

NVAO • THE NETHERLANDS

ACCREDITATION
JOINT PROGRAMME (MASTER)
EURO CULTURE: *EUROPEAN POLITICS,*
CULTURE, AND SOCIETY IN A
GLOBAL CONTEXT

Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (The Netherlands, coordinator), Georg-August-Universität Göttingen (Germany), Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie (Poland), Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci (Czech Republic), Université de Strasbourg (France), Uppsala universitet (Sweden), Università degli studi di Udine (Italy), Universidad de Deusto (Spain)

and as associated partners:

Osaka University (Japan), Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México - UNAM (Mexico), University of Hyderabad (India), Queen's

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1 Peer Review

The Accreditation Organisation of The Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) assesses the quality of an existing programme through a peer review process. To maintain accreditation an existing programme is reviewed every six years. This accreditation is necessary to be able to award a recognised degree upon the successful completion of a study programme.

The procedure for accrediting an existing programme serves as an ex-post assessment of a programme's quality. The quality of an existing programme is assessed by means of peer review. A panel of independent peers, including a student, reviews the programme during a site visit to the institution. A discussion amongst peer experts forms the basis for the panel's final judgement and advisory report. The focus is on the curriculum, the teaching and learning environment, and student assessment. The agenda for the site visit and the documents reviewed are attached as an annex to this report.

The peer review outcome is guided by the standards for the European Approach for quality assurance of joint programmes in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), issued in October 2014 and approved by the EHEA ministers in May 2015. The peer review outcome is also guided by standards outlined and published in the NVAO Assessment framework for the higher education accreditation system of The Netherlands (Staatscourant 2024, nr. 6405). Each standard is evaluated on a three-point scale: meets, partially meets, or does not meet the standard. Based on this evaluation, the panel will rate the programme's overall quality as positive, conditionally positive, or negative.

NVAO makes the decision on the programme's quality based on this advisory report. This accreditation decision can be positive, conditionally positive or negative. If the decision is positive, with or without conditions, the institution may proceed with the programme. Graduates of the programme are entitled to receive a legally accredited degree.

This report presents the panel's findings, analysis and judgements resulting from the peer review. It also details the commendations and recommendations for follow-up actions.

The reports of each peer review are published on NVAO's website www.nvao.net. There you can also find more information about NVAO and peer reviews of new programmes. The report will also be published in the database of external quality assurance results (DEQAR).

2 Programme

2.1 General data

Consortium Coordinator	Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (The Netherlands)
Partner institution 1	Georg-August-Universität Göttingen (Germany)
Partner institution 2	Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie (Poland)
Partner institution 3	Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci (Czech Republic)
Partner institution 4	Université de Strasbourg (France)
Partner institution 5	Uppsala universitet (Sweden)
Partner institution 6	Università degli studi di Udine (Italy)
Partner institution 7	Universidad de Deusto (Spain) ¹
Associated partner institution 1	Osaka University (Japan)
Associated partner institution 2	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México - UNAM (Mexico)
Associated partner institution 3	University of Hyderabad (India)
Associated partner institution 4	Queen's University (Canada)
Programme	Euroculture: European Politics, Culture and Society in a Global Context
Level	Master
Variants	Fulltime
Degree	Joint degree and double degree (France and Italy)
Tracks/Specialisations	Not applicable
Locations	Groningen (The Netherlands), Göttingen (Germany), Kraków (Poland), Olomouc (Czech Republic), Strasbourg (France), Uppsala (Sweden), Udine (Italy), Bilbao (Spain), Osaka (Japan), Mexico City (Mexico), Hyderabad (India), Kingston (Canada)
Study load	120 ECTS ²
Language	English

2.2 Profile of the consortium

The application was filed by a consortium of 8 higher education institutions in 8 countries. They have a cooperation in the field of European Studies and jointly develop and deliver the Euroculture: European Politics, Culture and Society in a Global Context programme (hereafter Euroculture). The partner institutions have signed a consortium agreement that specifies the terms and conditions of the joint programme as well as the structure of the consortium and the partner institutions' responsibilities. The current agreement was signed by all partner institutions in 2022, and covers 4 academic years, from 2022 to 2026. In anticipation of the next cycle, a new draft cooperation agreement has been drawn up for the period 2026-2031. This new agreement reflects the updated composition of the consortium following the planned departure of the Universidad de Deusto at the conclusion of the current funding period.

Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (The Netherlands, Coordinator), founded in 1614, is a public research university with a strong international orientation. It serves as the coordinating institution for the Euroculture consortium. The programme is embedded within the Faculty of Arts, which focuses on humanities and social sciences. The university is fully accredited by the NVAO and hosts the Consortium Secretariat, managing the administrative and financial coordination of the programme.

Georg-August-Universität Göttingen (Germany) was founded in 1737 and is a research university operating as a Foundation under Public Law. The Euroculture programme is hosted by the Faculty of Social Sciences. The university contributes specific expertise in political science, history, and theology to the consortium. It is accredited by the German Accreditation Council and recognized by national authorities.

¹ Deusto is offering the programme up to and including August 2026.

² European Credits

Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie (Poland), founded in 1364, is the oldest higher education institution in Poland and one of the oldest in Europe. The Euroculture programme is offered by the Institute of European Studies within the Faculty of International and Political Studies. The university offers a specific focus on Central and Eastern European perspectives, migration processes, and cultural diversity. It is accredited by the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci (Czech Republic) was founded in 1573 and is the second oldest university in the Czech Republic. The programme is delivered by the Faculty of Arts, contributing expertise in history, cultural studies, urban studies, political science and religion. The university holds institutional accreditation granted by the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education, allowing it to independently create and implement degree programmes.

Uppsala universitet (Sweden) was founded in 1477. Uppsala University is the oldest university in the Nordic countries. Uniquely within the consortium, the Euroculture programme is housed within the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, offering perspectives on the role of religion, sociology, and values in European culture. Under Swedish law, the university is entitled to establish programmes independently and is recognized by national authorities.

Université de Strasbourg (France), founded in 1538, is a French public research university located at the seat of several European institutions. The programme is hosted by the Faculty of Languages. Due to current national legislative constraints regarding joint degrees, the university currently awards a double degree for the programme, though it is fully integrated into the consortium's joint delivery. It is accredited by the French Ministry of Higher Education. The university offers perspectives on the topics of minorities and migration.

Università degli Studi di Udine (Italy), founded in 1978, is a public higher education institution. The Euroculture programme is recognized by the University Senate and Board of Directors. The university contributes a focus on cross-border cooperation and Mediterranean perspectives. It is currently in the process of transitioning the programme's legal status to facilitate the awarding of a joint degree in the near future.

Universidad de Deusto (Spain), founded in 1886, is the oldest private university in Spain. The programme is delivered by the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences (*Facultad de Ciencias Sociales y Humanas*). The university is recognised by national authorities and is fully authorized to award the Joint Master's Degree. The university will conclude its participation as a Full Partner at the end of the current Erasmus Mundus funding period in August 2026

In addition to the degree-awarding partners, the consortium includes four Associate Partners: Osaka University (Japan), Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) (Mexico), University of Hyderabad (India), and Queen's University (Canada).

