



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova – Republic of Kosovo
Agjencia e Kosovës për Akreditim
Agencija Kosova za Akreditaciju
Kosovo Accreditation Agency



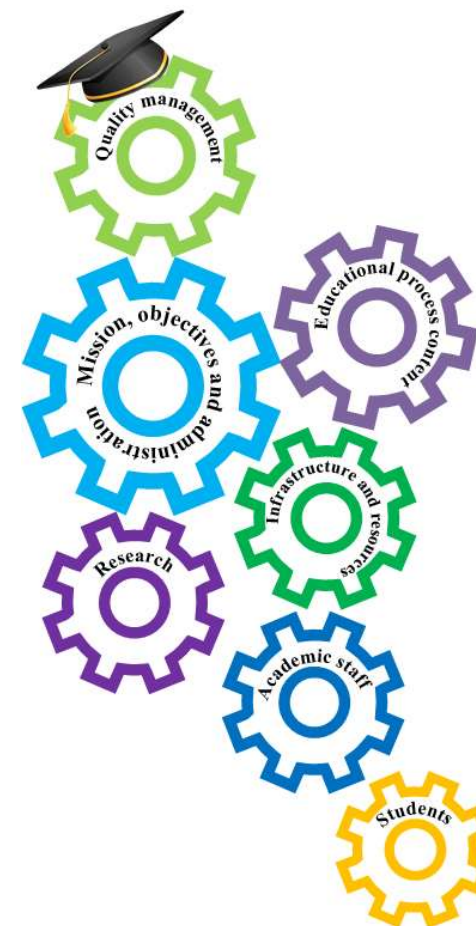
With funding from
 **Austrian
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HERAS
Higher Education, Research
and Applied Science **Plus**

2023 CONFERENCE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Naim Gashi
KAA General Director

26 SEPTEMBER, PRISTINA



2 February 2024

Naim Gashi - KAA General Director

Statistics of the HEI in Kosovo



- ▶ According to the data of the Statistics Agency of Kosovo the total number of students in Public Universities and Private Colleges for the **2021/2022 academic year is 70,184.**
- ▶ Kosovo has **9 public** higher education institutions:
- ▶ **7 universities/** 1 college, and 1 faculty.
- ▶ Kosovo also has **11 private colleges and**
- ▶ **1 international college.**

Kosovo Accreditation Agency



- ▶ The Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) was established by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) in 2008, in accordance with the Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo.
- ▶ The Kosovo Accreditation Agency now operates under Law No. 08/L-110 on the Kosovo Accreditation Agency and is a regulatory agency for quality assurance in higher education in the Republic of Kosovo.
- ▶ Kosovo is the first country in the Balkans and the second country in Southeastern Europe (after Slovakia) to have specific law for the Accreditation Agency.
- ▶ The law ensures full operational, financial, and institutional independence for the KAA

KAA Structure



- ▶ Administrative structure, which is led by the General Director, currently employs 15 staff
- ▶ State Council of Quality (SCQ) which is decision-making body of KAA. According to the Law on KAA, SCQ consists of six local members and three international members.
- ▶ Of the six local members, five of them are from the academic areas and one is student representative. The KAA General Director and two industry representatives are Board members without a voting right.
- ▶ Appeal Committee – consists of six members

KAA Role



- ▶ KAA is the only institution in Kosovo that conducts accreditation, re-accreditation, validation, and monitoring of both public and private higher education institutions in Kosovo, as well as their study programs.
- ▶ Through the accreditation process, KAA actively promotes the enhancement of quality in higher education, and assuring society that the higher education offerings in Kosovo meet international standards.
- ▶ Since its establishment, KAA has aligned its standards and procedures for accreditation with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG 2015) and has made them readily accessible on its official website.

KAA Main Values



- ▶ **Independence** – The decisions of the KAA are made independently and reasoned in a stable and verifiable manner;
- ▶ **Transparency** – KAA is guided by the principles of responsibility and public accountability through an effective information policy;
- ▶ **Reliability** – KAA organizes credible external quality assurance processes, where the academic community and society in general trust the work of KAA;
- ▶ **Professionalism** – KAA applies high professional standards applicable in Europe in external quality assurance processes.

