eqar/////

2008

Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

Foreword from the President of the Executive Board

Quality assurance is a cornerstone of the Bologna Process. Following on from the adoption of common principles and reference points for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area, the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG), in 2005 EQAR has now been created as an information tool allowing higher education institutions, students and the labour market to identify credible and legitimate quality assurance agencies.

At the same time EQAR represents a new and unique development: it is the first new organisation directly emerging from the Bologna Process, and responsibility for its establishment and management was entrusted by governments to the four stakeholder bodies already responsible for the development of the ESG: ENQA, ESU, EUA and EURASHE.

The role of governments is to support and oversee the work of EQAR as governmental members of the association created by the four founding organisations as the legal framework underpinning EQAR. In this first year of operation, it has been a great pleasure, and also a sign of confidence and joint ownership of the work of EQAR, to welcome 24 European governmental members.

Looking to the future, as the Bologna Process takes stock of past achievements and looks forward to the next decade, all Executive Board members are keen to see EQAR continuing its work and strengthening its position in supporting quality improvement in European higher education.

I am looking forward to working together with my colleagues from the other E4 organisations to this end, thus demonstrating the four Founding Members' special responsibility for the organisation and its development.
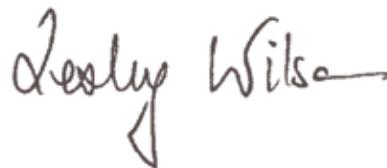
Lesley Wilson
President of the Executive Board
March 2009

## Foreword from the Chair of the Register Committee

Less than two years after the European education ministers' mandate to establish the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), the new register is now up and running. It is a great pleasure to present here the Annual Report for 2008, EQAR's first Annual Report since being established in March 2008.

The extraordinary commitment of everybody involved – in particular, the E4 Group and my colleagues on the Register Committee – expedited the establishment of EQAR as a new, genuinely independent organisation and enabled the Committee to register the first quality assurance agencies in December 2008.

I was honoured when EQAR's founders invited me to serve as the Register Committee's first Chair, and I am pleased to have accepted this position. It has been a great pleasure to work with the Committee's highly motivated and experienced members, who embrace a broad range of stakeholder perspectives. I would like to pay special tribute to our hardworking and diligent Secretary, EQAR's Acting Director Mr. Colin Tück.

As Chair of the Register Committee, I acknowledge some important responsibilities: to safeguard and promote the Committee's independence and neutrality, and to ensure that our decision making is fair and consistent. These duties make it both an interesting and refreshing task, but also a challenging one.

Already soon we will be considering the next cohort of quality assurance agencies for inclusion on EQAR. I look forward very much to the further progress and development of EQAR in 2009, with challenging debates and productive discussions in the Register Committee.
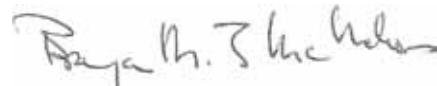
Bryan McMahon
Chair of the Register Committee
March 2009

Foreword from the Acting Director

This first annual report concludes an exciting and dynamic year for EQAR. The founding of the organisation in spring 2008 was the result of long periods of engaged and productive conceptual discussion that preceded the establishment of EQAR.

EQAR was up and running by the second half of the year and the first three quality assurance agencies have been listed on EQAR since early December 2008. The high commitment of all members serving voluntarily on EQAR's committees has made this possible.

At the end of 2008, EQAR moved into a new office. This was an important milestone for EQAR, underlining its role as a new and independent organisation. On this occasion I would like to express my gratitude to EQAR's Founding Members for their idealistic, logistical and personal support in developing EQAR. Particular thanks goes to EUA for provisionally hosting EQAR for more than a year in a great environment.

Finally, I would also like to thank ENQA for administering EQAR's funds during the start-up phase.

This report will be published in April 2009, when European ministers of higher education will meet in Leuven and Louvain-La-Neuve to take stock of progress made in the Bologna Process, in the context of which EQAR was established. I sincerely hope that it provides an accurate and useful record of EQAR's activities for all those interested in the development of European higher education.
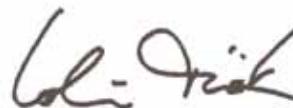
Colin Tück
Acting Director
March 2009

"EQAR's mission is to further the development of the European Higher Education Area by increasing transparency of quality assurance, and thus enhancing trust and confidence in European higher education."

(EQAR Mission and Values)

Preparing the founding of EQAR

The founding of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) as a new, independent international non-profit association in March 2008 concluded a long phase of conceptual and preparatory work by the E4 Group, consisting of ENQA, ESU, EUA and EURASHE.

The E4 Group elaborated an operational model for a European register of quality assurance agencies in higher education in the run-up to the Bologna Process follow-up conference held in May 2007 in London. There, the ministers responsible for higher education in the 46 Bologna Process countries mandated the E4 organisations to setup a European register of quality assurance agencies.

Between May 2007 and March 2008, the E4 Group took the necessary steps to implement the accepted model. This included further developing the structure of the new organisation, drafting its statutes, a business plan and financial forecasts, and agreeing on the fundamentals of EQAR's application and appeals processes. In order to organise this work efficiently, the E4 Group set up a small Register Working Group and hired a full-time Project Manager.

During this phase, the E4 Group had been regularly reporting to the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) on progress made and, in December 2007, informed European governments about how they could get involved in the governance of the new association (see Annex 2 for an overview of EQAR's structure). In January 2008, the Bologna Process countries were formally invited to become Governmental Members of the EQAR association.

Background

The concept of a European register of quality assurance agencies was initially welcomed by the ministers of the Bologna Process countries in 2005 at their Bergen summit, where a first proposal was presented in the report "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area". Those were developed by ENQA in co-operation with ESU, EUA and EURASHE following the ministers' request agreed at their Berlin summit (2003).

At that time, ministers asked the E4 Group to investigate further the practicalities of setting up a register, based on the newly adopted Standards and Guidelines, and to present an operational model two years later.

