



TOWARDS ACCREDITATION SCHEMES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE?

**CRE Project, co-funded by the SOCRATES Programme
(Complementary Measures for Higher Education)**

Final project report

February 2001

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Foreword

Last summer, CRE launched a project with the support of the European Commission to explore the context and the feasibility of accreditation across national borders in Europe. Our main motivation was to contribute to the clarification of the key concepts and issues related to this topic as well as to the discussion of possible collaborative accreditation schemes in Europe.

At the outset, it is important to emphasise that CRE has no pre-defined position on accreditation and no particular plans. Through the four major discussions that have taken place so far, and that are summarised in this exploratory report, we wished to create a forum for a wide and open debate on this theme. We wish to thank in particular the main rapporteur of the project, Andrée Sursock, who made this report possible, and all other resource persons and experts, who were very supportive in the process.

This project is located at two inter-related but distinct levels: the framework of the Bologna Declaration and its follow-up and the wider debate on the internationalisation of higher education.

The Bologna Declaration aims at creating a European higher education space by 2010, by promoting convergence to improve compatibility, comparability, readability and transparency of European higher education. This project is one of many that have developed as part of the follow-up process to the Bologna Declaration. The European ministers of higher education will meet in Prague (May 2001) to take stock of progress made in the construction of a European higher education space. Since the universities wish to be full partners in shaping policies, the academic community will meet in Salamanca at the end of March, together with a range of other stakeholders, to define its message and its concrete recommendations to the ministers. The accreditation project, the outcomes of which will be discussed in Salamanca, has been a unique opportunity for the higher education community to discuss and illuminate different possibilities of quality assurance including accreditation in order to be able to influence the future shape of European co-operation in the field of quality assurance and accreditation.

The second, perhaps even more important context for this project, is the internationalisation of higher education. Specifically, CRE is interested in the implications of internationalisation for students and institutions. With the rise of a global higher education space and the increased mobility of professionals, do current quality assurance mechanisms offer sufficient guarantees for students, higher education institutions and society at large? More concretely, do we need to internationalise quality assurance mechanisms? It is also in this context that this project must be understood. International accreditation may be one possible answer to this crucial question.

The Bologna process and the internationalisation of higher education are inter-connected in so far as the ultimate goal is to reach more readability, comparability, compatibility and transparency in European higher education, while preserving institutional diversity and autonomy.

This project does not aim to answer all pending questions, nor does it aim to design a single model of European accreditation. In fact, a great deal of work remains to be done in order to define more clearly a range of important issues that this exploratory report raises. CRE's major objective has been to structure and organise discussions on a crucial issue that has implications for all those in higher education and for society at large.

Lisboa/Oeiras, 10 February 2001

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1. INTRODUCTION

The CRE project on accreditation, which is co-funded by the European Commission under the aegis of the SOCRATES programme, is examining different options for accreditation schemes open to European higher education aimed at ensuring comparability of degrees and promoting student mobility at both the European and the international levels. Based on an analysis of European and international trends in higher education, especially in the field of international quality assurance and accreditation, CRE wishes to contribute to the crucial policy debate that is taking place. Specifically, the outcomes of the project will be presented at the Convention of European Higher Education Institutions (Salamanca, March 2001), whose conclusions will be communicated to the European Ministers of education (Prague, May 2001), who will take stock of the activities undertaken so far within the framework of the Bologna Declaration and set priorities for the next two years.

A key element of this project is its iterative dimension, based on an incremental approach to build the analysis and the recommendations, an approach that is reflected in this report. The first meeting included 12 participants (Paris, September 2000); the second was enlarged to 25 (Vienna, November 2000). Since lack of time in Vienna prevented a full discussion of recommendations, an ad-hoc meeting, with 11 participants, was organised in Brussels for that purpose (December 2000). All three meetings involved institutional leaders and key European actors in quality assurance ¹.

A seminar (Lisbon/Oeiras, February 2001) included almost 190 participants (CRE members; representatives of the non-university sector, of accreditation and quality assurance agencies; students; national higher education authorities and major European organisations interested in higher education) who reviewed and tested the concepts, definitions and possible scenarios for accreditation. The project ends in May 2001. The time-scale is tight but it is hoped that the consultative process will result in a policy statement to be placed on the Prague agenda.

Based on a range of publications, on the three workshops and the seminar organised by CRE with the active support of the Universidade Tecnica de Lisboa, this report seeks to present the possible options open to Europe in order to design viable schemes for accreditation as part of the efforts to create a European educational area.

2. ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEXT AND OF THE NEEDS

The Bologna Declaration, with its objective of creating a European higher educational area with a common qualification framework, has served as a catalyst for a range of initiatives, including this project². It is important to note, however, that even without the Declaration it would have been

¹ For the list of participants, cf. Appendix D.

² Extract from the Bologna Declaration (operational objectives undersigned by the Ministers)

- "Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, also through the implementation of the Diploma Supplement, in order to promote European citizens employability and the international competitiveness of the European higher education system
- Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate. Access to the second cycle shall require successful completion of first cycle studies, lasting a minimum of three years. The degree awarded after the first cycle shall also be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification. The second cycle should lead to the master and/or doctorate degree as in many European countries.
- Establishment of a system of credits - such as in the ECTS system - as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility. Credits could also be acquired in non-higher education contexts, including lifelong learning, provided they are recognised by receiving Universities concerned.
- Promotion of mobility by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement with particular attention to:
 - for students, access to study and training opportunities and to related services

important to carry it out for a range of reasons detailed below ³.

Indeed, this project is located at crossroads between many different trends, initiatives, opinions, and, as a matter of fact, the word “accreditation” is used in many different ways and contexts, which do not appear to be very convergent and clear.

2.1 The European context:

Europe is characterised by mostly public higher education systems in which institutions and programmes derive their formal degree-awarding capacity directly or indirectly from the state. Partly because of the diversity of both degrees and institutions, however, public knowledge about their quality is often opaque across national borders, and even sometimes within one country.

2.1.1 In addition, a recent EU overview of non-official higher education (Tsaoussis et al. 1999) shows that this sector is growing and that, in so far as it is not subject to clear rules of mutual recognition ⁴ and regulation, it presents EU member states with a challenge. This report notes that students and stakeholders need to be protected against titles without formal or substantive value as instances of malpractice and fraudulent activities are increasing due in part to the introduction of information and communication technologies that cannot be monitored easily.

2.1.2 Degree and institutional diversity is matched by a great variety of national quality assurance systems. Few of these quality assurance procedures take account of the internationalisation of higher education. While national quality assurance agencies have been exchanging information about their procedures and co-operating for some years now (more recently within the European network of quality assurance agencies ENQA), there are no European mechanisms in place to recognise the results of an evaluation across national borders. As a result, credit transfer and student mobility can be hampered. Internationalisation of higher education implies, however, the need to internationalise quality assurance procedures to a certain extent.

2.1.3 To facilitate student mobility and credit transfer in Europe, the notion of ‘equivalence’ was replaced in the mid 1980s by that of ‘recognition’, and more recently by the notion of ‘acceptance’:

... the notion of ‘*acceptance*’ has been adopted, whereby a foreign qualification which may even be slightly lower in level and/or function than the closest comparable degree in the receiving country will be accepted as the differences are insignificant. Recognition is allegedly only denied where there is ‘substantial difference’ (Campbell and van der Wende 2001 ⁵).

Thus, the current mechanism for credit transfer does not take fully into account issues of content and quality nor does it consider quality assurance results. It may be worth noting van Damme’s observation, in this context. He points out that:

By departing from the concept of ‘recognition’ instead of ‘equivalence’, the Lisbon Convention is a step forward in transparency and manageability, but

- for teachers, researchers and administrative staff, recognition and valorisation of periods spent in a European context researching, teaching and training, without prejudicing their statutory rights.”

On the particular issue of Quality Assurance, the Declaration says:

- “Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies”

³ van Vught (1995) was the first to see the need for accreditation in Europe. See also Surssock (1999).

⁴ For a definition of recognition, cf. 4.2.

⁵ See section 4.2.1 for a full discussion of the major European conventions and agreements governing this area.

the reduced concern for questions of contents and curricula in favour of more formal comparable characteristics of programs carries equally the risk of a diminished interest in quality issues (1999: 39).

In addition, the NARIC/ENIC offices, which are in charge of recognition, are not a homogeneous group. The variation in their authority is such that it calls into question 'the parity of treatment in recognition across the EU' (Campbell and van der Wende 2001).

2.1.4 The need to fill this 'quality information gap' in order to promote academic and professional mobility is being expressed in several ways. Institutions are entering into bilateral or multilateral agreements to recognise one another; some countries have developed accrediting procedures (cf. Appendix B); some labour-market oriented disciplines (for instance, business and engineering) in Europe are creating their own consortia or seeking accreditation from American accreditation agencies⁶. In fact, the growing demand from Europe for US accreditation in engineering is starting to pose a challenge for US accrediting agencies which would need to develop the capacity to meet the demand. Some of them seem to consider that this challenge is also an opportunity to increase their presence and their international legitimacy, thus contributing to the overall influence of US higher education in international relations.

2.2 International developments:

2.2.1 International developments, which form a backdrop for this project, include the emergence of transnational education (understood as any type of education in which the recipient/client is in a different country than the institution responsible of the course or degree). There are several initiatives that are attempting to regulate transnational education:

- UNESCO and the Council of Europe developed a code of good practice in the provision of transnational education.
- Major exporters of education (Australia, UK, US) have developed codes of practice.
- The UK is auditing collaborative provisions (i.e., programmes of study in co-operation between two or more institutions). France has been evaluating the specialised French institutes abroad.
- US accreditation agencies accredit overseas branch campuses of US institutions as well as non-US institutions abroad.
- Most of the receiving countries have enacted legislation to regulate non-national providers (Hong Kong, Israel, Malaysia, Romania, and South Africa).
- Accreditation of European business programmes is being done by the following organisations⁷: EQUIS (European Quality Improvement System) which is also accrediting internationally, AMBA (Association of MBAs), AACSB (International Association for Management Education) and CEMS (Consortium of European Management Schools).

