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Agjencia e Kosovës për Akreditim  
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Kosovo Accreditation Agency

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NGA/OD/FROM	Prof. Hasnije Ilazi, Chair of the State Council of Quality (SCQ)
PERMES/THROUGH	Naim Gashi, General Director of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA)
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## ANNUAL WORK REPORT OF THE STATE COUNCIL OF QUALITY AND THE KOSOVO ACCREDITATION AGENCY FOR THE YEAR 2025

Prishtinë, March 2026



AKA | Qendra e Studentëve, 10000 Prishtinë, Kosovë  
Tel. +383 38 200 65 753 | <https://akreditimi.rks-gov.net/>



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## Abbreviations

ADA – Austrian Development Agency

KAA – Kosovo Accreditation Agency

CEENQA – Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

CHEA – Council for Higher Education Accreditation

ENQA – European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

EQAR – European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education

ESG – Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

HEI – Higher Education Institution

Public HEI – Higher Education Institutions funded by the Government of the Republic of Kosovo

Private HEI – Self-financed Higher Education Institutions

INQAAHE – International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

AC – Appeals Committee, which reviews complaints submitted by HEIs regarding SCQ decisions

NQF – National Qualifications Framework

SCQ – State Council of Quality

Law on HE – Law on Higher Education

MESTI – Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation

IRP – Implementation of Recommendations Plan

SER – Self-Evaluation Report

QA – Quality Assurance

AI – Administrative Instruction

KSAC – Kosovo Subject Area Code

# 1. Introduction

This annual report provides a comprehensive overview of the activities, processes, and institutional developments of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) for the year 2025. The report aims to present structured information on the functioning of the quality assurance system in higher education in the Republic of Kosovo, reflecting the main evaluation/accreditation processes, decision-making, and developments that have characterized the work of the Agency during the reporting period.

This document presents the activities and decisions of the State Council of Quality (SCQ), as the highest decision-making body of KAA, the administrative and professional activities of KAA, as well as the work of the Appeals Committee in addressing matters related to accreditation and quality assurance processes in higher education.

The report also reflects institutional developments, international memberships, improvements to the regulatory framework, and the strengthening of cooperation with higher education institutions and international partners. These developments have contributed to the advancement of quality assurance mechanisms and the alignment of Kosovo's higher education system with European and international standards and practices.

More specifically, the report includes:

1. Evaluation/accreditation processes of higher education institutions and their study programs at Level V of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), as well as Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral levels, for the year 2025;
2. Activities and developments contributing to the internal quality assurance of KAA's work and the functioning of the State Council of Quality, as the decision-making body of KAA;
3. Developments that enabled KAA's re-registration in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), as well as progress towards membership in the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA);
4. Strategic orientation towards expanding cooperation and integrating KAA into accreditation networks in the United States, including the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA);
5. Cooperation with national and international partner institutions.

## 2. Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA)

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) was established by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) in 2008, in accordance with Law No. 04/L-037 on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo. Since 2023, the Kosovo Accreditation Agency operates under Law No. 08/L-110 on KAA and holds the status of a regulatory agency for quality assurance in higher education in the Republic of Kosovo.

KAA is responsible of accreditation, re-accreditation, validation, and monitoring processes for public and private higher education institutions in Kosovo, as well as their study programs. Through the accreditation process, KAA supports the continuous development and enhancement of quality in higher education and thereby ensures that higher education provision in Kosovo is aligned with comparable international standards.

The activities of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) are conducted within a well-defined legal framework, comprising the Law on Higher Education in Kosovo<sup>1</sup> (No. 04/L-037, dated 31 August 2011), Law No. 08/L-110 on KAA<sup>2</sup>, as well as secondary legislation and regulations adopted by KAA. Since its establishment, and in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)<sup>3</sup>, KAA has developed all standards and procedures for accreditation and has made them publicly available through its official website.<sup>4</sup>

The main external quality assurance processes conducted by KAA include:

- accreditation and re-accreditation of higher education institutions;
- accreditation and re-accreditation of study programs;
- accreditation of branches where study programs are delivered;
- recognition or validation of international accreditations;
- monitoring and post-accreditation procedures.

In order to ensure a transparent accreditation process, KAA provides the necessary documentation on accreditation procedures, which can be used by higher education institutions (HEIs), including:

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<sup>1</sup> [Law on Higher Education](#).

<sup>2</sup> [Law on the Kosovo Accreditation Agency](#).

<sup>3</sup> [European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance](#).

<sup>4</sup> [Accreditation Guidelines](#).

KAA Regulations and Standards, KAA Guidelines for the Preparation of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) for the evaluation of higher education institutions and their study programs, as well as the Accreditation Manual Regulation<sup>5</sup>. These documents serve as guidance for higher education institutions during the accreditation process, as well as for internal quality assurance and management.

The organizational structure of KAA includes the administrative structure led by the General Director, the State Council of Quality (SCQ) as the governing and decision-making body of the Agency, as well as the Appeals Committee, which is responsible for reviewing complaints.

## **2.1. Mission and Objectives of KAA**

The mission of KAA is to support the continuous development and enhancement of quality in higher education institutions through external evaluation processes, and to assure the society of Kosovo that the quality of higher education is at the level of the highest international standards.

Based on the Strategic Plan 2026–2030, the objectives of KAA are as follows:

1. Development of KAA as an institution that reflects a high level of professionalism and ethical standards in quality assurance processes in Kosovo;
2. Advancement of quality assurance practices for the continuous improvement of quality in the higher education sector in Kosovo;
3. Internationalization of the quality assurance system and its use to enhance institutional practices as well as system-level practices;
4. Promotion of a quality culture in higher education in Kosovo through individual and institutional awareness-raising, capacity development, and institutionalized practices.

### **The core values underpinning the work of KAA are as follows:**

The activities of KAA, as well as the external quality assurance mechanisms it administers, are grounded in a set of fundamental values that reflect its mandate and institutional mission. These values guide all aspects of the Agency's work:

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<sup>5</sup> [Accreditation Standards](#).

**Integrity:** reflects the commitment of KAA and its structures to ensure that evaluation and decision-making processes are conducted with honesty, objectivity, and consistency, ensuring that judgments are based on verified data and evidence and are entirely free from conflicts of interest, bias, or other forms of influence. This implies a high level of professionalism in the work of KAA and its continuous improvement in order to increase trust and the quality of outcomes.

**Transparency:** implies open and accessible communication regarding processes, criteria, decisions, and results related to the evaluation and accreditation of institutions or programs. More specifically, this implies the need for standards to be not only transparent, but also clear and impartial, avoiding multiple interpretations or ambiguities.

**Independence:** refers to the principle that KAA undertakes decisions, evaluations, and judgments in an autonomous manner, free from political, financial, or institutional pressures. This aims to ensure credibility, fairness, and integrity in the quality assurance process in Kosovo. This principle is also related to the organizational autonomy and governance of KAA, ensuring that it remains free from political or interest group interference.

**Professionalism:** implies competent, ethical, and responsible conduct by all individuals and institutions involved in quality assurance processes, whether on the part of KAA or higher education institutions. It ensures that evaluations are conducted with expertise, respect, and commitment to high standards of practice and a proper understanding of standards and criteria. At the same time, KAA remains committed to the further development of the capacities and competencies of all individuals working within and with the Agency.

**Inclusiveness and Diversity:** refer to the active recognition, respect, and inclusion of different perspectives, backgrounds, and stakeholder groups in the design, implementation, and evaluation processes. This includes ensuring and addressing gender equality in all services and activities, the inclusion of minority and marginalized groups, as well as the incorporation of perspectives from all stakeholders in the development of policies and practices.

**Social Responsibility:** refers to the commitment that KAA's processes contribute positively to society, ensuring that higher education promotes the public good, ethical conduct, and societal development.

## **2.2. Memberships and Partnerships**

During 2025, the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) marked one of the most significant

achievements in its institutional development with its re-registration in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). This registration was achieved following a positive evaluation by an independent panel of experts of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), confirming that KAA operates in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). Kosovo is currently the only country in the Western Balkans registered in EQAR. With this status, KAA is entitled to carry out accreditation of universities and study programs across Europe. In addition to EQAR, KAA continues to be part of international quality assurance networks in higher education and, during 2025, is a member of:

- the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA)<sup>6</sup>;
- the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)<sup>7</sup>;
- ENQA Affiliate: KAA has obtained ENQA Affiliate status following the fulfilment of a set of criteria, which were verified by the ENQA Board and subsequently approved by the ENQA General Assembly in Stockholm<sup>8</sup>;
- Global Academic Integrity Network (GAIN)<sup>9</sup>: the Global Academic Integrity Network is a consortium of agencies that promote academic integrity and cooperate to address the phenomenon of academic misconduct and commercial services that undermine integrity in higher education;

Through these memberships and international partnerships, KAA contributes to the exchange of experience and the further development of quality assurance practices in higher education.

### **2.3. Development of the Regulatory Framework and Institutional Documents of KAA**

As a result of the approval of the Law on KAA in 2023, during 2024 and 2025 the regulatory framework of KAA has been further advanced through the approval of a series of secondary legislation and institutional documents that support the functioning and development of the Agency

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<sup>6</sup> [Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education \(CEENQA\)](#).

<sup>7</sup> [The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education \(INQAAHE\)](#).

<sup>8</sup> [ENQA Affiliate](#).

<sup>9</sup> [Global Academic Integrity Network \(GAIN\)](#).

and provide a basis for accreditation procedures. The functioning and performance of KAA are directly influenced by this legal framework, which includes the Law on KAA, administrative instructions, and regulations governing evaluation, accreditation, and the internal management processes of KAA.

### **2.3.1. Administrative Instruction (MESTI) No. 01B-2195**

Based on the Law on KAA, specifically Article 28 of this Law, which regulates the criteria, standards, and procedures of accreditation, and paragraph 10 of this Article, which refers to program holders under paragraph 9 for study programs from non-majority communities, the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) has issued Administrative Instruction No. 01B-03/20 on the assessment of the suitability of program holders, as well as study programs from non-majority communities, in the accreditation and re-accreditation process of higher education institutions.

Based on the aforementioned legislation, study programs from non-majority communities will benefit from facilitative measures in the accreditation process and in the development of programs in their respective languages, starting from the academic year 2024–2025. The purpose of this Administrative Instruction is to assess the compliance of program holders for which higher education institutions apply in the accreditation and re-accreditation process, including programs from non-majority communities.

This Administrative Instruction is implemented by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) for all study programs from non-majority communities applying for accreditation and re-accreditation. Its implementation aims to promote the values set out in the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, the Law on Higher Education, and the Law on KAA, which support and promote the rights of non-majority communities.

### **2.3.2. Regulation on the Functioning of the Appeals Committee**

The Regulation on the Work of the Appeals Committee<sup>10</sup> of KAA defines the structure, functions, and procedures of this body. The Appeals Committee examines complaints submitted by higher education institutions against the decisions of the State Council of Quality (SCQ), ensuring a fair and transparent process in the assessment of such complaints.

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<sup>10</sup> [Regulation on the Functioning of the Appeals Committee.](#)

The working procedures of the Committee include timeframes for the submission and examination of complaints, the manner of evidence collection, and the decision-making process. Furthermore, the Regulation stipulates that the decisions of the Committee are final within KAA, thereby ensuring efficiency in the handling of matters raised by higher education institutions.

### **2.3.3. Regulation on Internal Organization and Systematization of Job Positions**

Based on this Regulation and the new organizational structure, KAA has a professional organizational structure, in full compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), the new Law on KAA, as well as the legislation of Kosovo in general.

The new structure of KAA consists of two departments, six divisions, and other supporting units. The approved staff of KAA will be 32. This Regulation establishes a clear organizational structure, improving the operational efficiency of KAA and ensuring a clear description of duties and responsibilities, with the aim of enhancing professionalism<sup>11</sup>.

### **2.3.4. Regulation on the Selection, Engagement, and Remuneration of External Experts**

The Regulation on the Selection, Engagement, and Remuneration of External Experts<sup>12</sup> at the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) defines the criteria and procedures for the selection of experts participating in the evaluation of higher education institutions. It ensures that external experts are professionals with relevant academic and quality assurance experience, thereby guaranteeing an impartial and reliable evaluation process.

The selection process is conducted through a public call, based on defined criteria for academic qualifications and professional experience. The selection of experts is carried out by the State Council of Quality (SCQ), based on principles of transparency and meritocracy. Selected experts are engaged for defined periods and are required to comply with ethical and professional standards during the evaluation of institutions and academic programs.

