



Quality assurance in engineering education : a French and European view

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In June 1999, the Bologna declaration has initiated the creation of the European Space for Higher Education ; it has been a turning point in the development of the general higher Education and in particular of the engineering education.

The so-called Bologna process aims at creating convergence and is not a path towards the “standardisation” or “uniformisation” of European higher education. It has to take into account the national, historical and cultural backgrounds of the numerous involved countries (more than 30).

The resulting action programme is based on a set of specified objectives, such as :

- the adoption of a common framework of readable and comparable degrees
- ECTS-compatible credit systems also covering lifelong learning activities;
- a European dimension in quality assurance, with comparable criteria and methods;
- enhancement of the free mobility of students (as well as trainees and graduates)

We shall concentrate our presentation on the quality assurance in engineering programmes. In Europe, “engineer” qualifies in the same time an academic education and a professional qualification, with a large diversity of national regulations. We shall describe the building of a european framework, based on jointly defined outcomes of engineering programmes and standards for their assessment.

We shall describe how the French engineering education system, based on graduate schools of Engineering (the “Grandes Ecoles” created a few centuries ago) has adapted itself to this new context, while preserving its specificities : selective admission, wide scientific backgrounds, opening to foreign languages and international culture, strong industrial involvement in the curriculums. We shall describe the rôle of CTI (“Commission des Titres d’ingénieurs”) as the French body in charge of engineering programs accreditation.