In 2006 the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union expressed their support of the establishment of a European register of quality assurance agencies in a joint recommendation.

In spring 2007 the E4 Group presented an operational model, essentially based on the cooperation of key stakeholders, to the European ministers responsible for higher education. Following the ministers' endorsement, that model has been implemented in practice.

The Bologna Process

Since 1999, European governments have been working closely together to allow Europe's diverse education systems to articulate better with each other, ultimately aiming at establishing a European Higher Education Area. The Bologna Process – named after the city of Bologna, where 29 countries signed a declaration marking the beginning of this reform process – nowadays gathers all 46 signatory countries to the Council of Europe's European Cultural Convention. The E4 organisations are consultative members of the Bologna Process.

The Founding Event

On 4 March 2008, at a public ceremony kindly hosted by the Royal Academy of Science and Arts in Brussels, the Presidents of EQAR's four Founding Members, ENQA, ESU, EUA and EURASHE, signed the statutes of the first stakeholder-managed organisation emerging directly from the Bologna Process.

The E4 Group had the honour of welcoming the European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, Ján Figel', and the Vice-Chair of the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG), Germain Dondelinger, who both underlined the importance of EQAR to increase transparency in European higher education in their opening addresses.

Approximately 80 guests attended the event, which concluded by welcoming the first members of the new EQAR association: BUSINESSEUROPE and Education International, who are also consultative organisations in the Bologna Process, became Social Partner Members of EQAR; 19 governments from 18 Bologna Process countries[1] followed the E4 Group's invitation and became Governmental Members of EQAR (see Annex 3 for an overview of EQAR's members).

Following the ceremony, the members of EQAR convened for a formal Founding Assembly to appoint the various bodies of EQAR and adopt its budget.

Development of EQAR's membership

On 19 May 2008, EQAR gained full legal personality after its statutes had been published in the annex to the Official Gazette of Belgium.

EQAR's members were invited for a first General Assembly on 25 June 2008 in Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), which was kindly hosted by the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Four additional Bologna Process countries were warmly welcomed as Governmental Members of EQAR at this occasion.

One additional Bologna Process country became a Governmental Member of EQAR later in 2008, thus leading to a total of 24 governments from 23 countries (out of 46 countries participating in the Bologna Process) being represented in EQAR by the end of the year. A full list of EQAR's members is presented in Annex 3.

1 The Flemish Community of Belgium and the French-speaking Community of Belgium are members of EQAR independent from each other.
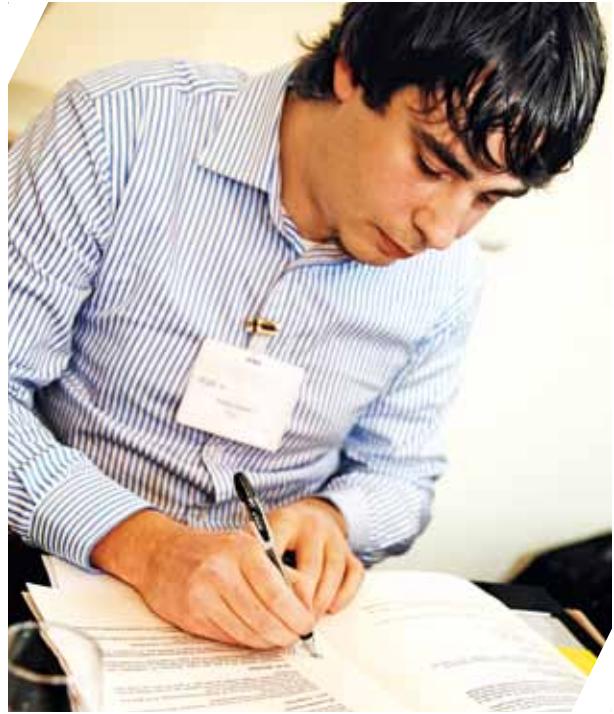
Timeline: establishment of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)

May 2005	Bergen summit: Bologna Process ministers welcome the idea of a European register of quality assurance agencies
Feb 2006	Joint Recommendation of the European Parliament and Council backs the establishment of a register
Apr 2007	E4 Group presents an operational model for a register to European ministers of higher education
May 2007	London summit: ministers endorse the operational model and ask the E4 Group to establish EQAR
Dec 2007	E4 Group informs governments on their possible involvement in the new EQAR association
Jan 2008	Nomination of the first Register Committee
Mar 2008	Founding of EQAR: a new, independent organisation is born, nineteen Bologna governments join the new association
Jun 2008	EQAR General Assembly convenes in Sarajevo
Aug 2008	EQAR officially invites quality assurance agencies to apply for inclusion on the register
Dec 2008	First quality assurance agencies are included on the European register of quality assurance agencies

"To achieve its mission EQAR manages a register of quality assurance agencies operating in Europe that substantially comply with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG)."

(EQAR Mission and Values)

The European register of quality assurance agencies

The Register Committee

The decision making on the inclusion of quality assurance agencies on EQAR is in the hands of the Register Committee, an independent body consisting of experts in quality assurance of higher education.

The Register Committee's ten members were nominated by ENQA, ESU, EUA, EURASHE (two each), BUSINESSEUROPE and Education International (one each) in January 2008. They serve for a 2-year term and may be re-nominated up to three times. In addition, the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) appointed five governments to observe the Register Committee's proceedings as foreseen in the E4 Group's report to ministers.

The first Chair of the Register Committee was jointly appointed by the four Founding Members. In the future, s/he will be appointed by the Register Committee itself. Mr Justice Bryan McMahon accepted the invitation to assume the position as first Chair of the Register Committee. He is a judge of the High Court (Ireland) and previously chaired the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) from 2003 to 2006.

The composition of the Register Committee, which was approved as a whole by the Founding Assembly, is presented in Annex 4 in full.

Development of Procedures for Application

The Register Committee's first task was the development of Procedures for Applications that would set out clear rules for quality assurance agencies that seek listing on EQAR, and for EQAR itself in handling applications.