Although the following two European networks do not play a regulatory role, it is worth point out their existence which facilitate information exchange and co-operation:

- the European Network of Quality Assurance agencies (ENQA);

⁶ For an overview of the existing accreditation procedures in Europe, cf. Appendix B. For examples of how two European consortia were created cf. Appendix C.

⁷ See Table in Appendix B for all accredited business programmes in Europe.

- the central and eastern European agencies have recently formed as a sub-network of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEE INQAAHE).
- 2.2.2 One difficult challenge, however, which has not been addressed yet, is how to regulate on-line provisions with no local partner or branch campus.
- 2.2.3 Student mobility can only increase with time, even if only through ‘virtual’ mobility. It will be important for the sector to find a way to regulate it. In addition, professional mobility requires the ‘portability’ of degrees and their requisite transparency. One increasingly mentioned option of regulation (or de-regulation, depending on the point of view...) would be within the context of international trade agreements. NAFTA (1994), ASEAN (1995), and especially the WTO (GATS (1995) and the Seattle meeting in 1999) have raised the issue of international trade in professional and educational services. According to some observers, discussions considering barriers to trade with respect to education as a whole appear to be only a matter of time. As of yet, ‘The WTO has given priority to the accountancy profession where it is close to achieving the setting of international standards’ (Campbell and van der Wende 2001).

2.3 Final remarks on the context and the needs:

- 2.3.1 Globalisation constitutes both a threat and an opportunity for European national higher education systems. There is need for student protection and for regulation, especially to curb what some perceive as the rise of ‘rogue’ transnational providers. Globalisation can be perceived as a threat by many ‘traditional’ actors who feel challenged by the presence of new institutions in heretofore-protected education systems. Paradoxically, this need is felt more acutely in the most protective and homogeneous national systems which do not offer sufficient choices to students and cannot integrate (and therefore regulate) non-official institutions. For many European universities, however, accreditation is mainly seen as an opportunity to strengthen their image by demonstrating their quality. Therefore, it is also an opportunity to improve their market position internationally. The valued-added element of accreditation for these institutions is mostly international and European rather than national. This explains developments in this area (cf. 2.1.3 and Appendices B and C).
- 2.3.2 In fact, if one wishes to oversimplify the situation, it could be said that the transition from a national to an international perspective of higher education seems to lead many European institutions to the perception that some kind of internationally visible “labelling” would be needed and could be useful. In a national context, this labelling need is mostly covered by existing national certification or accreditation procedures, whatever shape they have.
- 2.3.3 In practice, many European institutions of higher education have already taken part in or even launched some kind of accreditation initiatives, mainly in disciplines which have a high level of internationalisation, like engineering and business education. But even classical institutions, for a range of different reasons, are seeking accreditation by an external agency. Considering the lack of Europe-wide actors in this field, these institutions are contacting US agencies, not only specialised ones for discipline-based accreditation (like ABET for engineering), but also regional ones for institutional accreditation. Central and Eastern European institutions also expect from a European or international accreditation some kind of formal confirmation that they have caught up in terms of so-called European standards, whatever these standards could be.

2.3.4 In consequence, the goal of this project is to explore options for new mechanisms of quality assurance and accreditation in European higher education, which would contribute to address four issues in an effective way:

- How to improve the readability of European degrees in order to facilitate academic and professional mobility and promote a European higher education area?
- How to increase Europe's attractiveness to international students and promote international exchange?
- How to further on-going quality improvement at European and international levels?
- How to preserve institutional autonomy within a common European framework of recognition and quality assurance?

3. PRINCIPLES

In considering the different options open to Europe (cf. 5), participants in the three workshops assembled by CRE in autumn 2000 were mindful of the following five principles and of the need to find a balance among them:

- Create a space for European convergence while preserving diversity in higher education traditions and cultures to respect the principle of national competencies.
- Preserve higher education's institutional diversity in order to meet the needs of a variety of learners, with a variety of motivations to study.
- Establish an appropriate balance between external accountability and institutional autonomy.
- Be flexible and capable of adapting to the on-going international changes affecting higher education.
- Add value to current quality assurance systems while preserving their improvement function.

4. FUNCTIONS

4.1 Accreditation:

Accreditation is defined differently around the world although the processes in place share a degree of commonalities. The CRE group involved in the project used the following, as an initial working definition. This definition will need to be further refined and specified if the notion of accreditation is accepted:

Accreditation is a formal, published statement regarding the quality of an institution or a programme, following a cyclical evaluation based on agreed standards.

Applied to the present European context, this general definition could, for instance, imply developing mechanisms to validate new bachelors and masters degrees, possibly on the basis of European benchmarks⁸, or to provide a 'European label' to institutions seeking international

⁸ A pilot benchmarking project at the European level is about to start for five disciplines and is attracting the attention of 130 universities, which are interested in participating in this exercise.

visibility. This would add specific European value to current national procedures and further student mobility by facilitating comparability of degrees and credit transfer. This definition does not explicitly include a dynamic and permanent improvement dimension but any accreditation scheme would have to be integrated in a wider quality assurance scheme, including the essential improvement oriented function.

In this context, the CRE group distinguished between two main possible functions of accreditation: minimal quality control and promotion of quality assurance (i.e., improvement and excellence):

- Minimal quality control (mostly in the shape of some kind of certification) serves as a filtering mechanism in confirming that a higher education institution fulfils minimal quality requirements and has appropriate quality monitoring procedures in place. This would ensure the minimal quality of providers (whether public or private and whatever their delivery mode) and minimise the existence of 'rogue' providers.
- Quality assurance refers to the process of evaluating an institution or a programme. It leads to an analysis and to recommendations regarding its quality, including its specific quality assurance strategy. Evaluation has an internal dimension (self-evaluation) and an external one (conducted by external experts, peers or inspectors). The recommendations reflect the objective of this exercise, which is to promote ongoing improvement.

These two functions – minimal quality control and quality assurance – exist already in some way in most European countries and higher education institutions, but mostly not in the form of accreditation. In general, they are organised in a national (or even regional) context and mainly for a national audience. In the last years, the second function has also increasingly gained a European dimension, mostly in non-governmental schemes like the CRE institutional evaluation programme, or more recently through accreditation schemes. In the latter case, the motivation is a combination of promotion of quality assurance and labelling for marketing purposes.

In any case, both should have a European dimension, even if the minimal quality control function should and will remain mainly a national (or regional) task. This European dimension may take the shape of a validation of national procedures to ensure the delivery of a European label.

4.2 Recognition:

Recognition refers to the formal acceptance that Degree A leads to the same rights and consequences, (e.g., for further degrees or for access to the labour market) than Degree B (cf. 2.1.3). Recognition may also be requested for parts of degrees (single courses, academic study periods, etc.) in the context of student mobility. Credit transfer schemes are one main way to implement recognition for promoting student mobility.

According to Campbell and van der Wende (2001), the key European conventions and agreements guiding this area include:

- The European Convention on the Equivalence of Diplomas Leading to Admission to Universities (Paris 1953), which establishes the principle of admitting persons to universities in the receiving country on the basis of credentials that give admission to universities in the home country.
- The European Commission Directives:
 - Sectoral directives for health professionals and architects were adopted in the 1970s after lengthy discussions to establish qualitative and quantitative criteria which diplomas must meet in order for mutual recognition; this route to recognition was not repeated.
 - The 'General Directives' (89/48EEC of 1988 and 92/51 of 1992), established

generally acceptable minimum requirements, which apply to the finished product, i.e., the fully qualified professional. If these requirements are fulfilled, the host country has to prove that the foreign qualification is not up to standards.

- The UNESCO/CEPES and Council of Europe Convention on the recognition of qualifications – the Lisbon convention.

In addition, the NARIC/ENIC network meet regularly to exchange information about recognition and diploma assessment issues.

4.3 Transparency:

Transparency refers to procedures and outcomes (e.g., of accreditation or evaluation) that are documented and published.

4.4 From national to international quality assurance and accreditation?

The awareness that national quality assurance procedures are not sufficient in an international context is growing (cf. Appendix B). And if the history of the ‘quality movement’ is any guide, two major lessons can be drawn from it:

- The movement toward accreditation will spread for a variety of reasons, not the least of which will be the cost of not being part of the ‘accredited club’.
- If the ‘accreditation movement’ is allowed to spread without systematic thought or design, Europe will be faced with a jungle of procedures, matching the jungle of its degrees. If this situation is allowed to develop, it will reduce even more transparency and student protection and will increase obstacles to academic and professional mobility.

One could imagine a process where the outcomes of accreditation or evaluation procedures of a quality assurance/accreditation agency A would be recognised by a quality assurance/accreditation agency B, where the agents are national, international or professional bodies. If a specific degree (or institution) has been scrutinised with a positive result by agency A, agency B would then renounce to impose on the institution another procedure and instead would accept the conclusions of agency A. This process, which is not yet in place in Europe, will need to be based on agreed criteria. To some extent, the so-called Washington Accord between accreditation agencies in the field of engineering education, could serve as a model.

Indeed, instead of trying to build up any unified European system, which does not make sense for many reasons, a credible system of validation of accreditation and quality assurance procedures, could represent a serious option in Europe. Such a validation mechanism could deliver a sort of quality label and thus ensure that those procedures, whatever focus or features they have, are of decent quality, and may be trusted by students, partners, authorities, etc.

5. OPTIONS

5.1 Results of Workshop I (Paris, September 2000):

The first CRE workshop developed six options for accreditation schemes.

