

ANALYSIS OF CROSS-BORDER QUALITY ASSURANCE AT EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION LEVEL BASED ON DEQAR DATA

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Main objectives

- to analyse data on cross-border quality assurance at European Higher Education Area (EHEA)
- to draw conclusions on tendencies of cross-border quality assurance.

DEQAR data sets from 4th of September, 2019 [1] were used: data for reports, for institutions and for agencies. Manipulation of the data structure and graphical analysis was done by open source language and environment for statistical computing and graphics R [2].

Introduction

The idea for cross-border quality assurance is a mean to show trust between higher education systems as well as to further promote this trust root in EHEA. In this work cross-border quality assurance is considered as external QA activities of an EQAR-registered QA agency, which is carried out in a country other than the one in which it is based or primarily operates [3].

Based on DEQAR data, the analysis further investigates how widespread cross-border quality assurance activities are. It has to be mentioned that not all EHEA countries have legislation allowing their HEIs to choose EQAR-registered QA agencies for their regular external QA, and that the recognition of such activities is at times limited for certain EQA procedures or institutions [4]. Methodological limitations: the DEQAR database

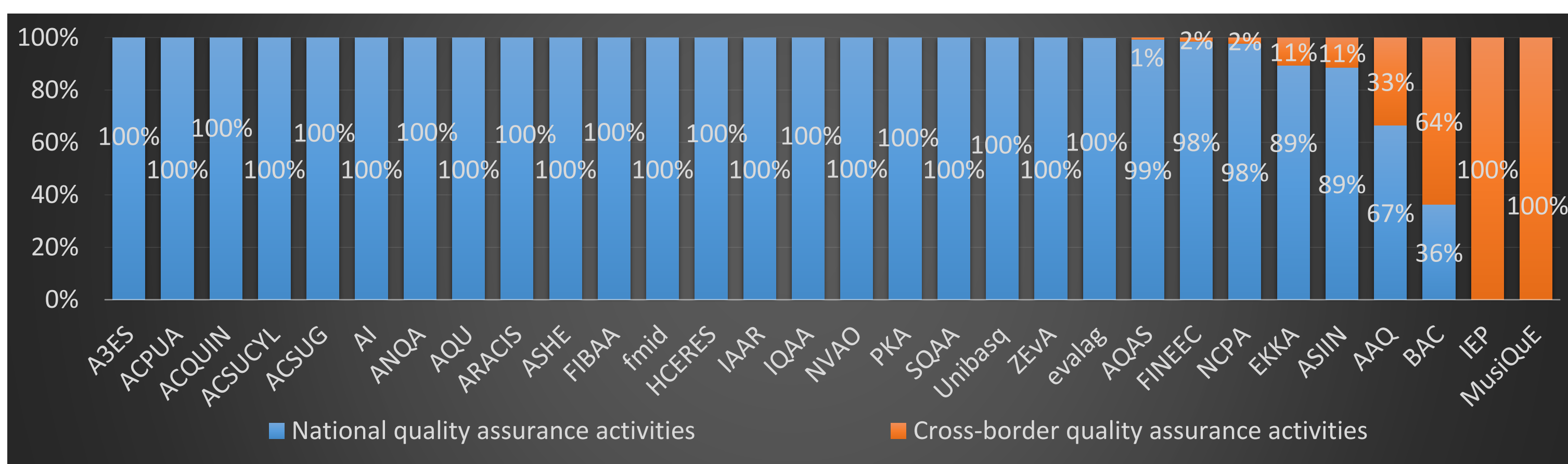


Fig. 1. Percentage of cross-border and national quality assurance activities by agencies who have uploaded in DEQAR.

at the moment of this analysis (September 2019) covers the EQA activity of 30 of the 47 EQAR-registered QA agencies. As a result, definitive conclusion from the data cannot be drawn or should be drawn very carefully.

Analysis and results

While 3 out of 4 EQAR-registered QA agencies have carried out at least one cross-border QA activity (2018 EQAR Annual Report) from Fig. 1 it can be seen that only 9 QA agencies have so far made available the results of their cross-border reviews into DEQAR. Most (87%) of the reports of cross-border reviews are carried out at programme level. The results from Fig. 2 show that cross-border quality assurance activities within EHEA can be described as significantly low compared to the total number of EQA activities carried out. This may be explained by the lack of EHEA member countries allowing their HEIs to choose an EQAR-registered agency.

