Crossing Borders - Internationalisation in Higher Education and Quality Assurance – German Experiences

NAQAAE Conference in Cairo on 12th and 13th of June 2019

Overview

- Introduction of AQAS
- Trends in Internationalisation
  - Transnational Education
  - European Universities
- Trends in External QA
  - Joint Programmes and European Approach
  - Certificates of Internationalisation
  - Accreditation abroad
- Conclusion and Challenges

AQAS - Facts and Figures

- Established in early 2002 by HEI as a membership organization (91 German and 1 Turkish University); membership is voluntary;
- Reaccredited by the German Accreditation Council (until 2022).
- Member of ENQA, ECA, EQAR, INQAHEE
- Areas of expertise:
  - About 6,000 programme accreditation (national and international)
  - 12 institutional accreditation (national and international)
  - 70 procedures for Joint Programmes (joint/double degree) provided by German HEI in cooperation with HEI in Irland, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Egypt, Jordan, Russia, China, Laos, Mexico,…

AQAS within the accreditation system

- AQAS is one of 8 German agencies.
- Agencies are not funded by the state but charge HEIs for the costs of accreditation. They operate on a non-profit basis.
- The agencies are obliged to check the criteria of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education of Germany (KMK) and the German Accreditation Council.
- New: German agencies do not have to be accredited by the German Accreditation Council (GAC) anymore but go through a review process organised by ENQA every 5 years.
  - ESG are the basis of ENQA reviews
  - Successful result also leads to a registration in European register (EQAR).

Key Actors of Quality Assurance in Europe

ENQA - European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

- **ESG: European Standards and Guidelines (2015)**
- developed the ESG in cooperation with other European organisations
- Reviews agencies in Europe

EQAR – European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education

- Functions as a whitelist for agencies in Europe

ECA – European Consortium for Accreditation (Network of agencies)

- Code of Good Practice (2004) – for agencies
- Projects on Joint Programmes and European Approach

Trends and Challenges of Transnational Education (TNE) in Germany

Crossing borders

Data on Higher Education in Germany (2017/18)

Number of higher education institutions (396 in total)	
Universities	121
Universities of Applied Sciences	218
Universities of Arts and Music	57

Maintenance of higher education institutions	
Public higher education institutions	240
Private, but state-approved higher education institutions	156

Number of programmes (joint/double programmes)	
study programmes as a total	**19,011 (675)**
BA programmes	8,677 (245)
MA programmes	8,703 (430)

Total number of students	2,800,000 (13% foreigners)
Graduates (2016)	462,375 (9,5% foreigners)

Situation of Internationalisation in Germany

- Federal Ministries finance the **German Exchange Service** (DAAD) which is the executive organisation for projects to strenghten internationalisation in Higher Education System in Germany.
- The Ministries of the 16 regions (Länder) are relativly weak in supporting HEI in internationalisation.
- Therefore the activities are still:
  1. depending on contacts of individual professor
  2. depending on profile and ambitions of each HEI
- There is a lack of internationalisation as a **strategic tool** of HEI.
- German Rectors‘ Conference (HRK) offers **„International Audit“** to consult universities and to strengthen the strategic aspect.

Categories of Transnational Education (TNE)

There are the following categories of TNE:

1. Participation of German HEI in **Joint Programme** (Joint, Double oder Multiple Degree) [= relevant for accreditation]
2. **Transfer** of a programme of German HEI abroad:

   a) Awarding a German degree [= relevant for accreditation on basis of German criteria]

   b) Awarding a foreign degree [accreditation on voluntary basis]
3. Participation in **„German backed universities"** (e.g. GUC in Cairo) [= depending on the model relevant for accreditation]
4. **Branch campus** (e.g. Al Gouna/TU Berlin)

Examples of TNE

Source: DAAD

Leading Ideas of TNE

- Cooperation at **eye level** (partnership approach)
- **Limited financial interests** of HEI
- Strengthing the cooperation with the **specific country or region** in the middle run
- Interlinkage of **teaching and research** in education
- Focus on **applied sciences**
- Students should spend a period of **time in Germany** (one semester or internship).
- **German language** should be learned up to a certain extent.
- DAAD and German Rectors‘ Conference developed a **„Code of Conduct“** for German HE Projects abroad“.

