HERE NATIONAL BOLOGNA EVENT –
“ENHANCEMENT OF QA IN BiH AND TRENDS IN THE EHEA”

THE FUTURE OF THE ESG – UPADATE ON ESG REVISION

25 SEPTEMBER 2025

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CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

TIRANA COMMUNIQUÉ

- Reaffirmed the role of the three key commitments for the successful development of the EHEA.

- Gave the mandate for the revision of the ESG

"The application of the ESG promotes trust and transparency within and between higher education systems and facilitates accountability and enhancement. ***To keep them in line with ongoing developments, challenges and expectations, we invite the authors of the ESG to propose a revised version by 2026 to the BFUG, to be adopted by us at our 2027 Ministerial conference****, as well as an adjustment, where required, of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes."*

PREPARATORY PROJECT: 'QA FIT FOR THE FUTURE'

Aims

- Mapping the state of play of quality assurance in the EHEA
- Explore perspectives for the future of quality assurance
- Provide an evidence base of a future revision of the ESG

Activities

- Surveys to main stakeholder groups
- Focus groups and consultations
- Papers and webinars to present the results

Co-funded by the European Union

RESOURCES

Material from the QA-FIT project is available here:

https://www.enqa.eu/projects/quality-assurance-fit-for-the-future-qa-fit/

Including

- Papers from each stakeholder organisation mapping the state of play and perspectives for the future
- Paper on QA and internationalisation
- Paper on the future of the ESG
- Policy brief and key considerations for the revision of the ESG
- Webinar recordings

Co-funded by the European Union

CONSULTATION OUTCOMES: WHAT WORKS?

- ✓ Importance of a European QA framework
- ✓ Strong agreement that the ESG are still needed
- ✓ The ESG support development of L&T, trust in and recognition of qualifications, student mobility, quality culture
- ✓ The basic principles remain relevant

These points are agreed by all main stakeholder groups

CONSULTATION OUTCOMES: WHAT NEEDS CHANGING?

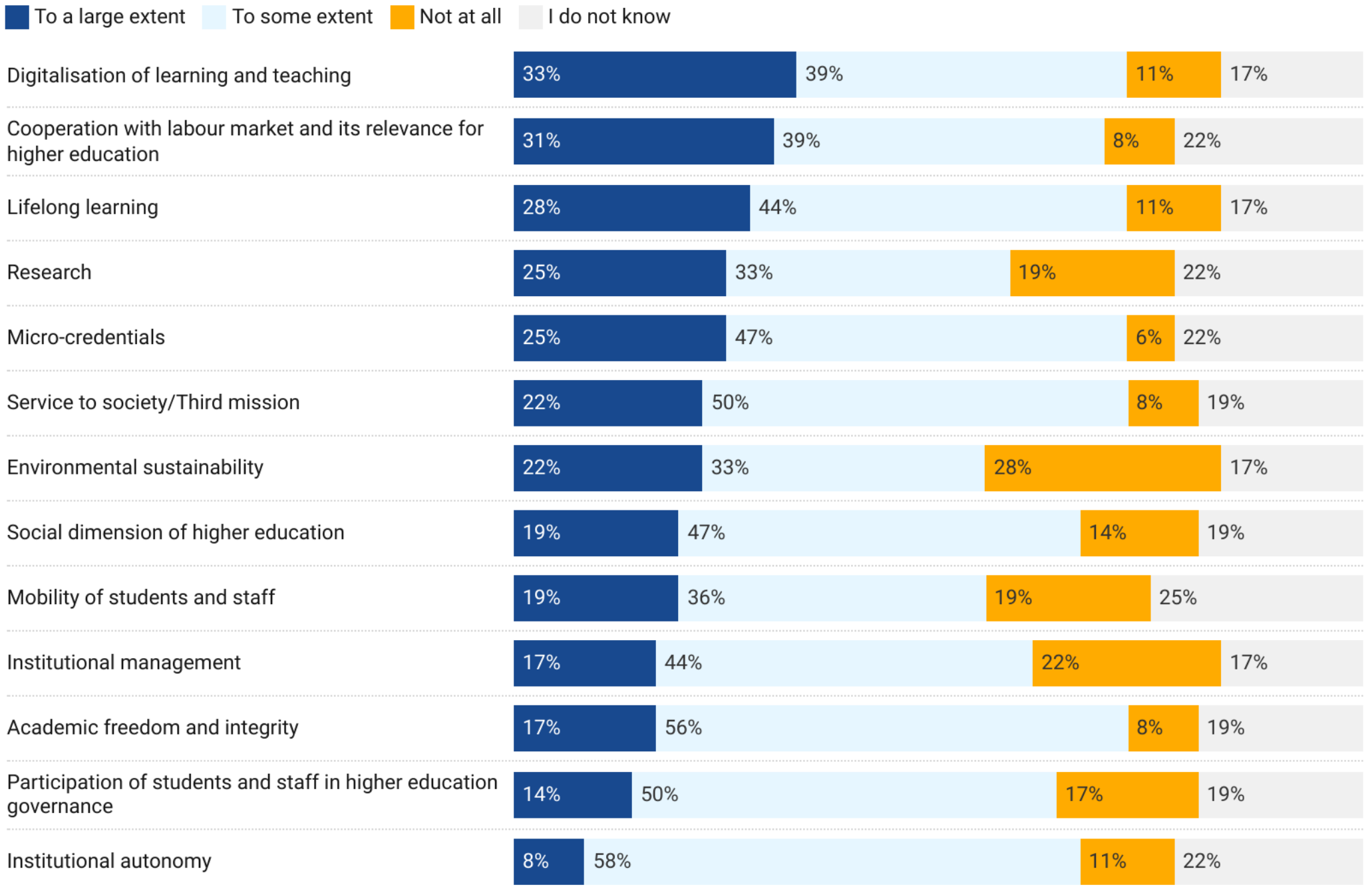
- Introduction: Update and make main concepts and messages clearer

