



Africa-EHEA Dialogue on recognition and quality assurance

Successes, challenges and perspectives for cooperation

17-19 January, 2024 – Barcelona, Spain

A 'Conversation' of the Africa-Sub Group of the Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue (CG on GPD) of the BFUG, with support of the HAQAA Initiative and IN-GLOBAL project

Venue: Barcelona, hosted by OBREAL in cooperation with the University of Barcelona



ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES
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Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
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1. About the BFUG Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue

In the Rome Communiqué issued on 19 November 2020, the Ministers responsible for higher education within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) recommitted to international dialogue on higher education values, policies, and reforms, drawing on the experiences of the EHEA as well as those of other areas of the world, and to further develop and strengthen Global Dialogue during the 2021-24 work period.

In line with the Rome Communiqué, the **Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue** under the EHEA is committed to develop continuous dialogue and to explore ways of initiating or consolidating contacts with other macro-regions, countries and organisations on matters of common concern and relevance for higher education. The work of the CG is supported by three regional sub-groups, respectively on Africa, Asia and the Americas. In this context, the sub-group on Africa of the Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue has hosted a series of *Online EHEA-Africa Conversations on Recognition in Higher Education*¹, involving institutional and academic experts from Europe and Africa.

The aims of the *Conversations* series has been:

- *to raise awareness of the importance of recognition for Higher Education in the EHEA and in Africa and to disseminate information on recognition instruments and practices;*
- *to provide EHEA and African administrations, institutions and stakeholders an informal, interactive space to exchange views on opportunities, challenges and good practice on recognition in both regions;*
- *to promote and facilitate the development and implementation of good policy and practice in the field of recognition;*
- *to embrace and exploit synergies between different initiatives and dialogues and reach out to new actors and countries.*

This dialogue event is currently being offered as part of this series, as a third, hybrid activity for African and EHEA stakeholders and members of the BFUG, and as a means to prepare the Global Policy Forum in the Tirana Ministerial Summit planned for 2024. It is supported by and framed under the HAQAA Initiative, financed by the EU, with additional support and funding from the IN-GLOBAL project and OBREAL Global, an association that supports inter-regional policy dialogue.

2. About HAQAA3

The HAQAA3 Initiative (Harmonisation, Quality Assurance and Accreditation in African Higher Education 3)², the continuance and expansion of the work done under HAQAA1 (2015-18) and HAQAA2 (2019-2022), is an ambitious response to African and international development objectives, framed within the context of the EU's growing investment in African partnership.

The Specific Objectives of this action are the following:

¹ <https://www.in-global.eu/>

² <https://haqaa3.obreal.org/>

1. *quality assurance (QA) culture and quality enhancement in Higher Education institutions and capacities of quality assurance agencies and national/regional authorities are strengthened to develop, implement and use transparency tools such as the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA) and African Credit Transfer System (ACTS);*

2. *the capacities of quality assurance agencies and national/regional authorities are strengthened to promote mutual recognition of qualifications and accreditation, use of transparency tools and the set-up of the PAQAA (Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency) is further developed;*

3. *the capacity of the higher education sector (including policy makers) on issues related to evidence-based and informed policy making and regional integration is built, with a view to strengthen regional and continental integration, enhance the sector's responsiveness and contribution to socio-economic challenges and to support the revision/extension of the CESA 2016-2025.*

The 'HAQAA3 Implementing Team', comprised of OBREAL Global (lead), the Association of African Universities - AAU, DAAD and ENQA, and supported by 9 strategic partners, are carrying forward a 5 year contract (commenced June 2023). EUA, which is part of the BFUG in addition to ENQA, is one of the strategic partners of HAQAA3. The European Commission, ENQA, EUA and DAAD are all part of the Coordination Group for Global Policy Dialogue of the Bologna Follow-Up Group and hence propose an important synergy between the work of this group and the HAQAA3 Initiative.

