

**Directorate of school, out-of-school
and higher education
Higher Education and Research
Division**



***The Legitimacy of Quality Assurance
in Higher Education:
The Role of Public Authorities and
Institutions***



The Council of Europe Higher Education Forums are intended to highlight and address particular issues of concern in a regular and flexible fashion, offering a major platform for high level policy debate in the area of higher education in Europe and beyond.

***The Legitimacy of Quality Assurance in Higher Education:
The Role of Public Authorities and
Institutions***

The enhancement of the quality of European higher education at institutional, national and European levels has been among the key issues and concerns of the Bologna Process from the very beginning. In the rapidly changing environment of higher education, the provision and maintenance of high quality and standards in higher education institutions have become a major concern for institutions and governments.

The Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research (CDESR) will organise a Forum on 'The Legitimacy of Quality Assurance in Higher Education: the Role of Public Authorities and Institutions' at Council of Europe headquarters in Strasbourg. It will gather some 90 European higher education policy makers.

Within the context of the Council of Europe Higher Education Forum, this year's event will look at the triangle of public responsibility, governance and quality assurance.

In particular, it will focus on the roles and responsibilities of public authorities in quality assurance, and will consider elements of importance to the legitimacy and acceptance of quality assurance methods and results by higher education institutions, students and staff, but also by the broader society.

The Forum will explore different understandings and practices of quality assurance in different countries within and across Europe, considering in particular three case studies from Bulgaria, Ireland and Poland.

Finding the balance between the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area as adopted by European ministers of education in Bergen in 2005, the systems of national quality assurance and quality assurance at the level of higher education institutions in each country is a major challenge. How to build a common understanding and mutual trust to have quality assurance decisions made in one 'Bologna' country adopted in others?

In keeping with the Council of Europe's long-standing activities on the recognition of qualifications, the relationship between recognition and quality assurance will also be of importance. Quality assurance is an important first step in individual recognition. Fair recognition of qualifications needs full implementation of quality assurance and cooperation among quality assurance systems across the European Higher Education Area. This is of particular importance for the cross-border qualifications and joint degrees.

While most public debate focuses on quality *assurance*, there is every reason to underline that quality *development* is an equally important aspect. Quality development is a precondition for quality assurance, and it is in particular the responsibility of higher education institutions and of the academic community. Public authorities, however, play an important role in laying down the framework within which both quality development and quality assurance can take place with a reasonable investment of resources and effort

The interactive format of the Forum, including case studies, a panel discussion on the acceptance for quality assurance and group discussions is intended first and foremost to contribute to collective thinking and debate on the relevant topics, with a view to coming up with a forward-looking statement.

Tuesday 19 September**08h00 – 09h00 – Registration**

In front of Room 9, second floor of the main building

9h00 – 9h15 - Opening and welcome

Welcome by **Luc Weber**, the Chair of the CDESR and Sjur Bergan, Head, Higher Education and History Teaching Department, Council of Europe

9h15-10h00 - Setting the scene : Approaches to and rationales for quality assurance in higher education in Europe. Presentation and discussion

Chair: **Virgílio Meira Soares**, member of the Bureau of the CDESR

Speakers

- o **Luc Weber**, Chair of the Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research (CDESR)

10h00 – 10h30 - Break**10h30 – 12h00 - Role, responsibilities and means of public authorities and institutions**

Chair: **Virgílio Meira Soares**, member of the Bureau of the CDESR

Speakers

- o **Alberto Amaral**, Center for Research on Higher Education Policies, (CIPES)
- o **Ossi V Lindqvist**, Chair of the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC)

12h00 – 14h00 Lunch**14h00 – 14h45 - Examples of practice with three case studies**

Chair: **Jean-Marc Rapp**, Rector, University of Lausanne

Speakers

- o Bulgaria: **Patricia Georgieva**
- o Ireland: **Fergal Costello**
- o Poland: **Andrzej Ceynowa**

14h45 – 16h45 - Panel discussion: How to win acceptance for quality assurance

Moderator: **Germain Dondelinger**, member of the Bureau of the CDESR

Participants

- o **Dhurata Bozo**, Director of the Accreditation Agency for Higher Education in Albania
- o **Jean-Marc Rapp**, Rector, University of Lausanne
- o **Peter Williams**, President of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)
- o **Colin Tück**, Student representative, the National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB)
- o **Aybar Ertepinar**, Deputy Chair of the Higher Education Council of Turkey

16h45 – 1700 – Summing up of the first dayGeneral Rapporteur

- o **Lewis Purser**, Assistant Director (Academic Affairs), Irish Universities Association

Wednesday 20 September**09h00 – 09h45 - Introduction to Group discussions**

Chair: **Emmi Helle**, Acting Secretary General of ENQA

The topics of all discussion groups will be introduced in a joint plenary session as follows:

- Groups A and B **Jürgen Kohler**, member of the CDESR Bureau
- Group C **Andrejs Rauhvargers**, member of the CDESR Bureau
- Group D **Peter Williams**, President of ENQA

10h00 – 12h00 - Group Discussions

Group A QA: Role, responsibilities and means of public authorities

Chair: *Jürgen Kohler*
Rapporteur: *Michael Hörig*

Group B QA: Implications for governance of institutions and systems (bilingual session)

Chair: *Jean-Marc Rapp*
Rapporteur: *Gro Beate Vige*

Group C QA and recognition of qualifications, including trans-national provisions

Chair: *Andrejs Rauhvargers*
Rapporteur: *to be decided*

Group D Implementation of the guidelines adopted by the European Ministers responsible for higher education in Bergen, May 2005

Chair: *Peter Williams*
Rapporteur: *Hélène Lagier*

12h00 – 13h30 - Lunch**13h30 – 14h30 - The use of outcomes of quality assurance**

Chair: **Radu Damian**, Vice-Chair of the CDESR

Speaker

- o **Norman Sharp**, Head of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (Scottish office)

14h30 – 15h30 - General Report and adoption of recommendations

Chair: **Radu Damian**, Vice-Chair of the CDESR

General Rapporteur

- o **Lewis Purser**, Assistant Director (Academic Affairs), Irish Universities Association