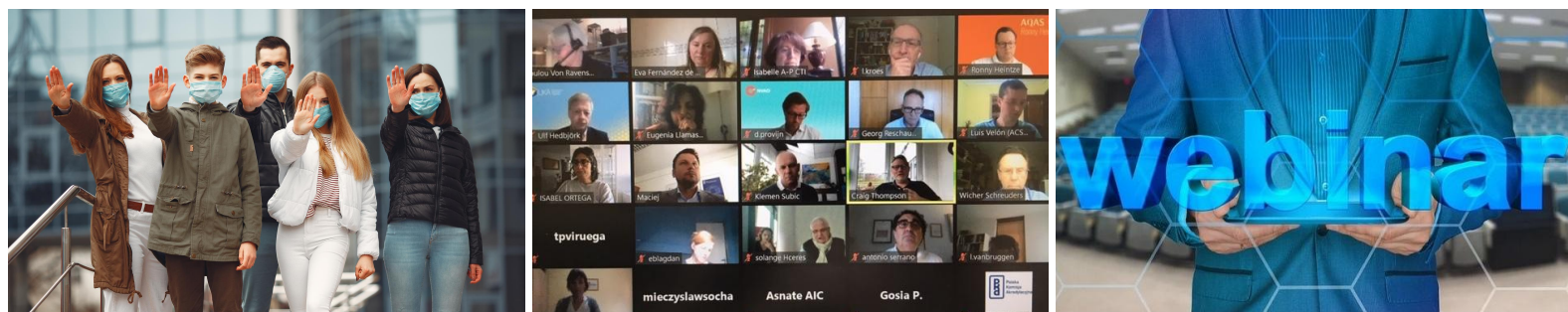




The European Consortium for
Accreditation in Higher Education

ECA NEWSLETTER



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ECA EDITORIAL:

Dear colleagues,

We are pleased to send you the Newsletter corresponding to the first semester of the year.

Without a doubt 2020, will be remembered for the year of the coronavirus pandemic, the virus that stopped the world and stayed to live with us. It has managed to change our way of life, of working in human and social relationships. While we live together and try to overcome the great challenges imposed,

More than 1.5 billion students and youth across the planet are been affected by school and university closures due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The assumed objective has been to identify the main challenges facing universities and other higher education institutions in the short, medium and long term and to share and help develop solutions.

From ECA and all its Members the situation has been faced as a new challenge to overcome. Now more than ever we need to be connected, exchange experiences, propose improvements and changes.

We have learned that we are able to adapt to these extreme situations and draw all the strength and desire from the world to continue with our challenges and objectives. We must understand that this situation has to teach us to work in a different way, but always with the objective to ensure the quality in higher education. Although we are facing the greatest challenge at all levels, only from understanding, coordination and work will we be able to overcome this.

ECA Secretariat



NEWS FROM ECA

New ECA Board for the period June 2020-June 2022

By ECA Secretariat

On 16 June 2020 the ECA members have appointed a new Board for the period June 2020-June 2022. The current composition of the Board is the following:

Chair: Maciej Markowski, PKA (Poland)

Vice-Chair: Solange Pisarz, Hcéres (France)

Treasurer: Luut Kroes, NVAO (Netherlands) (Appointed at the last ECA Board meeting on July 8, 2020).

Members:

Eva Fernandez de Labastida, Unibasq (Spain)

Ronny Heintze, AQAS (Germany)

Klemen Šubic, SQAA (Slovenia)

The Board is supported by the **Coordinator**, who heads the Secretariat. Coordinator Sandra Marcos, ACSUCYL (Spain)

In addition, Craig Thomson and Luis Velon were appointed as members of the **Financial Committee**.



ECA Board for the period June 2020-June 2022



Sandra Marcos
ECA Coordinator

ECA Meetings 2020 in Israel

By ECA Secretariat

The ECA meeting hosted by the Higher Education Council of CHE, Israel, took place on January 20 and 21 in Tel-Aviv.

The main focus of the meetings were to analyze the Israeli approach to ensuring the relevance of higher education in the labor market using different measures (policies, incentives, quality assurance, etc.). That also included the problems of the digital transformation of the economy and its implications for higher education.

A meeting of the certification group and the communication committee was also held. Likewise, the latest activities developed by the association were reported.

Undoubtedly a very enriching visit, which allowed us to know other experiences and very interesting points of view. [More info](#)



ECA Webinar “Responses to Covid-19 Pandemic Situation from ECA Agencies”

By Eva Fernández de Labastida Amurrio. ECA

On the 26th of May 2020, ECA hosted its first webinar on the topic of the responses to Covid-19 pandemic situation from ECA agencies.

