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# Newsletter

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## CEENQA News

### CEENQA General Assembly 2020

The **annual meetings of CEENQA** this year took place on **17 July 2020**. Due to the ongoing pandemic and for the first time in the history of CEENQA, these meetings were held as a **web conference**.

**23 member agencies** participated in the **General Assembly** and discussed CEENQA's activities during the past year as well as the network's plans for the future. Two **new member agencies** joined CEENQA – **NAQA** from Ukraine and **ECBE** from Belgium, which means that CEENQA now consists of an unprecedented **41 agencies from 26 countries!**

The member agencies re-elected Franci Demsar (NAKVIS), **Jolanta Silka** (AIKA/AIC) and **Stefan Handke** (ACQUIN) for a second term on the CEENQA board, while **Ibrahim Durak** from TEPDAD was elected as a new board member. **Franci Demsar** (NAKVIS) was elected **CEENQA president** for a two year term.

The GA thanked the **outgoing CEENQA president Cristina Ghitulica** for her dedicated work during her presidency and her successful efforts in promoting the network and its vision.

During the **workshop**, **Galina Motova** (NCPA) presented the results of a **survey on the influence of COVID-19 on quality assurance agencies**. Afterwards, the participating agencies discussed the latest developments, activities and events in their agencies and shared their **experiences and best practices** regarding the challenges imposed by the ongoing pandemic.

### CEENQA General Assembly and Workshop spring 2021

The Annual **General Assembly Meeting 2021** of the members of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA) will take place in **Istanbul, Turkey**. The Meeting will be hosted by the Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs (**EPDAD**), Turkey.



## Message from the President

### Dear CEENQA members, colleagues and friends,

We are experiencing very trying times in our private and professional lives because of the current epidemic situation. Hence, it is with great pride, but also responsibility that I begin my mandate as the president of CEENQA. I wish to thank you all for your support as I welcome the challenges that lie ahead. I promise that I will give my best to serve the organization and promote the agenda of CEENQA for the benefit of quality assurance and higher education in the region.

Although my formal education is in physics and I have spent considerable time working as a researcher and a teacher, I have dedicated most of my professional life to working in management. My management work included the position of Secretary of State at the Ministry of Science and Technology, the position of Minister at the Ministry of Defence, the position of Ambassador to the Russian Federation and the position of Director of Slovenian Research Agency. In the scope of my international engagement, I have assumed the responsibilities of Vice President of European Science Foundation and I am a member of the International Academy of Engineering. I have published multiple publications that have received domestic and international acknowledgment.

My work in quality assurance began three years ago, when I took over as director of Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency (SQAA/NAKVIS). The agency has just celebrated its 10th anniversary. Monitoring and assessing quality in Slovenian higher education has come a long way in the last decade and we are very proud to have a well-established and externally recognized quality assurance system in our country. Under my leadership, we have made additional progress in the fields of transparency, communication, stakeholder cooperation and informatization. We are also adapting to the current health conditions in the most constructive way we can and have begun successfully carrying out online distance evaluations.

My approach to work and management has always been the same – to take every responsibility very seriously and to be as proactive as possible. Despite the difficult times, these challenges present us with opportunities as well. My plan for the next year is to establish a **new CEENQA initiative – regular web conferences and presentations**. These events will be an opportunity for the member agencies to present their activities, good practices, thematic analysis, common projects and other interesting topics to other members in three 15-minute time slots, while the same time will be allocated to discussion as well. Cooperation and harmonisation between member agencies are the core objectives of CEENQA and these goals are now more important than ever.

With your help and active participation, I want to contribute to these and other goals as much as possible. If you have additional ideas, suggestions or questions, you are welcome to contact me at [franci.demsar@nakvis.si](mailto:franci.demsar@nakvis.si).

With best regards,

**Dr. Franci Demsar**

**President of CEENQA**



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## Upcoming Events

15 Sep 2020

First bi-monthly CEENQA meeting

17 Nov 2020

Second bi-monthly CEENQA meeting

19 Jan 2021

Third bi-monthly CEENQA meeting

Spring 2021

CEENQA General Assembly and Workshop

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## News from Members and Partners

### AIKA/AIC News



#### Quality Agency for Higher Education (AIKA) Celebrates Its 5th Anniversary



July 1st, 2020, marks 5 years since amendments to the Law came into force delegating the responsibility for quality assurance of higher education in Latvia to the Academic Information Centre (AIC) and its newly established unit - Quality Agency for Higher Education (AIKA).

