

# Decision Regarding the Assessment of the Environmental Protection Study Programme Group Euroacademy

18/06/2015

The Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education decided to approve the assessment report by the Assessment Committee and to conduct the next quality assessment of the Environmental Protection study programme group in the first and second cycles of higher education at Euroacademy in three years.

Euroacademy submitted the following study programmes for evaluation:

- Environmental protection Diploma of Professional Higher Education
- Environmental protection MSc

## Assessment Committee

Laurent Counillon (Chair)	University Nice-Sophia Antipolis (France)
Olav Aarna	Estonian Qualifications Authority (Estonia)
Maris Klavins	University of Latvia (Latvia)
Kari Keinänen	University of Helsinki (Finland)
Rik Leemans	Wageningen University (Netherlands)
Romanus Lenz	Nürtingen University of Applied Sciences (Germany)
Adrian Stan	Timisoara Dental Students Association, Student (Romania)

## The Committee's Comments on the Study Programme Group

### Strengths

- *The study programmes of this study programme group are well developed and provide students with a broad-based education in environmental protection which is a competitive advantage in the labour market.*
- *The study programmes are taught in both Estonian and Russian, increasing their attractiveness for international students.*
- *Leading scientists, professionals and international teachers are involved in the teaching.*
- *Small study groups allow for close interaction between the students and teachers.*
- *Organization of studies is flexible and takes into account the needs of the students.*
- *The employment rate for the MSc alumni is high. Both employers and alumni are pleased with the professional skills and social competencies of graduates.*

### **Areas for improvement and recommendations**

- *The Euroacademy infrastructure and especially resources related to the MSc studies in the Environmental Protection study programme group (laboratories and library resources) need to be improved. Better resources would help to enhance the quality of theses.*
- *It is essential to ensure that the actual student workloads are consistent with the workloads established by regulations (26 hours per 1 ECTS credit).*
- *In professional higher education, each internship should be implemented in full (at least 27 ECTS credits), not divided among individual courses. It is necessary to prepare individual internship plans for each student, and to ensure the supervision of internships and the defence of internship reports.*
- *More attention should be paid to the quality of final theses of professional higher education, but especially to the quality of MSc theses. Regarding MSc projects, it is necessary to collaborate with other universities and research institutions in Estonia, and the requirements for MSc theses should be more strict.*
- *With regard to the part-time study programmes, a larger number of distance learning tools could be offered.*
- *English language proficiency of students should be further enhanced to balance the levels of knowledge within study groups.*
- *The study programmes should address development of the students' entrepreneurial skills.*
- *The process of study programme development should be formalized, and professionals and alumni who work in the field of environmental protection should be involved in this, based on established regulations.*
- *In both study programmes more attention should be paid to the European Union environmental legislation as well as to the use of mathematical methods and statistical analyses. For further development of the study programmes, topics related to environmental economics and risk assessment could be considered.*
- *Reading of research articles should be used as a learning method to a greater extent, which would improve the quality of final theses.*
- *A plan for academic staff renewal and in-service training should be developed to ensure sustainability of the higher education institution and its study programmes. The academic staff should be further encouraged to commit*

*themselves to research and the research profile of Euroacademy should be defined more specifically.*

- *More information about opportunities for student exchange under the professional higher education programme should be provided to increase student mobility.*
- *Student counselling services should be improved to reduce the dropout rate.*
- *Teaching is conducted in small groups which might be economically unsustainable.*
- *In-service training courses should be offered to alumni and professionals, which would help Euroacademy to position itself more firmly in the Estonian higher education market.*

Further information:

Assessment Report

Minutes of the Session of the Quality Assessment Council (in Estonian)