

# Accreditation Going Global

Quality Assurance and Accreditation: Multiple Demands: Multiple  
Challenges

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# European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)



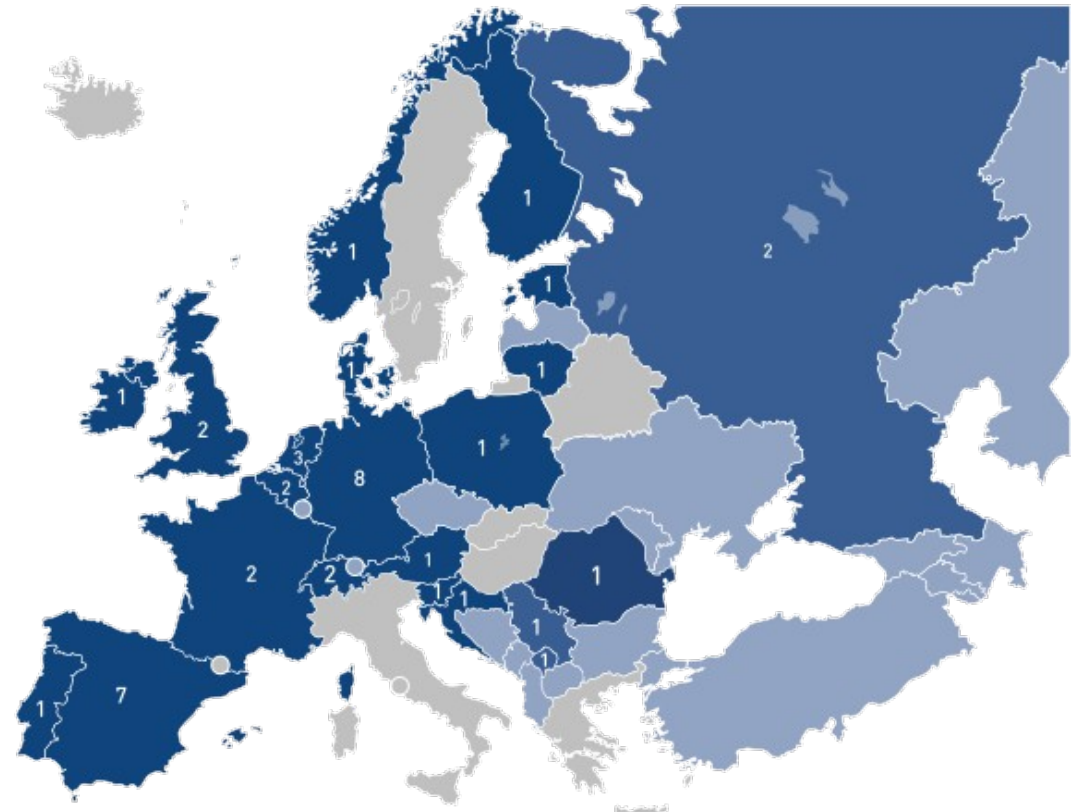
- Established by E4 at Ministers' request
- Jointly governed by stakeholders and governments
- Non-profit and independent, acting in the public interest
- **Mission:** *enhancing trust and confidence in EHEA*
- **Main role:** to manage a register of QAAs that comply substantially with the ESG



# EHEA framework on QA



- European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)
  - Modernised and improved 2015 version
  - Common ground for QA in Europe
- European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)
  - Agencies that comply substantially with the ESG – at home and abroad
  - Processes for substantive changes and complaints



