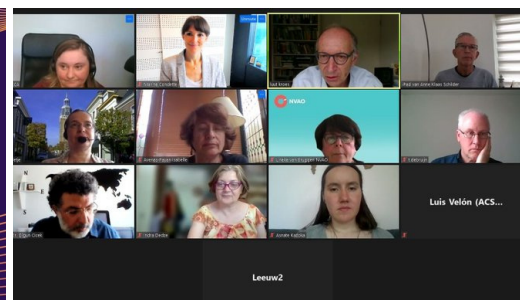




The European Consortium for
Accreditation in Higher Education

ECA NEWSLETTER



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ECA EDITORIAL:

Dear members and observers,

It is an honour and a pleasure to be elected as Chair and Vice-Chair of ECA, and we would like to thank you for your trust!

We've been board members for a few years now and we are ready to assume this new responsibilities together. Cooperation will be our key word, not only within the Board but also with the Members and Observers. We are both convinced that the added-value of ECA relies on the possibilities of dialogue and cooperation between all of us.

These last two years, we all have demonstrated flexibility, adaptation and resilience...at personal level, in our agencies, but also at ECA level. We've learnt to live and to work differently, also within ECA. And the choice to hire a new secretariat, that it is not from our "world" promotes our openness, our constant adaptation and our willingness to move forward.

Mutual trust is the main moto of ECA, since many years... and it makes even more sense now. Our needs are different compared to what they were and we need to be able to express them and to understand each other's expectations. Reinforcing dialogue and communication between us is vital for ECA. The new website is part of this but direct communication should not be forgotten and we will watch it out.

Your membership counts for us and ECA should also be counting for you. Let's make sure that our objectives of reinforcing cooperation and dialogue come true, reshaping our way of working together and giving new meanings to our ECA membership !



Solange Pisarz
ECA Chair



Eva Fernández de Labastida
ECA Vice-Chair

NEWS FROM ECA

New ECA Chair, Vice-Chair and Financial Committee

By ECA

On 30 June 2021 the ECA members have appointed a new Chair and Vice-Chair as well as the Financial Committee.

The current composition of the Board is the following:

Chair: Solange Pisarz, HCÉRES, (France)

Vice-Chair: Eva Fernandez de Labastida, UNIBASQ (Spain)

Treasurer: Luut Kroes, NVAO (Netherlands)

Members

- Ronny Heintze, AQAS (Germany)
- Klemen Šubic, SQAA (Slovenia)

ECA Financial Committee:

- Luis Carlos Velón Sixto, ACSUG (Spain)
- Craig Thopmson, THE-ICE (Australia)



Yodak, Quality Assurance Agency in North Cyprus has joined ECA as observer

By ECA Secretariat

On 30 June 2021 was held the ECA General Assembly. Among other issues, the agreement to join **YÖDAK, Quality Assurance Agency in North Cyprus** as an observer of the ECA was adopted.

YÖDAK was established as an autonomous public agency (non-profit) for Quality Assurance in North Cyprus in 2005.

Objectives of YODAK are the Internationalization of Higher Education, Welfare of Society and Sustainable development via Higher Education, bringing together international cultures and

rendering quality services, Intergrating higher education system with the Bologna Process Functions and Scope of Activities of YÖDAK are: Planning, Organizing, Observing the new applications, Evaluating (Auditing), Accrediting institutions and programs, Coordinating institutions.

The role of YÖDAK is to adapt and implement norms and standards to raise the quality in universities, to evaluate process against set standards, to develop and uphold the international standards in a higher education system, and be an official body for academic governance.

We are proud that Yodak is part of the ECA family. We are confident that the collaboration will be fruitful. Welcome YÖDAK!



ECA Webinar “The Global Recognition Convention: Impact On Transnational Education”

By ECA Secretariat

On 26 February 2021 was held the webinar “The Global Recognition Convention: Impact On Transnational Education”, Considering the current situation of the Covid-19 pandemic, ECA wanted to promote the dialogue among its members and is organizing a series of webinars. This webinar focused on recognition and particularly on the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education, which was adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in November 2019.

The Global Convention aims to facilitate international academic mobility and exchanges of students, teachers, researchers and job seekers, while promoting the right of individuals to have their higher education qualifications evaluated through fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manners. It is also expected that the Global

Convention will strengthen international cooperation in higher education and contribute to raising its quality worldwide. In this webinar, experts on the matter of recognition and transnational education discussed the potential impact of the Global Convention on transnational education.

