

European Quality Assurance
Register for Higher Education



Analysis of Register Committee Decisions

EQAR General Assembly
16 April 2021
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Outline



- A bird's eye view across QA agency applications (2015 onwards)



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- Data, charts & other figures



- Observations from past decisions/cases



But first a few question to ...

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A bird's eye view across QA agency applications



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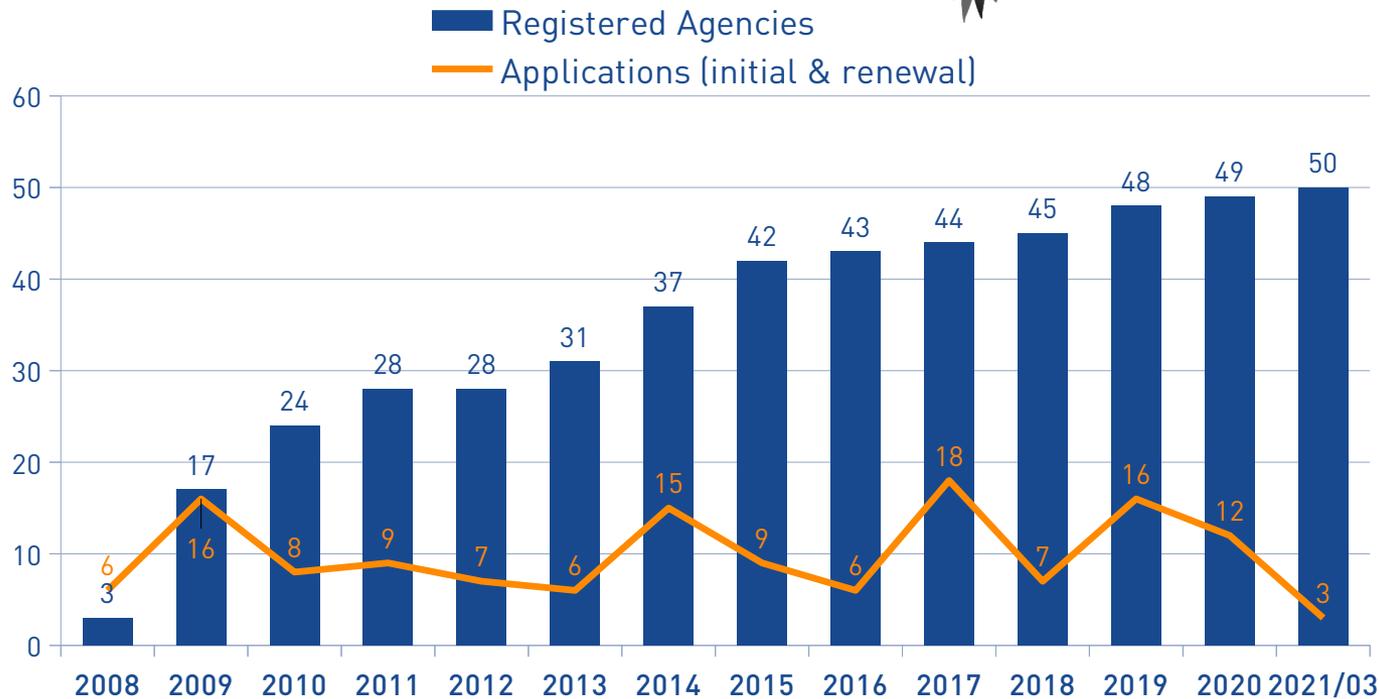


Chart. Registered agencies & evolution of applications, March 2008 – March 2021

- Total applications (without withdrawals) : 131
- Approved applications (2008-2021): 117 (89%)
 - Approval rate initial applications 85% vs renewals 93%

Agency Reviews Against ESG 2015



Decision on 61 applications (Nov 2015- March 2021) of which:

- a third (33%) initial applications
- two thirds (66%) applications for renewal of registration.

