

The European Students' Union

REPRESENTING STUDENTS SINCE 1982



Key Internal Quality Assurance Issues

Students' Perspective

EQAS – Training event 1

26st June 2015

Warsaw, Poland

Blazhe Todorovski (Executive Committee Member)

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What is ESU?

What is ESU?

Who we are?



The European Students' Union (ESU) is the umbrella organisation of 45 National Unions of Students (NUS) from 38 countries. Our members are student-run, autonomous, representative and operate according to democratic principles.

ESU's work centres around supporting its members through organising seminars, trainings, campaigns and conferences relevant to students, conducting European-wide research, partnership projects and campaigns, providing information services and producing a variety of publications for both students, policy-makers and higher education professionals.



Our role



Mission

ESU's mission is to represent, defend and strengthen **students' educational, democratic, political and social rights**. ESU will work for **sustainable, accessible and high quality higher education** in Europe.

Vision

Equal educational and social opportunities in an open and **democratic** Europe where students shape a **sustainable** future.

ESU involvement in QA...



- **In designing and promoting the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG)**
- **Has performed in 2008 the first QA agency audit (ARACIS) entirely carried out by a student review panel;**
- **Has been involved in the revision of UNESCO/ OECD guidelines for quality provision in cross-border higher education (2005);**
- **Overview of QA implementation in the BP → BWSE and BAFL.**



ESU involvement in QA...

- **EUA's Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP)**
- **ENQA quality assurance agencies' evaluations**
- **Institutional evaluations organized by national quality assurance agencies.**
- **LLP funded project 2009-2012 Quest for Quality for Students**
- **LLP funded common project of E4 (MAP- ESG)**
- **ESPAQ Project – Tempus Project (Armenia)**

E4 group (+)



- www.quest.esu-online.org
- All publications and documents that are related with QA can be found on this web-site!!!

ESU work on QA...

- **ESU QA experts pool**

In 2009, **ESU** established a **pool of committed and well prepared students** who aim to contribute to improve Higher Education provision in Europe through Quality Assurance procedures.

The establishment of this pool is a way how ESU is **promoting and developing student participation in Quality Assurance** all over Europe.

The pool is renewed once a year and has an **independent Steering Committee**, which launches the calls and selects the applicants based on public criteria.

ESU organises **study sessions, workshops** and other events for pool members where they are trained.

The pool **brings together** students from all parts of Europe, their **experience and knowledge**, and it is an excellent forum for debating, sharing views and learning about Quality Assurance.

These students contribute to **ESU policy making process**, act as **multipliers agents in their respective countries**, collaborate in several **projects, participate in Quality Assurance reviews**, etc.

ESU work on QA...

- **ESU QA experts pool**

Principles of the pool:

- Balanced by region and field of studies
- Student-led
- Cyclical renewal
- Bringing student experience together
- Enhancing the role of students in Quality Assurance
- Acting as multiplier

Currently there are **over 60 students:**

- 28 different European countries
- first, second and third cycle
- with previous experience

Cooperation:

- National Students' Pools
- Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) of EUA
- ENQA - External evaluation of Quality Assurance Agencies
- Quality Assurance Agencies
- Higher Education Institutions

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Internal QA

Student Involvement in IQA



- **Main roles of students:**
 - **As an information source (filling out questionnaires, focus groups, etc)**
 - **In the follow-up actions (implementation of recommendations, etc.)**
 - **As observers within the bodies of internal assessment processes**
 - **As full-members (voting rights) within the bodies of internal assessment processes**
- **European Standards and Guidelines**