Building on initial preparatory work by the E4 Group, the Register Committee prepared draft Procedures for Applications in an informal meeting on 3 March 2008 and its first official meeting on 13 May 2008 (both in Brussels). The draft was referred to the General Assembly for consultation, which took place at the 1st General Assembly on 25 June 2008 (Sarajevo).

The Register Committee considered the General Assembly's comments and adopted the final Procedures for Applications on 6 August 2008. The adoption in consultation with the General Assembly, as foreseen in EQAR's Statutes, ensured that governments and stakeholder organisations had sufficient opportunity to contribute their views and experience, while preventing any undue direct influence rooted in organisational or national interests.

The Procedures for Applications have been available on EQAR's website[2] since 8 August 2008.

Criteria and application process

Inclusion on EQAR is open to all quality assurance agencies that substantially comply with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG). The ESG were adopted by European ministers of higher education in 2005 as a set of common principles and reference points for internal and external quality assurance of higher education.

Before applying to EQAR, quality assurance agencies have to undergo an external review by a team of independent experts. The review has to provide sufficient reliable evidence of the agency's substantial compliance with the ESG.

The Register Committee makes its decision based on the external review report, the applicant's self-evaluation report and further documentation where appropriate. Rejected applicants have the possibility to file an appeal on procedural grounds or in case of perversity of judgement.

Further information on the application process and requirements for the external review process is available from the EQAR website and in the Guide for Applicants.

Further information: www.eqar.eu/application.html

Information of potential applicants

All relevant information for applicant quality assurance agencies has been available on the EQAR website since the publication of the Procedures for Applications.

In order to assist quality assurance agencies to prepare an application for inclusion on EQAR, a practical Guide for Applicants was produced and made available through the EQAR website. All rules set out officially in the Procedures for Applications are summarised in the Guide in plain language, supplemented with additional information and explanation where appropriate. In addition, the Guide contains background information about EQAR and further useful information for applicants.

In order to allow swift information of all potential applicants on questions arising, the EQAR website features a list of frequently asked questions (FAQ). The FAQ are updated more frequently than the Guide for Applicants.

Throughout 2008, the EQAR Secretariat received numerous requests for information from quality assurance agencies, based within and outside Europe. Information on the criteria and procedure for inclusion on EQAR was provided to interested quality assurance agencies at various seminars and conferences as well as in bilateral discussions.

First round of applications

Since the publication of EQAR's Procedures for Applications, on 8 August 2008, quality assurance agencies have been invited to make an application for inclusion on the register.

Applications that had reached EQAR by the first application deadline, 3 October 2008, were considered at the Register Committee's meeting on 22/23 November 2008 in Budapest.

The ten applications received were considered in terms of their adherence to the EQAR Procedures for Applications and applicants' substantial compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG). Following thorough scrutiny, applications from three quality assurance agencies were accepted at the Register Committee's November meeting. The agencies have subsequently been included on the register since 5 December 2008 (see Annex 9).

In the seven other cases, certain issues requiring further communication between EQAR and applicants were identified in the Register Committee's initial deliberations. The applicants concerned were informed about the specific problems. As a result, these applications are pending and will be considered further by the Register Committee in 2009.

Together with the first three quality assurance agencies included on EQAR, a Communiqué from the Chair of the Register Committee was published. It is enclosed with this report in Annex 10.

"EQAR seeks to provide clear reliable information on quality assurance provision in Europe, thus improving trust among agencies. [...] EQAR will make transparent its mode of operation and its procedures while ensuring necessary confidentiality. EQAR is committed to continuously improving the quality of its work."

(EQAR Mission and Values)

//// Communication and public relations

EQAR's activities target a broad audience including higher education institutions, students, quality assurance agencies, employers, governments and the wider public. Communication so far has primarily focused on those most concerned with EQAR during the start-up phase: governments, quality assurance agencies and higher education policy makers at national and European level.

Website

The website is EQAR's main communication tool to reach its audience. The site contains information about EQAR's background and structure, its mission and objectives, information for applicant quality assurance agencies and customised information for specific target groups.

The register of quality assurance agencies is essentially web-based. It allows users to acquire basic information about the registered quality assurance agencies and provides links to further information and reports. As the register grows, a search function will allow users to identify easily which agencies operate in specific countries.

The EQAR website was designed and developed by the public relations agency "die hoffnungsträger" in early 2008 following an open call for tender launched by the E4 Group. The website uses TYPO3, a wide-spread open source Content Management System (CMS) that can be flexibly and easily adapted and extended to suit EQAR's needs.

Table: Summary website statistics www.eqar.eu (Apr – Dec 2008)

	Visits[3]	Hits[3]
Total (sum)	22 858	336 987
Average per month	2 540	37 443

3 Visits: number of unique visits to the EQAR website, spanning multiple pages / Hits: total number of requests processed

19

Website statistics www.eqar.eu (Apr – Dec 2008)

