

# CEENQA WORKSHOP AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

13-14 JUNE 2025, TALLINN, ESTONIA

**Host:** Estonian Quality Agency for Education (HAKA)

**Venue:** Nordic Hotel Forum, Viru väljak 3, 10111 Tallinn

**Moderation:** Simona Lache and Hasan Ali Bicak, CEENQA Board Members

## Friday, 13 June 2025: Higher Education's Connection with the Labour Market

8.30 - 9.00	Registration
9.00 - 9.15	<b>Welcome speeches:</b> <i>Heli Mattisen, Director of Estonian Quality Agency for Education (HAKA)</i> <i>Vesna Dodiković-Jurković, President of CEENQA</i>
9.15 - 10.00	<b>Keynote speaker:</b> <i>Kai Mühleck, Senior Researcher at the German Centre for Higher Education Research and Science Studies (DZHW)</i>
10.00 - 10.20	<b>Presentation:</b> <i>Mislav Balković, Rector of Alegra Universiti</i>
10.30 - 11.00	Coffee Break and Networking
11.00 - 12.30	<b>Presentations:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Yngve Rosenblad, Chief Analyst at Estonian Qualifications Authority</li><li>• Aleksandra Zhivkovikj, Policy and Project Officer at EQAR</li><li>• Tamara Ciobanu, Executive Committee, ESU</li></ul>
12.30 - 13.45	Lunch



**13.45 - 14.45**

**Panel Discussions:**

- Olgun Cicek, Board Director of INQAAHE
- Marcus Ehasoo, Chairperson of the Board at the Estonian Student Union, member of the HAKA Supervisory Board
- Kristi Raudmäe, Head of Higher Education, Higher Education Policy and Lifelong Learning Department, Ministry of Education and Research
- Andrej Krček, Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency (NAKVIS)
- Yuliia Bleshmudt, Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA)

**14.45 - 15.00**

Closing remarks

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**16.30**

Meeting in front of the Nordic Hotel Forum

**16.35**

Bus departing to the Estonian Open Air Museum

**17.00 - 18.00**

Guided Tour at the Estonian Open Air Museum

**18.00**

Dinner at Kolu Inn (Open Air Museum)

**21.30**

Bus back to the hotel



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## Saturday, 14 June 2025: General Assembly

**9.00 - 9.30**

Welcome & Introduction

**9.30 - 12.00**

*Reports by CEENQA members*

*Status Report*

*CEENQA membership*

*Finances*

*Votes*

*Annual GA meeting / Workshop in 2026*

**12.00 - 13.00**

Lunch



## PRESENTATION OF SPEAKERS



**Kai Mühleck** is a senior researcher at the German Centre for Higher Education Research and Science Studies (DZHW). He initiated the EUROGRADUATE projects and currently coordinates the EUROGRADUATE 2022 survey. For over 15 years, he has led and conducted European comparative research projects in higher education, specializing in international survey research, labor market studies, and the analysis of monetary and non-monetary returns on higher education. His work on large-scale international survey projects has resulted in numerous scientific journal articles and policy-related research reports. Kai studied political science, economics, and sociology at the universities of Heidelberg and Manchester and earned a doctorate in sociology from Humboldt University of Berlin.



**Mislav Balković** is the rector of Algebra Bernays University and has been active in education since 1998. Previously, he served as principal and later as dean of Algebra University of Applied Sciences, where he developed study programs and a quality assurance system. He has contributed to national education policies and regulatory frameworks and has been a member of key bodies, including the National Council for Science, Higher Education, and Technology and the Croatian Employers' Association. Currently, he is involved in the strategic development of the DIVERSE University Alliance. Mislav is an optimist who believes that success is driven by faith, passion, and effort.



**Ms Yngve Rosenblad** is the Chief Analyst at OSKA, the Estonian labour and skills needs anticipation system at the Estonian Qualifications Authority. Since its redesign in 2015, OSKA has successfully integrated trend analysis with input from employers, educational institutions, and government bodies. Its studies support career planning, policy development, and curriculum updates in higher and vocational education. As one of Estonia's leading experts on the future of the labour market, skills, and education, Yngve frequently shares insights in the media and at conferences. She has contributed to higher education reform and policy-making through data analysis and advisory roles. Previously, she worked at Statistics Estonia, leading the Estonian Labour Force Survey team and analysing labour market trends, education statistics, and lifelong learning.