2.3 Profile of the programme

Euroculture: European Politics, Culture and Society in a Global Context is a two-year (120 ECTS) interdisciplinary Joint Master's Programme. It is jointly delivered by a consortium of 8 European degree-awarding universities and 4 non-European academic associate partners. The programme distinguishes itself through a citizen-focused perspective, critically engaging with the historical, political, and societal dimensions of European integration and identity within a global context.

The panel characterizes Euroculture as a highly cohesive and truly joint programme, driven by a committed teaching staff with a shared ethos and a strong sense of collective ownership. A defining feature is the tailor-made experience offered to students, who are actively supported in shaping their own academic trajectories through flexible mobility options and distinct research or professional tracks. The curriculum effectively balances academic depth with a strong emphasis on transferable skills training, highly valued by both alumni and the labour market.

2.4 Panel

Peer experts

- **Dr. Camilo Erlichman (chair)**, Assistant Professor in History at the Department of History, Maastricht University, and Programme Director of the MA in Arts and Culture (The Netherlands);
- **Prof. Lucie Doležalová, PhD (panel member)**, full professor at the Institute of Greek and Latin Studies, Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague (Czech Republic);
- **Prof. dr. hab. Anna Pacześniak (panel member)**, full professor of political science at the University of Wrocław (Poland), member of the Committee of Independent Eminent Persons at the European Parliament (2025-2029);
- **Drs. Judith Sargentini (panel member)**, Vice Mayor of the city of Gouda (The Netherlands), Chair Steering Committee Dutch Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa, former member of the European Parliament;
- **Katariina Järve, BA (student member)**, Student of International Relations and Region studies (Master's degree) - University of Tartu (Estonia).

Assisting staff

- Stijntje Dijk, MD MSc PhD, secretary
- Tinka Thede, MSc, NVAO policy advisor and process coordinator
- Reina Louw, MA, NVAO policy advisor and process coordinator (observer)

Site visit

Groningen (The Netherlands), 18 December 2025

3 Outcome

The NVAO approved panel reached a positive conclusion regarding the quality of the Euroculture programme offered jointly by Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (The Netherlands, coordinator), Georg-August-Universität Göttingen (Germany), Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie (Poland), Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci (Czech Republic), Université de Strasbourg (France), Uppsala universitet (Sweden), Università degli studi di Udine (Italy) and Universidad de Deusto (Spain). The programme meets all standards of the European Approach for quality assurance of joint programmes in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The panel was impressed by the strong cohesion and genuine jointness of the programme. Despite the complexity of involving eight full partner institutions, Euroculture functions as a fully integrated and coherent curriculum. There is a sense of collective ownership among the staff, supported by strong institutional mechanisms like bi-annual management meetings and the annual Intensive Programme. The panel considers the way the consortium fosters its unity across diverse institutional contexts to be a significant achievement.

A standout feature of the programme is the exceptional attention paid to the individual student. The panel commends the programme for offering a tailor-made educational experience where staff actively support students in shaping their own academic or professional trajectories. Whether navigating the logistics of mobility between countries or defining specific research or professional interests, students receive remarkable individual support. This student-centred approach ensures that the transitions between different university environments are smooth and educationally valuable.

The curriculum successfully balances academic depth with practical skills training. The students, alumni, and professional field representatives highlight the programme's specific focus on transferable skills such as project management, intercultural communication, and grant writing as an approach that works effectively and prepares graduates well for the labour market.

Throughout the visit, the panel observed a high level of enthusiasm and commitment among the teaching staff. Lecturers expressed that teaching in Euroculture is a privilege, creating a stimulating and dedicated learning environment. This positive spirit is particularly visible during the Intensive Programme, which serves as a festive and scholarly focal point where the community comes together.

While the overall quality is high, the panel identified a specific structural concern regarding assessment. The panel notes that the current thesis assessment procedure, where the two supervisors also act as the only reviewers and examiners, lacks sufficient independence and impartiality. This concern had also been noted by the previous NVAO panel in 2020. The panel also noted that there was a lack of transparency regarding the grading process and the extent to which the two graders arrive independently at an assessment of the thesis. To guarantee objectivity, the panel strongly recommends ensuring that the thesis is assessed by at least one independent reviewer who has not been involved in the supervision process. Furthermore, while the panels notes positively that the consortium has started benchmarking thesis grades to align pass/fail thresholds following the last accreditation, the panel recommends extending this calibration to the full range of grades and organising corresponding calibration sessions across the consortium. This will ensure that the distinction between adequate, good, and excellent work is consistent across all partner universities, while providing the consortium with a mechanism to monitor the quality of thesis assessment, which is an important indicator for the extent to which students have achieved the intended learning outcomes of the programme.

Finally, the panel noted that the teaching staff shares a critical, constructivist approach to Europe. This ethos is a strength, but it is not always clearly communicated to the outside world. Terms such as 'Eurocompetences' can appear externally as entailing an essentialistic notion of European identity, which is at odds with the intellectual and didactic rationale underpinning the programme. The panel suggests revisiting external communication about its specific profile to manage expectations, both for students expecting a traditional focus on EU institutions, laws, and policies, as well as for those expecting a broader curriculum. Additionally, the programme could more

explicitly highlight the distinct academic and thematic strengths of each partner university to help students make informed mobility choices.

In conclusion, the panel considers Euroculture to be a high-value joint programme and recommends it for accreditation.

Standard	Judgement
1. Eligibility	
1. Status	meets the standard
1.2 Joint design and delivery	meets the standard
1.3 Cooperation Agreement	meets the standard
2. Learning Outcomes	
2.1 Level	meets the standard
2.2 Disciplinary field	meets the standard
2.3 Achievement	meets the standard
2.4 Regulated Professions	meets the standard
3. Study Programme	
3.1 Curriculum	meets the standard
3.2 Credits	meets the standard
3.3 Workload	meets the standard
4. Admission and Recognition	
4.1 Admission	meets the standard
4.2 Recognition	meets the standard
5. Learning, Teaching and Assessment	
5.1 Learning and teaching	meets the standard
5.2 Assessment of students	partially meets the standard
6. Student support	
	meets the standard
7. Resources	
7.1 Staff	meets the standard
7.2 Facilities	meets the standard
8. Transparency and Documents	
	meets the standard
9. Quality assurance	
	meets the standard
Conclusion	positive

4 Commendations

The programme is commended for the following features of good practice.

1. **Jointness** – The panel is impressed by the strong cohesion of the programme; while celebrating the diversity of the participating universities, the curriculum functions as a well-coordinated whole where the different parts clearly belong together.
2. **Tailor-made programme** – The programme offers a uniquely individualized trajectory that allows students to proactively shape their own academic or professional paths based on their personal interests and goals with the support of staff.
3. **Student support** – The support provided to students is remarkable, offering extensive individual attention from visa preparations to well-being across institutions.
4. **Competencies** – The panel values the programme's strong basis for skills training, which equips students with specialized competencies that are highly appreciated by alumni and the labour market.
5. **Staff enthusiasm** – The teaching staff displays exceptional commitment and enthusiasm, working together as a team across different locations.

5 Recommendations

The panel recommends several follow-up actions to improve the programme further. These recommendations do not detract from the positive assessment of the programme's quality.

