

ECA NEWS IN 2015

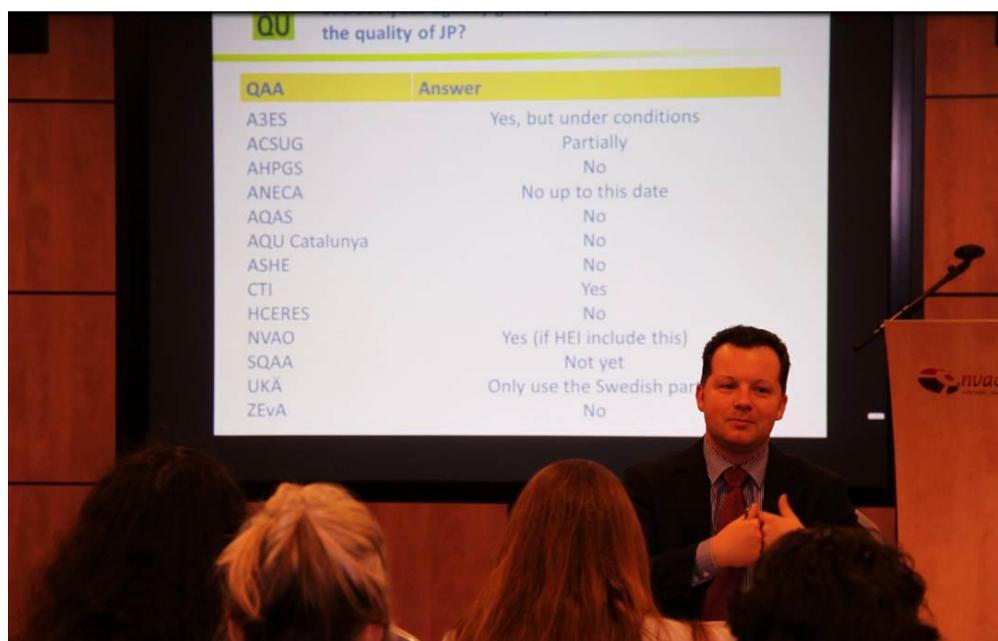


Happy New Year

From all of us @ ECA

We're happy to present a selection of the major ECA news items of the past year.

ECA and NVAO organised successful seminar on QA of joint programmes



On 3 December 2015 ECA and NVAO organised the Seminar "National Implementation of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes". More than 100 representatives of higher education institutions, joint programmes coordinators, QA agencies, governments and other stakeholders were present.

The European approach for accreditation of joint programmes that was adopted by the Ministers of the EHEA in Yerevan in May 2015 is a huge step forward. Can the implementation start right away or are changes in national legislation necessary? What challenges do HEIs/joint programmes, agencies and governments face in applying the European Approach? Is recognition of joint programmes and the degrees awarded assured? These and other questions were looked at from the viewpoint of different stakeholders such as the Bologna Follow-Up Group, European Commission, national recognition authorities and governments, EQAR, QA agencies, and of course the perspectives of joint programmes and their students and alumni. Although there are still challenges to overcome the seminar concluded positively with a plea to start implementing the European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes in practice.

For the programme, presentations, live stream and pictures [click here](#).

Unibasq joins ECA

**EUSKAL UNIBERTSITATE
SISTEMAREN KALITATE
AGENTZIA**
AGENCIA DE
CALIDAD DEL SISTEMA
UNIVERSITARIO VASCO



On 4 December 2015 the ECA member agencies have welcomed the Agencia de Calidad del Sistema Universitario Vasco/ Agency for Quality of the Basque University System (Unibasq) as new member of ECA.) Unibasq started in 2006 and is a state owned body governed by private law attached to the Basque Government's department responsible for universities.

The object of the agency is the evaluation, accreditation and certification of quality in the Basque university system, taking into consideration its Spanish, European and international dimensions. The agency may also carry out evaluation, accreditation and certification activities at universities and higher education institutions outside the Basque Autonomous Community within the context of the European Higher Education Area, on the basis of prior agreements signed with other agencies, universities or educational authorities outside the Basque Autonomous Community.

Unibasq is included in [EQAR](#) and full member of [ENQA](#).

ECA has now 16 [member agencies](#) from 11 countries.

THE-ICE observer in ECA



International Centre
of Excellence in
**Tourism and Hospitality
Education (THE-ICE)**

The Board of ECA welcomes a new observer to ECA: the International Centre of Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality Education (THE-ICE) which has its headquarters in Australia.