- 42 registered QAAs
- Governmental members without registered agency

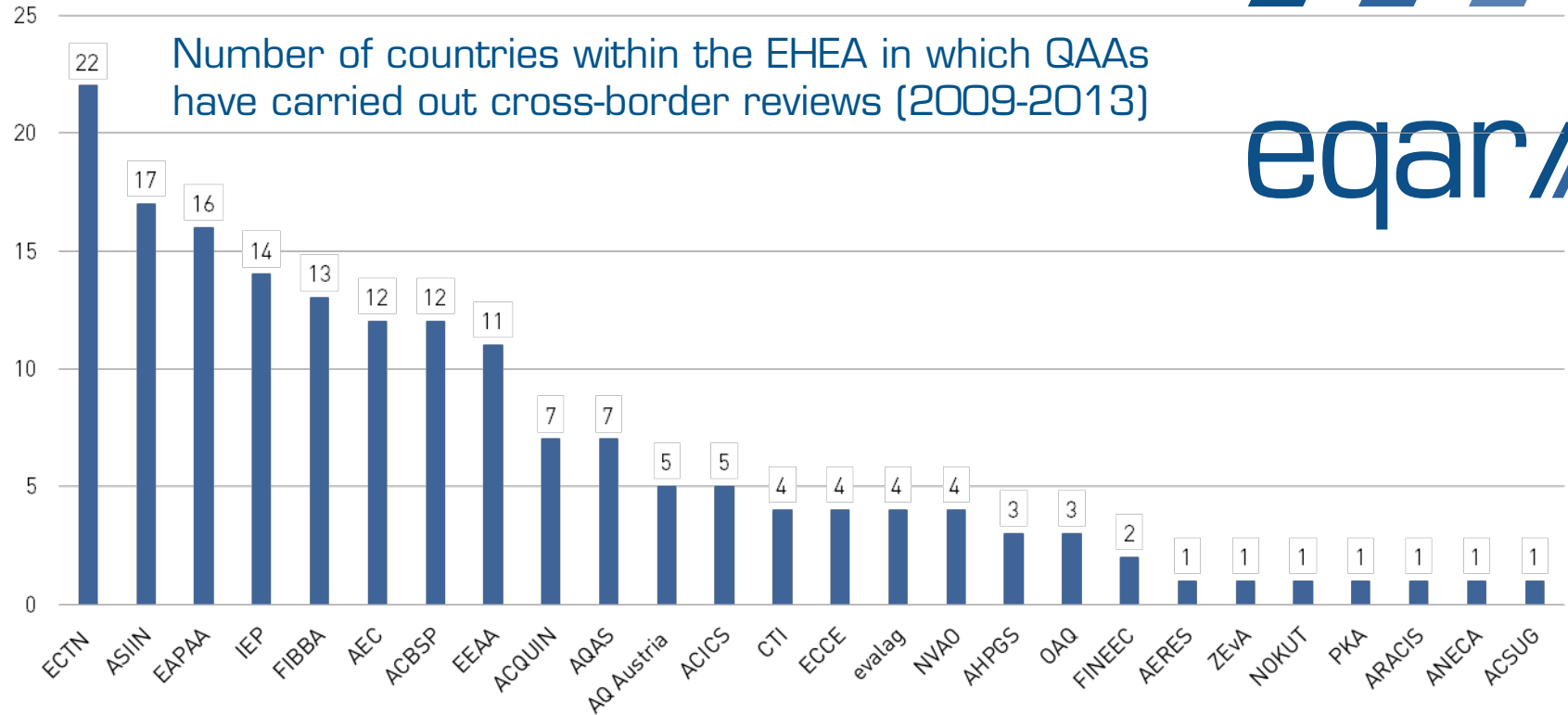
# Recognising International Quality Assurance Activity in the EHEA (RIQAA)