1. **Independent thesis assessment** – Ensure that the Master's thesis is assessed, as a rule, by at least one independent examiner who has not been involved in the supervision process, and that the appointment of an independent reviewer is not limited only to disputed cases.
2. **Grading calibration** – Expand the current thesis calibration system to include not only pass/fail cases but also the full range of grades to ensure consistent assessment standards across all partner universities.
3. **Institutional strengths** – Make the distinct academic profiles and specific strengths of each partner university more explicit to prospective students to help them make informed choices regarding their mobility trajectory.
4. **Approach towards Europe** – Clearly articulate the programme's critical and constructivist approach to Europe in external communication to prospective students and employers.
5. **Admission diversity** – Review the admission and bursary selection criteria, particularly regarding the point system for specific disciplines, to ensure the programme continues to attract and appreciate a diverse student body.

6 Assessment

6.1 Standard 1: Eligibility - 1.1 Status

The institutions that offer a joint programme should be recognised as higher education institutions by the relevant authorities of their countries. Their respective national legal frameworks should enable them to participate in the joint programme and, if applicable, to award a joint degree. The institutions awarding the degree(s) should ensure that the degree(s) belong to the higher education degree systems of the countries in which they are based.

Judgement

Meets the standard.

Evidence

The Euroculture consortium is composed of eight, soon to be seven (2025-2026) degree-awarding European universities (Full Partners) and four non-degree-awarding Academic Associate Partners from outside Europe (Canada, India, Japan, and Mexico). As confirmed by the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and substantiated by the evidence provided in Annex 1 ("Documents supporting the legal status"), all European Full Partners are officially recognized higher education institutions within their respective national systems.

The consortium's objective is to transition to a single joint Master's degree for all partners, which is possible under the national legal frameworks in The Netherlands, Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Sweden and Spain. The University of Strasbourg (France) and the University of Udine (Italy) are currently unable to award a joint degree due to specific national legislative constraints.

Assessment

The panel concludes that the partner institutions are recognized by the applicable higher education authorities within their respective countries. The consortium aims to transition to a single joint Master's degree for all partners. The panel reviewed the active steps taken by the partners in France and Italy to achieve this, including engagement with national ministries and accreditation bodies. The panel was informed that the process in Italy is expected to be completed within 18 months, and the University of Strasbourg is actively pursuing the necessary recognition. The panel acknowledges the specific legal challenges faced by the partners and finds that the interim use of double degrees in these specific instances does not detract from the programme's eligibility or joint character.

Additionally, the panel inquired about the specific degree designation at Uppsala University, where graduates receive a Master of Arts in Theology. The consortium clarified that under Swedish national regulations, the formal degree title is determined by the faculty holding the awarding authority (in this case, the Faculty of Theology). The management emphasized that this designation is administrative rather than academic and does not imply theological content, noting that other non-theological international programmes are similarly situated within this Faculty. As the diploma explicitly designates Euroculture as the main field of study, ensuring the degree reflects the programme's actual disciplinary profile, the panel deems this explanation sufficient.

The panel therefore concludes that the standard is met.

6.2 Standard 1: Eligibility – 1.2 Joint design and delivery

The joint programme should be offered jointly, involving all cooperating institutions in the design and delivery of the programme.

Judgement

Meets the standard.

Evidence

The design and delivery of the Euroculture programme are governed collectively by the Management Committee, which is composed of Directors of Studies from all partner institutions and meets in person at least twice a year to oversee academic and organisational decision-making. As outlined in the SER and confirmed during the site visit, specific curriculum components, such as the Eurocompetence courses, the Methodology & Theory course, and the Intensive Programme (IP), are developed collaboratively and implemented jointly using shared syllabi and learning outcomes. The programme delivery involves active cooperation, including staff mobility for co-teaching, and joint supervision of the Master's thesis by staff from two different degree-awarding institutions. Teachers confirmed they receive consortium-wide guidelines and adjust their local syllabi and Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) to fit the overall programme structure. Similarly, the students and alumni the panel spoke with during the site visit confirmed that they perceive Euroculture as a single, cohesive programme rather than a collection of separate courses at different universities.

Assessment

The panel finds that the programme successfully meets the requirements for joint design and delivery, functioning as a cohesive whole rather than as a collection of separate courses. The panel applauds the strong sense of collective ownership and shared ethos among the staff; the teaching team operates as a unified entity across different locations, ensuring that the educational goals remain consistent for all students. The structural mechanisms for cooperation, such as the Management Committee and the IP, and the seamless support provided to students across borders demonstrate that the programme is delivered jointly in practice. The panel is impressed by the consortium's ability to navigate the tension between harmonization and local specificity, described during the visit as "united in diversity." The consortium successfully establishes a framework that respects the distinct legal and administrative structures of the partner universities and allows for an effective joint delivery. The panel concludes that the structural mechanisms allow the consortium to benefit from diverse structures and sources of expertise, while maintaining a cohesive programme. Therefore, the panel concludes that the standard is met.

6.3 Standard 1: Eligibility – 1.3 Cooperation Agreement

The terms and conditions of the joint programme should be laid down in a cooperation agreement. The agreement should in particular cover the following issues:

- *Denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the programme*
- *Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation (including funding, sharing of costs and income etc.)*
- *Admission and selection procedures for students*
- *Mobility of students and teachers*
- *Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures in the consortium*

Judgement

Meets the standard.

Evidence

The terms and conditions of the Euroculture programme are legally formalized in a signed Consortium Agreement valid for the period 2022-2026, with a subsequent agreement drafted for the 2026-2031 period. The agreement comprehensively covers all required aspects, including the denomination of the degrees awarded, the division of management and financial responsibilities, and the procedures for student admission, selection, and mobility. Furthermore, the agreement specifies the examination regulations and degree-awarding procedures, ensuring that the consortium operates within the legal possibilities of the respective national frameworks.

Assessment

The panel concludes that a cooperation agreement is in place that effectively governs the joint implementation of the programme. The panel notes that the programme has been running successfully for over 21 years and has

proven its resilience even as the composition of the consortium has evolved. The panel reviewed the upcoming changes, specifically the departure of the University of Deusto and the accession of new partners, and found no concerns regarding the programme's viability. The panel appreciates that these changes stem from internal policy reasons, and notes that the consortium effectively draws on its own Euroculture alumni network to identify and co-opt new partners. The panel finds that the standard is met.

6.4 Standard 2: Learning Outcomes – 2.1 Level [ESG 1.2]

The intended learning outcomes should align with the corresponding level in the Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA), as well as the applicable national qualifications framework(s).

Judgement

Meets the standard.

Evidence

The ILOs of the Euroculture programme are explicitly defined and aligned with the second cycle descriptors of the Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) and Level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), as well as the applicable national qualifications frameworks of the partner institutions. The panel reviewed the matrix provided in the SER, which maps the programme's ILOs against these frameworks, confirming coverage of knowledge, skills, and autonomy/responsibility.

During the site visit, the panel discussed with the programme management how highly specialized knowledge (a key indicator of Master's level) is met within an interdisciplinary context. The management clarified the curriculum's progression in complexity: while the first semester focuses on balancing general knowledge to ensure a shared baseline for students from diverse backgrounds, the subsequent semesters ensure the acquisition of in-depth, specialized knowledge.

