European Quality Assurance
Register for Higher Education

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Recognising External Quality Assurance Across Borders

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Recent Developments
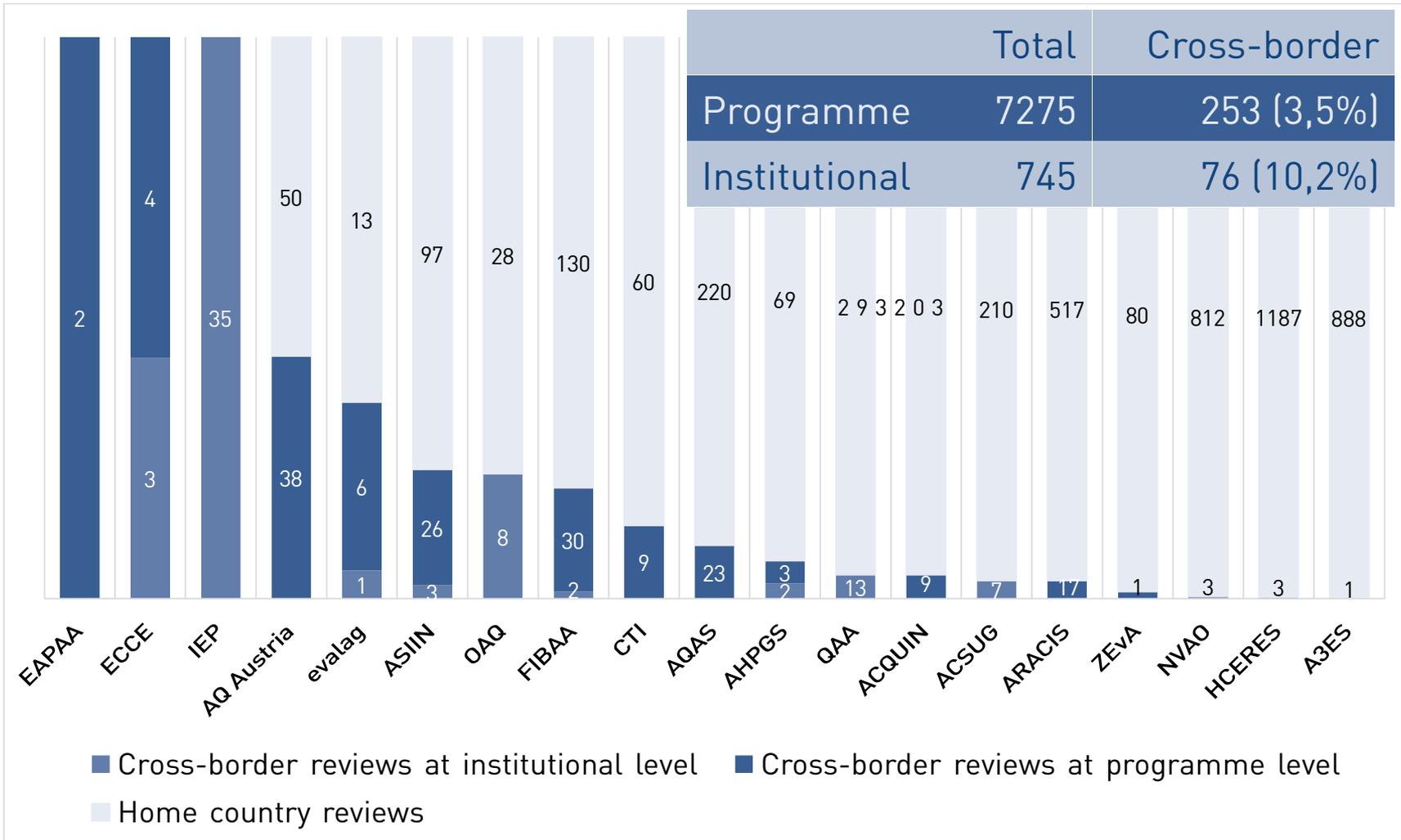
1. Increased international cooperation
   - … between quality assurance agencies
   - … agencies evaluating/accrediting institutions abroad

2. European framework for quality assurance
   - Revised European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)
   - European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)

Cross-border reviews by registered agencies (2014)

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	Total	Cross-border
Programme	7275	253 (3,5%)
Institutional	745	76 (10,2%)

