



REVISITING THE ESG: CELEBRATING SUCCESS AND ADDRESSING CHANGE

**ANNA GOVER, ENQA DIRECTOR
17 OCTOBER 2025**

enqa.

ENQA IN BRIEF



Who we are

Membership association of QA agencies:
62 members
41 affiliates



What we do

Represent interests of members
Provide services to members and stakeholders
Drive development of external QA



How we do it

Policy input	Projects
Events	Publications
Working groups	Agency reviews

QA IN THE EHEA TIMELINE

2005

Adoptions of the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA (ESG)

2012

Allow EQAR-registered agencies to perform their activities across the EHEA, while complying with national requirements.

Recognise QA decisions of EQAR-registered agencies on joint and double degree programmes.

Creation of European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)

2008

QA IN THE EHEA TIMELINE

2015

Revised version of ESG (ESG 2015)
European approach for QA of Joint
Programmes

2020

Encourage an enhancement-oriented use of
the ESG to support innovation

2018

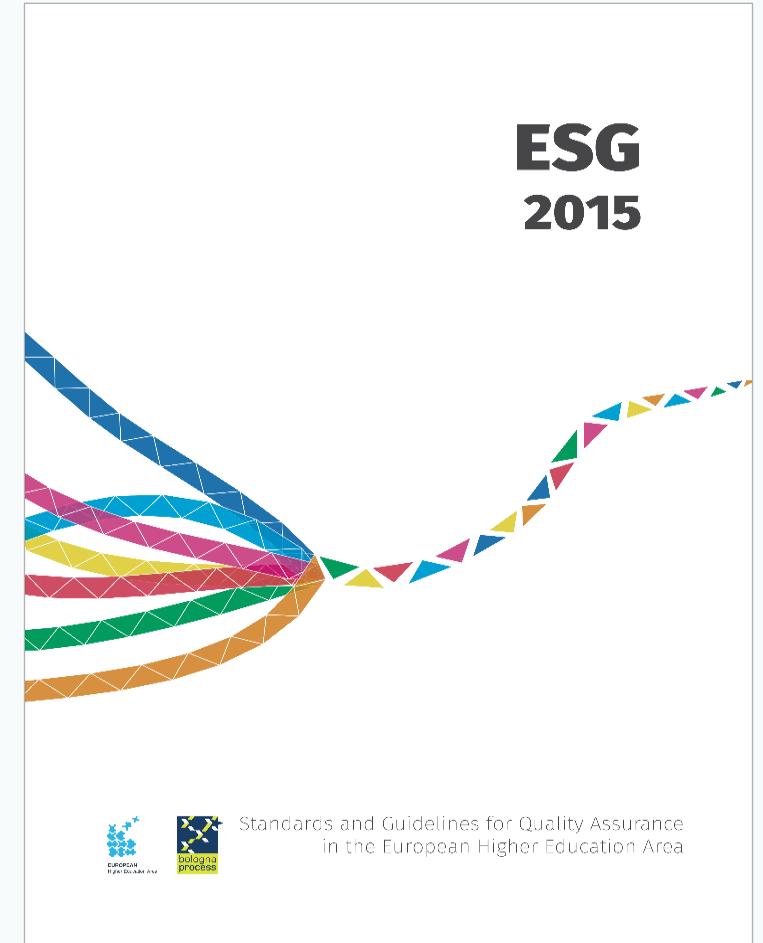
Three key commitments on 3-cycle systems of
degrees; recognition in line with the LRC; and
QA in line with the ESG

2024

Mandate for the revision of the ESG, for
approval of new version in 2027

THE ESG

- Composed of **three parts**:
 - Part 1 - Internal QA within HEIs
 - Part 2 - External QA by QAAs
 - Part 3 - Internal QA and operation of QAAs
- ESG are a document that needs to be read **as a whole**:
 - introductory part is of central importance!
 - parts 1, 2 and 3 build on each other
- Four main **purposes**:
 - Set a common framework for QA in Europe
 - Enable assurance and improvement of quality
 - Support mutual trust
 - Provide info on QA



ESG: PRINCIPLES OF QA IN THE EHEA

- Higher education institutions have the **primary responsibility** for the quality of their provision and its assurance;
- Quality assurance responds to the **diversity** of higher education systems, institutions, programmes and students;
- Quality assurance supports the development of a **quality culture**;
- Quality assurance takes into account the needs and expectations of students, all other **stakeholders** and society.