This main topic was further discussed regarding the shift to online external quality assurance procedures and the support given to higher education institutions in their adaptation to remote virtual teaching and learning.

The webinar started with the EQAR view on adaptation to external QA procedures, which was followed by the experiences from HCERES, ÜKA, NAVKIS, ACSUCYL and CTI.

(Link to [programme](#) and [presentations](#)).

Up to 53 participants took part in this webinar, which gave also the option to debate and make questions regarding this topic to the speakers



NEWS FROM ECA MEMBERS

THE-ICE announces Virtual International Panel of Experts (VIPoE)

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

THE-ICE's annual signature event, the International Panel of Experts Forum, offers high-level panel sessions, workshops, and roundtable discussions focusing on strategic issues facing tourism, hospitality, events, and culinary arts (TH&E) education, bridging research, education, and industry.

This year, in light of the COVID-19 crisis and global travel restrictions, THE-ICE has made the difficult decision to postpone THE-ICE 14th IPoE Forum.

The postponed event, proudly hosted by the University of Derby, United Kingdom, exploring the theme "Securing our Future-Exploring Sustainability in and of Tourism and Hospitality Education", will now take place during the week of 25th October 2021.

As a consequence, this year, from 26-29 October 2020, THE-ICE will host its first ever Virtual International Panel of Experts (VIPoE). The event will bring together global industry and academic experts to share knowledge and support one another around the theme "Exploring the Post-pandemic 'New Normal' of TH&E Education and Quality Assurance".



ASHE adapted its working conditions during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

By Agency for Science and Higher Education Croatia

In order to ensure the continuity of work during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Agency for Science and Higher Education adapted its business activity to new circumstances.

During the quarantine in the Republic of Croatia, from mid-March till mid-May, ASHE adjusted its working hours and organised a special distribution of employees in accordance with the recommendations issued by the competent authorities regarding the protection of employees' health and safety, while also ensuring the continued fulfilment of business obligations.

In compliance with the above said, evaluation procedures in higher education and science, when possible, were carried out online with the professional support of ASHE employees. Online evaluations proved to be a successful response to the exceptional circumstances. Experience gathered through these procedures will be used for the further development and adaptation to the "new normal" working conditions; in fact ASHE plans to carry out online programme accreditations as well as evaluations in science.



agency for science and higher education



CTI Response to COVID-19 Pandemic Situation

By Marie-Jo GOEDERT, CTI Executive director

The COVID-19 crisis led CTI to adapt the accreditation criteria and its procedures. Among the accreditation criteria, those specifically concerned by the crisis are

- international mobility
- internships and final projects in industry
- apprenticeship tracks

Nonetheless, the HEIs must ensure the achievement of all programme outcomes and follow every student especially when in a fragile situation.

Many CTI procedures have been postponed: HEIs reports, site visits, international procedures, joint CTI-Hcéres evaluations. Plenary sessions have been replaced by virtual sessions. First virtual visits are scheduled in July 2020. Specific guidelines for virtual site visits have been provided. Fortunately, a working group on digitalization for teaching, learning and evaluation started at Fall 2019.

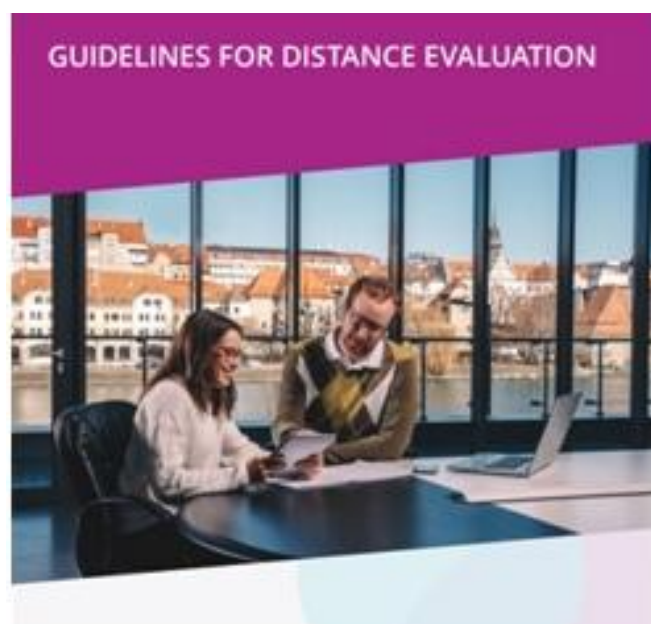
CTI sent several messages of support to HEIs and replied to individual HEIs questions. Dedicated webinars on distance teaching and learning have been organized for HEIs and stakeholders. CTI also regularly edits newsletters and updates its website to make everyone aware of the situation and inform on new procedures.



