

## Council for Higher Education Accreditation International Quality Group



### (CIQG) Sixth Annual Meeting

The sixth annual meeting of the CHEA International Quality Group (CIQG) took place in Washington, DC, January 31 – February 1, 2018. A global quality forum, the focus of the meeting was politics, government and quality assurance worldwide, especially how the emerging new nationalism and populism are affecting quality assurance and higher education and the longstanding commitment to internationalization. Approximately 200 colleagues from 31 countries came together to explore these issues, share ideas and reflect on future opportunities and challenges.



Frank Bruni

Frank Bruni, Op-Ed columnist for *The New York Times*, led off the meeting, focused on the condition of higher education in the United States and future needs of students and society. Participants also heard from speakers from Germany, Africa, Canada, Egypt, New Zealand, Nigeria, Thailand, Belgium and the UK, accompanied by leaders from major multi-national organizations that included UNESCO, the International Association of Universities (IAU), the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and the European Commission.

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## UNESCO Regional Consultation Meeting for Western Europe

### *The Role of Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Challenges, Developments and Trends*

Geneva, Switzerland, 15-16 February 2018

The UNESCO Regional Consultation Meeting for Western Europe was organized in Geneva, Switzerland, in cooperation with the Swiss Agency of Accreditation and Quality Assurance (AAQ). It was the fourth regional preparatory event for the International Quality Assurance Conference, to be held in Paris in November 2018. CHEA/CIQG, as one of UNESCO's partners for the International Conference, was represented at two previous regional meetings (Arab States, Bahrain, February 2017 and Asia-Pacific, Shenzhen, China, June 2017) by CIQG Advisory Council members from the region. At the Geneva meeting for Western Europe, Judith Eaton, CHEA President, participated as keynote speaker and Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić, CHEA Senior Advisor on International Affairs, as a participant.

Quality assurance (QA) was approached from different perspectives. Patrick Aebischer, President Emeritus of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (EPFL), Lausanne, gave a personal view of quality and linked it to the university autonomy, believing it needs to be decoupled from politics.

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## CHEA International Quality Group (CIQG) Sixth Annual Meeting

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Meeting topics ranged from the role of regional higher education and quality assurance organizations to fighting academic corruption worldwide to the relationship and potential tension between institutional autonomy and social accountability to the role of multilateralism and the interaction of politics, social justice and quality. The conversations were spirited and reflected the participants' deep understanding, expertise and experience in these areas.

Major themes emerging from the meeting included: 1) the important and growing role of regional efforts to address quality moving forward and the role of qualifications frameworks, rankings and mutual recognition; 2) the need for greater attention to academic corruption from quality assurance, noting that it is a difficult and controversial subject and 3) an acknowledgment that institutional autonomy and social accountability are not mutually exclusive, that they are in a state of flux and how each is viewed is influenced by country and region. A fourth theme focused on the expanding leadership role of multinational organizations such as UNESCO in defining and framing quality assurance across nations and regions.

The meeting concluded with a strong sense that quality assurance and higher education must place a high priority on change in practice and responsiveness to the environment. There were calls for refreshing the vision for quality for all higher education providers. Participants spoke to their valuing of the past but, at the same time, the need to build constructively and go beyond traditional approaches and practices. Valuing academic excellence, academic freedom, institutional autonomy remains vital, but building a future that acts on these values differently is essential. An excitement permeated the various conversations.

For additional information about the CIQG 2018 Annual Meeting, please click [here](#) to view all meeting presentations and [here](#) to read the various *University World News* articles about the meeting.↪



*Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić, CHEA Senior Advisor on International Affairs; Susanna Karakhanyan, President of INQAAHE, and Libing Wang, Chief of the Section for Educational Innovation and Skills in the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, address the current interaction of politics, social justice and quality and the role of multilateralism.*

## UNESCO Regional Consultation Meeting for Western Europe

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Teresa Sanchez Chaparro of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) underscored the importance of linking External Quality Assurance (EQA) with the recognition of qualifications while Ebba Ossiannilsson (International Council for Distance Education, ICDE) and George Ubachs (European Association of Distance Teaching Universities, EADTU) presented different models of QA in Open and Distance Learning. Refreshing was the presentation by Director of Education at Kiron Open Higher Education, Florian Rampelt, on Quality Assurance Tools for MOOCs Based Curricula, introducing digital certification but also the challenging issue of the education of migrants, some 170 million people of school age. Judith Eaton (CHEA) pointed to the incredible transformation of higher education that needs to be matched by the transformation of quality assurance and accreditation through constant innovation, adaptation and change.

