

# **International Institutional Accreditation: experience of Lithuanian Universities**

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# HELLO!

**I am Nora Skaburskiene**

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# Content

- ✓ Organization of External Quality Assurance in Lithuania
- ✓ Advantages of international Quality Assurance
- ✓ Benefits for higher education institutions
- ✓ Challenges of International Quality Assurance
- ✓ Internationalization in each step of EQA process
- ✓ National QA Agency (SKVC) experience with foreign agencies
- ✓ Conclusions

VILNIAUS  
GEDIMINO  
TECHNIKOS  
UNIVERSITETAS

# VILNIUS GEDIMINAS TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY



ONE OF THE TOP 2% UNIVERSITIES IN THE WORLD

32 in QS Emerging Europe & Central Asia Rankings 2020

# FACTS AND FIGURES

- ESTABLISHED IN 1956
- **8 500** STUDENTS  
14% with international experience
- **13%** OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS  
from **79** countries
- **966** ACADEMIC STAFF MEMBERS  
**11:1** student / academic staff ratio
- **85 000** ALUMNI
- AROUND **500** BUSINESS PARTNERS
- **480** PARTNER UNIVERSITIES  
in **64** countries globally



# 10 FACULTIES OF VILNIUS TECH



- ANTANAS GUSTAITIS' AVIATION INSTITUTE
- ARCHITECTURE
- BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
- CIVIL ENGINEERING
- CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
- ELECTRONICS
- ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING
- FUNDAMENTAL SCIENCES (ICT & Computer Sciences)
- MECHANICS
- TRANSPORT ENGINEERING

# 110 STUDY PROGRAMMES

(60% in the field Engineering, IT and Technological Sciences)



## 36% TAUGHT IN ENGLISH:

- Bachelor's (undergraduate) 240 ECTS
- Integrated (undergraduate) 300 ECTS – Master's degree awarded
- Master's (graduate) 90 ECTS
- Master's (graduate) 120 ECTS

## **EQA in LITHUANIA**

At least once every 7 years:

- Institutional review and accreditation
- Study field (all programmes in study field) evaluation and accreditation




## **EVALUATION PROCESS**

**Study programme evaluation** (from 1998):  
International experts - from 2002

**Institutional review** (from 2011):  
International experts - from the beginning

# Why international experts?



# Higher Education in Lithuania

37 Higher Education Institutions

~ 1300 I&II cycle  
study programmes

~104 000 students

**2,8 mln. population**



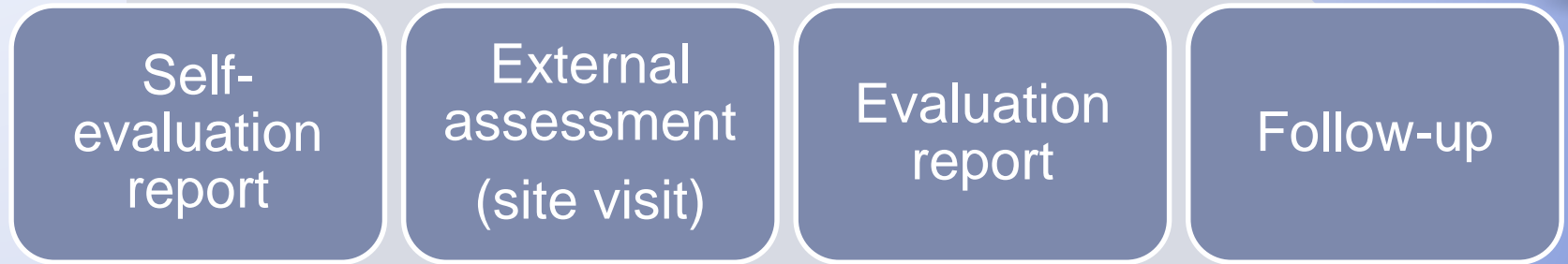
# Invitation of international experts – initiative of Universities

Competition

Mistrust in local  
experts

Focus on EHEA

## EVALUATION PROCESS (ESG Part 2)



**ESG 2.4 The involvement of international experts in external QA, for example as members of peer panels, is desirable as it adds a further dimension to the development and implementation of the processes.**

## ADVANTAGES OF INTERNATIONAL QA

- ❑ Avoiding conflicts of interests – increased objectivity of the process
- ❑ Evaluation with the European perspective
- ❑ Possibility to find experts of specific areas
- ❑ High quality of experts
- ❑ Especially important for joint study programmes
- ❑ Recommendations for improvement of national external quality assurance framework