HAQAA3 has three **transversal methodological Components**:

- *Policy development*
- *Training and Capacity Building*
- *Piloting and Implementation*

These elements cut-across **four Work Areas**:

- *Capacity building and training for IQA and EQA*
- *The Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (PAQAA),*
- *Support for the piloting of the African Credit Transfer System (ACTS)*
- *Capacity for HE Data for policy analysis*
- *Transversal Work Area - Policy Dialogue and support for Higher Education Regional Integration.*

In relation to the transversal work area, one key commitment of HAQAA is to organise, both virtually and in hybrid formats, policy dialogue between Africa, Europe and other relevant work regions on topical issues related to HAQAA3: Higher education integration, mobility, recognition, quality assurance, student-centred learning and learning outcomes, higher education and digitalisation, etc.

3. Objectives of the dialogue

This dialogue event aims to

- Continue to explore the topic of recognition and quality assurance in and Africa-EHEA context, particularly by digging deeper into certain key themes of the Conversation series
 - Recognition policies and frameworks and how they relate to institutional cooperation and mobility
 - Recognition for life-long learning
 - Recognition and micro-credentials
 - Recognition and the role of quality assurance systems and agencies
- Review outcomes and plans of Erasmus+ CBHE Strand 3 projects, working on these themes in Africa and further afield;
- Provide a space for consultation on the draft statement of the Global Policy Forum of the EHEA Ministerial Conference 2024 in Tirana;
- Outline priorities for future Africa-EHEA dialogue and how to organize it in the context of the Bologna Process post-Tirana and discuss the synergetic role of initiatives like HAQAA, IN-GLOBAL, Erasmus+ projects and other dialogue spaces generated by stakeholders.

4. Structure and Target audience

The event will gather approximately 40-50 participants physically in Barcelona, from Africa (including Northern Africa) and Europe, in addition to participants who will be invited to participate online.

The main target audience will be a mix of stakeholder organization representatives and governments:

- Members of the BFUG, especially the Coordination Group Global Policy Dialogue, including ministries in the EHEA and stakeholder organisations such as EUA, ENQA, ESU, UNESCO, etc.
- Targeted members of the 'Thematic Peer Group' for Quality Assurance and also for Recognition of the BFUG
- The European Commission and the African Union Commission
- Selected representatives of major African university associations
- Selected representatives of regional economic communities (EAC, SADC, ECOWAS) and representative ministries or agencies in Africa
- Select representatives of QA and recognition networks in Africa
- The All-Africa Students' Union/ Erasmus Students Alumni Network

5. Agenda

Day 0: 17 January - – Historic Building of the U. Barcelona

Pre-meetings (upon invite only) and cocktail reception

HAQAA3 meetings

- 9h00: Registration
- 9h30 - 13h: HAQAA3 Advisory Board Meeting - Aula Magna
- 13h - 14h: Lunch for HAQAA3 participants
- 14h – 17h: Meeting of the HAQAA3 Steering Committee – Aula Magna
- 17h – 18h: Coffee and Visit of the University of Barcelona

CG GPD meeting

- 15h30 – 18h30: CG GPD Meeting – Sala Ramon I Cajal

Arrival of other participants

18h30 Welcome reception

- Opening panel debate provided by OBREAL Global and DAAD: Comparative regional perspectives on quality assurance developments: Does QA lead to quality? – Vestibulo of Historic Building
- Cocktail and light dinner

Day 1: 18 January – Historic Building of the U. Barcelona

Room: Aula Magna

8h30 Registration

9h00 **Official welcome**

- Joan Guardia, Rector, University of Barcelona
- Co-Chairs of the EHEA Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue
- Adrian Veale, DG EAC, European Commission
- Sophie Ashipala, Head of Education Division, African Union Commission (virtual)
- Ramon Torrent, President, OBREAL Global / HAQAA3 Coordinator

9h30 **Objectives of meeting and ice breaker exercise**

9h45 **Introductory presentations/keynotes**

A snapshot: Higher education areas and spaces in Africa: Regional and continental dynamics – *Albert Ngesgijuma, Executive Secretary, Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)*

Bridges between Africa and Europe: From Recognition Conventions to Recognition Practice – *Borhene Chakroun, Director of Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, UNESCO*