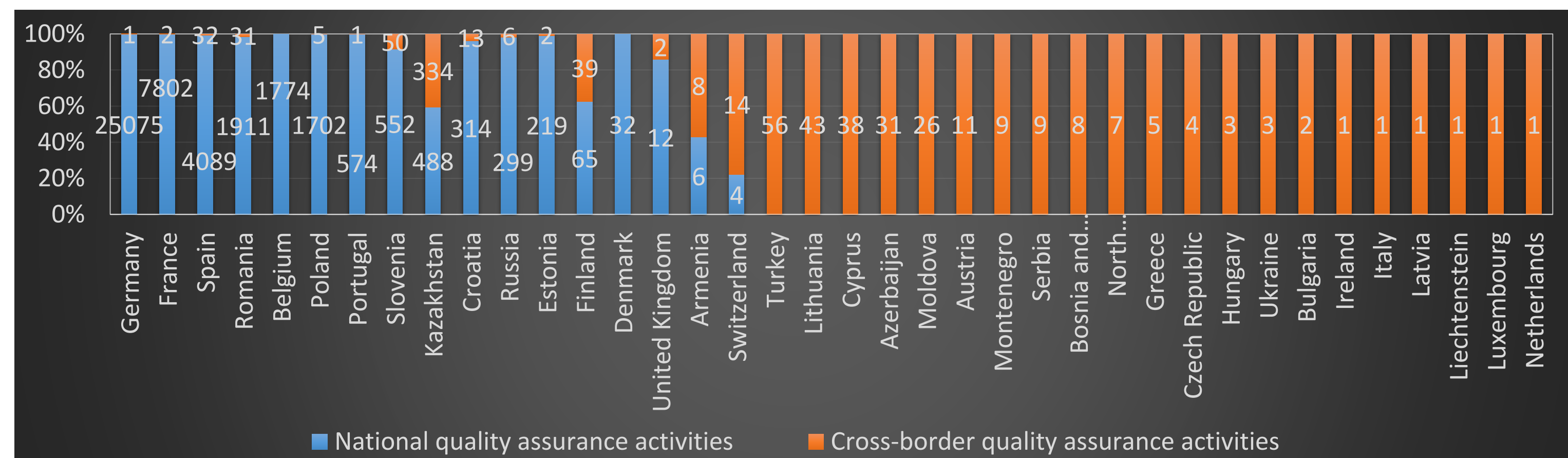


Fig. 2. Number of national and cross-border quality assurance activities carried out within EHEA countries. Only agencies with uploaded reports included

Data from Fig. 3 illustrates that whenever agencies registered in EQAR are doing cross-border quality assurance activities they tend to carry out only one type of evaluation. Only a few agencies organise cross-border quality assurance activities at programme and institutional level.