The main emphasis of the document is on well thought out implementation of ERU, adequate technical support of all users and establishment of mechanisms for ongoing monitoring, adaptation and improvement of teaching and learning. We expect that some of the changes and improvements introduced in teaching and learning during the pandemic situation will remain also in the future..

More information:

<https://www.nakvis.si/latest/guidelines-for-conducting-a-distance-evaluation/?lang=en>



The work of Nakvis in the COVID-19 pandemic

By Klemen Subic. NAKVIS (Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education)

COVID-19 pandemic resulted in an almost overnight lockdown of all education institutions in Slovenia and in a cancellation of all site visits planned in the accreditation and evaluation procedures.

To continue with the intended work, Nakvis prepared **Guidelines for online site visits** to help HEIs prepare for the new format of work. We successfully performed 13 online site visits in June and July, with generally positive feedback. Based on the evaluation form we've send to the stakeholders we plan to improve the guidelines for the next cycle.

At the same time Nakvis prepared relevant recommendations for better shift to emergency remote education (ERU) as the cancellation of all »face to face« education has accelerated inclusion of online learning significantly.



Update on AHPGS

By AHPGS – Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Sciences

The AHPGS has successfully completed the procedures for renewal of the EQAR listing (decision 16 March 2020) and membership of ENQA (decision 28 April 2020).

After the "State Treaty on the Organization of a Joint Accreditation System for Quality Assurance in Studies and Teaching at German Universities"



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entered into force on January 1, 2018, the AHPGS was the first German agency initiating this procedure which also leads to the approval as an agency in Germany. A special challenge for the AHPGS was the clarification of a common understanding related to ESG 3.4 Thematic Analysis of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

As a consequence, the AHPGS has developed a revised concept for the regular publication of thematic analyses and published first thematic analyses based on it. Furthermore, a critical examination of the ESG standard "Thematic Analyses" in the context of accreditation can be found in the following article. The article is planned as part of a publication in 2020.

The thematic analyses are published on our homepage:

<https://ahpgs.de/en/thematic-analysis/>



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Quality Agency for Higher Education (AIKA) Celebrates Its 5th Anniversary

By Asnate Kažoka Quality Agency for Higher Education (AIKA)

July 1st, 2020, marks 5 years since amendments to the Law came into force delegating the responsibility for quality assurance of higher education in Latvia to the Academic Information Centre (AIC) and its newly established unit - Quality Agency for Higher Education (AIKA).

The objective of this PLA was to identify and design models of good practice to structurally support LRC compliant recognition practices in HEIs. Several examples were presented and discussed. The PLA was structured around two main questions:

AIKA started with a vision to be trustful and internationally recognized, to contribute to continuous quality enhancement of higher education in Latvia and to take an active role in quality assurance processes in the European and global higher education area.

During these years AIKA upheld its vision by working closely with higher education institutions and other stakeholders in Latvia and by becoming an active member of different international organizations such as ENQA, CEENQA, INQAAHE, ECA.

The Head of AIKA Jolanta Silka shares her view that the last 5 years have been intensive but also rewarding -with the possibility to establish and shape an institution from the very beginning - from a written concept to a functional and recognised quality agency that is comparable with its peers in other countries and often looked at as an example of rapid and successful development. It would not be possible without continuous support from stakeholders in Latvia and abroad, shared experience of colleagues from other countries. AIKA is looking forward to future challenges and cooperation with existing and new partners and wishes everyone a warm and sunny summer.



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Experts from 19 countries join THE-ICE Webinar Series to explore the impact of COVID-19 on the education and industry

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

As businesses and institutions around the world face the COVID-19 crisis, THE-ICE have created a forum for knowledge sharing and peer support through THE-ICE Webinar Series, with attendance from more than 40 organisations across 19 countries on 4 continents to date.

Since March, THE-ICE Webinar Series has brought together representatives from the leading tourism, hospitality, events, and culinary arts (TH&E) institutions and organisations of THE-ICE member network, with industry and education experts to explore:

- Alternative approaches to teaching delivery, assessment, and examination under COVID-19, including fundamental principles of online teaching and learning.
- Utilising online simulations, apps, and certification training.
- Providing support to staff, students, and colleagues through COVID-19.
- Exploring the anticipated ongoing impact of COVID-19 on TH&E industries and higher education.

Although participation is exclusive to representatives of THE-ICE member institutions, recordings and key takeaways from all webinars are made publicly available on THE-ICE website:

<http://the-ice.org/events/the-ice-webinars/>

