

Exclusion of KAA from the Register

Summary of decision, consequences and perspectives

The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) is the official register of quality assurance agencies operating in substantial compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG¹). Decisions on registered agencies are in the hands of EQAR's independent Register Committee, consisting of quality assurance experts from different backgrounds.

1. Summary of the Decision

The Board of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) was dismissed by the Minister of Education, Science and Technology in September 2017. EQAR was unable to identify any highly exceptional circumstances that would have made this dismissal – infringing with the independence of KAA – reasonable and absolutely necessary to protect other overriding values or principles.

EQAR thus concluded that the agency is no longer able to “act autonomously” and is no longer in a position to assume “full responsibility for [its] operations”, which is required by one of the standards for registration (ESG standard 3.3).

According to EQAR's procedures, an agency is excluded from the Register if it not longer fulfils the standards for registration.

The reasoning is spelled out in detail in the published [decision of the Register Committee](#). KAA has the right to appeal within 90 days.

2. Consequences for Recognition

In general, the recognition of diplomas issued by Kosovo² higher education institutions (HEIs) depends on the target country. Some countries might recognise diplomas automatically or more easily if the diploma or awarding institution was subject to external quality assurance by an EQAR-registered agency. Other diplomas will often still be recognised, but the process could be longer or more burdensome.

¹ [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(EHEA\), 2015 version](#)

² All references to Kosovo, whether the territory, institutions or population, shall be understood in full compliance with United Nation's Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

KAA was excluded as from 25/9/2017³, but KAA's registration until that date was not revoked in any way. EQAR therefore considers that KAA's accreditation procedures and decisions until that point were in compliance with European standards (the ESG). This does, however, not apply to any decisions made afterwards or in the future.

The exclusion of KAA from the Register might therefore make recognition more difficult for those diplomas/HEIs accredited by KAA after its exclusion from the Register.

For specific countries, please also refer to the [recognition information centre \(ENIC-NARIC\)](#) of that country.

3. Perspectives

EQAR's goal is that all European quality assurance agencies operate in line with the agreed European standards set out in the ESG. In order to be re-admitted to the Register, KAA would have to undergo an external review to demonstrate that its organisational structure and operations are in compliance with the ESG. In particular, KAA would need to demonstrate that it can operate independently and without external interference.

EQAR is in a dialogue with both KAA and the Ministry. EQAR was informed that a parliamentary debate was held on 7 March 2018 and welcomes the resulting recommendations, in particular with regard to clear and transparent selection criteria and procedures for the KAA Board, as well as legislative changes to ensure the independence of KAA.

4. Contact

For further information, please do not hesitate to contact Colin Tüeck, EQAR Director, at +32 2 234 39 11 or colin.tueeck@eqar.eu.

Please note that this statement is of informative nature, while solely the Register Committee's [official decision](#) is a formal and binding document.

³ With the dismissal of the Board on that day KAA has lost the ability to operate independently, and according to EQAR's Procedures exclusion shall be as from the date the agency ceased to fulfil the criteria.