Standards and Procedures



Since its establishment, KAA has developed all standards and procedures for accreditation in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) and has published them on its official website.

In order to develop a transparent accreditation process, KAA has developed the necessary documents on accreditation procedures that can be used by HEIs, as follows:

- ▶ KAA standards, for BSc, Master and PhD studies;
- ▶ KAA guidelines on drafting the self-assessment report (SAR) for the assessment of higher education institutions and their study programmes;
- ▶ Accreditation Manual.

International experts



- ▶ According to KAA's law and previous legal acts, all external experts come from **European Union** countries and **ENQA/EQAR member states**.
- ▶ In 2021, there were 81 experts engaged
- ▶ In 2022, there were 75 experts engaged
- ▶ In 2023, there were 56 experts engaged
- ▶ In all expert teams, there have also been students experts.

Internationalization and partnerships



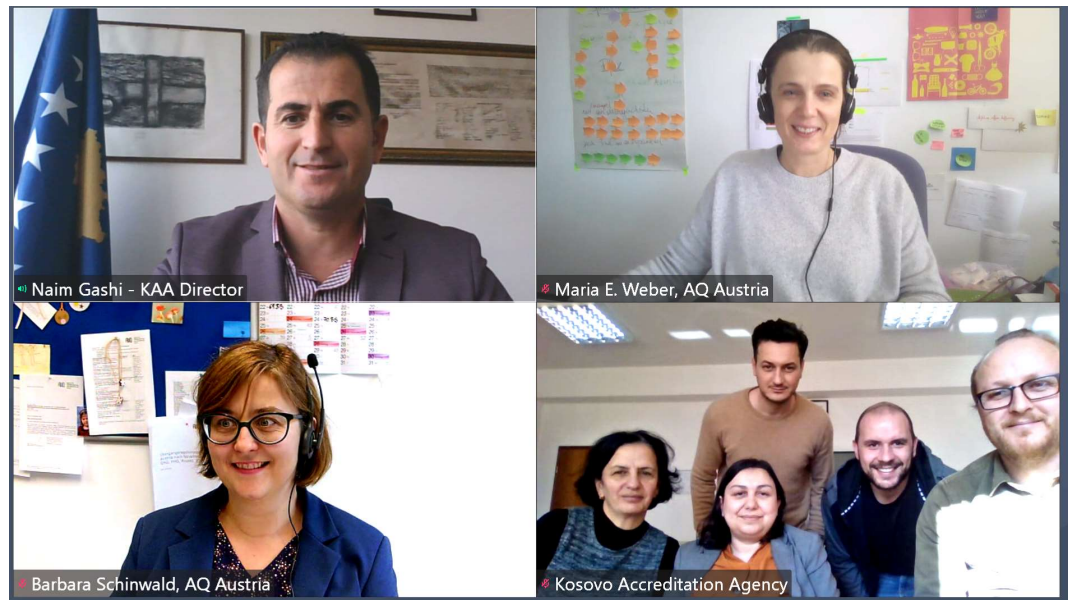
- ▶ European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) – Affiliate Member;
 - ▶ Central and Eastern European Network of Higher Education Quality Assurance Agencies (CEENQA) – Member;
 - ▶ Global Academic Integrity Network (GAIN) – Member;
 - ▶ European Council of Leading Business Schools (ECLBS) – Member
- Etc..



Twinning between Kosovo and Austria Accreditation Agencies



- ▶ With the support of the Heras Plus project, funded by the Austrian Agency for International Development (ADA), the Kosovo Accreditation Agency is twinned with the Austrian counterpart Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation.
- ▶ This project increases the cooperation in the field of education between Kosovo and Austria.



Donors



► Austrian Development Agency ADA

- HERAS +
- QAIN Project
- HEI 25

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- USA Embassy in Kosovo
- TAIEX Expert Mission



ENQA recommendations



- ▶ On October 1, 2019, ENQA sent a letter to KAA containing several recommendations. These recommendations have been incorporated into:
- ▶ KAA's Strategic Plan
- ▶ Performance Indicators
- ▶ Annual Activity Plan
- ▶ All internal regulations of KAA.



