



1<sup>st</sup> Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM1)  
in Bucharest, Romania on 18-19 November 2025



Asia-Europe Meeting

ASEM Education

# Keynote “Quality Assurance to Foster Global Cooperation in Higher Education”

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# Regional and Interregional Cooperation in Higher Education

## Quality Assurance to Foster Global Cooperation in Higher Education

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**ASEM Education 1st Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM1)**

***“Connecting Education. Fostering collaboration between Asia and Europe”***

Dates: 18-19 November 2025

Location: Bucharest, Romania

Venue: Hotel Pullman Bucharest World Trade Center

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# THE BOLOGNA PROCESS AND EHEA

- Europe of knowledge.
- Greater **compatibility** and **comparability** of the systems of higher education:
  - ✗ *promotion of European co-operation in **quality assurance** with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies*
  - ✗ easily readable and comparable **degrees**
  - ✗ two main **cycles**
  - ✗ system of **credits** (ECTS)
  - ✗ **mobility** for students and staff
  - ✗ correspondence with **the market/society needs**
  - ✗ European dimensions in higher education.



**1999**

**The Bologna Process  
Bologna declaration  
signed by 29 states**

**1998**

**Sorbonne  
Declaration**

# THE BOLOGNA PROCESS AND EHEA

- **Policies and reforms are agreed at European level**, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, and, afterwards, **implemented at national level**, reaching every higher education institution.
  - ✓ **Voluntary cooperation framework**, with no legally binding provision, except for the Lisbon Recognition Convention.
  - ✓ Sharing same **values**.
- The Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) is the executive structure supporting the Bologna Process in-between the Ministerial Conferences.

✗ Global Policy Dialogue since **2009**!



**1999**

**The Bologna Process  
Bologna declaration  
signed by 29 states**

**2010**

**Budapest-Vienna Declaration  
on the European Higher Education Area**

# THE BOLOGNA PROCESS AND EHEA

- **Quality** is the **basic underlying condition** for trust, relevance, mobility, compatibility and attractiveness in the European Higher Education Area and has proven to be at the **heart** of the setting up of a European Higher Education Area.
  - ✓ **quality assurance systems** play a **vital role** in ensuring high **quality standards**
  - ✓ systematic introduction of **internal mechanisms** and their direct correlation to **external quality assurance**



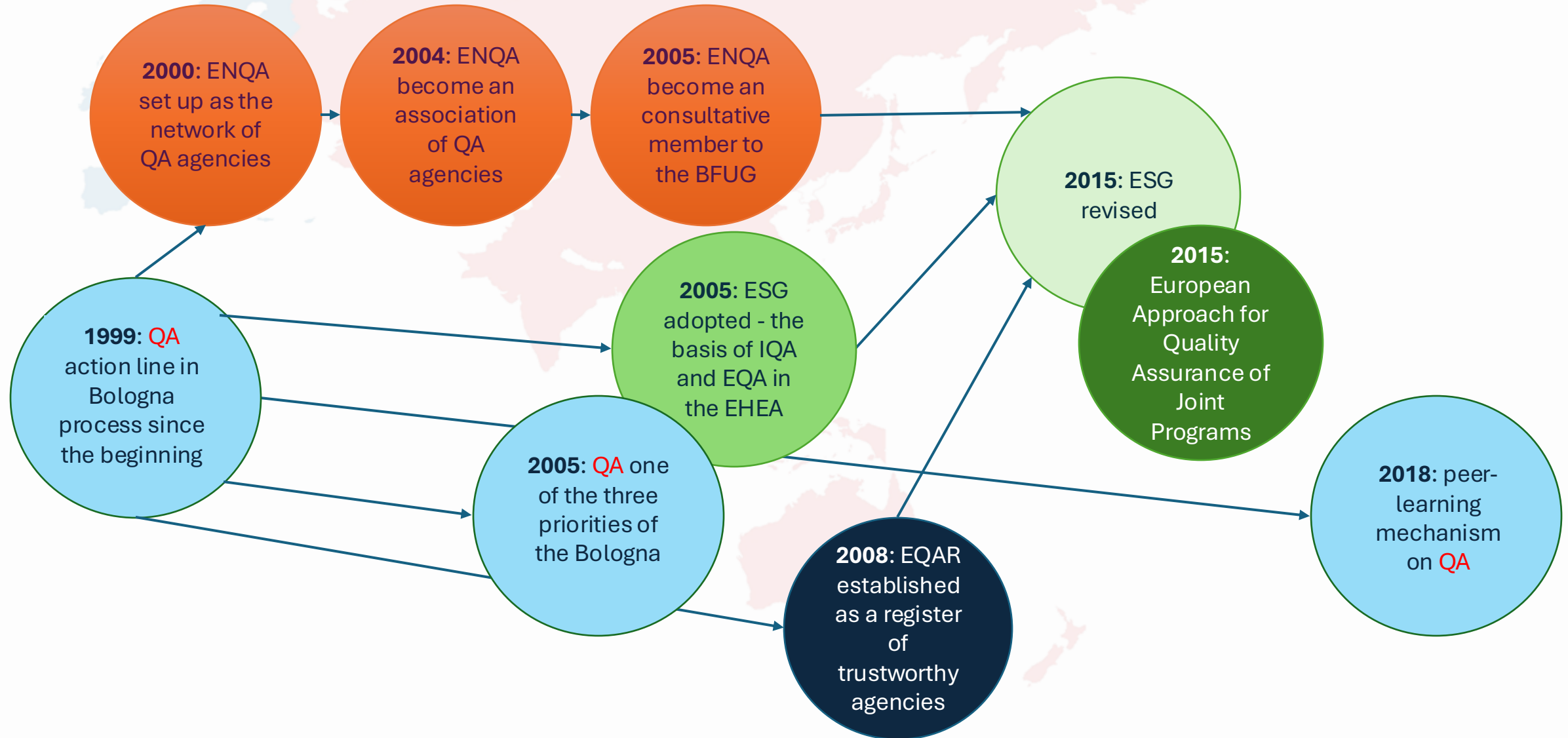
# THE EUROPEAN SYSTEM OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