Expectations refering to TNE Programmes:

- The accountability and the **responsibilities** of the main institution and the other site have been clearly defined and are adequate.
- The degree programmes which are offered at several sites are of **uniform quality.**
- The respective **national legislation** is observed.
- **Educational traditions and cultural differences** regarding teaching and learning, including examination procedures, are respected.
- All sites are included in the institution's **quality management system**.
- The organisation, management and support structures are established according to the **same quality standards** as they are maintained at the accredited site.

Trends and developments

- Some 4,000 joint programmes in EHEA (estimate European Commission); Erasmus Mundus just 5%

Situation in Germany:

- No reliable data on joint programmes. It seems that the number is rising.
- Sometimes the label „joint programmes“ is used to attrack more students. The programmes are provided by a German university and only include a stay at a university abroad.
- Number of students in programmes: between 5 to 30 (small programmes).

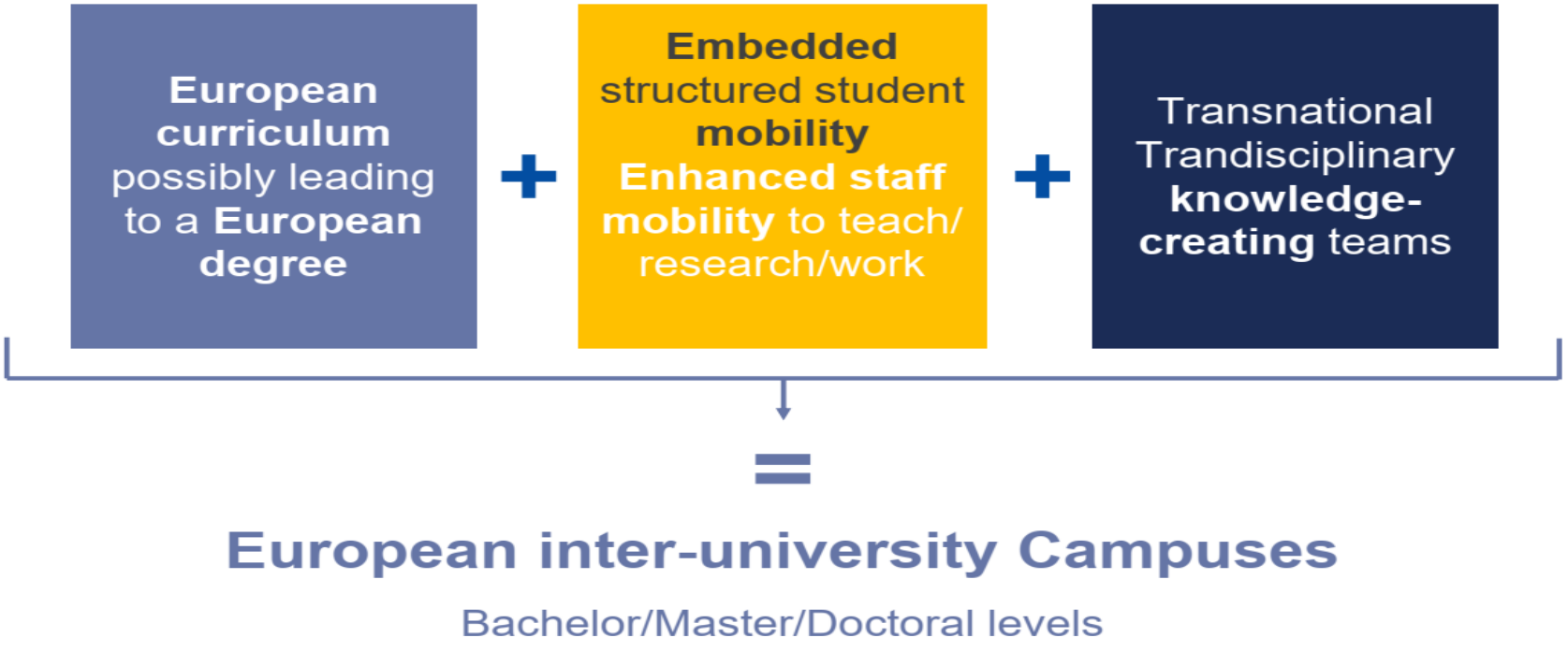
New: European Universities

- On a meeting in December 2017 the European Council concludes:

  "Education and culture are key to building inclusive and cohesive societies, and to sustaining our competitiveness."

