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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EVALUATION OF UNIVERSITY COOPERATION WITH THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of this scientific article is to conduct a comparative analysis of the evaluation of university cooperation with the socio-economic environment, using the examples of the Republic of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany, and to identify the differences between the analysed systems as a determining factor for the superiority of the German higher education system over the Polish system.

Methodology: Three research methods were employed to achieve the chosen research objective: the formal-dogmatic method (dogmatic-legal), the comparative law method (legal comparativism), and the empirical method (empirical research) as an auxiliary method. The formal-dogmatic method was used to analyse the logical and linguistic regulations governing the institutional framework of agencies responsible for the quality of education in Poland and Germany. The comparative law method will be implemented through classical comparative legal research aimed at analysing the similarities and differences in legal regulations regarding the evaluation of university cooperation with the socio-economic environment in the Republic of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany. The empirical method was used as an auxiliary method to analyse the thesis presented by the author, which is the superiority of German universities over Polish universities.

Findings: The article points out fundamental differences in the legal status of agencies responsible for the quality of education and the systems of quality evaluation in the area of university cooperation with the socio-economic environment in the Republic of Poland and

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the Federal Republic of Germany. Furthermore, the author identifies this state of affairs as one of the factors determining the superiority of the German higher education system over the Polish system.

Originality/value: The chosen research objective represents an unexplored field so far. There is a lack of studies in the domestic and European markets that aim to systematically compare the evaluation of university cooperation with the socio-economic environment in the Republic of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany. The conducted analysis and the resulting conclusions effectively fill this gap.

Keywords: higher education, university, socio-economic environment, evaluation, quality of education

1. INTRODUCTION

Universities in the Federal Republic of Germany have been consistently ranked among the top higher education institutions in Europe and the world, while domestic universities enjoy significantly less recognition. *The Academic Ranking of World Universities 2022 (Shanghai Ranking)*, which included 1,000 classified universities, featured 47 German universities and only 11 universities from Poland. According to this ranking, the top three German universities are the Technical University of Munich (56), Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (57), and Heidelberg University (70). The top three universities from Poland are Jagiellonian University (401–500), University of Warsaw (401–500), and AGH University of Science and Technology in Kraków (601–700).

The *Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings 2023* covered 1,422 universities, including 46 German universities and 22 Polish universities. The highest-ranked German universities are the Technical University of Munich (49), Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (59), and Heidelberg University (65). The top-ranked Polish universities are the University of Warsaw (284), Jagiellonian University (293), and Warsaw University of Technology (521–530).

Out of the 1,001 universities classified in the *Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2023*, 49 are from Germany and only 5 are from Poland. The leading German universities in this ranking are the Technical University of Munich (30), Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (33), and Heidelberg University (43). The Polish universities mentioned are Wrocław Medical University (352–400), Jagiellonian University (601–800), and Medical University of Łódź (601–800).

The *CWTS Leiden Ranking (PP top 10%) 2021*, which is based solely on bibliometric indicators, classified 1,224 universities, including 50 German universities and 31 Polish universities. The highest-ranked German universities in this ranking are Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (141), Georg-August University of Göttingen (173), and Westphalian Wilhelms University of Münster (178). The best-ranked Polish universities are Gdańsk University of Technology (612), Poznań University of Technology (875), and Medical University of Gdańsk (906).

A study conducted by *University-Business cooperation in Europe* on behalf of the European Commission indicates that the conditions for cooperation between universities and the business sector in Poland are lower than the European average and compared to the conditions for German universities, both in terms of resources and promotion.

The criterion that most differentiates Poland and Germany in terms of cooperation with businesses is the scope of activities in which universities collaborate with private entities engaged in economic activities. German universities are almost twice as likely to use business support in the implementation of tasks in the field of management, research, education and commercialization. In Germany, academics most often cooperate with business in the area of student mobility, in which as many as 28.5% of academics stated a high level of cooperation between universities and the business community. Similarly, in the area of scientific research, 28.5% of academics willingly cooperate with the private environment, as well as a high the result is achieved by cooperation in the area of scientific advice (18.6%). In comparison, in Poland, the most common form of cooperation with private entities is research and development. However, within this area, only 9.3% of academics indicate a high level of collaboration, and over 65% of academics do not engage in any cooperation with private entities.