Accreditation: Six possible options (Result of Workshop I, Paris, September 2000)		
	Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Do nothing	Avoids further work Protects traditions that are viewed as positive	Does not address issues of transparency, consumer protection and comparability Does not contribute to improving the current system Creates a vacuum in which non-European accrediting agency can move in
2. Bilateral and multilateral institutional agreements for mutual recognition, including between accreditation and QA agencies	Contributes to transparency, comparability and mobility Respect institutional autonomy	Does not address, <u>for the sector as a whole</u> , issues of transparency, comparability and mobility Very slow process that creates a vacuum in which non-European accrediting agencies can move in
3. A European clearinghouse (to collect and disseminate information on current quality assurance systems) and think tank (to study their impact)	Contributes to transparency Non-threatening Builds trust and capacity	Does not address issues of comparability and students' protection Creates a vacuum in which non-European accrediting agencies can move in
4. A European platform to validate, on a voluntary basis, existing national and professional accreditation/quality processes as well as any bilateral or multilateral institutional agreements, provided they are based on a common set of principles	Respects national diversity Meets the needs of transparency, mobility and comparability Avoids the likely emergence of a 'jungle' of accreditation procedures and ensures minimal quality control of accreditation bodies	Difficult to forge a consensus on a common framework given the diversity of QA procedures
5. Option 4 + the ability to directly accredit on demand	As in option 4 Provides accreditation where no national accreditation framework exists or if a 'European label' is sought	As in option 4
6. A European accreditation agency, with mandatory accrediting power	Meets the needs of international transparency, mobility and comparability	Difficult to forge a consensus on a common system Does not respect institutional and national autonomy

5.2 Results of Workshop II (Vienna, November 2000):

The following consensus emerged from the discussions in Vienna:

- Options 1 and 6 are rejected because they are not realistic or desirable.
- Option 2 is already *de facto* in process, but does not guarantee fully international comparability of degrees.
- Building on Options 2 – 5, the scenario proposed in Vienna distinguishes:
 - two main functions: minimal quality control, for instance through institutional certification, and promotion of higher quality excellence through on-going quality improvement;
 - two domains – the national and the European domains – and their articulation in order to ensure that national outcomes are recognised across borders.
- The scenario, shown in the table below, needs to be implemented **step by step** and build on current national and European processes with a view of **preserving their quality improvement function**.

Results of Workshop II, Vienna, November 2000		
Domain	Actor	Functions
National	To be determined at national level	To certify institutions, based on minimal standards (i.e., the institution fulfils these standards and has internal quality monitoring mechanisms in place), which can take the form of accreditation.
National	To be determined at national level	To ensure on-going quality improvement (a function which may have a European dimension already now)
European	Clearinghouse and think tank formed by representatives from national and international quality assurance and accreditation agencies, in co-operation with representatives of higher education institutions (through ENQA?)	To collect and disseminate information on current quality assurance and accreditation systems To analyse and disseminate best practice
European	Platform involving all key players and stakeholders	To validate (recognise) existing or developing accreditation procedures in order to give them legitimacy and ensure consumer protection through minimal quality control of accreditation at European level. To promote good practice. To guide the sector through (e.g.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - benchmarking schemes; - looking at the European dimension of programmes and institutions; - promoting the accreditation of new degrees developed within the Bologna framework.

5.3 Results of Workshop III (Brussels, December 2000):

Building on the previous two workshops, the group in Brussels developed the following recommendations:

5.3.1 In keeping with the notion advocated in Vienna that the scenario is a step-by-step approach, in the long term, the European platform would combine the following functions:

- A clearinghouse and think tank to collect information on current quality assurance and accreditation systems and to analyse and disseminate best practice.
- A validating body (on a voluntary basis) for existing and developing accreditation procedures based on agreed criteria, using as possible sources of inspiration the CHEA model in the USA or the Washington Accord in engineering studies, as well as current or planned bilateral agreements in Europe.
- The possibility (to be discussed further) to provide accreditation of institutions on demand and based on the subsidiarity principle, e.g., in order to cope with transnational or foreign providers or to provide accreditation where no national system exists. This service could be offered by the platform or it could be delegated to a recognised European accrediting agency.

5.3.2. This was clarified further as follows:

- The mechanisms that would be put in place would be voluntary.
- The platform would be formed by higher education institutions, student representatives, representatives of government, quality assurance/accreditation agencies, and other stakeholders.
- The platform should make every possible use of current European schemes and networks, e.g., ENQA, NARICs/ENICs, thematic networks in certain disciplines, EQUIS, etc.
- The validation function could replace very complex and burdensome negotiations on bilateral or multilateral recognition of national QA procedures.
- There would be no ranking involved.
- The articulation between the national and European domains is not hierarchical.

The existence of a platform would not prevent competition among accrediting bodies. On the contrary, it would ensure that this competition is performed on a transparent and fair basis and offers a quality label to filter 'rogue' accreditation bodies. It would represent the effort of self-regulation of the higher education system in Europe, instead of, for instance, a system driven by the EU Commission or at an intergovernmental level.

5.3.3 The group suggested that one or more pilot projects could be launched to raise greater awareness of the issues and to test the procedures. These pilot projects could focus on two types of situations (as examples):

- validation of existing national and professional accreditation procedures by a European consortium which would serve as the model for the future platform.
- accreditation of new degrees in the context of the Bologna Declaration.

5.3.4 While there are still some unanswered questions (cf. Appendix A), the shape and functions of the platform, as described above, would contribute to the readability and comparability of degrees within and outside Europe, and ultimately to student and professional mobility. As the system matures, it would be tested and further fine-tuned.

5.4. Results of the Lisbon/Oeiras Seminar (February 2001)

The Lisbon seminar provided an opportunity for a wide and rich debate on key issues related to accreditation and its context. Almost 190 participants discussed all aspects of the draft exploratory report, including the needs analysis, the underlying principles and mechanisms of accreditation, if these are introduced.

5.4.1 Areas of consensus:

- Without any doubt, there is need for action, mainly to increase transparency of the value to students and stakeholders of the quality assurance and accreditation systems at European level, and to internationalise quality assurance in general.
- Voluntary validation of national and professional accreditation could be a key option to meet these two needs, but this must be implemented within a wider context of European co-operation in quality assurance.
- The ownership of any validation scheme should be clearly in the hands of higher education institutions, in co-operation with key partners and stakeholders, such as students, quality assurance agencies, professional organisations, etc.
- Quality assurance is both a pre-requisite and a framework for any accreditation or validation scheme, which cannot be isolated from quality improvement and accountability purposes; that is why accreditation and its validation should be discussed in this wider framework.
- The needs analysis should be completed and made more precise, using all the existing material as far as possible.
- The seven working groups appear to support the idea of some kind of European platform to continue this discussion, to act as a clearinghouse and as a forum, and possibly to test operational models, but the exact shape and role of such a platform is still very open. The process should proceed step by step, and the added value of any initiative should be checked regularly before developing unnecessary burdens and using scarce resources.

5.4.2 Areas for further debate:

There were also issues that remain open for further debate:

- There is a wider debate on the Bologna process, which goes beyond the scope of this seminar. Nevertheless, it affects the discussion on accreditation insofar as validation of accreditation is considered as one of the tools for creating a European higher education space.
- For many participants, the question of ‘What problems would validation of accreditation address?’ still has not been answered adequately; this is related to the needs analysis.
- There still is a discussion on accreditation of programmes vs. accreditation of institutions. A majority agrees that the former is the logical approach in the framework of establishing guarantees for students and stakeholders, but a minority is strongly convinced of the virtues of institutional accreditation as higher education institutions are the locus of quality management.
- As already mentioned, the role of a possible platform is very open: for some it relates to the fear of creating a European bureaucracy, while others insist on the fact that no European scheme would be possible without a minimum of human and financial resources.
- There were also different views on the exact role to be given to national quality assurance agencies, and how far they should be full partners of the process.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Validation Seminar, Lisbon, 8-10 February 2001

The following conclusions will be conveyed to the Salamanca Convention of European Higher Education Institutions. They do not represent any formal decision but rather the synthesis of very lively and rich discussions held in plenary and working group sessions.

During the Lisbon/Oeiras seminar organised by CRE in collaboration with the Universidade Técnica de Lisboa, representatives of higher education institutions, as well as student organisations, quality assurance agencies, national higher education authorities and intergovernmental bodies discussed accreditation as a possible option for higher education in Europe, particularly as a contribution to the completion of the European higher education area called for in the Bologna Declaration.

The meeting showed converging views on the usefulness and the necessity of effective and compatible quality assurance mechanisms within Europe. It was acknowledged that there are several quality assurance systems already in existence, mainly at national level, but that there was a need for a trans-European quality assurance framework which would ensure the international visibility, compatibility and credibility of European higher education degrees.

It was felt that such an explicit and agreed framework in Europe organised by the universities in co-operation with other stakeholders would promote the transparency, the visibility and the ongoing quality enhancement of European higher education, thus contributing to a more compatible and comparable qualification framework and to the employability of European graduates. Internationalisation of quality assurance was seen as a necessary and logical response of European higher education to current globalisation trends as well as to the challenges of building a European higher education area.

The discussion in Lisbon/Oeiras focused on how far accreditation could represent a substantial option for achieving an effective and transparent European co-operation in quality assurance. In operational terms, this could mean a European validation scheme for quality assurance and accreditation procedures, rather than a European accreditation system as such.

It was stressed that accreditation was not an end in itself, but rather represented an important component of quality assurance. When examining accreditation for Europe, the participants debated such issues as: accreditation of degrees/programmes and/or of whole institutions, accreditation as a minimal quality filter or as promotion of excellence, the possible division of tasks, etc. Approaches based on the promotion of mutual recognition of existing national or regional quality assurance and accreditation outcomes, as well as those based on close inter-institutional co-operation, were also considered. The relationship and balance between national, regional and European quality assurance activities has to be clarified.

The higher education leaders present in Lisbon/Oeiras wished to advance the discussion on the design of viable schemes of quality assurance for Europe, including validation of accreditation procedures, along the following lines:

- add value for institutions of higher education to existing schemes, especially in terms of an “International dimension”, with a view to the emerging European higher education area,
- base new developments on voluntary participation and on the self-regulation of the higher education community,
- co-operate closely with partners such as students and academics, quality assurance and accreditation agencies and networks, professional organisations, recognition centres, as well as with national and regional higher education authorities,
- give due regard to academic values, to diversity and to institutional autonomy,
- build, as far as possible, on existing mechanisms and experiences, and illuminate examples of good practise,
- stress the supportive elements of evaluation and accreditation,

- cover all modes and types of higher education,
- keep to reasonable deadlines in moving forward towards operational models.