AIKA started with a vision to be trustful and internationally recognized, to **contribute to continuous quality enhancement** of higher education in Latvia and to take an **active role in quality assurance processes** in the European and global higher education area.

During these years, AIKA upheld its vision by working closely with higher education institutions and other stakeholders in Latvia and by becoming an active member of different international organizations such as ENQA, CEENQA, INQAAHE, ECA.

The Head of AIKA Jolanta Silka shares her view that the last 5 years have been intensive but also rewarding - with the possibility to establish and shape an institution from the very beginning - from a written concept to a functional and recognised quality agency that is comparable with its peers in other countries and often looked at as an example of rapid and successful development. It would not be possible without **continuous support from stakeholders** in Latvia and abroad, shared experience of colleagues from other countries.

AIKA is looking forward to future challenges and cooperation with existing and new partners and wishes everyone a warm and sunny summer.

#### Postponement of assessments and call for international experts

In light of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Quality Agency for Higher Education (AIKA)/ Academic Information Centre (AIC) has adopted certain **precautionary measures**.

All **assessment procedures with participation of international experts have been postponed** and as a result, the accreditation terms for all study



directions (study programme groups) that had to be accredited from 2020 until 2023 have been postponed for half a year.

Procedures for licensing of study programmes have taken place as planned, only by **using online tools**.

Since 10th June (end of state emergency in Latvia), the site visits for licensing have been **complemented by some on-site elements**, when appropriate, for example, the tour of the premises and laboratory equipment. The site visits for accreditation of study directions will be resumed in late summer.

Given the circumstances, AIKA has started the preparatory work for assessments planned in 2021 and is launching a **call for international experts** in the following areas:

- Mechanics and metalworking, thermal power engineering, heat engineering, and mechanical engineering;
- Energy, electrical engineering, and electrotechnologies;
- Production and processing;
- Architecture and construction;
- Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, veterinary medicine, and food hygiene;
- Health care;
- Social welfare.

The interested experts should apply by filling in the application form (<https://eplatforma.aika.lv/index.php?r=expert%2Fexpert%2Fcreate>) on AIKA's E-platform for Assessment of Higher Education Institutions, Accreditation of Study Directions and Licensing of Study Programmes. AIKA staff will review the applications and notify the candidates about their inclusion in the AIKA experts' database.

In case of inquiries, please contact the Head of Development and International Cooperation Unit Ms Asnate Kažoka (asnate.kazoka@aic.lv).

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## ARACIS News

### Some Effects of COVID-19 Pandemics Protective Restrictions on ARACIS Activity

After 27 February 2020, the date of the first COVID case confirmed in Romania, several **legislative measures** were successively taken by the Government in order to assure continuation of courses in higher education and of external quality assurance activities.

On 11 March face to face courses in pre-university and higher education were suspended and **on-line courses** started, while on 07 April the **legal framework for on-line final evaluations** (graduation exams) at bachelor, master and doctoral level was approved, and on 23 April the one related to **on-line admission exams** in HE. The courses in the campuses premises will remain suspended for the whole duration of current academic year.

Regarding quality assurance, the Government extended the deadlines for universities to apply for accreditation, until the start of 2021/2022 academic





year, and have created the necessary legislative framework so that procedures for ex-ante evaluation or accreditation could be performed on-line.

Consequently, ARACIS Council elaborated and approved the **Guideline for on-line external evaluation visits**, which can be found (in Romanian) on the website of the agency at the address <https://www.aracis.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Etapele-metodologice-vizita-online-FINAL-25-mai-2020.pdf>.

The **Guideline** establishes that for each evaluation an on-line folder will be created by the university that will be used to share all documents related to the respective evaluation. All meetings, between the members of the panel, with representatives of the institutions, as well as with students, alumni and employers, according to the case, are performed through web conferencing, and are recorded, for increased transparency. The evaluation of learning and teaching, research or student life infrastructure is done virtually, through short movies, based on complete description in the self-evaluation file. Currently, the **evaluations are in progress**, and we are looking forward to see the results, and draw the necessary conclusions for further improving the external quality assurance procedures. In situations when the site visits were already completed, a significant number of external evaluations were finalised and the reports were sent to the Ministry of Education and Research in due time.