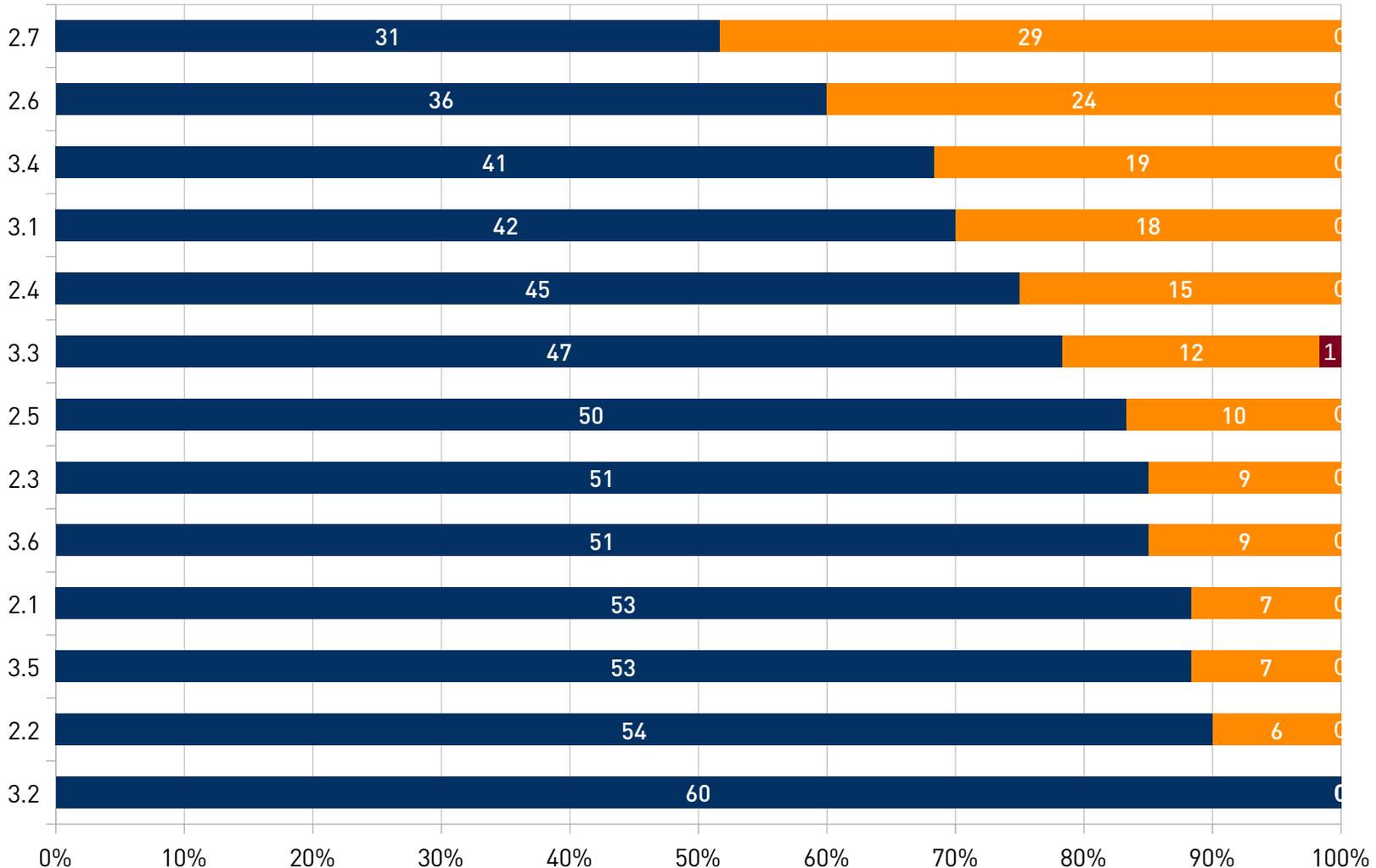


51 applications approved (80 % success rate)

1 in 4 applications deferred for a second consideration before approval by the Register Committee.

Initial applications are more likely to be rejected during their second consideration, compared to renewal applications.

ESG Compliance: what do the numbers show?



