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## **Discussion Paper - Thematic session 4: Quality assurance for EIT degrees**

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### Panel:

**Moderator:** *Dr. Achim Hopbach* - President, European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

### **Panellists:**

*Prof. Anders Flodström* - Vice Chairman of the EIT Governing Board

*Dr. Lena Adamson* – Associate Professor of Psychology, KTH and expert on quality in education

*Prof. Sebastião Feyo de Azevedo* - Vice- President of the European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education

*Prof. Dr. Harris* - Director of the Intel Higher Education & Research Programs for the EMEA and EIT ICT Labs representative

**Rapporteur:** *Dr. Marie-Anne Persoons* - Policy officer, DG Education and Culture, European Commission

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### **The objective:**

The objective of this session is to have an exchange of ideas and explore how to best provide quality assurance for EIT degrees. The discussions should lead to 3-5 recommendations from the panel and the audience to the EIT.

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### **The context:**

The development of an adequate quality culture for universities is an important element in building up the European Higher Education Area. Sound quality assurance systems create transparency and enhance trust in the programmes evaluated, both facilitating international recognition of degrees and qualifications.

The adoption of the European Standard and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) by the European Ministers in charge of Higher Education at their meeting in Bergen in 2005 was a milestone in the history of the Bologna Process and has directly led to the establishment of the European Register for Quality Assurance (EQAR) by ENQA, EUA, Eurashe and ESU in 2008.

The ESG have also shaped recent EU decisions in the field of European cooperation in quality assurance for higher education, in particular the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 February 2006 on further European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education, where the Council and the European Parliament recommend Member States to introduce internal quality assurance systems in accordance with the standards and guidelines adopted in Bergen in the context of the Bologna Process.

In the recent discussions on quality assurance both in the national contexts as well as in European gremia there is a growing consensus that definition of study programmes in terms of learning outcomes is a crucial instrument to enhance transparency in the context of quality assurance and recognition of qualifications. In this perspective the Ministers in charge of higher education at their meeting in Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve, 28-29 April 2009 also reasserted "the importance of the teaching mission of higher education institutions and the necessity for ongoing curricular reform geared toward the development of learning outcomes".

### **Towards a quality culture for EIT programmes and degrees**

The EIT Regulation stipulates that EIT degrees shall be awarded by the participating higher education institutions in the KICs in accordance with national rule and accreditation procedures.



The objective of this thematic session is to explore how this requirement of recognition and compliance with quality assurance procedures can be met in an efficient way.

Particular attention will be given to the question whether the traditional quality assurance mechanisms should be complemented by other methods and perspective in order to create a more specific quality approach for the EIT degrees, which are fully anchored in the knowledge triangle (education-research-innovation) and will therefore require particular attention on e.g. the development of creativity and the ability to transform research findings into innovation.

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### **Questions:**

- What specific tools do the KICs need to develop a quality culture in relation to teaching and learning in the knowledge triangle?
- Are the regular higher education quality assurance procedures sufficient to grasp the specificity of EIT programmes that operate in the knowledge triangle? Can the evaluation of specific activities in the scope of EIT education, e.g. in the field of business creation and technology transfer, benefit from quality assurance methods developed in a business and/or industry setting?
- If so, how should the integration of different methods take shape in order to guarantee academic and professional recognition of the EIT degrees awarded by the universities participating in the KICs?
- What should the universities participating in the KICs do in order to assure general acceptance both at national and international level? In this endeavour, how will they cooperate with the other partners in the KICs, especially businesses and industry, and how can they better involve students and graduates in view of enhancing the relevance of the EIT degrees for the labour market?
- If the EIT's ambition is to become a role model in the European Higher Education Area, how should the quality assurance mechanisms for EIT degrees match with the European Standards and Guidelines and the EQAR?
- How can the quality culture for EIT programmes and degrees plug into the learning outcomes oriented approach as promoted via the qualifications framework for the EHEA and the EQF? Are the descriptors/generic learning outcomes as defined in the context of those qualifications framework broad enough to encompass not only skills and competences in the narrow sense but also attitudes acquired throughout the training?