All **current activities of agency** staff and members of the Council have been realized in a **blended format**, both on-line and at ARACIS premises, when needed, observing all necessary measures for preventing the virus spread. In order to make that possible, adequate IT means were used. Moving the activities on-line in such a short notice required an intensive logistic effort, adaptation of procedures and guidelines, while everyone was in fact worried about how this pandemic will affect our lives.

We would like to underline the commitment of our staff to carry on working under these difficult conditions. We also hope that the situation would soon allow CEENQA to fully resume the activity and its meetings in the traditional format all of us so much value and appreciate.



## HAC News

### **Hungarian Accreditation Committee Operations during the COVID-19 Lockdown**

The pandemic reached Hungary on 4 March 2020, when the first cases in the country were announced. The first Coronavirus (COVID-19)-related deaths were reported on the government's official website on 15 March, 2020.

Already on March 7, the government announced the cancellation of all public events including the ceremonies of Hungary's national holiday on March 15 and a state of emergency was instituted on March 11. Already some ten days prior to that, the president of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC) asked all Board and staff members who had travelled in the past two weeks not to come to the HAC offices. From March on, all meetings were cancelled and staff began to work from home on March 12.



On March 18 2020, the surgeon general announced that the virus had spread to every part of the country.

Since then, the HAC has implemented **online Board meetings, expert committee meetings and site visit interviews** online via Microsoft Teams. All meeting participants are provided with **data protection information** that they have to accept and return online. The HAC has for many years conducted its monthly Board meetings via its TIR (HAC's Information System) database, where all documents are uploaded and a secure platform enables voting. Meeting participants have received access to TIR after they had submitted their IP codes to the system manager who enabled personal access to the meeting-related documents and the actual voting platform of TIR available from the member's home or office. Every meeting was assisted by the HAC technical staff and went surprisingly smoothly from the start on.

All participants of the online meetings received a **guide with very detailed technical instructions**, not only for how to use the online tool but also how to access documents, how to vote, how persons with conflicts of interest with the case being discussed would be excluded from access and vote during discussions of that case, and similar information, prior to the meetings. The relevant section in the HAC **procedural regulations** was amended to include online meeting and voting procedures. For site visit interviews, the programme officer in charge prepares the minutes of the meeting based on a template, which includes technical information related to the online process, including the legal disclaimer concerning audio recordings of the meetings.

Addressing higher education institutions and the public, the HAC president published a Statement on procedures carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic on 31 March in both Hungarian and English. For upcoming site visits of institutions or doctoral schools – the two important ex post evaluations performed in every fifth year – were asked about their availability for online "site visits" with the various groups to be interviewed. The students of doctoral schools were not interviewed online; rather they were sent an **online questionnaire** with questions touching all important issues related to doctoral school's ESG compliance. Furthermore, all traditional contact options (e.g. phone, e-mail), are available in order to secure the information change and consultations between the programme officers and institutions, doctoral schools, Board members and expert committee chairs and members.

In the period covering the work of the Higher Education Accreditation Agency of The Republic of Srpska in the past few months, emphasis was placed on activities related to the **preparation of the Law on Quality Assurance in Higher Education** of The Republic of Srpska and the preparation of **thematic analysis related to distance learning** in the light of extraordinary circumstances caused by the presence of the corona virus.

With the aim of quality assurance in the field of higher education in The Republic of Srpska, a great effort has been made in drafting the law to provide the best possible legislative framework through a quality analytical and methodological approach. This approach envisages regulation of quality assurance in higher education, initial accreditation procedures, accreditation, thematic evaluation and external independent periodic assessments of the internal quality assurance system, and the status, activities,



organization and financing of the Higher Education Accreditation Agency of The Republic of Srpska.

The law received support in the National Assembly of The Republic of Srpska in the form of a draft, and it is expected that in the final version, and in the form of a proposal, it will pass the legislative procedure and the final confirmation in the parliament. In the process of drafting the Law, in addition to experts who actively worked in the team in charge of drafting the law, the expert public was consulted and, accordingly, a public hearing procedure was conducted, at which there were no significant objections. The Republic of Srpska will thus, for the first time, receive a special law that regulates the area of quality assurance in higher education, which has so far been defined by the Law on Higher Education. The law gives the Agency new competencies related to the licensing process for the purpose of issuing work permits for higher education institutions and study programs, and the recognition of foreign higher education documents in accordance with the Lisbon Convention.