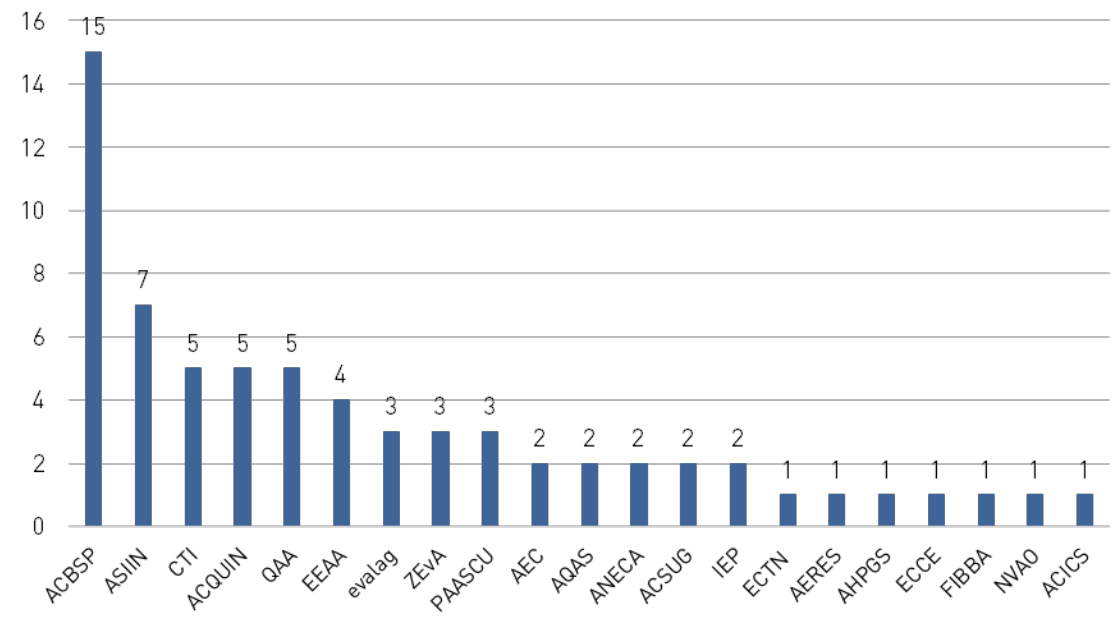
## Research questions:

- How **higher education institutions** (HEIs) make use of the possibilities to request quality reviews by suitable agencies listed on the Register, as well as their rationale behind it.
- What are the different dimensions/levels of recognition, specific **national requirements** in place as well as inhibiting factors both on the side of governments and HEIs.
- What is the extent of the cross-border external quality assurance (EQA) activity within EHEA? What are the opportunities and challenges faced by **QA agencies** carrying out reviews across borders?