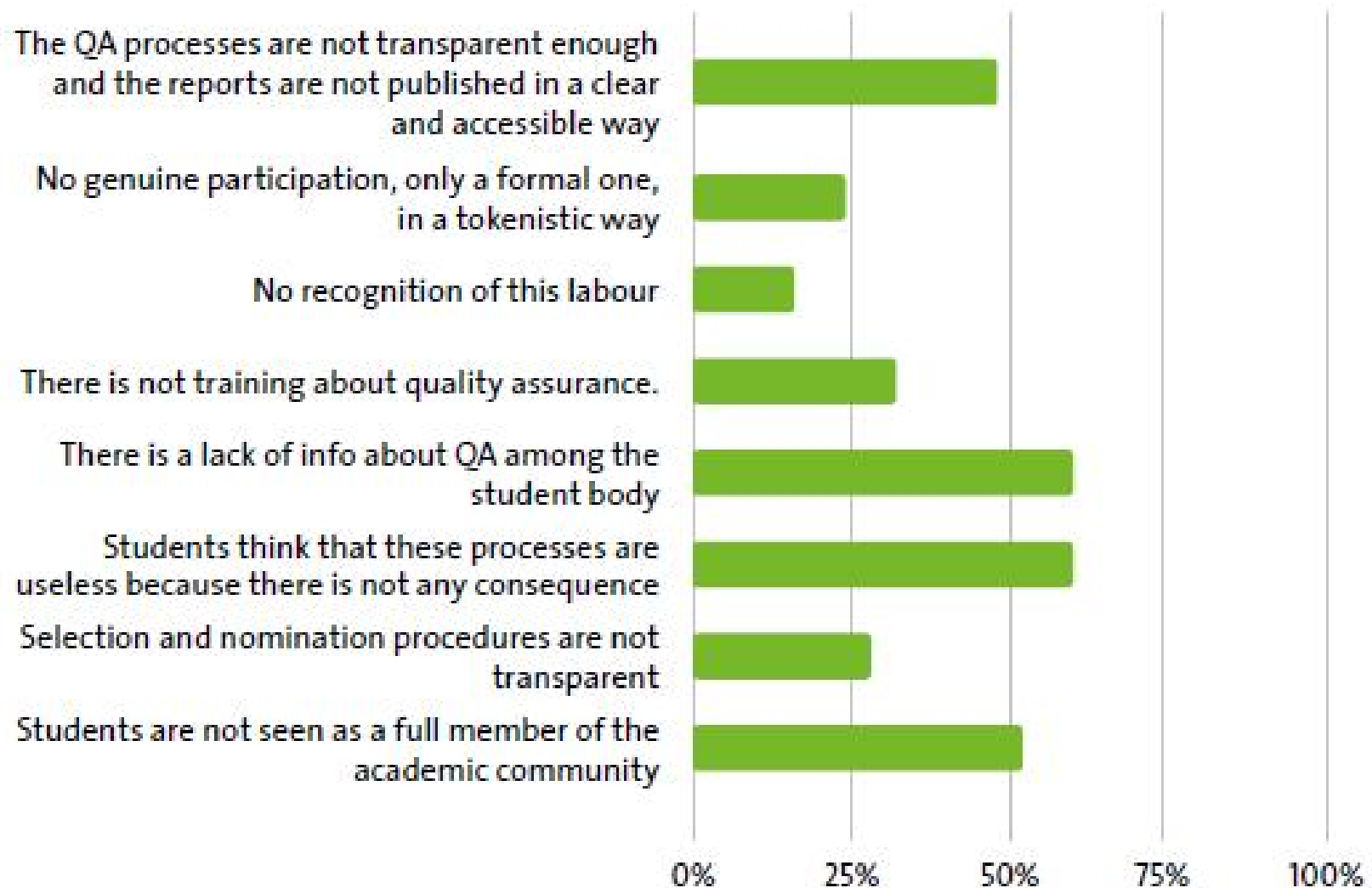
ESU's policy on IQA



- **As full members of the academic community and competent co-responsible partners, students should be fully involved in defining the quality assurance policy of the institutions and its internal system.**
- **Internal quality assurance systems should be aligned with HEIs' mission and strategic priorities and act as an integral part of the managerial structures of HEIs.**
- **ESU also emphasises that while quality assurance bodies are a supportive structure within the HEIs, they can neither replace governance bodies and student participation within these bodies, nor undertake their responsibilities.**