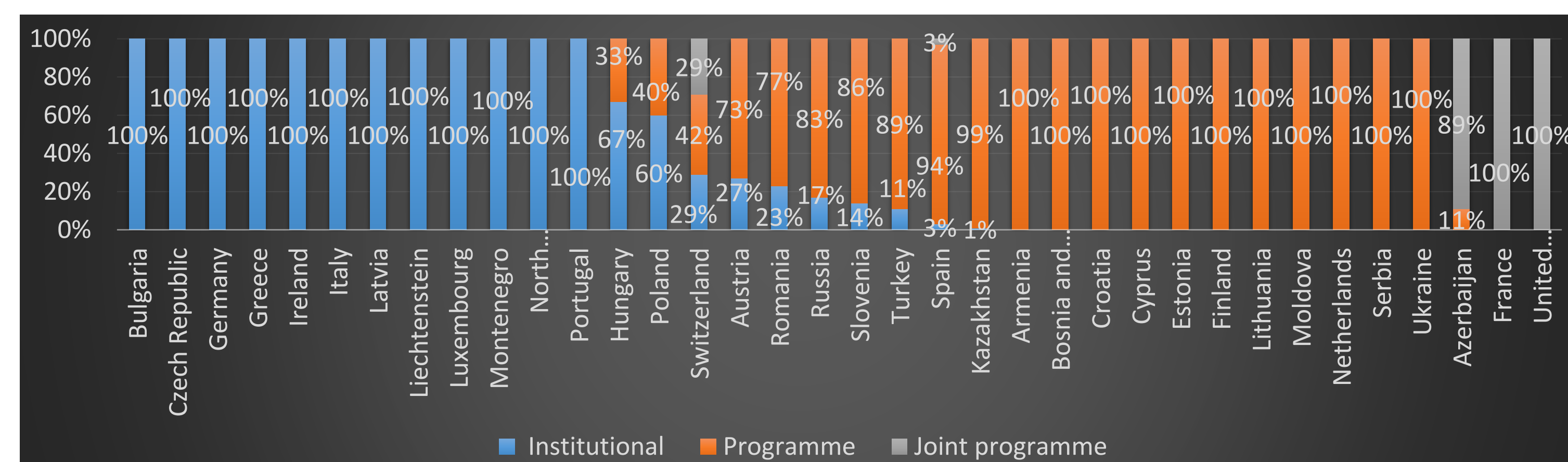


Fig. 3. Type (institutional, programme, joint programme) of cross-border quality assurance activities within EHEA in %.

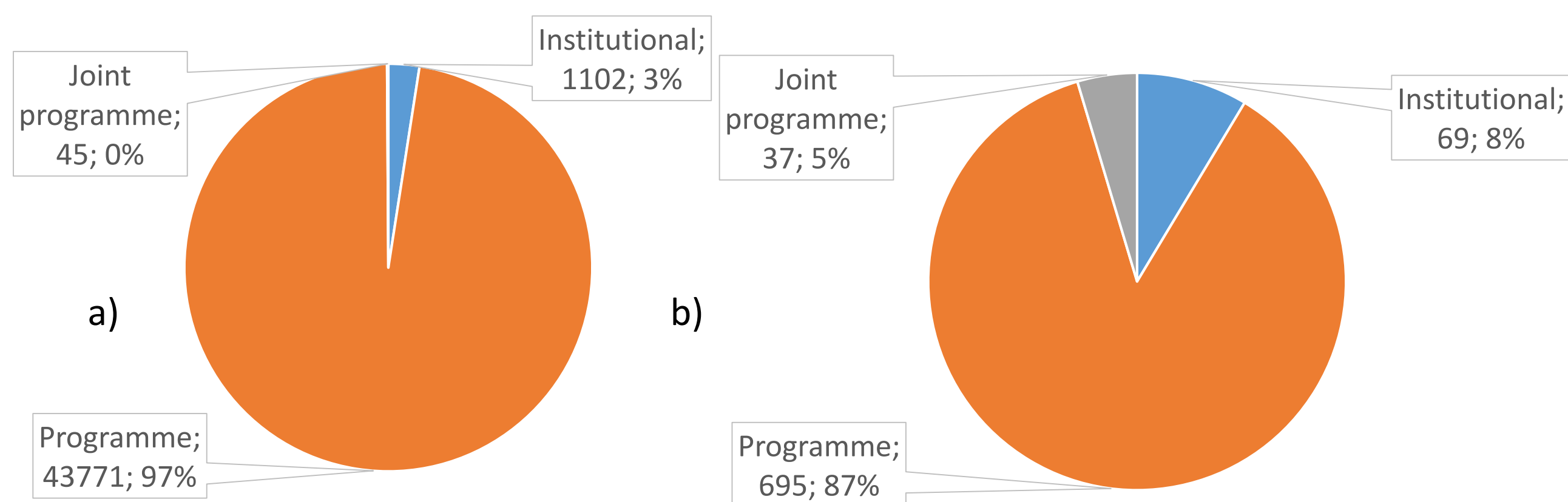


Fig. 4. Type of reports in from EHEA countries in DEQAR: a) includes only reports of national quality assurance activities, b) includes only reports of cross-border quality assurance activities.

From Fig. 4 it can be seen that cross-border quality assurance activities are done relatively more frequently for joint programmes and institutions compared to usual programmes. Fig. 5 shows that approximately one fifth of the cross-border quality assurance activities done by agencies registered in EQAR is done outside EHEA. Data from Fig. 6 shows that whenever an agency does cross-border activities it usually performs one type of assessments either institutional or study programme.

