



ECA Agreement of Cooperation

5th June 2008, Kraków, Poland

The signing parties to this Agreement of Cooperation agree to continue and build on the work of the “European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education” (ECA) which was established in Córdoba, November 2003.

1. Aims and Activities

The aim of the Consortium is threefold:

- to achieve **mutual recognition** of accreditation and quality assurance decisions; to enhance the conditions for such mutual recognition, especially for joint programmes
- to provide a platform for **mutual learning** and disseminating experiences with accreditation and accreditation-like practices
- to provide **transparent information** on quality and to facilitate the **internationalisation** of institutions and students.

To achieve the aims of mutual recognition, mutual learning, transparent information and internationalisation the participants agree to undertake the necessary activities in Working groups. The topics of these activities and their corresponding Working groups will be determined by the Consortium in annual work plans. These annual work plans will include the dissemination of the work of the Consortium and the exchange of information with other bodies, both in Europe and outside of Europe.

2. Organisation

The Consortium

The Consortium is a project organisation. The organisations participating in ECA will meet once a year. The Consortium:

- Appoints the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Coordinator and the other members of the Management Group for a term of two years. These persons can be re-appointed for a second term.
- Considers and approves the annual work plan and reports of the Management Group.
- Considers and approves the annual ECA membership fee.
- Decides upon membership applications.

The decisions of the Consortium are based on consensus among members. Each member organisation may cast one vote. If after a thorough discussion a consensus cannot be reached then a combined majority of members and member countries may take a decision to prevent a deadlock.

The Management Group

The Management Group of the Consortium consists of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and the Coordinator plus a *maximum* of five representatives from different member countries. The Management Group has the possibility to co-opt a new member in case of a vacancy.

The Management Group:

- Prepares the annual meetings and other Consortium activities
- Looks after the Working groups and their activities
- Proposes the annual membership fee to the Consortium; approves the financial statements and the Conclusions of the plenary meetings
- Makes recommendations to the members of ECA on the admission of new members.

The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson:

- Preside over the meetings of the Management Group and the Consortium
- Represent ECA externally
- Actively contribute to the aims of the Consortium.

The Coordinator:

- Prepares and convenes the meetings of the Consortium and the Management Group
- Prepares the reports and publications of ECA, and administers the websites
- Prepares the financial statements; administers the finances; collects the annual subscriptions and any other financial contributions to the activities of ECA
- Supports the Management Group and encourages the Working Groups.

3. Members and Partners

Membership is open to organisations in the Bologna signatory countries:

- which have been established by law as corporate bodies or are based on national or regional regulations or agreements;
- which have accreditation or accreditation-like practices as one of their principal functions;
- which contribute actively to the aims of the Consortium;
- which fulfil the ECA Code of Good Practice and/or the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance.

The Management Group of the Consortium will act as membership review committee and will consider applications for membership of ECA. The Consortium decides about the membership.

The members of the Consortium decide each year on the annual membership contribution and approve the budget. The basic activities of the Consortium are funded from the contributions of its members. In order to fund specific activities, ECA may apply and receive financial support from other parties.

The Consortium has the possibility to invite observers, experts and stakeholders to its meetings and Working Groups.

4. Final Provisions

This Agreement of Cooperation shall enter into force with the signature of the mandated representatives of the participating organisations. This Agreement shall end on 31 December 2011.

Any dispute over the interpretation of this agreement shall be resolved by the annual meeting of the Consortium.

Amendments to this agreement must be adopted by the members of the Consortium. It may only be modified with the approval of a combined majority of members and member countries. Changes and additions have to be in written form.



SIGNATURES

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