The following people participated as speakers in this event.

- **Jenneke Lokhoff.** President of the ENIC-NARIC Networks. Senior Policy Officer at Nuffic, the Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education.
- **Andreas Snildal.** Senior Advisor for International Relations. Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT).
- **Fabrizio Trifiro.** Head of Quality Benchmark Services. UK NARIC.

[Here](#) you can find the complete video presentations of the Webinar.



The Global Recognition Convention and global solutions to the recognition of TNE qualifications: *the TNE Quality Benchmark*

Dr. Fabrizio Trifiro, Head of Quality Benchmark Services, UK NARIC, Fabrizio.Trifiro@naric.org.uk

ECA TNE Webinar – 26 February 2021



ECA Webinar “Combined Evaluation/Accreditation Procedures”

By ECA Secretariat

The webinar **"Combined Evaluation/Accreditation Procedures"** took place on June 30th.

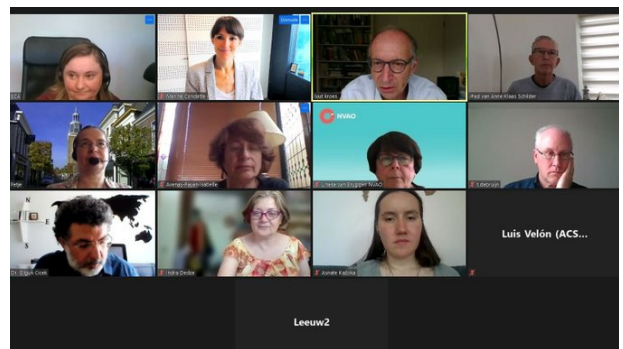
For some programmes in Higher Education the assessment is carried out by several organisations in a public-private partnership. Not only by a national organisation/agency but also by an (international) interbranch organisation or professional stakeholder organisation.

Where the first is required to be (formally) recognised, is the second assessment a choice of the programme itself for various reasons. Programmes do that for example to distinguish themselves from other related programmes or to stress the international character of the programme.

The assessment procedures that those interbranch organisations or professional organisations are handling, are overlapping to a large extent with the assessment procedures of the national agency. An agency has the possibility to conclude cooperation with such organisations to simplify the combination of the two assessment procedures. Specific agreements describe how a combined process will be carried out.

In this webinar, were presented and discussed experiences and the pros and cons of these combined processes.

- Combined Evaluation/Accreditation Procedures". Craig Thompson. CEO. International Center of Excellence in Tourism an Hospitality Education (THE-ICE).
- NVAO Combined Accreditations". Thomas de Bruijn. The Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO).
- Experiences from a moderator". Anne Klaas Schilder / Fetje Westerhof. (NHL STENDEN. University of Applied Sciences).
- Combined Visits". AACSB International /NVAO.



ECA is participating in the Qual-AI-ty Engagement project

By ECA Secretariat

Fostering Student Engagement through Qualitative Quality Assurance Practices (Qual-AI-ty Engagement) is an Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships project lead by Riga Technical University (<https://www.rtu.lv/en>) and co-lead by ACEEU (<https://www.aceeu.org/>). Other partners include the University of Twente (<https://www.utwente.nl/en/>), the Malta College of

Arts, Science and Technology (<https://www.mcast.edu.mt/>) and the European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education (<http://ecahe.eu/>).

The project aims at breaking the old tradition and enforcing a new approach to assess the quality of education offered by leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) resources to acquire and process qualitative data, thus enhancing efficiency and creating a culture of quality for student engagement.