Participants emphasised the needs to define criteria and mechanisms in a careful fashion and to identify good practice at European level, while using available and additional analysis. To this end, it was recommended that a common working platform of higher education institutions be established in Europe, involving also the above-mentioned partners. This platform would clarify the concepts, perform a more systematic and explicit analysis of the needs, and test the feasibility of possible approaches and mechanisms - for instance to European validation of accreditation and quality assurance procedures - possibly through pilot projects.

It was emphasised that activities fostering the convergence of practices and procedures in Europe should avoid at all costs the establishment of a new and unnecessary layer of bureaucratic control across the European higher education domain.

Lisbon - Oeiras, 09/02/2001
CRE-Paris, 28/02/2001

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APPENDIX A: Other issues to consider

While the recommendations and conclusions of this report will be the focus of discussions in Lisbon and later in Salamanca, there are other issues that will also need to be addressed during the pilot projects.

1. On the political level:

- The platform's leadership, i.e., whether it should rest with the higher education institutions or government agencies, and the balance of power between them.
- Whatever option is selected, what would be the role of international organisations (e.g., OECD, UNESCO, and NGOs) and other stakeholders (e.g., students and employers)?
- What would be the European criteria for the recognition of national evaluation/accreditation procedures?
- Is it appropriate and realistic to develop European benchmarks for disciplines that would lead to a European label?

2. On the methodological level:

- What would be the scope: programme, institutions or both? Only new programmes or institutions, or both old and new? Private or public institutions, or both?
- Whether to use threshold standards (and which ones), top standards or adopt the fitness for purpose approach?
- Whether to use an input process or an output model (learning outcomes) or a combination?
- If the model stresses learning outcomes, what would be the implications for the accreditation of new providers (e.g., corporate universities, publishers, telecommunication companies, etc.)?
- Whether to evaluate/accredit on-line teaching differently from contact teaching? And if so, how?
- To what extent ought international peers, employers, students and alumni be included in the process?
- What to do with accreditation of prior learning (APL) and lifelong learning?
- How to set up a process which will respect both institutional and national diversity and which would include the following:
 - a. Evaluation by an independent external body
 - b. Self-assessment
 - c. Peer evaluation
 - d. Minimal academic standards
 - e. Public report

3. On a more general level:

The following lists some of the issues which are outside the scope of this project but are likely to arise, in some national contexts, from the implementation of such a mechanism as

accreditation, as well as from the processes of globalisation and internationalisation. The issues that will need to be considered include:

- The national legal frameworks for higher education to take account of globalising and internationalising trends. The major question here is how to facilitate mobility.
- State funding implications of an accreditation process.
- The question of student fees and students financial aid (how to fund a 'mobile' student?).
- Regulation and protection of the use of the term 'university' in English.
- Generalising the use of the Diploma Supplement and disseminating good practices generated through the NARIC/ENIC network.
- Co-ordination among many relevant organisations such as IAUP, CRE, ENQA, INQAAHE, CHEA, OECD, UNESCO, etc.
- Development of a common vocabulary in accreditation/quality assurance.

APPENDIX B: Some of the accreditation procedures around the world

1. *Historical background*

1.1 Introduction

The following milestones may provide a useful background. Accreditation started in the US in an attempt to self-regulate a higher education sector characterised by a mix of institutional types in a competitive context. Accreditation was a way of providing both an impetus for quality improvement and guarantees to stakeholders that the institution/programme met or exceeded the explicit standards of the accrediting agency.

During the past decades, *western Europe* experienced (i) the rise of mass higher education, which put great pressure on the public purse, (ii) structural high unemployment, and (iii) greater institutional autonomy. The combination of these factors led to calls for greater accountability, but because European higher education was mostly public, no need was felt for an accreditation procedure since institutions/programmes were *de facto* recognised. Therefore, quality assurance mechanisms were developed with the twin goals of accountability and improvement, and in most of western Europe, quality has been defined as fitness for purpose. Accreditation procedures are being set up in western Europe. Initially, these procedures are being geared toward the non-university sector but this seems bound to change in the future.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, *central and eastern Europe* (CEE) felt the need to transform its higher education system, set up quality control and improvement mechanisms and, in some countries, regulate the rapid emergence of private providers. Some countries were attracted to accreditation which they saw as a powerful steering mechanism when put in government's hands. Thus accreditation in some CEE countries is not merely a process leading to recognition but also, a financial and political tool.

Despite endemic confusion about what others are doing, the international sharing of experiences is promoting some level of understanding and even a small degree of convergence. This is exemplified by the fact that US accreditation procedures incorporate quality assurance principles, while quality assurance procedures in western European are slowly integrating US-style accreditation functions (cf. 2.1 below).⁹

1.2 Who does accreditation?

The responsibility for accreditation procedures, where they exist, rests with a variety of agencies, among them: national agencies, voluntary associations, rector's conferences, inter-institutional networks, and professional organisations.

The key point here is the distribution of power among the different players: the state, the institutions and the agency. It is worth noting in this respect that US accreditation is based on power sharing between the state and the voluntary sector while, at the other extreme (e.g., some CEE countries), it is a government tool for regulating the sector. In the first case, accreditation is voluntary (except for the regulated professions) while it is obligatory in the second case.

1.3 How to do accreditation?

⁹ Here are two examples of definitions of accreditation used by US regional accreditation agencies:

- Accreditation is a process of recognising education institutions or programs for performance, integrity, and quality that entitles them to the confidence of the educational community and the public.
- Accreditation is a process of recognising education programs for performance and quality standards set by external bodies (e.g. government, accreditation commission, ministry, rectors' conference, international accreditation units, etc.).

- Standards (either threshold or top) vs. fitness for purpose
- Self-study
- External review by peers
- Results in a public judgement (yes/no, sometimes conditional), renewable on a fixed cycle (5 – 10 years)

1.4 Why do accreditation?

Reasons for the existing national accreditation procedures include:

- institutional or programme credibility;
- pre-condition for state funding;
- access to a profession;
- student and professional mobility;
- in the case of a guarantee of top standards, accreditation confers a label of excellence and facilitates comparison, marketing, and high level co-operation;
- in some cases, they are set up to protect a national HE system against transnational or private providers.

Along with some of the above, the major reason for considering an international accreditation framework is consumer protection and market transparency in an increasingly global, complex and diversified HE market. To this end, it is essential to set up an articulation between national and international quality assurance procedures.

2. Overview of current practice

Note that the following overview is meant to be illustrative of some of the processes that have been developed around the world. It is neither complete nor up to date.

2.1 Western Europe

Austria: ‘An accreditation Council has been founded; its mission is to accredit private institutions of higher education, thus allowing them to award officially recognised degrees’ (van Damme 2000: 7).

Denmark: The inclusion, within the mandate of the Danish Evaluation Institute, of the private institutions offering further education and short-cycle, higher education degrees, has prompted the development of procedures akin to accreditation. In 2001, the Danish Evaluation Institute will conduct an analysis of accreditation as a tool for quality assurance.

France: In France, there is a validation (*habilitation*) process performed by the ministry. ‘National degrees’ are guided by the national curriculum, but in addition, universities are allowed to develop ‘university degrees’. Once these ‘university degrees’ are validated, they gain the status of ‘national degrees’ and are funded by the State. The validation process for both types of degrees is based on a dossier evaluated by academic peers on behalf of the Minister. No site visit is performed and there is no *habilitation* cycle; that is, a degree programme is validated once and for all. As a one-off, desk exercise, this is not, strictly speaking an accreditation process.

Germany: The bachelor/master structure and accreditation procedures were introduced together in 1998. Only these new degrees are accredited. ‘The *Akkreditierungsrat* functions as a sort of ‘meta-agency’, by setting the standards for and recognising accreditation agencies’ (ibid).

Finland: The Finish Higher Education Evaluation Council (HEEC) ‘carries out two types of accreditation: the assessment of institutions applying for the polytechnic status, and the accreditation and registration of professional courses in the field of continuing higher education, for which a separate Accreditation Board of Professional Courses has been set up’ (ibid).

Netherlands: ‘the association of universities (VSNU) has opened the possibility for institutions and programmes, especially internationally oriented specialisation programmes, to participate in various forms of external accreditation... In the non-university higher education sector the HBO-*Raad*, the association of *hogescholen*, is starting an experiment of pilots projects with accreditation in two

disciplines... Dutch *hogescholen* also have developed master's programmes outside the national legislative framework, often in co-operation with new universities in the UK. Since 1999 a validation council is set up for the 'certification' of these programmes' (ibid). From 2002, all programmes will undergo an accrediting process.

Switzerland: The Swiss University Conference (CUS) conducted a pilot accreditation of all medical faculties. Meanwhile, a new higher education legislation has been adopted, requiring the establishment of a national quality assurance and accreditation system.

United Kingdom: Some universities act as a validating body to other institutions, which do not have degree-awarding powers. The validating university grants the degree.

Regional recognition: Flanders, Germany, England, the Netherlands and others are discussing the possibility of mutual recognition of their evaluation and accrediting procedures.

2.2 Central and Eastern Europe

Almost all CEE countries have an accreditation agency. In many countries, the twin functions of accreditation (i.e., certification) and quality assurance are recognised in the title of the agency. Some countries (such as Lithuania) have an evaluation agency with no accrediting functions. Countries without an agency yet include Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Poland, Slovenia, and Yugoslavia.

2.3 Latin America

Argentina: The Comisión Nacional de Evaluación y Acreditación Universitaria (CONEAU), created in 1995, 'has the mission to accredit all undergraduate programmes in regulated professions and all graduate programmes' (van Damme 2000: 8).

Brazil has accreditation procedures in place.

Chile: The Comisión Nacional de Acreditación (CAN) accredits the programmes of all licensed higher education institutions (ibid).

Mexico and other countries are developing accreditation procedures (ibid).

2.4 Asia

Hong Kong: The Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA) which does not have within its remit the accrediting of universities, 'conducts both programme validation procedures and institutional accreditation. Accredited institutions achieve self-accrediting status, but have the obligation to develop systematic quality assurance procedures, which in turn are subject to audit' (ibid).