**Aleksandra Zhivkovikj** is a policy and project officer at EQAR, where she manages DEQAR, supports the registration of quality assurance agencies, and conducts research, analyses, and reports on quality assurance and recognition. She holds a Master of Laws (LLM) from SS. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje and a master's degree in educational policies and development from the University of Oslo, the Autonomous University of Barcelona, and the University of Malta. Before joining EQAR, she worked as a consultant at the OECD's Directorate for Education and Skills and UNESCO in Paris.



**Tamara Ciobanu** is a master's student in Sustainable Development and Environmental Management at Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca. Her involvement in the student movement began in 2017 with the Student Organization of Babeş-Bolyai University (OSUBB), where she developed a strong interest in educational policies. During her law studies, she engaged at the national level, serving as Vice President for Educational Policies and later Vice President for International Affairs within the National Alliance of Student Organizations in Romania (ANOSR). Now expanding her work internationally, she is passionate about quality assurance, academic integrity, and the European Universities Initiative, believing in the transformative power of individual action.

## PRESENTATION OF PANELISTS



**Olgun Cicek** has been a key figure in global higher education quality assurance for over three decades. He currently serves as an elected Board Director of INQAAHE and has held leadership roles as Past Vice President of CEENQA and President of IQA. He is a member of the CHEA-CIQG International Advisory Council in the USA, the Accreditation Committee of the British Accreditation Council (BAC) in the UK, and the Quality Assurance Committee at the Malta Quality Assurance Agency. Additionally, he advises THEQC, serves as a Senior Advisor to E-Quadrat Science & Education, and is a member of the International Strategic Partners Council of Kazakhstan's Ministry of Higher Education and Science. Olgun is actively involved as an advisory board member, panel chair, and evaluator for accreditation bodies across America, Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, and the Far East.



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**Marcus Ehasoo** is the Head of Advocacy at the Network of Estonian Non-Profit Organizations and a Lecturer at the Educational Leadership Academy at Tallinn University. He has held leadership roles in the Federation of Estonian Student Unions and the Estonian School Students' Councils' Union, contributing to education reform and inclusion. He served as a supervisory board member of the Estonian Quality Agency for Education and a member of the Chancellor of Justice's Human Rights Advisory Council. Marcus holds a Master's in Educational Leadership from Tallinn University and is pursuing a Master's in Law at the University of Tartu. Combining legal expertise with a passion for education, he works to improve education policy and quality.



**Kristi Raudmäe** is the Head of the Higher Education Policy Unit at the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research. She is responsible for planning, developing, and implementing national education policies and strategies, as well as managing the legal framework, analyses, resources, and international cooperation (including with the OECD). From 2023 to 2025, Kristi serves as the Vice-Chair of the Group of National Experts on Higher Education in the OECD's Education Policy Committee. She joined the Ministry in 2013, initially working in the Research Policy Department, focusing on research funding and evaluating R&D institutions. Kristi holds a Master's degree in semiotics and culturology from the University of Tartu and is currently on hold with her PhD studies in literary semiotics and literary sociology.



**Andrej Krček** works at NAKVIS in the Department of Analysis and Informatics, where he manages a wide range of IT-related tasks and supports various departmental analyses. Recently, his focus has shifted toward research on student integration into the labor market, particularly exploring the link between graduates' career paths and the quality assurance of higher education. Andrej actively contributes to projects aimed at improving data-driven decision-making in higher education and labor market integration. His work helps bridge the gap between academic outcomes and real-world employment, enhancing the quality and relevance of higher education.



**Yuliia Bleshmudt**, LL.M. is the Deputy Division Manager of International Accreditation Procedures at FIBAA, specializing in international standards, compliance, and accreditation. She enhances institutional quality through strategic oversight and cross-border collaboration. Yuliia organizes workshops on quality assurance for higher education institutions and FIBAA experts. She co-presented at a conference by the Ministry of Higher Education of Kazakhstan and will contribute a paper to the First Conference on Leveraging the African Continental Free Trade Area for Higher Education Integration. Before joining FIBAA, Yuliia worked at law firms in Ukraine and Germany, gaining extensive experience in international law.