At the same time, in the period that was affected by special measures related to the suppression of the coronary virus pandemic, the Agency started to prepare a **Thematic Analysis** regarding the conduct of distance learning, in the light of new circumstances. The topic of the analysis is the **process of teaching within the curriculum** at higher education institutions in The Republic of Srpska, and the analysis itself included 14 accredited higher education institutions. The content of the analysis included the self-evaluation of higher education institutions through the submitted questionnaire with the aim of making a cross-section of the situation in the period of extraordinary circumstances in order to determine the justification and quality of distance learning. The analysis is aimed at academic staff at all higher education institutions in the Republic of Srpska, as well as students in all study programs conducted at public and private universities and colleges. The importance of the data collected through the questionnaires will serve the purpose of **qualitative assessment of the teaching process in the new circumstances** and serve as a basis for **considering this type of teaching in the form of recommendations** in the accreditation process.

## HEPDAK News

### Hepdak's Plan Addressing the Challenges in Accreditation Process Related to Covid-19

In Turkey, higher education institutions have started to continue their education with **distance education** because of the Covid-19 pandemic. All the nursing undergraduate programs carried out their education with distance education in the spring term of 2019-2020.

Considering with the prediction that the pandemic process will continue in the next Autumn term (2020-2021);

1- HEPDAK has decided to support the continuation of accreditation processes for nursing programs through **virtual visits** to ensure the quality of education and to ensure that the relevant programs and accreditation processes are not interrupted.

2-HEPDAK has defined **standards for the virtual site visit regarding distance education for nursing undergraduate programs** in the period of 2020-2021 due to the possibility of online training partially or completely. These standards





are expected to be met in the evaluations to be made as long as distance education will continue in the later periods.

3-After the examination of the self-evaluation reports of the nursing programs by the evaluation teams, virtual site visits will be made and, if necessary, the **institution visit by face to face will be planned at a later date** after the pandemic. The working schedule to be applied during virtual site visit and the institution evaluations has been announced in the "HEPDAK 2020-2021 term evaluation plan in the web page of HEPDAK.

4-HEPDAK Online Orientation Program For Evaluators On Virtual Site Visit

An **online orientation program** has been developed to prepare new evaluators and the experienced active evaluators for their role as an HEPDAK virtual visitor to orient them to the virtual site visit, and provide for gaining a **better understanding of the virtual visitor role** in the HEPDAK accreditation process.

5-HEPDAK organized two webinars on

-Nursing Training in The Covid-19 Period (17.06.2020)

-Digital Transformation in Universities in the Period of Covid-19 Pandemic : Distance Education Experiences and Future Plans in Nursing Programs



## ILAD News

### Covid-19: Promises and Perils – An Essay

Education is one of the fields where the blow by the Covid-19 crisis is felt quite strongly. In many schools around the world, classroom education is suspended and replaced by "distance learning." Actually, distance learning was not a totally unknown ball game prior to the crisis. On the contrary, thanks to the digital transformation, some institutions were working hard to reach larger groups of people who are in need of education but not physically available for various reasons. However, this time distance learning did not kindly knock the door. It broke it open!

In this essay, I will try to raise a question regarding quality assessment and accreditation in the context of higher education under Corona conditions. I should warn the reader though: I cannot promise a solid answer. But I believe our main task is to ask the questions rather than find out one simple answer. The question is obvious: **how would such an unexpected situation influence quality assessment and accreditation?**

As it is well known, quality assessment institutions define their **standards**, which academic programs in turn try to attain for accreditation. One of the most important sets of standards concerns the content of an academic program. What coursework do the students follow, to what extent is theoretical knowledge balanced by practical training, how does the program measure and assess students' performances, etc.

When all education is transferred to **distance learning mode**, some standards for educational content have become somewhat irrelevant, if not totally obsolete. As the Dean of Faculty of Communication at Istanbul Bilgi University for instance, I consider the philosophy of "learning by doing" a must for communication education. Under Corona conditions, it is obvious that certain measures had to be taken in order to adhere to that philosophy, at least partially. Nevertheless, only partial adherence to the philosophy of learning by doing would not be enough to comply with the standards of, for



example, the very association, ILAD, I work at as the accreditation committee chair.

On the other hand, **Covid-19 influences accreditation institutions** as well. Site visits especially are put on hold as quarantine orders limit or prohibit mobility and gatherings. In other words, while the academic institutions cannot properly pursue their educational goals, accreditation institutions cannot evaluate their performance to understand if standards were met or not. This leads to a double bind situation.

