

EHEA Key Commitments

Briefing Note for the Members' Dialogue 2021

(session 1.3)

1. Main findings

1.1 Quality Assurance

The work of EQAR directly relates to the EHEA key commitment on quality assurance, which is currently [fully realised by 28 countries](#). EQAR maintains a knowledge base on legal frameworks for external QA, covering the general framework as well as specific regulations for cross-border QA (see session 1.2) and the European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes.

On that basis, EQAR contributes actively to the BFUG Monitoring WG and its regular Implementation Report, as well as to the EHEA's Thematic Peer Group (TPG) on Quality Assurance.

The knowledge base is the third most frequently visited part of the EQAR website, after the Register and DEQAR. Country pages as well as information on the European Approach are accessed most frequently (see Figure 1), both are amongst the top 10 most visited pages on the EQAR website.

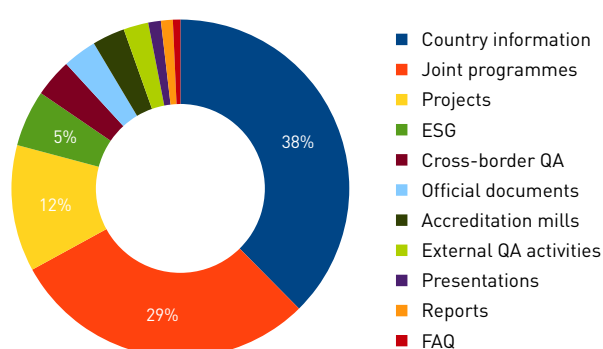


Figure 1: Knowledge Base – unique page views

EQAR's contribution to the EHEA working structure has achieved the most positive rating under the umbrella of "trust and recognition" (strategic goal 2, see Figure 2). The increase in registered agencies reflects that countries succeed in realising the key commitment, either through establishing national QA agencies or working with other EQAR-registered agencies. While EQAR's contribution is only one of many enabling factors, of course, it can be hoped that it also made an impact.

Some founding members noted that potential for further improvement remains, either in "supporting those lagging behind the development, supporting their institutions and raising awareness" (EURASHE) or in raising flags with member governments in such cases where the national framework prevents agencies from complying with the ESG; ENQA noted that EQAR has "an appropriate and also powerful channel" to the ministries in that regard, the potential of which has not yet been reaped.

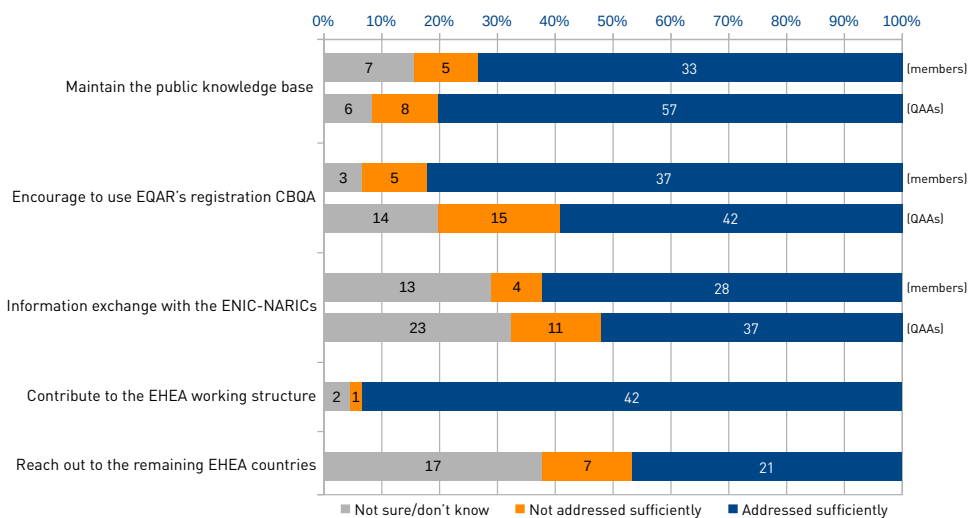


Figure 2: Strategic Goal "Trust and Recognition"

1.2 Recognition

In addition, EQAR's work also relates to the EHEA key commitment on recognition and the goal of automatic recognition in the EHEA; this dimension has come more into the focus since the launch of DEQAR.