■ Compliance ■ Partial compliance ■ Non-compliance

Data: 60 RC decisions based on ESG 2015;

Why partial/non-compliance



- **ESG 2.7: Complaints and appeals (29/60)**
 - consideration and decision on appeals not sufficiently independent of original decision-maker
 - limited scope of appeals, not all outcomes may be appealed
 - appeals process limited due to legal framework
- **ESG 2.6: Reporting (24/60)**
 - some reports not public, or only summaries
 - quality or accessibility of reports
 - no public reports for denied initial accreditation

Why partial/non-compliance



- **ESG 3.4: Thematic analysis (19/41)**
 - Constraints on human and financial resources.
 - Lack of a systematic approach.
 - Limited analysis of existing thematic analysis i.e. reports of internal feedback mechanisms; summaries of panel reports etc.
- **ESG 3.1: Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance (18/41)**
 - Lack of stakeholders' involvement in the governance of in the decision making processes.
 - Unclear separation between EQA and other activities, confusion between EQA and consultancy activities.

Why partial/non-compliance



- **ESG 2.4: Peer-review experts (15/60)**
 - Issues re. the recruitment of experts.
 - Limited activities for the training and preparation of experts.
 - Absence of student experts from some panels.
- **ESG 3.3: Independence (12/60)**
 - Mostly issues re. organisational independence i.e appointment of the members of the accreditation committee by minister, government or founding organisation.
 - But also issues re. the nomination and dismissal of the Board members of the organisation, the independence of formal outcomes.

ESG 2015: Clarification requests



- Request for further clarification (panel, QA agency or coordinator) for every two out of three applications (69%).
- Clarification requests on initial applications 83% > renewal applications 63%
- Correlation between clarification issues and judgment of partial compliance i.e. ESG 3.1, ESG 2.6, ESG 3.3, ESG 2.7