The remuneration of external experts is defined in the Regulation, taking into account the complexity of the evaluations and the duration of their engagement. Payments are made in accordance with the

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<sup>11</sup> [Regulation on Internal Organization and Systematization of Job Positions.](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Regulation on the Selection, Engagement, and Remuneration of External Experts.](#)

financial provisions of KAA, ensuring fair compensation for the contribution of experts to the accreditation process. The Regulation also sets out provisions for the coverage of expenses and principles related to conflicts of interest, in order to safeguard the integrity of the evaluation process.

### **2.3.5. Regulation on the Accreditation/Re-accreditation and Validation Manual**

The Regulation is a key document that defines the standards and procedures for the accreditation, re-accreditation, and validation of higher education institutions and their programs in Kosovo. This Regulation has been drafted in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), with the aim of ensuring the continuous improvement of the quality of educational institutions in the country.

In June 2025, the State Council of Quality approved the updated version of the Accreditation Manual, within the framework of Regulation (KAA) No. 04/2024 on the Accreditation/Re-accreditation and Validation Manual<sup>13</sup>, with the aim of reflecting new developments in evaluation processes and further aligning with European quality assurance practices.

The Regulation serves as a guiding document for KAA, higher education institutions, international experts, and the general public in the implementation of fair and transparent accreditation procedures. It defines the main responsibilities of educational institutions for ensuring the quality of the services they provide, taking into account the diversity of education systems, institutions, programs, and students. Furthermore, the Regulation promotes the development of a quality culture and takes into account the needs and expectations of students, other stakeholders, and society at large.

The Regulation contains clear criteria for the evaluation of institutions and study programs.

### **2.3.6. Regulation on Procedures and Criteria for External Evaluation by International Accreditation Agencies**

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<sup>13</sup> [Regulation on the Accreditation/Re-accreditation and Validation Manual](#)

This Regulation is also referred to as the Regulation on Validation<sup>14</sup>. It defines the procedures and criteria for validation in cases where a higher education institution applies for external evaluation at the institutional level or for study programs by an international accreditation agency.

Furthermore, the Regulation on Validation covers cases where a higher education institution accredited by KAA, in partnership with an international university, decides to offer in Kosovo study programs which, in their country of origin, are accredited by international accreditation agencies.

### **2.3.7. Regulation on the Organization and Functioning of the State Council of Quality**

This Regulation<sup>15</sup> defines the structure, competencies, and functioning of the State Council of Quality (SCQ), as the highest decision-making body of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency. The Regulation sets out the procedures for Council meetings, the decision-making process, the duties and responsibilities of its members, as well as the institutional relationship between the SCQ and the administrative structures of KAA. Through this Regulation, it is intended to ensure a transparent, professional decision-making process in line with European standards for quality assurance in higher education.

### **2.3.8. Regulation on Standards for Doctoral Study Programs**

This Regulation<sup>16</sup> defines the standards and criteria for the accreditation and development of doctoral study program in higher education institutions in the Republic of Kosovo.

The document defines the minimum requirements related to the academic structure of PhD programs, the qualifications of academic staff, research infrastructure, as well as mechanisms for quality assurance and the functioning of doctoral studies. The purpose of this Regulation is to harmonize doctoral programs in Kosovo with European higher education practices and to strengthen the research dimension within academic institutions.

### **2.3.9. Regulation on Monitoring and Post-Accreditation Procedures of KAA**

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<sup>14</sup> [Regulation on Validation.](#)

<sup>15</sup> [Regulation on the Organization and Functioning of the State Council of Quality.](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Regulation on Standards for PhD Study Programs.](#)

This Regulation<sup>17</sup> defines the procedures and criteria for monitoring higher education institutions following the adoption of an accreditation decision. The document defines the mechanisms for the continuation and completion of the implementation of recommendations made by international experts, the process of periodic reporting, and the procedures for the assessment of institutional progress. The purpose of the Regulation is to strengthen the post-accreditation dimension and to ensure the continuous improvement of quality in higher education institutions.

#### **2.4. Policy Documents and Institutional Supporting Documents of KAA**

In addition to secondary legislation, during the reporting period KAA has also developed and approved a number of supporting documents and institutional policies aimed at strengthening internal governance and enhancing institutional transparency. In this context, the following documents have been developed and implemented:

- KAA Strategy 2026–2030<sup>18</sup>;
- Guideline for HEIs on the Appeals Process in the Appeals Committee<sup>19</sup>;
- Manual for the Professional Development of New Staff<sup>20</sup>;
- Guideline on General Procedures in the Kosovo Accreditation Agency<sup>21</sup>;
- Code of Ethics for Civil Servants of KAA<sup>22</sup>;
- KAA Integrity Plan 2025–2027<sup>23</sup>;
- KAA Privacy Policy<sup>24</sup>.
- Policies for Internal Quality Assurance<sup>25</sup>.

These documents contribute to improving the internal functioning of the Agency, promoting ethical and professional standards, as well as enhancing accountability and institutional credibility in quality assurance processes in higher education.

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<sup>17</sup> [Regulation on Monitoring and Post-Accreditation Procedures](#)

<sup>18</sup> [KAA Strategic Plan 2026–2030](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Guideline for HEIs on the Appeals Procedure at the Appeals Committee](#).

<sup>20</sup> [Manual for the Professional Development of New Staff](#).

<sup>21</sup> [Guideline on General Procedures in the Kosovo Accreditation Agency](#).

<sup>22</sup> [Code of Ethics for Civil Servant](#).

<sup>23</sup> [KAA Integrity Plan 2025–2027](#).

<sup>24</sup> [KAA Privacy Policy](#).

<sup>25</sup> [Policies for Internal Quality Assurance](#)

## **2.5 Policies for the Internal Quality Assurance of KAA**

KAA has developed the document *Policies for Internal Quality Assurance*, which defines the measures and procedures for ensuring internal quality within the Agency. These policies are aligned with international standards and aim to enhance transparency, accountability, and the continuous improvement of accreditation processes.

The Policies for Internal Quality Assurance of KAA formally establish and describe all actions undertaken with the purpose of implementing internal quality assurance. The policies serve as the main mechanism of KAA for internal reflection and are fully aligned with the Agency's commitment to establishing a system of operation that is comparable to European quality assurance agencies.

The continuous improvement of quality within KAA is ensured through the application of the PDCA cycle (Plan – Do – Check – Act). The timely and regular planning and implementation of external evaluation processes, in addition to being required by the applicable legislation, constitute an essential performance indicator of KAA. On the other hand, the collection of data through monitoring and review, as well as the revision of internal procedures, represent prerequisites for continuous quality improvement. Internal evaluation processes also contribute to enhancing the transparency of KAA's activities towards society at large. In this regard, KAA is committed to involving relevant stakeholders, whose feedback serves as an important basis for informing KAA's policies.

### **3. State Council of Quality (SCQ)**

The State Council of Quality (SCQ), or the Board of KAA, is the decision-making body of KAA and is responsible for taking decisions on the accreditation of higher education institutions and their study programs. The State Council of Quality operates based on the Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo No. 04/L-037 and Law No. 08/L-110 on KAA<sup>26</sup> and is supported by the Regulation on the Work of the State Council of Quality (No. 02/2025)<sup>27</sup>.

The applicable legislation enables the selection of SCQ members based on professional and transparent criteria and procedures. The selected list of nominees is ratified by the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo. Based on the Regulation on the Work of the State Council of Quality, the SCQ sets annual agendas for the accreditation process of HEIs, approves standards, procedures and accreditation criteria, approves external expert teams proposed by the Director of KAA, takes accreditation decisions, and approves the Statute and regulations of KAA.

The SCQ consists of the following members:

1. Prof. Assoc. Dr. Hasnije Ilazi, Chair;
2. Dr. Klemen Miklavic, Vice-Chair;
3. Prof. Ass. Dr. Gëzim Tosuni, Member;
4. Prof. Dr. Maja Martinović, Member;
5. Prof. Dr. Jaakko Kauko, Member;
6. Prof. Dr. Mirlinda Batalli, Member;
7. Prof. Dr. Avni Berisha, Member;
8. Dr. Jetmir Haxhibeqiri, Member;
9. Shkurta Bajgora, Student Member;

Non-voting members:

10. Director of KAA, Mr. Naim Gashi (ex officio);
11. Mr. Ermal Sadiku, Industry Representative;

Ms. Arieta Pozhegu Vula, Industry Representative.

#### **3.1. Meetings and Decisions of the SCQ**

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<sup>26</sup> [Law on the Kosovo Accreditation Agency.](#)

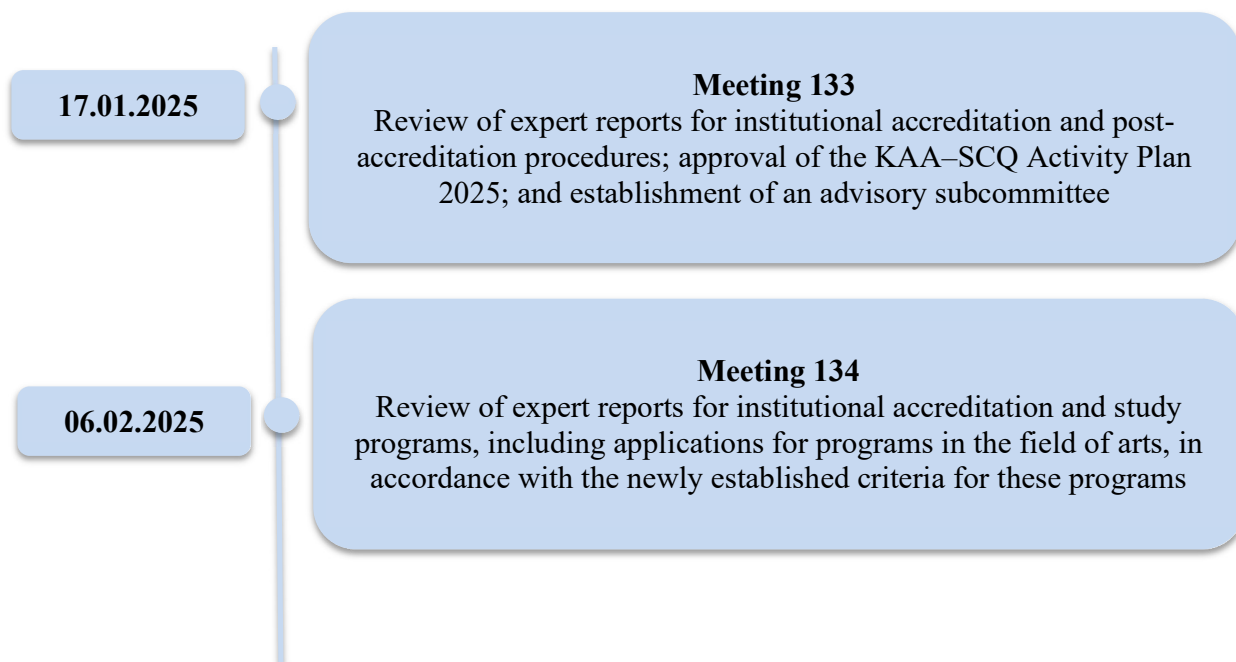
<sup>27</sup> [Regulation No. 02/2025 on the organization and Functioning of the State Council of Quality](#)

