

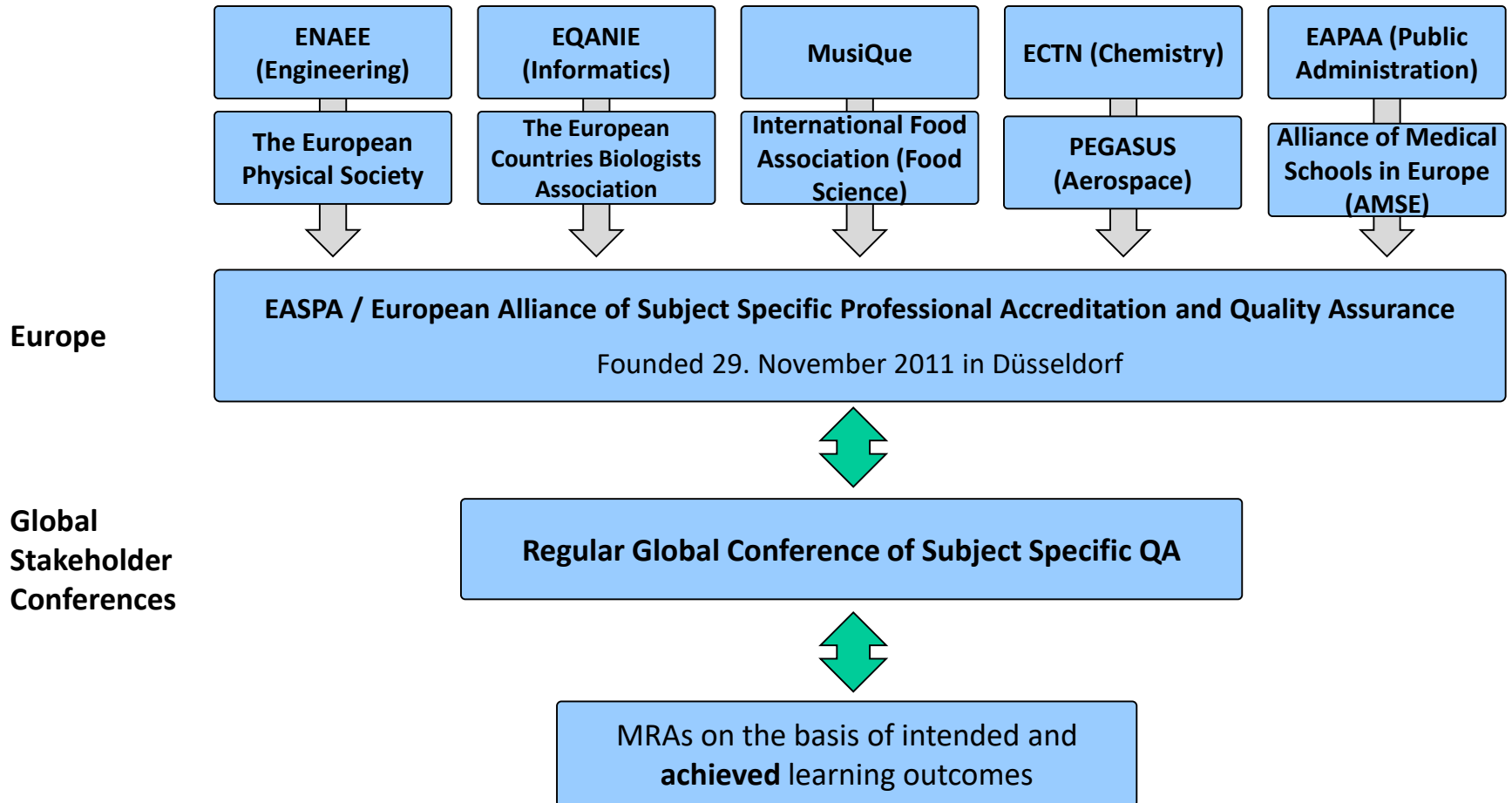
The logo for EASPA, featuring the letters 'EASPA' in a stylized, bold, green font. The 'E' and 'A' are connected, and the 'S' is a large, flowing curve. The 'P' and 'A' are also connected.

European Alliance for Subject-Specific
and Professional Accreditation & Quality Assurance

Professional Accreditation based on Disciplinary Standards – Why does EASPA matter more than ever?