Visits

Hits

| | 04/'08 | 05/'08 | 06/'08 | 07/'08 | 08/'08 | 09/'08 | 10/'08 | 11/'08 | 12/'08 |
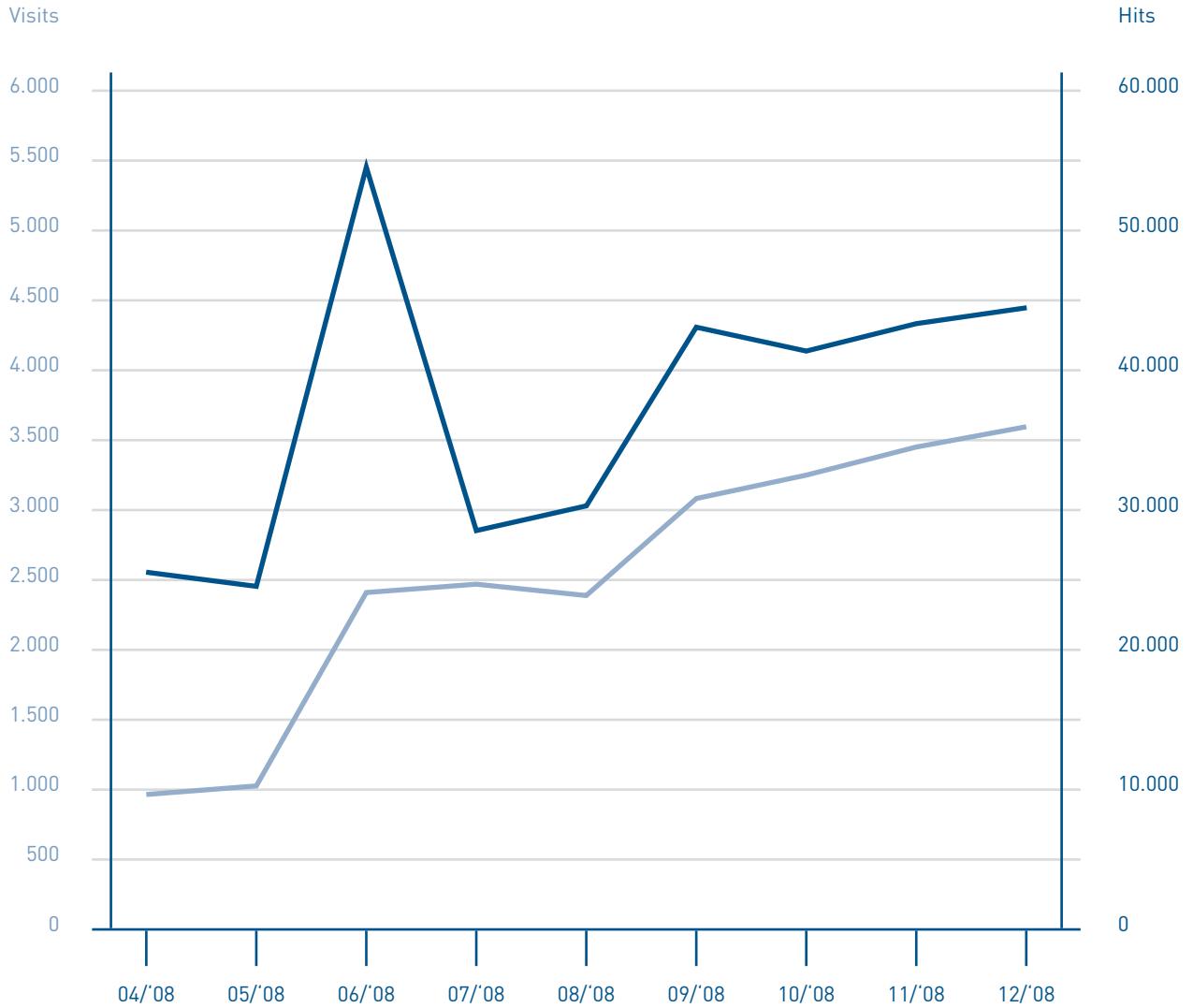
EQAR leaflet

A leaflet containing basic information about EQAR, its mission and objectives, as well as the fundamentals of its operation was produced in order to target a broad, non-specialised readership. The leaflet was developed to be useful for those who have no previous information about EQAR and little, if any, knowledge about European higher education policy and the Bologna Process.

Approximately 50 leaflets each were distributed to a number of important national and European stakeholders, including all members of the EQAR association (governments and stakeholder organisations) as well as national rectors' conferences, national unions of students, quality assurance agencies and teachers' unions affiliated to EQAR's Founding and Social Partner Members.

Press and media relations

EQAR was successful in positioning the founding ceremony in various media at national and European level. Particularly noteworthy is the attention that was given to the founding of EQAR by non-European media. Some additional attention, mostly from specialised media, was received when EQAR opened for applications in August 2008.

Successfully placing EQAR's founding in the media was made possible thanks to the joint efforts of its Founding Members, in particular EUA's efforts in coordinating the press work.

Approximately 20 major European and national papers and radio stations reported about the founding of EQAR. In addition, numerous blogs, newsletters and organisation websites made reference to the event.

"The new [Register] committee is unlikely to be pushed around."

(University World News, 9 March 2008)

"The new EQAR is responsible for ensuring educational quality assurance agencies in individual member nations are doing their jobs properly"

(CNN.com, 17 March 2008)

"EQAR is committed to the principles on which the ESG are based: external quality assurance should recognise the central responsibility of higher education institutions for quality development and should be carried out by independent quality assurance agencies in a transparent, objective and responsible manner, involving their stakeholders and leading to substantiated results based on well-defined procedures and criteria."

(EQAR Mission and Values)

////   Organisation and finances

Office location

EUA had generously offered to host the appointed Project Manager and, subsequently, the EQAR Secretariat on a provisional basis, from the association's foundation until a suitable location for EQAR's office could be found.

Different options for the EQAR office had been looked at during September and October. In the second half of December, EQAR eventually moved into new premises on Oudergemselaan/Avenue d'Auderghem 22-28 in Brussels. The office is located together with West Midlands in Europe, further office associates are East Midlands European Office, smallbusinesseurope, European Regional Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN), Lower Silesia Region, Cyprus European Office and University of Cyprus.

Staff

In 2008, EQAR had one full-time staff member appointed initially as Project Manager (until 30/10/08) and subsequently as Acting Director (from 1/11/08).

An Executive Assistant on a part-time basis should be recruited in the first quarter of 2009.

Funding

EQAR's operations rely on a diversified funding base designed to ensure both reliability and operational independence. The funding sources include membership fees from governments and stakeholder organisations, application and listing fees paid by quality assurance agencies, start-up funding provided by the European Commission and donations.

Members of the EQAR association contribute an annual membership fee of a fixed symbolic amount (Social Partners), depending on the organisation's budget (Founding Members) or depending on the Gross Domestic Product of the country (Governmental Members). The details of EQAR's membership fee scale are documented in Annex 5.