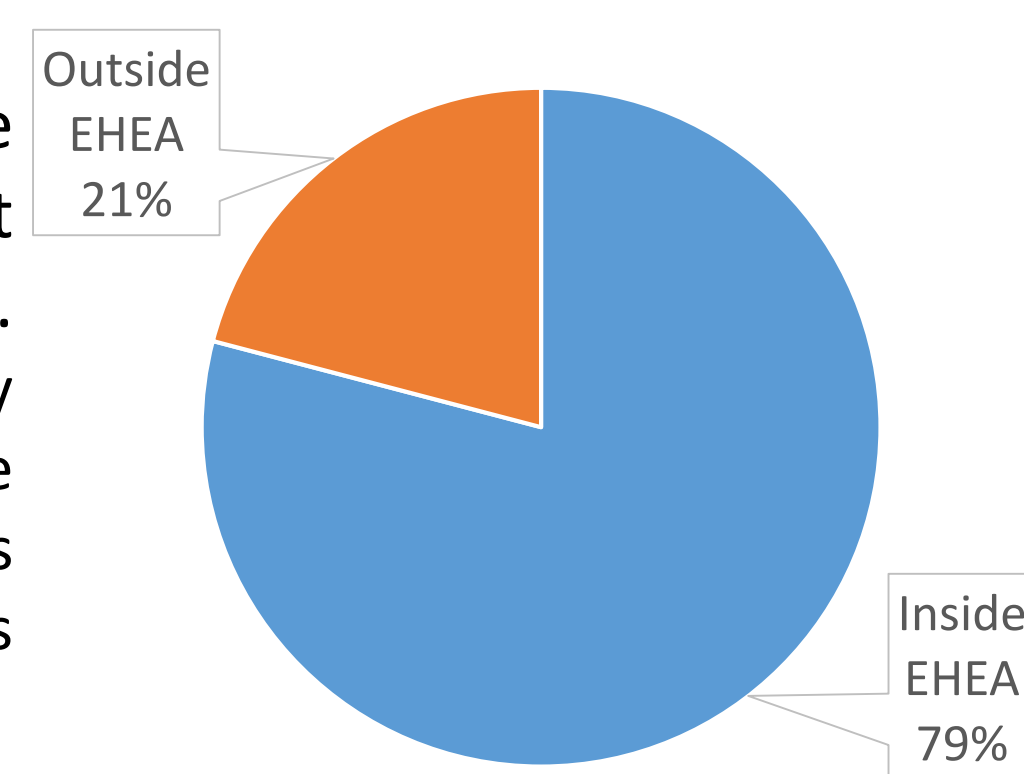


Fig. 5. Cross-border quality assurance done in countries belonging to EHEA and in countries beyond EHEA.

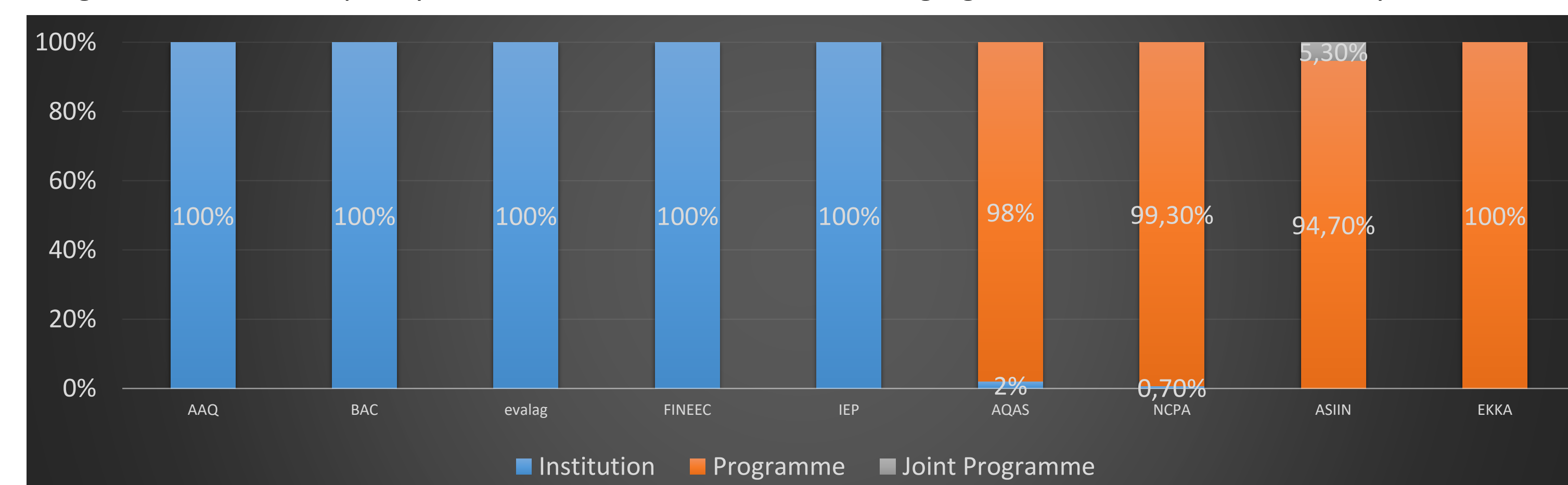


Fig. 6. Percentage of cross-border quality assurance activities done by agencies currently registered in EQAR.