European Association for
Quality Assurance in Higher Education

1st Recommendation: Consensus among all stakeholders



ENQA's recommendation's have been incorporated into 11 key activities.

The first recommendation is consensus among all stakeholders on KAA's role:

- ▶ The Law was approved with full consensus, involving both the majority and the opposition in the Parliament.
- ▶ In the Parliament of Kosovo, 17 public hearings were held on the KAA Law, with the participation of all higher education stakeholders, including EQAR and ENQA representative.
- ▶ Approval of the Strategic Plan with the involvement of all higher education stakeholders.
- ▶ Approval of performance indicators.
- ▶ Approval of the Annual Activity Plan.

2nd Recommendation: Thematic analyses



KAA has approved the **Guidelines on conducting thematic analyses by Kosovo Accreditation Agency**.

- ▶ We have conducted two thematic analyses:
- ▶ The thematic analysis for "**Institutional Accreditation of HEIs in Kosovo**" aims to contribute to the implementation of the KAA strategy.
- ▶ The thematic Analysis on "**Preparing Kosovar graduates for the labor market - Employer and Alumni Perspective**"
- ▶ The third thematic analysis regarding the **programme accreditation process of programs** is currently in progress.

3rd Recommendation: Human Resources



Increase the number of Staff

- ▶ In March 2020, we had 5 officials. Today, we are 15 officials. Currently, we are in the process of recruiting two new staff members.
- ▶ By the end of the year, we will have a total of 17 staff members.
- ▶ The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance **have approved 32 job positions for KAA.**
- ▶ Once we move to the new facility, we will also hire additional personnel.

4th Recommendation: Internal Quality Assurance

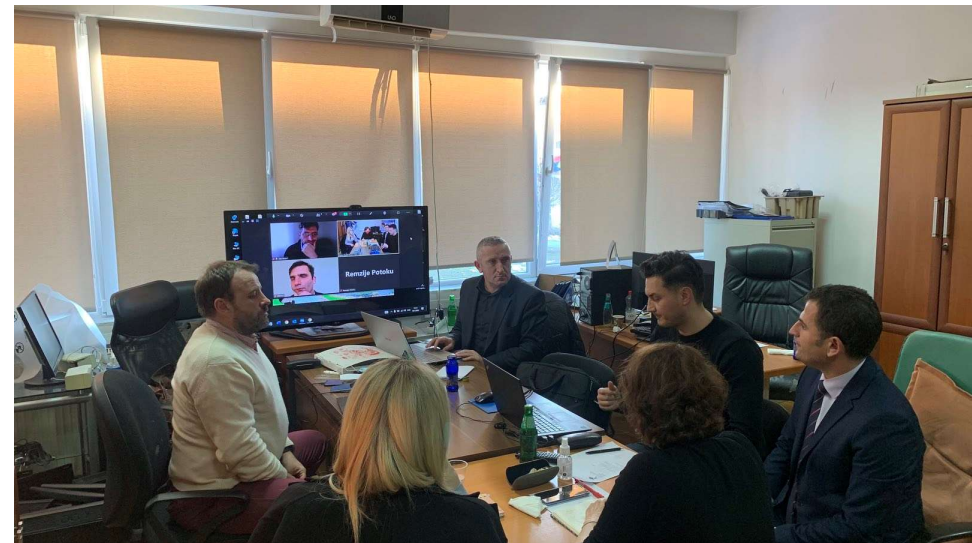


- ▶ KAA has approved the guideline for internal quality assurance.
- ▶ The purpose of this guideline is to provide guidelines for a performance evaluation process to be implemented by the Kosovar Accreditation Agency - KAA. Kosovar Accreditation Agency is committed to supporting every employee to reach their potential and achieve their personal goals, which in turn will assist the agency to achieve its objectives.