- With support of Erasmus+ programme strategic partnerships between HEI should be founded or extended to build up 20 "European Universities" till 2024.
- These network universities should enable students to obtain a degree by combining studies in several EU countries.
- The question of external QA is still open.

New: European Universities



European Commission

Trends and Challenges of External Quality Assurance

Accreditation of TNE in Germany

- Whenever a **German HEI provides a degree** abroad or in cooperation with universities abroad, an accreditation is obligatory.
- A successful accredition is the precondition for the approval of the programme by the Ministry of Education. As a consequence the **degree is recognized** in Germany.
- The advantage for the Bachelor graduate may be that the **admittance to a Master programme** at a German HEI is easier.
- The publication of the report of accreditation creates **transparency** concerning the programmes offered.

New definition of Joint Programmes in Germany (2018)

A joint programme is a Bachelor- or Master programme which will be provided and coordinated by several Higher Education Institutions from several countries, under participation of a German Higher Education Institution.

The joint programme can result in a joint, double or multiple degree and shows the following characteristics:

- *integrated curriculum,*
- *period of study abroad of at least 25 percent,*
- *cooperation agreement,*
- *agreed procedures for admittance of students and*
- *agreed examination systems as well as*
- *common quality assurance (based on ESG part 1).*

New “European Approach” for JP

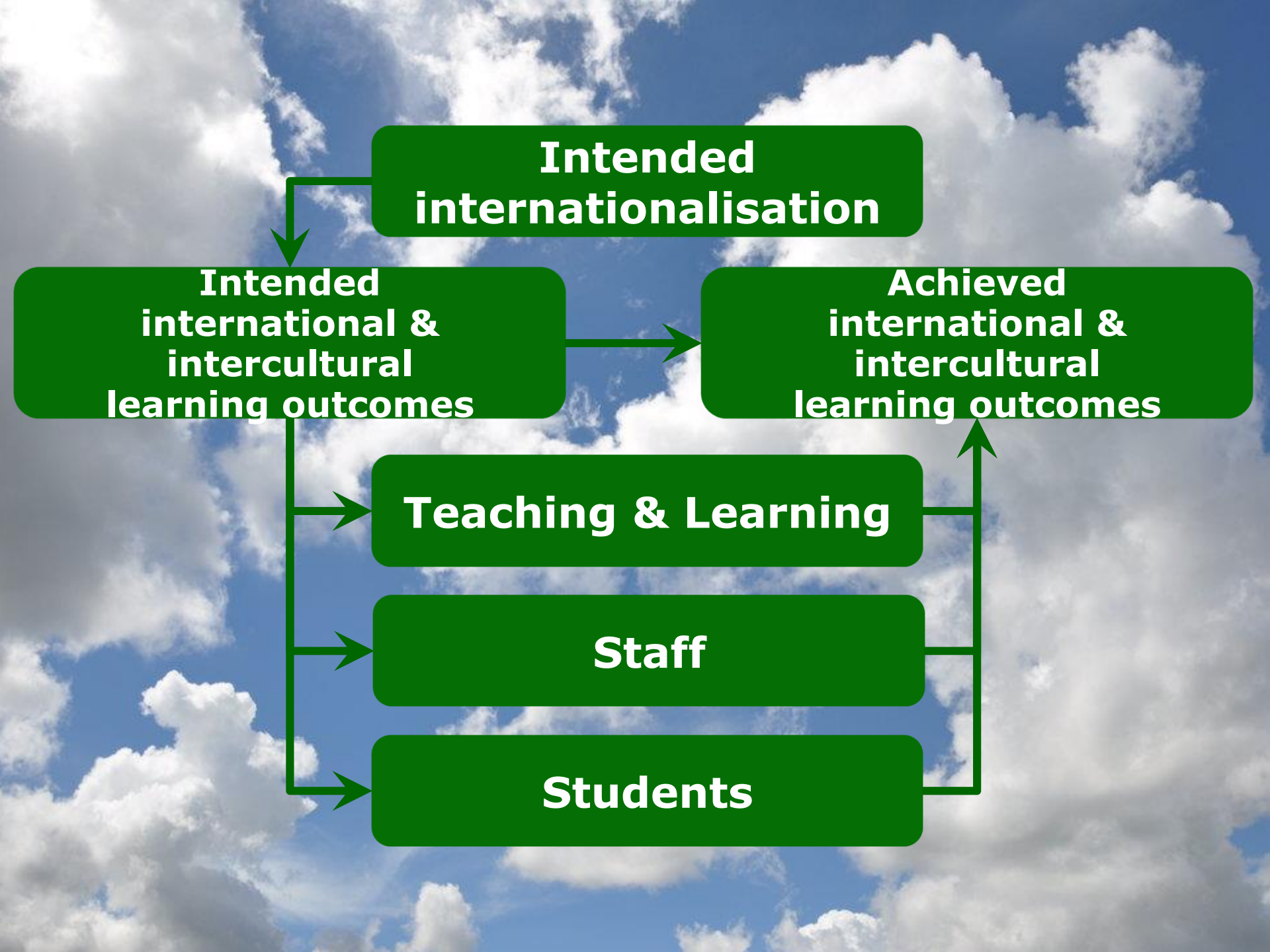
- Only Joint Programmes which fit in the above named definition can be reviewed by **any** EQAR-registered QA agency
- Accreditation decision by a EQAR-registered agency that follows this approach should be accepted in all EHEA countries where the programme is offered!
- Partner HEI from outside Europe can be included.
- The panel of experts for the reviews must include international expertise.
- The site visit can be restricted to one location but the provision of all locations has to be taken into account.