## ADVANTAGES OF INTERNATIONAL QA

- ❑ Experts – lecturers for trainings, presenters at the conferences and seminars
- ❑ Advices for improvement of procedures
- ❑ Advices on political issues (general overview and recommendations to national authorities; meetings at the ministry)



## **BENEFITS FOR HEIS**

- ❑ Valuable recommendations for improvement
- ❑ Open perspectives through the discovery of means and solutions used in other European countries
- ❑ Useful contacts
- ❑ Evaluation by SKVC – funded by the state

## CHALLENGES OF INTERNATIONAL QA

- ❑ Lack of knowledge of the national HE system
- ❑ Cultural differences
- ❑ Translation – time and quality
- ❑ High financial costs
- ❑ Trainings only on the first day of the visit or on-line
- ❑ Organization of the visit – more complicated
- ❑ Burden for HEIs – all documentation in ENG

# GENERAL STEPS OF THE PROCEDURE

1. Preparation of SER in HEI
2. Review of the documents by the Agency
3. Composing the expert panel
4. Training of experts
5. Experts work before the site visit
6. Visit of the expert panel
7. Joint report of the expert panel
8. Comments by HEI on the factual errors
9. Decision by the Board
10. Follow-up procedures

## Preparatio of Self-evaluation report in HEI

### More information about national context :

- National Strategies
- Legal requirements

### Translation issues:

- SER in LT and EN
- Terminology
- Not all documents in EN

## ● Composing the expert panel

### Composition:

- 3-4 international experts (different countries)
- Employer (LT)
- Student (LT or international)

### Finding experts (hunting 😊):

- Call on ENQA webpage
- Foreign Agencies
- International professional networks
- Other networks, experts
- Internet

## Particularities of international expert panel

- Cultural differences
- Different level of expertise
- Diverse education systems
- Different personalities

## Training of experts

### Experienced experts

Trained by other agencies and having vast experience

### Initial meeting+consultation

On the first day of the visit

### Initial training

Online short training sessions from 2021:

- National context
- National legislation
- Methodology

## **Visit of the expert panel**

- ❑ Longer and more complicated arrangements of the visit: flights, hotels in different cities, transportation to HEIs
- ❑ Usually visit to HEI – 2-3 days + initial meeting + group work on the report and decisions



## ● Joint report of the expert panel

### Study field evaluation (4-6):

- Chair
- Experts

### Institutional review (5-7):

- Chair
- Secretary
- Experts

### Challenges:

- Language
- Work on the report text
- Communication with coordinator

## Maintenance of an Expert pool

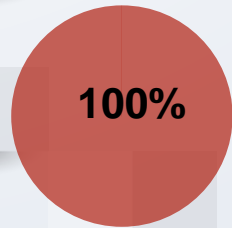
- Regular update of CVs, other information
- Notes by the coordinators
- Regular calls, involvement of new members

## **NATIONAL QA AGENCY (SKVC) EXPERIENCE WITH OTHER FOREIGN AGENCIES**

- ❑ Evaluation of study programmes at branch of Bialystok University in Vilnius with Polish Accreditation Commission
- ❑ Evaluation of Theology and Religion study programmes with AVEPRO
- ❑ Evaluation of joint study programmes (JOQAR project & scheduled evaluations by SKVC)
- ❑ Accreditation of study programmes evaluated by foreign agency in one of state universities

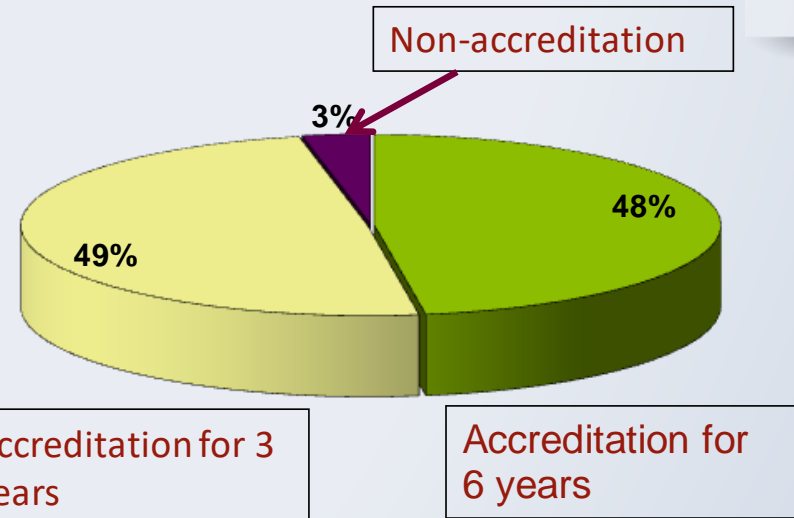
# ACCREDITATION DECISIONS

Results of evaluation by  
foreign Agency (2010-2015)