Polish universities also exhibit significantly lower levels of cooperation with businesses located outside the country, as 59% of respondents do not cooperate with foreign entities at all, whereas in Germany, this figure is only 25%. Polish academics more frequently than German academics point to insufficient funding from universities as one of the main barriers to cooperation with businesses, remaining below the European average. They also more often indicate an excess of bureaucracy in the procedure of business cooperation. Polish academics also often express concerns that collaboration with businesses may interfere with their duties as researchers and lecturers.

As indicated by the analyzed reports, Polish academics would much prefer to strengthen cooperation between universities (76.8% to 42.7%) than with businesses, which suggests other external factors contributing to weaker development of cooperation with businesses in Poland. An example of this is the role of "initiators," entities that initiate cooperation between higher education and businesses. According to representatives of the Polish academic community, they themselves are the most common initiators of these relationships. The situation is similar in the German higher education environment. However, in Germany, there are two additional entities that are significant initiators: university authorities and the state, which, according to 38% of surveyed academics, always or often initiate contacts with businesses. Their Polish counterparts achieve lower results: 30% of academics claim that university authorities often or always initiate cooperation with businesses, while in the same metric, Polish government authorities achieve a result of only 17%, which is more than twice as low as the German result.

In summary, according to representatives of the academic community, the actual level of cooperation with businesses in Poland significantly differs from the realities in Germany, both quantitatively and qualitatively. This is the case despite the fact that Polish academics show strong willingness to further develop cooperation with private entities. This situation may indicate the presence of macro-scale problems, such as a passive attitude of university authorities and state bodies, as well as a lack of sufficiently developed legal regulations that stimulate university cooperation with the socio-economic environment, as well as the evaluation of university cooperation with the socio-economic environment carried out by national accreditation agencies.

The presented analysis was conducted based on research carried out by University-Business Cooperation in Europe, namely: *State of University-Business Cooperation. POLAND. University Perspective. Study on the cooperation between higher education institutions and public*

and private organisations and State of University-Business Cooperation. GERMANY. University Perspective. Study on the cooperation between higher education institutions and public and private organisations, both prepared by University-Business Cooperation in Europe.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted using research methods typical for legal sciences, namely the formal-dogmatic method (dogmatic-legal) and the comparative law method (legal comparative studies). The empirical method (empirical research) serves as an auxiliary method in relation to the mentioned methods.

Within the formal-dogmatic method, a logical-linguistic analysis was conducted of the legal regulations defining the institutional framework of agencies responsible for quality education in Poland and Germany (particularly regarding the evaluation of university cooperation with the socio-economic environment). The analysis carried out using this method allows for a proper understanding of the legal norms governing the researched subject matter and helps to understand the differences between the two compared systems of evaluating university cooperation with the socio-economic environment.

The comparative law method (legal comparative studies) will be implemented through classical comparative legal research aimed at analyzing the similarities and differences in legal regulations concerning the evaluation of university cooperation with the socio-economic environment in the Republic of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany. The comparative research focuses on comparing two legal systems.

The empirical method (empirical research) was used as an auxiliary method to analyze the thesis presented by the author, i.e. the advantage of German universities over Polish universities. Current, leading industry rankings were analysed and a comparative analysis of research on the state of cooperation between universities and the socio-economic environment was made, based on research carried out by University-Business Cooperation in Europe.

3. LEGAL STATUS OF THE POLISH ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

The Polish Accreditation Committee (PKA henceforth) appeared in the Polish legal system as the State Accreditation Committee under the Act of July 20, 2001, amending the Act on Higher Education, the Act on Higher Vocational Schools, and certain other acts (Journal of Laws of 2001, No. 85, item 924). In the justification of the aforementioned bill, the establishment of the Academic Accreditation Committee was argued as follows: “Regardless of the ongoing work on the draft Law on Higher Education, the academic community expressed the urgent need to amend the Act of September 12, 1990, on Higher Education and the Act of June 26, 1997, on Higher Vocational Schools, and to regulate new issues of fundamental importance for the proper functioning of the higher education system, namely the establishment of an accreditation and quality assessment system for education (...)” (Jakubowski, 2023, pp. 803–806).