THE-ICE is a not-for-profit international accreditation agency originally funded by the Australian government from 2004 to 2008. THE-ICE is now an Australian-based QA agency committed in the recognition, the development, international benchmarking and the promotion of excellence in the specialised fields of tourism, hospitality, events and culinary arts (TH&E) education, training and research. Its global network comprises of leading quality institutions, private hotel schools, universities of applied sciences and research universities from some 15 countries.

For more information please visit www.the-ice.org.

René-Paul Martin-Denavit confirmed as Chair of ECA



ECA members confirmed on 4 December 2015 René-Paul Martin-Denavit ([CTI](#), France) as Chair of ECA. He was Acting Chair since former ECA Chair [Rafael van Grieken became Minister](#) of Education of the region Madrid.

Dr René-Paul Martin-Denavit was Member of the CNE, AERES councils, and the CTI, in charge of international activities, since 1997 until 2014. He was scientific advisor for joint university-industry R&D at the Ministry of Industry in Paris in chemistry and oil. Director of the Research Center of Pechiney and ELF companies in Lyon. Director of Innovation and Development in Paris for ELF. Chair of the Committee for Industry at the IUPAC. Technical adviser of the Ministry of Education for industry-education cooperation and employment. Head of human resources development at ATOCHEM until 2002.

René-Paul Martin-Denavit has taught chemistry, innovation management, and quality assurance in France and abroad. He was recently appointed as Honorary Consul of Pakistan in the Lyon and Rhône Alps region.

Ivan Leban appointed as Vice-Chair of ECA



On 4 December 2015 the ECA members have appointed Ivan Leban ([SQAA](#), Slovenia) as Vice-Chair of ECA. Prof. Dr. Ivan Leban became Director of the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency (SQAA) in 2013. He was Professor of Chemistry at the University of Ljubljana up to 2012. From 2001 to 2005 he was Vice-rector of Ljubljana University. He is an evaluator of [EUA](#) IEP since 2006. In 2015 he was re-elected as Vice-President of [CEENQA](#).

New ECA Board member: Madalena Fonseca



The Board of ECA is happy to announce that Madalena Fonseca from ECA member agency [A3ES](#) (Portugal) has agreed to become Board member. The Board has co-opted Madalena Fonseca because of the vacancy that occurred as former ECA Chair [Rafael van Grieken](#) became Minister of the Region Madrid.

Josep Grifoll joins ECA Board



The ECA Board is happy to announce that Josep Grifoll has agreed to join as co-opted Board member. Josep Grifoll works with ECA member agency [AQU Catalunya](#) since 1997. He is currently technical director of AQU's Quality Assessment Department and also member of the Register Committee of [EQAR](#). Within ECA he is chairing [Working Group 1](#) on mutual recognition and joint programmes.

Rafael van Grieken appointed as Minister of Region Madrid



ANECA Director and ECA Chair Rafael van Grieken has been appointed as Minister of Education, Youth and Sport of the Region of Madrid.

We congratulate Rafael with his appointment to this honourable position and are most grateful for his strong commitment, contributions and support in the past three years as ECA's Chair and Board member.

Miguel Ángel Galindo appointed as Director of ANECA



ANECA's Board of Trustees, the governance body of ECA member agency the National Agency for Quality Evaluation and Accreditation of Spain (ANECA), has appointed Miguel Ángel Galindo as new Director of the Agency. Miguel Ángel Galindo is Professor for Applied Economics at the Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha and was the acting Deputy-Director for Programme and Institutional Evaluation in ANECA since 2012

Michel Cosnard appointed as President of HCERES



Since 30 October 2015, the ECA member agency French High Council for Evaluation of Research and Higher Education ([HCERES](#)) operates with a [renewed Board](#) of 30 members, who were appointed by decree.

[Michel Cosnard](#) was appointed to chair the agency for a mandate of 4 years.

Several major projects will be started by HCERES in the next few months, such as:

- definition of the site policies assessment procedures (global evaluation on all HEIs on a regional area);
- simplification of evaluations procedures;
- development and enhancement of cooperation between QA agencies through European and international projects but also joint procedures.

Two key events will also take place in 2016. In spring, the High Council will settle in new offices located in the 13th arrondissement of Paris. In summer, the agency will be evaluated by a committee of international experts for the renewal of its [ENQA](#)'s membership and its inclusion in [EQAR](#)

ECA participates in FAIR project

ECA is one of the project partners in the EU funded project Focus on Institutional Automatic Recognition (FAIR). By exploring the practical implementation of automatic recognition of qualifications, the project team builds further on the work of the Pathfinder Group on Automatic Recognition. The project aims for faster and more consistent recognition decisions, thereby improving the mobility of students in the EU and EHEA.

