

# MES and AIKA are gaining international experience on cyclical institutional evaluation of higher education institutions

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From April 19 to May 21, 2021, the Department of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) organized five remote international webinars to get acquainted with the quality assurance systems of several countries in the European Higher Education Area and gain an understanding of cyclical higher education evaluation of educational institutions at the level of ministries, quality assurance agencies, and universities.

Employees from the Higher Education, Science and Innovation Department of the MES and the Quality Agency for Higher Education (AIKA) gained knowledge and experience in these webinars, while experts from the Swedish Higher Education Authority for Higher Education, the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education (Czech Republic), the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (Czech Republic), the Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders, the Hungarian Accreditation Committee and the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria shared their experience.

Foreign experts presented the quality assurance framework of higher education established in their country, describing the quality assurance system, the activities of quality agencies and evaluation procedures, and the institutional evaluation structure of higher education institutions, outlining the evaluation goal and process, evaluation standards, criteria and decision-making. Attention was also paid to the issue of involvement of experts in the university evaluation process, for example, their selection, training, work quality control.

It is especially important that representatives of the universities of the mentioned countries also took part in the webinars: prof. Bo-Anders Jönsson (Association of Swedish Higher Education Institutions, Lund University, Sweden), prof. Daniela Jobertová (Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, Czech Republic), prof. Miroslav Doupovec (Brno University of Technology, Czech Republic), prof. Roeland Smits (Universities of applied sciences, The Netherlands), prof. Nándor Birher (Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Hungary) and prof. Péter Báldy (Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary), who shared the experience of cyclical institutional evaluation of higher education institutions from the perspective of higher education institutions, highlighting both the most important issues in the evaluation preparation process, such as developing a common understanding of quality and quality culture, and emphasizing the added value of institutional evaluation in the future operation and development of higher education institutions.

Despite the different approaches to the cyclical evaluation of higher education institutions, it is important that the evaluation achieves its main goal - to ensure quality and appropriate education, which is realized as a mutual cooperation between the higher education institution, evaluation experts and the accreditation body.

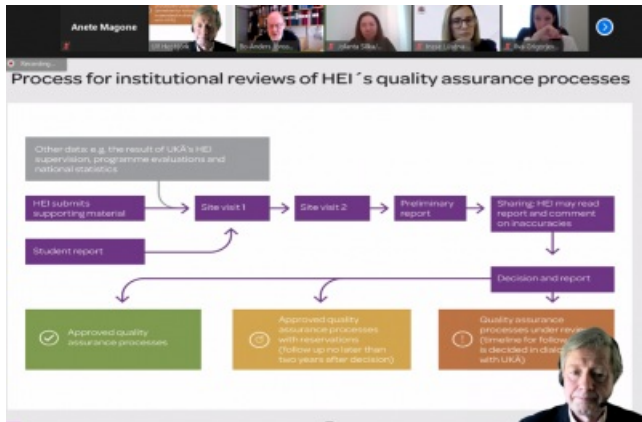
The webinars were organized within the framework of the ERASMUS + K3 program "Support for policy reforms" "Road Map for Implementation of Institutional Assessment" jointly implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science, the Academic Information Center, the Estonian Ministry of Education and Science and the Estonian Higher and Vocational Education Quality Agency. 899137 - RoadMap - EPLUS2020-EHEA09-2019) and is especially important for fulfilling the task set in the Latvian Government Action Plan "To prepare for the introduction of cyclical institutional accreditation of higher education institutions starting from 2024".

The goal of the project is to improve the quality assurance system of higher education in Latvia and to introduce cyclical accreditation of higher education institutions as the main quality assurance procedure, thus reducing the current overlap

between various existing quality assurance procedures, reducing administrative burdens and evaluation procedures.

Project implementation duration: 24 months (until 31 May 2022).

In picture: webinar with Swedish experts on April 19<sup>th</sup>, this year. Ulf Hedbjörk, a senior analyst at the Swedish Higher Education Authority, introduces the audience to the stages in the quality assessment of higher education institutions in Sweden.



<https://www.izm.gov.lv/en/article/mes-and-aika-are-gaining-international-experience-cyclical-institutional-evaluation-higher-education-institutions>