

## Summary of the Annual Meeting of the International Advisory Board 29 October 2021

### Summary of the meeting

The International Advisory Board (IAB) of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee (MAB) held its annual meeting on Friday, **29 October 2021**. This year, the meeting was held online between 09:30 and 16:00 hours via Microsoft TEAMS, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was chaired by **Valéria Csépe**, MAB President. The IAB members present were **Guy Haug**, **Achim Hopbach**, **Liudvika Leišytė**, **Lučka Lorber**, **Bert Roebben**, **Norma Ryan**, and **Mieczysław Socha**.

The Annual Meeting had four main presentation parts. The meeting started with a presidential greeting and the MAB President's introductory presentation. The second part was about the expansion of international tasks and their outcomes. **Ádám Kéglér**, Secretary-General held a presentation on the results of international opening (topics: V4QA, HAR, MAB Webinar series, TSI) and **Péter Levente Lakatos**, Deputy Director presented the international QA tasks (topics: Digitalization, MICROBOL, DEQAR, Staff mobility). The third part of the meeting focused on the new project and new challenges. **Ágnes Mosolygó Gódné**, Director gave a presentation on the renewal of study programmes' evaluation. This was followed by **Anna Szombathelyi**, WFME project coordinator's report on the new accreditation process – international accreditation of Hungarian medical education. The fourth presentation part included the directions for the development of doctoral schools' accreditation process, held by **Beatrix Dányi**, programme officer.

The presentations were followed by a Q&A session, moderated by **Ádám Kéglér**, Secretary-General. The Annual Meeting was open to all MAB staff members.

IAB members received the meeting documents by e-mail prior to the meeting. They comprised the agenda and the Annual Report 2020 to September 2021. The meeting was conducted in accordance with the agenda.

Between 13.30-15.00 hours the Board, in its closed meeting, formulated its recommendations with the assistance of **Péter Levente Lakatos**, Deputy Director and **Tekla Bodnár**, meeting secretary.

### Recommendations of the MAB's International Advisory Board

The IAB commended MAB for the quality of the report prepared to the IAB, as the amount of data and the breadth of data analysis provided in the report had increased compared to previous years. The IAB also commended MAB for its achievements in the past year, such as raising its international visibility and lively international activities. The IAB would like to support the MAB in its progress by making the following recommendations.

1. The IAB notes that MAB has done significant work, especially in the field of internationalization. Nevertheless, further action is needed on some of last year's

recommendations (IAB Recommendations 2020), such as increasing the level of involvement of stakeholders in the work of the MAB at all levels, organizing more efficient training of experts and increasing the number of international experts in the procedures. MAB must continue to place increased focus on internationalization.

2. The IAB highlights the benefits and values of the published Thematic Analysis (prepared by PricewaterhouseCoopers) as useful external feedback and a good first step. However, the IAB recommends that MAB should prepare its own analysis by using the existing data collected from previous evaluations and procedures. More attention should be paid to a deeper analysis of the data already available and the preparation of some meta-analyses is suggested, as the Agency has already collected a lot of useful information. MAB should collect the experiences and points of view of institutions and stakeholders via questionnaires or professional discussions.

One part of the analysis should focus more on the experiences of the pandemic period from the perspective of MAB (staff and experts), higher education institutions, and students and other stakeholders, to identify the challenges for quality assurance.

3. The IAB notes that it is essential for MAB to identify specific priorities in strategy and to better prioritize among its activities in the areas of evaluation, accreditation, and internationalization. MAB's internationalization strategy should be in line with its general strategy. MAB should choose the right priorities as it is the only way that would enable the Agency to make the best possible use of its human resources. The IAB also underlined the importance of streamlining activities to maximize the best use of available resources.
4. As regards the launch of the V4 Quality Assurance Forum, the IAB welcomes V4 activities and finds it a good initiative of the neighbouring countries in Central Europe, as long as they support and promote the broader European goals and activities. The IAB recommends that the Forum should be more focused on QA professional tasks.
5. Another area for reconsideration is program evaluations, in light of the number of the existing programs. As MAB is facing significant changes, the process needs to be planned in detail. Among other things, MAB should examine for example the discipline, the profile, and the size of the programs; after that, MAB can plan the clusters and link them to the different institutional (BA, MA) levels. The evaluations should focus on the internal QA system of higher education institutions, increasing the responsibility and autonomy of institutions. MAB should focus more on the audit of the QA system of institutes instead of the legal circumstances.
6. The IAB recommends that the MAB should examine how the various EQA procedures have an impact on each other to avoid unintended negative repercussions.
7. The IAB stressed the importance of the European Universities Initiative. The IAB recommends that MAB pay close attention to the European Universities Initiative, e.g. in the form of a working group. It is important for MAB to follow the events and changes in this field.
8. The IAB welcomes that MAB has started planning the integration of the accreditation of doctoral schools into the institutional evaluation process; however, further action is needed in this regard. Moreover, due to the high number of doctoral schools in Hungary, IAB recommends a holistic integration of the accreditation of doctoral schools into institutional accreditation. The importance of a holistic approach for doctoral schools is stressed by the IAB.
9. The IAB noted that MAB should increase focus and emphasis on the quality of teaching, research and joint programmes as part of institutional accreditation. The IAB suggested

that interdisciplinary programmes should be supported and accredited, and proposed that MAB adapt an accreditation practice to the specifics of the external evaluation of interdisciplinary majors, e.g. in the form of training and selection of experts with experience in conducting such studies. The IAB also recommended that MAB should actively consider the best way(s) to evaluate blended and online learning.

As a topic for the 2022 meeting, the IAB suggest discussing the issue of the **European Universities Initiative**.

The next meeting of the IAB will be held on **2-3 September 2022**.

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