In FAIR various actors work together to gain experience at national and European level with the implementation of automatic recognition of qualifications. These are the Ministries of Education, ENIC-NARICs and 23 institutions from Italy, Spain, Germany, Croatia, Belgium and the Netherlands. FAIR is coordinated by EP Nuffic at the request of the Dutch Ministry of Education.

Trials

In FAIR higher education institutions will first undertake a 'baseline assessment' of their recognition procedures based on predefined indicators. After introducing elements of automatic recognition in these procedures, the procedure will again be measured using the same indicators. In this way, the project seeks to determine the impact of automatic recognition. The results will be used for (inter) national recommendations and implementation activities.

To ensure an objective outcome, the trials will be accompanied by an 'Evaluation Body': the European University Association (EUA). The final recommendations will also be reviewed by a 'critical friend' of the project. ECA has a connecting role in the project, namely to ensure that the activities are in line with the latest developments in quality assurance.

The FAIR project website is now online and can be accessed [here](#).

ECA Certification Group is installed

ECA has installed its [Certification Group](#) - which ensures overall consistency for the implementation of the ECA Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation by a system of qualitative evaluations of the applied methodology, i.e. assessment procedures and reports.

This Certification Group includes representatives of agencies with relevant expertise in the assessment of internationalisation.

The Certificate is organised as a service by ECA and its members, the quality assurance agencies. The **Terms of Reference (ToR)** are the formal agreement on how to organise and award the Certificate. It lays down all the responsibilities and methodological issues not included in the Frameworks for the Assessment of Quality in Internationalisation.

ECA Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation launched at CeQuInt Conference.

Around 150 participants from 20 countries attended in February 2015 the ECA Conference "[Assessing the Quality of Internationalisation](#)" in Paris France.



CeQuInt Dissemination Conference

The conference focused on quality in internationalisation and answered the most pertinent questions from a quality assurance perspective. In the framework of the [CeQuInt Project](#) co-funded by the European Commission, quality assurance and internationalisation [agencies](#) have developed and tested in [12 pilot procedures](#) across Europe a [methodology](#) to assess the quality of internationalisation at both the level of programmes and institutions. The overall aim was to provide a methodology to (self)-assess the quality of internationalisation in higher education and to help enhance the quality of internationalisation.

A welcome outcome of the developed methodology is that ECA is now able to reward good quality in internationalisation of programmes & institutions. The [first 11 Certificates for Quality in Internationalisation](#) were awarded at the conference.



An assessment gives higher education programmes and institutions insight into their performance in the domain of internationalisation and provides them with the relevant means for improvements. Undergoing such an assessment inevitably leads

to internal discussions, measures for coherence and provides a considerable contribution to the level of internationalisation already achieved. The award of an ECA Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation confirms that a programme or an institution has successfully incorporated an international and intercultural dimension into the purpose, function and delivery of its education. The applications for the ECA Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation [are now open](#) for programmes and institutions at the ECA Internationalisation Platform.

In addition to the [certification service](#), ECA will publish [good practices in internationalisation](#) on a newly revealed internationalisation platform. A good practice in internationalisation (GPI) is an internationalisation activity that has been verified by a third-party review process as contributing to the overall quality of an institution or programme and as adding commendable value for its stakeholders.

For more information on the ECA Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation please contact secretariat@ecahe.eu.

- Visit the [ECA Internationalisation Platform](#)
- Access the [Conference Presentations](#)
- Visit the [Photo Gallery](#) of the Event

ECA joint programmes training held in Cologne



On 21 and 22 September 2015 the first ECA training "Assessing Joint Programmes" was held at the [AQAS](#) offices in Cologne. There were fourteen participants from higher education institutions and QA agencies, as well as a student expert. The feedback received from participants was positive. ECA will therefore continue these trainings next year, taking into account some useful suggestions that were made.

The training focused especially on the [European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes](#) as adopted by the EHEA Ministers in Yerevan in May 2015. As a case study the [accreditation of the European Joint Master's in Strategic Border Management](#) was used. This procedure was carried out by [NVAO](#) according to the ECA framework from the [JOQAR project](#) which provided an important input for the development of the European Approach.

The participants received a certificate and are entitled to join [ECA's Experts Exchange Platform \(EEEP\)](#) so that QA agencies can ask them to carry out assessments of joint programmes.

