

# Foreword

In November 2003, ENQA organised in co-operation with its Italian member agency, Comitato per la Valutazione del Sistema Universitario, a workshop on *Accreditation Models in Higher Education – Experiences and Perspectives* in Rome, Italy. The intention of the workshop was to understand the principles of the various accreditation methodologies and models in higher education, to demonstrate examples of possible good practices on the basis of country case studies, to discuss and evaluate the usefulness of accreditation activities, their strengths and weaknesses, and to make recommendations for the future.

Accreditation is a complex concept and wide-ranging as a practice, without one single denotation. In fact, national adaptations and practices vary considerably. Exactly for this reason, the workshop proved to be a successful forum for learning from each other in terms of good accreditation practices and experiences. In addition, the dialogue on the nature, purpose and objectives of accreditation, and an examination of the weak and strong points contributed to a greater understanding of accreditation in a European context. Moreover, the workshop considered the differences between accreditation and evaluation, finding that both of these modes of operation aiming to assure quality in higher education contain a developmental aspect in them.

The Rome workshop contributions have been collected to this workshop report. Unfortunately, because of limited space, the individual contributions by the workshop guest speakers have had to be shortened. However, the full version of each of the workshop presentations, including the PowerPoint presentations that are not included here, can be found on the ENQA website ([http://www.enqa.net/workshop\\_rome.lasso](http://www.enqa.net/workshop_rome.lasso)). The report is structured so that it begins with three general articles on accreditation. This is followed by seven country cases and finally, a conclusion on the contribution of the workshop.

It is my hope that this report will be of use to many, enhancing further the benefits of the workshop by continuing the sharing of ideas and fruitful discussion on accreditation, its methodologies and practices. Through the publication of this report ENQA wishes to emphasise its support for accreditation as an important method of the overall concept of quality assurance.

**Christian Thune**

President

ENQA Board