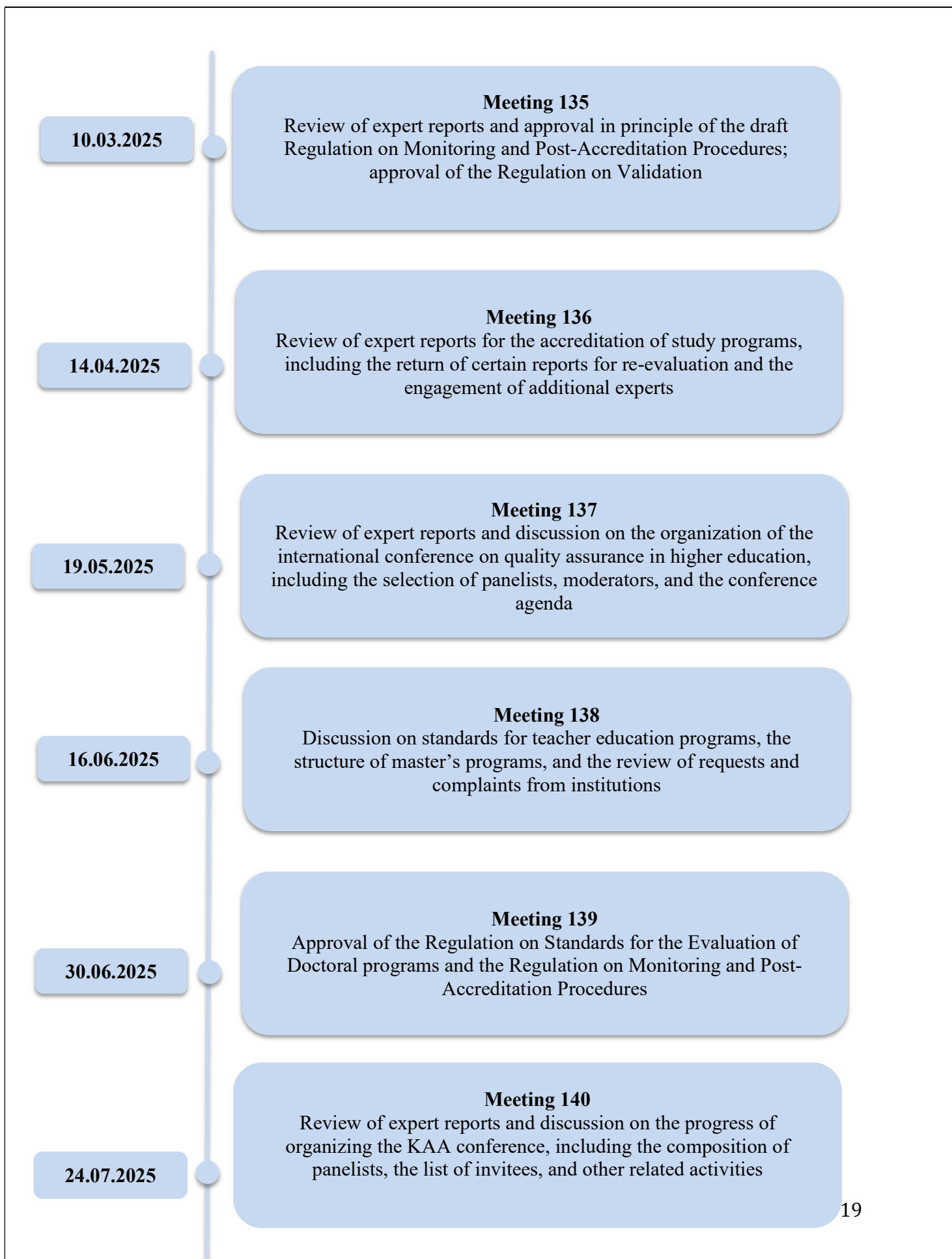
During 2025, the SCQ carried out a range of activities related to the functioning of the quality assurance system in higher education in the Republic of Kosovo. Within the framework of regular and extraordinary meetings, the SCQ reviewed reports of international experts for institutional and program accreditation, addressed requests and complaints from higher education institutions, and approved a number of regulatory acts governing accreditation and monitoring processes. During 2025, the SCQ held one online meeting, which was a continuation of Meeting 142, while one vote was conducted online via circular email.

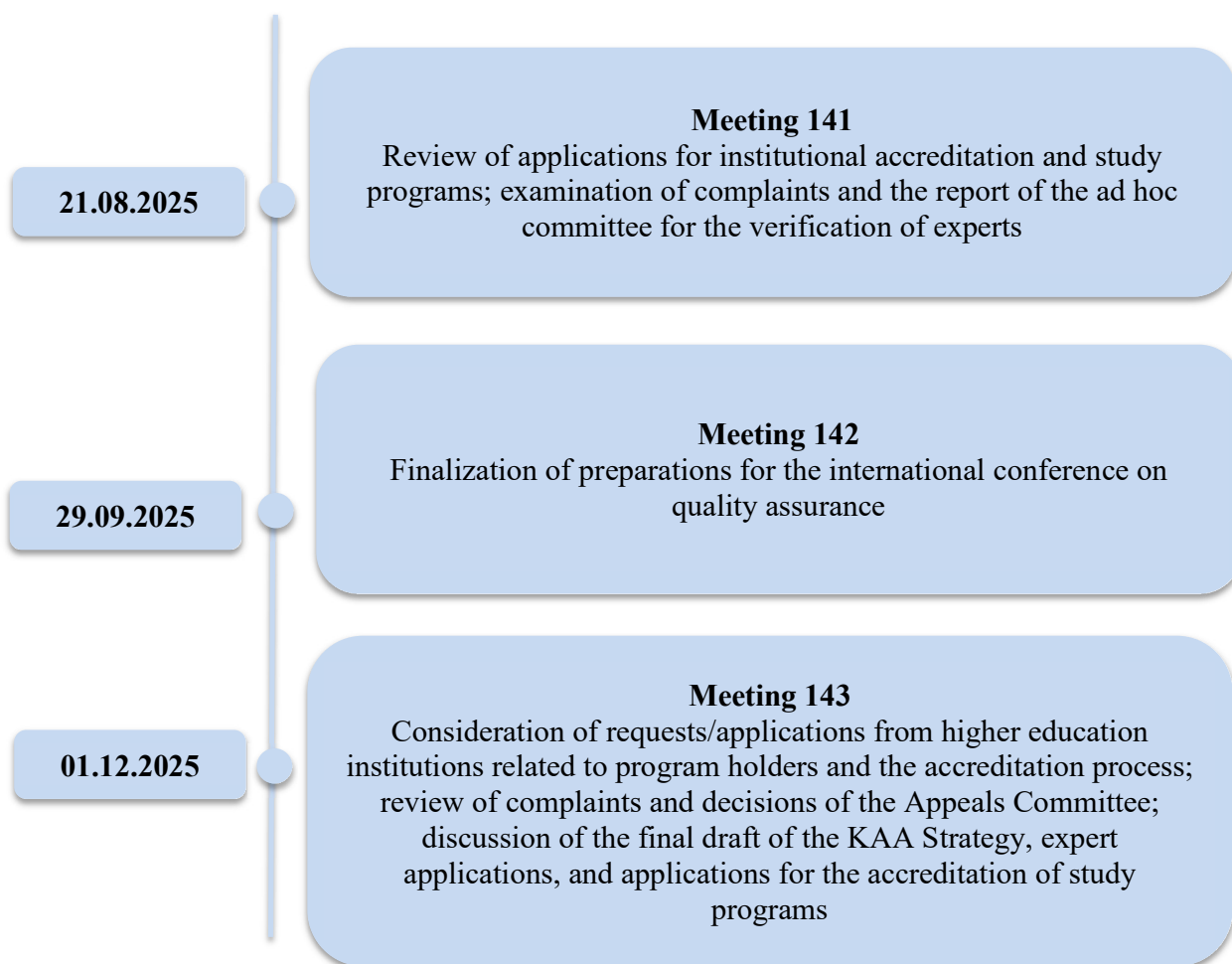
Furthermore, during the accreditation processes, the SCQ approved individual panels of international experts for the evaluation of higher education institutions and their study programs.

In addition to activities directly related to the accreditation process, during 2025 the SCQ contributed to the drafting and approved the KAA Strategy 2026–2031, and also contributed to the organization of the international conference on quality assurance in higher education. The table below presents, in chronological order, the main issues addressed by the SCQ during the meetings held in 2025.

### Meetings of the State Council of Quality in 2025







In general, during the accreditation process, the SCQ has assessed that, based on the evaluations of international experts, higher education institutions (HEIs) demonstrate more pronounced deficiencies in the implementation of Standard No. 3 on Research and Standard No. 2 on Quality Management. Therefore, the KAA Annual Conference for 2026 will focus on internal quality, while KAA staff will organize training sessions for HEI officials with the aim of supporting institutions in enhancing quality within the framework of the aforementioned standards.

### **3.2. Approval of the Strategy of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency 2026–2030**

The State Council of Quality, at the meeting held on 1 December 2025, approved the Strategy of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency for the period 2026–2030. The strategic document defines the development of the external quality assurance system over the next five years in the Republic of Kosovo, clearly reflecting European standards, the context of higher education in Kosovo, and the vision for further strengthening the credibility of accreditation.

The Strategy is built on the principles of integrity, transparency, professionalism, and institutional independence, which remain the foundation for all activities of KAA and the SCQ.

The Strategy 2026–2030 includes four main development objectives: strengthening the professional and ethical capacities of KAA; advancing quality assurance practices beyond compliance, towards a genuine continuous improvement approach; internationalizing the work of KAA and strengthening its presence in European and global networks; and promoting a quality culture in higher education institutions. The Strategy foresees the periodic review of accreditation standards, the development of new procedures for joint programs and micro-credentials, the full digitalization of accreditation processes, as well as the progressive integration of artificial intelligence in data processing and report drafting. The development of the KAA Strategy was supported by the SHER Program, funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA).

### **3.3 Organization of Workshops for the Preparation of the KAA Strategy**

Prior to the approval of the Strategy, on 1 October 2025, the SCQ, with the support of the SHER Program, organized a one-day workshop for the finalization of the draft KAA Strategic Plan 2026–2030. The workshop was organized with the aim of incorporating the contributions of all relevant stakeholders in the development of this important strategic document, which will contribute to enhancing the quality of KAA’s work and improving the quality of higher education in Kosovo.

On 26 May 2025, another workshop for the preparation of the KAA Strategy 2026–2030 was held in Prishtina, with the participation of representatives of public and private higher education institutions. During the workshop, KAA presented the achievements in the implementation of the KAA Strategy 2021–2025, while representatives of HEIs discussed the vision and objectives of the new strategic document.

### **3.4 Annual Meeting with Leaders of Higher Education Institutions**

On 24 February 2025, the SCQ and the leadership of KAA held their regular annual meeting with representatives of public and private higher education institutions in the Republic of Kosovo. This meeting, organized in two separate sessions, aimed to discuss key issues related to accreditation, quality assurance, and KAA’s strategic plans for the future.

Rectors, deans, and heads of quality assurance offices of higher education institutions (HEIs) participated in the meeting and were informed about the latest developments in the field of

accreditation and quality assurance. This is an annual activity through which KAA ensures an open dialogue with academic institutions in order to share experiences, address challenges, and identify future steps for improving quality in higher education.

### **3.5 SCQ Visits and Meetings with HEIs**

The State Council of Quality has established a practice of conducting visits to higher education institutions in the Republic of Kosovo. During 2025, seven higher education institutions were visited, where SCQ meetings were also held.

During these visits, SCQ members and KAA management meet with the leadership of higher education institutions, visit their premises, and subsequently hold SCQ meetings on the premises of those institutions.

This constitutes a European practice aimed at strengthening cooperation and establishing partnerships between accreditation agencies and higher education institutions. Through these visits, improved opportunities are created for direct communication, exchange of experience, and the addressing of issues of relevance to the development of quality in higher education.

In addition to individual visits, representatives of the SCQ and KAA management held meetings with dozens of representatives of higher education institutions, with whom they discussed various topics related to quality assurance, accreditation processes, and the advancement of standards in higher education in the country.

### **3.6 Approval of the Activity Plan**

On 17 January 2025, the SCQ reviewed and approved the Activity Plan for 2025. This plan represents an important guiding document for the work of KAA throughout the year and serves as a roadmap for strategic and operational developments in quality assurance processes in higher education in the Republic of Kosovo.

Through this plan, the main priorities of the Agency are defined, including the activities to be undertaken during the year, as well as the objectives related to advancing the processes of evaluation, accreditation, and monitoring of higher education institutions. The plan aims to ensure a more structured, efficient, and transparent approach in the exercise of the Council's responsibilities.

Furthermore, the Activity Plan for 2025 aims to strengthen institutional cooperation with relevant stakeholders in higher education, support the implementation of quality standards, and contribute to the continuous improvement of the higher education system in the country.

#### **4. Evaluation and Accreditation Process of HEIs for 2025**

Institutional and program evaluation is a periodic activity of KAA. This process is based on the assessment of documents submitted by the applicant institution (Self-Evaluation Report - SER) and on the findings from the site visit conducted by the team of international accreditation experts. Based on the published procedures of KAA, each HEI must demonstrate that it meets the accreditation criteria in order to obtain accreditation.

Based on the Law on KAA, each HEI submits an application for institutional accreditation/re-accreditation, or for one or more study programs. At the same time, the HEI must also submit the list of academic staff, declared to KAA through the e-accreditation platform, for engagement in the respective HEI and program for the relevant academic year. The application, together with the staff list, is subject to the assessment of compliance with formal criteria and, following approval by the SCQ, is included in the annual KAA agenda for evaluation. In the case of a negative preliminary assessment of the application by the SCQ, it is rejected and does not proceed to evaluation. In addition to the approved applications and staff lists, the HEI must also submit to KAA the Self-Evaluation Report (SER), which is forwarded to the external evaluation team within a specified timeframe prior to the site visit.