One answer to the dilemma has been to **postpone** everything. Some universities did that. Many schools around the world shut down and told their students that if and when conditions ease, they can come back... But do we know when the conditions will ease? As we all know, the answer is "no." It all depends on the news from medical research oriented towards a vaccine or a cure, and despite "good news" the media circulate daily, we simply do not know. In this respect, postponing is a mere band aid and not the real answer. If education is postponed, accreditation process would also be postponed. But there is more to say about postponing...

There is another and stronger reason as to why postponing is not the real answer. It is not because even after the Covid-19 crisis, we know we will not be teaching as we did before. As I said above, distance education was already a serious option before the crisis. Actually many of us not only crash landed the education plane but we also gained a tremendous amount of experience as to how to do that. Now we are working toward the new academic semester not wanting to repeat the same mistakes we did during the crash landing and accreditation institutions need to adjust to the new conditions.

I am sure universities are preparing themselves for any possibility. A cure or vaccine may emerge and they might turn back to business as usual. A total shut down might also be the case. Or else, a **hybrid solution** might guide education like reduced number of face-to-face classes, reduced number of students per course, etc. Leaving aside many repercussions like the financial impact of not re-opening/partial opening on the university budgets, or the political adverse conditions that governments would find hard to surmount, the immediate effect of these two alternatives will be about the quality of education.

On the positive side, we know the problems of online teaching and distance learning. Our own research indicates that the students do not feel they learned as much as they did before. In a similar way, they feel less engaged in the subjects they are taught online than in-class teaching. As I said, we are preparing for the new semester with this knowledge in mind. But **can the accreditation standards remain the same?** Of course not. Accreditation institutions should adapt to the new conditions knowing that such conditions are not temporary measures. Not only because Covid-19 could last longer than hoped for or new epidemic outbreaks might emerge, but as the result of the accumulated experience. Many schools are redefining the way they deliver education.

My final words will be about a wish. Universities and independent accreditation institutions are not two sides of a difficult struggle called higher education. On the contrary, they are part of the same community. I know this by heart since, like many of my readers, I have two hats to wear. I am an academic and a university administrator, and also the chair of the accreditation committee. In order to have these two tasks function in a healthy manner, we need to remind ourselves of this fact over and over



again. As parts of the same community, our goal is to **increase quality in education in a sustainable manner**. Under Covid-19 conditions, we should be doing this by adding a reasonable amount of flexibility into our procedures and ceaselessly updating them. I wish we would do this as a quality requirement, not as a measure for damage control. Because the corona virus could hit back even after it is eliminated, or new unexpected inputs shake our understanding of what “quality education” is all about.

Halil Naçaoğlu, Istanbul Bilgi University, ILAD



**NATIONAL AGENCY  
For HIGHER EDUCATION  
QUALITY ASSURANCE  
(UKRAINE)**

## NAQA News

### NAQA continues to assure higher education quality remotely

The **National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance** (NAQA, Ukraine) is young, but very ambitious and hard-working team. Since summer 2019, it has successfully launched the new approach to accreditation procedure based on ESG-2015. NAQA has recruited and trained 2528 experts for accreditation site visits and 329 members for subject area councils. Starting from November 2019, NAQA has completed 653 accreditation cases, almost half of them were done during the pandemic lockdown.

In Ukraine COVID-19 quarantine was announced on March 12, just at the beginning of the second year of active operation of the agency. Since the beginning of the quarantine, NAQA has developed a **Temporary Procedure for Accreditation Examination Using Technical Means of Video Communication**, and since March 26, almost three hundred distance accreditation examinations have been successfully conducted. Preliminary briefing of expert groups, site visits, communication with stakeholders, university administration, meetings of sector expert councils - all this takes place online now. Moreover, all participants of the process note that the quality of accreditation expertise remains high. During the total lockdown, all internal meetings of NAQA members and Secretariat were regularly held remotely. Since the restrictions have been slightly eased, NAQA uses both **remote and office work and mixed format of meetings**.

We should say that **international communication and cooperation** continue and even became **more active** as it is much easier to meet online than to organize a meeting abroad. During the quarantine a number of [meetings](#) were held with colleagues, including those from France, Lithuania, Sweden, Belgium, Georgia, and Turkey. NAQA even signed [bilateral agreements](#) with some of them online. NAQA representatives took part in the [evaluation](#) visit within the ERASMUS + EDUQAS project also by technical means of video communication.