5th Recommendation: Regular Accreditation Process



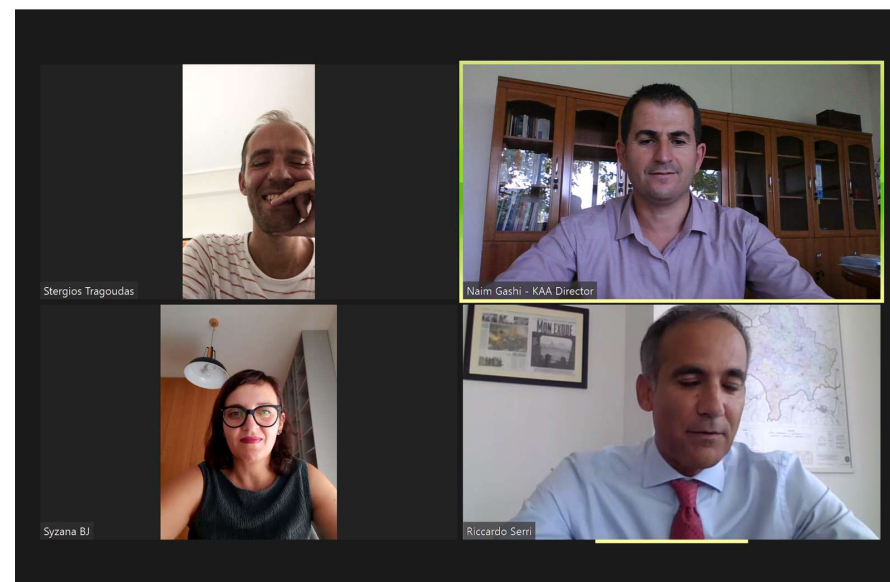
- ▶ Regular Accreditation Process
- ▶ Despite the pandemic challenges, since 2021, KAA has been consistently completing the accreditation process.



European Commission Report on Kosovo



- ▶ The European Commission Report for Kosovo, October 2021 in the section on the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) is accurate, very positive and encouraging for the work of the KAA and gives hope for a return to ENQA and EQAR.
- ▶ Although affected by the pandemic, the European Commission estimated that, quote: **"The Agency managed to complete the full cycle of accreditation for the academic year 2021-2022, reducing the number of programs and institutions, based on quality criteria."**



6th Recommendation: Monitoring



- ▶ We have approved the methodology for monitoring and post-accreditation procedures.
- ▶ Since May 2022, the monitoring and post-accreditation procedures have been progressing smoothly.
- ▶ Yesterday our board reviewed the monitoring reports and made decisions regarding them.



7th Recommendation: Training of experts



- ▶ Before each accreditation process, KAA's staff conducts training for the external experts.
- ▶ KAA has also prepared a manual for external assessors, containing all the information about the higher education system in Kosovo, legislation, regulations, etc.



8th Recommendation: Students involvement



- ▶ Since 2020, student experts have been actively involved in every accreditation process.
- ▶ Also, KAA Director has approved Guidelines for Increasing Student Involvement in Quality Assurance Processes in Higher Education in Kosovo.

Angazhimi i studentëve në qeverisjen e arsimit të lartë dhe sigurimin e cilësisë duhet të bazohet në këto parime



9th Recommendation: Transparency



- ▶ KAA is a highly transparent institution.
- ▶ All our decisions, all reports from international experts, and all our documents are published on the Agency's website in Albanian, English, and, for some documents, in Serbian as well.