Assessment

The panel concludes that the programme's ILOs are set at the Master's level. The evidence presented during the visit confirms that the programme successfully prepares students for third-cycle (PhD) studies, with a significant number of alumni entering doctoral positions. Simultaneously, for students not pursuing a PhD, the programme provides high-level professional and managerial skills that exceed standard university training, ensuring graduates are fully equipped for complex professional roles. Although the Student Chapter in the SER noted that some students felt the programme lacked consistent depth, the panel's discussions with current students, alumni, and staff during the site visit did not substantiate this concern as a general problem. Instead, they identify a deliberate and appreciated progression from general to specialized knowledge. The panel is convinced that the balance between general foundation and specialized depth is well-managed, and finds that the standard is met.

6.5 Standard 2: Learning Outcomes – 2.2 Disciplinary field

The intended learning outcomes should comprise knowledge, skills, and competencies in the respective disciplinary field(s).

Judgement

Meets the standard.

Evidence

The programme integrates a broad range of disciplines, including political science, international relations, history, cultural studies, sociology, and law, as outlined in the SER. A distinguishing feature of the curriculum is the Eurocompetences learning line, which runs through several semesters and focuses on professional and transferable skills such as project management, intercultural communication, and grant writing. During the site visit, employers and alumni explicitly highlighted these competences as a strong asset for employability, confirming that graduates possess the specific skill sets sought by the labour market.

Assessment

The panel concludes that the programme effectively covers the knowledge, skills, and competences required for the field. The panel appreciates that the programme provides a solid foundation while allowing students to tailor their trajectory toward specific interests, be it highly theoretical knowledge or practical application.

The panel does note that the term "Eurocompetences" is an internal term that may not be immediately clear to external stakeholders and carries the risk of sounding Eurocentric or essentialistic, which clashes with the pedagogical rationale of the programme. While students and alumni clearly underline the value of the competences within this learning line, they noted that the term often requires explanation in professional contexts (e.g., on a CV), and the competences themselves were described by both faculty and students as not specific to Europe. Consequently, the panel advises the consortium to review their external communication regarding "Eurocompetences" to clarify what this training entails and consider how to best define these crucial skills for prospective students and the wider labour market. Despite this advice on communication, the panel finds the standard is met.

6.6 Standard 2: Learning Outcomes – 2.3 Achievement [ESG 1.2]

The programme should be able to demonstrate that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Judgement

Meets the standard.

Evidence

The programme demonstrates the achievement of learning outcomes through a structured alignment matrix (Tuning-CALOHEE model) that maps course-level objectives against programme-level outcomes. This is supported by a diverse, student-centred assessment strategy that includes creative formats like portfolios and movies, as well as oral thesis defences, fostering original thought and mitigating risks associated with Generative AI. The panel reviewed a sample of 15 Master's theses, confirming they meet defined academic standards and demonstrate the students' capacity for independent research. Joint examination regulations explicitly link the successful completion of all curriculum components to the awarding of the degree. Finally, high graduate employability rates further corroborate that the intended outcomes are effectively achieved.

Assessment

The panel concludes that the programme successfully demonstrates the achievement of its intended learning outcomes through rigorous constructive alignment. The panel highlights the creative and diverse assessment methods as a strength in verifying these outcomes. Furthermore, the panel's review of the theses confirms that students attain the required academic level, while alumni feedback validates that graduates are well-prepared for the labour market. The panel concludes that the standard is met.

6.7 Standard 2: Learning Outcomes – 2.4 Regulated Professions

If relevant for the specific joint programme, the minimum agreed training conditions specified in the European Union Directive 2005/36/EC, or relevant common trainings frameworks established under the Directive, should be taken into account.

Judgement

Not applicable

6.8 Standard 3: Study Programme [ESG 1.2] – 3.1 Curriculum

The structure and content of the curriculum should be fit to enable the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Judgement

Meets the standard.

Evidence

The Euroculture curriculum is a two-year (120 ECTS) programme structured around four progressive phases: foundational knowledge (Semester 1), exploration and methodology (Semester 2), a professional or academic track (Semester 3), and the Master thesis and interdisciplinary reflection (Semester 4). The programme requires students to study at a minimum of two European partner universities, with options for a third semester at a partner university outside Europe or a professional placement. A central component of the curriculum is the IP, a one-week, cohort-wide event held at the end of the first year. This module brings together students and staff from all full partner universities for academic presentations, peer review, and intercultural exchange. The curriculum integrates disciplines such as political science, history, cultural studies, and law to examine European identity and integration.

The programme structure is modular, allowing students to give their own spin to their degree. As explained by students and staff during the site visit, this flexibility allows for distinct specialisations within the context of the ILOs; for instance, one student focused on migration cinema while others could focus on institutional politics. To address potential disparities in entry-level knowledge, the programme offers mechanisms to level the playing field, such as suggesting students take expanded versions (60 hours vs. 30 hours) of foundational courses. The programme uses a wide variety of teaching methods specific to the respective intended learning outcomes. For example, in Uppsala students participate in a suburb tour of refugee-rich areas to create an understanding beyond the theoretical level, and participate in an underground ethnographic exploration. In Strasbourg, students visit the Council of Europe, and participate in a mock trial where students stated they were able to practice their negotiation skills.

Assessment

The panel concludes that the curriculum is well-structured and fit to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The panel commends the IP as a significant strength of the curriculum. It serves not only as a crucial moment for academic exchange and peer learning but also as a vital mechanism for fostering the jointness of the student cohort and staff.

The Student Chapter noted an EU-leaning lens that might overshadow global perspectives and marginalise a more inclusive understanding of 'Europe'. After the discussions with faculty and students during the site visit, the panel is convinced that the programme successfully balances studying the EU with broader cultural and social perspectives on Europe, while also interrelating Europe with the rest of the world. The panel found that the programme adopts a critical, constructivist approach to Europe, rather than functioning merely as a study of EU institutions. However, the panel notes that the specific academic strengths and regional emphases of the individual partner universities (e.g. a strong EU focus in Göttingen compared to a different focus in other partners) are not always sufficiently clear to prospective and current students. Consequently, the panel recommends the consortium to clarify in its external communication what the specific place of the EU is within the broader curriculum and to emphasize the regional variations and specific expertise available at each partner university. This transparency will help students make informed mobility choices based on whether they seek specific training in EU institutions, policies, and processes, or a more cultural and societal focus. The panel finds that the standard is met.

6.9 Standard 3: Study Programme [ESG 1.2] – 3.2 Credits

The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) should be applied properly and the distribution of credits should be clear.

Judgement

Meets the standard.

Evidence

The Euroculture programme employs the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) with a total study load of 120 EC, evenly distributed across four semesters of 30 EC each. According to the syllabi, Euroculture

offers courses ranging from 5 to 25 ECTS. The distribution of credits across the various course components is clearly documented and applied consistently across the consortium partners. Euroculture awards credits based on defined learning outcomes and their associated workload. Credits are awarded for various types of learning, including courses, research, and internships. The use of ECTS by all partners in Europe and most outside Europe makes it possible to create and document learning pathways, allowing better flexibility and comparability.

Assessment

The panel concludes that the ECTS is applied properly and the distribution of credits is clear and logical. Therefore, the panel considers the standard met.

6.10 Standard 3: Study Programme [ESG 1.2] – 3.3. Workload

A joint bachelor programme will typically amount to a total student workload of 180-240 ECTS-credits; a joint master programme will typically amount to 90-120 ECTS-credits and should not be less than 60 ECTS-credits at second cycle level (credit ranges according to the FQ-EHEA); for joint doctorates there is no credit range specified. The workload and the average time to complete the programme should be monitored.