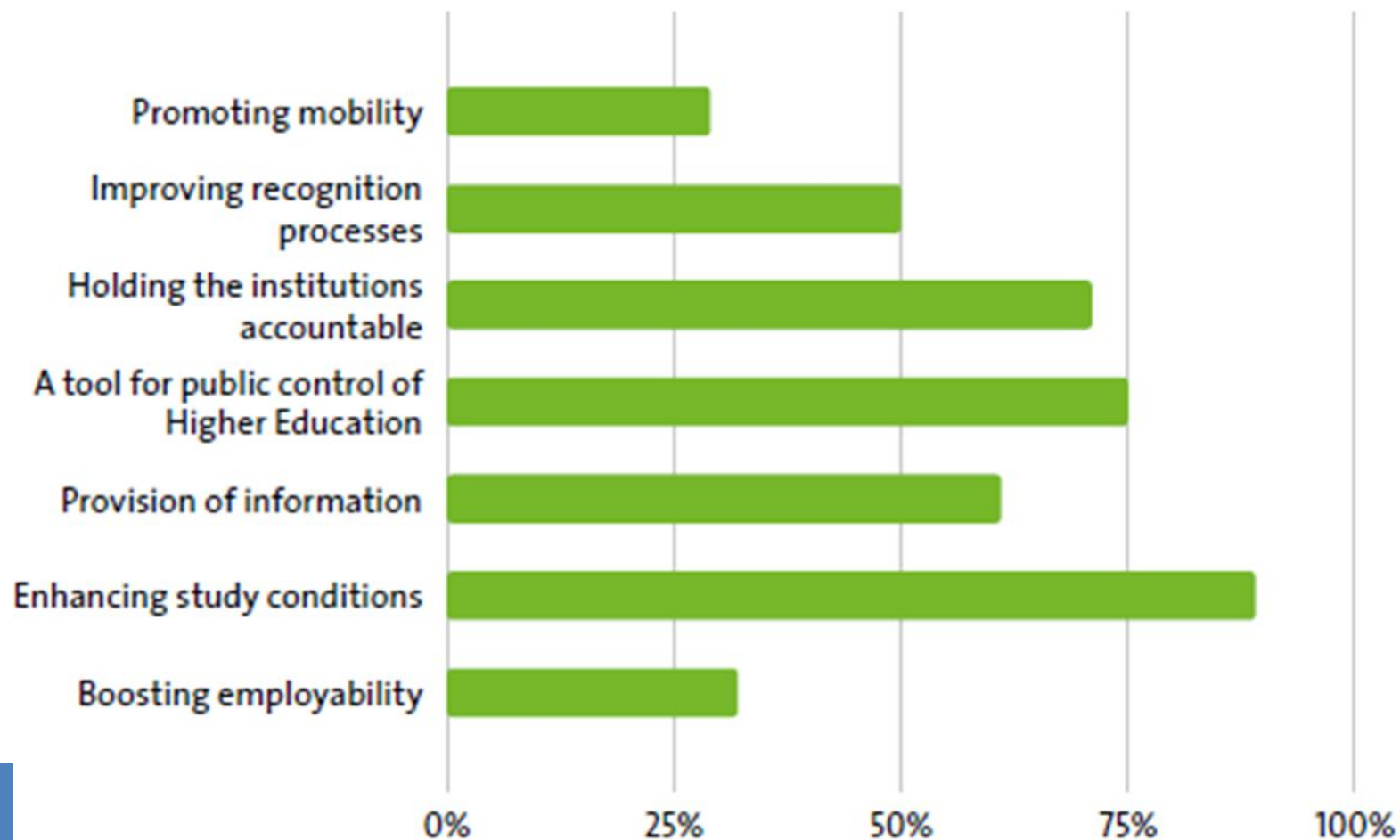
Barriers

fig. 3 What are the main barriers that students find in their involvement?