EAPAA: 2

ECCE: 4, 3

IEP: 35

AQ Austria: 50, 38

evalag: 13, 6, 1

ASIIN: 97, 26, 3

OAQ: 28, 8

FIBAA: 130, 30, 2

CTI: 60, 9

AQAS: 220, 23

AHPGS: 69, 3, 2

QAA: 2 9 3 2 0 3, 13

ACQUIN: 9

ACSUG: 210, 7

ARACIS: 517, 17

ZEvA: 80, 1

NVAO: 812, 3

HCERES: 1187, 3

A3ES: 888, 1

■ Cross-border reviews at institutional level   ■ Cross-border reviews at programme level
■ Home country reviews

Opportunities and Challenges

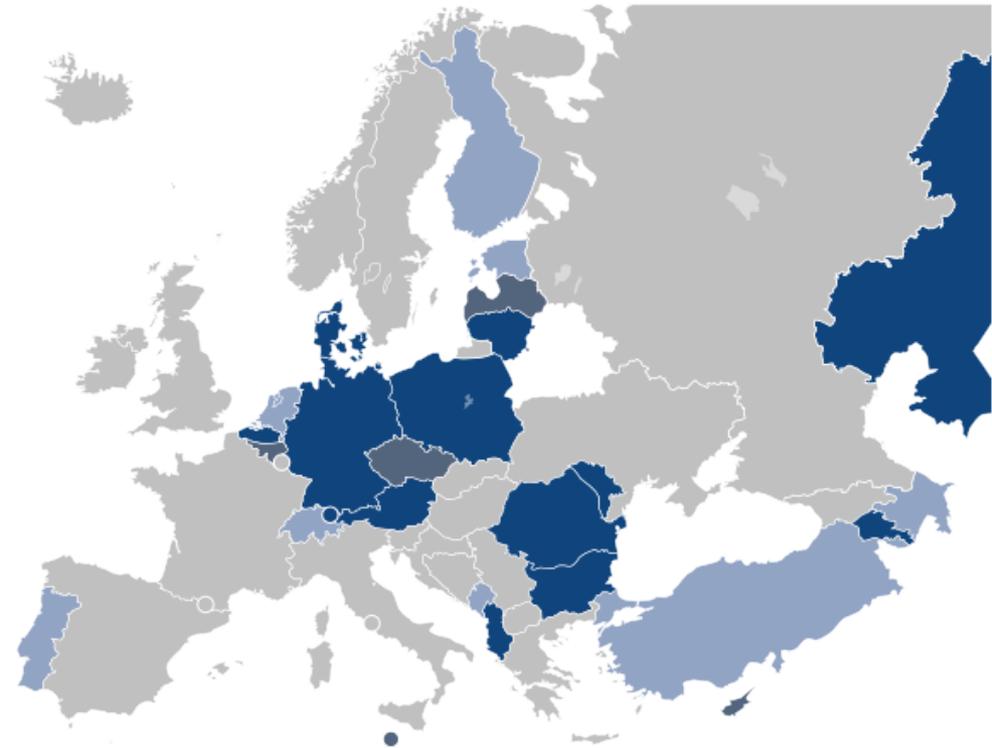|	Opportunities	Challenges
Higher Education Institutions	International visibility Recognition of degrees Most valuable feedback Specific review/label	Identify a suitable agency Language Explain context
Quality Assurance Agencies	International ambitions Enhance their methods Greater commitment	Acquaint themselves with a foreign HE system Standards and processes
Governments	Institutional responsibility International openness	Trust in European framework Funding of external QA

European framework

- Revised European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)
  - Modernised and improved version
  - Larger 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

■ 36 registered quality assurance agencies

■ Governmental members without registered agency

But: national legal frameworks lag behind

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- Despite the robust European framework ...
  - Cross-border accreditation/evaluation not 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

Joint programmes: QA reality mismatches the ideal

- Quality assurance is currently often fragmented

    - Different agencies look at bits and pieces
    - Not reflecting the "jointness" of the programme

- European Approach for Quality Assurance of JP

    - Joint programmes = joint quality assurance
    - Based on the Bologna infrastructure (QF-EHEA & ESG)
    - No additional national criteria
    - One review carried out by a suitable EQAR-registered agency
    - More joint responsibility (i.e. for QA)
    - Simplify process to create/design programmes

Conclusions

- The EHEA is taking shape – established European framework allows to consolidate trust and recognition

- But, mismatch between reality and policy:

  "Cross-border external quality assurance activities are increasing and are a manifestation of both the quality assurance agencies' and the universities' international aspirations and their wish to be evaluated in different ways. As compared to the other issues mentioned above, quality assurance shows that the actors (institutions and agencies) are ahead of the policy makers [...]" (EUA, Trends 2015)

- Enable institutions to mirror their diversity and international aspirations in external quality assurance