- **Quality assurance systems**

- **essential for building trust** and to reinforce the attractiveness of the EHEA's offerings
- facilitating the **comparability of qualifications** throughout Europe
- **peer review** of **quality assurance** agencies on a national basis, while respecting the **commonly accepted** guidelines and criteria.

➔ **close European cooperation and mutual trust** in and acceptance of national **quality assurance** systems.

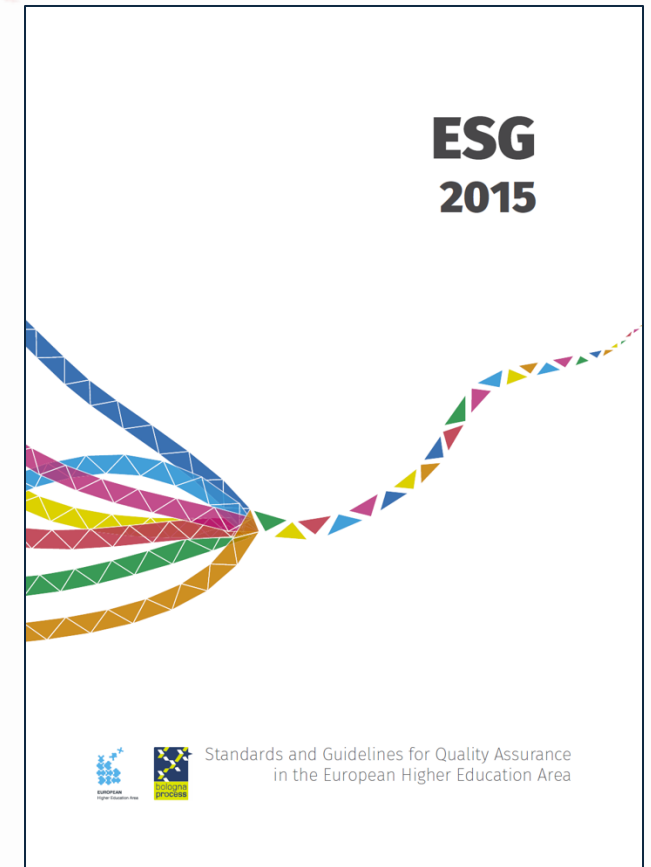
# THE EUROPEAN SYSTEM OF QUALITY ASSURANCE