Currently, under the existing law of July 20, 2018 – Higher Education and Science Act (consolidated text: Journal of Laws of 2023, item 742 as amended), the activity of the Polish Accreditation Committee is governed by Article 251, which states that “the PKA is an

institution acting independently for the purpose of improving the quality of education.” It is worth examining the individual elements of this definition. The institutional nature of the PKA corresponds, in practice, to an administrative entity acting, in most cases, through its bodies. The independence of the Polish Accreditation Committee may initially raise doubts due to its strong ties to the minister responsible for higher education and science (hereinafter referred to as the minister). The minister, among other things, appoints members of the PKA (Article 251, paragraph 3), appoints and dismisses the chairperson of the PKA (Article 253, paragraph 4), and determines the criteria for programme evaluation (Article 248, item 1). However, the independence of the PKA is not manifested in its separate constitutional status since it de facto serves as an auxiliary body to the minister, but rather in its activities. The minister does not have legal instruments to influence the content of opinions and conclusions issued during the evaluations carried out by the PKA teams, nor can the minister influence the outcome of programme evaluations or comprehensive assessments conducted by the PKA (Waltoś & Rozmus, 2016). The minister can only influence the execution of tasks by the PKA based on statutory provisions. Other entities, including universities, are also unable to influence the substantive aspects of opinions and evaluations issued by the PKA (Balicki & Pyter & Zięba, 2021). The autonomy of the Polish Accreditation Committee as an institution was confirmed as a result of two external assessments conducted in 2008 and 2013 in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, ESG of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) (Woźnicki, 2019). The aim of the PKA is to improve the quality of education, which is also a key element of the mission of the entire higher education and science system (Article 2). Therefore, it exercises effective control over the activities of higher education institutions and supports the minister in his activities within the higher education system.

PKA (Polish Accreditation Committee) consists of up to 100 members (the law does not provide for a lower limit) nominated by institutions associated with the higher education system and appointed by the Minister and the Chairman of the Parliament of Students of the Republic of Poland. The term of office for PKA is 4 years and begins on January 1st. PKA operates in plenary sessions, including the adoption of its own statute, or through its bodies, which are the presidium and the chairman. The PKA statute specifies the organization and operation of PKA and comes into effect if the Minister does not raise objections to its compliance with the law within the specified period. The PKA also includes teams responsible for comprehensive and programmatic evaluation, as well as appeal teams (Izdebski & Zieliński, 2019).

The tasks of the Polish Accreditation Committee (PKA) are defined in Article 258. However, due to the scope of this article, the most important aspect of PKA's activities is the evaluation of the quality of education, which can take two forms: programmatic evaluation (which includes criteria such as cooperation with the socio-economic environment) or comprehensive evaluation. The detailed criteria for programmatic evaluation are currently defined in the Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of September 12, 2018, on the criteria for programme evaluation (Journal of Laws, item 1787). The evaluation of the quality of education is issued based on the report of a team operating within a given field and the position of the university. The evaluation is issued in the form of a resolution by the PKA presidium. Decisions of the presidium can be subject to a request for reconsideration and an

appeal to the administrative court, as they are administrative actions concerning the rights or obligations of entities (Article 3, Section 2, Point 4 of the Code of Administrative Procedure). There are doubts in the academic community about the legal nature of PKA resolutions. On the one hand, they are individual and specific acts that shape the rights and obligations of the parties, which would indicate that PKA resolutions have the character of administrative decisions, especially in connection with Article 246, which imposes the obligation to cease conducting studies in that field by the end of the semester in which the resolution became final if PKA issued a negative evaluation of the quality of education. However, another part of the academic community, including A. Jakubowski, states that the key element of an administrative decision, namely a resolution, is lacking in PKA resolutions. Therefore, they only constitute a statement of knowledge, which may result in the creation of an obligation arising from a statutory provision but is not in itself an act of applying the law. The confusion regarding the legal nature of PKA resolutions has far-reaching consequences, as depending on the adopted position, provisions of the Code of Administrative Procedure may or may not apply to them.

Another important activity of PKA, in the context of this work's scope, is cooperation with international institutions and organisations operating in the field of higher education, particularly in collaboration with other accreditation committees in the implementation of the Bologna Process and the construction of the European higher education area (Jakubowski, 2023).