Usefulness/Purposes of QA

fig. 1 The usefulness/purposes of QA is generally seen by your national union of students (NUS) as:



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BWSE2015: Main findings & recommendations

bwse2015.esu-online.org

Main findings (IQA processes)

- **Only one out of 39 respondents of the BWSE survey have stated that students in their country do not take part in the internal QA processes**
 - **As an information source (filling out questionnaires, focus groups, etc) (29)**
 - **In the follow-up actions (implementation of recommendations, etc.) (10)**
 - **As observers within the bodies of internal assessment processes (9)**
 - **As full-members (voting rights) within the bodies of internal assessment processes (26)**

-

Main findings (EQA processes)

- **4 out of 38 respondents have declared that students in their country do not take part in EQA processes**
 - **As an information source (as in interview during external reviews, etc) (23)**
 - **As observers within the external review panel (7)**
 - **As full-members within the external review panel (29)**
 - **Students can take the position chair/secretary of the external review panel (3)**
-

Main findings (QA governance)

- **Are students involved in the governance of quality assurance (QA) agencies?**
- **YES (28) NO (6) No QA Agency (4)**
- **Their involvement in the QA agencies (28 responds)**
- **As full-members of the governance bodies (decision-making bodies) (22)**
- **As members of the consultative bodies (11)**
- **As observers of the governance bodies (decision-making bodies) (5)**
- **As planners of the evaluation/accreditation programmes (5)**
- **Are Students consulted by the Government about QA issues**
- **YES (22) NO (11) Don't know (5)**

Recommendations



- **Quality Assurance must continue to be a priority for higher education systems in order to remove obstacles to take up, pursue with and successfully complete degrees. It has to ensure academic freedom, integration of teaching, learning and research as well as prepare students for being active citizens in the future without excluding any of the groups within the society.**



Recommendations

- **Quality Assurance systems should be based on the principles and values of trust, participation and ownership of stakeholders and a drive for real improvement.**
- **The internal QA should embrace evaluating and monitoring all of education activities within a HEI. The reports from the evaluation have to be accessible for students, other stakeholders and wider public and include the recommendations that should serve for the action plans for future improvement. HEIs need to make sure that the progress is monitored.**
- **Independent QA agencies have to be established in every country across the EHEA to provide the complementary reviews and support HEIs in enhancing quality on institutional and programme level. The autonomous responsibility for their operations should ensure non-political character of the conclusions and recommendations.**

Recommendations

- **The meaningful representation of students is a must in the QA. Students have to be recognised as competent and equal partners and act as full members in the decision-making bodies of internal and external QA.**
- **It is essential that the revised version of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) in the EHEA are rapidly implemented in cooperation with national stakeholders. The student-centered learning standard is of an utmost importance and the countries across the EHEA should strive for full transformation of the national provisions to execute this standard in practice while carrying out the reviews with full and meaningful engagement of students.**
- **The possibilities for further development of EQAR should be explored in order to provide information about quality-assured higher education provision in EHEA. This could be achieved, for instance, by establishing a database of official degrees and study programmes offered within EHEA.**



Bologna With Student Eyes 2015

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Introduction



This year as you can already tell we decided to take a slightly different approach to the publication. Compared to previous years where every aspect of the Bologna process was analysed from a student perspective we have chosen to highlight some key issues for the future that are important for students. Some of the key areas for the the European Students' Union in this edition are student-centred learning, the social dimension, recognition and the future of the Process as a whole.

We are in a crucial time for the Bologna process. There are many questions hanging in the air. Is the Process still relevant? Has it died? How do we get countries to implement all the reforms they committed to? Will the countries who did implement the reforms stay interested? It is doubtful that the Ministerial Conference in Yerevan will answer all of these questions. However, at the very least we hope that we can set out a path for the future that will lead to the results that students

need.

It is not reasonable that the Bologna Process has been in place since 1999, yet still basic recognition of degrees and

#BWSE2015



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**Thank you for your
attention!**

attention!

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 European Students' Union



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