In 2025, KAA conducted the evaluation and accreditation process of higher education institutions and study programs based on the revised standards of 2024 and the Regulation of the new Accreditation Manual, on which HEIs are required to rely when preparing the SER. These standards aim to enhance the overall quality of HEIs in Kosovo and focus on strengthening their internal quality assurance systems.

##### **4.1. Higher Education Institutions in Kosovo**

The higher education system in the Republic of Kosovo consists of public and private institutions that offer study programs at the Bachelor, Master's, and Doctoral levels. These institutions operate

in accordance with the applicable legislation on higher education and are subject to accreditation and re-accreditation processes carried out by KAA. Higher education institutions in Kosovo include universities, colleges, academies, and other units that carry out their activities in various fields of study. Through institutional and program evaluation and accreditation processes, KAA and the SCQ ensure that these institutions meet the established standards for quality in higher education.

The higher education system in Kosovo consists of 21 higher education institutions, of which 10 are public and 11 are private. According to data from the Kosovo Agency of Statistics for 2025, a total of 72,848 students are enrolled in these institutions, with 48,839 students studying in public institutions and 29,009 students in private institutions. In terms of institutional structure, the public

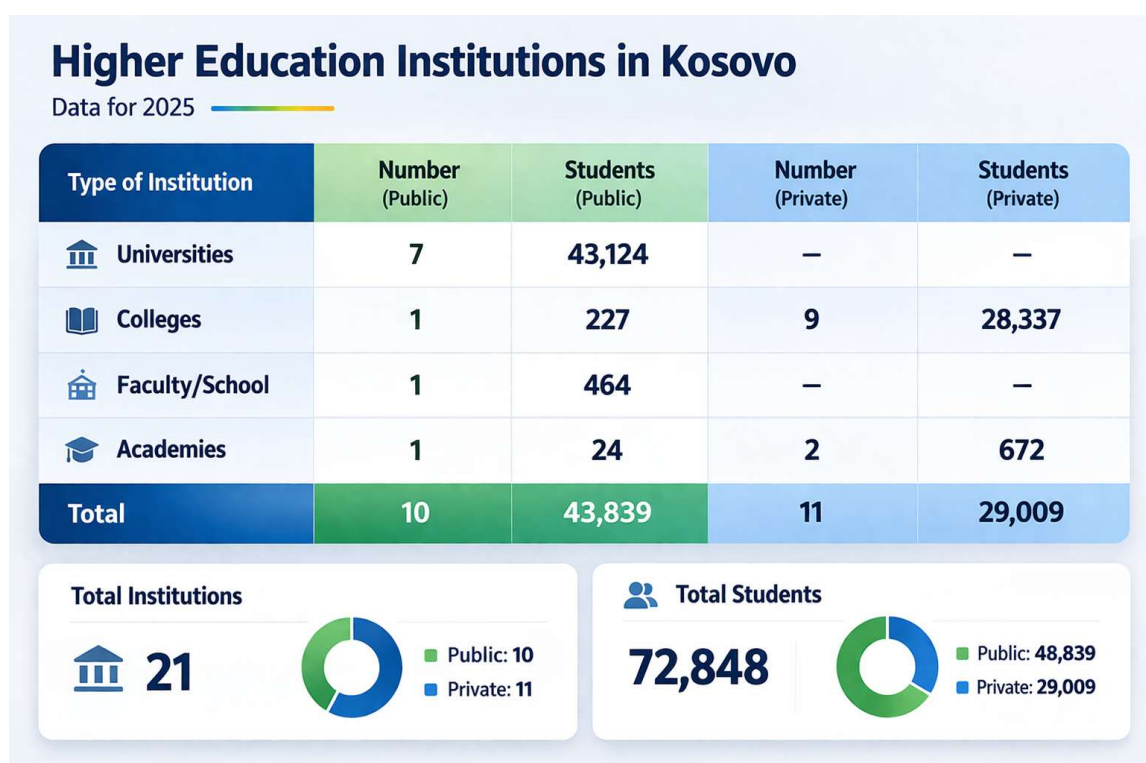


Figura 1. Higher Education Institutions

sector consists of 7 universities, 1 college, 1 faculty, and 1 academy, while the private sector is mainly composed of 9 colleges and 2 academies. These data provide an overview of the distribution of institutions and students within the higher education system in Kosovo and serve as a basis for further analysis of accreditation processes and developments in quality assurance.

During 2025, KAA received a total of 178 applications submitted by higher education institutions for processes related to institutional accreditation, accreditation of study programs, re-accreditation, and validation of study programs.

Following the administrative verification of applications by KAA and their initial review by the SCQ, in accordance with Law No. 08/L-110 on KAA and the Accreditation Manual, a total of 143 applications were forwarded for further evaluation by international experts engaged by KAA, while the remaining applications were rejected due to non-fulfilment of the criteria set out in the Accreditation Manual.

Based on the reports of international experts and in accordance with the procedures defined in the legal and regulatory framework of KAA, the SCQ reviewed the recommendations and took the respective decisions regarding accreditation. Of the evaluated applications, 9 were for institutional accreditation, while 134 were for the accreditation of study programs.

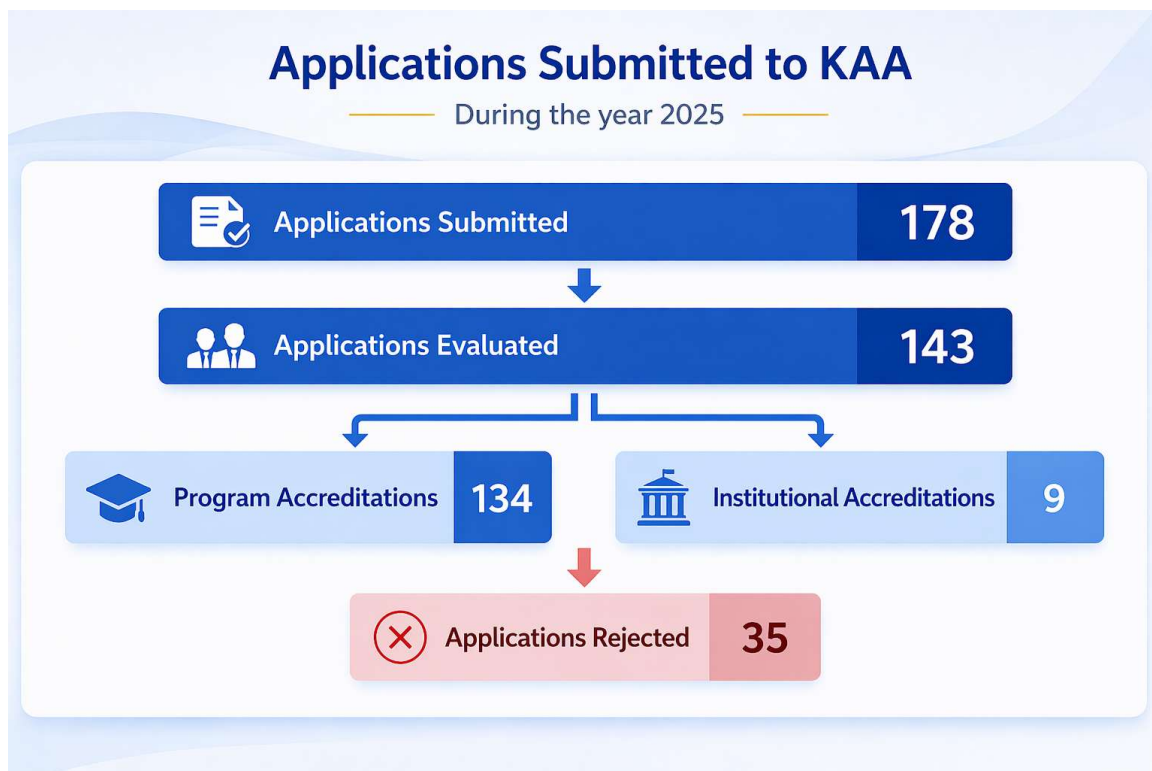


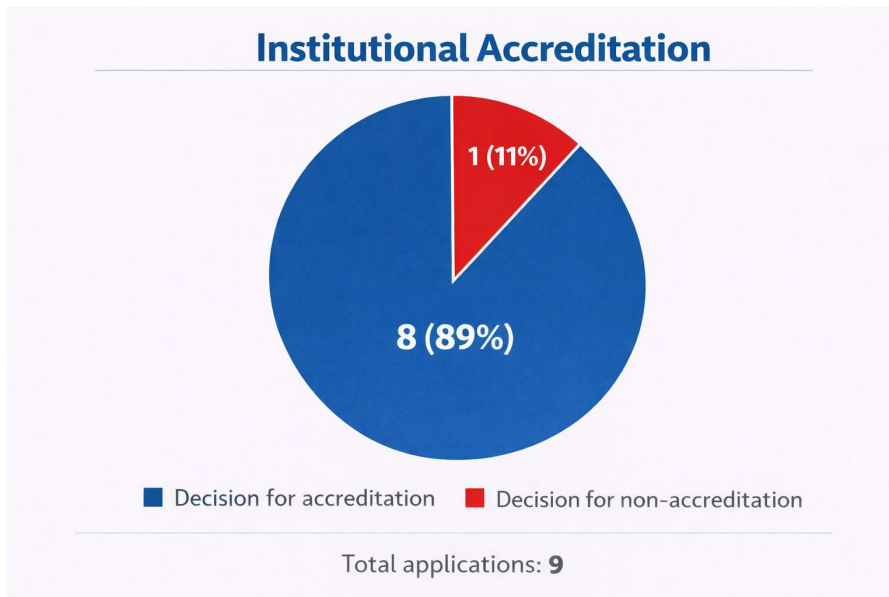
Figure 2. Applications submitted to the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA); only those applications approved by the State Council of Quality (SCQ) are included in the evaluation process.

### 4.1.1 Institutional Accreditation

In the process of institutional accreditation, a total of 9 applications were submitted to the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) during 2025 by higher education institutions. Following administrative verification by KAA, the applications are reviewed by the State Council of Quality (SCQ), which decides on their approval for evaluation. The approved applications are subsequently assessed by international experts in accordance with KAA standards and procedures.

Based on the reports of international experts and following review by the SCQ, a total of 8 decisions for institutional accreditation were issued, while 1 decision resulted in non-accreditation.

The results indicate that the majority of evaluated institutions have met the established standards for



quality assurance in higher education, whereas cases of non-accreditation are associated with the failure to meet the required criteria in accordance with accreditation standards.

Figure 1. Institutional Accreditation

### 4.1.2. Accreditation at the Level of Study Programs

A total of 134 applications for the accreditation of study programs were submitted by higher education institutions. Following administrative verification by KAA and approval for further procedure by the SCQ, the applications were forwarded for evaluation by international experts, in accordance with the standards and procedures defined within KAA's legal and regulatory framework.

Of the total number of submitted applications, 75 applications relate to bachelor-level programs, 57 applications to master-level programs, and 2 applications to doctoral (PhD) programs.

Based on the reports of international experts and following review by the SCQ, a total of 125 accreditation decisions and 9 non-accreditation decisions were issued for study programs.

The results of this process indicate that the majority of study programs submitted for accreditation have met the established standards for quality assurance in higher education, while cases of non-accreditation are linked to the failure to meet the criteria and standards defined in the KAA Accreditation Manual.

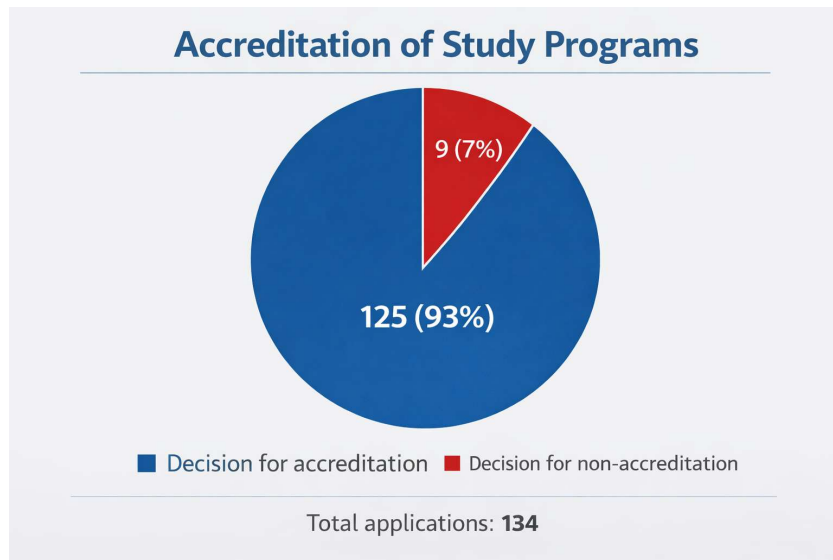


Figure 2. Accreditation at the Level of Study Programs

## 6.2 Monitoring Process

Monitoring constitutes an integral part of the quality assurance process in higher education and aims to ensure the continuous verification of compliance with accreditation requirements by higher education institutions. This process is carried out by the Monitoring Division within KAA, in accordance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework.