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Secretary General EASPA
Managing Director ASIIN

EASPA – who we are and what we do



EASPA is uniting European/International bodies which are engaged in professional accreditation/QA based on cross-national Learning Outcomes/disciplinary competence profiles

Joint EASPA Statement (Düsseldorf Declaration) of the field-specific accreditation European networks to the Ministers of Education in London

The European Label Associations undersigning this statement represent accreditation bodies, higher education institutions, professional and scientific associations and other relevant stakeholders in higher education in the respective discipline.

Aiming at:

- Securing and improving the quality of higher education;
- Facilitating trans-national recognition of academic qualifications through a recognized label;
- Facilitating recognition of academic qualifications by the competent authorities;
- Protecting consumers against false information and low-quality university degrees and other qualifications;
- and
- Considering the “European Quality Assurance Standards” and the “Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area” adopted by the European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education,

the members represented by the European Label Associations have undertaken the development of criteria and procedural guidelines based on which the European Quality Label in the respective discipline may be awarded.

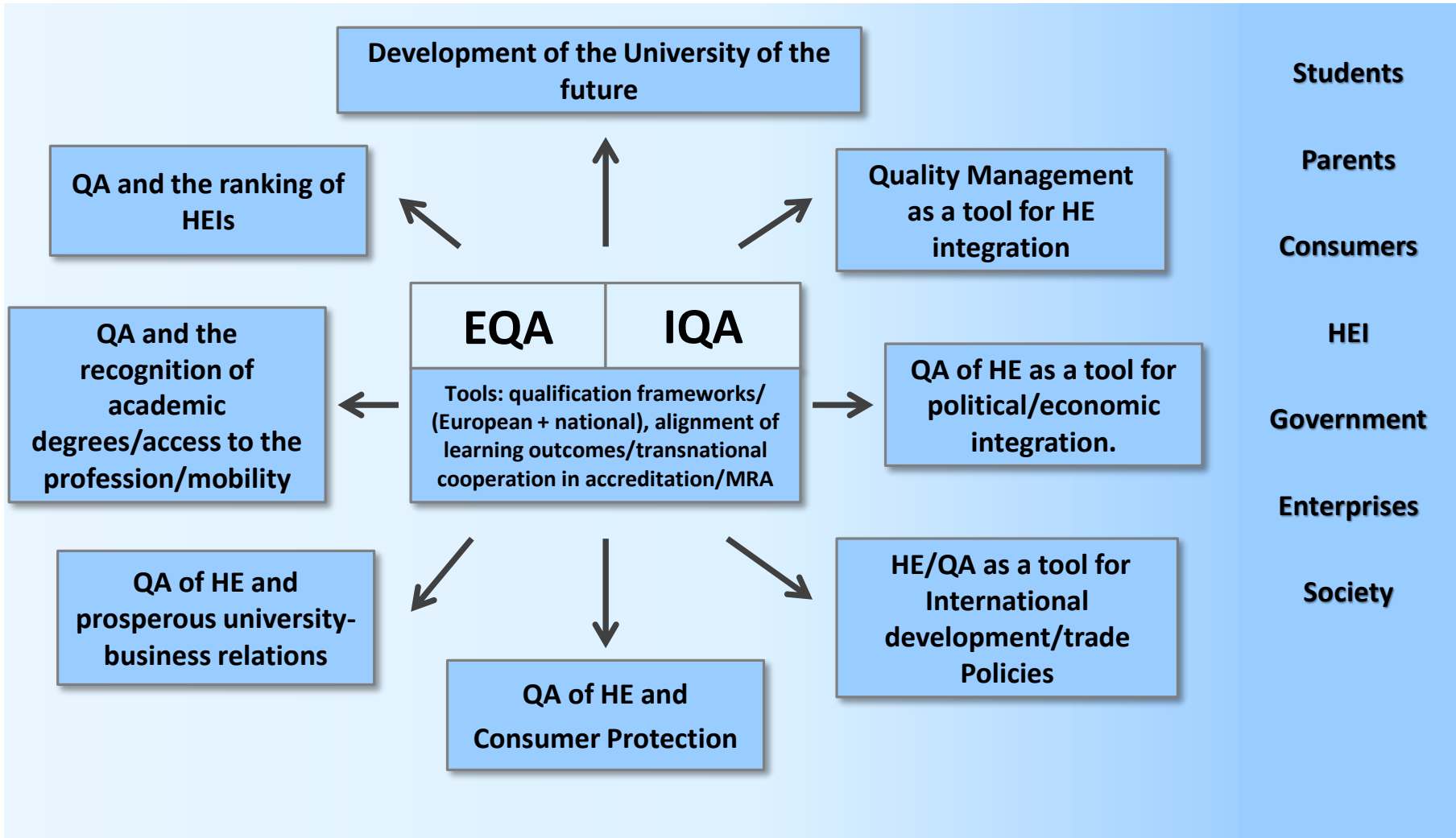
EASPA - Milestones

- 2011** Creation of EASPA in the ASIIN Headoffice in Germany
Signing of the “Düsseldorf Declaration” on the Importance of Professional Accreditation
- 2013 Cooperation Agreement with the American Alliance of subject specific professional accreditation (ASPA)
- 2015 Memorandum of Understanding with the Tuning Academy
- 2016 Negotiations with the Asian Pacific Quality Assurance Network on the Creation of an Asian ASPA
- 2020** Enlargement of EASPA

Candidates/Potential Partners:

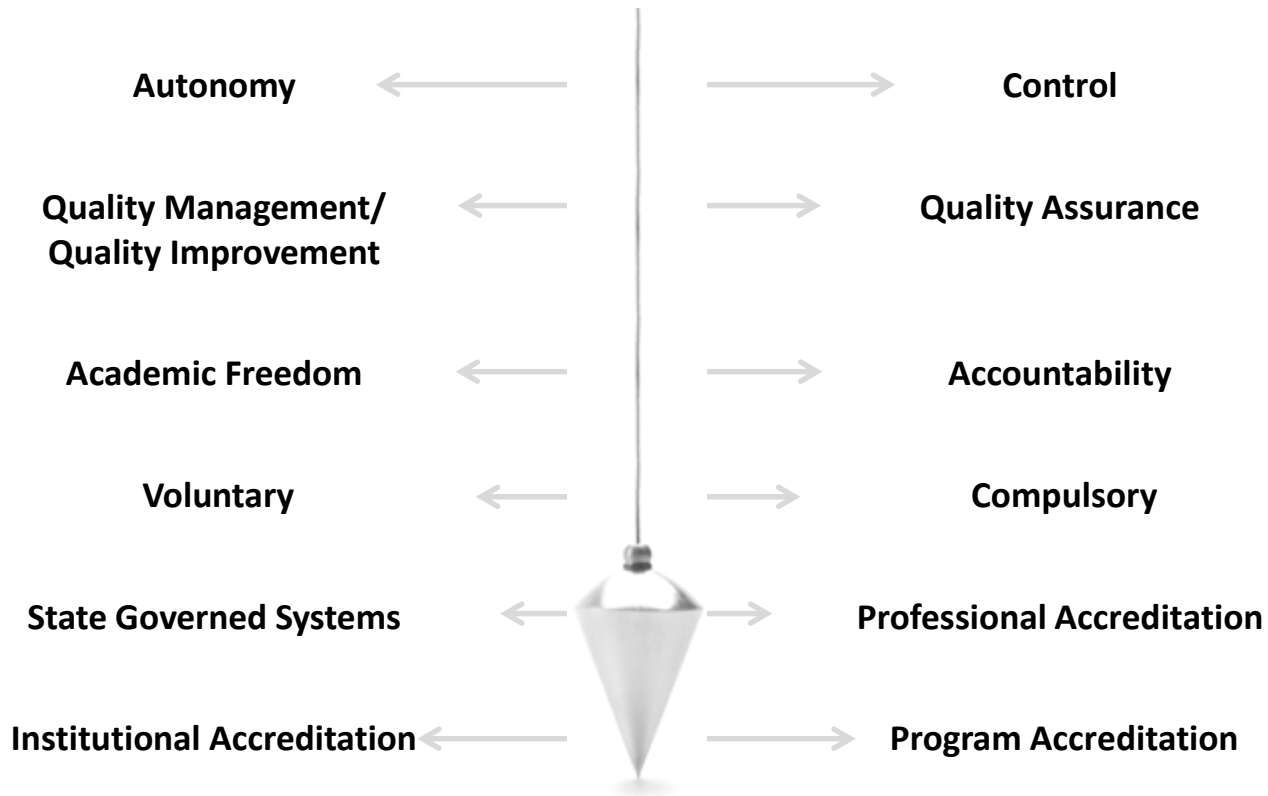
- Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP),
- Association of Dental Education in Europe (ADEE)
- European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE)
- European Council for Business Education (ECBE),
- European Council on Chiropractic Education (ECCE)
- European Council of Civil Engineers (ECCE)
- European Council for Theological Education (ECTE)
- European Federation of Chemical Engineering (EFCE)
- European Federation of Geologists (EFG)
- European League of Institutes of the Arts/EQ-Arts- Enhancing Quality in the Arts
- European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD)
- International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA Europe)
- Iuventum – Global Education
- The ICE – International Center of Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality Education)