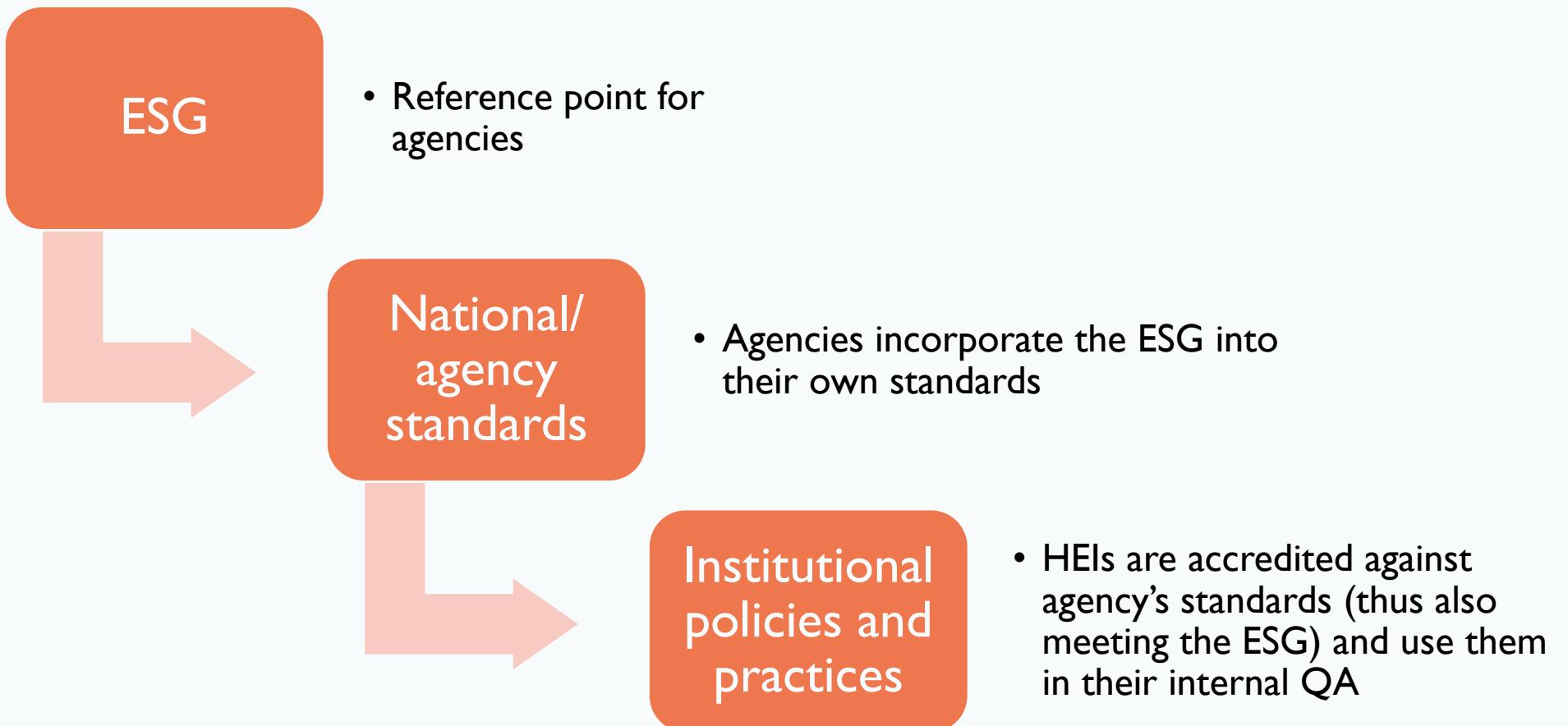
ESG: SCOPE

- Apply to **learning and teaching**, plus relevant links to research and innovation
- Apply to **all higher education** in EHEA regardless of mode of study or place of delivery
- Twin purposes of **accountability and enhancement**
- Standards for **quality assurance**, not for quality
- Generic enough to be applicable in **all contexts**

WHAT ARE THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES?