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# SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS

## Student employment in Europe and subsequent labour market outcomes

*Kai Muehleck, Victor Rudakov*

The study investigates the impact of student employment on the subsequent labour market outcomes of university graduates in 13 European countries. The analysis makes use of the EUROGRADUATE 2022 data, a unique and rich dataset of European graduates from the 2017 and 2021 cohorts. The data shows, that student employment is generally a widespread phenomenon. Levels of student employment differ between countries, by fields of subject, and by the housing situation. In line with theoretical expectations, the findings reveal a positive impact of student employment on employment and salaries after graduation for the entire dataset. The magnitude of this effect increases if the work was related to the field of study and decreases for work unrelated to the field of study. The effect of student employment on salaries is low or insignificant in Western European countries, while it has a stronger positive impact on graduates' subsequent salaries in Eastern and Southern European countries. Surprisingly, we find no evidence that the returns to student employment diminish in the long run.

## Higher Education - key driving force of national and European competitiveness

*Mislav Balković*

Higher education is these days probably one of the most powerful engines in boosting relatively weak European competitiveness and preparedness. From Draghi's report on European Competitiveness in September 2024 to the "Union of Skills" strategic document published in March this year, Europe tries to find ways to provide sustainable and long-term setup which would assure survival of European values and living standard. Higher education should play key role in this endeavour because it can both help create skills (and thus upskill and reskill European workforce) and create innovation which is a driving force of Competitiveness. Initiatives such as Alliances of European Universities and similar show that involvement of companies and other stakeholders could positively influence quality of higher education.

Presentation will first depict current state of play in demography, labour market and competitiveness of Europe and then provide some ideas and present some best practices at institutional and national levels, which could serve as inspiration on how to better connect Higher Education and Labour Market. These range from evidence-based policy, which is linked to skills requirements on the national level, all the way to the use of micro credentials, project-based didactics and RPL at institutional level. Inspiration provided through selected examples might not only be useful for HEI's but also for Accreditation agencies and policy makers at large.



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## **The role of OSKA labour and skills anticipation system in in the development of the Estonian higher education system**

*Yngve Rosenblad*

Both the rapid changes in society as well as larger background processes present challenges for higher education to evolve and adapt. Ten years ago, Estonia established the OSKA anticipation system, which brings together various stakeholders to analyse future needs for the labour market and skills, and to propose changes accordingly, including for higher education. This presentation provides an overview of the expectations that the labour market and employers have for higher education, the identified needs for change, and the changes that have taken place.

## **Trusting micro-credentials: Quality assurance and information provision in DEQAR**

*Aleksandra Zhivkovikj*

In response to the demand for more adaptable, learner-centred methods of delivering education and training, short learning courses (i.e. micro-credentials) and other non-traditional credentials are being rapidly developed in Europe and around the world by a wide range of public and private providers. The growing offer of micro-credentials and other alternative credentials also brought up the question of trust and recognition of their learning outcomes, especially when offered by non-traditional higher education providers that are not well-known by the public or officially recognized as higher education institution by the national authorities. The presentation will look into two quality assurance related tools that advance the transparency and trust in the short learning provisions. First, the session will offer a glimpse of the information in the Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR) – a one stop shop access to reliable information on accreditations and evaluations of higher education programmes, including micro-credentials by non traditional higher education institutions, evaluated by EQAR – registered agencies. Second, the session will look into the use of quality labels and the experiences of quality assurance agencies and non-traditional providers of higher education in Europe.

## **The digital divide and employability: an ESU plea for inclusive futures**

*Tamara Ciobanu*

Addressing the digital divide is essential for ensuring equitable access to future labour market opportunities. From a student's perspective, this presentation will examine how disparities in digital access, literacy and AI competencies among students impact their employability. The presentation will include policy recommendations for inclusive digital education strategies and equitable access to technology, ensuring all students are prepared for an increasingly digital and AI-driven workforce.