The general conclusion was that the higher education landscape was changing at such a fast pace that it challenges QA to innovate and change to stay relevant. Some discussants noted that the national context defines QA, that there was no absolute definition of QA and that the focus should be on “assurance.”

A distinctive feature of this particular event was the variety of stakeholders contributing to its programme. In addition to the QA community, higher education institutions and business, there was a deliberate attempt to bring in the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) community through such organizations as the European Association for Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU) and the International Council for Distance Education (ICDE)



The UNESCO *Global Education Monitoring Report*, (full report available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0025/002593/259338e.pdf>) presented by its director, Manos Antoninis, was devoted to “Accountability in Education: Meeting our Commitments (2017/8),” highlighted the existing disparities in education around the world and emphasized that accountability was a shared responsibility of a wide range of stakeholders, including those in higher education.

Institutional perspectives on, e.g., social responsibility and internationalization were addressed in a roundtable chaired by Hilligje van’t Land, Secretary-General of the International Association of Universities (IAU), going beyond the economic integration of the EU and the competitiveness and employment agenda for higher education.

The next regional consultation meeting for Eastern Europe was announced and will take place in Moscow on 22-23 April 2018. The results of the six regional meetings will be brought to the UNESCO Global Conference on Higher Education to be held in Paris on 21-23 November 2018.↵

# Getting Higher Education Back on the Road to Somewhere

*Sir John Daniel, Research Associate – Contact North | Contact Nord*

Upheavals and tremors in the political landscape have been particularly striking in Britain and the United States, but all countries are feeling their impact. A common analysis of the rise of populism, the central feature of the new politics, holds that the old political spectrum of left and right has been superseded by a continuum of attitudes ranging from open to closed. I explored this development in a paper to the CIQG 2017 Annual Meeting that was subsequently published in *Change*.

In his recent book, *The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics*, David Goodhart proposes a fresh dichotomy, “between the mobile, ‘achieved’ identity of the people from Anywhere, and the marginalised, roots-based identity of the people from Somewhere.” This schism accounts for the Brexit vote in the UK, the election of Donald Trump in the United States, the decline of the centre-left generally and the rise of populism across Europe. The Somewhere backlash is a democratic response to the dominance of Anywhere interests in everything from mass higher education to mass immigration.

For Goodhart, higher education is one of the principal villains of the piece, the other being mass immigration, which universities have largely supported, especially in the UK. A goodly proportion of the people from Anywhere have higher education and did not vote for either Brexit or Trump, whilst for the people from Somewhere, the reverse is true. He argues that a major reason for the divide is that both politicians and, more understandably, university lobbyists, have energetically promoted degree-level programmes at the expense of postsecondary courses of more value to the Somewheres.

His analysis focusses largely on the UK, which has had its economy and international standing hit hardest, and probably irreversibly, by the disaffection of the Somewheres expressed in the Brexit vote. In the United States, the Somewheres believe that they have an ally in Donald Trump, although whether his tenure in the White House will enable them to make up lost ground in status and income against the Anywheres is more doubtful. France and Germany may have avowedly internationalist governments, but they have travelled less far down the road of globalisation and have preserved more effective educational provision for the Somewheres than the UK. Countries that have not yet reached the stage of mass higher education should consider the UK as a cautionary tale.