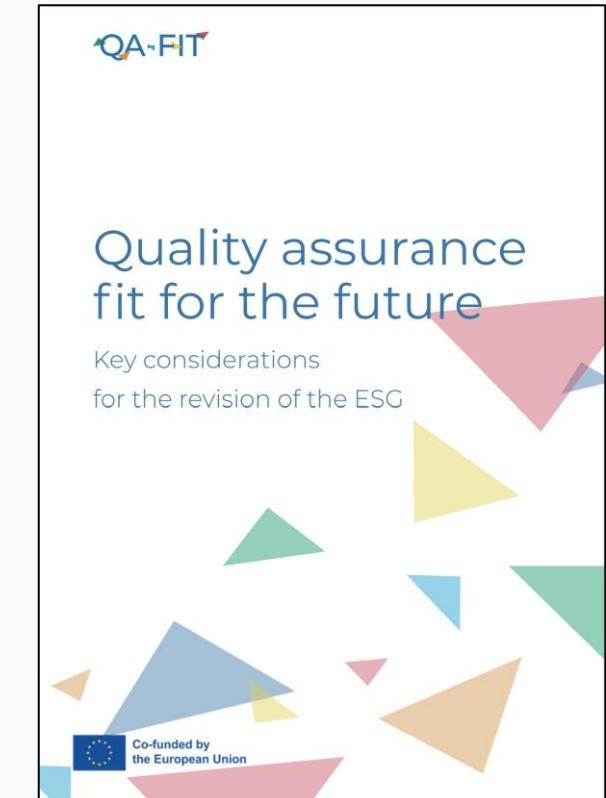
- **Generic principles** → allow for diversity of implementation; need to be “translated” into different contexts without losing their meaning
- **Standards** “set out agreed and accepted practice... and should be taken account of and adhered to by those concerned”
- **Guidelines**
 - “explain why the standard is important”
 - “describe how standards *might* be implemented”.
 - “set out good practice ... (but).. Implementation *will* vary depending on different contexts”
 - If do things in another (good) way, OK → explain “why?”

RELEVANCE OF ESG FOR INSTITUTIONS



FOUNDATIONS FOR THE ESG REVISION

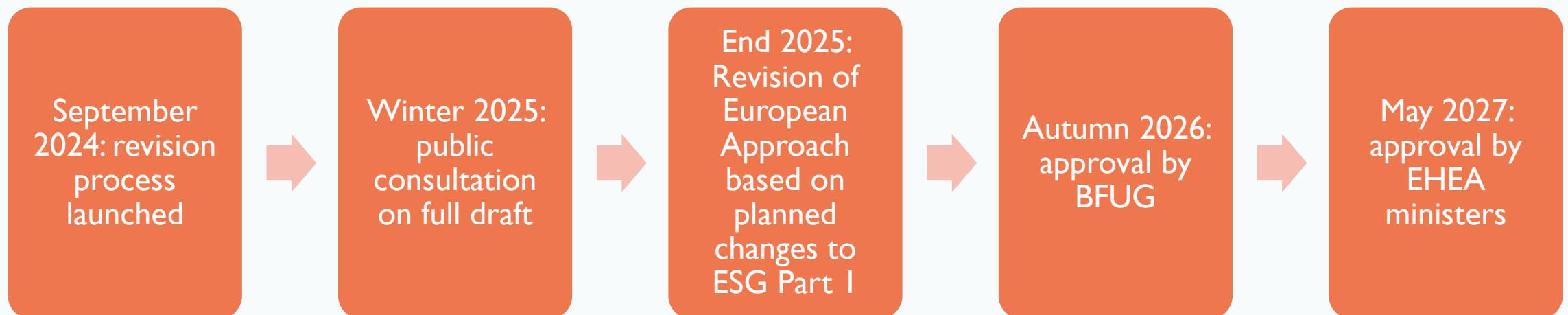
- Recognise the existing purposes of the ESG as relevant and valid
- Maximise the added value of EHEA standards
- Celebrate the diverse contexts and cultures in higher education
- Situate the quality assurance of learning and teaching in its broader context
- Balance current issues with long term relevance



ONGOING DISCUSSIONS FOR THE REVISION OF THE ESG

- Update the context, clarify key concepts and make main messages sharper
- Maintain focus on QA of learning and teaching, but stronger reference to links with research and societal missions of HEIs
- Update and broaden understanding of teaching staff, student-centred learning and learning environment
- Strengthen the enhancement aspect for internal and external QA
- Make room for justified alternative approaches in external QA methodologies

TIMELINE



USEFUL LINKS

- www.enqa.eu
- www.eqar.eu
- [ESG 2015](#)
- [European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes](#)
- [Key considerations for cross-border QA](#)
- [Resources from the QA-FIT project](#)



Sign up to receive
our quarterly newsletter:

<https://www.enqa.eu/contact/#newsletter>

Follow ENQA on social media:



**Stay in
touch!**

enqa.