



Conclusions of the Sixteenth Workshop of the European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education (ECA) Madrid, 19 June 2013

Approved by the Management Group on 3 October 2013

1. Introduction

The sixteenth workshop of the European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education (ECA) was held at the ANECA offices in Madrid on 19 June 2013. In the morning the working groups had met to discuss the new work plan. This was followed by the ECA Business meeting and short presentations of the new work plan by each working group. The workshop preceded the JOQAR dissemination conference and marked the 10th anniversary of ECA.

2. ECA Business Meeting

The Chairperson welcomed the members and commemorated the 10th anniversary of ECA. At the end of the workshop a special presentation and birthday cake marked this milestone. Following the recommendation of the Management Group the Consortium decided to admit ACSUG (Spain) as new member of ECA. Updates on membership issues were given. There was an interest in ECA membership from some agencies and this would be further explored.

The annual accounts of 2012 as audited by KPMG and the budget for 2013 were presented and accepted by the Consortium. The fee for 2013 remains 3,000 euro for member agencies and 1,000 euro for observers. It was decided that these fees for members and observers will remain the same in 2014. Starting in 2014 the fees will be collected at the beginning of the year.

A Memorandum of Cooperation between ECA and the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) was presented. The Consortium endorsed the signing of this memorandum by the presidents of both networks.

A large part of the Business meeting was devoted to a discussion of the proposed strategic management plan and business plan of ECA. The strategic management plan was accepted by the members with some revisions regarding the involvement of stakeholders, the positioning of ECA regarding other networks and some suggestions with regard to different wording. With these revisions the strategic management plan will be finalised. The Business plan led to more discussion and different views were expressed about the favourite business model for providing the services of the internationalisation certificate and single accreditation of joint programmes. Possibilities ranged from ECA organising the services to a model where agencies would be licensed to carry out the services, with also the possibility of a mixed model. Some members advocated that one clear model would be chosen. It was concluded that the roles of members and ECA in providing the services should be further

clarified. In the end it was decided that the Management Group will explore an alternative business model and that the proposed Business plan will be revised accordingly.

The proposal to turn ECA into a legal entity was accepted by the Consortium. Through this legal entity ECA can provide the envisaged services, deal with liability issues, enlarge its abilities to participate in EU funded projects and try to obtain funding as a network. The most appropriate legal form will be explored by the Management Group and a proposal will be prepared for discussion by members.

The annual winter seminar will be held in The Hague in December 2013. This seminar would prepare the transition to a legal entity. The Consortium welcomed the proposal to organise the 17th ECA Workshop by A3ES in Porto in June 2014.

3. Working groups

The four Working groups (Mutual recognition and joint programmes; Institutional accreditation and audits; Crossroads and information strategies; Mutual learning and best practices) had met in the morning and presented plenary the work that had been carried out during the last year and in particular their new work plans including the priorities for the coming year. It was decided that the name of Working group 2 will be changed into: "Internationalisation of QA and accreditation".

All presentations can be downloaded from here:

<http://www.eaconsortium.net/main/events/documents/eca-workshop-madrid/23>