

ENQA held its 2006 General Assembly in Brussels on 19/20 September.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2006

Stefanie Hofmann In Memoriam

The most difficult moment of this year for the whole Association, was the receipt of the sad news of the death of ENQA Vice-President, Dr Stefanie Hofmann.

On 15 July Dr Stefanie Hofmann unexpectedly passed away at her home, at the age of 36 years, as a consequence of diabetes. Stefanie had worked in higher education, notably in the field of curricular reforms as part of the Bologna Process, since 1998 and had been an ENQA Board Member from 2004. She devoted much time, effort and energy to ENQA's work and was an outstanding Vice-President, esteemed colleague and friend to many.

ENQA membership matters

New members

After the Madrid GA, the Associate members of ENQA were given an opportunity to become Candidate members if they so desired. All of these agencies, namely IGAENR, AQAS and NQAI, took this opportunity and became Candidate members. They were given a period of two years to fulfil the criteria for Full membership.

Since September 2005 the Board has had the pleasure of granting ASIIN, NAA, AEQES, EFMD and AHPGS Candidate membership status of ENQA. With the endorsement of the present GA, ENQA will formally have 44 member agencies.

Over the course of the last year, several networks and organisations, which are unable or do not wish to fulfil the ENQA membership criteria, have expressed their interest in having a formal relationship with the Association. The Board believes that this kind of arrangement would have considerable advantages for ENQA, particularly in regard to creating wider representation of the Association throughout the European Higher Education Area and beyond. Networks of bona fide quality assurance agencies in the area of higher education would be able to ask to become 'affiliates' of ENQA. Bona fide quality assurance agencies or organisations in the area of higher education, which do not wish to or are unable to become ENQA members, would be able to ask to become 'associates' of ENQA. Neither of these categories of affiliation would carry the status of members of ENQA. The proposed amendments to the Regulations of ENQA, which the GA will be considering, include these changes.

External reviews

ENQA membership criteria require that its members should undergo an external review on a five-yearly basis. These are normally organised on a national basis, but, if this is not possible or the agency so requests, they can also be co-ordinated by ENQA. In order to clarify the relationship between national reviews and ENQA membership, the Board has agreed on a strategy which will make the recognition of the national reviews easier.

As for the ENQA-coordinated reviews, the Board agreed to create a pool of review experts and secretaries and has asked the ENQA members for nominations. The Board concluded that for the moment ENQA could handle a maximum of two reviews per year. In the future the number of reviews would be determined both by ENQA's actual capacity to conduct



reviews and by the genuine need of agencies to engage ENQA for the purpose, rather than undergo a nationally-organised review.

In 2006 the Board accepted a request from AQA, as well as a joint request by AQU and ANECA, to undergo an ENQA coordinated review in the first half of 2007. The Board also received a proposal by the Austrian FH Council to undergo a national review in the autumn of 2007 and a letter from the Austrian Accreditation Council about its plan to undergo a national review by the end of 2007.

HETAC, whose national external review was completed in May 2006, was the first agency to have its full membership of ENQA re-confirmed on the basis of examination of the review report by the ENQA Board. The membership of HSV in ENQA was re-confirmed on the basis of reviews conducted in 2004 and in 2005 and of further material submitted to the Board at its request. EVA's membership was re-confirmed by the Board on the basis of a review conducted in 2005 and of a supplemental analysis in 2006.

In 2006 ACQUIN, ASIIN and ZeVA were all nationally evaluated by the German Akkreditierungsrat. During that process, the Board conducted a useful discussion with the Akkreditierungsrat on the integration of the European Standards and Guidelines into the German system. Further work is being undertaken to assess the compatibility of the Akkreditierungsrat with ENQA membership requirements.

Membership survey

A questionnaire about the structure, function and future of ENQA was sent to all members in December 2005. A total of 27 member agencies responded and the Board had the opportunity to analyse the results at its meeting on 24 February. It was clear from the responses that the majority of the respondents had begun planning for their external review and were taking into consideration the implementation of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and their impact on their activities. Most of the agencies were of the opinion that they were already operating under the majority of the ESG best practice recommendations. They hoped that ENQA would continue to support them in the implementation of the ESG through information dissemination, organisation of stocktaking seminars and the provision of a platform for discussion.