Even though several respondents noted that EQAR was not sufficiently well-known to the broader community (see also background to session 2.4), the amount of comments from survey respondents linking DEQAR to the (automatic) recognition agenda is remarkable.

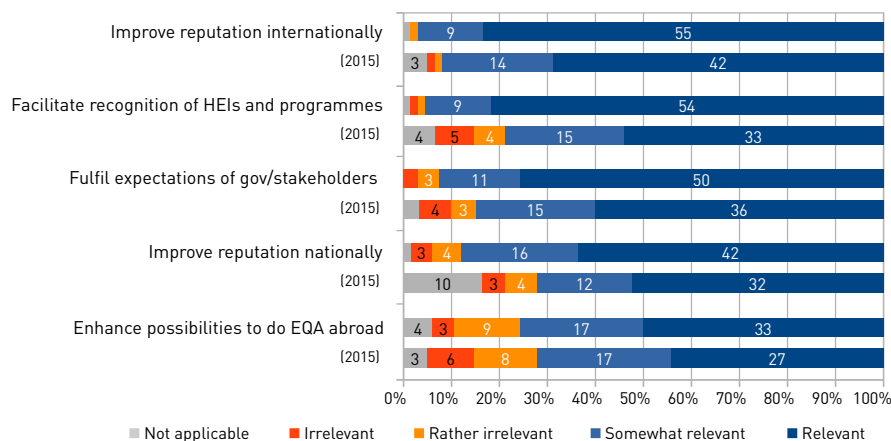


Figure 3: Motivations for seeking registration (2015 & 2020)

A large number of QA agencies underlined that they see participation in DEQAR as an important tool to enhance recognition of HEIs and programmes they accredit, evaluate and audit. It is interesting to note that, comparing with the 2015 survey of QA agencies (see Figure 3), this factor has seen the largest increase amongst motivations seen as relevant for seeking EQAR registration.

Some respondents are well aware of the existing information exchange between EQAR and the ENIC-NARIC networks, and seem to highly appreciate it: one non-member government noted that “the opinion of EQAR is appreciated in ENIC-NARIC and BFUG meetings as the opinion of an expert institution which contributes to the maintenance of quality assurance in EHEA”. However, a substantial number of respondents – especially among QA agencies – are also not very aware, see Figure 2.

The survey responses highlight some issues that require attention:

- (a) Many respondents stress the importance of achieving good coverage of DEQAR. Some countries point to this as an important issue and wonder why some agencies do not participate (see also session 2.2).
- (b) Several comments were made on the need to intensify and strengthen the exchange with ENIC-NARICs. AIC (Latvia) combines the QA agency and ENIC-NARIC under one roof, and noted “there is very little public information and the role of EQAR in the automatic recognition of qualifications is not very visible”.
- (c) One country raised the important question “whether HEIs at large are aware of [DEQAR] when most recognition decisions are made by HEIs across the EHEA, and whether employers are aware”.
- (d) In the context of automatic recognition this raises the important question whether EQAR’s addressing of the topic should be focused on ENIC-NARIC centres alone or have a broader basis.

2. Questions for discussion

1. How effective is EQAR’s monitoring of the key commitment on QA?
2. How useful is EQAR’s support to peer groups?
3. Do member countries expect additional support from EQAR in relation to the key commitments and, if so, what sort?
4. How well does DEQAR support the (automatic) recognition of qualifications to date? How can the real impact be monitored and enhanced?
5. In addition to ENIC-NARIC centres, should EQAR reach out more to HEIs and employers given their role in recognition?

3. References

- [EQAR Self-Evaluation Survey for Members and Potential Members](#)
- [EQAR Self-Evaluation Survey for QA agencies](#)
- [Bologna Process Implementation Report](#) (2020)
- [EQAR website: knowledge base](#)