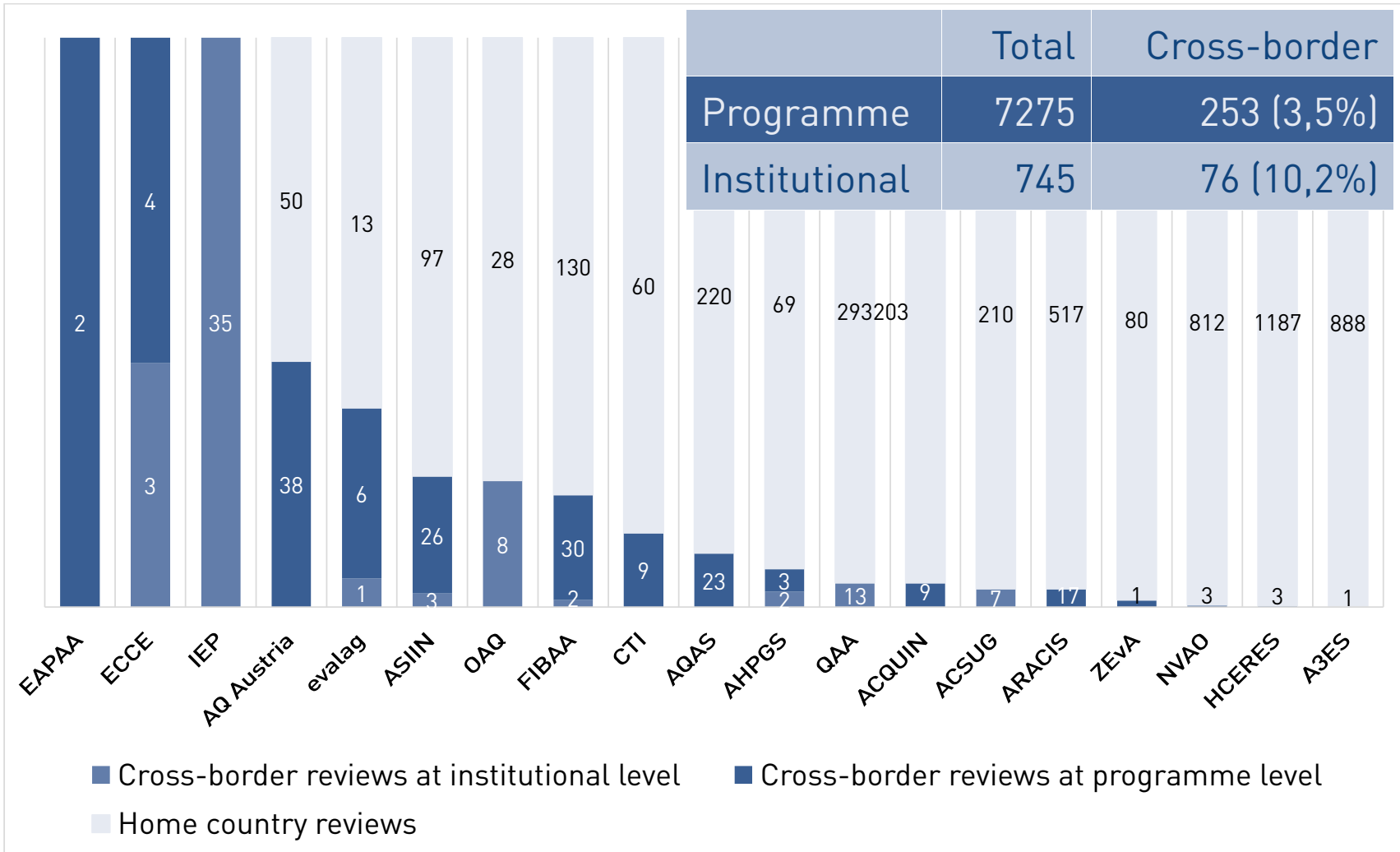
Number of countries within the EHEA in which QAAs have carried out cross-border reviews (2009-2013)



Number of countries outside the EHEA in which QAAs have carried out cross-border reviews (2009-2013)



# Cross-border reviews by registered agencies (2014)



# HEIs making use of a suitable EQAR-listed QAA



- QAA that best suits the HEIs own mission and profile;
- Increased commitment of their internal and external stakeholders.
- Foreign/international reviews
  - are considered as more genuinely international experience, even if the national QA agency would include international peers on its panels.
  - they require more time, effort and are generally more costly
  - ...but the advantages and opportunities of the cross-border QA justify the price & extra effort required.

# Rationale for a cross-border EQA



Increasing the international visibility and reputation (NS1 & NS2)