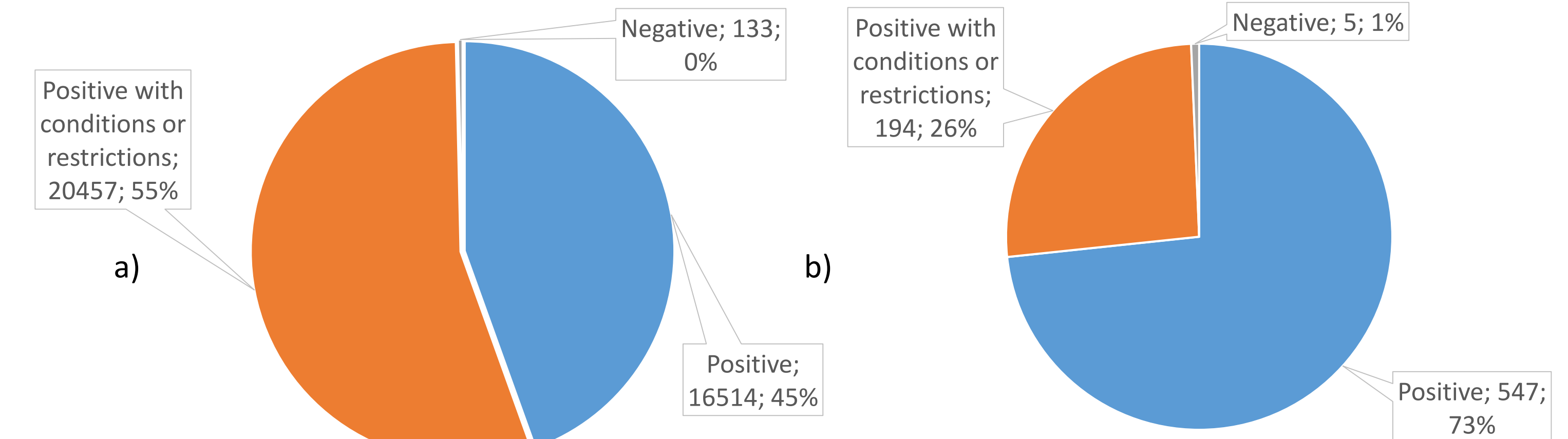


Fig. 7. Decisions of reports from EHEA countries in DEQAR: a) includes reports of national quality assurance activities, b) includes only reports of cross-border quality assurance.

In Fig. 7 it can be clearly seen that in cross-border quality assurance we find a higher % of negative evaluations while in national reviews we have more positive with conditions/restrictions. In Fig. 8 we can see that these statistics look roughly the same as before if only are taken into account cross-border quality assurance activities which are part of obligatory EQA system. Also, noteworthy that majority of cross-border quality assurance activities (92%) are of voluntary nature. Fig. 9 also shows that currently joint programme evaluations are exclusively positive.

