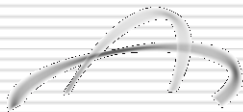


German Accreditation Council

The European Standards and Guidelines and the external evaluation of agencies in Germany

Dr Achim Hopbach
Managing Director



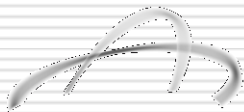
Content

- The European Standards and Guidelines
 - Meaning to Europe
 - Meaning to signatories

- The European Standards and Guidelines in German HE
 - framework conditions
 - ESG out of the blue?
 - Implementation process

- Accreditation of three agencies: Experiences

- Lessons to be learned



The European Standards and Guidelines

Bergen Communiqué, 19 Mai 2005:

Ministers “**adopt standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area...**”, which are:

“**designed to be applicable to all higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies in Europe, irrespective of their structure, function and size, and the national system in which they are located.**”

Ministers “**welcome the principle of a European register of quality assurance agencies...**”, and

“**underline the importance of co-operation between nationally recognised agencies with a view to enhancing the mutual recognition of accreditation or quality assurance decisions**”



The European Standards and Guidelines

Meaning to Europe:

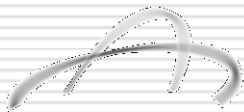
Strengthening the European Voice/the European dimension of QA:

- ESG as membership criteria of ENQA
- ESG as registration criteria for European register of QA-agencies

Meaning to signatory countries:

- Form mutual understanding towards mutual recognition
- Convergence of QA-systems/procedures/decisions

→ Emergence of a „European Quality Assurance Area“ rather than a European Quality Assurance System/Approach

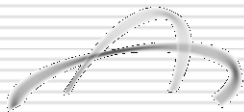


The ESG in German Higher Education

Framework Conditions - I

- Public higher education system in a federal country
(Responsibilities in HE lie mostly with the 16 Länder, not with the federal level)

- Regulated Accreditation System
with the Accreditation Council as a '*central body*', mandated by the 16 Länder to organise and rule an Accreditation System with the accreditation procedures carried out by various accreditation agencies.

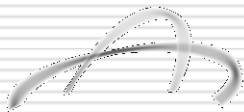


The ESG in German Higher Education

Framework Conditions - II

- Evaluation of Teaching and Learning in most of the Länder not legally formalized.

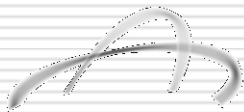
- Evaluation procedures follow more or less widely accepted standards as developed since mid-nineties
(self-report⇒peer review⇒decision⇒follow up)



The ESG in German Higher Education

ESG out of the blue?

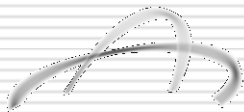
| Standards | ESG Part I | ESG Part II | ESG Part III |
|--------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| New | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Partly new | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| Yet in place | 3 | 3 | 1 |



The ESG in German Higher Education

Implementation

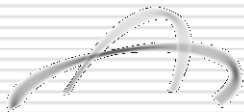
- Accreditation Council: Criteria for accreditation of accreditation agencies and Study Programmes (Dec. 2005)
- Joined working-group of ministries, rectors' conference, students, accreditation council, and stakeholder to develop recommendations for implementing ESG
- ➔ Integration in legal basis rather than extra/additional procedures



Experiences: Accreditation of three agencies-I

- Accreditation of agencies leads automatically to implementation of ESG part one: Standards for internal QA in Higher Education Institutions

- „Quick“ implementation of new standards
 - mostly no legal problems (publication, formal appeal system)
 - some „phasing in“ problems (effectiveness of internal QA-system, accountability processes)

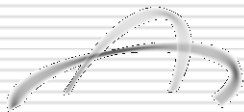


Experiences: Accreditation of three agencies-II

- Modification of standards to comply with the partly new standards (Mission statement, Follow up-procedure)

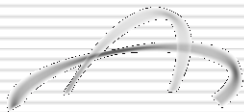
- Formalization of Evaluation as challenge (due to legal framework)
 - tension between ESG and autonomy of HEI(?)

- Acceptance in agencies depend on awareness of European dimension



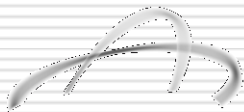
Overall Experiences

- ❑ Evaluation of agencies against ESG as driving force of implementation
- ❑ Evaluation against ESG as slight development rather than new approach
- ❑ Acceptance in agencies depend on awareness of European dimension
- ❑ Possible tension between formalization and autonomy



Lessons to be learned

- Deletion of „procedures“ in ESG right decision!
 - ESG as generic standards fit into different legal frameworks
- Integration in existing legal frameworks fosters convergence
- Standards for QA affect the whole Higher Education System
- European (regional/international) Standards as driving forces of reforms in Higher Education



Thank you for your attention!

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