# ESG

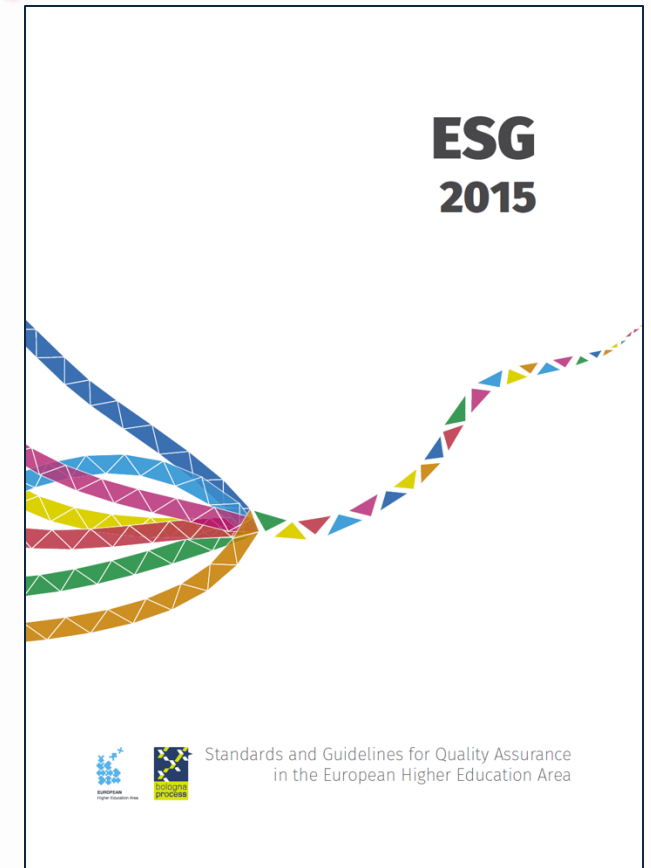
- Three parts:
  - ✓ **Internal** quality assurance
  - ✓ **External** quality assurance
  - ✓ **Quality assurance of agencies**
- The focus of the ESG is on quality assurance related to **learning and teaching** in higher education, including the learning environment and relevant links to research and innovation.



# ESG

## Four principles :

- Higher education institutions have **primary responsibility** for the quality of their provision and its assurance;
- Quality assurance responds to the **diversity** of higher education systems, institutions, programmes and students;
- Quality assurance supports the development of a **quality culture**;
- Quality assurance takes into account the needs and expectations of students, all other **stakeholders** and society.



# ESG AND BOLOGNA PROCESS COMMITMENTS

## 1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Quality assurance policies are most effective when they reflect the relationship between research and learning & teaching and take account of both the national context in which the institution operates, the institutional context and its strategic approach. Such a policy supports

...

- **academic integrity and freedom** and is vigilant against academic fraud;

....

Building on our rich and diverse European cultural heritage, we are developing an EHEA based on institutional autonomy, **academic freedom**, equal opportunities and democratic principles that will facilitate mobility, increase employability and strengthen Europe's attractiveness and competitiveness.

Together we are engaged in a process of voluntary convergence and coordinated reform of our higher education systems. This is based on public responsibility for higher education, **academic freedom**, institutional autonomy, and commitment to **integrity**.

## 1.2 Design and approval of programmes

Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended **learning outcomes**. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the **Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area**.

✓ define the expected student workload, e.g. in **ECTS**;

Adoption of a system essentially based on **two main cycles**, undergraduate and graduate.

Establishment of a **system of credits** - such as in the **ECTS** system – as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility.

*1999: Bologna Declaration*

*2007: London Communiqué*

*2015: Yerevan Communiqué*

# ESG AND BOLOGNA PROCESS COMMITMENTS

## 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

Ministers affirmed that **students should participate in and influence the organisation and content of education** at universities and other higher education institutions.

## 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student “life cycle”, e.g. student admission, progression, **recognition** and certification.

- ✓ Students need to receive documentation explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.

Adoption of a system of **easily readable and comparable degrees**, also through the implementation of the **Diploma Supplement...**