KAA website and official Facebook



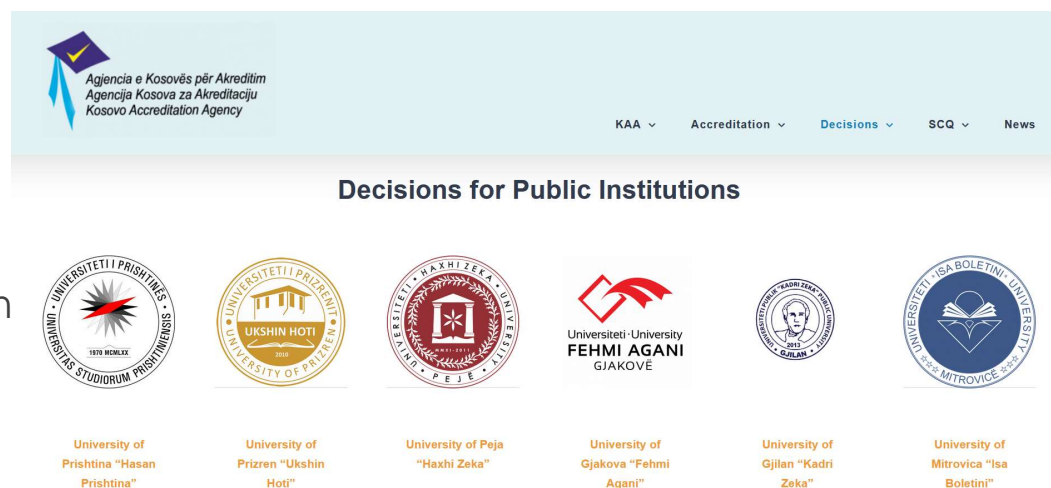
- ▶ Funded by the Embassy of the United States of America, the new KAA website has been developed in 2021.
- ▶ The site is in three languages, Albanian, English and Serbian. All decisions and developments in KAA are published on the website.
- ▶ KAA has also launched the official Facebook profile, where all news, announcements, and developments in KAA are published.



All decisions and reports of international accreditation experts are published



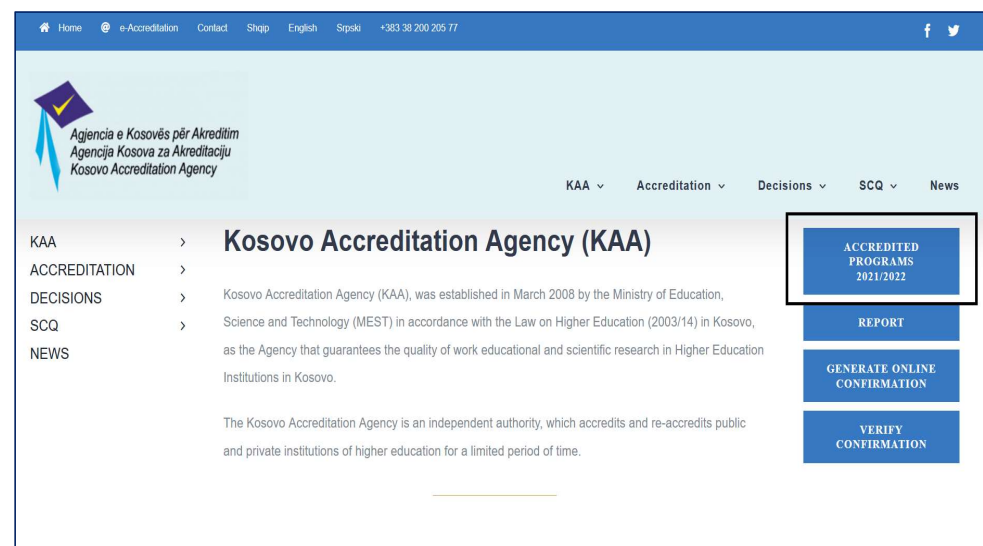
- For the purpose of full transparency and accountability to the public, the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) all decisions and final reports of international accreditation experts.
- The KAA publishes all its documents on its official website.