2.5 International accreditation schemes and activities

New England Association of Schools and Colleges: accredits four institutions in Switzerland for Associate degrees and two in Greece for Bachelor degrees (Campbell and van der Wende 2000: 14).

Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools: accredits three institutions in Europe (Paris, Switzerland, London) and has given candidacy status to the Central European University (Hungary) and John Cabot University (Rome) (ibid).

Washington accord: recognises the equivalence of national accreditation mechanisms for basic engineering education in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, United Kingdom, and the USA (ibid: 32).

ABET: The US Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology has recognised as ‘substantially equivalent’ programmes in universities from Colombia, Iceland, Korea, Kuwait, Mexico, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia and Turkey (ibid: 33).

In addition to these examples, there are many consortia being established, such as the European Quality Improvement System – EQUIS (see Appendix C), which are developing links on the European or international level.

Campbell and van der Wende (March 2000: Annex 3, EQUIS data, updated December 2000) reported the following activities in the accreditation of business and management education (reprinted with permission).

Acronyms:

EQUIS: European Quality Improvement System
Association for Management Education

AACSB: International

AMBA: Association of MBAs
Management Schools

CEMS: Consortium of European

Institution/Country	EQUIS 31 Accredited Schools in 12 countries	AMBA Accredited programmes in 54 schools in 9 countries	AACSB 370 accredited prog including schools countries outside th
1. Wirtschaftsuniversitat Wien (A)			
2. Universite Catholique de Louvain (B)			
3. Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (B)		MBA FT	
4. Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales (CDN)	EQUIS		
5. Warsaw School of Economics (CZ)			
6. Copenhagen School of Business (DK)	EQUIS		
7. EAP European School of Management (F)	EQUIS	MBA FT	
8. E.M. Lyon (F)	EQUIS	CESMA MBA FT	
9. EDHEC (F)	EQUIS		
Institution/country	EQUIS	AMBA	AACSB
10.ENPC (F)		International MBA FT	
11.ESCP (F)	EQUIS	Executive MBA PT	
12. ESCNA (F)	EQUIS		
13.Groupe ESSEC (F)			AACSB
14.HEC	EQUIS	MBA FT	
15. IEP (F)		MBA FT	

16. INSEAD (F)	EQUIS		MBA FT		
17. IAE d'Aix en Provence (F)		EQUIS			
18. Theseus International Management Institute (F)			MBA FT		
19. Helsinki School of Economics and Business Administration (FIN)	EQUIS		International MBA FT/PT		
20. WHU Koblenz : Graduate School of Management School (D)		EQUIS			
21. Universitat zu Koln (D)					
22. Universitat Mannheim (D)					AACSB
23. Budapest University of Economics Sciences (H)					
24. SDA Bocconi, Milan (I)	EQUIS		MBA FT		
25. University of Dublin, Trinity College (IRL)			MBA FT		
26. Erasmus University Rotterdam (NL)	EQUIS		MBA FT MBA/MIM FT		AACSB
Institution/country	EQUIS	AMBA	AACSB		C
27. NIMBAS (NL)		MBA FT/PT Utrecht/Bonn/Mainz			
28. Nyenrode University Business School (NL)	EQUIS	International MBA FT			
29. Haarlem Business School (NL/UK)		Kingston University- Haarlem Business School MBA			
30. NHH Bergen (N)					
31. Handelshoyskolen BI (N)	EQUIS				
32. Leon Kozminski Academy of Entrepreneurship and Management (PL)	EQUIS				
33. Warsaw School of Economics (PL)					
34. EADA (E)	EQUIS				
35. ESADE (E)	EQUIS		MBA FT		
36. Instituto Empressa (E)	EQUIS		International MBA FT		
37. IESE	EQUIS		MBA FT		

38. Swedish Institute of Management (S)	EQUIS				
39. Stockholm School of Economics (S)	EQUIS				
40. IMD (CH)	EQUIS		MBA FT		
41. Universitat St Gallen (CH)					
42. Aberdeen Business School (UK)			MBA FT/PT		
Institution/country	EQUIS		AMBA	AACSB	C
43. Ashridge Management College (validated by City University) (UK)	EQUIS		Executive MBA FT/PT European Partnership Consortium MBA		
44. Aston Business Sch. (UK)	EQUIS		MBA FT/PT/DL/ Public Sector Management		
45. University of Bath School of Management (UK)			MBA FT Executive PT		
46. Birmingham Business School (UK)			MIM/Modular MBA MBA FT/Ev/modular MBA executive modular delivered in Singapore		
47. Bradford Management Centre (UK)	EQUIS		MBA FT/PT/OL		
48. University of Bristol, Graduate School of International Business (UK)			MBA International Business FT/PT		
49. Bristol Business School, UWE (UK)			MBA PT		
50. University of Cambridge, Judge Institute (UK)			MBA FT		
51. City University Business School (UK)			MBA FT/PT MBA Engineering Management		
52. Cranfield School of Management (UK)	EQUIS		MBA FT/PT MSc Project Management		
53. Royal Military College of Science, Cranfield (UK)			Master of Defense Administration FT&Exec		
54. De Montfort University School of Business (UK)			MBA FT/PT MBA PT (South Africa)		
55. Durham University Business School (UK)			MBA FT/PT/DL		
Institution/country	EQUIS		AMBA	AACSB	
56. Edinburgh University Management School (UK)			MBA FT/PT		
57. University of Glasgow (UK)			MBA FT/PT		

58. Henley Management College (UK)	EQUIS	MBA FT/PT/DL/modular and project management DL		
59. Imperial College Management School (UK)		MBA FT/PT		
60. Kingston Business School (UK)		MBA PT/OL		
61. Lancaster University Management School (UK)		MBA FT Executive PT		
62. Leeds University Business School (UK)		MBA FT/PT/Exec/EV/ MBA PT Health & Soc Sci		
63. Leicester University Management Centre (UK)		MBA FT/DL		
64. London Business School (UK)	EQUIS	MBA FT & Exec PT Sloan Fellowship Program		
65. London School of Economics (UK)				
66. Loughborough Business School		MBA Exec PT and PT at Peterborough campus		
67. Manchester Business School UMIST (UK)		MBA FT/PT		
68. Manchester Metropolitan University (UK)		MBA PT		
69. Middlesex University Business School (UK)		MBA FT/PT		
70. University of Newcastle School of Management (UK)		MBA FT/PT		
Institution/country	EQUIS	AMBA	AACSB	CEM
71. University of Nottingham Business School (UK)		MBA General FT/PT MBA Financial FT/PT		
72. Open University Business School (UK)		MBA DL		
73. Said Business School, University of Oxford (UK)		MBA FT		
74. Strathclyde Graduate Business School (UK)		MBA FT/PT/OL (UK and international)/MM		
75. Warwick Business School (UK)	EQUIS	MBA FT/Exec/DL & modular	AACSB	
76. University of Westminster Business School (UK)		MBA FT/PT		

EQUIS: www.efmd.be

AMBA: www.mba.org.uk

AACSB: www.aacsb.org

CEMS: <http://www.cbs.dk/org>

FT= full-time; PT= part time; DL= distance learning; OL= open learning; Ev = evening

MM= mixed mode

APPENDIX C: Case studies

We are including two examples of how accrediting consortia were established to illustrate the challenges and processes that have taken place to achieve this goal.

C.I. A history of the European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS)

By Bernadette Conraths, former Director of EFMD, Brussels

1. Background

In the late eighties and early nineties, the fields of management education and business administration – one of the academic disciplines most exposed to the market – faced two issues. First, as students crossed borders and companies recruited increasingly on an international level, there was a felt need to identify common international benchmarks and criteria. Second, there was a need to develop a European identity for management education which was, and still is, strongly influenced by the dominant US-based models. At that time, national accrediting agencies for management and business administration existed only in some countries. These agencies were very of diverse type and scope, a few were semi-public, and most were schools associations.

The European Foundation for Management Development (efmd) - a non-profit European network of stakeholders in management education (business schools, universities, large corporations, consultancies) founded in 1971 - initiated subsequently:

- 1) a round table of national agencies, aiming to share information about their respective systems and identify common denominators (1993/94);
- 2) the foundation of EQUAL, the European Quality Link (1995), offering the political foundation for co-operation in developing a joint European evaluation and accreditation scheme for business schools;
- 3) the launch and management of a multinational/multistakeholder system: EQUIS, the European Quality Improvement System (1997).

To date, EQUIS has been successfully established as a tool for international benchmarking and accreditation of graduate and post-graduate management education institutions, with 42 schools accredited (by December 2000), many institutions applying and increasing demand from outside Europe (North America, Latin America, Asia, South Africa).

2. Players and issues

This development required a yearlong difficult political negotiation among the European associations and schools involved in the process regarding the scope and governance of such a joint initiative, as well as its conceptual design.

The national associations in Europe were of very diverse size, strength and influence. The UK-based body AMBA (Association of MBAs) was the only one to have built a brand name for its MBA programme accreditation beyond the UK.

While there were initial concerns about losing influence and weight in the national environment through the creation of a 'supranational' body, there was also much awareness of the need for national agencies to think and act beyond national borders, and of the visibility that could be accrued through common action.

For efmd, this was a new and challenging initiative since, up to then, it operated as a platform for information exchange, conference and project services to the members. A good quality assessment expertise, however, had been built up through the efmd Strategic Audit Unit which, since 1985, had carried out peer reviews at the request of European schools. Its concept laid the groundwork for the strategic review approach of the EQUIS model, which came later.

Therefore, a necessary first developmental step was to found EQUAL, the European Quality Link, under the umbrella of efmd, in order to offer an open forum for co-operation of these agencies and a platform to identify and discuss key issues. The building of trust in a group of experts and peers as well as the creation of a European consensus on key issues constituted an indispensable basis. Only this could lead to a common perspective and eventually to the design of evaluation and accreditation, and to EQUIS. Indeed, the bottom-up approach was the only option, given that no top instance existed and only broad consensus could deliver the kind of intellectual and material support needed to create such a complex and politically delicate initiative.