Core idea of European Approach

- Criteria for the assessement of Joint Programmes (JP):
  1. European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)
  2. Qualification framework for European Higher Education Area (EQF)
  3. ECTS-principle
- And the specific character of Joint Programmes has to be addressed: Common responsibility, development of the programme and execution of the programme.
- National regulations have to be considered by the HEI, but are not the basis for accreditation of JP anymore.

Institutional Approach: Check of Internationalisation in Europe

- Internationalisation is a complex phenomenon not only in Higher Education
- More and more German universities want to get feedback on their level of internationalisation
- Available tools to check:
  - Internationalisation- Audit of German Rectors Conference (HRK)
  - Certificate for Quality of Internationalisation by European Consortium of Accreditation (ECA)
    - Framework for programmes
    - Framework for institutions
  - Over 30 universities achieved to get the ECA Cerfiticate

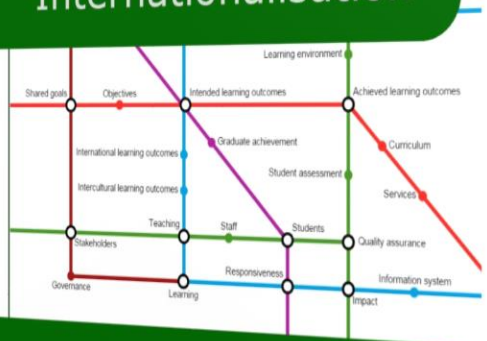

Intended internationalisation
Intended international & intercultural learning outcomes
Achieved international & intercultural learning outcomes
Teaching & Learning
Staff
Students

Frameworks for the Assessment of Quality in Internationalisation

Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation

eca european consortium for accreditation

The Guide for Assessing the Quality of Internationalisation



Axel Aerden

eca european consortium for accreditation

An introduction to international and intercultural learning outcomes

Axel Aerden

eca european consortium for accreditation

Crossing border activities of European Agencies

- When programmes, teaching staff and studends cross boarders, external QA has to follow.
- Aiming for co-operation, mobility and comparability requires some common standards and a mechanism and tools:
  - Shared qualification framework to allow comparability (alignment) (EQF)
  - Common set of Standards defining quality in the procedure (European Standards and Guidelines)
- External Quality Assurance required to create transparency and independence and certify that a certain framework level is reached (building TRUST).