The monitoring process is conducted based on the Manual for Monitoring Methodology and Post-Accreditation Procedures, as well as the Monitoring Regulation, both approved by the SCQ. These documents define the standards, procedures, and mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of accreditation decisions by higher education institutions.

During 2025, the Monitoring Division conducted monitoring visits to both public and private higher education institutions, with the aim of verifying the implementation of accreditation conditions and quality assurance standards in the delivery of study programs.

In total, 13 monitoring visits were conducted, covering:

- 5 public universities, and
- 8 private colleges.

Within these visits, a total of 60 study programmes were monitored, of which:

- 52 programmes at the Bachelor level, and
- 8 programmes at the Master level.

Monitoring activities focused primarily on verifying program holders, lecture and exercise schedules, the publication of schedules on official institutional websites, as well as the alignment of program delivery with accreditation decisions and relevant program documentation (see Fig. 5).

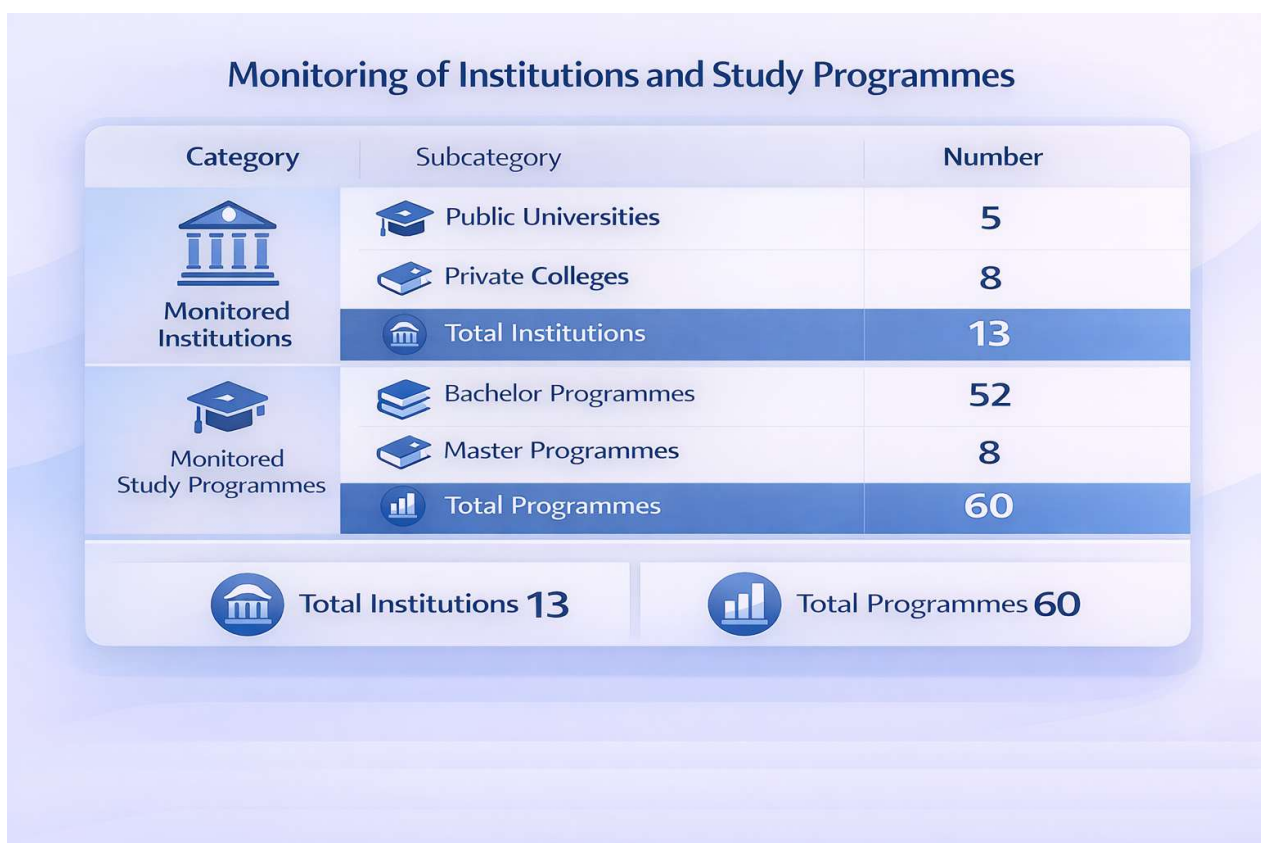


Figure 3. Monitoring of Institutions and Study Programs

### **6.3 Post-Accreditation Procedures**

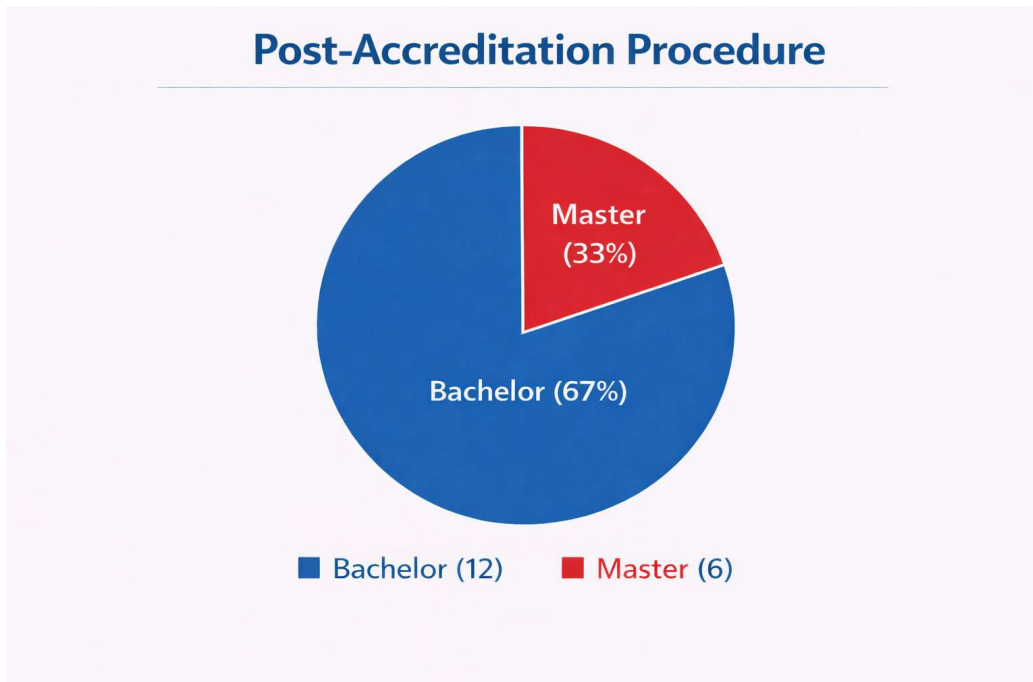
The Post-Accreditation Procedures process aims to assess the degree of implementation of the recommendations set out in initial accreditation and re-accreditation reports, as well as to verify the improvements undertaken by higher education institutions. This process is carried out through the analysis of Implementation Plans for Recommendations, verification visits, and the preparation of respective evaluation reports, which are subsequently submitted to the State Council of Quality (SCQ) for review and decision-making. Within the framework of post-accreditation procedures during 2025, KAA received and analyzed the Implementation Plans for Recommendations (IRPs) submitted by higher education institutions. These plans reflect the commitments of institutions to address the recommendations of international experts and to improve academic and institutional processes following the completion of the accreditation process.

During this process, a total of 120 IRPs for study programs and 7 IRPs within institutional accreditation were received, processed, and archived. The analysis of these plans served as a basis for monitoring institutional progress in the implementation of recommendations and for identifying concrete measures undertaken to enhance the quality of study programs and institutional performance.

Within the framework of post-accreditation procedures, a total of 18 evaluation processes were carried out for study programs across various higher education institutions, including verification visits and the preparation of evaluation reports by international experts.

Of these reports, 12 relate to bachelor-level programs, while 6 relate to master-level programs. The reports assess institutional progress in the implementation of expert recommendations, analyses the documentation submitted by institutions, and verify compliance with the standards established in the accreditation process. The selection of institutions and study programs for this process was made based on the request of the State Council of Quality, while also reflecting KAA's priorities for the implementation of post-accreditation procedures.

The selection was based on a risk assessment matrix, taking into account the level of compliance with accreditation standards, the number and nature of recommendations issued during the accreditation process, as well as the need to verify institutional progress in addressing them.



*Figure 5. Post-accreditation Procedure*

## **5. Appeals Committee (AC)**

### **5.1. Legal basis of operation**

The Appeals Committee (AC) of KAA has carried out its duties and responsibilities in accordance with its legal authorizations, based on KAA Regulation No. 01/2024 on the work of the Appeals Committee, which entered into force and has been implemented since 15 January 2024. Furthermore, this regulation derives from Law No. 08/L-110 on KAA, adopted by the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo on 29 June 2023, which specifies the authorizations, structure, decision-making procedures, and other relevant aspects of the AC.

### **5.2. Summary**

The AC report aims to provide a clear overview of the meetings held, decisions issued, hearings conducted, and the Committee's engagement in ensuring a proper, impartial, and legally grounded review of complaints submitted by higher education institutions.

As the body responsible for the administrative review of complaints within the accreditation system, the Appeals Committee exercised its competencies throughout 2025 in accordance with the applicable legislation and relevant bylaws.

The Committee has contributed to strengthening the principles of legality, transparency, objectivity, and the right of parties to a fair administrative review. This report summarizes the key data of the work carried out during the reporting period and serves as an informative document for relevant state institutions.

### **5.3. Appeals Committee Composition**

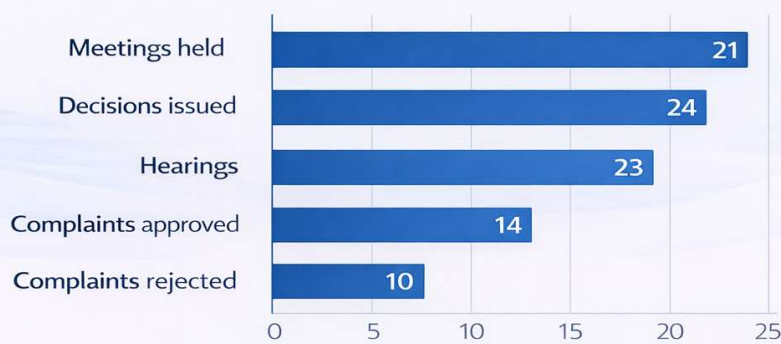
- Prof. dr. Ibish Mazreku, Chair;
- Prof. Assoc. Dr. Fatos Rexhepi, Member
- Jurist Lirik Veselaj, Member;
- Jurist Nexhat Kelmendi, Member.

#### 5.4. Activity of the Appeals Committee during 2025

During 2025, the Appeals Committee conducted regular and continuous activities in handling submitted complaints. These activities were carried out through working meetings, review of administrative documentation, organization of hearings, and issuance of decisions regarding the complaints submitted.

The number and distribution of activities throughout the months reflect the intensity of the Committee’s work and the need for systematic handling of issues related to accreditation and quality assurance processes in higher education.

*Table 1. Statistical Summary of the Commission’s Activities during 2025*



**Table 1.** Statistical summary of the Committee’s activity for 2025

Indicator	Number	Remarks
Meetings held	21	Activities distributed throughout the year
Decisions issued	24	Includes approvals and rejections
Hearings	23	In compliance with LPPA and the right of parties to be heard
Complaints approved	14	Assessed as grounded
Complaints rejected	10	Assessed as ungrounded

**Table 1.** Statistical summary of the Committee’s activity for 2025

#### 5.5. Meetings of the Appeals Committee

During the reporting period, the Appeals Committee held a total of 21 meetings. These meetings served for the review of cases, the organization of hearing sessions, the analysis of documentation, and decision-making regarding submitted appeals.