Today EQUAL counts ten European member associations (from eastern and western Europe, including Russia) and acts as a think tank and resource to the EQUIS process. The European Commission has supported EQUAL from the beginning through its Socrates Thematic Networks programme, as it valued the concept of joint development of an evaluation scheme while respecting the principle of subsidiarity.

3. The emerging competitive landscape

In the US, an accreditation scheme for business schools has existed for almost hundred years, carried out by AACSB, a US business school association (then the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business, recently renamed the International Association of Management Education). Programme accreditation was the major product/service offered by the association. Given the saturation in the home market and an increased presence and partnering of US business schools outside the country, AACSB decided to offer its accreditation scheme outside the US.

In 1996, it offered co-operation to efmd (with whom a longstanding partnership existed). For AACSB, this meant an attempt to internationalise its members and services and to access a promising market.

The European schools in efmd, however, decided to first pursue their EQUAL initiative and define their own approach to quality in their diverse education reality and to enter into co-operation when a situation of 'EQUAL footing' would have been reached.

The decision of AACSB to go ahead with their own accreditation eventually sped up considerably the development of EQUIS on the European side, causing a remarkable co-operative effort of the management development community in Europe.

In roughly one year, with the considerable effort of volunteers and the committed support of over 100 management education experts from academia and practice, an innovative and international level evaluation scheme was designed, ready for presentation to the stakeholder groups for decision.

In January 1997 the green light was given by an overwhelmingly positive opinion poll among the deans of the European business schools members of efmd. A group of 19 pioneer schools from all over Europe, including the leading business schools, which acted as both pathfinders and guinea pigs in the first year, helped in further fine-tuning and shaping the model and the processes. They also helped to co-finance the initiative, as the efmd Board had decided that, given its network character and its agreed 'arms' length' policy, EQUIS must be a self-financing and cost-covering activity.

Without the determined commitment of expert peers and the financial and moral support of the pioneers, and without the consistent integrative lead function of a network organisation like efmd the project could not have been implemented. A vision, a conviction, a leadership based on a common understanding of the objectives were crucial to the implementation and the subsequent success of EQUIS as a fully self-regulatory initiative of the professional community.

4. The key issues

4.1 Scope

The key questions around the construction of a European evaluation and accreditation scheme for management education institutions were:

- accreditation vs. evaluation;
- national/regional vs. European accreditation systems;
- institutions vs. programmes;
- minimum standards vs. 'blue ribbon' award for high quality ;
- European vs. international/global;
- degree awarding vs. including all executive education centres.

4.1.1 Accreditation vs. evaluation: There were intense early discussions about the advantages and disadvantages of accreditation (meaning a system of compliance or non-compliance within a given frame of standards) versus a non-judgemental evaluation approach.

Eventually, a decision for the development of an accreditation scheme was taken because

- of a perceived increased demand from schools, students and companies;
- evaluation would not have the same impact in terms of information to the public, improvement incentive and marketing effect for the institution;
- other agencies of very different nature and objectives were launching accreditation schemes and already started confusing market and customers alike;
- AACSB, the American association had announced its accreditation intentions in Europe. But European schools wanted to shape and govern their own approach to quality in their own territory.

A development scheme – EQUIP – was launched in order to strengthen the improvement dimension over the judgement dimension inherent in accreditation schemes. EQUIP was designed to give schools which are not yet operating on an international quality level an opportunity to assess strengths and weaknesses and work to an improvement agenda which can lead to EQUIS accreditation

4.1.2 National vs. European: There was unanimity that, as a non-governmental initiative of the European professional community, EQUIS should not interfere with national systems and agencies (governmental or not) which were obviously legitimated and guided by their respective educational structures. Rather, it had to be an additional and an optional tool for schools to improve and to create a framework for European and international level quality.

EQUAL 's co-operative structure enabled it to serve as a support agency in developing common standards, i.e., Guidelines for 'What is an MBA in Europe' were issued jointly and are applied in the EQUIS review.

4.1.3 Institution vs. programme: A holistic institutional approach was chosen, which respected the diversity of programme format and content. For an international approach, an institutional review made more sense as it looks at the quality of the whole of a school including its inputs, processes and outputs. Also, there was a wish not to limit the EQUIS concept to an MBA accreditation. Although MBA programmes have made successful inroads into European management education, the bulk of European future managers are still educated in the various national degree

courses. EQUIS wants to offer quality benchmarking and improvement to this wide variety of European management education.

4.1.4 Minimum standards vs. ‘blue-ribbon’ award: Given that EQUIS could not and would not be a compulsory exercise for all management education institutions in Europe it was agreed to confer – in its accreditation version – a high quality label for those schools operating across borders and ready to measure themselves on an international level. This was broadly defined as a school, which delivers high quality management education, and, through all or most of its elements, enables students to operate successfully in the international/global corporate environment. This was reflected in the design of the criteria.

4.1.5 European vs. international: The initial focus was clearly on the identification of European common ground and framework. However, by its very nature, the scheme turned out to lend itself to a broader international application, as its key features are respect for cultural diversity, for educational context, and the international and the corporate customer dimension of the institution. While in the first years energy and attention were entirely absorbed by the design and launch of the European initiative, accreditation of non-European schools was started in 1999 and registers increasing demand, indicating a need for such an international quality evaluation and positioning framework.

Indeed, world wide there are now essentially two systems on offer: the US-based AACSB and the Europe-based EQUIS. While this opens interesting questions of co-operation and competition with the American counterparts it clearly shows the rapid internationalisation of the discipline and the institutions. The current question being raised is whether competition with the American association is wanted and healthy, or should the future bring co-operation to further broader global understanding of quality issues in higher (management) education. A joint test initiative of efmd and AACSB in South East Asia is already underway.

4.1.6 Degree awarding institutions vs. all Executive Education Centres: The key focus of EQUIS is on graduate and postgraduate Higher Education institutions (which do or do not include executive education activities). Special criteria have been developed also for Executive Education Centres.

4.2 Criteria

The criteria were developed by various working parties of stakeholders including senior representatives from academic institutions/business schools, experts in quality evaluation, corporate practitioners from the Human Resource development area and representatives from the national accrediting agencies. The efmd and EQUIS governing bodies (see below) agree the criteria.

Given the concept of EQUIS a quantitative approach was considered inappropriate if not impossible, except for very few items (i.e., number of core faculty). The criteria cover all aspects of the institutions from mission and context, to governance, student selection and support, programme portfolio, curriculum, learning concepts, research, faculty, staff, facilities, etc. All of them are embedded in two main quality evaluation themes: the international dimension and the connection with the corporate world.

Tools to ensure consistency in application, both for eligibility to EQUIS and for the accreditation itself, have been developed (e.g., data sheet, criteria satisfaction checklist, profiling sheets, guiding notes and peer review team brief). The EQUIS Steering Committee constantly monitors the criteria and the relevant documents. Changes must be approved by it and by the efmd Board of Governors as the ultimate responsible body.

4.3 Governance

The nature of EQUIS required a complex check-and-balance system in order to make the scheme and the processes transparent, legitimate and consistent.

The key requirements were:

- representation of stakeholders and cultures, and participation in decision-making processes;
- an arm's length governing structure to the 'hosting' efmd organisation;
- a legislative body governing over eligibility of institutions, criteria, processes;
- a juridical body taking the ultimate accreditation decisions, broader than the efmd/EQUAL community.

All bodies involved in EQUIS include efmd Board members, EQUAL Chairman, various types of schools (public university, private business school, executive education centres), different European cultures (but no quota), managers from major companies (human resource and management development), the EQUIS Director, and the efmd Director General as advisers.

efmd is the hosting and legally responsible organisation with its Board of Trustees as the final decision-making body. However, in order to ensure transparency of governance and management of the accreditation process and to separate it from the network organisation two distinct decision-making bodies have been created:

- 'Legislation': The EQUIS Steering Committee is responsible for criteria and process setting, eligibility decisions for schools to enter the accreditation process, questions of policy, management, budget, documentation, development.
- 'Jurisdiction': The EQUIS Awarding Body takes the final decision on accreditation, based upon the report and recommendations of the peers review team and on the history of decisions made to date: accreditation for five years, conditional accreditation, non-accreditation (with option to represent the application upon a recommended improvement plan)

Beyond the members' categories listed above, the Awarding Body also includes the CEO of the European Foundation for Quality Management whose model and Award for quality in corporations is close to the EQUIS model. A member of the European Round Table of Industrialists, a network/think tank organisation of CEOs of Europe's leading companies, which also includes a chapter on education and training. The current Chairman is a member of the efmd Board from an academic institution. Future members of both bodies are identified and proposed by the bodies themselves and appointed by the efmd Board (for three years, renewable once). An Appeals Committee has been recently established, and is headed by the President of efmd.

4.4 Process

Current steps of the EQUIS process (duration average 8 months) are:

- personal briefing of candidates by EQUIS director or advisers;
- application for eligibility and admission by the EQUIS Steering Committee (to EQUIS, or failing this, to EQUIP);
- self-assessment and report to peers team;
- peer team visit;
- team report to Awarding Body with recommendations;
- Awarding Body decision.

The **eligibility** phase was introduced at a later stage, when it became clear that many schools engaged into the process without realising that they were quite far from reaching the standards set,

thus causing unnecessary tension and frustration in the institution. In order to strengthen the improvement character of the model, it was decided to have a first screen based on principle criteria of national standing and recognition, international scope, institutional governance. This is based on a data sheet and documentation provided by the school as well as by EQUIS representatives visiting the school for briefing.

The pool of **auditors** is drawn from the efmd membership and EQUAL national auditors. An exhaustive peers briefing document as well as work tools have been developed. An EQUIS co-ordinator accompanies the team in order to support and monitor the visit. The peers are volunteering their time while the schools cover travel and accommodation.

The **accreditation options** are also designed to support the improvement culture. Conditional accreditation is given for a limited number of years if the school is in principle of good quality but needs to work on certain aspects which are spelled out by the peers team and confirmed (or edited) by the Awarding Body. A work agenda is monitored during the time established and a review decides on full accreditation or non-accreditation.