Examples of International Activities of Agencies

NVAO (The Netherlands) assessed JP at a University in Germany

AQAS (Germany) carried out a European Approach procedure in Finland

AQAS will review programmes and a university in Belgium

QQI (Irland) will cooperate with Hongkong for joint assessment and recognition

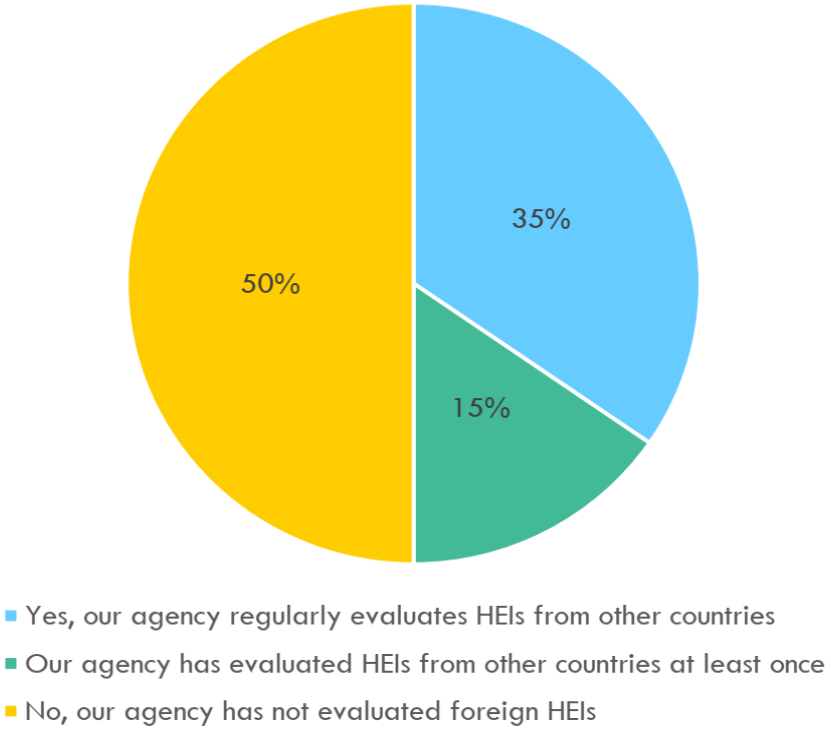
AQ Austria will review research centres in Germany

AHPGS (Germany) accredits programmes in Romania and Latavia

…

Only in some cases special premittance by ministries is needed.

HAS YOUR AGENCY EVER IMPLEMENTED THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES?