The monthly distribution of meetings demonstrates a consistent work rhythm and an institutional commitment to fulfilling the Commission’s mandate.

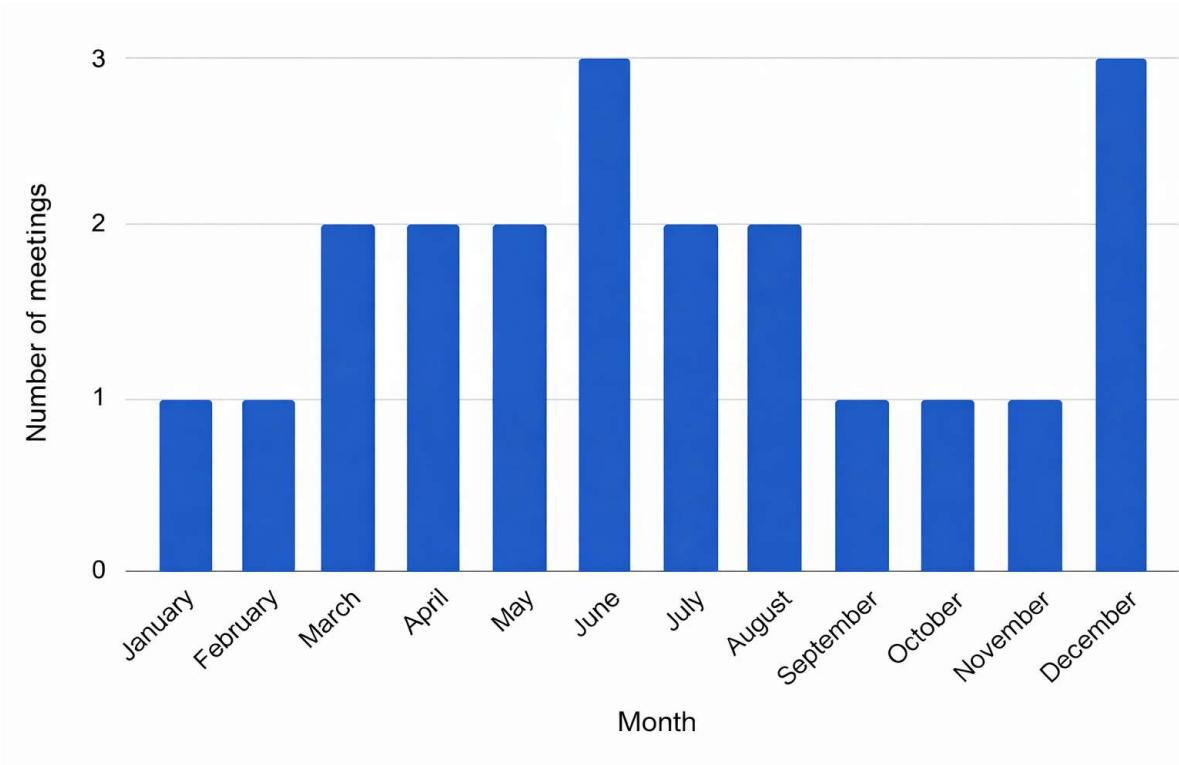


Figure 7. Meetings of the Appeals Committee by month

**5.6. Decision-Making of the Appeals Committee**

During 2025, the Appeals Committee issued a total of 24 decisions regarding appeals submitted by higher education institutions. Decision-making was carried out based on the review of relevant documentation, the conduct of hearing procedures, and the legal and factual assessment of each case. Out of the total number of decisions, 14 appeals were approved as justified, while 10 appeals were rejected as unfounded. This structure indicates that the Commission exercised its function in a balanced manner, treating each case individually and with due justification.

### 5.7. Hearing Sessions

In accordance with Article 95, paragraph (1) of Law No. 05/L-031 on General Administrative Procedure, the Appeals Committee held a total of 23 hearing sessions during the reporting period.

The conduct of these hearings has been of particular importance in ensuring the right of the parties to be heard, clarifying factual circumstances, and guaranteeing a fair, transparent, and inclusive administrative procedure.

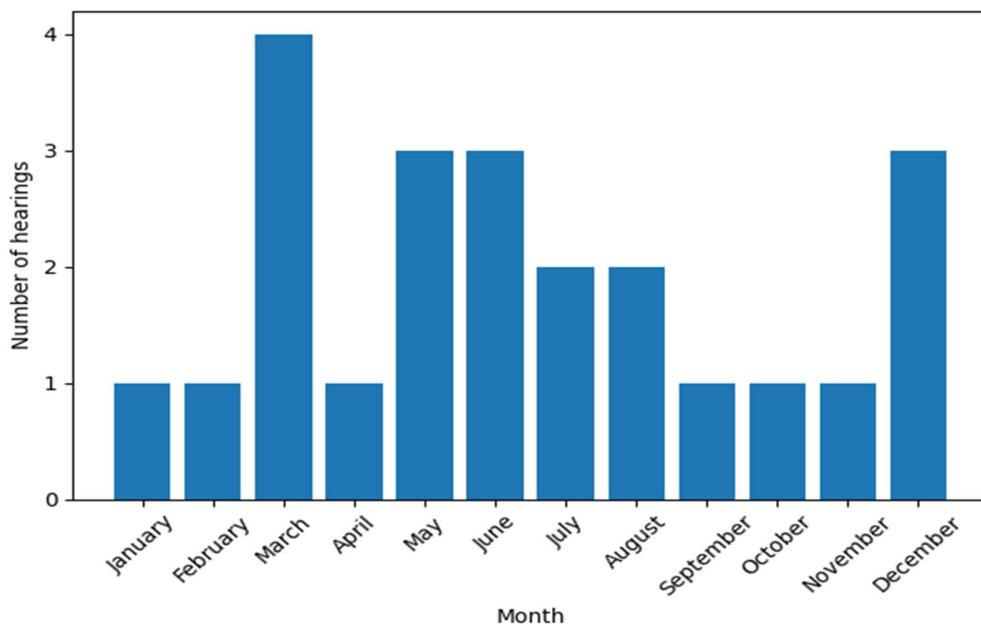


Figure 8. Number of Hearing Sessions

### 5.8. General Assessment of the Committee’s Work

Based on the presented data, it can be concluded that the Appeals Committee carried out regular, intensive, and functional activity throughout 2025. The number of meetings, decisions, and hearing sessions reflects continuous institutional engagement in the exercise of its mandate.

The work of the Commission during this period has been characterized by the systematic handling of appeals, the conduct of hearing procedures in accordance with the applicable legislation, and administrative decision-making based on the thorough review of each case. This activity has

contributed to maintaining standards of legality, transparency, and accountability in accreditation processes.

### **3. Institutional Developments and Key Activities of the Agency**

#### **6.1. International Recognition of KAA and Strategic Achievements**

During the reporting period, the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) recorded significant developments in strengthening its position within international quality assurance networks in higher education. These developments include the advancement of cooperation with international organizations and agencies, as well as increased alignment of KAA processes with European standards and practices for quality assurance.

In this context, KAA has continued to contribute to the exchange of experience and to the promotion of practices developed in Kosovo within international quality assurance forums and networks.

##### **6.1.1. Registration of KAA in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)**

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency was registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), following an independent international evaluation process conducted in accordance with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*.

The assessment of KAA's compliance with the ESG was carried out by a five-member review panel of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). Based on the positive report of the ENQA experts, KAA was successfully registered in EQAR. Kosovo is the only country in the Western Balkans registered in EQAR.

Registration in EQAR confirms that KAA's processes and procedures are aligned with European standards for quality assurance. This development represents a significant step in strengthening the international credibility of the quality assurance system in higher education in the Republic of Kosovo and contributes to increasing trust in accreditation and institutional evaluation processes.

Furthermore, EQAR registration facilitates the expansion of international cooperation and the deeper integration of Kosovo’s higher education system into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), supporting the continuous development and enhancement of quality in higher education institutions.



Figure 9. The official EQAR website listing the State of Kosovo and the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA).

KAA has already uploaded decisions on the accreditation of study programs in Kosovo to the EQAR database known as DEQAR. DEQAR is the European database of external quality assurance results in higher education, where reports and decisions of external evaluations conducted by EQAR-registered agencies are published.

In this way, information on study programs in Kosovo becomes more accessible, transparent, and easily verifiable for institutions, students, and other stakeholders both nationally and internationally. The role of DEQAR is to serve as a common reference point for accreditation and external quality assurance results. Through this database, KAA’s decisions extend beyond the national level and become part of a broader European system of transparency and trust in higher education. This enhances the visibility and comprehensibility of study programs in Kosovo for international partners. The inclusion of decisions in DEQAR is also of particular importance for international recognition and comparability. When a study program is listed in this database, it becomes easier for foreign institutions, authorities, and organizations to verify that it has undergone an external quality assurance process conducted by an EQAR-registered agency. This strengthens confidence in

Kosovo's higher education system and contributes to enhancing KAA's reputation at the European level.



The screenshot displays the EQAR website interface. At the top, the EQAR logo is on the left, and navigation links for Register, Database, Knowledge base, News, and About are on the right. A breadcrumb trail reads 'eqar.eu > Register > Registered agencies > KAA'. A left-hand navigation menu includes 'Register', 'Registered agencies', 'Applications', 'Decisions', 'Analysis of Decisions', and 'Database of Precedents'. The main content area features the title 'KAA - Kosovo Accreditation Agency' and its Albanian name 'Agjencia e Kosoves per Akreditim'. A blue badge indicates 'SUBSTANTIAL COMPLIANCE WITH THE ESG', and an orange button says 'VIEW 76 REPORTS ON 17 INSTITUTIONS'. Below this, a table lists registration details:

Registration valid until	31/12/2029 (listed since 01/12/2024)
Registration note	The agency was previously registered on EQAR between 2015-06-05 and 2017-09-25
Website	<a href="https://akreditimi.rks-gov.net/accreditation-standards/">https://akreditimi.rks-gov.net/accreditation-standards/</a>

### 6.1.2. KAA Participation in the ENQA Seminar in Madrid

Representatives of KAA participated in a seminar organized by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), where they presented KAA's experience in the external evaluation process and its impact on improving quality assurance mechanisms in higher education in the Republic of Kosovo. The seminar was organized by the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain (ANECA) and brought together representatives of ENQA, the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), and quality assurance agencies from various European countries. During the presentation, the role of the ENQA evaluation process in advancing quality assurance processes in Kosovo was emphasized, contributing to the improvement of evaluation procedures, increased institutional transparency, and strengthened alignment with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). The seminar also provided a platform for discussing methodologies for external reviews of quality assurance agencies, including the preparation of self-evaluation reports and best practices in evaluation processes. KAA's participation in this activity contributed to the exchange of experiences and the strengthening of cooperation with European quality assurance

agencies, supporting the further development of quality assurance mechanisms in higher education in the Republic of Kosovo.

### **6.1.3. European Commission Assessment of the Quality Assurance System in Kosovo**

In the 2025 Kosovo Report, the European Commission assessed KAA positively for its progress and alignment with European standards for quality assurance in higher education. The report also acknowledges the development of the Agency's institutional capacities, including the expansion of professional staff, improvement of internal quality assurance processes, and the inclusion of students and industry representatives in decision-making processes.

This assessment reflects the progress made in developing the quality assurance system in higher education and confirms the alignment of the Agency's processes with European standards and practices in this field.

### **6.1.4. Publication of the Thematic Analysis**

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency published the thematic analysis entitled "Enhancing Scientific Research through External Quality Assurance (EQA) Mechanisms", which examines the impact of external quality assurance mechanisms on the development of scientific research in higher education institutions in Kosovo. The study is based on the analysis of over 60 accreditation and reaccreditation reports for the period 2019–2024, as well as data collected through a survey conducted with higher education institutions. The analysis addresses how research evaluation standards influence institutional strategies, academic staff productivity, student involvement in research, and the development of institutional mechanisms supporting scientific research. The findings indicate that KAA's external evaluation processes have contributed to increasing institutional focus on scientific research, improving policies and strategies for scientific publications, and strengthening internal quality assurance mechanisms in this field. At the same time, the analysis identifies challenges related to research funding, infrastructural capacities, and institutional support for research activities. This publication represents an important analytical contribution to the further development of policies and quality assurance mechanisms related to scientific research in higher education in Kosovo.