In the UK, degree-level higher education has swept all before it, not merely in numbers, but in curricular focus. Goodhart tells the story in some striking figures. That country is spending £17 billion (\$23bn) a year on higher education against only £1.5 billion (\$2.2bn) on adult skills. Not surprisingly, the provision of technical and vocational education has shrunk by 80 percent in 20 years. Furthermore, much of the focus of adult skills training has shifted from employer-funded, job-specific training to state funding of generalist skills. Many skilled trades courses have been closed, to be replaced by the provision of business studies programmes mainly offered by proprietary providers.

Almost as serious as the resultant failure to produce the skilled technical workers sought by industry is the aspiration gap that the promotion of degree-level courses has opened up. Goodhart quotes a survey showing that 98 percent of British mothers want their children to go to university, a sure recipe for future resentment. Moreover, even those who make it into universities may be disappointed. He talks of many young people from Somewhere backgrounds “emerging with the graduate tag but ill-equipped for the most highly skilled professional jobs and unwilling to take lower end ones.” Furthermore, “all the survey evidence, in both the UK and the United States, suggests that it is the idea that the Golden Age is behind us, rather than just ahead, and that children will not automatically live better lives their parents, that has caused most anxiety.”



*Sir John Daniel*

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## Getting Higher Education Back on the Road to Somewhere

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In sum, the sense of dislocation that has accompanied the shift from an industrial to a knowledge-based economy has left many of the Somewhere people in the bottom half of the income and education spectrum feeling demoralised and disrespected.

How should this impact our thinking about quality in higher education? The central conclusion is that both institutional and government policies must pay more attention to “doing the right thing” rather than merely “doing the thing right.” The rush of formerly vocational institutions to define excellence in terms of research output and rankings, and the push to recruit

international students at the expense of serving local economies, have yielded unanticipated and unpleasant political outcomes for universities. Nothing but a major shift of focus will right the imbalance that has been created.↻

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1. Daniel, John S. (2017). “A Changing World: Expectations of Higher Education,” *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 49:4, 8-13, doi: 10.1080/00091383.2017.1355208.
  2. Goodhart, David (2017) *The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics*, Hurst & Co., London

The *CIQG Website* provides an outstanding resource for information about quality assurance internationally.

- *CIQG Policy Briefs*
- *The CHEA-CIQG Publication Series*
- Issues of *Quality International*, the CIQG Newsletter
- Translations of the *CIQG International Quality Principles* and other publications
- CIQG Annual Meeting presentations
- An *International Directory* of quality assurance bodies, accrediting organizations and Ministries of Education in countries around the world

Visit

the CIQG

Website

Visit the CIQG Website whenever you need information on quality assurance internationally or on CIQG activities.

# Introducing Karl Dittrich, The New President of the European Quality Assurance Register For Higher Education (EQAR)

## Interview Conducted by Stamenka Uvalić-Trumblić

**Question #1: What was the route that led you to head this institution which plays an important role in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)?**

While I started my career as a political science researcher I took an interest in higher education policy in my role as member and later chair of the Executive Board of the University of Maastricht. My work in quality assurance followed as part of the Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation (NVAO) where I started off as inaugural chairman, in 2005. In that capacity I held functions in the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) Board and the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). Once I retired from chairing the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU) in 2017, I looked to further my involvement in supporting and strengthening European ideals and cooperation in the field of higher education.



*Karl Dittrich*

The European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) plays a key role in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by guaranteeing the quality of the quality assurance (QA) agencies and promoting trust in and between them, a precondition for recognition and mobility of students and staff. Exchange and mobility promote understanding between European citizens and help us build strong, democratic and equal societies. Building and strengthening a European identity and culture will be vital for the new phase Europe has to enter.

**Question #2: In CIQG's *Quality International* Volume 5, January 2015, we interviewed Colin Tück, who was enthusiastic about the *Recognising International Quality Assurance Activity* (RIQAA) project, allowing EQAR members to assure quality across borders. How has this project evolved in the past three years?**

Following changes to the EQAR organisational structure, the position of president was introduced in 2017, allowing me to put forward my candidature. My term as president comes at an opportune time, as EQAR is celebrating its tenth anniversary. Founded by the E4 – ENQA, the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), the European Students' Union (ESU) and the European University Association (EUA) – in 2008, EQAR started off with 19 governmental members and three agencies registered; and it now has 39 governmental members supporting the organization, and 45 registered agencies that have demonstrated their compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). My ambition is to have all Bologna signatories become members of EQAR!