Source: European Commission study on progress in quality assurance

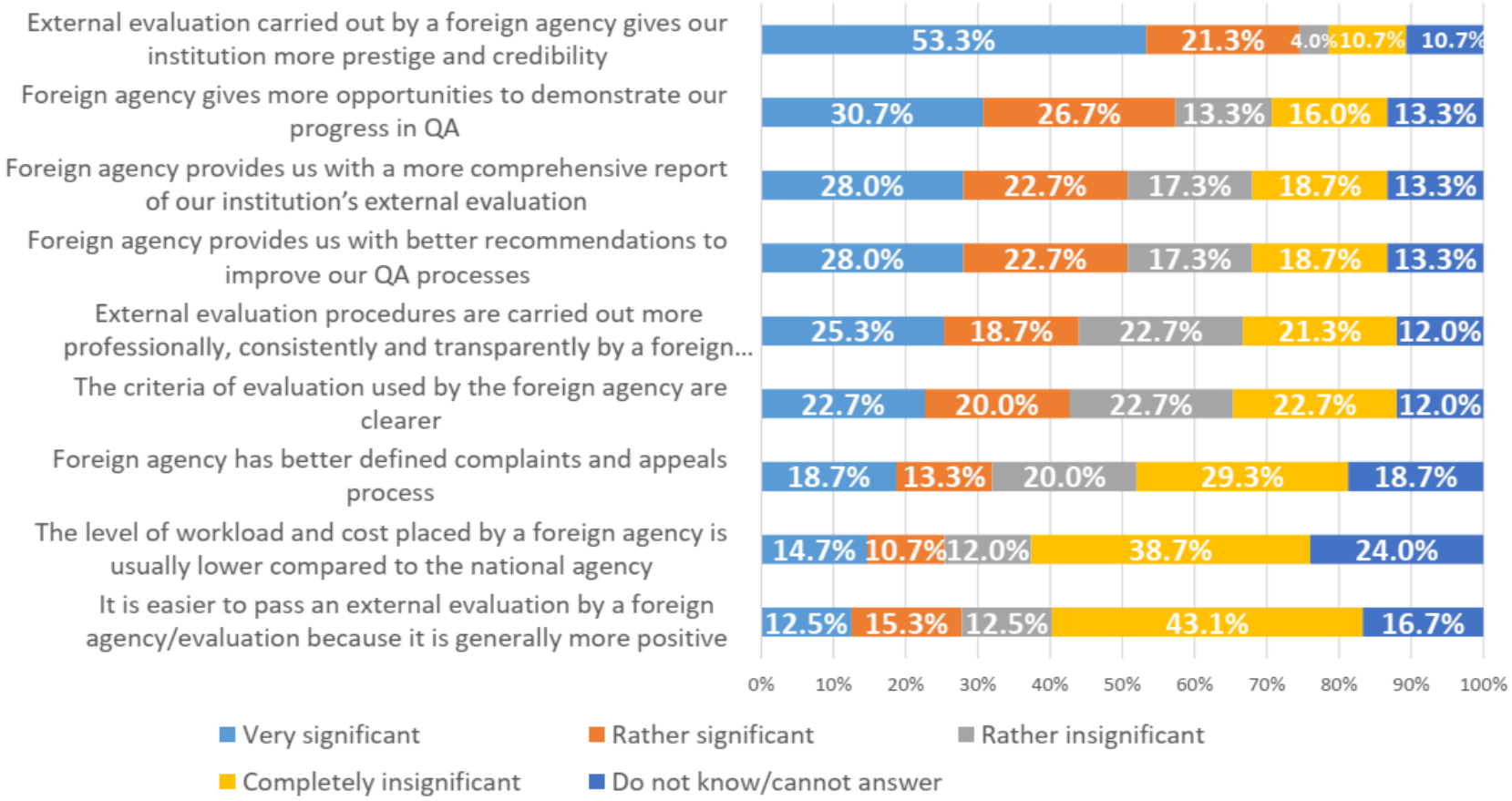
European Commission

Crossborder-Activities of European Agencies

Data provided by EQAR:

- During the past 4 years 30 EQAR-registered agencies carried out at least on review abroad.
- In past 4 years 1099 QA activities in 83 higher education systems (78% on programme level, 20% on institutional level, 2% JP).
- Some agencies carried out more than 100 reviews abroad.
- Most of the procedures take place in EHEA countries, even if there is no recognition is guaranteed (e.g. Russia)
- Some countries leave the selection of an EQAR-registered agency to the university (e.g. French-speaking Belgium)

WHAT REASONS LED YOUR INSTITUTION TO CHOOSE A FOREIGN QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY INSTEAD OF A NATIONAL ONE?



Source: European Commission study on progress in quality assurance

European Commission

Conclusions

- International reviews do not substitute national accreditation but provide an added value.
- Regional networks of universities become more important and strive for visibility („European Universities“).
- Networks of agencies (e.g. ANQAHE, SAQAN, ASEAN, ENQA) should focus more on exchange about international practices and experiences.
- International frameworks and guidelines are crucial for exchange and crossborder activities (e.g. ASG, ESG).
- Internationalisation of staff members is needed.

Challenges of Internationalisation

- Lack of sustainablity of programmes/cooperation
- Lack of data to analyse situation of TNE
- Little experiences with the new European Approach
- National QA regimes and regulations may collide with international approaches
- Recognition of international procedures by national ministries (or ENIC/NARIC)???
- Intercultural problems in review procedures

Doris Herrmann
Managing Director
herrmann@aqas.de

Agency for Quality Assurance
through Accreditation of Study Programmes (AQAS)
Hohenstaufenring 30-32
50674 Cologne
Germany
Phone: + 49 (0) 221 99 50 06 – 12
Fax: + 49 (0) 221 99 50 06 – 99
www.aqas.de