4. LEGAL STATUS OF GERMAN ACCREDITATION AGENCIES

Accreditation, as an element of ensuring the quality of education, appeared at German higher education institutions in the 1990s as a response to the agreements of the Bologna Process. The German system of ensuring the quality of education is characterised by multi-agency and hierarchical structure. An important feature is also the responsibility for ensuring the quality of education, including accreditation, belonging to the competence of the federal states, which have autonomy in this regard due to the federal nature of the German state. All the described forms of centralisation and standardisation of the accreditation procedure are the result of cooperation between the federal states through bodies such as the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (Szewior, 2018).

The current legal system of accreditation has been in place since 2018, created under the influence of a ruling by the Federal Constitutional Court, which recognized external quality assurance in teaching conducted through the accreditation process as constitutional. This triggered a process of standardising the accreditation system, in which the federal states carry out their tasks in ensuring the quality of education through the Accreditation Council Foundation, serving as an overarching institution for the entire accreditation system. The statutory body of the foundation, the Accreditation Council, functions as the decision-making body in the accreditation process, while the actual procedure is carried out by external agencies, which undergo a two-step procedure to be implemented into the German accreditation system. Firstly, these agencies must be registered with *the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education* (EQAR), and then, as a mere formality, approved by the Accreditation Council. Such a structure not only makes the German accreditation system significantly more flexible than the Polish system but also opens it up to entities operating on a European scale,

thereby meeting higher quality standards associated with elevated criteria for such agencies in many Western European countries (Huther & Krucken, 2018). In parallel with the described accreditation system in Germany, there is also the Science Council, which is responsible for institutional accreditation of private universities.

Accreditation carried out by agencies has two dimensions: programmatic and systemic. Programmatic accreditation aims to assess the quality of teaching offered by a university from the perspective of an external entity, while systemic accreditation evaluates not the actual quality of education offered but the internal quality assurance system functioning within the university. It is worth noting that due to the federal nature of Germany and the fact that ensuring the quality of education falls within the competence of the federal states, the obligations regarding accreditation may differ to a greater or lesser extent among individual federal states (Bednarczyk-Płachta, 2016). Three main criteria can be mentioned as differentiating factors:

- the choice of undergoing systemic or programmatic evaluation;
- the mandatory timing for conducting the first accreditation;
- the mandatory nature of accreditation and its scope.

As a result of the conducted accreditation, an external agency formulates its opinion and compiles comprehensive documentation regarding the procedure, which is then provided to the Accreditation Council. Based on the presented documentation, the Council issues an administrative decision, concluding the accreditation process and determining whether the formal and material requirements of the university are met. Thanks to a clear division of roles between the agencies and the Accreditation Council, the German accreditation system is characterised by stability and procedural certainty, which is also beneficial for higher education institutions. They can appeal the decision of the Accreditation Council through the regular administrative procedure. Such structuring of the process also avoids the confusion present in the Polish legal system regarding the legal nature of the assessment of the quality of education carried out in the form of a resolution of the Presidium of the Polish Accreditation Committee, which combines characteristics of both an opinion and an administrative decision. In Germany, the opinion on the quality of education or the quality of the education system at a university is issued by a separate entity from the decision-making body, thus ensuring a clear division of roles and competencies that is understandable to all stakeholders.

5. THE CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING THE COOPERATION OF UNIVERSITIES WITH THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT IN THE POLISH HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

In the Polish higher education system, evaluation is carried out in the form of program evaluation or comprehensive evaluation. Comprehensive evaluation involves assessing the actions taken to ensure the quality of education at the university. When conducting a comprehensive evaluation, particular attention is given to the effectiveness of actions taken to ensure the quality of education in all fields of study offered by the university. The subject of evaluation is carried out at the request of a university that has only received positive programme evaluations or a positive comprehensive evaluation. Programme evaluation involves the cyclic assessment of the quality of education in a specific study programme. Programme evaluation

is initiated by the Polish Accreditation Committee (PKA), at the request of the university, or promptly at the request of the Minister (Świstak, 2022).

One of the 10 criteria for evaluating programme work is the criterion of cooperation with the socio-economic environment in the construction, implementation, and improvement of the study programme, as well as its impact on the development of the field. Cooperation with the socio-economic environment is crucial for aligning study programmes with the needs of the labour market, enabling graduates to have better employment prospects and professional development (Kozień, 2021). The Polish Accreditation Committee (PKA) attaches great importance to this aspect when evaluating the quality of study programmes. This criterion is divided into two standards: Standard 6.1 and Standard 6.2 of the quality of education.