To ensure active communication, NAQA has launched a number of informative projects on its [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page, as well as on [Twitter](#) account for foreign colleagues.



**NATIONAL CENTER FOR  
EDUCATIONAL QUALITY  
ENHANCEMENT**

## **NCEQE News**

### **Presentation of New CEENQA Member: NCEQE**

The NCEQE was established in 2006 as the **National Center for Educational Accreditation (NCEA)** to conduct institutional accreditation. After the first round of the revision of the external quality assurance system in 2010, the **National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE)** was established as its legal successor. The new Law on Educational Quality Enhancement established NCEQE as independent in its activities and operation, with its structure and responsibilities defined in a Charter, which was adopted in 2010. The NCEQE is recognized as a sole national body authorized to carry out external mechanism of assuring and enhancing educational quality.

The main aims of the NCEQE are to promote enhancement of educational quality and development of quality culture at educational institutions through **development and implementation of external QA mechanisms and supporting development of internal QA mechanisms** at the educational institutions. NCEQE has a broad range of functions relating to the external **quality assurance of higher, vocational and general education in Georgia**; the National Qualifications Framework and recognition of education.

NCEQE implements two external quality assurance mechanisms of higher education: **authorization of higher educational institutions** and **accreditation of higher educational programs**. NCEQE maintains the eight-level National Qualifications framework and any associated recognition. NCEQE is the NARIC center for Georgia and provides **recognition advice on foreign qualifications**. NCEQE coordinates development, approval and further improvement of sector benchmarks for HE.

Since its establishment, NCEQE is actively involved in ENQA's activities and events. NCEQE is **full member of ENQA** and **registered in EQAR**. NCEQE actively participates in the working groups established by the European Commission (Bologna follow-up process) and in different international projects related to quality assurance issues and implemented jointly with other quality assurance agencies and/or networks (Twinning, ERASMUS+, etc.). NCEQE is an **affiliated member of EUA** since 2015. NCEQE is a member of European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) since 2016 and gained the first level recognition "Committed to Excellence". In October 2018 NCEQE has been awarded **Recognition Status by the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME)**. WFME Recognition Status has been awarded for ten years. The accreditation process, post-accreditation monitoring and decision making by NCEQE when it accredits medical schools and medical programmes are in compliance with demands of WFME.



## YODAK News

### YODAK's Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

During the pandemic times, YODAK was fully alerted and worked harder than usual times to overcome the possible consequences to the Higher Education Institutions and its stakeholders.

First of all, once the pandemic was officially announced, the agency building was shut down and all staff start **working remotely** afterwards until 15 May 2020. As far as the Executive Board is concerned, the President was in Turkey and one Board Member was in USA during the lockdown period. However, YODAK Board was so agile in taking firm decisions to continue the Board Meetings via online conferences and it was very practical as well as useful. Thus, the coordination with the Ministry of Education and Universities was smoothly carried out and universities have been informed/instructed accordingly.

There have been **many virtual meetings** within the Board and the Rectors as well as an official Inter University Coordination Council (Rectors Conference), which was held online on 11 June 2020. This meeting was useful for all participants to learn from their experiences and get the **best practices**. YODAK also listed the immediate requests /actions to be taken by the public authorities.

The overall situation is safe and secure as far as North Cyprus is concerned. There is no positive COVID 19 case for the last two months. Most of the universities shifted to **online teaching** for the **Spring semester** with a **special decree from the Council of Ministers** in March 2020. Most of the students left to their respective countries safely and they are closely communicated and coordinated/supported by the respective universities on an individual basis.

The **summer schools** are scheduled for the first week of July 2020. Students are welcome back with a PCR test at both sides of their travel. The universities are welcoming their students at the on-campus dorms with all the **health and safety measures** in place.

As far as **Fall 2020** is concerned, almost all of the universities are preparing to welcome their existing and new students **for face to face teaching** at their safe and healthy campus premises. Since there is not many positive case in North Cyprus, we are very optimistic that there will be an increase in the number of new intakes for Fall 2020 at bachelor as well as Masters level.

As YODAK Board, we are proud to announce that within a safe island, our universities are ready to offer safe and secure student friendly environment as well as international standard high quality education to our learners from all around the world.

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