A decision of on-accreditation also comes with a series of suggestions for improvement and an offer to work on them within a given time frame (two originally non-accredited schools have in the meantime represented their case and been accredited).

4.5 Management and Finance

EQUIS is based at the efmd offices in Brussels: the EQUIS Director (reporting to efmd Director General) and two administrators manage the process of schools' eligibility, accreditation (or EQUIP evaluation), the pool of auditors, team visits, committee meetings, marketing and finance. A few consultants from the network and from EQUAL support the EQUIS team in their work. The cost of the overall operation is covered by income from the audits.

C.II. A history of the Quality Review Program of the European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU/EQR)

By Tom R Phillips, ECIU Quality Assurance officer, University of Twente

1. The ECIU

The European Consortium of Innovative Universities ~ ECIU ~ consists of eleven universities with similar histories and interests. Founded within the past 35 years, their shared objectives include the development of high-quality innovative, interdisciplinary, and international programs to serve emerging needs, joint educational ventures, research relevant to business and industry, and entrepreneurial activities. The ECIU is a non-profit educational organisation with a governing board comprised of the Rectors of the member institutions. The members are:

Aalborg University, Denmark	University of Joensuu, Finland
Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona, Spain	Universidad de Aveiro, Portugal
Chalmers Technological University, Sweden	University of Strathclyde, Scotland
Université de Technologie de Compiègne, France	University of Twente, Netherlands
University of Dortmund, Germany	University of Warwick, UK
University of Hamburg-Harburg, Germany	

1.1. Motivation for EQR: A number of “International Masters” programs had been developed by ECIU institutions prior to Bologna. These were generally two-year programs, utilising elements of existing Masters programs, and taught in English for an international clientele. Most were interdisciplinary to some extent; most included a major project or internship; some combined classroom and distance learning; some were joint efforts of two institutions; but none were designed to produce “licensed professionals.” In general the graduates would fill specialist roles in education and training, public and private sector management, and research & development within high-tech companies.

Program accreditation was needed to meet the expectations of foreign governments and to compete effectively. In south-east Asia and India, our members would compete with institutions in Australia, the U.K., and the U.S. Accreditation would help our members to attract corporate support in the form of study grants and internships.

The very strengths and unique objectives of these programs placed them beyond the scope of the established accrediting agencies. For example, an “Engineering Mathematics” program designed to serve students from various backgrounds -- math, physical sciences, computer science or engineering. For accreditation as an advanced-level “engineering” program, all of the students would have to possess an acceptable undergraduate engineering degree. Interdisciplinary programs that included management studies did not seem to fit the agenda of the business and management accrediting agencies. In other disciplines, such as the natural sciences and social sciences, there simply were no accreditation options.

All of this signalled a need for a rigorous, yet flexible and transparent form of accreditation. We set out to build a modest program within the consortium that would support evaluation or formal accreditation, operate with minimal bureaucracy and cost, be scalable, and permit co-operation with other organisations.

An accreditation program based in a consortium, league, or university network has inherent limitations. Such associations are perceived, rightly or wrongly, as “exclusionary”. (ECIU membership is not required for institutions that wish to use the EQR program). The membership of almost any network or league may attract negative comment, some for being too elite, some for just

the opposite. This can influence the market potential of a league-based accreditation program, regardless of its intrinsic merit.

The present market for program accreditation is undeveloped, but should take shape as Bologna moves forward. The market will be influenced by government policies on external review and accreditation. Our strategy is to lay down a foundation for government approval; subsequent actions will depend on emerging government policies. Any organisation that seeks to become an approved accreditor must be willing to take on quasi-governmental functions. This may require a redirection and expansion of the organisation, a profound step for a network that was never intended to be 'inclusive' in the manner of public agencies.

1.2. Accreditation and the ECIU Mission: Is accreditation an appropriate activity for a university consortium or league? We concluded that the EQR program would support various ECIU goals, including:

- Innovation in the services that universities deliver to the public.
- Development of an innovative campus culture; new forms of management and administration; support for new forms of teaching, training, and research.
- Benchmarking and joint program development.

1.3. EQR Scope and Program Eligibility: The ECIU, acting as an independent agent, organises and conducts external quality reviews leading to the recognition of study programs in these categories:

- Study programs leading to degrees variously described as “first-university” or “advanced-level”, “undergraduate” or “graduate”. They may be traditional in nature or innovative, interdisciplinary, and non-traditional. Therefore, they may fall beyond the disciplinary focus, scope, or capabilities of existing government review systems or international accrediting agencies. Ph.D. or “doctoral” programs are not included in the ECIU review program.
- Study programs developed in the spirit of the Bologna Declaration of 1999, notably European university “bachelors” and “masters” degree programs
- Study programs leading to first-university or advanced-level degrees that are classified as institutional diplomas, but not as national diplomas under prevailing national education law.
- University-level study programs seeking an international quality review and recognition, in lieu of, in addition to, or in co-operation with an existing national review process.

1.4. EQR Objectives: European university education has entered a period in which quality assurance, quality improvement, and mutual recognition will grow in importance. In this context, the ECIU Quality Review Program (EQR) is intended to help institutions plan effective new programs or to improve existing ones. EQR is offered as a non-profit resource to all higher education institutions that share these concerns and objectives.

- **Objective 1:** To provide institutions and faculties with concepts and tools for planning, implementing, and managing a wide variety of study programs according to credible but flexible quality standards.
- **Objective 2:** To make determinations in the following areas: whether the study program has credible objectives in terms of its academic level; whether the program level is consistent with accepted European standards for a bachelor, master, or other degree in a given type of institution; whether the intended results, as defined, indicate that the objectives have been met; whether the study program meets the needs of those who must be served; and *whether the faculty will be able to maintain the quality of the program.*

1.5. EQR Characteristics

Non-Profit: EQR is a “not-for-profit” venture, in which all fees and expenses paid by an institution relate to the direct cost of the program review and any support provided by the institution. There is no ECIU overhead charge or ‘administrative’ fee.

Limitations: As stated in the EQR Criteria, the ECIU is not a professional, technical, or discipline-based association. The EQR program is designed to accommodate programs in various disciplines. Therefore, EQR does not promote the interests of any given faculty, discipline, profession or occupational group.

The ECIU cannot predict in detail the jobs that individual graduates may actually seek or obtain. Therefore, an EQR review cannot predict the performance of a graduate in a specific position, especially those in licensed or regulated professions. ECIU/EQR neither claims nor implies the status of a professional certification agency for regulated professions (such as architecture, engineering, law, health and medical, etc.).

1.6. History and Current Status: The EQR concept, criteria, and procedures were initially developed by a consultant with U.S. accreditation experience, working in co-operation with European experts in the Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) and ECIU engineering faculty members. The documents went through several iterations, each time with comment from the ECIU Rectors and staff. The plan received Board approval at the Fall 1998 annual meeting, including approved for a pilot evaluation of the International Masters in Engineering Mathematics at Twente. A highly successful evaluation was conducted in the fall of 1999, leading to the first ECIU accreditation action.

Criteria revisions were enacted in 1999 to acknowledge the “Bologna” concept of bachelors and masters programs. The criteria and self-study have proven useful as planning tools, and while institutions have expressed interest, there have been no further evaluations. Faculties on European university campuses seem to be preoccupied with the development of Bologna bachelors and masters programs – indeed, the International Masters may simply be absorbed in the new programs. Institutions seem to be awaiting developments in national accreditation policies, which may affect their interest in voluntary review programs. It may be that many institutions do not have an external review requirement, other than compliance with the national system.

The initial EQR charter referred to “university-level” programs leading to the MSc or International MSc degrees. This was changed to accommodate “Bologna” bachelors and masters programs. Further changes may be needed to comply with the recognition standards of certain government agencies – e.g., a German requirement that approved agencies must serve both fachhochschulen and universities. A proposed change in the EQR charter would replace “university” references with the term “higher education.”

2. Constituents and Issues

The core constituents are the various ECIU faculties, but EQR is available to any institution. EQR is a multi-disciplinary and multi-national program that could serve various types of employers and professions. Flexibility is needed to serve the diverse faculties of the institutions, but this complicates efforts to form academic and employer advisory groups.

3. Co-operation and Competition:

EQR is based on the principles of outcomes assessment and quality improvement. This should facilitate co-operative agreements with public and non-governmental quality assurance agencies, as well as professional organisations. EQR has provisions for joint reviews with organisations that do

not have their own review program. It also complements existing national review systems by providing a more detailed examination of objectives and outcomes at the program and course level.

There are very few non-governmental competitors in program-level accreditation – perhaps none who review programs in most any discipline. As noted above, the market is not well developed at this time. Government seems to be the most significant competitor, and as owners and providers, governments are under no injunction to delegate responsibility for higher education quality assurance to NGO's. It is conceivable that the existing external review processes, with a few improvements, may compete with any newcomers that obtain government approval. Given a choice, some faculties will go with the existing system simply because it is familiar.

4. Value Judgements

4.1. Accreditation vs. Evaluation: Most universities are expected to conduct self-evaluations and to undergo some type of external review. While this may serve some purposes, we felt that it was important to anticipate the development of European accreditation systems.

Quality is built from the bottom-up; therefore, we felt it was important to go beyond mission, strategy, and broad objectives. EQR considers implementation, results, and quality improvement provisions at the program and course level. It can be a tool for planning academic programs, in that the information required in the self-study can be used for planning, internal review, accreditation, or for use in other review processes.

EQR may be used as a diagnostic tool, and an ECIU consultant may be retained to assist faculties in developing an “accreditation capability.” That is done through an iterative and modular process of determining need, defining program objectives and outcomes; analysing feasibility; linking objectives and outcomes with curricular elements; and developing appropriate assessments.

4.2. Program-Level: Reputable institutions may still have weaknesses at the faculty and program levels, a view based upon practical experience the U.S. Faculty¹⁰ autonomy is a prime characteristic of European higher education, a condition that makes it more difficult to implement comprehensive quality management systems, creating a potential for differences in quality among faculties within an institution. Therefore, we felt that EQR should focus on programs and courses, as this is where mission and strategy must be realised.