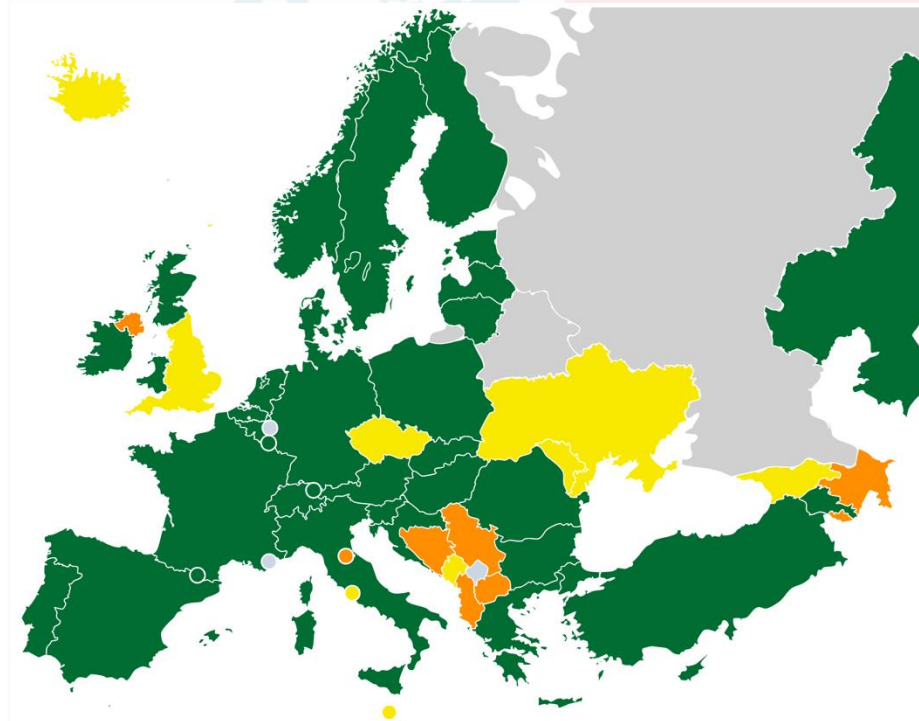
## 1.6 Learning resources and student support

Institutions should have **appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities** and ensure that adequate and readily accessible **learning resources and student support are provided**.

Ministers also reaffirmed the need, recalled by students, to take account of the **social dimension** in the Bologna process.

*1999: Bologna Declaration  
2001: Prague Communiqué*

# QUALITY ASSURANCE AND BOLOGNA PROCESS COMMITMENTS

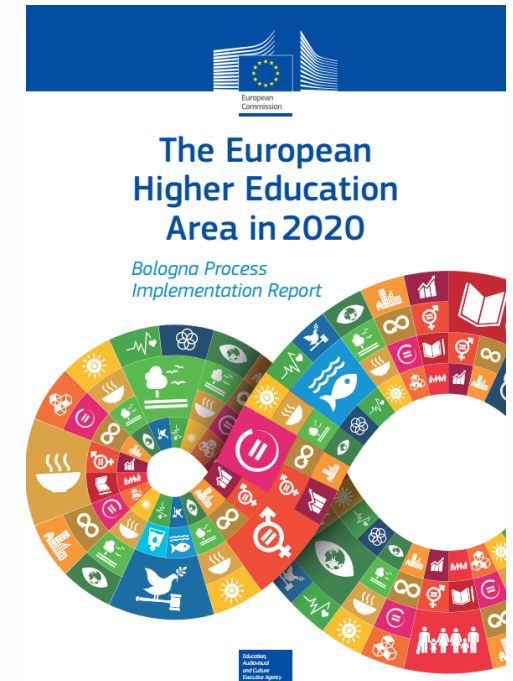


**47** members:

- **34** – QAA compliant with the ESG,
- **13** – no QAA compliant with the ESG, as proved through an external peer-review procedure.

36	<b>Systems* Fully aligned with the ESG</b> - A fully functioning quality assurance system is in operation nationwide, in which all higher education institutions are subject to regular external quality assurance by an agency that has successfully demonstrated compliance with the ESG through registration on EQAR
9	<b>Systems Partially aligned with the ESG</b> - A fully functioning quality assurance system is in operation nationwide but only some higher education institutions are subject to regular external quality assurance by an agency that has successfully demonstrated compliance with the ESG through registration on EQAR
6	<b>Systems Not aligned to the ESG</b> - A quality assurance system is in operation nationwide, but has not (yet) been fully aligned to the ESG

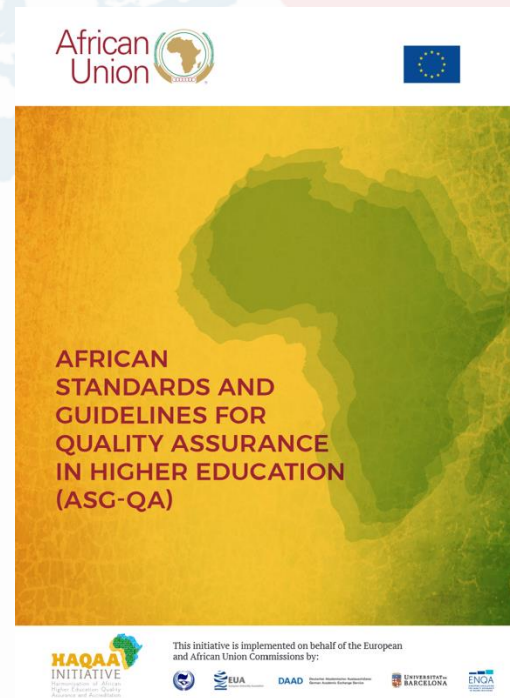
*\*47 members (Belgium – 2 systems, UK – 4 systems)  
[EQAR website, November 2025]*



