

The role of EQAR in quality enhancement of higher education

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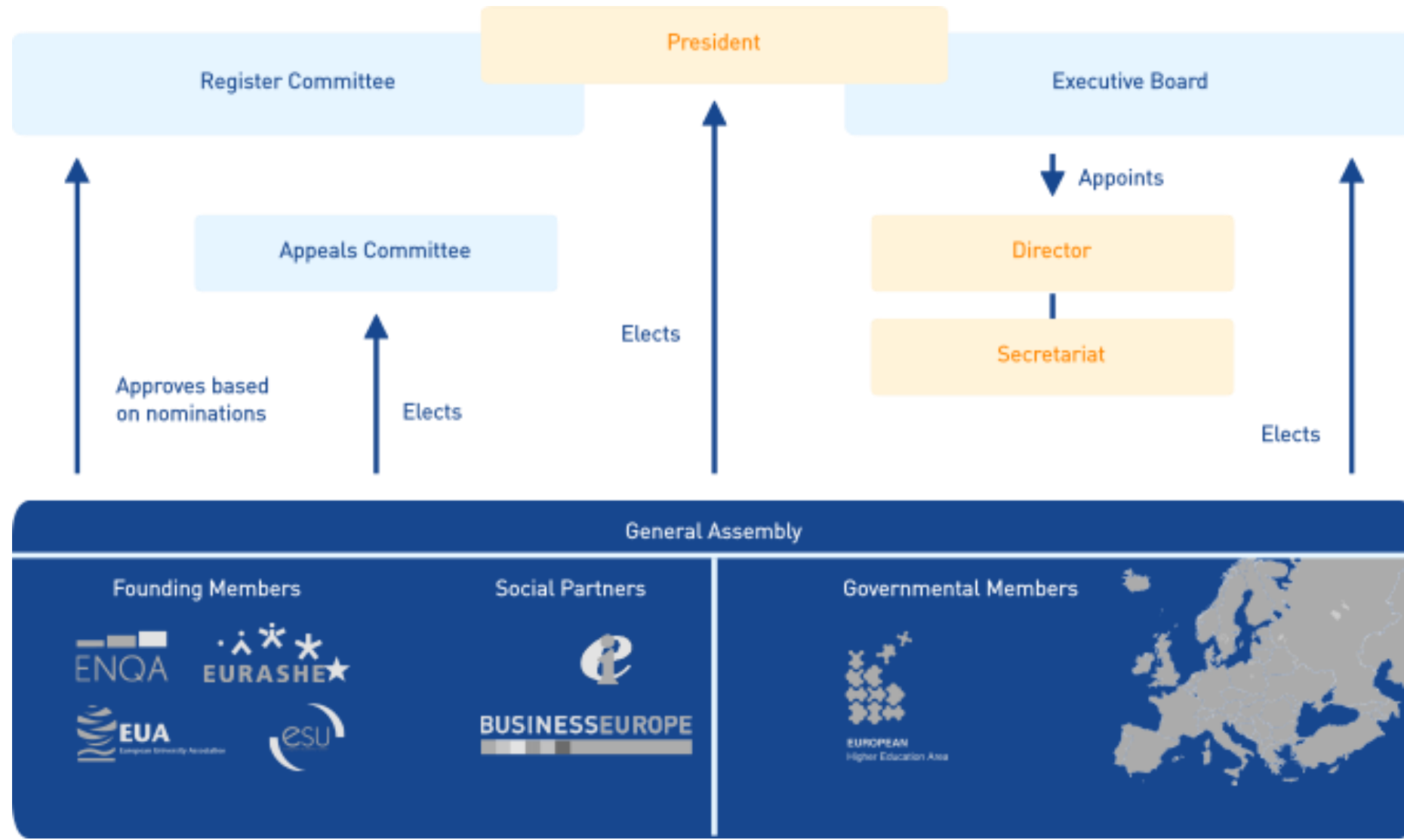
What is EQAR?

- Organisation to keep register of trustworthy agencies in EHEA
- Trustworthy means “compliant with European Standards and Guidelines”
- Founded in 2008 by E4 on request ministers of HE
- Membership: governments, currently 40 out of 48 EHEA-countries

Why EQAR?

- Robust system of internal and external QA key commitment in Bologna-process
- Ministers wanted external check on quality of QA
- European Standards and Guidelines, 2005 and 2015
- ESG: internal and external QA + system
- Instrument/tool for mobility and cooperation

How does EQAR work?



How does EQAR work?

- General Assembly: members
- Executive Board: representatives from E4 + president
- Register Committee: 10 members + president
- President:
 - Independent
 - Elected by GA
 - Term of 3 years
 - Once renewable
- Appeals Committee: independent of agencies

How does Register Committee work? (I)

- 4 x 2 members nominated by EUA, EURASHE, ESU, ENQA
- 2 x 1 members nominated by Business Europe and EI
- President chairs meeting without voting right
- RC judges compliance, based on (ENQA-) review
- Agency applies for registration (voluntary)
- Two RC members judge separately, then deliberation and proposal (C, PC, NC)
- Third RC member gives opinion on proposal
- Proposal to RC or questions to panel

How does Register Committee work? (II)

- 1 NC means no registration
- All C means registration
- 1-5 PC means holistic judgement, leading to (non-)registration
- Deferral leads to possible reaction of agency
- Second discussion in RC upon proposal by the three RC members
- Registration or non-registration
- Appeal possible: 3 appeals in 10 years

Benefits of registration for agencies

- Trust for HEIs, students, society
- National and international trust
- Crossborder cooperation
- International activities: “open market”
- Possible global trust: for profit agencies
- DEQAR as a tool

Difficult standards

- 3.3: Independence
- 2.7: Appeals and complaints
- 2.4: Peer-review experts
- 2.6: Reporting
- 3.4: Thematic analysis
- 3.1: EQA and consultancy

Trends in QA

- From program level to institutional level
- From control to enhancement
- Governments “oblige” agencies to register
- Cross-border QA
- Governments overload QA
- Growing diversity and substantive changes
- Rankings as alternatives to QA

Problems for EQAR

- Both ENQA and EQAR “judge” against ESG
- “Gatekeeping” vs/or “trust”
- Development stage of systems and agencies
- Length of the process
- “Bureaucracy”

Principles for QA

- QA is not leading, HEIs are leading
- It is not about QA, but about quality of education
- Education is dynamic, which urges QA to adapt
- One-size-fits-all QA is insufficient
- Students and stakeholders need reliable information

Benefits of registered agencies

- HEIs, students and society know quality of agency
- External parties develop trust
- Participation in DEQAR
- Better chances for mobility
- Better chances for international cooperation
- Internal QA will be taken seriously

Thank you for you attention