Quality assurance agencies are charged an application fee of 950€ (European[4] agencies) or 1 900€ (non-European agencies) excluding VAT. Successful applicants are charged a listing fee of the same amount for each year of inclusion on the register.

The European Commission provided a grant to support the establishment of EQAR financially between 1 October 2007 and 30 September 2008. As this grant was awarded to ENQA on behalf of the E4 Group, activities funded under this grant do not show up in EQAR's accounts for 2008. The European Commission granted further start-up funding for another year as from November 2008, which will be managed by EQAR's own accounts.

In 2008, EQAR accepted a donation of 20 000 Swiss Francs (ca. 13 000€) from the Swiss confederation.

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4 "European" refers to agencies having their registered address in a state party to the European Cultural Convention

Accounts 2008

The accounts of the financial exercise 2008 were approved by the EQAR General Assembly on 25 March 2009. It should be noted that activities funded under the European Commission start-up grant (see above) are not included in the following figures.

Balance Sheet (in EUR)			
Assets		**Liabilities**	
Fixed assets	**147,66**	**Own funds**	**60 647,68**
Liquid assets	**94 976,77**	Result 31/12/08	60 648,68
Receivables up to 1 year	1 408,65	**Payables**	**34 475,75**
Cash	76 058,52	Paybles up to 1 year	34 170,09
Income receivable and prepaid expenses	17 509,60	Deferred costs	305,66
Total	**95 124,43**	**Total**	**95 124,43**

Profit and Loss Account (in EUR)			
Revenue		Expenditure	
Membership fees	79 750,00	Travel and subsistence	21 506,25
Application/listing fees	10 450,00	Administration (office, publications etc.)	5 175,43
Other income	15 517,94	Staff	17 499,52
		Other costs	888,06
Total	105 717,94	Total	45 069,26
Result (surplus)	60 648,68		

Statutory Auditor's Report to the general meeting of the members of the Association of Eqar vzw on the financial statements for the year ended 31.12.2008

In accordance with the legal and statutory requirements, we report to you on the performance of the mandate of statutory auditor, which will be entrusted to us for a period of 3 years at the General Assembly of the 25th of March 2009 and which will cover the accounting years 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011. This report, which is established as the result of a special assignment, contains our opinion on the true and fair view of the financial statements as well as the required additional statements.

Unqualified audit opinion on the financial statements

We have audited the financial statements for the year ended 31.12.2008, prepared in accordance with the financial reporting framework applicable in Belgium, which show a balance sheet total of € 95.124,43 and a profit for the year of € 60.648,68.

Management is responsible for the preparation and the fair representation of these financial statements. This responsibility includes: designing, implementing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with the legal requirements and the Auditing Standards applicable in Belgium, as issued by the Institute of Registered Auditors (Instituut der Bedrijfsrevisoren). Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In accordance with the above-mentioned auditing standards, we considered the association's accounting system, as well as its internal control procedures. We have obtained from management and from the association's officials the explanations and information necessary for executing our audit procedures. We have examined, on a test basis, the evidence supporting the amounts included in the financial statements. We have assessed the appropriateness of accounting policies and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the association as well as the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that these procedures provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements for the year ended 31.12.2008 give a true and fair view of the association's assets and liabilities, its financial position and the results of its operations in accordance with the financial reporting framework applicable in Belgium.

Additional statements

The compliance by the association with the law of 27 June 1921, changed by the law of 2 May 2002, related to not-for-profit associations, international not-for-profit associations and foundations, is the responsibility of management.

Our responsibility is to supplement our report with the following additional statements, which do not modify our audit opinion on the financial statements.

/ Without prejudice to formal aspects of minor importance, the accounting records were maintained in accordance with the legal and regulatory requirements applicable in Belgium.

/ There are no transactions undertaken or decisions taken in violation of the association's by-law or the law of 27 June 1921, changed by the law of 2 May 2002, related to not-forprofit associations, international not-for-profit associations and foundations that we have to report to you.

Wemmel, 20th of March 2009

Burg. BVBA ROBRECHTS & Partners Bedrijfsrevisoren
Statutory auditor

Represented by Peter ROBRECHTS
Registered Auditor

1. Mission and Values

EQAR's mission is to further the development of the European Higher Education Area by increasing transparency of quality assurance, and thus enhancing trust and confidence in European higher education.

EQAR seeks to provide clear reliable information on quality assurance provision in Europe, thus improving trust among agencies.

EQAR seeks to facilitate the mutual acceptance of quality assurance decisions and to improve trust among higher education institutions, thus promoting mobility and recognition.

EQAR seeks to reduce opportunities for "accreditation mills" to gain credibility in Europe, thus further enhancing the confidence of students, institutions, the labour market and society more generally in the quality of higher education provision in Europe.

To achieve its mission EQAR manages a register of quality assurance agencies operating in Europe that substantially comply with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG).

EQAR recognises the diversity of approaches to external quality assurance and is therefore open to all agencies, whether operating at programme or institutional level, whether providing accreditation, evaluation or audit services.

EQAR is committed to the principles on which the ESG are based: external quality assurance should recognise the central responsibility of higher education institutions for quality development and should be carried out by independent quality assurance agencies in a transparent, objective and responsible manner, involving their stakeholders and leading to substantiated results based on well-defined procedures and criteria.

EQAR acts independently from other organisations and is committed to taking proportionate, consistent, fair and objective decisions.

EQAR will make transparent its mode of operation and its procedures while ensuring necessary confidentiality. EQAR is committed to continuously improving the quality of its work.
(adopted by the EQAR General Assembly on 25 June 2008 in Sarajevo)

2. Overview of EQAR's structure

EQAR's structure was developed based on the premise that the key stakeholders in higher education jointly bear the main responsibility to establish EQAR and to ensure its operation, as reflected in the mandate given to the E4 Group by ministers.