***The development of higher education quality assurance systems has been one of the most significant features and drivers of change in the EHEA.***



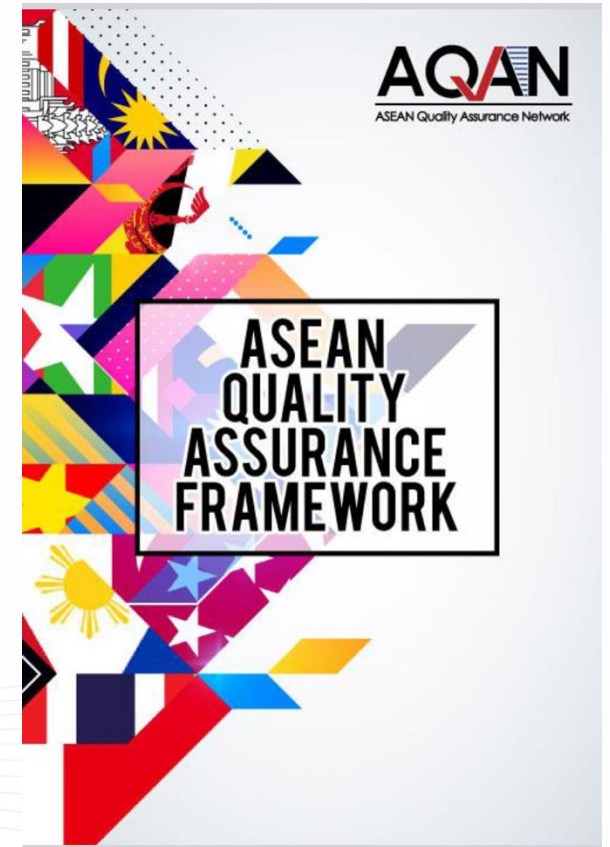
# GLOBAL FRAMEWORKS FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE





# ESG-AQAF

- ❌ High level of alignment regarding principles and content
- ➡ *good basis for inter-regional trust in outcomes of quality assurance and in the qualifications and hence forms a good basis for cooperation between higher education institutions.*
- ❌ Conditions in which the frameworks were developed and the level of implementation and, consequently, their impact and relevance in general in the two regions, differ substantially



# ENQA-AQAN

- Strategic **policy advice** to the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN)
- Joint **capacity building** and staff training with DAAD for AQAN Secretariat
- Support for strengthening AQAN **governance and review coordination**
- Contribution to the external review process of four ASEAN QA agencies
- Support to Cambodia and Vietnam on EQA development (consultancy visits)
- Engagement across other QA-related activities within SHARE extension



EUROPEAN UNION SUPPORT TO  
HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE ASEAN REGION

# ENQA-AQAN

## *MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND ASEAN QUALITY ASSURANCE NETWORK*

- ✓ Mutual understanding
- ✓ Information exchange
- ✓ Staff development



*Signed in Stockholm on 26 October 2022*

# CONCLUSIONS

- **Quality** of education is a **prerequisite** for successful international academic collaboration, which should lead to its further enhancement.
- While the responsibility for the **quality** of education stays with the higher education institutions themselves, and rely on **internal quality assurance** procedures and the **quality culture** to be maintained and further developed, **external quality assurance** procedures have a key role in building **trust** between higher education systems and institutions.
- **Quality assurance** proved to be a **key driving factor** for building the EHEA, as part of a **coherent framework** of policies and reforms meant to increase comparability and compatibility of higher education systems of the member countries.
- Building **regional frameworks** for **quality assurance** and **cooperation** between **quality assurance** agencies networks, as well as **bilateral cooperation** between **quality assurance** agencies are important tools to drive innovation, exchange good practices and build trust.
- The **alignment** between frameworks for **quality assurance** in Europe and Asean regions is a valuable enabler for cooperation in higher education.



# Thank you for your attention!

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