## **6.2. International Cooperation and Representation of KAA in Quality Assurance Networks and Forums**

International cooperation constitutes an important element in the development and advancement of quality assurance mechanisms in higher education. Through participation in international networks, seminars, and forums, the Kosovo Accreditation Agency contributes to the exchange of experiences and the adoption of European and international best practices in this field. These activities also support the institutional representation of KAA and strengthen cooperation with counterpart agencies and organizations at the international level.

### **6.2.1. KAA Participation in the ENQA Seminar in Madrid**

Representatives of KAA participated in a seminar organized by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), where they presented KAA's experience in the external evaluation process and its impact on improving quality assurance mechanisms in higher education in the Republic of Kosovo. The seminar was organized by the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain (ANECA) and brought together representatives of ENQA, the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), and quality assurance agencies from various European countries. During the presentation, the role of the ENQA evaluation process in advancing quality assurance processes in Kosovo was emphasized, contributing to the improvement of evaluation procedures, increased institutional transparency, and strengthened alignment with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). The seminar also provided a platform for discussing methodologies for external reviews of quality assurance agencies, including the preparation of self-evaluation reports and best practices in evaluation processes. KAA's participation in this activity contributed to the exchange of experiences and the strengthening of cooperation with European quality assurance agencies, supporting the further development of quality assurance mechanisms in higher education in the Republic of Kosovo.

### **6.2.2. Presentation of KAA Experience at the ENQA General Assembly in Cyprus**

Representatives of KAA participated in the General Assembly of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), held in Paphos, Cyprus, where they presented a publication on the role of the ENQA evaluation process in the institutional development of KAA. During the presentation, developments and reforms implemented by KAA following the previous ENQA evaluation were outlined, including improvements to the legal framework, strengthening of institutional capacities, and increased alignment with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). It was also emphasized that the ENQA evaluation process has contributed to advancing quality assurance procedures and strengthening institutional transparency and credibility. The event also addressed the importance of institutional reforms undertaken in Kosovo, including the adoption of the Law on KAA and the development of the Agency's professional and infrastructural capacities, which have supported improvements in quality assurance mechanisms in higher education. Participation in this international forum enabled the presentation of Kosovo's experience and discussion of current developments in quality assurance in higher education with European counterpart agencies.

### **6.2.3. Presentation of KAA practices on post-accreditation procedures within the CEENQA network**

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) presented its experience in implementing post-accreditation procedures at the regular meeting of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA). During this activity, KAA's practices and methodology for implementing post-accreditation procedures were presented, aiming to ensure that higher education institutions maintain and enhance quality standards throughout the validity period of accreditation. These procedures include verifying the implementation of recommendations provided by international experts during the accreditation process and monitoring the progress of institutions in improving their study programs. Within this process, higher education institutions are required to submit to KAA an implementation plan addressing the recommendations received during the accreditation process. The presentation of these practices enabled the sharing of KAA's experience with agencies in the region and facilitated discussion on different approaches to implementing post-accreditation procedures within quality assurance systems in higher education.

#### **6.2.4. Presentation of KAA experience at the RCC meeting in Croatia**

Representatives of KAA participated in a meeting organized within the framework of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), held in Zagreb, Croatia, with the participation of representatives from quality assurance agencies from Western Balkan countries. During this activity, Kosovo's experience in the evaluation process conducted by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) was presented, along with the impact of this process on the institutional development of KAA. The presentation highlighted improvements made in the legal and regulatory framework, the development of institutional capacities, and the advancement of quality assurance procedures in line with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). The RCC meeting also served as a platform for exchanging experiences among regional quality assurance agencies, with a focus on challenges and best practices in implementing ESG standards and preparing for external evaluation processes by ENQA. The discussions contributed to strengthening regional cooperation and sharing experiences related to the development of quality assurance systems in the Western Balkans.

#### **6.2.5. Exchange of experiences with Croatia on joint and double degree programs**

Representatives of KAA conducted a working visit to the University of Zagreb, where discussions focused on Croatia's experience in the development and implementation of joint and double degree programs in higher education. During the discussions, practices of Croatian institutions in designing and implementing these programs were presented, along with their experiences in ensuring the sustainability and quality of international academic cooperation. These experiences are important for the development of a regulatory framework in Kosovo that will enable higher education institutions to offer joint and double degree programs in cooperation with international partners. As part of the visit, meetings were also held with experts and representatives of Croatian quality assurance institutions, during which experiences were exchanged on best practices in implementing the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). This activity served as an opportunity to deepen inter-institutional cooperation and to discuss policy development supporting internationalisation and the quality of study programs in higher education in Kosovo.

### **6.2.6. Institutional visit of KAA to Rikkyo University in Japan**

Within the framework of participation in the activities of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) in Tokyo, Japan, the KAA delegation conducted an institutional visit to Rikkyo University. The visit focused on exploring opportunities for exchanging experiences and best practices in the field of quality assurance in higher education. During the meeting, possibilities for academic cooperation and the involvement of international experts in the evaluation processes of study programs in higher education institutions in the Republic of Kosovo were discussed. The discussions emphasized the importance of international cooperation for the development of quality assurance mechanisms and the advancement of academic standards. As part of this visit, the KAA delegation also held a meeting at the Embassy of the Republic of Kosovo in Japan, where the importance of participation of Kosovo institutions in international forums and networks related to quality assurance in higher education was discussed. These activities contribute to strengthening international cooperation and promoting the exchange of experiences with international institutions and experts, supporting the further development of quality assurance mechanisms and the internationalisation of higher education in the Republic of Kosovo.

### **6.2.7. Annual Conference in the United States of America**

Representatives of KAA participated in the Annual Conference of the Association of Technology, Management, and Applied Engineering (ATMAE), held in Memphis, United States of America. The conference brought together representatives of institutions and organizations operating in the field of quality assurance and accreditation in higher education. As part of this activity, discussions and exchanges of experience were conducted with representatives of American accreditation organizations regarding the development of standards and quality assurance practices in academic programs in the fields of technology, management, and applied engineering. The experiences and practices presented at this conference contributed to enhancing knowledge of current developments in quality assurance in higher education and strengthening international cooperation in the field of accreditation. These discussions also supported KAA's internationalisation processes and efforts to expand cooperation with international organizations, including the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

### **6.2.8. Cooperation with the U.S. Embassy in support of quality assurance development**

Representatives of KAA held a meeting with representatives of the Embassy of the United States of America in Pristina, during which the continuation of cooperation in support of the development of the quality assurance system in higher education in the Republic of Kosovo was discussed. The meeting addressed the cooperation to date between KAA and the U.S. Embassy, particularly in projects that have contributed to the development of the Agency's institutional and technical capacities, as well as to the advancement of accreditation and quality assurance processes. The discussions also emphasized the importance of continuing support for projects that contribute to the internationalisation of the higher education system in Kosovo and to strengthening cooperation with international partners in the field of quality assurance.

### **6.2.9. Cooperation with North Macedonia in the field of quality assurance**

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) hosted a delegation from the Agency for Quality in Higher Education of North Macedonia, with the aim of exchanging experiences and strengthening regional cooperation in the implementation of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). During the meeting, the institutional development of KAA was presented, including improvements to the legal and regulatory framework, the development of institutional capacities, and the advancement of quality assurance processes in line with ESG standards and the recommendations of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). The meeting also served as an opportunity to exchange experiences on the organization of accreditation processes, monitoring, and post-accreditation procedures, as well as to discuss practices used by both agencies in strengthening quality assurance mechanisms in higher education. This activity contributed to strengthening regional cooperation and to the exchange of best practices between counterpart agencies, with the aim of advancing quality assurance standards in higher education.

### **6.2.10. Participation in the ENQA workshop on artificial intelligence in Estonia**

Representatives of KAA participated in a workshop organized by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), held in Tallinn, Estonia, which focused on the use

of artificial intelligence in quality assurance processes in higher education. The workshop addressed the responsible and ethical use of artificial intelligence in the activities of quality assurance agencies, discussing the opportunities and challenges that this technology brings to evaluation, accreditation, and institutional decision-making processes. During the activity, representatives of quality assurance agencies from various European countries presented practices and experiences related to the use of new technologies in the evaluation and monitoring of higher education institutions. KAA's participation contributed to the exchange of experiences with European quality assurance agencies and to the identification of innovative approaches that can support the improvement of accreditation processes in line with European standards.

#### **6.2.11. Participation in the ENQA seminar on quality assurance in Belgium**

A seminar organized by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), entitled "The European Dimension of Quality Assurance," was held in Brussels, Belgium. The seminar addressed the latest developments in European quality assurance policies and practices in higher education, including the Bologna Process, the priorities of the European Commission in the field of higher education, the role of organizations within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), and the process of revising the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG). The discussions and exchange of experiences among European quality assurance agencies and institutions contributed to the professional development of staff and to the further alignment of KAA processes with European quality assurance practices and standards.

#### **6.2.12. European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF) 2025 in Budapest, Hungary**

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency was represented at the European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF) 2025, held at Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary. The forum, organized by ENQA, EUA, ESU, and EURASHE, is one of the key European events in the field of quality assurance in higher education. Discussions focused on current developments in quality assurance, with particular emphasis on the role of quality assurance institutions in maintaining institutional stability, academic autonomy, and international cooperation. Participation in this forum enabled the exchange of experiences and good practices with European quality assurance agencies and institutions and

contributed to the further alignment of KAA processes with European standards and developments in this field.

### **6.2.13. International conference on quality assurance in higher education in Croatia**

The KAA delegation participated in activities organized in Zagreb, Croatia, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Agency for Science and Higher Education of Croatia (ASHE). As part of this visit, meetings were held with representatives of ASHE, during which discussions focused on strengthening inter-institutional cooperation, exchanging best practices, and further developing quality assurance processes in higher education. An international conference entitled “Quality in Higher Education and Science: From Challenges to Opportunities Together” was also organized, addressing current developments and challenges in the field of quality assurance in higher education. This activity also served to deepen cooperation with European counterpart agencies and to share experiences related to the development and improvement of quality assurance processes in higher education in Kosovo.

## **6.3. Cooperation with higher education institutions and KAA activities in Kosovo**

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency continuously develops cooperative activities with higher education institutions in the Republic of Kosovo. These activities include informational meetings, training sessions, conferences, and institutional visits aimed at increasing transparency and institutional coordination. Through these engagements, KAA contributes to the development of a sustainable quality assurance culture within the higher education system in Kosovo.

### **6.3.1. Annual meeting of KAA with leaders of higher education institutions**

The State Quality Council and the leadership of KAA organized the regular annual meeting with representatives of public and private higher education institutions in the Republic of Kosovo.

The activity was held in two separate sessions and aimed to discuss key issues related to accreditation processes, quality assurance, and strategic developments in higher education. Rectors, deans, and representatives of quality assurance offices from higher education institutions participated in the meeting and were informed about the latest developments in accreditation and quality assurance

processes. The importance of inter-institutional cooperation in improving evaluation processes and advancing quality standards in higher education was also discussed. During the discussions, recent developments within KAA were presented, including the completion of the legal and regulatory framework deriving from the Law on KAA, as well as the initiation of the process for drafting the KAA Strategy for the period 2026–2031. Representatives of higher education institutions were encouraged to contribute to this process by participating in relevant working groups. Discussions also focused on improving accreditation and quality assurance processes, the professional development of academic staff, the advancement of teaching and research methods, and the enhancement of the internationalisation of higher education institutions. This activity served as an important platform for strengthening cooperation between KAA and higher education institutions, with the aim of continuously advancing quality in the higher education system of the Republic of Kosovo.

### **6.3.2. KAA Annual International Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education**

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency organized its annual international conference on quality assurance in higher education, with the participation of representatives from European quality assurance agencies, higher education institutions, and international experts in the field. Prior to the conference, the State Quality Council established a Working Group for its preparation, composed of Board members and KAA staff. The conference served as a platform for discussing current developments in quality assurance in higher education and for exchanging international experiences. The conference program included presentations and discussions on the role of quality assurance in building trust in European higher education, compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), and recent developments in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The conference also included thematic sessions on cross-border cooperation in higher education and the impact of international processes on national quality assurance systems. The conference contributed to strengthening professional dialogue and advancing international cooperation in the field of quality assurance in higher education.