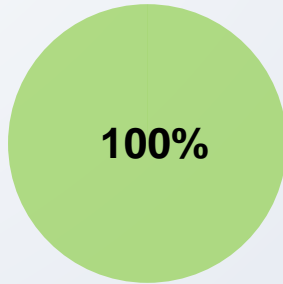
Accredited for 6  
years (36)

Results of evaluation by SKVC  
(2010-2015)



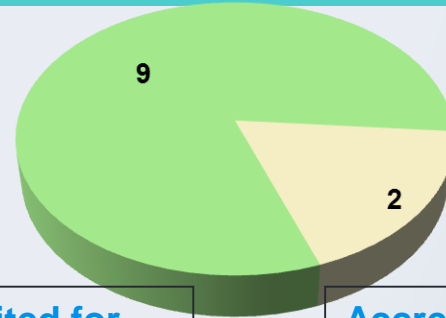
# ACCREDITATION DECISIONS

Results of evaluations by foreign Agencies (2010-2015)



Accredited for 6 years (56)

Results of evaluations by foreign Agencies (2016-2017)



Accredited for 6 years

Accredited for 3 years

## RECOMMENDATIONS

External evaluation by foreign QAA in 2011	External evaluation by SKVC in 2016
9 study programmes	6 study programmes
2 general recommendations to the HEI	3 general recommendations to the HEI
3 recommendations for all 9 study programmes	4-7 recommendations for each study programme

## EXTRACT FROM EVALUATION REPORT 2016

*„The programmes subject to the present procedure were last evaluated in 2011 and found to fulfil all necessary requirements. The experts had access to the Evaluation Reports produced by the Agency and found them **to be superficial and short on specific recommendations suitable for providing guidance to HEIs it seeks to continuously improve its structures and programmes.**“*

Consideration of IQA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectiveness of IQA</li> <li>• ESG – Part 1</li> </ul>
Methodologies fit for purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear aims</li> <li>• Stakeholder involvement</li> </ul>
Process of EQA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-assessment      ▪ Visit by peers</li> <li>• Report      · Follow-up</li> </ul>
Experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student member      · Employers</li> <li>• Selection procedure      · Training</li> </ul>
Criteria for outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-defined</li> <li>• Published</li> </ul>
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full text</li> <li>• All decisions</li> </ul>
Complaints and Appeals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly defined</li> <li>• Part of EQA process</li> </ul>



## CONCLUSIONS

- ① Cooperation of foreign agency with the national QAA
- ① Review of the evaluation report and suggestion for accreditation by the Board of the national QAA – assurance of equal conditions
- ① QA should take into account national priorities and context
- ① Involvement of experts from different HE systems – valuable practice