Discussion

Chair: Elizabeth Colucci, OBREAL Global/EUA representative to the CG GPD

11h00 Coffee and networking

11h30 **The EHEA-Africa Conversations: What have we learned?**

How the Bologna Process functions and the role of the Global Policy Dialogue

- *Kathy Isaacs, Co-Chair CG GPD, Italy*

Presentation of the results of the Africa-EHEA Conversations in the context of the CG GPD

- *Caroline Hollela, Ministry of Education, French Community of Belgium- virtual*

12h00 **Break-outs 1: Going further and deepening the discussion**

(Room: Aula Magna – with interpretation ENG-FR)

- **Group 1: Making academic recognition work: Tools, frameworks and communication**

Room: Aula Magna

- *Input presentation from EHEA – Chiara Finocchietti, BFUG TPG Recognition/CIMEA*
- *Input presentation from Africa: Credits, Credit Systems, Conventions and QFs... How does this play out in one system in Africa? – Lamine Gueye, ANAP-Sup Senegal*
- *Discussion*
- *Recommendations: Success factors, follow-up issues, topics for further dialogue*
Chair: Chiara Finocchietti, BFUG TPG Recognition/CIMEA

- **Group 2: Flexibilisation of learning and learning pathways**

(Room: Ramon I Cajal – No interpretation)

- *Input presentation from the EHEA– Vanja Gutovic, Education Specialist, UNESCO*
- *Input presentation from Africa: Regulatory challenges and advances – Jean Koulidiati, Rector of the Pan-African University, Cameroun*
- *Discussion*
- *Recommendations for follow-up, action and further dialogue*
Chair: Eduarda Castel-Branco, ETF/Coordinator of the ACQF II project

13:30 Lunch

14:30 Short reports from break-outs

15:00 **Information session: the EU Global Gateway/Youth Mobility Flagship, HAQAA and support for recognition and QA in Africa**

-*Adrian Veale, DG EAC, European Commission*

16:00 **Panel discussion: Different projects and initiatives related to recognition and QA in Africa: Synergies and Opportunities**

Chair: Adrian Veale, DG EAC, European Commission

Panelists:

Bernard Zuppinger, Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF)

Stefan Bienefeld, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

Apiyo Okwiri, OBREAL Global

James Jowi, Association for the Internationalization of African Higher Education (ANIE)

17:30 Close

Day 2: 19 January

Venue: Hotel le Avenida Palace, Gran Via de les Cortes Catalanes 605-607

9:00 **Panel discussion: Student perspectives and interests in recognition processes**

Ana Gvritshvili, Executive Committee member, European Students' Union (ESU)

Peter Kodjie, All-Africa Student's Union (AASU)

Imane Benrabiaa, African Student's Alumni Forum (ASAF) - virtual

Chair: Jenneke Lockhoff, Nuffic

10h30 Coffee

11h00 **Recognition of quality assurance decisions and trust between QA agencies:
Comparative processes between the EHEA and Africa**

- *EHEA: How this functions, implications for recognition of QA decisions, successes and challenges / diversity of national systems and agencies*
- *African initiatives and their evolution: The ASG-QA, Regional Accreditation processes, the Pan-Africa Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency/ support for development of national systems and agencies*
- *Student voice in QA*
- *Discussion on lessons learned, challenges and comparative development*

Chair: Maria Kelo, Director for Institutional Development, EUA

Panelists:

Olusola Oyewole, Secretary General, Association of African Universities (AAU), Ghana

Michael Mawa, Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), Uganda

Horia Onita, President, ESU (virtual)

Anna Gover, Director, ENQA

12h30 **Information session: Understanding comparative regional integration in higher education: The HAQAA Learning Materials, MOOC Series and Network**

13h00 Lunch

14h00 **Towards the Global Policy Forum Statement**

Presentation of draft statement and discussion/ input - *Co-Chairs, CG GPD*

Priorities for future Africa-EHEA dialogue in the context of the Bologna Process post-Tirana and discuss the synergetic role of initiatives like HAQAA, Erasmus+ projects and other dialogue spaces generated by stakeholders

16h15 **Summary, way forward and closing remarks**

- *Co-Chairs of the Coordination Group on Global Policy Dialogue*
- *Coordination of HAQAA3*

16h30 Close