Judgement

Meets the standard.

Evidence

The Euroculture programme is a two-year Master's programme amounting to 120 ECTS credits, fully aligning with the FQ-EHEA guidelines. One credit is the equivalent of 25 to 30 hours of study. The feasibility of the workload is supported by data showing that approximately 90% of students graduate on time. The consortium systematically monitors student workload through various quality assurance tools, including annual online student evaluations and the annual Student-Staff Round Table held during the IP.

During the site visit, the panel discussed credit allocation in relation to the actual workload. While the general feedback indicated that the distribution is appropriate, there were reflections regarding the IP being demanding. Staff and students noted that the workload for the IP has been recently adjusted to be better distributed, specifically by spreading preparatory work more evenly across the semester to avoid compression. Additionally, the partners have made agreements regarding the deadlines for submitting assignments and taking exams to ensure that there is no overlap. Workload remains a recurring item for monitoring in the quality assurance process.

Assessment

The degree is awarded after completing 120 ECTS which is in the typical range for a master's degree. The panel concludes that the student workload is appropriate and well-monitored. While some students suggested that the IP is particularly intense, the panel noted that this perception was not consistently repeated in conversations with students and alumni, and staff noted that steps had been taken to spread the workload in recent years. However, the panel does advise the programme to remain vigilant. The panel observed from the site visit conversations that Euroculture students are often highly intrinsically motivated and may be inclined to take on more work than required. Some members of staff also suggested that Euroculture students were particularly willing to go the extra mile and were prepared to work more hours than those prescribed by the EC value of a course. The panel advises the programme to safeguard that the number of EC assigned continues to accurately reflect the actual workload, ensuring that students are not implicitly pressured to exceed reasonable limits, even when driven by their own enthusiasm. Given the high success rate and the proactive adjustments made by management regarding the IP workload distribution, the panel considers the standard to be met.

6.11 Standard 4: Admission and Recognition [ESG 1.4] – 4.1 Admission

The admission requirements and selection procedures should be appropriate in light of the programme's level and discipline.

Judgement

Meets the standard.

Evidence

The Euroculture programme employs a centralized admission procedure coordinated by the Consortium Secretariat in Groningen, utilizing a unified online application system. The selection process is transparent, based on a Joint Selection Criteria document that weighs candidates on academic competence (45%), professional competence (20%), and personal competence (35%). These criteria are transparent towards prospective students. During the site visit, the panel discussed specific elements of the selection matrix. It was noted that under the current points system, applicants with backgrounds in disciplines such as European Law are awarded fewer points for degree proximity compared to those from fields like International Relations or History. Following feedback from current students who questioned the validity of reference and motivation letters in the current digital age, the consortium has recently decided to remove the requirement for two letters of recommendation from the admission procedure for future cohorts.

In previous years, the diversity of the student body was supported significantly by Erasmus Mundus scholarships, with the programme hosting students from approximately 80 nationalities. Scholarships are awarded based on a point-ranking system, with the highest-ranking students receiving funding subject to a maximum quota of students selected per region, following European Commission guidelines. Furthermore, the consortium offers financial support in the form of partial fee waivers for specific categories of students, effectively functioning as a tuition discount for eligible applicants who do not receive full grants. Students can appeal decisions on admission and scholarships based on procedural errors.

Finally, the programme dedicates sufficient time and attention to the diversity in disciplinary backgrounds in the first semester by allocating courses that build up a common knowledge and understanding.

Assessment

The panel concludes that the admission requirements are appropriate, transparent and well-structured, meeting the standard. The panel appreciates the consortium's responsiveness to student feedback concerning the admission procedure.

However, the panel has two specific observations regarding the admission and scholarship allocation procedures. First, while the programme attracts a vast diversity in disciplinary backgrounds among students, the panel notes that during the selection process fewer points are, for example, awarded to European law graduates compared to humanities graduates. At the same time, however, the panel gained the impression that students with a law background were a good fit for the programme and were thriving in the current cohort. The panel, therefore, suggests reviewing whether any aspects of the weighting procedure negatively impact the representation of relevant disciplinary backgrounds within the cohort, as multidisciplinary diversity is a key asset of the programme. Second, the panel acknowledges that the current high level of student diversity is partially dependent on Erasmus Mundus funding. While the panel hopes the consortium is successful in its re-application for this funding, it suggests that the programme should proactively review its policies in order to maintain a diverse student population. The panel notes that the consortium has already acknowledged this as a potential threat and that it supports students' applications through national funding where possible.

Overall, the panel concludes that the standard is met.

6.12 Standard 4: Admission and Recognition [ESG 1.4] – 4.2 Recognition

Recognition of qualifications and of periods of studies (including recognition of prior learning) should be applied in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and subsidiary documents.

Judgement

Meets the standard.

Evidence

The Euroculture programme adheres to the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention regarding the recognition of qualifications and periods of study. As detailed in the SER, the consortium operates on a strict

policy of mutual recognition. All credits earned at any of the degree-awarding Full Partners are automatically recognized by all other partners, a mechanism that is legally required for the delivery of joint degrees and underpins the programme's mobility scheme.

Prior qualifications of applicants are evaluated during the admissions process by admission officers at the Full Partners (or centrally at Groningen for scholarship applicants) to ensure eligibility. The Teaching and Examination Regulations (TER) explicitly allow students to request exemptions for specific programme components if they can demonstrate equivalent competence gained through previous higher education or relevant work experience. These requests are assessed on an individual basis by the Director of Studies in consultation with the BoE, ensuring that exemptions are granted consistently and in accordance with the programme's quality standards. Upon successful completion of the programme, each degree is accompanied by a Diploma Supplement issued in English, which details the nature of the programme, the student's specific mobility trajectory, the universities attended, and the grading systems applied.

Assessment

The panel concludes that the recognition procedures are in place and compliant with international standards. The system of automatic mutual recognition of credits functions in an effective manner, ensuring that when students move between universities they face no administrative barriers regarding credit transfer. The programme has accurate procedures in place to allow for the proper recognition of prior qualifications. Consequently, the panel determines that the standard is met.

6.13 Standard 5: Learning, Teaching and Assessment [ESG 1.3] – 5.1 Learning and teaching

The programme should be designed to correspond with the intended learning outcomes, and the learning and teaching approaches applied should be adequate to achieve those. The diversity of students and their needs should be respected and attended to, especially in view of potential different cultural backgrounds of the students.

Judgement

Meets the standard.

Evidence

The programme is built on a student-centred pedagogical vision that promotes active learning, co-creation, and student ownership of their academic trajectory. The curriculum is designed to foster a progressive learning path across four semesters, moving from foundational knowledge to specialization and autonomy. During the site visit students emphasized that faculty members actively help them in developing their individual academic trajectories, particularly during the first semester and within the Eurocompetence courses.