- Internal QA: digitalisation, diversity of learners and academic staff, flexible learning pathways, links with other institutional missions, transversal topics (…)

- External QA: flexibility in QA methodologies while maintaining sufficient accountability (…)

If the scope of the ESG Part I were to be expanded, what should it cover in more detail?

(QA-FIT survey to ministries)



QA-FIT
Quality Assurance Fit for the Future

CONSULTATION OUTCOMES: KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE ESG REVISION

- Recognise the existing purposes of the ESG as relevant and valid
- Maximise the added value of EHEA standards
- Celebrate the diverse contexts and cultures in higher education
- Situate the quality assurance of learning and teaching in its broader context
- Balance current issues with long term relevance

REVISION STRUCTURES AND PROCESS

- ESG Steering Committee
  - Representatives of all ESG authors (ENQA, EUA, EURASHE, ESU, EQAR, Education International & Business Europe)
  - Coordinate the overall process, including main directions and consultations
- ESG Drafting Group
  - Representatives of primary ESG authors (ENQA, EUA, EURASHE & ESU)
  - Prepare drafts and identify issues for further discussion
- Consultation rounds with all key stakeholders, including BFUG
- Parallel revision of the European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes
- Final versions in autumn/winter 2026, ministerial approval in 2027

STEERING COMMITTEE PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS (1)

- The current **structure** should be maintained (introduction, 3 parts)
- There should be further work on ensuring that the **standards are self-explanatory**, while the guidelines support implementation in different contexts
- The ESG should remain **focused on L&T**, but with stronger reference to the links to the research and societal missions of HEIs
- The ESG should maintain **applicability** to all types of higher education provision (and revision should keep in mind "other/alternative providers" and smaller units of learning smaller e.g. micro-credentials)

STEERING COMMITTEE PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS (2)

- Re-writing of **introduction** to revise the structure and eliminate overlaps, update the context, make the key messages clearer
- The ESG should support different **concepts of quality**
- The ESG are **standards for quality assurance** and not for quality itself
- The existing **principles remain valid**, but discussion on whether additional ones are needed
- Reflection on whether **definitions** should be in the text versus a separate section (glossary)

BFUG CONSULTATION FEBRUARY 2025

- General agreement on
  - The need for a revision, but building on the existing version
  - The current structure is appropriate
  - Caution against overloading the ESG with too many topics and risk diminishing its strength
  - No need to (re-)define the concept of quality
  - The ESG should focus on learning, teaching (and assessment), but with much stronger reference to research and societal missions
- Divergent views on
  - If and how references to values and social dimension should be strengthened
  - Extent of convergence needed between ESG/EA and European Degree criteria

FURTHER TOPICS OF RELEVANCE

- Digitalisation in/of L&T
- Lifelong learning
- Micro-credentials / short learning units
- Transnational education
- Cross-border quality assurance
- Recognition of qualifications
- Environmental sustainability (sustainability as a broader term?)
- Social dimension
- Fundamental values
- Societal mission - relevance to the society/region/labour market
- Research

KEY MILESTONES FOR 2025

- June, September & December 2025: Steering Committee meetings to prepare drafts of Parts 1, 2 and 3.
- December 2025: BFUG consultation
- Winter 2025/26: Public consultation on complete draft

(+ start work on revision of the European Approach)

THANK YOU

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