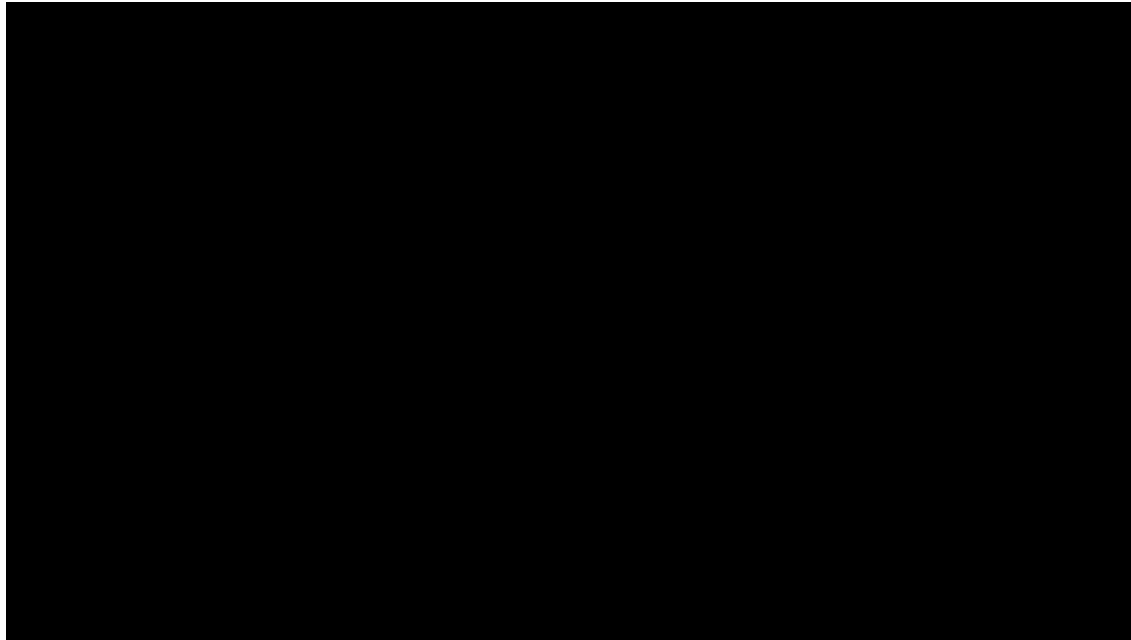
KAA publishes the list of accredited programs and information videos



- ▶ Kosovo Accreditation Agency has published on 06.08.2021 the list of programs accredited in higher education institutions in the Republic of Kosovo for the new academic year 2021/2022.
- ▶ Also, with its own budget the KAA has published an advertising video which advises young students to visit the KAA website before deciding to apply in any of the Kosovo HEIs.



Awareness Raising Video for students



Cooperation with civil society



- ▶ The work of KAA is monitored by three local organizations and by the Embassy of the United States.
- ▶ ORCA
- ▶ BIRN
- ▶ EDGUARD



10th Recommendation: Expansion of Facilities



- ▶ The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MASHT) has allocated a public facility for KAA, covering over 1000 square meters.
- ▶ The facility will be highly modern and located in the New Pristina area.



11th Recommendation: Progress visit



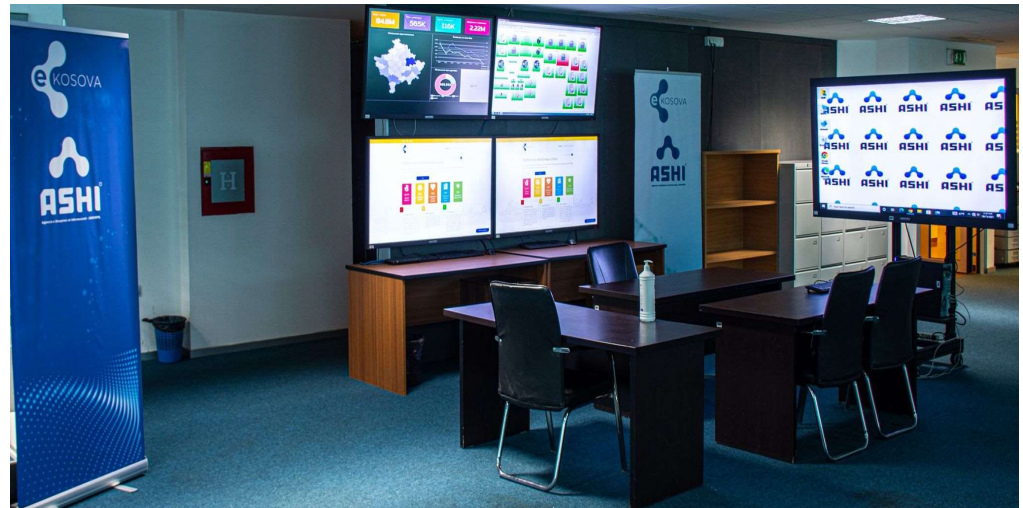
- ▶ Progress Visit Development by ENQA
- ▶ On October 11, KAA will host a progress visit by ENQA, led by the Accreditation and International Cooperation Manager of AQ Austria, Ms. Maria Weber.



