



**Conclusions of the Thirteenth Workshop of the
European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education
(ECA)
Graz (Austria), 9th June 2010**

Approved by the Management Group on 25th October 2010

1. Introduction

The thirteenth workshop of the European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education (ECA) was held in Graz on 9 June 2010. ECA members enjoyed the hospitality of the Österreichische Akkreditierungsrat (ÖAR) and the Fachhochschulrat (FHR). The workshop was held on the afternoon preceding the TEAM II dissemination conference on joint programme on 10 and 11 June 2010.

2. ECA Business Meeting

The Chairperson welcomed the participants and gave an update on meetings that had taken place with the European Commission regarding their QA progress report, and on a new INQAAHE working group on mutual recognition that had been installed.

The Conclusions of the Zürich Workshop were approved by the Consortium.

The following future ECA events were agreed:

- ECA Seminar in The Hague on assessment of internationalisation, 14 December 2010
- ECA Workshop in Barcelona, June 2011

It was also mentioned that on 4-7 April 2011 the INQAAHE Conference will be organised by ANECA in Madrid. ECA members were encouraged to send in papers for the conference.

The Consortium approved the recommendation of the Management Group that ECA membership should be granted to ACE Denmark, on the condition that the outcome of the external review would be positive and that a visit by a small MG delegation would clarify some questions regarding the position of ACE Denmark in the Danish accreditation system.

The ECA membership of AQU Catalunya was confirmed. It was also confirmed that the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education is the legitimate successor of the Council for Higher Education of the Republic of Slovenia. The Consortium was informed that ASIIN did not renew its membership and that 2 observers would attend ECA meetings: Loulou von Ravensberg (HSV, Sweden) and Michal Neumann (CHE, Israel).

The ECA audit report 2009 and the ECA budget 2010 with a membership fee of EUR 3,000 were approved by the Consortium.

The Consortium decided to re-appoint the members of the Management Group until 31 December 2011. The composition of the Management Group is now the following:
Rolf Heusser (Chairperson)
Karl Dittrich (Vice-Chairperson)
Mark Frederiks (Coordinator)
Terje Morland (Member)
Elisabeth Fiorioli (Member)
Laureano González (Member)
Rainer Künzel (Member)
Mieczyslaw Socha (Member).

The paper ECA after 2011 was discussed. It was remarked that decreasing the burden of accreditation could also be a possible topic (under principle 3 or 4 of the paper). Furthermore, it was agreed that there is an overlap between principle 8 and 9, and that an external and international evaluation is not necessary. Mutual recognition should stay as an overarching aim. With regard to information and services a more pro-active position was advocated. It was agreed that the paper would be sent to and, if possible, discussed with the ENQA Board to avoid any possible duplications in activities.

3. Working groups

Working group 1 on Mutual recognition and joint programmes presented the new work plan and welcomed Doris Hermann and Josep Grifoll as new members. Papers on the benefit of mutual recognition and a proposal for developing a multilateral mutual recognition agreement were presented and accepted by the Consortium. It was mentioned that the principles for accreditation procedures regarding joint programmes should be refined. What happens when new higher education institutions (who might not be recognised) enter a joint programme consortium? WG 1 is also active regarding the project JOQAR of which a summary was presented.

Working group 2 presented a paper by Hannelore Weck-Hannemann and Karl Dittrich. The paper was discussed and it was agreed that the amended paper would be published and also sent to ENQA members. A paper on the impact of accreditation was also presented. It was agreed that members would help to fill in the gaps in empirical evidence regarding impact. There were examples of what can happen politically when impact cannot be demonstrated. Apart from positive (intended) impact there should also be attention for negative impact in the form of unintended consequences. ZEvA had undertaken an impact study and the some of the difficulties encountered were explained. Finally, the summary of the EU funding proposal E-TRAIN on the training of experts was presented.

Working group 3 presented the work on Crossroads (which would be demonstrated at the conference) and the summary of the IMPAQT proposal. The new ECA website was demonstrated which was well received by the Consortium.

Working group 4 had developed a new document on principles and recommendations of learning outcomes. Questions were raised with regard to some principles (e.g. 1, 6, 7) and the status and formulations of recommendations. It was agreed that the paper would be revised.