The panel examined how the programme addresses the specific needs of its diverse student body and found strong evidence of a flexible and supportive teaching environment. The panel was provided with specific examples regarding students with special needs where staff demonstrated tailored support across institutions. By adjusting deadlines and providing personalized guidance, the programme successfully facilitated these students' graduation. Alumni confirmed that the balance between soft skills and content knowledge effectively prepared them for the labour market and PhD positions, allowing them to successfully achieve the ILOs. Furthermore, the teaching staff is specifically chosen not only based on their academic credentials but also because of their international mindset and ability to thrive in this multicultural classroom environment. Additionally, the didactic approach actively encourages students to incorporate their own backgrounds and identities into their academic work. The programme fosters creativity by designing tasks where students apply their personal context (whether European or non-European) to the subject matter, allowing them to view Europe from both internal and external perspectives. The panel was provided with a concrete example of a student involved in ecological research in Nigeria prior to starting the programme, who then used the programme's tools to investigate the impact of European policies on the environment in Nigeria. This philosophy of co-creation ensures that students remain active participants in the learning process while adhering to academic requirements.

Because of the international character of the programme and the diverse international staff and students, the language of instruction, teaching, and examination is English. Therefore, the name of the programme is also in English.

Assessment

The panel concludes that the learning and teaching approaches are adequate and well-aligned with the intended learning outcomes. The panel was particularly impressed by the programme's commitment to facilitating individual student success. The specific examples of support provided to students with special needs serve as a testament to the staff's dedication to student well-being and their ability to accommodate diverse needs within a rigorous academic framework. Furthermore, the panel observes that the teaching staff is well-equipped and selected to handle the specific demands of this international classroom, contributing to a high-quality learning environment. The standard was therefore considered met.

6.14 Standard 5: Learning, Teaching and Assessment [ESG 1.3] – 5.2 Assessment of students

The examination regulations and the assessment of the achieved learning outcomes should correspond with the intended learning outcomes. They should be applied consistently among partner institutions.

Judgement

Partially meets the standard.

Evidence

The assessment of students in the Euroculture programme is governed by the joint TER, which prescribe assessment methods for all core and shared courses. Euroculture uses a variety of assessment methods aligned with the teaching methods and the intended learning outcomes. Students are assessed through written assignments, portfolios, oral presentations, and the Master's thesis. The Master's thesis involves assessment by two supervisors, each from a different degree-awarding university. A third independent reader is appointed if the two supervisors disagree on a pass/fail decision. Recently, the consortium has introduced thesis benchmarking to ensure consistency, specifically focusing on the threshold for passing grades. Additionally, the consortium has recently decided that all students will perform an oral defence for their thesis, which was previously a decision at the host institutions' discretion.

Whilst the consortium has made considerable efforts to improve consistency across institutions, there remains room for variation based on local customs. For example, in Krakow, students participate in the typical Polish 'zero-exams' prior to the start of the classes. During the site visit, students shared their appreciation of experiencing different types of learning and assessment practices as part of their international experience.

The Board of Examiners (BoE) is responsible for setting the overall quality assurance of assessment and coordinate the alignment of local Examination Boards with consortium-wide TER. The BoE also has to report regularly to the Management Committee on assessment practices, outcomes, irregularities (if any), and recommendations for improvement. Currently, the BoE is composed of members of the Management Committee, as is required by national legislation in France. This provides a conflict with the legislation of The Netherlands which requires an independent BoE. To address concerns about the independence of the BoE raised in previous accreditations, the consortium has appointed an independent chair and ensured that the BoE convenes separately from the Management Committee to avoid conflicts of interest, including on financial matters. Furthermore, it was emphasized during the site visit that the programme management in Groningen does not possess institutional budgetary power, as decisions regarding teaching budgets and staff formations are made at a higher faculty level. Thereby, the management fulfils the spirit of the law in the Dutch context as much as possible by ensuring the BoE remains independent of financial interests.

Assessment

The panel concludes that while the assessment methods generally correspond to the learning outcomes, there are specific structural issues regarding independence and consistency that prevent the standard from being fully met.

Firstly, the panel has concerns regarding the assessment of the Master's thesis. Given the intense supervision trajectory where two supervisors work closely with students over a long period, the panel believes there is a risk of bias when these same supervisors determine the final grade. To guarantee objectivity, the panel recommends ensuring that the thesis is assessed by at least one independent reviewer who has not been involved in the supervision process.

Secondly, the panel reviewed a sample of 15 Master's theses to verify the achievement of learning outcomes and the quality of assessment. While the panel confirms that the theses generally reflect the required Master's level, the review highlighted inconsistencies in the assessment procedure. The panel observed considerable variation in the completion of assessment forms, ranging from detailed feedback to superficial comments that did not always clearly justify the grade or appeared nearly identical to the other supervisor's comments. Notably, the panel identified a significant discrepancy regarding one thesis, which was awarded a high grade by the supervisors (equivalent to a 9) but was assessed by the panel as merely satisfactory (equivalent to a 6).

The panel appreciates the consortium's recent shift towards calibration and benchmarking of thesis grades. This procedure is, however, currently focused primarily on determining the pass/fail thresholds. The panel therefore recommends extending this calibration to the full range of grades, specifically to define what constitutes "excellent" versus "good" and "adequate" work, to ensuring consistent grading cultures across the consortium. Lastly, the panel notes that the body is not completely independent, as it is composed of the Directors of Studies who are also responsible for the programme management. The panel acknowledges that this situation arises from conflicting national legal frameworks (e.g., requirements in one partner country that examiners must be professors involved in the management committee, versus the requirement in another partner country for full independence of the Board of Examiners). This creates a situation of legal incompatibility between national systems that cannot be resolved by the consortium. The panel is convinced that the management has done what it can to address this conflict, such as by appointing an independent chair and separating financial interests from the Board of Examiners' duties. While the panel accepts this compromise as a necessity of the joint degree context, the structural lack of full independence should remain a point of attention, especially when decisions with potential conflicts of interest are taken.

Due to the concerns regarding the independence of thesis assessment the panel judges that this standard is partially met.

6.15 Standard 6: Student Support [ESG 1.6]

The student support services should contribute to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. They should take into account specific challenges of mobile students.

Judgement

Meets the standard.

Evidence

The Euroculture programme maintains a multi-layered support system designed to navigate the complexities of an international, mobile student cohort. This support is delivered centrally by the Consortium Secretariat and locally by Programme Managers and Directors of Studies at each partner university. Support begins pre-arrival with access to a digital platform containing handbooks and practical guidance on housing and visas. Upon arrival, students participate in intake meetings to discuss their personal goals and orientation towards professional or academic tracks. The staff maintain an open-door policy and actively encourage students through both formal and informal communication to seek support. During the site visit, the panel found evidence of exceptional dedication to solving the specific administrative challenges faced by mobile students. For example, regarding complex visa

procedures for non-EU students, the panel was informed of a specific case involving a student moving to a partner institution from outside the EU, where the programme director intervened personally on a weekly basis to ensure the visa was issued. Regarding well-being and special needs, the programme utilizes pre-semester surveys to identify needs early. Staff demonstrated a high level of flexibility through adjusted deadlines and personalized guidance, enabling students to graduate successfully.

During the site visit, students mentioned that the small and closely connected cohort is one of the biggest strengths of Euroculture. Additionally, students have the opportunity to interact with alumni, such as during the Career Day at the IP, when being put in contact through staff based on individual interests and the alumni's expertise, and during specific events such as a site visit to Brussels. Students expressed their appreciation for meeting with alumni and highly valued this at both a personal and professional level.