AShI guarantees the cyber security of KAA



- In addition to the creation of the new website, the transfer of KAA servers to the Agency for Society Information (AShI) was also done. KAA website, the issuance of electronic confirmations for accreditation and the E-Accreditation platform where it stores the data of over 4000 academic staff, is guaranteed by AShI.



Linking the E-Accreditation Platform with the Tax Administration



- KAA owns the electronic platform E-Accreditation which stores all data of academic staff in the Republic of Kosovo. KAA has connected this platform with the servers of the Tax Administration of Kosovo, to verify if the academic staff has more than one full-time job.
- This project was realized with the support of ALLED II, funded by ADA.

The screenshot displays the 'e-Akreditimi' platform interface. On the left is a sidebar with navigation options: 'Mirësevini, e-Akreditimi Supervisor', 'Këshilli Shtetëror i Cilësisë (KSHC)', 'Agjencia e Kosovës për Akreditim (AKA)', 'Aplikacionet për Akreditim', 'Pasqyra e Stafit Akademik', 'Pasqyra e Stafit AkademikV2', 'Faturat për Proces të Akreditimit', and 'Financa/Shpenzimet'. The main area shows a table of academic staff with columns: 'Emri Mbiemri', 'Emri i Biznesit', 'Numri fiskal', 'Muaji i Viti', and 'Primar/Sekondar'. A modal window titled 'Te dhënat nga ATK' is open, displaying two rows of tax data. The first row shows 'Emri Mbiemri: [redacted]', 'Emri i Biznesit: Ezer Group OJRTK', 'Numri fiskal: 810872946', 'Muaji i Viti: 10 \ 2021', and 'Primar/Sekondar: Primar'. The second row shows 'Emri Mbiemri: [redacted]', 'Emri i Biznesit: Kanceli i Mbrojtjes Për Detyrues dhe Tërbësues', 'Numri fiskal: 810514853', 'Muaji i Viti: 10 \ 2021', and 'Primar/Sekondar: Primar'. Below the modal, there is a table with columns: 'Emri', 'Mbiemri', 'Konfirmimi', 'Të dhënat personale', 'Dokumentet', 'Angazhimet', 'ATK', and 'Konfirmo'. The 'Konfirmimi' column contains the text 'Pa konfirmuar nga AKA' for each row. The 'ATK' column contains an information icon and a checkbox.

Emri Mbiemri	Emri i Biznesit	Numri fiskal	Muaji i Viti	Primar/Sekondar
[redacted]	Ezer Group OJRTK	810872946	10 \ 2021	Primar
[redacted]	Kanceli i Mbrojtjes Për Detyrues dhe Tërbësues	810514853	10 \ 2021	Primar

Emri	Mbiemri	Konfirmimi	Të dhënat personale	Dokumentet	Angazhimet	ATK	Konfirmo
[redacted]	[redacted]	Pa konfirmuar nga AKA	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
[redacted]	[redacted]	Pa konfirmuar nga AKA	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
[redacted]	[redacted]	Pa konfirmuar nga AKA	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
[redacted]	[redacted]	Pa konfirmuar nga AKA	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
[redacted]	[redacted]	Pa konfirmuar nga AKA	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]

SCQ and KAA visits to all higher education institutions



- ▶ The President of the State Council of Quality (SCQ), members of the Council and the leaders of the KAA, have visited all accredited institutions of higher education in Kosovo.
- ▶ During the visits, in addition to the management, meetings were held with student representatives and the academic community.



Meetings with students



- During the visits, except for the management, meetings have taken place with students and the academic community.



Ongoing main project – Digitalization



- ▶ With the funding from ADA Austria through the HEI 25 project, we are currently in the process of contracting a contractor for the digitization of all processes at KAA.
- ▶ The overall value of the project is approximately 100,000 euros. Currently, we have digitized several services, but we aim to have a one-stop shop for all our procedures.