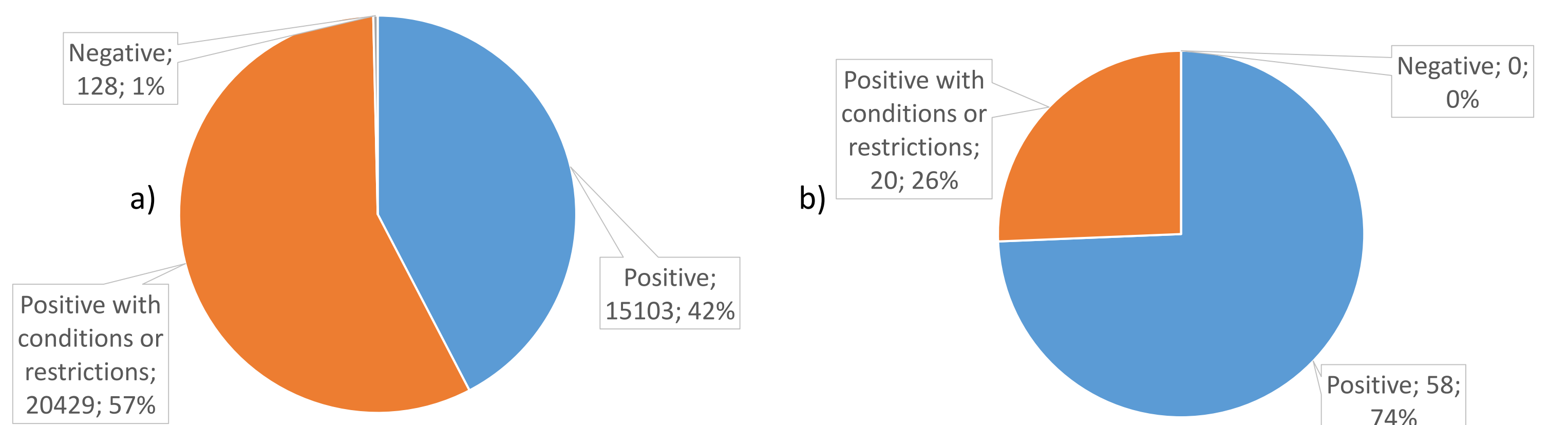


Fig. 8. Decisions of reports part of the mandatory external QA in DEQAR: a) includes reports of national quality assurance activities, b) includes only reports of cross-border quality assurance.

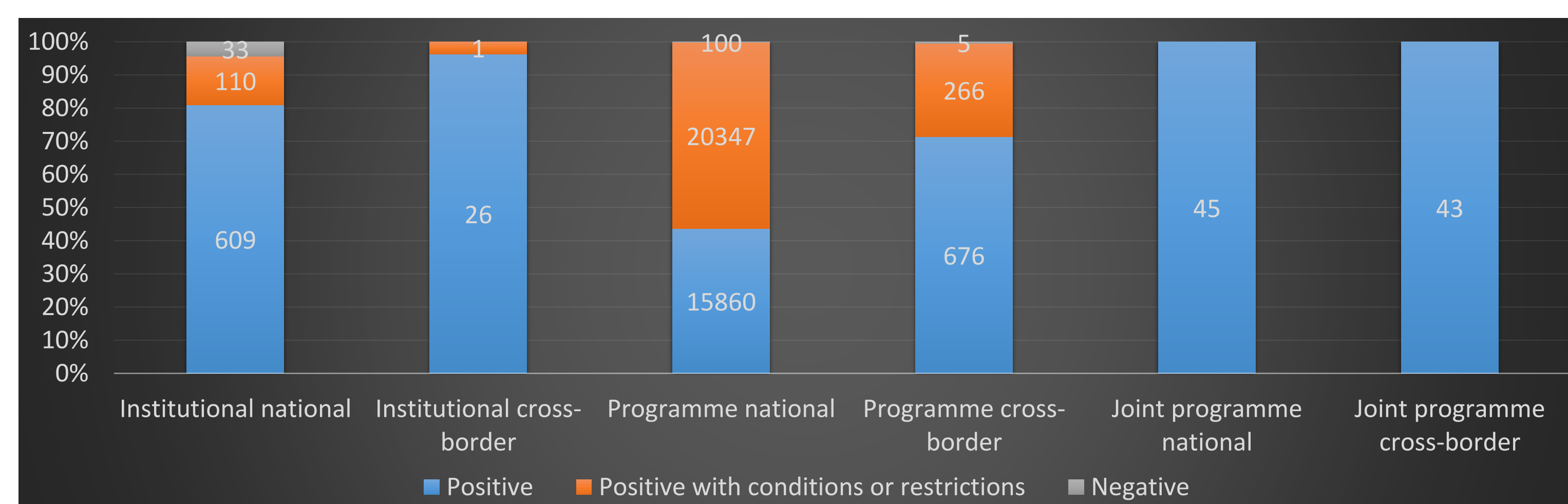


Fig. 9. Decisions of all reports including from non-EHEA countries for different types of evaluation in DEQAR.

Conclusion

This work provides insight on some tendencies of cross-border QA activities done as well as difference it introduces in decisions. However, since cross-border quality assurance is just catching momentum in future it would be beneficial to analyze DEQAR data in time perspective.

References:

- <https://www.eqar.eu/qa-results/deqar-project/>
- R Core Team (2013). R: A language and environment for statistical computing. R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria. URL <http://www.R-project.org/>

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- <https://www.eqar.eu/kb/country-information/> (2019-08-25)