The RIQAA project's aim was to inform policy makers on the existing legal provisions and to provide information on how higher education institutions make use of the existing possibilities to request quality reviews by foreign agencies, as well as the rationale behind it. We found that the project results were well received by governments and stakeholders. The results of the RIQAA report were taken into the Message to the Yerevan Ministerial Conference adopted by the EQAR General Assembly (2015), and the ministers further committed themselves to enable our higher education institutions to use a suitable EQAR-registered agency for their external quality assurance process.

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## Introducing Karl Dittrich

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Three years later, we can see an increase in the EHEA, with four new countries that have enabled their higher education institutions to choose a suitable agency from the Register for their compulsory external evaluation, accreditation or audit. The data collected in the past three years by EQAR show that cross-border external QA activities are carried out in almost all EHEA countries and that these activities mostly take place in countries that recognise the activity of EQAR-registered agencies as part of the regular accreditation procedure. Currently, only 17 countries make a specific reference to using suitable EQAR-registered ESG-compliant agencies and thus make full use of the established European framework for quality assurance. While progress is slow, it is reasonable to expect further progress in this direction, with an increase of cross-border QA activities and an increase of the EQAR-registered agencies that carry out reviews internationally. I hope the Paris-communiqué of next May will plead for more cross-border cooperation and using simple methods to reach that goal.

### **Question #3: EQAR has prepared a new Strategy 2018-2022. Could you give us the highlights of this document?**

The Strategy 2018-2022 reflects the goals of the organization to provide reliable and widely used information on registered agencies' activities in order to enhance transparency and information and to provide the foundation for trust and recognition.

In its new strategy, EQAR will prioritise and emphasise certain aspects of EQAR's specific activities, i.e., managing the Register in a fair and consistent way through its Register Committee; using analyses of the Register Committee's decisions, as well as the information available on registered agencies and their activities, to provide the sector with statistics; maintaining public knowledge base on legal frameworks for external QA and contributing to the EHEA working structures. This, of course reflects the conviction that cooperation between countries and between higher education institutions (HEIs), and strategy enhancing mobility will strengthen Europe.

One particularly new activity of the strategy is the establishment of a Database of External QA Results (DEQAR), that has been endorsed by EQAR members and has been awarded a grant by the European Commission (Erasmus+ Key Action 3, 2017-2019) to support its development. This database will include a list of HEIs and study programs that have been externally reviewed by an EQAR-registered QA agency, including access to their external QA reports and decisions. EQAR has conducted a feasibility study for such a database, which concluded that it would be both feasible as well as useful for a broad range of users and, in particular, for recognition officers to satisfy their information needs and support different types of decisions.



Having a common European database of quality-assured study programs and HEIs represents a significant step towards closing the existing information gaps in the European Higher Education Area. But this database will also contribute to developing stronger cooperation with other regions and networks. I am very much looking forward to that as well!☺

# International Seminar on Quality and Excellence in Higher Education

(New Delhi, India, 22-23 February 2018)

by Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić



*Judith Eaton*

The International Seminar was jointly organized by the Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education (CPRHE), National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) and the British Council in India. Prof. N.V. Varghese, Vice-Chancellor of NUEPA, a member of the CIQG Advisory Council, opened the Seminar, part of a series organized on a regular basis on a variety of research topics in higher education.

The objectives of the Seminar, at a time when governments and institutions recognize the vital role of higher education in achieving economic growth and sustainable development, was to have a rich debate on key issues related to quality. These included student diversity, learning and teaching; external quality assurance and internal quality assurance; resources and funding for quality; World Class Universities, global rankings and excellence in higher education; and international quality regimes and regional quality networks. This year's Seminar offered a host of opportunities for intellectual debate among some 150 delegates, with a predominantly Indian audience of academics, policymakers and senior managers in higher education and close to 20 invited foreign guests.