EQR considers the credibility of the objectives and outcomes defined by the faculty, making these the context of the review. A review can be rigorous without imposing limits on academic diversity and faculty prerogatives. Moreover, the results of such a review lend themselves to international comparison and acceptance.

4.3. Minimum Standards vs. Excellence: A common criticism of accreditation is that it is based upon minimum standards and does not reward excellence. This may happen when an agency serves a large and diverse constituency. This was a time when U.S. agencies commonly used data- and specification-driven criteria, but there has been a substantial change in recent years, stimulated by the recognition policies of the U.S. Department of Education and CHEA. In practice, relatively few have attempted to define at least generic outcomes. Some agencies have gone from specifications to the other extreme, overly transparent outcomes-based criteria that fail to express a workable standard for planning, evaluation, or accreditation.

There is reason for optimism. Human nature works differently in the old and new accreditation systems. ABET – the U.S. engineering accreditor -- once had quantitative specifications for credit hours in subject areas. Faculties tended to meet but not exceed specifications and everyone complained about “bean counting.” Under the new ABET criteria, faculties must demonstrate the

¹⁰ “Faculty” being used here in the U.S. sense of professors.

academic and professional credibility of their objectives and actual outcomes. Faculties now tend to *overachieve* in planning, executing, and documenting their programs. Perhaps more can be gained by appealing to pride and peer approval.

4.4. International Applicability: The ECIU wanted an accreditation option that would work in most countries across a range of institutions and disciplines. We wanted compatibility with other agencies, especially in the English-speaking systems. This is achieved by applying the basic principles of outcomes assessment and quality improvement.

One problem bears mention -- many European institutions do not have quite the customer orientation assumed in assessment and improvement systems. Many have yet to develop the external assessments and improvement processes that are needed. At the least, we hope that EQR will help faculties to understand what must be done to succeed in a progressive accreditation process.

4.5. Criteria and Procedures: The major headings of the EQR Criteria and Self-Study are:

- Program coherence, structure, level
- Program objectives and academic feasibility
- Program outcomes and assessment
- Professional context: professional demands, employment outcome
- Curricular objectives and content: integration, essential content, role of projects, language and communication skills, appropriate laboratory and computing resources. Ethical, social, and environmental concerns. Required internships or work projects.
- Faculty Issues: Adequacy of background, number, qualifications
- Students, graduates, quality control: Recruitment and selection; advising; remediation; maintenance of academic standards; assessment plan and practices, including ability to demonstrate the quality of student work
- Institutional support: Leadership, financial policy and support, institutional facilities, information resources including library and computer systems, laboratory facilities

4.6. Accreditation Process: An EQR cycle normally occupies a period of 8-9 months, assuming that the faculty has its affairs in order and is prepared to write an effective self study. The steps are:

- Initial institutional/faculty application for review; acceptance by the ECIU Quality Review Council; assignment of the review to the EQR Director.
- Initial consultation; identify factors that may reduce the likelihood of a successful outcome.
- Identify and confirm evaluators.
- Self-evaluation, due at least 90 days prior to the visit.
- Site visit.
- Team report and recommendation to the Quality Review Council.
- Quality Review Council decision, reported to ECIU Board.

4.7. Recruitment, selection, training of evaluators: The team leader must be from an ECIU institution. Two or more evaluators are selected for expertise relevant to the program under review, any specialisation, and the professions or industries that are involved.

EQR evaluators receive an honorarium equivalent to about 500 USD per day, based on the time required for preparation, the visit, and reporting. This is less than the consulting rates commanded by many technical faculty members.

The initial briefing materials include the criteria and guidelines for their application; the self-evaluation; and a criteria-based checklist to guide assessments of the self-evaluation and inquiries during the visit. A reporting format is provided to help the evaluators produce appropriate report statements. The EQR Director accompanies the team in an ex-officio capacity to provide guidance on policy and procedure questions and to facilitate preparation of the visit report.

4.8. Accreditation Actions: The EQR process leads to a yes or no decision, which distinguishes EQR from other forms of evaluation. The faculty receives a copy of the initial visit report and recommendation, with a request for comments or corrections on factual errors or omissions. Recommendations for improvement are presented in a separate section of the visit report. Taking the faculty response into consideration, a final visit report and Executive Summary are prepared, the latter intended as a public report if faculty and institutional policy requires such a report.

4.9. Governance and Management: The ECIU Board has delegated functional responsibility for EQR reviews to the Quality Review Council, which oversees the work of the Quality Review Director. The Quality Review Council formulates the EQR criteria, policies, and procedures, subject to final approval by the ECIU Board.

The evaluation team report and recommendation are subject the approval of the Quality Review Council. The content or conclusions may be questioned, but changes must emanate from the evaluation team. The official letter of accreditation is signed by the Chair of the Quality Review Council and the ECIU Board Secretary.

The ECIU Secretariat and EQR Director are based at the University of Twente (NL). A consortial membership fee supports ECIU general operations. The university contributes the time of the EQR Director, overhead costs, secretarial support (as needed), and access to computing and office equipment. Otherwise, EQR operates on a direct-cost basis without recourse to outside funding.

It is worth noting that a university league- or network-based accrediting program may have an inherent problem in obtaining external financial support. The prospects may be better for agencies that specialise in disciplines of specific interest to business and industry.

APPENDIX D: LISTS OF MEETING PARTICIPANTS (by alphabetical order)

Workshop I, Paris, 18-19 September 2000

- **Andris Barblan**, Secretary General, CRE
- **Bernadette Conraths**, InterContext; previously European Foundation for Management Development (efmd)
- **Ferdinand Devinsky**, Rector, Comenius University, Slovak Republic
- **Judith Eaton**, President, US Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), Washington
- **Eric Froment**, Délégué Général, CPU, France
- **Sami Kanaan**, Programme Manager, CRE
- **Marie Ange Orihuela**, Programme Officer, CRE Paris
- **Bettina Schiller**, Akkreditierungsagentur Bayreuth für Bayern, Germany
- **Andrée Sursock**, Project Rapporteur, Centre for Higher Education Research and Information, Open University, London
- **Christian Tauch**, Expert in the follow-up of the Bologna Declaration, German Rectors' Conference, Bonn
- **Dirk Van Damme**, Accreditation expert of the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP) and University of Ghent, Director of the Flemish Inter-University Council (VLIR)
- **Don Westerheijden**, Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS), University of Twente, Netherlands

Workshop II, Vienna, 8-9 November 2000

- **Andris Barblan**, Secretary General, CRE
- **Bernadette Conraths**, InterContext; previously European Foundation for Management Development (efmd)
- **Ferdinand Devinsky**, Rector, Comenius University, Slovak Republic
- **Judith Eaton**, President, US Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), Washington
- **Ustün Ergüder**, Former Rector, Bogaziçi Üniversitesi, Istanbul
- **Karin Fischer-Bluhm**, Consortium of Universities in Northern Germany, Hamburg
- **Eric Froment**, Délégué Général, CPU, France
- **Kauko Hämäläinen**, Secretary General, Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council, Secretary General ENQA (European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies)
- **Andrea Henzl**, Secretary General, Austrian Rectors Conference, Vienna
- **Sami Kanaan**, Programme Manager, CRE
- **Tobias Lindeberg**, Evaluation Officer, Danish Evaluation Council
- **Jan Willem Meijer**, VSNU, the Netherlands
- **Virgilio Meira Soares**, Former Rector, Universidade de Lisboa, CIPES
- **José-Ginés Mora**, Consejo de Universidades, Spain
- **Ginette Nabavi**, Administrator, DG Education and Culture, European Commission
- **Heide Naderer**, Managing Director, Accreditation Council, Bonn
- **Marie Ange Orihuela**, Programme Officer, CRE Paris
- **Kurt Sohm**, EURASHE Executive Council member, Vienna
- **Andrée Sursock**, Project Rapporteur, Centre for Higher Education Research and Information, Open University, London
- **Tibor Szanto**, Hungarian Accreditation Committee, Hungary
- **Christian Tauch**, Expert in the follow-up of the Bologna Declaration, German Rectors' Conference, Bonn

- **Dirk van Damme**, Accreditation expert of the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP) and University of Ghent, Director of the Flemish Inter-University Council (VLIR)
- **Marijk van der Wende**, Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS), University of Twente, Netherlands
- **Lazar Vlasceanu**, Deputy Director, CEPES, UNESCO
- **Georg Winckler**, Rector, Universität Wien
- **Klaus D. Wolff**, Akkreditierungsagentur i. Gr., Bayreuth

Workshop III, Brussels, 7 December 2000

- **Sylvie Brochu**, Programme Officer, CRE
- **Dirk van Damme**, Accreditation expert of the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP) and University of Ghent, Director of the Flemish Inter-University Council (VLIR)
- **Ustün Ergüder**, Former Rector, Bogaziçi Üniversitesi, Istanbul
- **Guy Haug**, Senior Adviser, CRE Paris
- **Sami Kanaan**, Programme Manager, CRE
- **José-Gines Mora**, Consejo de Universidades, Madrid
- **Ginette Nabavi**, Administrator, DG Education and Culture, European Commission
- **Jonathan Slack**, for EFMD, Chief Executive, Association of Business Schools, UK
- **Andrée Sursock**, Project Rapporteur, Centre for Higher Education Research and Information, Open University, London
- **Christian Thune**, Danish Evaluation Institute, Chairman ENQA
- **Don Westerheijden**, Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS), University of Twente, Netherlands

Validation seminar, Lisbon/Oeiras, 8-10 February 2001

Categories of participants:

CRE member institutions:	103	55%
National conferences of higher education including rectors conferences and universities associations representatives:	20	11%
Other higher education institutions representatives (not members of CRE):	15	8%
Students representatives:	5	2.5%
CRE staff:	4	2.25%
Experts involved in the project:	3	1.5%
Ministries of Education and Economy representatives:	18	9.5%
Assurance quality and accreditation agencies representatives:	10	5.5%
International organis. (European Comm., OECD, Council of Europe, UNESCO):	5	2.5%
ENIC/NARIC:	4	2.25%
Total number of participants	187	100%