The Proposed Register of European Quality Assurance Agencies

ENQA has been an observer member in the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) since March 2005, and in May 2005 it was designated as a Consultative Membership. ENQA has contributed to the BFUG's work by reporting on its mandate to implement the European Standards and Guidelines and by considering the practical implications of the European Register.

The meetings of the E4 Group (ENQA, ESIB, EUA and EURASHE) during the year have been concerned mostly with the European Register and with the organisation of the first European Quality Forum in November 2006. In April, a consultant (Bastian Baumann) was appointed to produce a report on the different possibilities for the realisation of the Register. In June he submitted a full and thorough report to be discussed by the E4 Group. ENQA will, on behalf of the E4 Group, provide an interim report to the BFUG in October on the outcomes of the report and on the results of the discussion in the E4 Group. A final report will be submitted to the BFUG in March 2007. If available, a copy of the draft interim report to BFUG will be circulated to ENQA members during the course of the General Assembly.



International and European collaboration

The President and the acting Secretary General participated in the annual General Assembly of the Network of Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education on 29-30 May in Graz. In that Assembly the CEEN members decided that the network should affiliate with ENQA if the proposal of the ENQA Board to introduce the possibility of such a formal relationship was endorsed by the present ENQA GA. CEEN also agreed to host an ENQA seminar on the implementation of the ESG in Vienna in December 2006.

As for the cooperation with the ENIC/NARIC networks, a meeting between them and ENQA representatives took place in Brussels in February. It was decided that cooperation between the two should be increased and an ENQA-ENIC/NARIC working group has been established in order to explore further ways of collaboration.

ENQA was also represented in the Council of Europe Forum on quality assurance held this week in Strasbourg. This third CoE Forum of Higher Education looked at the three-fold challenge of public responsibility, governance and quality assurance. In addition, it considered elements of importance to the legitimacy and acceptance of quality assurance methods and results. The relationship between recognition and quality assurance was also an important topic.

In addition, ENQA has been represented in many other important events, such as the INQAAHE annual workshop in The Hague and in various OECD conferences.

ENQA workshops

Employer Involvement

An ENQA workshop on 'Employer Involvement' took place on 25-26 November 2005, organised by ACQUIN in co-operation with Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA) and with UNICE. Several European examples of employer involvement in quality assurance procedures were discussed during the workshop.

Evaluation methodologies

ENQA member, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA, UK), hosted the ENQA workshop on 'Improvement and Development of Evaluation Methodologies' on 8-9 December 2005 in Birmingham, UK. The event was organised in cooperation with agencies from Norway, Sweden, France and Denmark. The workshop focused on the improvement and development of academic review methodologies at the institutional level.

Language

The QAA also coordinated a two-day ENQA workshop on the 'Language of European Quality Assurance' on 29-30 June at the University of Warwick, UK. The goal of this workshop was to improve understanding and communication amongst ENQA members by examining English words and phrases commonly used in quality assurance and to facilitate future attempts to develop glossaries of those words and phrases. As a result of the workshop, a message board for the workshop participants has been created to allow further discussion of QA terms. A report will be published by the end of the year in the ENQA workshop report series.

Projects

TEEP II

The Transnational European Evaluation Project II (TEEP II) was concluded with a final conference, held on 4-5 May 2006 in Stockholm. The conference gave the participants of



the project the opportunity to comment and draw conclusions on the project as a whole and to contribute to the programme and methodological reports. TEEP II was a detailed follow-up to the first transnational European pilot project (TEEP I) coordinated by ENQA in 2002-2003. The project involved the development of a European-wide transnational quality evaluation scheme, which aspired to identify the means and common elements necessary for the delivery of quality education in Joint Masters Programmes. Those examined were in three subject areas: water management; cultural and communication studies; and law and economics. Three subject-specific programme reports and a methodological report were published after the final conference. The project was conducted by ENQA and six of its member agencies, with financial support from the European Commission's SOCRATES programme.

Portuguese higher education

On 21 November 2005, ENQA signed a contract with the Portuguese Minister of Education to participate in part of the overall assessment and quality review of the Portuguese higher education system. The ENQA Board nominated the following expert team for this important undertaking:

- Christian Thune, former President of ENQA and Executive Director of the Danish Evaluation Institute (Chair);
- David Dill, Professor of Public Policy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Director of the Ford-Foundation funded Research Program on Public Policy for Academic Quality;
- Helmut Konrad, Professor of History at the University of Graz, former member of the ENQA Board and former President of the Austrian Accreditation Council;
- Gemma Rauret, Director of the Quality Assurance Agency for the University System in Catalonia;
- Anette Dørge Jessen, Senior Advisor, the Danish Evaluation Institute (Secretary).

