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**//FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE//**

**ATHEA**

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**New Higher Education Accreditation Association Formed in Vienna**

A new association for higher education accreditation was formed in Vienna Austria in May 2015 and is currently accepting new members. The **Association for Transnational Higher Education Accreditation** (ATHEA) is a not-for-profit, membership-based association that seeks to advance quality in higher education through institutional accreditation based on the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG), which is required for eventual recognition by the European Quality Assurance Register in Higher Education (EQAR).

“We are excited to launch this important initiative in order to provide outcomes-based accreditation to primarily private higher education institutions” reported Günther Singer, Executive Director of ATHEA. Singer elaborated that institutional membership is open to institutions that reside inside and outside of the European region that meet membership requirements.

ATHEA aspires to be the preeminent resource for institutions of higher education striving to achieve excellence in fulfilling their missions. ATHEA intends, through voluntary assessment and adherence to high standards for student learning outcomes and operational behaviour, to assure higher education's publics that its accredited institutions are fulfilling their stated purposes and addressing the publics' expectations. ATHEA is a voluntary, non-governmental, membership association that is dedicated to quality assurance and improvement through accreditation via peer evaluation. Accreditation by a Board of Commissioners instils public confidence in the institutional mission, goals, performance, and resources through its rigorous accreditation standards and their enforcement of those standards.

THEA (Transnational Higher Education Accreditation) is the actual accreditation service provided by ATHEA. An institution joins ATHEA in order to be awarded THEA. The THEA Board of Commissioners is the independent accreditation decision-making body of ATHEA and is elected by the organisation's membership in accordance with the ATHEA bylaws.

The first annual conference of ATHEA is scheduled for 21-October-2015 in Brussels, Belgium. At this meeting, the association will finalize its bylaws and formalize its candidacy and accreditation processes.

Further information can be found at ATHEA's website: [www.athea.org](http://www.athea.org)

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