In her opening keynote, which set the framework for the Seminar, Judith Eaton, CHEA President, gave an overview of global trends in higher education, quality assurance and accreditation. Through ten succinct points, she illustrated the major transformations higher education is facing and the challenges quality assurance and accreditation need to respond to in order to remain relevant.

Panel discussions were based on papers presented by the authors, and then debated by the participants. The first one dealt with Rankings and World Class Universities demonstrating that national rankings were increasing in popularity, such as the Moscow International University Rankings for Russian institutions.

External quality assurance and internal quality assurance were at the heart of the discussions, demonstrating that the focus was shifting from external to internal quality assurance and that greater emphasis was placed on the assessment of students' learning outcomes. Effective internal quality assurance measures also help entry of graduates into the labour market. (Papers were presented by Stephen Jackson, formerly from the Quality Assurance Association, UK; Michaela Martin from UNESCO/IIEP and Anupam Pachauri, India.)

The case of Dubai as host to a great number of cross-border providers, in particular international branch campuses was presented by two speakers (Nitesh Sughnani and Solomon Arulraj David), explaining its specific higher education landscape in a territory with 90 percent of expatriate population. Complementarity is assured between accreditation provided by the Federal Ministry of Education's Commission for Academic Accreditation for higher education institutions outside the free zones and the University Quality Assurance International Board (UQAIB), which provides quality assurance for foreign higher education providers and international branch campuses.

Goolam Mohamedbhai, from Mauritius, former Secretary-General of the Association of African Universities (AAU) and CIQG Advisory Council member, presented the main developments within the continental African regional quality assurance network, AfriQAN, and activities of emerging sub-regional networks.



*Goolam Mohamedbhai*

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# International Seminar on Quality and Excellence in Higher Education

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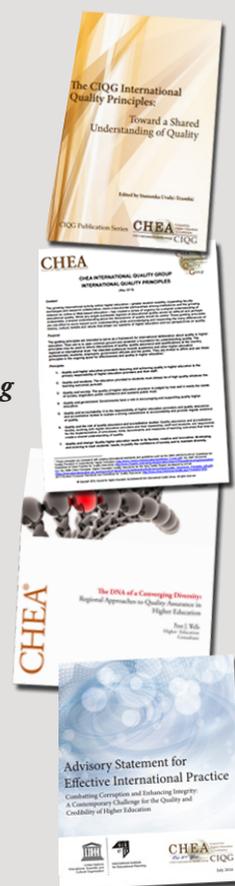
Wang Libing, from the UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok, discussed regional quality assurance networks and activities in Asia-Pacific, with a special focus on achieving the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 4, devoted to education. Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić, CHEA Senior Advisor on International Affairs and former UNESCO Head of Higher Education, speaking from an international perspective, reviewed UNESCO's most salient activities in quality assurance over the years, gave an overview of new quality assurance tools, such as those for alternative providers, including Open and Distance Learning, and recalled that quality was the main responsibility of the provider, highlighting the *CIQG International Quality Principles*.

The Seminar ended with an Open Panel on Student Diversity and Quality. The need for a space to be created for basic academic values and the importance of assuring equity in higher education permeated the Seminar discussions. ↻



## CHEA/CIQG Publications in Translation

- ***CIQG International Quality Principles***  
Available in Arabic, Chinese, French, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and English
- ***CIQG International Quality Principles: Toward a Shared Understanding of Quality***  
Available in Chinese, French and English
- ***CHEA/CIQG and IIEP-UNESCO Advisory Statement on Combatting Academic Corruption***  
Available in Chinese, French and English
- ***Is Big Brother Watching You? The Evolving Role of the State in Regulating and Conducting Quality Assurance***  
Available in Arabic, Chinese and English
- ***The DNA of a Converging Diversity: Regional Approaches to Quality Assurance in Higher Education***  
Available in Chinese and English
- ***Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education***  
Available in French and English
- ***CHEA/UNESCO Statement on Effective Practice to Discourage Degree Mills in Higher Education***  
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