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HAQAA3 EQA TRAINING –
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EXTERNAL QA IN EUROPE - IN A NUTSHELL



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

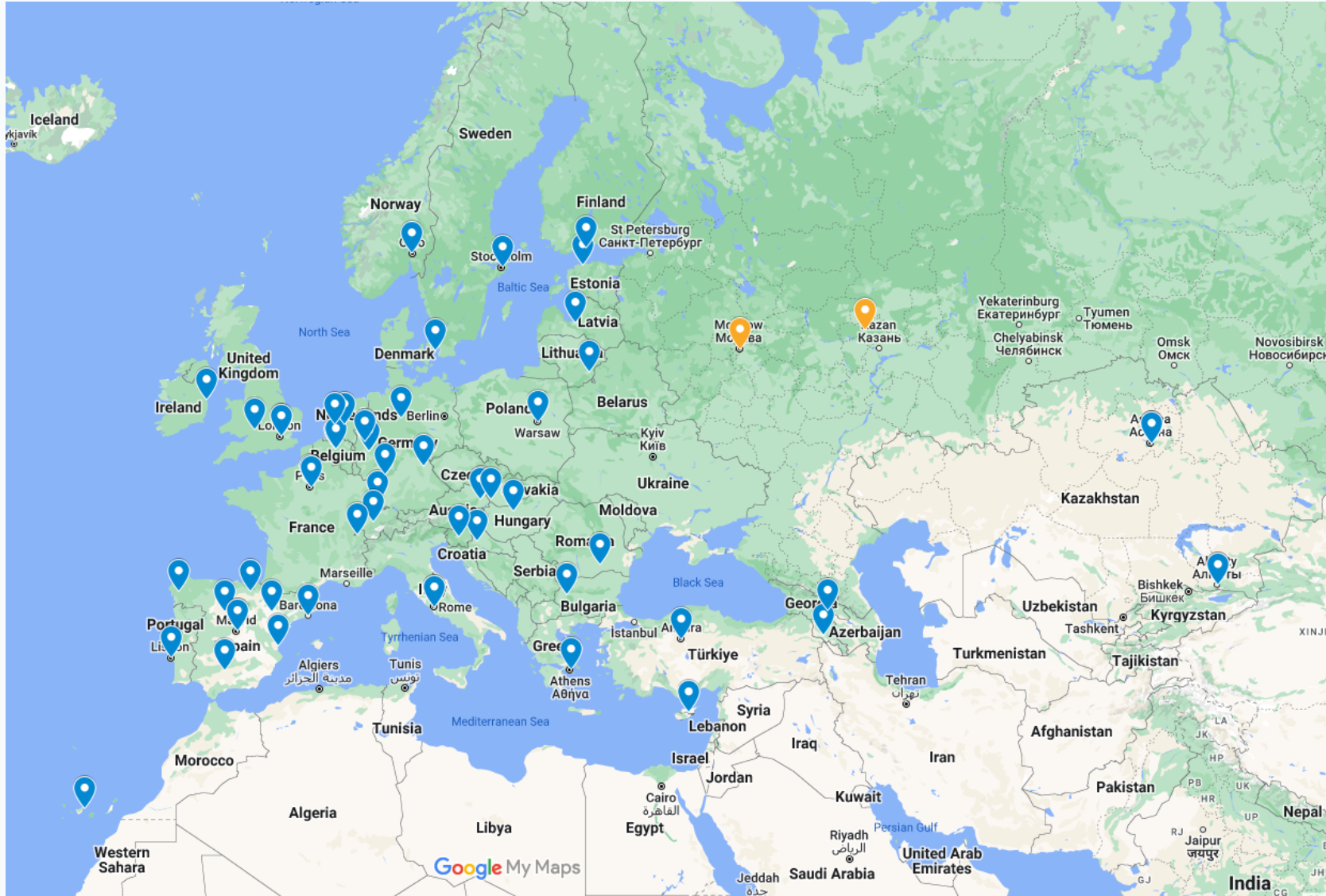
QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

- QA: one action line in the **Bologna Process (ministries of HE in Europe) since the beginning** (1999)
- 2005: Joint Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)
- 2008: European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), established by E4 → list of “trustworthy agencies”
- 2015: revised ESG adopted; European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes adopted
- 2018: start of “thematic peer groups” (TPG) on three Bologna Process key commitments, including quality assurance
- 2024-2026: Revision process of the ESG

THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION – ENQA

- Umbrella NGO for European QA agencies
- Network in 2000; association in 2004,
- Membership organization with 60 very active members from 32 countries and 42 contributing affiliates from 26 countries
- Structure: Board, General Assembly, Secretariat, Agency Review Committee, Complaints Commission

ENQA – MEMBER AGENCIES (60 IN 32 COUNTRIES)



- Participation in **policy making**
 - Consultative member in the **Bologna Follow-up Group** since 2005
 - Co-operation within “**E4**” (EUA - Universities, ESU – Students , EURASHE – Universities of Applied Sciences, ENQA - Agencies)
 - Dialogue with the **European Commission**
 - **Participation** in Ministers’ Conferences
- Coordination of **external reviews** of QA agencies (members and beyond)
- **Dissemination of information** on experiences, good practice and new developments in the field of QA to members and other stakeholders
- Organisation of **events**, including co-organization of European QA Forum (EQAF) with European universities
- Partner in **European and international projects (HAQ**
- Founding member of the **European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)**
- Coordination of **thematic working groups** to support QA development

- To improve the **education available to students** in higher education institutions in the EHEA;
- To **assist higher education institutions** in managing and enhancing their quality and, thereby, to help to justify their institutional autonomy;
- To form a **background for quality assurance agencies** in their work;
- To make external quality assurance **more transparent** and simpler to understand for everybody involved;
- To provide a **source of assistance** and guidance to higher education institutions and other relevant agencies in developing **their own culture of quality assurance**;
- To **inform and raise the expectations** of higher education institutions, students, employers and other stakeholders about the processes and outcomes of higher education;
- To contribute to a **common frame of reference** for the provision of higher education and the assurance of quality within the EHEA.

- **ESG/set of joint criteria:** ESG are the basis for national criteria, but the implementation them in EHEA differ and national criteria still play an important role. Advantage: stakeholders in HE have a joint point of reference. There is a jointness and comparability in EHEA although the differences are high.
- **Methodology:**
 - some countries were coming from **programme accreditation** and changed over the years to institutional accreditation as method of EQA (GB);
 - in Germany both approaches are in use and applied depending on the decision of the university
 - European Commission promotes institutional approach in future;
 - Several countries are now developing solutions for institutional review of HEIs
- **Approches in EQA:** there is not “one model serves all” in Europe but some aspects which are considered to be best practice (use of ESG, 4-steps procedure, peer-review with stakeholders in panel, publication of results, follow-up on outcome etc.)

- Most of EHEA countries have **national agencies** which have a wide range of tasks, e.g.
 - to assess university education and VET,
 - ENIC-NARIC function,
 - setting the accreditation standards,
 - Reporting to Ministry of Education,
 - consultancy of universities,
 - certification of professorships
- Some countries have **several agencies** with same or slightly different tasks due to a regional principle (Germany, Spain).
- **Wide range of legal forms:** some founded by ministries (public body), some by universities or professional bodies (private bodies – not profit or for gain).
- **Roles differ:** gatekeeper, EQA-reviews only, body for recognition, consultant of HEIs
- **Activities depend on national laws!** Between accountability and enhancement, e.g. institutional accreditation is combined with additional criteria to help universities to support their profiles (sustainability)

- Only two levels in Europe which are relevant for standards: national and European
- European criteria (ESG) are the basis of criteria in 48 national systems. This is checked in ENQA reviews of national agencies.
- ESG are “common reference point” for all agencies. This makes cooperation of agencies easier, e.g. in joint assessment procedures. Pilot project: national and international accreditation in one procedure.
- When ESG are revised now, also stakeholders contribute and might bring in national ideas.
- Intercontinental exchange on criteria took and takes place (ASG, ESG)

- QA-systems reflect the **tradition of each individual Higher Education System!**
- Shaping your own EQA system: Ask yourself...
 - How your HE-system looks like? (few institutions/many institutions? strong/small agency? Which role plays the ministry? Which role play the universities?)
 - Are there several QA-bodies in your country? How are the tasks divided?
 - What is the overall target of your QA system? Avoiding degree mills, developmental approach, excellency?
- **Worth considering:** the Irish and Scottish approach are very enhancement oriented and have a close exchange with the universities. Idea of partners in the HE-area. This works well if you have small systems and with mature (traditional) universities.
- **Element of success:**
 - in times of disruption a **culture of jointness** might bring success, but it takes effort to implement structures and create trust.
 - Networks enable exchange among agencies on “good practice”



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