- The specific objectives of the project are:
- Mapping out the status quo of student engagement with society in Europe, showcasing best practices and highlighting the major drivers and barriers to accomplishing it.
- Actively engaging and educating Quality Assurance (QA) staff with the matters pertaining to student engagement so as to be able to evaluate and ultimately foster it.
- Co-creating new modes of student engagement evaluation together with students as a means of providing new and more comprehensive perspectives to QA.
- Creating a machine-based learning algorithm to analyse qualitative data on student engagement and spur efficiency, bringing about a new approach to QA instruments.
- Forging a platform showcasing qualitative-data on student engagement to increase visibility of QA and student engagement in general.
- Creating an Action Plan on fostering student engagement with society on the European Union level, easily replicable by other Higher Education Institutions interested in enforcing the same vision.
- The duration of the project is 26 months from November 2020 to October 2022. For further information please consult the project website (<https://qual-ai-ty.eu/>) and the LinkedIn account (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/qual-ai-ty-engagement>).
- More information about the project [here](#)



The ECA Board has resolved the call for projects to be financed by the Association

By ECA Secretariat

Last February ECA launched a call to finance projects to ECA members with the requirement that were in line with ECA's strategy.

In April, the ECA Board decided to finance the project presented by **UNIBASQ** to develop recommendations on how this aspect should be

taken into account in the external evaluation processes of quality assurance agencies. These recommendations will also serve as a reference for higher education institutions in the development of their degrees.

The project has already been launched with the appointment of a **Steering Committee** made up of **Fiona Crozier**, **Sabine Hoidin** and **Sandra Marcos** and coordinated by **Eva Fernández de Labastida**. It is scheduled for completion in May 2022.



NEWS FROM ECA MEMBERS

Swedish UKÄ member of ENQA and included on EQAR

By The Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ)

The Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) is again a member of ENQA. UKÄ is now also included on EQAR.

- It is a very welcome message that UKÄ has received from ENQA, a clear quality mark for the agency, says Director General Anders Söderholm. It is particularly gratifying that ENQA highlights UKÄ's close dialogue with higher education institutions, as well as the important role students play in the Swedish quality assurance system. At the same time, ENQA noted the challenges related to the complexity of UKÄ's quality assurance system and the level of workload it places on higher education institutions.

A further important step in UKÄ's internationalisation strategy to support internationalisation of higher education and student mobility is the agency's inclusion on EQAR as of spring 2021.

<https://english.uka.se/quality-assurance/international-principles-for-quality-assurance-and-enqa/international-cooperation-on-quality-assurance-in-higher-education.html>



Letter from François Pernot (Hcéres)

By François Pernot

Dear friends,

After 10 years at the AERES and then at the Hcéres, including 5 years as Director of the Europe and International Department, 3 years on the ECA board, 3 and a half years on the ENQA board and then Vice-President of ENQA from 2019 to today, I am leaving Hcéres.

Initially, in 2013-2015, I was in charge of a "Europe and International mission" which was a rather small department (there were two of us) at the AERES. Fairly quickly, with my team, we have built strong things and worked more and more. And with you, we have created bonds of trust and friendship. With you and my team, I take part in many European and international conferences, forums, etc., I take part in several international projects – remember all the WG for TLQAA (+), CeQuint, Qache(s), C3QA, Euniq, etc. ! And Eurobarometer ! I also develop activities, relations and partnerships of cooperation with national partners (CTI, FEI, Campus France, AFD...) as well as agencies of the countries of the European Higher Education Area, but also extra-European agencies in Central and South America, Africa, Near and Middle East, Asia... I learned a lot leading evaluations of foreign programs or institutions in Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordania, United Arab Emirates, Armenia, Cameroon, Senegal, Togo, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Vietnam, Peru, Costa Rica, Honduras, Salvador, Panama, Argentina, etc. more and more in cooperation with other agencies.

And I also learned a lot from working in ECA and then in ENQA. By the way, you have been very

patient with me and helped me to make progress in English and Spanish, but well, I was coming from far ;-)...

These years have been very rich for me, especially thanks to the professionalism of my team which I am very grateful, and mostly thanks to you and the work we have been able to do together, so I would like to quote all of you, my friends from Europe and my friends from the whole world, but there are so many of you and I am afraid of committing the crime against friendship of forgetting one of you... That's why I just want to thank you, truly, sincerely and warmly for all we did together. It's a beautiful word "together", it's a word I like, it's a word that means strength, wisdom and a certain idea of loveliness too.

I am now leaving for new adventures, at the university of course but perhaps also in other settings... This is the way it is. The world is changing. And it is also maybe time for me to renew my professional career. I have no doubt that we will have the opportunity to work together again, so do not hesitate to call on me if you think I can be of any help, for evaluations, expertises, projects, but I am also very good as a Best Man at weddings...

See you soon, I hope.

Best and even... warm wishes !

François Pernot

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