QAAs and include experts with knowledge in the local context;
- Exhibit solidarity: do not downplay the work of other QAAs



# HEIs should...

- Choose carefully 😊 (for the long term benefits, not just the short term ones);
- Continue to be in line with ESG provisions, such as:
  - Ensure an inclusive and comprehensive preparation, which includes the entire academic community, as well as other stakeholders;
  - Take full responsibility for the results of the QA review and their follow-up.

# EQAR should...

- Consider QAA cross-border activities in its reviews for registration and renewal;
- Review its follow-up procedures so that professional conduct and ESG compliance is observed for cross border QA activities of registered QAAs;
- Reflect on how concerns of various stakeholders can be taken into account in considering QAAs applications;
- Provide updated information regarding cross-border QA activities, transparency of their results and legal framework updates;
- Invite ENQA, ESU, EUA, EURASHE, BUSINESS EUROPE and EI to discuss recommendations (or guidelines?!) regarding cross-border QA, based on the ESG, UNESCO/ OECD Guidelines and the new European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes.

# Thank you!

ligia.deca@uni.lu