EASPA's contributions as family of professional accreditors in Higher Education



Dominating Dichotomies in the Political Debate about Professional Accreditation in Higher Education

Discussion usually revolve around the following dichotomies/opposing poles:



→ **How can Professional Accreditation establish the best balance in the interest of socio-economic development?**

Professional Standards – freedom of research and teaching vs. occupational freedom

Article 5

[Freedom of expression, arts and sciences]

(1) Every person shall have the right freely to express and disseminate his opinions in speech, writing and pictures, and to inform himself without hindrance from generally accessible sources....

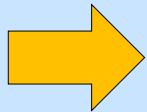
(...)

(3) **Arts and sciences, research and teaching shall be free.** The freedom of teaching shall not release any person from allegiance to the constitution.

Article 12

[Occupational freedom]

(1) **(All Germans) shall have the right freely to choose their occupation or profession, their place of work and their place of training.** The practice of an occupation or profession may be regulated by or pursuant to a law.



Equivalency of degrees and freedom of occupation is logically connected to using agreed (cross) national Learning Outcomes/competence profile in the accreditation process – this is the raison d’être of EASPA.

Why Professional Accreditation? EASPAs contributions to transparency, orientation and consumer protection

1. **Massification** of HE, general trend globally towards **diversification of both HE degrees and institutions (danger of degree mills)**, public knowledge/stakeholder knowledge about their quality is not sufficient within a country and across national borders.
 2. Degree and institutional diversity is matched by a great **variety of national quality assurance systems (danger of accreditation mills)**
 3. Reemerging challenges of a **growing private, non-regulated HE sector** and growth of trans-national education with a lack of regulatory codes.
 4. New forms of governance - Balance between HE autonomy and accountability in many countries fragile;
 5. **Academic Titles** in some instances no longer provide orientation; in some countries the academic degree constitutes the automatic admission ticket to the job market whereas in others additional prerequisites are demanded to acquire **professional status**
 6. **Marketizing and Globalization** of Higher Education
- **Professional QA/Accreditation is the key for transparency, mobility and recognition, consumer protection etc.**

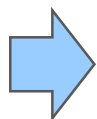
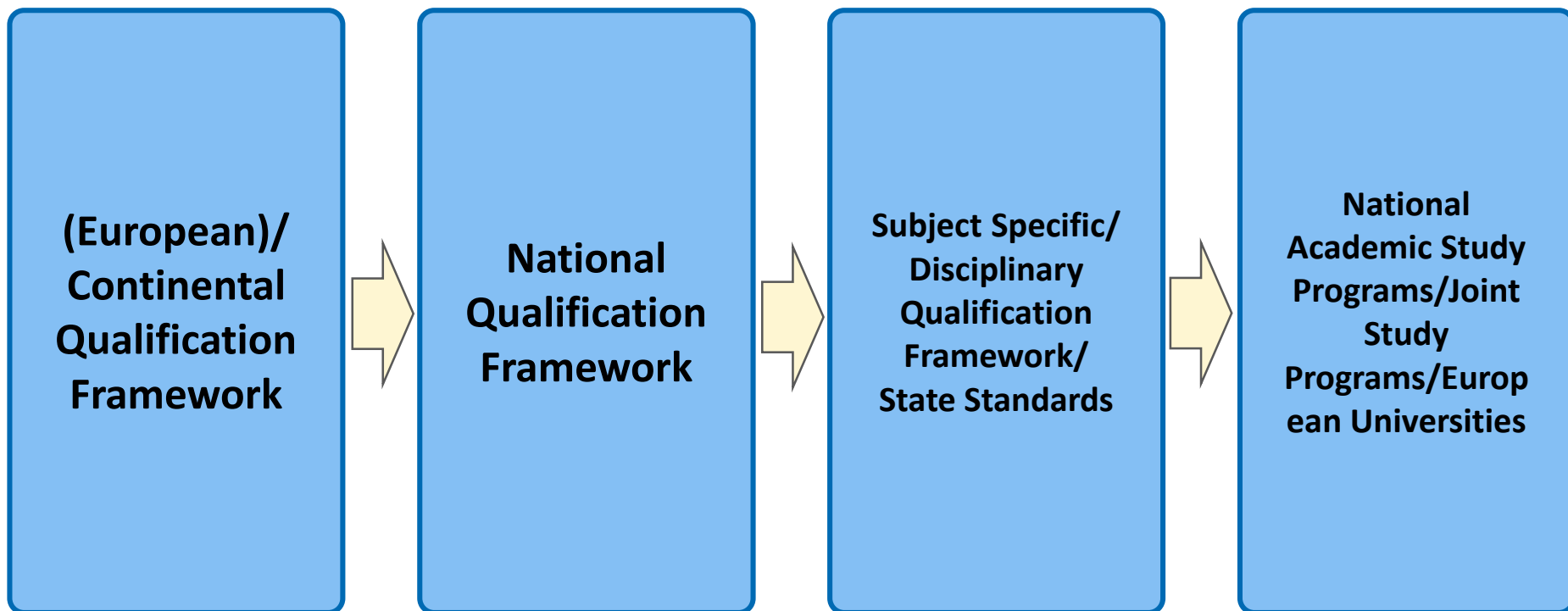
European (International) Instruments for QA in HE as point of orientation - what is currently in place?