Assessment

The panel assesses the student support services as excellent, constituting a specific strength of the programme. The support structures are not only of an administrative nature but deeply integrated into the student's personal and academic development. The panel commends the programme for offering a uniquely individualized trajectory. Through intake meetings and continuous mentoring, staff proactively support students in shaping their own academic or professional paths based on their personal interests and goals. Moreover, the support provided to students is remarkable, offering extensive individual attention ranging from complex visa preparations to monitoring and facilitating general well-being across institutions. The panel concludes that the services provided effectively mitigate the challenges of mobility and significantly contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes. The standard is therefore considered met.

6.16 Standard 7: Resources [ESG 1.5 & 1.6] – 7.1 Staff

The staff should be sufficient and adequate (qualifications, professional and international experience) to implement the study programme.

Judgement

Meets the standard.

Evidence

The Euroculture programme is delivered by a qualified and internationally experienced teaching team drawn from seven European Full Partners and four non-European Academic Associate Partners. The staff represents a broad range of disciplines ensuring the programme's interdisciplinary character is well-supported. Staff holding PhDs (or under the supervision of a senior researcher) are responsible for research-based courses, while staff with a Master's degree (or equivalent) are specifically deployed for service and competence-based components (such as Eurocompetence courses), where professional experience is paramount. The Consortium selects faculty not only based on academic credentials but also on their international teaching experience, English language proficiency, and ability to operate within intercultural frameworks.

Staff support and coordination are facilitated through regular Management Committee meetings and the annual IP, which serves as a platform for alignment, mutual learning, and the refinement of teaching practices. During the site visit, staff members expressed that they feel well-integrated into the programme, citing excellent onboarding processes and clear guidance on relating their teaching to the needs of the programme.

Assessment

The panel concludes that the staff is highly committed to the programme, and sufficient and adequate to implement it. A specific strength noted by the panel is the balance between central coordination and individual academic freedom. Teachers expressed that they do not feel restricted by excessive centralization or rigid guidance; rather, they enjoy the freedom to adapt their teaching while adhering to the shared framework. This autonomy has fostered a sense of ownership and a commendable high enthusiasm among the staff, who view teaching in Euroculture as a privilege. Furthermore, the panel confirmed that the staff possesses the necessary English language skills and is well-equipped to handle the specific demands of an international classroom, effectively managing diverse student backgrounds. The panel concludes that the standard is met.

6.17 **Standard 7: Resources [ESG 1.5 & 1.6] – 7.2 Facilities**

The facilities provided should be sufficient and adequate in view of the intended learning outcomes.

Judgement

Meets the standard.

Evidence

During the site visit in Groningen, the panel was offered a short tour of the facilities, which served as an exemplary overview of the resources available to students within the consortium. As a joint programme involving mobility between at least two universities Euroculture relies on the infrastructure of its partner institutions. Students are formally enrolled at the university hosting them each semester, which guarantees full access to library services (physical and digital), computer labs, study spaces, and academic IT support at every location. To support the continuity of the programme across these different sites, the consortium maintains a dedicated online platform (Brightspace) where core documents, such as the Programme Handbook and course syllabi, are centrally accessible. Additionally, a shared educational website is used specifically to support the IP preparation. To manage the logistics of mobility, the consortium provides comprehensive support services. This includes guidance on visa applications, housing, and insurance, as well as the provision of pre-mobility booklets (Semester Guides) to help students prepare for their moves between universities.

In addition to formal education, students are welcome to join various extracurricular activities, such as exhibitions, or visits to local cultural events like Christmas markets, to experience the distinct culture of their host country. Furthermore, the panel discussed the level of student integration within their host universities outside of the specific Euroculture cohort. The panel noted that integration with the wider local university community can sometimes be challenging in international Master's programmes such as Euroculture. Students indicated that while they feel well-connected within the consortium, connecting with local students outside the programme varies by location and often requires additional effort.

Assessment

The panel concludes that the facilities provided are sufficient and adequate to support the programme. During the site visit, the panel found no concerns regarding the infrastructure, as students appeared satisfied with the resources available to them. The panel encourages the programme to continue facilitating the interactions of students with the wider University environment beyond the Euroculture cohort to ensure students are not isolated from the local academic culture. The panel concludes this standard is met.

6.18 **Standard 8: Transparency and Documentation [ESG 1.8]**

Relevant information about the programme like admission requirements and procedures, course catalogue, examination and assessment procedures etc. should be well documented and published by taking into account specific needs of mobile students.

Judgement

Meets the standard.

Evidence

The programme ensures that relevant information is well documented and accessible to both prospective and enrolled students. The central website serves as the primary information hub, providing comprehensive details on admission requirements, selection procedures, scholarship opportunities, and the structure of the curriculum. For enrolled students, the digital learning environment (Brightspace) functions as a central repository for all essential documentation, including the course catalogue, the programme handbook, and the TER. This digital learning environment is managed by RUG university who also offers technical assistance to Euroculture staff, lecturers, and students using the environment.

The programme utilizes specific information booklets (Semester Guides) to facilitate the mobility of students between universities, helping them make informed choices regarding their second and third-semester

destinations. Additionally, the assessment procedures and criteria are clearly documented in the TER and specific thesis guidelines, ensuring transparency regarding grading and expectations. During the site visit, students confirmed that they are well-onboarded and that the central information provided via Brightspace allows them to follow all procedures transparently.

Assessment

The panel concludes that the programme is overall transparent about its procedures and requirements. The documentation provided to students is substantial, ensuring they are well-informed about their rights, obligations, and the practicalities of their mobility tracks.

The panel sees room for improvement regarding the external communication of the programme's specific profile. While the programme adopts a critical and constructivist approach to "Europe," questioning the equation of Europe with the EU, the panel noted that some incoming students still expect a more traditional "European Studies" curriculum focused on EU institutions, and noted from the Student Chapter in the SER that other students viewed the curriculum as too focused on an EU-lens. The panel believes that these experiences are dependent on the individual trajectories and partner institutions selected by the student. To manage these expectations and attract the right students, the panel advises the consortium to clarify the approach towards Europe by clearly articulate the programme's critical and constructivist lens in external communications to distinguish it from programmes focused on studying the European Union. Secondly, the panel recommends that the consortium makes the distinct academic profiles and specific strengths of each partner university more explicit to prospective students. For example, if a student desires specific training in EU institutions and policies, they should be clearly directed toward partners such as Göttingen or Strasbourg, while those with a stronger interest in cultural studies can be directed to other partner universities. Despite these recommendations for refining the external message, the internal transparency and documentation regarding the study programme are fully compliant with the requirements of this standard, and therefore the standard is considered met.

6.19 Standard 9: Quality Assurance [ESG 1.1 & part 1]

The cooperating institutions should apply joint internal quality assurance processes in accordance with part one of the ESG.

Judgement

Meets the standard.

Evidence

The programme operates under a jointly developed quality assurance (QA) system that fully adheres to Part 1 of the ESG and applies the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle across components of the programme. The well-functioning QA cycle is evidenced by recent developments, such as the introduction of thesis calibration mechanisms and the amended thesis assessment form, designed to ensure consistency across the consortium. Additionally, the QA system shows its ability to adapt to recent challenges through active steps undertaken regarding Generative AI. By developing, on the one hand, new forms of creative assessment methods (such as video productions) and oral presentations that verify the authenticity of students' work, and on the other hand developing local and consortium-wide frameworks, specific learning lines (such as the 'Navigating the Information Landscape' line which is currently being developed), and student declarations dealing with Generative AI, the consortium shows its ability to adjust the programme where required.