At the same time, it was recognised that European governments bear the responsibility for Europe's higher education systems as a whole and thus EQAR needs to involve governments and ensure overall accountability to governments. The E4 Group developed a structure featuring differentiated roles for governments and stakeholders, and several checks

ENQA
EUA
EURASHE
ESU
BUSINESSEUROPE
Education International

Register Committee
11 members in their individual capacity
5 governmental observers

Appeals Committee
3 members

Aproval based on
nominations

Election

General Assembly

Founding Members	Social Partners	Governmental Members
E4 Group	BE and EI	EHEA Governments

Executive Board: 4 members
(elected on proposal of the E4)

Secretariat:
Director + Executive assistant

Figure: Structure of EQAR aisbl/ivzw

and balances (see Figure).

ENQA, ESU, EUA and EURASHE are the Founding Members of the EQAR association. BUSINESSEUROPE and Education International are Social Partner Members and, by 31 December 2008, 24 European governments (see Annex 3) have become Governmental Members of the association.

The different categories of membership reflect the different roles and responsibilities of the four founders, other stakeholder organisations and governments with regard to the

governance and management of EQAR.

All members together form the General Assembly of the association. It decides on general matters of the association, such as the annual budget and the composition of the Executive Board. A special voting scheme ensures that governments and stakeholders cannot outvote each other.

The Executive Board includes one representative of each Founding Member. The members take turns in assuming the posts of President, Treasurer and two Vice-Presidents. The

Executive Board is in charge of ensuring the smooth day-to-day operation of EQAR. With the support of the Secretariat, the Board assumes responsibility for all administrative matters of the association.

The decision making on applications for inclusion on the register lies in the hands of the Register Committee. It is a dedicated body for this task, comprising of a chairperson and ten members with ample experience in quality assurance of higher education. The members are nominated by the Founding Members (2 each) and the two Social Partner Members (1 each). The first Chairperson was appointed by the E4 organisations jointly and in the future s/he will be by-elected by the Register Committee. The Committee's proceedings are observed by representatives of five European governments, nominated by the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG).

Possible appeals against a decision of the Register Committee will be considered and decided by the Appeals Committee, comprising of 3 members and 3 deputies.

The partnership of governments and stakeholders as implemented in EQAR's structure is unique to the Bologna Process. While overall accountability to governments is ensured, the main responsibility for the management and development of the organisation is borne by stakeholders. The partnership of governments and stakeholders serves two main purposes:

/ Accountability through the involvement of governments, multi-national organisations and all relevant stakeholders in the General Assembly, EQAR's supreme decision-making body.
/ Broad ownership by allowing governments, multi-na-tional and stakeholders to actively participate in EQAR's overall governance and development and to identify themselves with the new organisation.

3. List of EQAR members as of 31 December 2008

Founding Members

/ ENQA, European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
/ ESU, European Students' Union (formerly ESIB)
/ EUA, European University Association
/ EURASHE, European Association of Institutions in Higher Education

Social Partner Members

/ BUSINESSEUROPE
/ Education International

(both since 4 March 2008)

Governmental Members
Joined at the Founding Assembly on 4 March 2008:

/ Armenia
Ministry of Education and Science
/ Austria
Federal Ministry of Science and Research
/ Belgium (Flemish community)
Flemish Department of Education and Training
/ Belgium (French-speaking community)
Direction générale de l'Enseignement non obligatoire et

de la Recherche scientifique
/ Bulgaria
  Ministry of Education and Science
/ Cyprus
  Ministry of Education and Culture
/ Estonia
  Ministry of Education and Research
/ France
  Ministry of Higher Education and Research
/ Georgia
  Ministry of Education and Science
/ Germany
  Federal Ministry of Education and Research / Standing
  Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural
  Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany
/ Poland
  Ministry of Science and Higher Education
/ Liechtenstein
  Office of Education
/ Luxembourg
  Ministry of Culture, Higher Education and Research
/ Malta
  Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment
/ the Netherlands
  Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
/ Portugal
  Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education
/ Romania
  Ministry of Education, Research and Youth
/ Spain
  Ministry of Education and Science
/ Ukraine
  Ministry of Education and Science

/ Bosnia and Herzegovina
  Ministry of Civil Affairs
/ Denmark
  Danish University and Property Agency / Ministry of
  Science, Technology and Innovation
/ Hungary
  Ministry of Education and Culture
/ Norway
  Ministry of Education and Research

Joined after the General Assembly on 25 June 2008:

/ Ireland
  Department of Education and Science

4. Composition of EQAR bodies

Register Committee
(approved collectively on 4 March 2008)

Chair:
Bryan McMahon (Dublin, Ireland)
Judge of the High Court of Ireland

Vice-Chair:
Lucien Bollaert (Kortrijk, Belgium)
Director of Education and Research, University College West
Flanders

Appeals Committee

(elected 4 March 2008 unless stated otherwise)

Chair:

Jürgen Kohler (Greifswald, Germany)
Former Chair of the German Accreditation Council

Members:

Ossi V. Lindqvist (Kuopio, Finland)
Former chair of the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation
Council (FINHEEC)

Stephan Neetens (Brussels, Belgium)
Lawyer, Brussels Office of DLA Piper

Deputy chair:

Thierry Malan (Paris, France)
Former General Inspector, Inspectorate for Education and
Research

Deputy members:

Geri Bonhof (Utrecht, the Netherlands)
President of the Executive Board, Hogeschool Utrecht – University of Applied Sciences (by-elected 25 June 2008)

Inge Jonsson (Stockholm, Sweden)
Former Rector of Stockholm University

Secretariat

Acting Director:
Colin Tück
(since 1 November 2008, hitherto Project Manager)

5. Membership fee scale

The following membership fee scale was adopted by the Founding Assembly on 4 March 2008. In 2008, all membership fees were reduced by 50%.

