

# **Strengthening a Quality Culture in Europe's Universities**

**Robin Middlehurst,  
University of Surrey, UK**

# Agenda

- **Relevance of this theme to the European Higher Education Area & beyond**
- **Key references and projects: EUA and others**
- **Topical debates**
- **Policy & action points**

# Relevance...

“Quality is the basic underlying condition for trust, relevance, mobility, compatability and attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area”

(Prague Communiqué)

# Relevance...

- Essential for autonomy, identity and positioning of institutions
- Essential to collaboration or competition
- Essential to learning experience for students, working environment for staff and sustainability of research
- Essential for accountability to all stakeholders

# Relevance....

- Important for the general goals of the Bologna process: increased transparency & attractiveness (coherent, compatible, competitive)
- Useful for mutual learning and building common understandings across HEIs
- Important for development of European Knowledge & Learning Society
- Important for TNE & international QA

# **A Quality Culture is....**

- **A place of vibrant intellectual and educational attainment - with a strong reputation**
- **A way of working where everyone strives to improve, develop and extend the intellectual and educational life of the university**
- **An institution that knows and challenges itself and is open and responsive to change**
- **Developed and supported by effective leadership, management and governance**

# **EUA Quality Culture Project**

- **Origins in EUA action plan 2001-3**
- **Aim to embed systematic, coherent quality culture in HEIs**
- **Supported by EC & Socrates Programme + extra funding**
- **Working method: mutual learning**
- **29 countries, 40 universities**

# EUA Quality Culture Project

- **Six Networks:** Research management, teaching & learning, student support services, implementing Bologna reforms, collaborative arrangements, communication flow and decision-making structures
- **Each HEI:** SWOT analysis & action plan
- **Network meetings:** principles, goals & structures needed
- **Reports being written:** findings & issues
- **Next steps:** publication autumn 2003 + Phase II



# Related projects

- Institutional Evaluation Programme
- The Management Seminar
- ENQA projects
- UNESCO

# Topical Debates

- Diversity of current QA systems
- Variety of European interest groups
- Link to professional training and mobility
- Links between QA, recognition of qualifications, ECTS
- Wider international scene: UNESCO, GATS, US accreditation
- Wider competition + collaboration

# **Policy & Action points**

- **Concrete proposals for universities to develop & monitor quality internally**
- **Concrete actions to promote transparency, recognition, quality & the Bologna process**
- **Clarify responsibilities of actors and stakeholders**
- **Report back...**