The governance of this system lies with the Management Committee, which comprises Directors of Studies and Programme Managers from all partner universities. This committee meets in person twice a year to evaluate the programme's implementation, ensure curriculum coherence, and integrate feedback from various stakeholders. A central element of the QA system is student representation. Students are structurally involved through the annual Student-Staff Round Table held during the IP. To ensure effective dialogue, this forum has transitioned from general discussions to specific "topical tables" attended by observers who help distinguish between local issues and broader systemic issues requiring consortium-level attention. Matters identified as strictly local are

resolved by the specific institution through regular follow-up procedures, while larger structural issues are brought to the Management Committee. This structure addresses problems, but also facilitates the sharing of positive innovations. The panel was provided with an example where the consortium identified a highly effective student information sheet originally developed at Uppsala University. Following the Round Table, this local initiative was formalized into a protocol, demonstrating the consortium's ability to identify successful local solutions and implement them across the entire consortium.

Another example provided to the panel of suggestions directly stemming from student representatives that had been implemented by the Programme Committee, is the amendment to the admissions procedure listed previously within this report. Additionally, student representatives attend Management Committee meetings, and feedback is gathered systematically through course evaluations and alumni surveys.

The BoE also plays a crucial role in the QA framework by monitoring compliance with the joint TER and overseeing the quality of assessment and degree-awarding processes. Furthermore, the consortium will introduce the inclusion of an external academic reviewer (as member of the Advisory Council) for key academic decisions to further reinforce transparency and impartiality. By installing an Advisory Council, the consortium aims to further aid a critical reflection of their own efforts to identify blind spots, and to foresee current and expected changes in the professional work field that require adaptations to the programme.

Assessment

The panel concludes that the cooperating institutions apply effective joint internal quality assurance processes. The panel found evidence of a shared quality culture where feedback loops result in tangible improvements to the curriculum and organisation. The panel observes that the BoE effectively performs its monitoring tasks, proven by recent developments such as the calibration efforts and the amended thesis assessment form.

The panel is particularly positive about the active student representation within the QA cycle. The Round Table provides a meaningful platform for dialogue, ensuring that the student voice directly impacts decision-making. During the site visit, students expressed an appreciation for both formal and informal manners in which they can provide feedback to the programme, facilitated by small cohorts and close connections with staff. The panel does advise to maintain methods to provide anonymous feedback, even when informal direct feedback is widely available. The panel concludes that the standard is met.

Annex 1: Agenda site visit

The panel undertook a site visit on 18 December 2025 as part of the external assessment procedure regarding the Master Euroculture at Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands.

08.30 – 09.00	Tour of the facilities	Coordinator of the consortium, vice-Dean, chair of the cluster board
09.00 – 09.10	Welcome	Programme managers, coordinator of the consortium, directors of studies, vice-dean, consortium secretariat
09.10 – 09.30	Closed panel session	Panel
09.30 – 10.20	Management of the consortium	Coordinator of the consortium, directors of studies, consortium secretariat
10.20 – 10.40	Closed panel session	Panel only
10.40 – 11.40	Teaching staff	Lecturers
11.40 – 12.00	Closed panel session	Panel only
12.00 – 12.30	Students currently enrolled in the joint programme	Students currently enrolled in the joint programme, cohorts 2024-2026 and 2025-2027
12.30 – 13.30	Closed panel session and lunch	Panel only
13.30 – 14.15	Quality assurance	Coordinator of the consortium, head of examinations, chair Board of Examiners Euroculture, chair programme committee, lecturer, deputy director of international programmes, vice-dean for international affairs, head of examinations (local), quality assurance
14.15 – 14.35	Closed panel session	Panel only
14.35 – 15.05	Alumni and professional field representatives	Alumni, labour market expert
15.05 – 15.35	Programme managers	Programme managers
15.35 – 17.30	Deliberation panel	Panel only
17.30 – 18.00	Sharing main findings with management	All Euroculture directors of study, coordinator of the consortium
18.00 – 18.15	Public presentation of the main findings	All participants of the consortium, students, alumni, vice-dean

Annex 2: Documents reviewed

Documents presented by the institution

- Self-evaluation report
- Annex 1: Documents supporting the legal status of the Full Partner institutions/Proof of accreditation
- Annex 2: Cooperation Agreement (Consortium Agreement)
- Annex 3: Documents supporting each partner's legal basis for participating in the joint programme and Joint Degree awarding rights
- Annex 4: List of intended learning outcomes (matrix of alignment with QF-EHEA and EQF for LLL, aligned with national qualifications frameworks)
- Annex 5: Course syllabi
- Annex 6: Structure of the curriculum
- Annex 7: Admission requirements and selection procedures
- Annex 8: Recognition of qualifications
- Annex 9: Student assessment regulations
- Annex 10: Academic staff CVs
- Annex 11: Internal quality assurance measures
- Annex 12: Diploma Supplement samples
- Annex 13: Euroculture Student Chapter for the NVAO EA QA, 2025
- Annex 14: ECTS Grading Table
- Annex 15: Overview associate partners
- Annex 16: Distribution of students across academic and professional tracks
- Annex 17: Strategic analysis
- Annex 18: Overview of professional track placements
- Annex 19: Problems identified and solutions found by the Euroculture Management Committee
- Annex 20: Consortium course guidelines (only Master Thesis Guidelines, all other documents on Brightspace)
- Annex 21: Consortium semester guides (only on Brightspace)
- Annex 22: Disciplinary expertise of all Full Partners
- Annex 23: Table of contents of Euroculture Programme Handbook (EURECA)
- Annex 24: Euroculture Management Chart and list of roles and responsibilities of all Euroculture partners
- Annex 25: Tasks and duties of the Management Committee
- Annex 26: Tasks and duties of Board of Examiners
- Annex 27: Euroculture ESG compliance

Documents made available during the panel visit

- Euroculture Master Thesis: Student Declaration
- Euroculture Thesis Assessment Form (2024-2026)
- Addendum 1: Board of Examiners
- Placement Manual 2025-2027
- Quality Assurance Calibration Form for Euroculture (third reader assessment)

Annex 3: Abbreviations

BoE	Board of Examiners
CALOHEE	Measuring and Comparing Achievements of Learning Outcomes in Higher Education in Europe
DEQAR	database of external quality assurance results
EC	European Credit
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
EU	European Union
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
ILOs	intended learning outcomes
IP	Intensive Programme
LLL	Lifelong Learning
MA	Master
NVAO	Accreditation Organisation of The Netherlands and Flanders
QA	Quality Assurance
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
TER	Teaching and Examination Regulations

This advisory report was written at the request of NVAO and is the outcome of the peer review of the existing programme

Euroculture: European Politics, Culture, and Society in a Global Context

Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (The Netherlands, coordinator), Georg-August-Universität Göttingen (Germany), Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie (Poland), Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci (Czech Republic), Université de Strasbourg (France), Uppsala universitet (Sweden), Università degli studi di Udine (Italy), Universidad de Deusto (Spain)

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