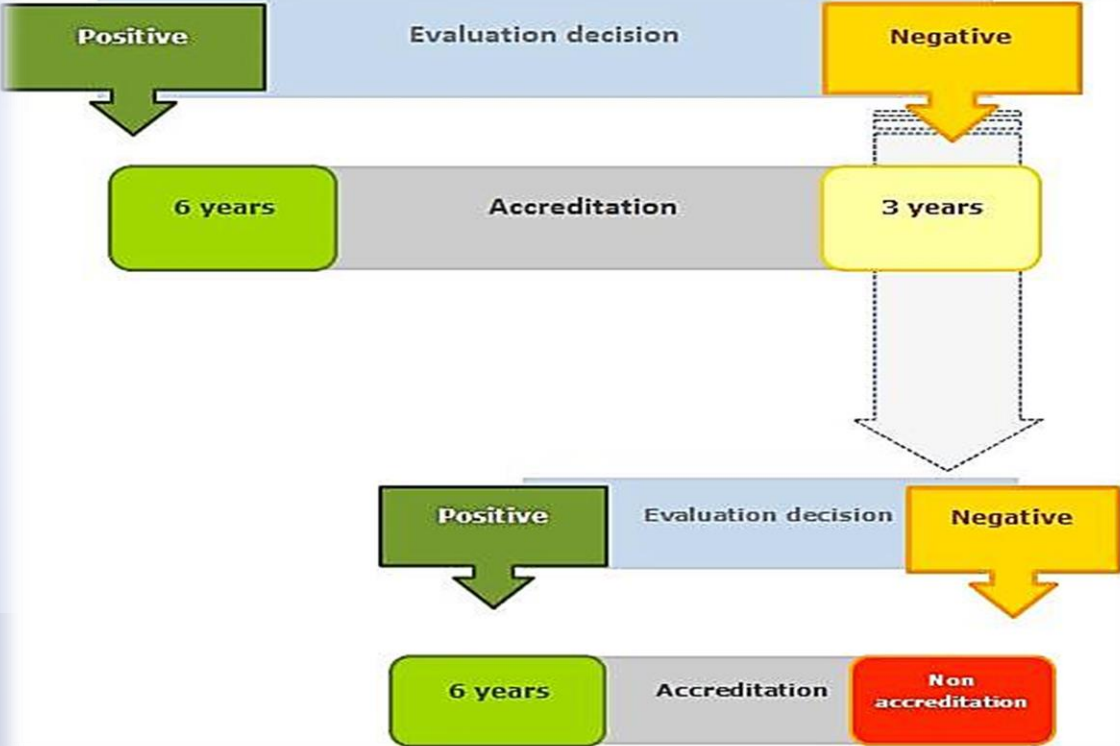
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**Institutional review in  
Lithuania:  
results of the first cycle of  
institutional review**

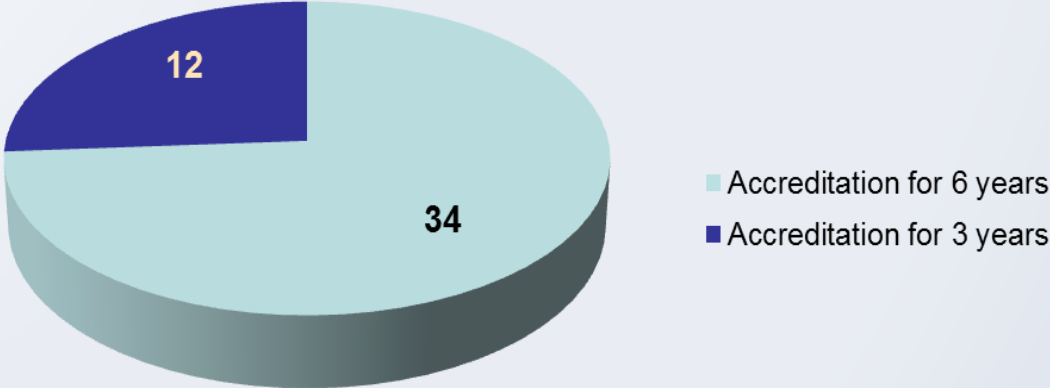
## I cycle of reviews

- Beginning in 2011
- End in 2014
- All decisions on accreditation by Spring 2015
- Repeated review 2015-2018