The exercise started in December 2006 and the draft report by the expert team has been submitted to the Portuguese authorities on 15 September. The whole project is due to finish by the end of November.

QCS II

A follow-up project to the Quality Convergence Study was launched in March 2006. The first QCS was completed in 2005 and concluded that mutual trust, knowledge and understanding were the key factors in any move towards the convergence of quality assurance processes in Europe and the construction of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The aim of QCS II is to continue further along this path by offering the member agencies of ENQA an opportunity to reflect together on the values that underpin their activities. The steering group of the project, comprising CNÉ and QAA, sent an introduction to the objectives and intended outcomes of the project and a questionnaire to all ENQA members in July. The final report with the major conclusions will be published at the end of 2006.

Changes in the Secretariat

In March 2006, the Secretary General, Kimmo Hämäläinen, resigned to take up a new position. Following Kimmo's resignation, the Board agreed that a small group comprising the Presidency, Bruno Curvale and Tibor Szanto, should consider and bring forward proposals for the appointment of the Secretary General. In the course of its discussion, the group agreed that a wider range of areas and factors related to the administration of ENQA needed to be considered, including the impact of the changing workload of ENQA on the support requirements of the Secretariat; the developing role(s) and functions of senior personnel; and the Secretariat's optimum location.



Staffing arrangements

The role of the Secretary General is defined in the Association's Regulations and includes both senior administrative responsibilities and a limited capacity to represent the Association 'politically' when the Presidency is unable to attend meetings, conferences etc. The post of Project Officer was created in 2004 to assist the Secretary General with the day to day administration of the Association and project work.

With the departure of the Secretary General in March 2006, the Board agreed that the responsibilities of the Secretary General should be transferred to Emmi Helle, Project Officer, on a temporary basis and gave her permission to recruit an administrative assistant. It was further agreed that Emmi should be designated as Acting Secretary General.

The working group proposed to the May Board, that to fulfil the ongoing needs of ENQA and to provide more stability, the Secretariat should comprise three posts:

- *a Secretary-General*
This should be developed from its senior administrative role to include an explicit 'political' and policy development mandate and provide a single, authoritative and permanent point of contact for partners and stakeholders. The strategic direction of the Association will however, remain in the hands of the Board and Presidency.
- *a Senior Administrative Officer*
This would need to be expanded from the role of Project Officer to include high level administrative, financial, member relation activities and some policy and project work.
- *an Administrative Assistant*
This person would be responsible for the day to day administrative tasks required for the successful functioning of ENQA as an Association.

These proposals would significantly increase the staffing costs of the Secretariat, and cannot be introduced until additional and reliable sources of finance can be secured. The Board and Secretariat are currently investigating new sources of finance which will allow ENQA to pursue this new staffing structure.

This proposal was accepted by the Board at its May meeting. It was agreed that this should be proposed to the General Assembly.

Location

Before any recruitment can take place for the above posts the question of the location of the Secretariat needs to be addressed.

In conclusion

Although overshadowed by Stefanie Hofmann's death, this year has been in many other ways very successful for ENQA. We have consolidated our role in the Bologna Process, identified a number of strategies for the future, professionalised our 'back office' functions, run a well-received programme of projects, seminars and workshops, and participated in a large number of conferences and other events. That the Association has been able to achieve so much with the very limited resources it has available to it is principally due to four factors: first, to the commitment and hard work of the Board, which has been a great pleasure for me to chair; secondly, to the invaluable support of Vice-President Séamus Puirseil, whose unstinting willingness to share the burdens of the Presidency has enabled me to manage somehow to carry on being both President of ENQA and Chief Executive of QAA; thirdly, to my colleagues in Gloucester, Rachel Dearlove and Sue Ibberson, who have



had the additional responsibilities of ENQA thrust upon them and who have accepted them with enthusiasm and effectiveness; and finally, and most importantly, to the total dedication and great skill of Emmi Helle, who was unexpectedly thrust into the role of acting Secretary General in March and who has since then devoted herself to making sure that the Association continues not just on an even keel, but goes from strength to strength. Her contributions at all levels of ENQA's work are of the highest quality and I believe that we all owe her a great debt of gratitude. To all these colleagues I should like to offer my personal thanks.

