Press release

Europe launches Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education

4th March 2008. The **European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)** will be officially launched in Brussels today in a move designed to improve the quality of European higher education and to promote greater student mobility. The new register is a landmark for European cooperation in quality assurance of higher education in the context of the Bologna Process reforms.

Under the mandate of Education Ministers from the 46 countries taking part in the Bologna Process, the new register has been established by the "E4 Group" comprising the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European Students Union (ESU), the European University Association (EUA) and the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE).

The new register (EQAR) aims to provide clear and objective information about trustworthy quality assurance agencies that are working in Europe. It also aims to help improve the quality of European higher education and to promote greater student mobility by increasing trust between higher education institutions. The register will provide a means for HE institutions (where national regulations permit) to choose between different agencies on the register.

The founding of EQAR is a milestone in the Bologna Process reforms, which has an underlying goal of improving the quality culture of European higher education. In the past decade, there has been a rapid development across Europe of national quality assurance systems, and as a result, common reference points have been defined at European level to improve the consistency of quality assurance schemes.

Inclusion on the EQAR, which is voluntary, will be based on compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance adopted by European Education Ministers in 2005. A Committee – composed of independent experts nominated by the E4 Group, BusinessEurope, Education International, together with five government observers – will be responsible for admissions to the register. The register will be accepting applications from the summer of 2008 and information will be publicly accessible through a web-based tool.

The EQAR will be officially launched by the heads of the E4 Group at a special ceremony to be held this morning (4th March) at the Royal Academy for Science and Arts in Brussels. Ján Figel', European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth will also make a special presentation at the event to mark the launch of the register.

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