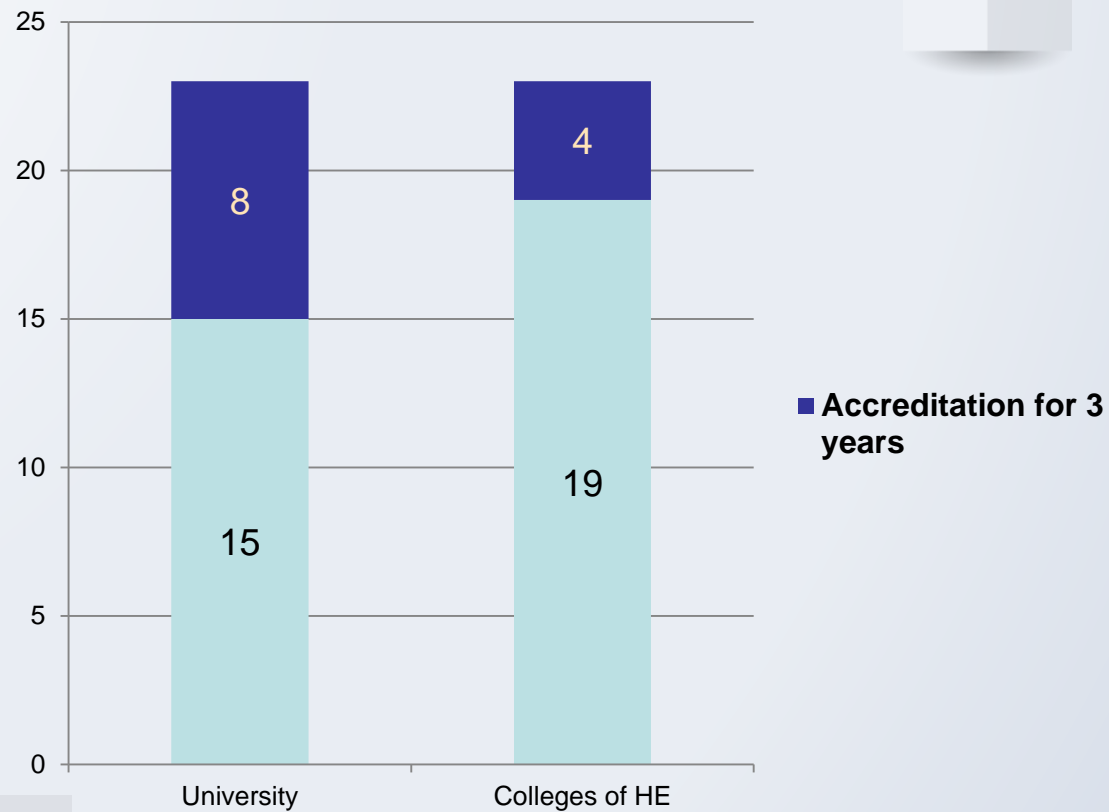
# Consequences of review



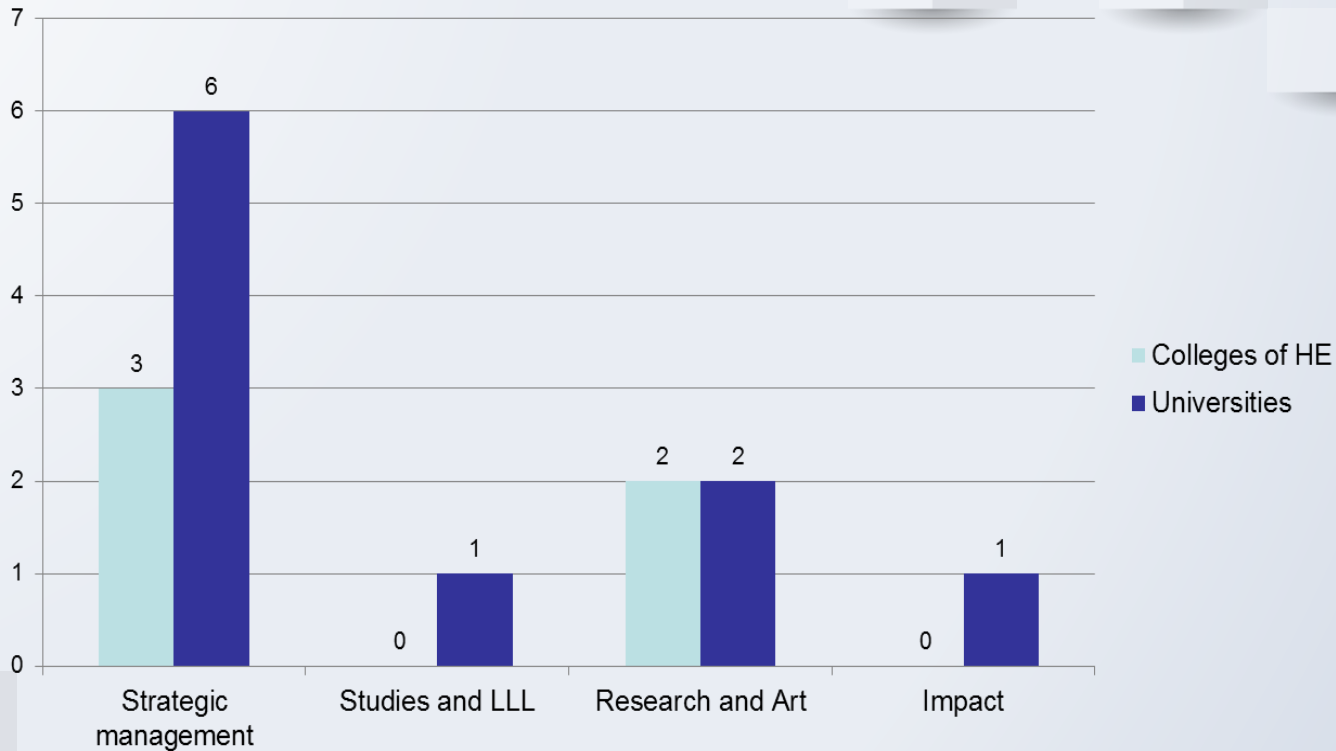
# Review results



## Review results



# Negatively evaluate areas



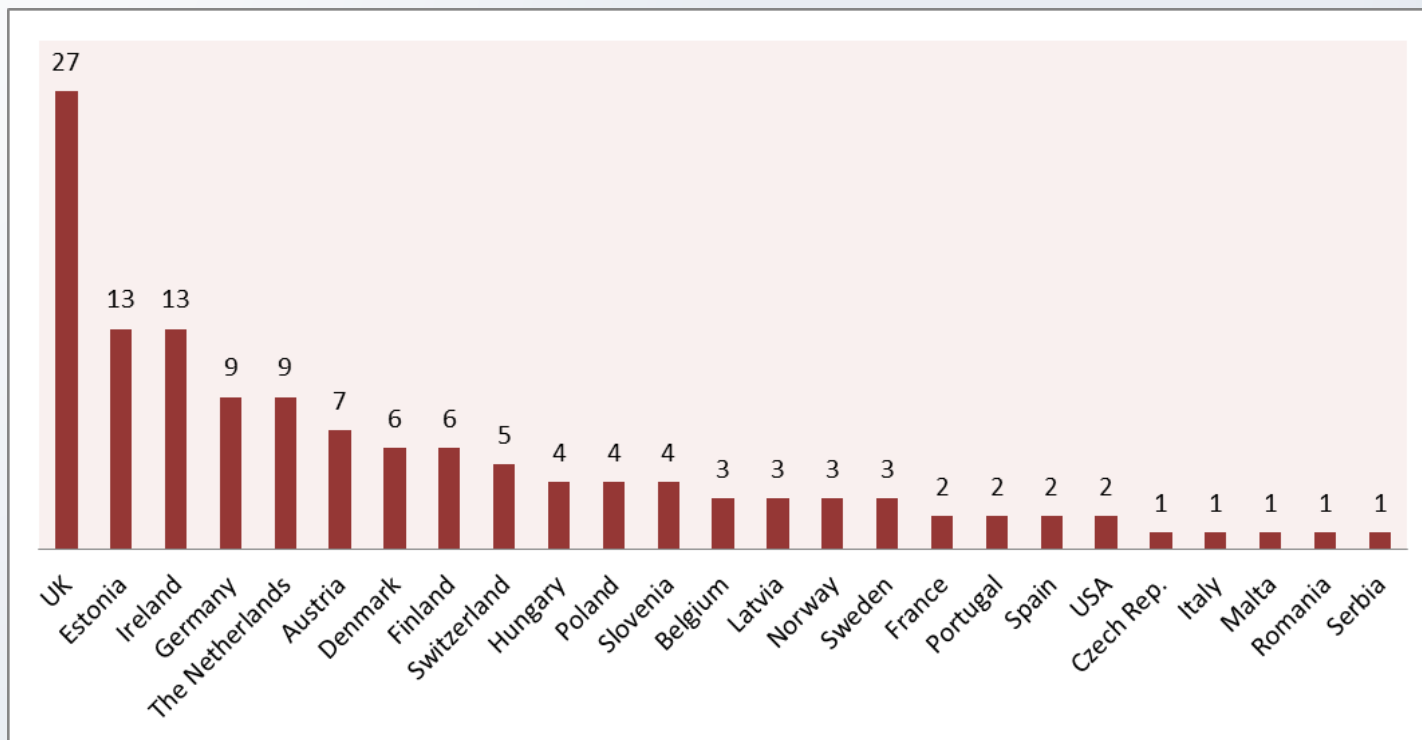


HEIs were provided with the  
lists of good practices:  
<400 (9 per institution)

And recommendations:  
654 (15 per institution)



# Experts



## Changes during the process

- ❑ Mandatory consultations for HEIS before submitting self-evaluation documents;
- ❑ Introduction of the mapping tool for experts;
- ❑ Recommendations for HEIs on preparation of self-evaluation documents (published online);
- ❑ Summary of the review report for wider public;
- ❑ Review of Priests Academies – by AVEPRO (starting from November 2014).

# Appeals

During the I cycle:

- ❑ 4 appeals
- ❑ 1 case in Court (duration - 2,5 year)

# THANK YOU!

**Any questions?**

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