### **6.3.3. Informational visits to higher education institutions**

Within the framework of the implementation of the Work Plan for the academic year 2025/2026, the Monitoring Division of the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) conducted a series of

informational visits to public and private higher education institutions in the Republic of Kosovo. The visits were carried out in accordance with Monitoring Regulation No. 04/2025 and aimed to inform institutions about the procedures and requirements of the monitoring process. During this process, 21 informational visits were conducted, addressing issues related to the functioning of internal quality assurance mechanisms, student involvement, institutional transparency, and the compliance of study programs and academic staff with accreditation standards. These visits aimed to support higher education institutions in implementing monitoring procedures and strengthening internal quality assurance practices.

#### **6.3.4. Informational meeting with higher education institutions on post-accreditation procedures**

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency organized an informational meeting with higher education institutions regarding Post-Accreditation Procedures and the implementation of recommendations resulting from accreditation processes. The meeting was attended by representatives of higher education institutions, including quality coordinators and heads of study programs. During this activity, the methodology and timelines of post-accreditation procedures were presented, as well as key findings from the analysis of Recommendation Implementation Plans submitted by higher education institutions. Discussions focused on the role of institutions in this process and the importance of systematically implementing recommendations for continuous quality improvement. The meeting contributed to increased transparency and coordination between the Agency and higher education institutions in implementing post-accreditation procedures.

#### **6.4. Development of the regulatory framework, policies, and institutional capacities**

The continuous development and improvement of the regulatory framework and institutional policies constitute a key element for the effective functioning of the quality assurance system in higher education.

In this regard, the Kosovo Accreditation Agency has undertaken activities aimed at updating regulatory acts, strengthening institutional transparency, and aligning its processes with European quality assurance standards. In parallel, initiatives have been developed to enhance the professional and organizational capacities of the institution, with the aim of improving the efficiency and quality of accreditation and monitoring processes.

#### **6.4.1. Public consultations on drafting and improving KAA regulatory acts**

With the aim of continuously improving the regulatory framework and aligning quality assurance processes with international standards, the Kosovo Accreditation Agency regularly organizes public consultation processes for regulatory acts related to the functioning of the quality assurance system in higher education. During the reporting year, a public consultation process was conducted on the Draft Regulation on Procedures and Criteria for External Evaluation by International Accreditation Agencies, which was approved for public discussion by the State Quality Council in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 08/L-110 on KAA. Through this process, KAA invited higher education institutions and other stakeholders to provide comments and suggestions regarding the content of this regulatory act. Public consultations aim to increase transparency and ensure the involvement of the academic community and other relevant actors in the development of policies and regulations related to quality assurance in higher education.

#### **6.4.2. Improvement of the regulatory and ethical framework for the functioning of KAA**

In order to strengthen institutional standards and improve quality assurance processes, the Kosovo Accreditation Agency organized a workshop for drafting the Regulation on General Procedures of KAA, as well as for reviewing the Code of Ethics for the institution's staff. The Regulation on General Procedures aims to standardize and harmonize procedures related to the functioning of KAA and the accreditation processes of higher education institutions and study programs in the Republic of Kosovo. This document seeks to establish a clear and transparent framework for conducting accreditation processes and other quality assurance-related activities, in line with international standards and practices. At the same time, the revision of the Code of Ethics for KAA staff was also considered. This code is based on the Civil Service Code of the Republic of Kosovo and includes principles related to integrity and professional ethics in the exercise of public functions. It defines standards of conduct and professional accountability to be observed by KAA civil servants in the performance of their duties. Through the updating of these regulatory and ethical acts, KAA aims to strengthen institutional transparency, increase the credibility of accreditation processes, and contribute to the continuous improvement of the quality assurance system in higher education in the Republic of Kosovo.

#### **6.4.3. Public hearing on the revision of doctoral study standards**

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency organized a public hearing on the revision of doctoral (PhD) study standards, with the participation of representatives of higher education institutions and field experts. This activity aimed to improve the evaluation framework for doctoral programs and strengthen quality assurance mechanisms in higher education in the Republic of Kosovo. During the process, proposals for updating standards governing the organization and evaluation of doctoral programs were discussed, taking into account developments in scientific research, the need for high-quality academic supervision, and alignment with international quality assurance practices. The organization of this public hearing aimed to ensure the involvement of the academic community and stakeholders in the revision process, ensuring that the regulatory framework for doctoral studies is aligned with the needs of scientific research development and European quality assurance standards. This activity contributed to strengthening transparency and to the continuous improvement of the quality of doctoral programs in higher education institutions in Kosovo.

#### **6.4.4. Workshop for drafting the KAA Strategy**

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency organized a workshop for drafting the KAA Strategy for the period 2026–2030, with the participation of representatives of the State Quality Council and agency staff. The activity aimed to define strategic objectives and institutional priorities for the further development of the quality assurance system in higher education in the Republic of Kosovo. During the workshop, key directions for KAA's development in the coming period were discussed, including strengthening accreditation and monitoring mechanisms, developing institutional capacities, and advancing international cooperation in the field of quality assurance. The drafting of this strategy aims to ensure a structured, long-term approach to improving evaluation and accreditation processes, in line with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and contemporary developments in higher education. This activity contributed to strengthening KAA's strategic planning and the continuous advancement of quality assurance mechanisms in higher education in Kosovo.

#### **6.4.5. Strengthening institutional integrity and transparency in quality assurance processes**

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency adopted an Integrity Plan aimed at strengthening institutional transparency, accountability, and ethical standards in the functioning of the agency. This document defines measures and mechanisms for identifying and managing risks that may affect institutional integrity and decision-making processes. It includes measures for preventing conflicts of interest, increasing transparency in administrative processes, and strengthening institutional accountability. Through the implementation of this plan, KAA aims to ensure a high level of integrity in processes related to accreditation and quality assurance in higher education. This activity contributed to improving institutional governance and strengthening the credibility of quality assurance processes, supporting the development of a transparent and sustainable accreditation system in the Republic of Kosovo.

#### **6.4.6. Implementation of Privacy Policies**

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency adopted Privacy Policies, an institutional document defining the collection, processing, and protection of personal data in accordance with Law No. 06/L-082 on Personal Data Protection and relevant European Union legislation. The document sets out procedures for the collection, use, storage, and dissemination of personal data, as well as the rights of individuals to access, update, and file complaints in cases of privacy violations. It also provides for the appointment of a Data Protection Officer and cooperation with the Information and Privacy Agency. The implementation of these policies contributed to strengthening institutional transparency, ensuring secure data management, and aligning the Agency's processes with quality assurance standards in higher education.

#### **6.4.7. Professional development plan for KAA staff (2026–2028)**

As part of efforts to strengthen institutional capacities and improve quality assurance processes, the Kosovo Accreditation Agency adopted the Professional Development Plan for staff for the period 2026–2028. This document aims to develop the professional and technical competencies of staff through training, internal workshops, and participation in professional activities at national and international levels. The plan includes activities related to advancing knowledge in accreditation,

monitoring, and post-accreditation procedures, as well as the use of digital platforms and data analysis to improve work processes. At the same time, it supports the development of staff competencies in line with European quality assurance standards. The implementation of this plan is expected to contribute to increased institutional efficiency and the further improvement of quality assurance processes in higher education in the Republic of Kosovo.

#### **6.4.8. Development of the new KAA website in cooperation with ADA**

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency organized a workshop during which the design and structure of the new institutional website were approved, with the aim of improving transparency and access to information for higher education institutions and the general public. The development of this digital platform is carried out within the framework of the HEI 25 project, funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), and aims to enhance institutional communication and the publication of information related to accreditation and quality assurance processes in higher education. The new website will provide a clearer structure of content and easier access to official documents, decisions, standards, and KAA reports. It offers a more organized presentation of information, facilitating access for higher education institutions, the public, and international partners, while increasing transparency regarding the Agency's activities and quality assurance processes.

#### **6.4.9. Training of higher education institutions on the use of the digital platform**

The Kosovo Accreditation Agency conducted a training session for representatives of higher education institutions on the use of the digital platform for applications in accreditation processes. The training was attended by vice-rectors and quality coordinators from public and private higher education institutions in the Republic of Kosovo. During the activity, the functionalities of the electronic system were presented, enabling online applications for institutional accreditation and re-accreditation, as well as for study programs, the declaration of academic staff for respective programs, and integration with relevant state systems. The implementation of this platform contributed to improving the administration of accreditation processes and increasing efficiency, transparency, and data management within the quality assurance system, while also facilitating online verification and administration of data by both KAA and higher education institutions.

#### **6.4.10. Partnerships and donor support**

During 2025, KAA continued its cooperation with the Sustainable Higher Education and Research in Kosovo (SHER) program, funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), which aims to support the development of a sustainable, evidence-based, and needs-oriented higher education and research sector in Kosovo. Within this program, KAA is one of the direct beneficiaries, with support focused on institutional strengthening and addressing requirements related to advancing KAA's position in line with European quality assurance standards and mechanisms. In this context, SHER supported KAA in the drafting of the Strategic Plan 2026–2030, including the organization of consultative workshops with stakeholders, SWOT analysis, and the initial definition of strategic objectives and measures. This cooperation also contributed to the organization of the 3rd Annual Conference on Higher Education and Quality Assurance, co-organized by KAA with the support of the SHER program, thereby strengthening the international dimension of the Agency's activities and promoting the exchange of best practices in quality assurance. Through this partnership, KAA has benefited from significant support in strategic development, institutional capacity building, and the expansion of international cooperation, contributing to the continuous advancement of its role within the quality assurance system in higher education in the Republic of Kosovo.

## **7. Challenges and Priorities**

### **7.1. Challenges**

#### **7.1.1 Main challenges of KAA in 2025 – Budget**

With the entry into force of the Law on KAA, the Agency's duties and responsibilities have tripled. Previously, the Agency was responsible only for accreditation, whereas the new law has expanded its mandate to include monitoring and post-accreditation procedures. KAA's operational costs have also increased due to its membership in EQAR and other international organizations, as each membership entails the payment of annual fees. The operational budget of KAA is approximately €1 million; however, the expenditure ceiling permitted under the Law on Budget is approximately €540,000. KAA generates around €1 million annually from accreditation fees paid by higher education institutions, but over the past three years, these revenues have been transferred to the state

treasury as surplus due to the expenditure cap. To address the financial gap, in 2025 the Ministry of Finance, by Government decision, allocated an additional €80,000 to KAA; however, outstanding obligations remain. Through the 2026 budget revision, it is essential to increase the operational expenditure ceiling for KAA in order to enable the effective use of its own-source revenues to cover operational costs.

## **7.2. Priorities**

### **7.2.1. Implementation of EQAR Recommendations**

The external evaluation report for KAA identified several priority areas for further action, including: the development of a multi-year implementation plan for the Strategic Plan; more regular production of thematic analyses; clearer human resource planning; strengthening internal quality assurance; more structured involvement of students and other stakeholders; and improvements in monitoring processes and post-accreditation procedures. These recommendations provide an important guiding framework for KAA's institutional development and for achieving full alignment with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). To support their implementation, KAA's strategic documents foresee concrete measures directly linked to EQAR findings, including: the development of an internal quality assurance policy; periodic self-evaluations; systematic data collection from stakeholders; publication of summary findings; development of standard operating procedures; expanded use of digital platforms; production of annual thematic analyses; organization of consultations with higher education institutions; and training for staff and external experts. In this way, the recommendations of the external evaluation have been reflected in KAA's development directions and operational measures.

### **7.2.2. Implementation of the KAA Strategy 2026–2030**

The KAA Strategy 2026–2030 is built upon four main development objectives: strengthening KAA as a professional institution with high ethical standards; advancing quality assurance practices for continuous improvement in higher education; internationalizing the quality assurance system; and promoting a quality culture in higher education in Kosovo through awareness-raising, capacity development, and institutionalization of quality practices. The strategy also integrates cross-cutting themes such as digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and sustainable development. Its

implementation foresees a structured approach through defined measures, activities, and measurable indicators. At the institutional level, the strategy includes: professional development of staff; orientation programs for new members of the State Quality Council and staff; strengthening managerial and administrative capacities; development of an internal quality assurance policy; preparation of annual performance reports and standard operating procedures; and increased transparency and public communication. It also aims at the full digitalization of accreditation processes, expanded use of data, production of thematic analyses, expansion of the network of international experts, revision of standards, and organization of regular meetings and workshops with higher education institutions to strengthen internal quality assurance. Overall, the KAA Strategy 2026–2030 serves as the main guiding document for the Agency’s medium-term development. Its implementation is expected to strengthen KAA as an independent, professional, and credible institution, contributing to the continuous improvement of the quality assurance system in higher education in the Republic of Kosovo and further alignment with European best practices.

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