Governmental Members pay a membership fee according to four categories, based on an index calculated according to the following formula:

$$\text{Index} = \frac{1}{2} \cdot \left(\frac{GDP}{AvgGDP} + \frac{GDPpc}{AvgGDPpc} \right)$$

The following parameters are used:

GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
GDPpc:	Gross Domestic Product per capita
AvgGDP:	Arithmetic mean of the GDP among all EHEA states
AvgGDPpc:	Arithmetic mean of the GDPpc among all EHEA states

The following four categories are used:

Index	Fee level
< 0,25	2 500 €
< 0,75	5 000 €
< 1,50	7 500 €
> 1,50	10 000 €

For the time being, the GDP, GDPpc, indexes and fee levels according to the following table are used:

Country	GDP[5] Bill. €	GDPi p.c. €	Index	Fee €
France	1,715.838	28,130	3.8373	10,000
Germany	2,244.600	27,228	4.7481	10,000
Italy	1,423.048	24,503	3.2158	10,000
Luxembourg	29.396	64,283	1.8766	10,000
Netherlands	508.964	31,203	1.7870	10,000
Norway	242.361	52,619	1.9227	10,000
Spain	908.450	20,938	2.2032	10,000
Switzerland	298.162	40,990	1.6915	10,000
United Kingdom	1,792.788	29,772	4.0201	10,000
Austria	245.330	29,797	1.2802	7,500
Belgium	299.114	28,457	1.3375	7,500
Denmark	208.025	38,445	1.4596	7,500
Finland	157.162	29,958	1.1286	7,500
Greece	228.156	20,555	0.9875	7,500
Iceland	13.699	45,679	1.3208	7,500
Ireland	161.498	39,097	1.3957	7,500
Liechtenstein[6]	2.731	34,700	0.9897	7,500
Russia	637.385	4,442	1.2549	7,500
Sweden	283.787	31,365	1.3929	7,500
Andorra[7]	1.840	23,954	0.6831	5,000
Croatia	31.384	7,065	0.2561	5,000
Cyprus	13.709	18,089	0.5377	5,000

5 Unless otherwise stated, the source of GDP data is: International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook October 2007 database, data as of 2005 retrieved from http://www.imf.org/ on 28/11/2007; converted to EUR based on exchange rates as of end 2005 by ECB or OANDA.com, where no ECB rates were available; for the Holy See no GDP is available
6 2004, Source: Government of Liechtenstein, data as submitted for EFTA publication "This is EFTA 2008", available to the author, Note: GDP p.c. is calculated with adjusted number of inhabitants
7 2004, Source: German Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/de/Laenderinformationen/01-Laender/Andorra.html [28/11/2007]

Country	GDP[5] Bill. €	GDPi p.c. €	Index	Fee €
Czech Republic	103.255	10,094	0.4694	5,000
Estonia	11.210	8,319	0.2560	5,000
Hungary	89.790	8,892	0.4114	5,000
Malta	4.789	12,015	0.3495	5,000
Poland	254.741	6,675	0.6406	5,000
Portugal	148.852	14,092	0.6636	5,000
Slovak Republic	38.837	7,181	0.2726	5,000
Slovenia	28.244	14,098	0.4502	5,000
Turkey	305.207	4,262	0.6615	5,000
Albania	6.499	2,073	0.0703	2,500
Armenia	4.190	1,263	0.0433	2,500
Azerbaijan	11.178	1,329	0.0575	2,500
Bosnia and Herzegovina	8.074	2,060	0.0728	2,500
Bulgaria	21.877	2,825	0.1189	2,500
Georgia	5.352	1,239	0.0446	2,500
Latvia	13.012	5,642	0.1832	2,500
Lithuania	20.621	6,021	0.2074	2,500
Moldova	2.420	715	0.0246	2,500
Montenegro[8]	1.644	2,474	0.0731	2,500
Romania	78.270	3,605	0.2409	2,500
Serbia	20.362	2,726	0.0732	2,500
„the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	4.658	2,287	0.1134	2,500
Ukraine	73.775	1,572	0.1753	2,500

Constituent parts of a country joining the association independently (according to Art. 6 (2) of the statutes, currently the case for two communities of Belgium) share the country fee equally.

The Founding Members pay a membership fee based on their annual income from membership fees according to the following table:

Income	Membership fee
< 100 000€	1 000€
> 100 000€	0,01504 · Income – 504€ (maximum 10 000€)

For the time being, the following table applies:

	Fee to pay €
EUA	10 000,00
ENQA	3 000,00
ESU	1 000,00
EURASHE	1 000,00

The Social Partner members pay a symbolic membership fee of 1 000€ annually.

6. Agenda founding event 4 March 2008

Founding Assembly of EQAR
(European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education)
4 March 2008, Brussels

Venue:
Royal Academy for Science and Arts
Palais des Académies/Paleis der Academiën
Rue Ducale/Hertogsstraat 1

Tuesday 4 March 2008
Founding ceremony, Rubens Auditorium

10:00   Brief introduction to EQAR
Signing of the statutes of "European Quality Assurance Register in Higher Education (EQAR) - aisbl" by the E4 Presidents

/ Peter Williams, President of ENQA
/ Koen Geven, Chairperson of ESU
/ Jean-Marc Rapp, Vice-President of EUA
/ Lars Lynge Nielsen, President of EURASHE

Nomination of EQAR's Executive Board

10:30   Keynote addresses
/ Ján Figel', European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth
/ Germain Dondelinger, Vice-Chair of the Bologna Follow-Up Group

11:15   Coffee break and question time for media representatives

11:45   Admission of further members by the Founding Members

   / Social Partner Members

   / Governmental Members

12:00   Presentation of EQAR's structure and operations

(Colin Tück, EQAR Project Manager)

Questions and answers

13:15   Lunch break (Hall of the Royal Academy)

14:15   Founding Assembly

Official session (Albert I Hall)

7. Press release: Europe launches Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (4 March 2008)

4th March 2008. The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) will be officially launched in Brussels today in a move designed to improve the quality of European higher education and to promote greater student mobility. The new register is a landmark for European cooperation in quality assurance of higher education in the context of the Bologna Process reforms.