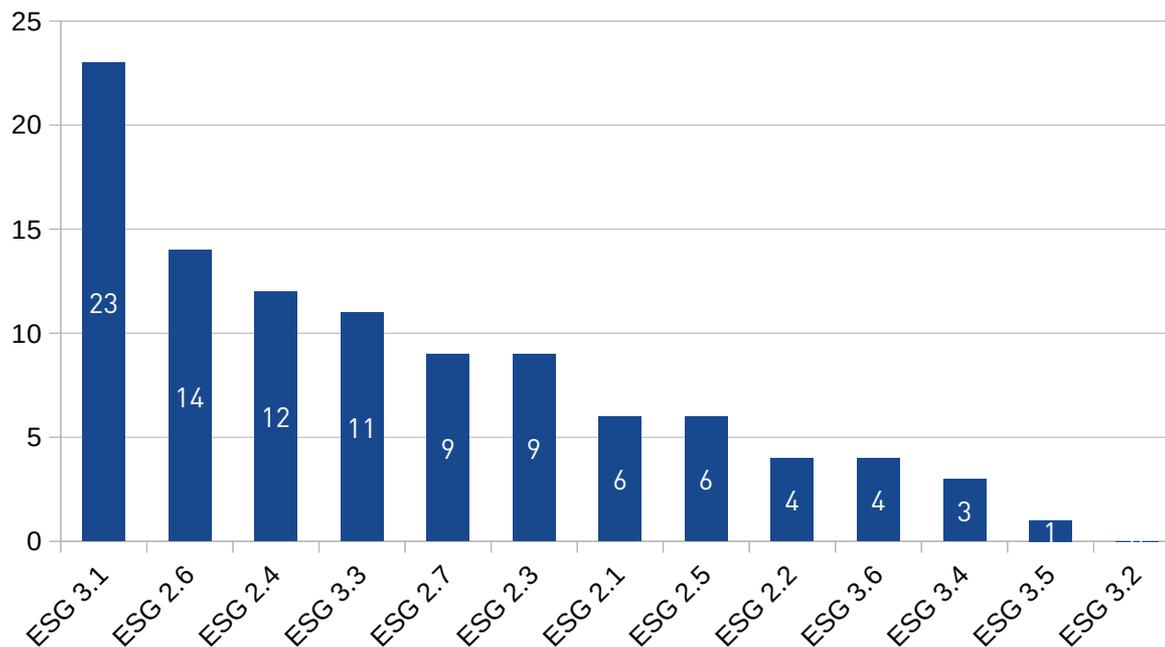
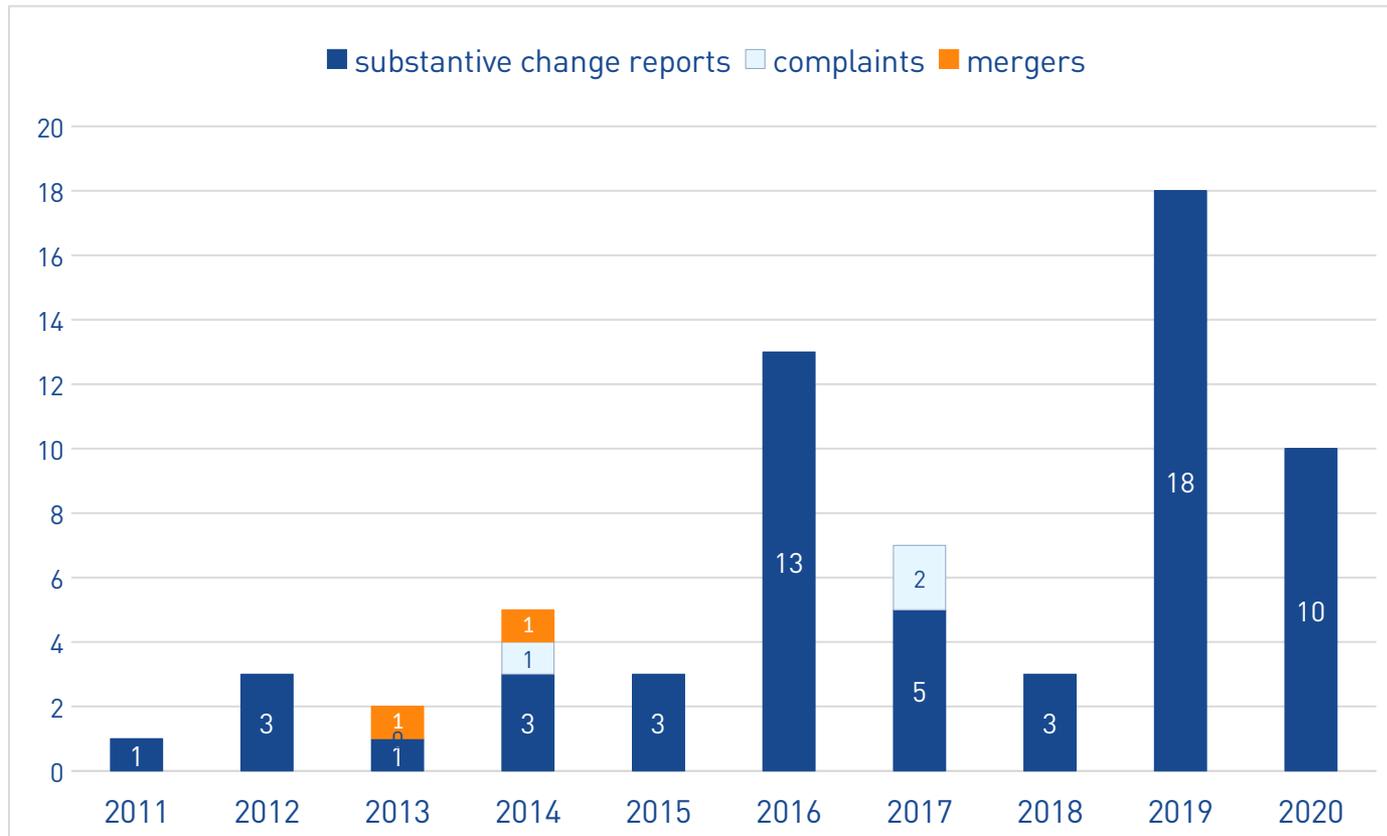