Development of institution's management and organisation



Achieving "Bologna-compatible" degrees



Development of institution's quality culture



Seeking a different EQA review or approach

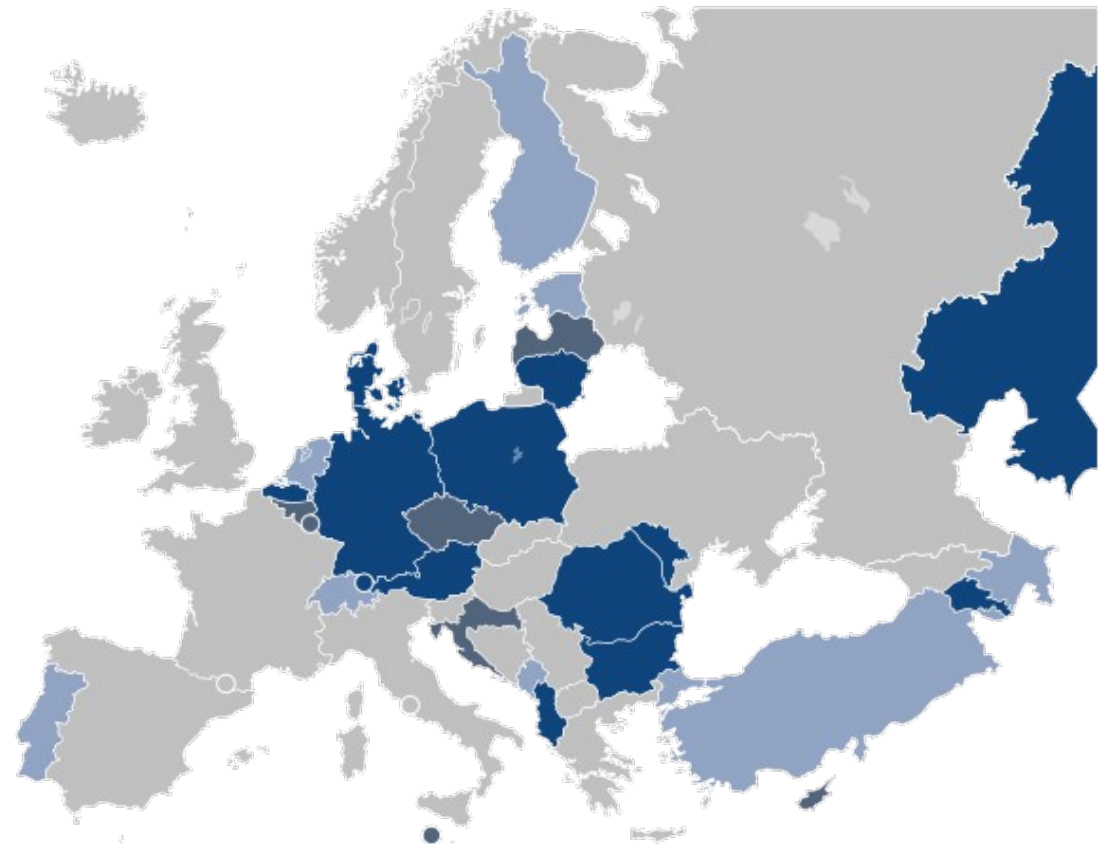


The reviews were sometimes carried out in the context of national reforms or to achieve accreditation for regulated professions.



# But: national legal frameworks lag behind

- Despite the robust European framework in place ...
  - Cross-border accreditation/ evaluation not fully recognised
  - In addition/parallel to obligatory national external QA
  - Duplication of efforts for institutions



- Recognising EQAR-registered agencies as part of the national requirements for external QA
- Recognising foreign agencies with own/specific framework
- Discussions ongoing
- Countries not recognising external QA by foreign agency

# Standards and Guidelines for QA in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)



- Agreed set of standards since 2005
  - Internal quality assurance
  - External quality assurance
  - Quality assurance agencies
- Serve as criteria for registration on EQAR
- Second version approved by ministers 2015
  - Revision process 2012-2015, wide consultation
  - Broad consensus on common ground in QA

# ESG 2015 – what's new?



- Clarified that ESG are applicable to non-traditional HE, new modes of delivery, transnational provision, etc.
- Better integrated in overall EHEA framework
  - References to qualifications frameworks, other tools
- Underline institutional responsibility for quality
- Stronger focus on whole student experience
  - E.g. admission, progression, student-centred learning

# ESG 2015 – what's new?



- Take account of changed context
    - Cross-border QA
    - HEIs work with changing QAAs
    - Stakeholder model consolidated
  - Many principles more clear now, e.g.
    - Publication of full reports
    - Students on review panels
    - Appeals
    - Professional conduct of QAAs
- ➔ Reflecting EHEA's progress over last 10 years

# Wrapping up



- Quality assurance is going regional in Europe
  - ... not overnight
  - ... individual institutions, agencies have own priorities
- Strong regional framework a prerequisite
  - ESG: agreed standards
  - EQAR: register of agencies
  - Allow institutions to pursue international aspirations
  - Reduce duplication of efforts
- EQAR's work continues, together with E4 (stakeholders) and governments



Thank you.

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