Under the mandate of Education Ministers from the 46 countries taking part in the Bologna Process, the new register has been established by the "E4 Group" comprising the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European Students Union (ESU), the European University Association (EUA) and the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE).

The new register (EQAR) aims to provide clear and objective information about trustworthy quality assurance agencies that are working in Europe. It also aims to help improve the quality of European higher education and to promote greater student mobility by increasing trust between higher education institutions. The register will provide a means for HE institutions (where national regulations permit) to choose between different agencies on the register.

The founding of EQAR is a milestone in the Bologna Process reforms, which has an underlying goal of improving the quality culture of European higher education. In the past decade, there has been a rapid development across Europe of national quality assurance systems, and as a result, common reference points have been defined at European level to improve the consistency of quality assurance schemes.

Inclusion on the EQAR, which is voluntary, will be based on compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance adopted by European Education Ministers in 2005. A Committee – composed of independent experts nominated by the E4 Group, BusinessEurope, Education International, together with five government observers – will be responsible for admissions to the register. The register will be accepting applications from the summer of 2008 and information will be publicly accessible through a web-based tool.

The EQAR will be officially launched by the heads of the E4 Group at a special ceremony to be held this morning (4th March) at the Royal Academy for Science and Arts in Brussels. Ján Figel', European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth will also make a special presentation at the event to mark the launch of the register.

8. Press release: European Quality Assurance Register now open for applications (11 August 2008)

11th August 2008. Quality assurance agencies for higher education can now officially apply to join the new European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) which was founded in March this year.

EQAR will provide clear and objective information about trustworthy quality assurance agencies working in Europe. It will contribute to improving the quality of European higher education and to promoting greater student mobility by increasing transparency and trust between higher education systems and institutions.

The establishment of this voluntary register is a milestone in the Bologna Process reforms. It will list only those quality assurance agencies that have demonstrated their substantial compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines, the commonly agreed principles for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area. Before applying quality agencies must undergo an external review carried out by independent experts. The requirements and rules for applications are now published on the EQAR website. The first deadline for applications is 3 October 2008.

Lesley Wilson, President of the EQAR Executive Board said: "EQAR will provide essential information for Europe's higher education community: Students and employers can identify which higher education institutions and degree programmes have been reviewed by a credible and independent quality assurance agency. Higher education institutions may also acquire the information they need to choose between diffe-

rent agencies to fulfil their own external quality assurance requirements where national legislation allows."

The Register Committee, EQAR's independent body deciding on applications, is chaired by Mr Justice Bryan McMahon, Judge at the High Court of Ireland, and will convene in November 2008 to review the first applications. The first list of accepted agencies is due to be published subsequently.

EQAR has been established by the "E4 Group" – comprising the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European Students' Union (ESU), the European University Association (EUA) and the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) – under the mandate from the Education Ministers from the 46 Bologna countries.

9. Agencies included on the register as of 31 December 2008

The following agencies were included on the register as of 31/12/2008. Agencies are included for five years counted from the date of their external review, the duration of inclusion is indicated in the table for each agency.

Further information on these agencies and the external review reports on which EQAR's decision are based can be retrieved from:

http://www.eqar.eu/register.html

Name:	Inclusion until:
National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain (ANECA)	30/6/2012
Agency for Quality Assurance in the Catalan University System (AQU)	31/8/2012
Accreditation Organization of The Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO)	30/9/2012

10. Communiqué from the Chair of the Register Committee (5 December 2008)

First applications for inclusion on EQAR
– Communiqué from the Chair of the Register Committee –
Brussels, 5 December 2008

1. The Register Committee convened on 22/23 November 2008 in Budapest to consider the first applications for inclusion on the Register received from quality assurance agencies by the 3 October deadline. The Register Committee is an independent body of EQAR made up of independent experts in quality assurance who were nominated by the key stakeholders. Its task is to review and take decisions on all applications received.

2. Following the establishment of EQAR in March 2008, the first task of the Register Committee was to prepare Procedures for Applications governing its work. These procedures are based upon the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) adopted by the European ministers of higher education in Bergen in 2005 and were adopted through a process that included consultation of the different stakeholder bodies and governments represented in the General Assembly of EQAR.

3. Following the publication of the Procedures (see "Notes" for a weblink) a first call to quality assurance agencies inviting them to apply for inclusion on the register was launched in August 2008.

4. Aware of the importance of the Register for the European Higher Education Area the Register Committee took

great care to follow these commonly agreed Procedures in its work. They describe the process and the conditions that quality agencies need to fulfil if they wish to be to be listed on the register, including:

/ the formal requirements that must be fulfilled in relation to the conduct of the external review of the applicant agency; and

/ the substantial compliance of their activities with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG).

5. The Register Committee considered the applications received with regard to these two important elements, in this way ensuring fair and consistent decision making based on reliable evidence provided by the agencies concerned.

6. Following examination of the applications received EQAR is now pleased to announce the first three quality assurance agencies to be listed on the European register of quality assurance agencies:

/ National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain (ANECA)
/ Agency for Quality Assurance in the Catalan University System (AQU)
/ Accreditation Organization of The Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO)

7. Further applications are pending.

8. The next meeting of the Register Committee will take place in April 2009. The deadline for applications will be in early February 2009. More details will be available shortly on the EQAR website.

BryanMcMahon
Chair of the Register Committee

Notes:

1. The Register is accessible online at:

http://www.eqar.eu/register.html

2. The European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) are available on the EQAR website:

http://www.eqar.eu/application/criteria.html

3. The Procedures for Applications, as well as other official documents, can be consulted on the EQAR website:

http://www.eqar.eu/application.html

http://www.eqar.eu/fileadmin/documents/eqar/official/RC_01_1_ProceduresForApplications_v1_0.pdf

4. EQAR was founded on 4 March 2008 by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European Students' Union (ESU), the European University Association (EUA) and the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE). Please consult our website for general information.