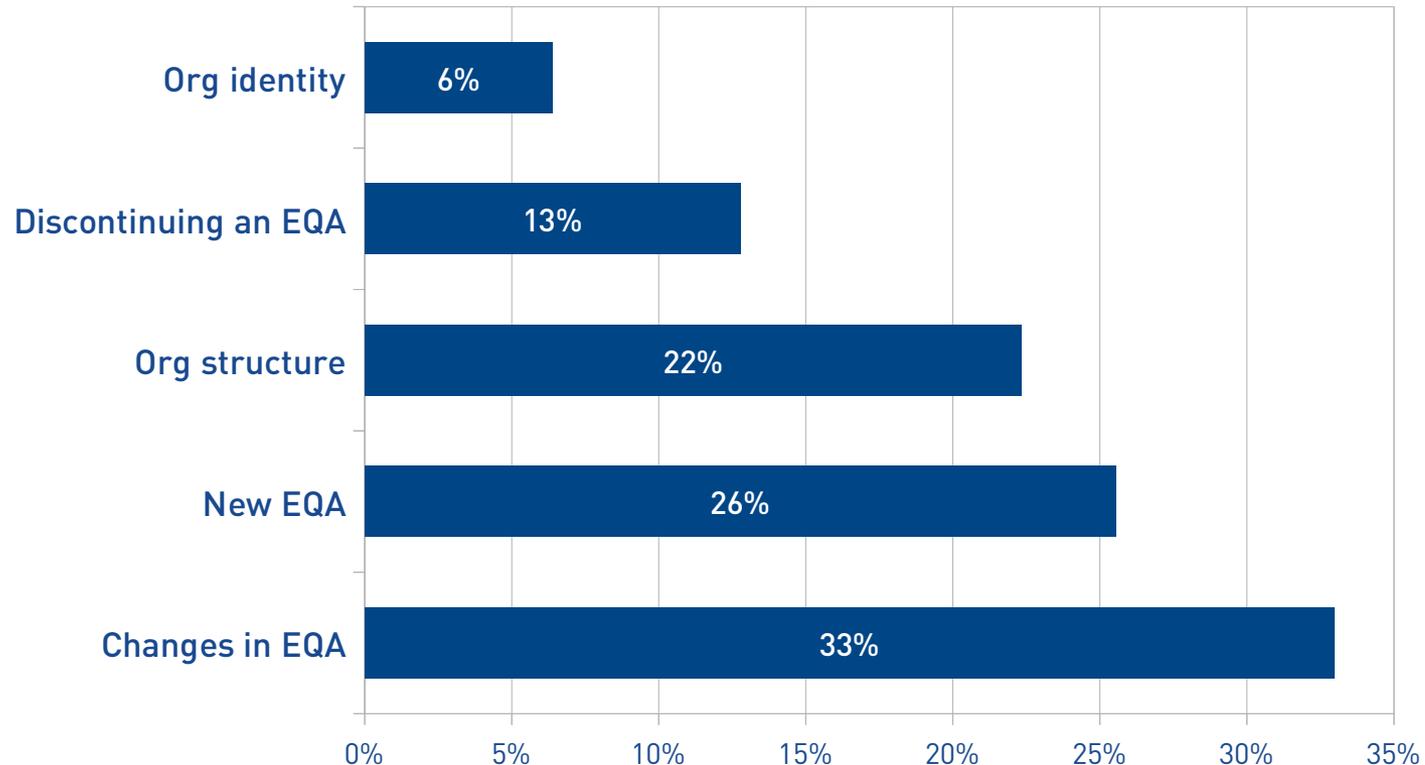
Chart. Clarification requests considering ESG standards, Nov. 2015 – March 2021

Substantive change reports, complaints, mergers



- Increase in substantive change reports in the last two years
- Almost all EQAR registered agencies have submitted one change report
- No mergers and few complaints in recent years

Substantive changes: main issues



- Dynamic external QA landscape: main changes relate to the agency's existing activities & development of new activities.
- But also changes in the national HE system → substantive changes in the activities and organisational structure of QA agencies

Final observations

All EQAR-registered agencies have now been reviewed against ESG 2015
Most agencies underwent at least two external reviews against the ESG (38 out of 50)

The most challenging standards for QA agencies remained the same across the past years i.e. ESG 2.7, ESG 2.6, ESG 3.4.

Legal framework impact on agency's activities:

- appeal system for higher education institutions is not under the agency's own responsibility;
- changes in legal framework → changes in the resources, organisation and activities offered by QA agencies