- ✓ International **Qualification Frameworks** (such as the European Qualification Frameworks (Bologna and Copenhagen, Dublin Descriptors)
- ✓ Structural elements: European Credit Transfer System, Diploma Supplement
- ✓ Lissabon Convention – Recognition of Academic Qualifications
- ✓ Directives on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications/**Professional Cards**
- ✓ International (general) Accreditation **Standards and Guidelines** (European Standards and Guidelines, Chiba Principles, INQAAHE GGP)

- ✓ **Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR) in place since 01.01.2019** - European White List of EQA results - inclusion of the Results of Professional Accreditation in the DEQAR-Date Base

- ✓ **Alignment and Transnational Agreements on European Disciplinary Standards/Diciplinary Learning Outcomes and Competence Profiles**

Ongoing QM Alignment Processes in Europe and an a global level



Description and Measurement of Learning Outcomes processes are at the core of manifold international alignment projects and a core EASPA competence

TUNING Educational Outcomes - the Assessment of Achieved Learning Outcomes in the EHEA as new focus

1. The AHELO Project (Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes)

2. The CALOHEE projects – EASPA and Tuning

Do students enrolled in higher education around Europe develop the competences they need? Are study programmes delivering their promises? Can we learn to compare students' achievements in different countries in a meaningful way?

EASPA - potential of professional accreditation for the recognition of academic degrees/for organizing academic and professional mobility

- Professional Accreditation will play an increasingly important role for the recognition of academic degrees and for promoting academic and professional mobility (manifold examples such as medicine (see the U.S. decision to allow as of 2024 only graduates of professionally accredited programs to engage professionally in the US, UA architecture etc).
- The European DEQAR Register is a powerful tool, the “White list” of accredited European Institutions and Programs **is a unique chance for EASPA members to bridge the gap between state accreditation and professional accreditation**
- Synergies between accreditation and recognition authorities are needed, EASPA, its members and the ERIC-NARIC network will need to synergize.
- Mutual Recognition Agreements between (professional) accreditation bodies will pave the way

The potential of Professional Accreditation for the employment sector

- Professional Accreditation has the potential to deliver much needed information to the employment sector
- The topic is multidimensional
 - IQA: Use of disciplinary standards in university curricula development
 - EQA: Participation of industry representatives in peer reviews, definition of professional standards in cooperation between academia and employer associations
 - Access to the profession is more and more connected to accreditation decisions
 - Remuneration decisions (e.g. for the civil servants) are connected to successful accreditations.

Next Steps for EASPA – a vision for the future

- Integration of the most important stakeholders/disciplinary networks in the EASPA family
- Close Alliance of EASPA with the European Business Community/Political Stakeholders
- Existing Qualification Frameworks to be extended –the integration of continuous education/life-long learning as new challenge (eg. eCF); the emergence of a 5th European Qualification Framework for microcredentials will pave the way
- Connecting the results of EASPA’s accreditation activities to the European DEQAR/alternatively forge strong international Mutual Recognition Agreements within a disciplinary community
- Intensifying EASPA’s public relations work (quarterly newsletters, annual conference, website, joint logo on all EASPA members quality labels)
- Reinforcing links with ASPA, forging of an international community in a globalized market



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