ECA training Assessing the Quality of Internationalisation held in The Hague



On 24 and 25 November 2015 the ECA training “Assessing the Quality of Internationalisation” was held at the [NVAO](#) offices in The Hague. Fourteen participants from seven countries followed the training which was facilitated by Axel Aerden (NVAO) and Maciej Markowski ([PKA](#)). The training prepared participants for the assessment of internationalisation in the framework of the [ECA Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation](#). Panels that carry out these procedures need to have at least one expert who is trained for this job. All participants have received a ECA training certificate. The training certificate allows participants to register themselves in the [ECA Experts Exchange Platform](#) (EEEP). QA agencies carrying out assessments of internationalisation may search the EEEP to find suitable experts.

The next training will be organised in spring 2016. If you are interested to follow this training then please indicate this [here](#).

Good practice from Laurea (Finland) published



A new good practice in internationalisation has been published on ECA's Internationalisation Platform. The good practice concerns a Learning by Developing operational model as developed by Laurea University of Applied Sciences in Vantaa, Finland.

Click [here](#) for the description of the good practice

Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation awarded to La Salle University

For the first time ECA has awarded a Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation to a university outside Europe. A panel of four experts chaired by Prof Hans de Wit and facilitated by the National Accreditation Council of Colombia (CNA) assessed La Salle University in Bogotá, Colombia. The procedure was part of ECA's [CeQuInt project](#). The panel concludes that: "La Salle University demonstrates a strong commitment in building, developing and consolidating clear and consistent internationalisation processes that have had a positive impact recently, which are supported, both by the "lasallista" academic community and external stakeholders."

The ECA [Certification Group](#) has checked that the assessment report complies to the agreed methodology and decided to award the ECA Certificate for Quality in Institutional Internationalisation to La Salle University in Colombia.

The executive summary and the full assessment report can be found [here](#).



German Accreditation Council and NVAO sign agreement to simplify joint degree accreditation



On 8 July 2015 the German Accreditation Council and the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) have signed in The Hague a mutual recognition agreement with regard to the accreditation of joint degrees. From now on joint programmes leading to the award of a joint degree in which German, Dutch and/or Flemish HEI participate only need one accreditation decision (in Germany or by NVAO). The other accreditation organisation will then recognise that decision without any additional assessment procedure.

Mutual recognition of higher education diplomas in Benelux



The five Education Ministers of the Benelux have approved a decision whereby Bachelor's and Master's degrees awarded by higher education institutions in Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg will be automatically recognised throughout the Benelux. This Benelux agreement is the first example of reaching one of the commitments made by Ministers of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in the [Yerevan Communiqué](#): “to ensure that qualifications from other EHEA countries are automatically recognized at the same level as relevant domestic qualifications “.

[Benelux decision-explanation](#)

Joint Programmes from A to Z: Now on ECApedia



In search for a publication that presents an overview of all good practice in coordinating joint programmes? The recently published 'Joint Programmes from A to Z. A reference guide for practitioners' is exactly doing that. Already available as a [pdf publication](#), the guide is now also available as an [online portal](#) in ECApedia.

The 'Joint Programmes from A to Z' portal provides information on all relevant issues relating to developing, establishing and sustaining high quality international joint programmes. As such, it aims to assist coordinators, advisory bodies and other experts working or interested in working with joint programmes.

The various aspects coordinating joint programmes are presented in eight sections, on topics such as management, accreditation and recognition. Key messages for practitioners are presented on each topic, as well as practical examples. The portal includes online links to key sources on the topic.

The 'Joint Programmes from A to Z' portal is the result of the JDAZ project (2012 – 2015), conducted by a consortium of six Erasmus National Structures and two external experts. JDAZ was coordinated by EP-Nuffic and co-financed by the Erasmus Mundus Programme.

ECA Webinar: Hans de Wit on Internationalisation of HE in Europe



ECA has started its first webinar with a lecture by Prof Hans de Wit, Director of the Center for International Higher Education (CIHE) at Boston College, USA. Click on the pdf for a short bio of [Hans de Wit](#).

Title of the webinar: "National Strategies and the Future of Internationalisation of Higher Education in Europe". Prof De Wit also refers to a [study](#) for the European Parliament that he has been working on.

ECA webinar with Lucien Bollaert available



The second ECA webinar featured Lucien Bollaert who spoke on "Quality, Quality Assurance and Quality Culture in Higher Education". "Why do we need quality? How is it created? And what is it?" were some of the fundamental questions that Lucien Bollaert elaborated on. The webinar was broadcasted on 20 October 2015 and is now available [online here](#). With apologies for the annoying advertisements; this is the price of using free software but we will try to find another solution for future webinars.

