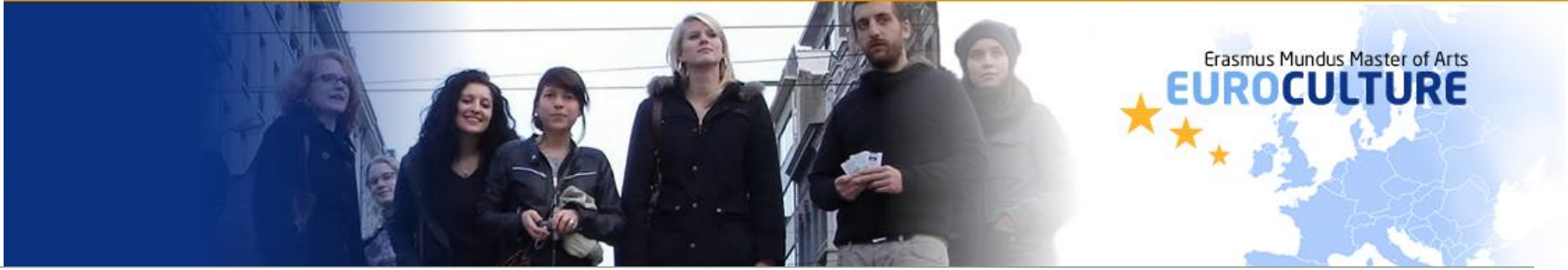


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# **EURO CULTURE: Society, Politics and Culture in a Global Context**

## **Experiences with the European Approach** **The EMJMD Euroculture Consortium Perspective**

**Robert Wagenaar**

President Euroculture Consortium  
University of Groningen



**Euroculture EMJMD: 120 ECTS – 8 EU diploma awarding partners – 4 Non-European partners**

**Based on STAR-model: student studies at 2 or 3 institutions; 2 EU partners offer joint/double degree**





### Why opting for European Approach?

- Showing consistency of the programme and strong cooperation in implementation and delivery
- Strengthening its position in international and national contexts
- Promoting its international prestige by standing out in comparison to other joint programmes
- Facilitating the awarding of joint degrees: joint degrees (should be) intertwined with European Approach for QA

### Time frame applied

Feb. 2018	Management Committee agrees with applying for European Approach; Decision to invite the NVAO as the accreditation organisation because Groningen is coordinator
Spring 2018	Meeting of NVAO representatives, policy and legal staff UG and Coordinating UG staff Euroculture
Autumn 2018	Informing national QA organizations about intention to go for European Approach
January 2019	Preparation Self-Evaluation according to set of standards European Approach
Feb. 2019	Discussion of first draft of Self-Evaluation Report
April 2019	Finalising Self-Evaluation Report
May-Sept.	Composition review panel for site visit and evaluation
June 2019	Preparation for site visit at regular Management Committee meeting
4-5 Nov. 2019	Visit of review panel to University of Groningen





### Challenges?

- Involving National QA agencies: **different attitudes and level of interests** in 8 countries involved
- Identifying **national peculiarities** to be taken into account in Self-Evaluation Report and accreditation procedure to facilitate chances for recognition of NVAO accreditation report by national authorities (additional items not changing standards)
- Preparation of Self-Evaluation Report proved to be **easy job** because could be based on EMJMD application: all necessary data already available. Report: 40 pages + app. 450 pages Annexes (all existing documents)
- In addition to these data: preparation of new Alumni Report (2019) – also useful for PR
- Preparatory process not more time consuming than national accreditation process

### Good practice

- Excellent cooperation between NVAO, Consortium and local authorities at UG and partners: **shared aim to make process a success**, respecting each others role and responsibilities at the same time
- Process of preparation by partners and actual site visit (all EU Universities represented) promoted jointness and **feeling of shared responsibility**



### Site visit of review panel

- Dutch chair to ease preparation of accreditation process (joint decision of NVAO and president Consortium)
- One full day visit: interviews with management (Directors of Studies); teachers of different EU partners; students studying at different partner institutions; alumni (now employees and employers) who graduated at different partner institutions; course managers + student advisors of the EU partners)
- Pleasant and constructive atmosphere
- Start site visit with short informal meeting of review panel and Consortium representation
- Finish site visit with initial conclusion of panel including its ordeal: met / not met standards



## Observations

### For HE institutions:

- Start preparations in time, and **involve all partners** in process; **prepare site visit well** (identify strengths and weaknesses / key points of recent debate); collect all necessary documentation
- Be **factual** but also **self-critical** in Self-Evaluation Report

### For accreditation organization and review panel members:

- Start preparations in time, including discussions with coordinating institution of Consortium
- **Prepare the members of the panel well**: make clear it is a European not a national endeavour which involves coping with compromises regarding national legislations and HE institutional practices
- Panel should identify in debates both **strength and weaknesses** and avoid focussing on single item(s)
- Avoid hobby horses of panel members: respect divergence and diversity (national educational cultures): **joint programme does imply jointness, not uniformity**



