



LE GOUVERNEMENT
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG
Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur
et de la Recherche

Press release

Quality assurance in higher education: The Ministry of Higher Education and Research signs a framework agreement with the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO).

On 28 February 2022, the Minister for Higher Education and Research, Claude Meisch, signed a framework agreement with the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders, NVAO (*Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie*), which is responsible for the quality assurance of higher education in the Netherlands and the Flemish Region of Belgium. The NVAO was represented on this occasion by its Vice-President Wouter Duyck.

The NVAO, which is also very active on an international scale, has already collaborated with the Luxembourg authorities on several occasions in the past, notably in the context of joint accreditation procedures for private higher education institutions and their programmes, as well as in the recent context of the external evaluation of the University of Luxembourg (2021).

With the signed framework agreement, both parties commit themselves to work together to establish, in a step-by-step approach, a consolidated and coherent quality assurance system applicable to all public and private higher education degree programmes delivered under the seal of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. This new, holistically reworked quality assurance system will subsequently be anchored in the revised legal framework for higher education as foreseen in the government's 2018-2023 programme.

"Education can only fulfil its purpose if it meets the highest possible qualitative requirements. This objective is to make our children and young people autonomous, critical but also formally competent citizens. The quality of education must be ensured at all levels, including higher education. The framework agreement we signed today, which is accompanied by an initial action plan for the next ten months, will enable us to strengthen the coherence of the quality criteria for all higher education in Luxembourg and thus guarantee their overall quality", said the Minister for Higher Education and Research, Claude Meisch, at the signing ceremony. "The agreed planning, which I welcome, is certainly very ambitious, but I have no doubt that it will be successfully implemented.

Wouter Duyck, Vice President of the NVAO, explained: "Our organisation has significant expertise in international quality assurance and is one of the initiators of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, the European Framework for Quality Assurance of European Universities, and the mutual recognition of degrees. This innovative

position has not gone unnoticed. We are proud that Luxembourg has chosen us, after having conducted most evaluations in Luxembourg since 2017, as its privileged partner. In this way we can share our experiences and assist in building a new quality assurance system for higher education in Luxembourg. NVAO's cooperation with Luxembourg will also help us to reflect on the methodological development of the quality assurance system in our own jurisdiction. Strengthening this cooperation within the Benelux is part of our pursuit of borderless quality assurance within a coherent European policy that facilitates international mobility.”

The choice of the agency with which the Ministry of Higher Education and Research has decided to collaborate in a consolidated manner for the evaluation of higher education provision in Luxembourg is indeed based on a long history of collaboration between the Benelux countries, particularly in the field of mutual recognition of diplomas (Benelux Decisions of 18 May 2015 and 25 January 2018; Multilateral Treaty on the Automatic Mutual Recognition of Levels of Higher Education Diplomas between the Benelux countries and the Baltic States of 14 September 2021). In addition, the three countries cooperate at other levels, including technical levels, for example in international working groups such as the Bologna Follow-up Group.

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