With funding from

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 **HEI'25**
Higher Education Intervention 2025



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Kosovo Accreditation Agency



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DIGITALIZATION FEASIBILITY STUDY

This report was produced at the request of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency. The report was prepared independently by:

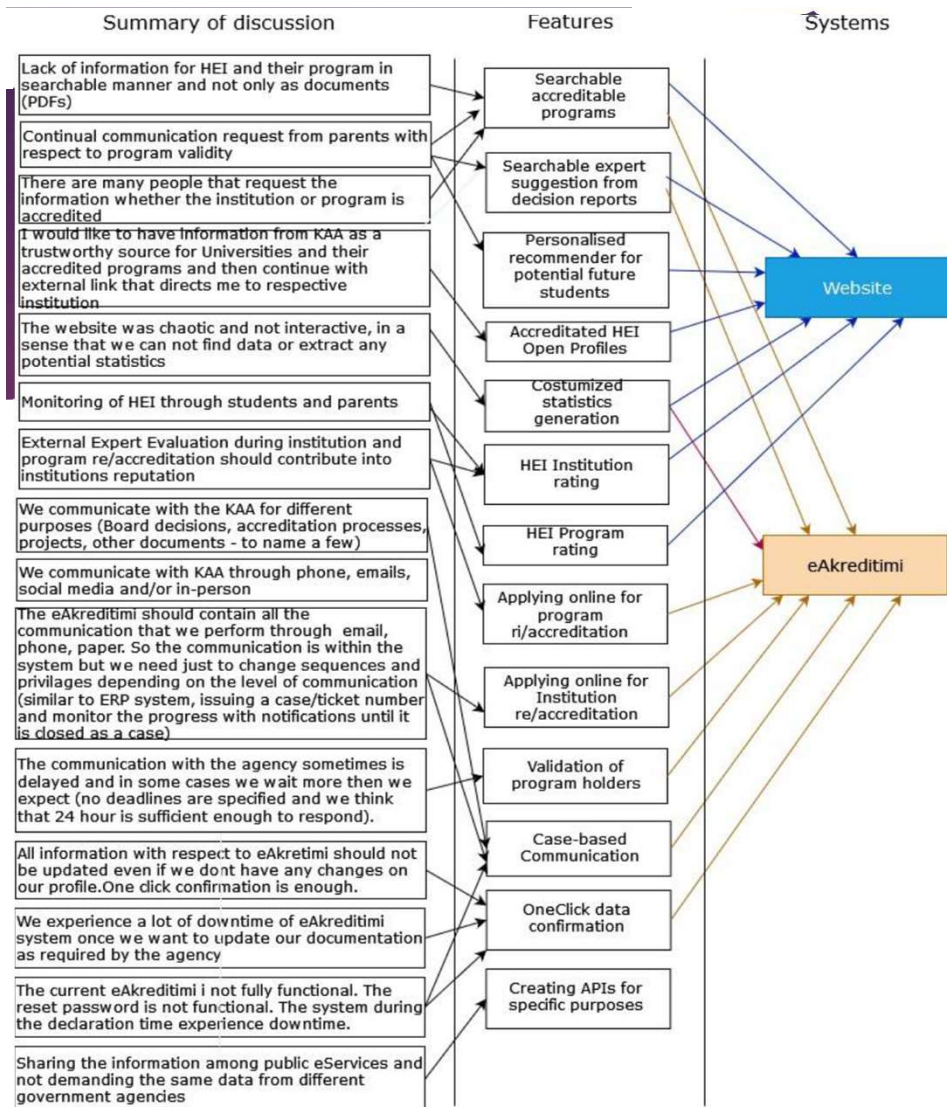
Dr. Trenia Walker from the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, U.S.A.

Dr. Krenare Pireva Nuci from the State Council of Quality (SCQ) of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency, Pristina, RKS.

Flamur Abazaj from the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA), Pristina, RKS.

November 2021

Naim Gashi - KAA General Director



2 February
2024

Next step



- After implementing all of these recommendations, we plan to undergo full evaluation by ENQA at the beginning of 2024.



Thank you for your attention!



See you at the next event!



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