### **Role of Examination Board**

- In Euroculture one Consortium Examination Board and local Boards to implement its decisions, taking into account local practices
- Consortium Examination Board meets twice a year in the context of the Management Committee meetings
- Bases its decisions on the agreed Examination Regulations
- Oversees the quality of implementation by setting clear documented guidelines and evaluation the programme (on the basis of student-evaluations and input Directors of Studies / Course Managers and student-advisors)

### **Dutch dimension**

Review panel advised to strengthen the role of the Examination Board by cross checking the quality of outcomes of the learning process on a regular basis. Realistic in an international setting?



### **Advise**

Review panels should be fully aware that in 21<sup>st</sup> Century programmes the intended / achieved learning outcomes should be based on **a set of cap stones**, that is:

- (Inter)disciplinary training
- Level of generic competences developed (Eurocompetences modules)
- Placement / Research track (in setting Euroculture Programme)
- Methodology / Theoretical training and application
- Preparation of a PhD project application / Societal oriented project application (in setting Euroculture)
- Final thesis

### **Dutch dimension**

Independent assessment / review of final thesis

Euroculture practice: two supervisors (first and second) representing two degree awarding institutions

National legal systems define different requirements for thesis supervisors and assessors: 2, 3 or 4 reviewers?





### **Follow up of accreditation decision**

- Final Report / Accreditation Decision expected in first months of 2020
- Report will be shared with national QA / Accreditation authorities of 8 countries involved
- These authorities will be asked by Euroculture Consortium to recognize the accreditation decision. Response will be made public.
- Intention: putting pressure on national authorities to respect their own political decisions made in the context of the Bologna Process. Has proven to be an effective strategy.

### **Overall impression and advise for other joint programmes**

Very positive and worth the effort both in terms of strengthening jointness and sense of community

**GO FOR IT !**



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# **Euroculture Consortium Experiences with the European Approach**

## **A Spanish Perspective**

Maite Sagasti

University of Deusto, Spain





## **The Spanish accreditation system**

ANECA is in charge of the Spanish accreditations

UNIBASQ is in charge of the Basque Country programme accreditation since

- Unibasq – the Basque University System Quality Assurance Agency is a public entity regulated by private law, dedicated to promote the innovation and improvement in the Basque University System (BUS), satisfying international quality standards and attending the society interest in higher education.
- Since 2016 showed interest in the European Approach for QA



## UNIBASQ & the ImPEA Project (2017/2020)

- **Aim of the project** is to support efficient implementation of the European Approach Quality Assurance of the JP
- Completions of the following objectives:
  - Identify the key obstacles in the implementation of the EA
  - Support partner QA agencies in running EA-based programme accreditation procedures
  - Supporting partner HEI in pursuing the external accreditation
  - Developing a EA implementation toolkit



## **UNIBASQ & the University of Deusto**

- 2017 contacted the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities to take part in a pilot experience with a joint master programme that was led by the University of Deusto
- 2018 different members of the Faculty took part in a conference that took place in Poznan (Poland). During those 3 days programme we analyzed the following issues
  - Project overview
  - European approach- principles, methodology, criteria and current stage of implementation
  - Templates for self evaluation report
  - Preparations and efficient conductions of the visit



## **The University of Deusto & EA: the pilot project**

- 2018 we had the first experience
- UNIBASQ was in charge of the process
  - The NOHA joint master prepared the self-evaluation report
- UNIBASQ organized the panel
- Evaluation session
- It was good learning experience with a positive result



## 2019 Euroculture JP accreditation

- In parallel the Euroculture consortium (led by the University of Groningen) decided to go through the EA process
- UD position
  - We had the need for information about the EA
  - We were just part of consortium
  - We sent part of the information to complete the self evaluation report
  - Took part in the evaluation panel
- It was a really positive learning experience



## Positive aspects of the European Accreditation Approach

- The Spanish accreditation system allows us to be evaluated by a EQAR-registered agency outside de country
- Implement a procedure that takes truly into account of the joint nature of the programme.
- Considers the joint master as a whole rather than a sum of seperate parts.
- EA's take aspects into account that are not sufficiently analyzed in the national accreditation (jointness, students support, transparency in a global context
- Clear benefits of a single, speedy, less resource intensive evaluation process





## Challenges of the European Accreditation Approach

- The lack of information regarding the general basis
- The accreditation cycle
  - ANECA :4 years
  - EA:6 years
- Not easy for universities to see the benefits of the EAA when the European Accreditation is still valid but the programme must go through the Spanish accreditation system.



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Thank you for your attention !