

# Mutual Recognition of Accreditation Decisions: A European Perspective

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# Overview

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- ECA definitions
- Aims of ECA
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- Structure of ECA
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# Why ECA?

- To enhance recognition of qualifications and student mobility (Bologna, EHEA)
- To remove barriers for accreditation of international programmes/institutions
- ECA solution: mutual recognition of accreditation decisions

# ECA definitions

- Accreditation: “ a formal and independent decision, indicating that an institution of higher education and/or programmes offered meet certain standards”
- Mutual recognition of accreditation decisions: “a formal acknowledgement of accreditation decisions in one country by competent authorities in another country”

# Aims of ECA

- Ultimate aim: mutual recognition of accreditation decisions among the participants before the end of 2007
- Contributions to EHEA, recognition of qualifications, mobility
- Sharing of expertise

# Members of ECA

- Austria: AAC, Fachhochschulrat
- France: CTI
- Germany: Akkreditierungsrat, ACQUIN, AHPGS, AQAS, FIBAA, ZEvA
- Ireland: HETAC
- Norway: NOKUT
- Spain: ANECA
- Switzerland: OAO
- The Netherlands and Flanders: NVAO

# Structure of ECA

- Established in November 2003
- Independent: contributions from members
- Open for nationally recognised accreditation organisations
- Links with many international networks
- Consortium (workshops); Management group; Coordinator; Working groups

# Working groups

1. Mutual Recognition
2. European Qualifications Framework
3. Information Tool for Accreditation Decisions
4. European Initiatives
5. New Developments in Accreditation

# Code of Good Practice

- 17 standards: accreditation organisation, procedures, standards
- With a view to e.g. INQAAHE Guidelines, ENQA standards (fully compatible)
- Signed in Zürich in December 2004
- Implementation of Code by end of 2006
- External evaluation in 2007

# Road map to mutual recognition

## 1. MR of accreditation procedures

- Code of Good Practice
- Experts; selection criteria and procedures
- Information tool for accreditation decisions
- Common themes/standards in accreditation

## 2. MR of accreditation organisations

- Profiles
- Inventory of mutual cooperation
- Observation reports
- Pilot projects

# Road map to mutual recognition

## 3. MR of assessment results

- EQF and Dublin descriptors in assessments
- Assessments of joint/multiple/double degrees
- Assessments of programmes vs. institutions
- Formal agreement

## 4. MR of accreditation decisions

- Different national/legal frameworks
- Statement for Ministers London 2007
- Formal agreements

## 5. MR of degrees based on accreditation decisions

- European Recognition and Accreditation Area?

# Conclusions

- Reaching mutual recognition agreements is not easy but worthwhile
- Facilitates recognition of degrees and student mobility
- Joint/multiple/double degrees accreditation in 1 country instead of many
- Makes accreditation transparent and promotes good practice