Lucien Bollaert is Executive Board member of [NVAO](#) and Board member of ECA. His book *A Manual for Internal Quality Assurance in Higher Education - with a special focus on professional higher education* was launched in November 2014 at the European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF). The book drew a lot of attention internationally and is currently reprinted. Lucien Bollaert also wrote an article on "Quality Assurance in Europe (2005-2015)" which can be downloaded [here](#).

Accreditation and Recognition of Medical Schools



Author: Marta van Zanten*

Accreditation is frequently viewed as a powerful tool for quality control and improvement of medical education programs, yet accreditation practices vary considerably worldwide. The [Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research \(FAIMER\)](#) collaborates on various initiatives to enhance the quality of medical education accreditation, including the implementation of a global system to evaluate accreditation organizations, to conduct research on accreditation effectiveness, and to develop data resources describing accreditation practices worldwide.

FAIMER is a non-profit foundation committed to improving world health through education. FAIMER was established in 2000 by the [Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates \(ECFMG\)](#). The ECFMG is responsible for certifying graduates of international medical schools who seek to enter postgraduate medical training and subsequent licensure in the United States. In partnership with ECFMG, FAIMER promotes excellence in international health professions education through programmatic and research activities.

Medical School Accreditation Requirement for ECFMG Certification

[ECFMG has announced that, effective in 2023, physicians applying for ECFMG Certification will be required to graduate from a medical school that has been appropriately accredited.](#) To satisfy this requirement, the physician's medical school must be accredited through a formal process that uses criteria comparable to those established for U.S. medical schools by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) or other globally accepted standards.

World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) Recognition of Accrediting Agencies Program

The [World Federation for Medical Education \(WFME\)](#), with assistance from FAIMER, has developed and implemented a [Program of Recognition of Accrediting Agencies](#). This process will allow medical schools accredited by recognized agencies, and their graduates, to meet ECFMG's accreditation requirement.

The [WFME Recognition Program](#) involves a thorough process for evaluating and recognizing accrediting agencies using globally accepted [criteria](#). Currently, the Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Education in Medicine and other Health Professions, the Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Medical Education Programs, Turkey, and the United States Liaison Committee on Medical Education /

Committee on the Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools have all participated in the WFME process and are each recognized for a period of ten years. More information on WFME recognized accrediting agencies can be found [here](#).

Accreditation Research

While trends of a worldwide focus on medical education accreditation such as the WFME Recognition Program have been increasing, there is limited published research demonstrating that accreditation activities are related to the ultimate goal: producing more highly skilled physicians. FAIMER has conducted several investigations that support accreditation as a mechanism for increasing quality. [In a study of Mexican and Philippine citizens seeking ECFMG certification](#), first attempt pass rates on all components of the required United States Licensing Examination (USMLE) series were higher for individuals attending accredited medical schools, compared to their peers who attended non-accredited schools. In another [investigation](#) of the performance of all graduates of international medical schools who took the USMLE step 2 clinical skills (CS) examination during the five year (2006 – 2010) study period, after controlling for the person-level variables, graduating from an accredited medical school was positively associated with the Step 2 CS first-attempt pass rate.

In addition to gathering data on the impact of accreditation systems, it is also important to investigate the components of accreditation, such as the specific standards used, that can be demonstrated to enhance the quality of the process. In a study aimed at development of best practices, an expert panel unanimously agreed on [14 essential standards](#) that should be required by accrediting agencies to ensure the quality of physicians.

Caribbean Medical Schools

Globally, there have been projected shortages in the health care workforce along with reports of maldistribution of physicians. Responding to these projections, there has been an increase in the number of for-profit medical schools located in the Caribbean, and the number of graduates providing patient care in the United States is growing. [This short report](#) updates previously published information describing the medical education provided at for-profit offshore medical schools.

There was a very large variation across school characteristics, and variability regarding accreditation and approvals. The number of individuals who obtained ECFMG certification in 2013 was very low for some small or new schools, and almost 1,000 for older, larger schools. Approximately one-quarter of the institutions have participated in regional accreditation or approval processes.

Medical Education Accreditation Data Resource

In support of accreditation activities and research endeavors, FAIMER has developed a [Directory of Organizations that Recognize / Accredite medical schools \(DORA\)](#). DORA contains a list of countries that have at least one operational medical school listed in the International Medical Education Directory (IMED), and that have an identified accreditation authority or authorities.

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ECA Summer Workshop in Santiago de Compostela



Something to look forward to in 2016 for ECA members, observers and guests: the ECA Summer Workshop and Annual Meeting will be held in Santiago de Compostela. The event will be hosted by [ACSUG](#) on Thursday 30 June and Friday 1 July 2016.