Standard 6.1 (Appendix No. 2 to the Statute of the Polish Accreditation Committee – Detailed criteria for program evaluation) pertains to conducting cooperation with the socio-economic environment, including employers, in the construction, implementation, and improvement of the study program. The aspects taken into account during the evaluation by the Polish Accreditation Committee (Self-Assessment Report – Appendix No. 2 to Resolution No. 66/2019 of the Presidium of the Polish Accreditation Committee of February 28, 2019, as amended) include:

- professional internships: The PKA verifies whether study programmes include periods of professional internships that allow students to gain practical experience and whether they are implemented according to the study programme. Professional internships should take place in business entities and institutions approved by the institution offering the study programme. The completion of internships is associated with the formal establishment of cooperation between the internship provider and the institution offering the study programme;
- consultations with employers: The PKA expects universities to conduct consultations with representatives of the socio-economic environment, including employers, during the construction of study programmes. Employers should have the opportunity to express their opinions on the needs of the job market and the competencies that graduates of a particular programme should possess. In addition to the basic form of cooperation with socio-economic institutions such as professional internships and student internships, collaboration in consulting the study programme, the possibility of preparing theses on thematic areas related to a specific field, and the diverse infrastructure of cooperating entities with local government units in the field should also be taken into account;
- partnerships with employers: The PKA appreciates the cooperation between universities and employers through partnerships, research projects, student internships, and other forms of collaboration. These partnerships can contribute to better adapting study programmes to the requirements of the job market. An interesting form of cooperation is conducting research, as well as preparing various analyses, reports, and expertise in the functioning, development, and preparation of projects related to the broad functions and development that contribute to the improvement and development of study programmes;
- updating study programmes: The PKA expects universities to continuously monitor changes in the job market and adjust study programmes to meet the current needs of

employers and society. Universities should respond to changes in technology, professional trends, and social needs.

Standard 6.2 (Attachment No. 2 to the Statute of the Polish Accreditation Committee Detailed criteria for program evaluation) assesses the relationships with the socio-economic environment in relation to the study programme and the impact of this environment on the programme and its implementation. The assessment is conducted systematically with the participation of students, and the results of these assessments are used in improvement activities. This includes analysis and interpretation of collected data, identification of areas requiring improvement, and the development of strategies and action plans to implement appropriate changes (Bugaj & Budzanowska-Drzewiecka, 2022).

The impact of the socio-economic environment on the programme and its implementation is diverse. Changing labour market needs may suggest the need to introduce new skills or areas of specialisation in the programme (Leja, 2013). The assessment and improvement process should be continued systematically so that the study programme can continue to be adjusted to the changing socio-economic environment. Regular updating of the programme based on assessment results will help ensure that students receive the most up-to-date knowledge and skills that are valuable in the job market and beyond (Przyszczykowski & Cytlak, 2021).

6. NATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAMME AND SYSTEMIC ACCREDITATION REGARDING COOPERATION WITH THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

The accreditation process in the Federal Republic of Germany is determined at the state level, within the guidelines formulated by the *Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs) and state laws on higher education, as a necessary condition for obtaining state licensing/permission for higher education. German solutions regarding the criteria for evaluating the quality of education, including the evaluation of cooperation with the socio-economic environment, significantly differ from the way this matter is regulated in Poland (Szewior, 2019). First and foremost, it should be noted that the criteria used by German accreditation agencies do not impose standardised methods and evaluation criteria for all types of universities and study programs. The idea behind the German accreditation system is to have decentralised evaluation criteria based on specific common frameworks. One important element of evaluation in Germany is the presence of representatives from the socio-economic sphere.

Regarding the evaluation of university cooperation with the socio-economic environment, it should be noted that the German higher education system implements both programmatic accreditation and systemic accreditation. The evaluation criteria depend on the type of assessment being conducted. The purpose of programmatic accreditation is to verify first and second-degree studies conducted in state and state-recognised universities. A positive accreditation of a programme results in obtaining accreditation for a specific period of time and the awarding of a quality mark. Systemic accreditation involves assessing the university's

quality assurance system along with its elements (related to management, provision, impact, and effectiveness), as well as the system's ability to ensure quality regulations, curriculum, and teaching. The main goal of systemic evaluation is to verify the quality assurance system (to determine if the university is capable of self-accreditation) (Szewior, 2020).

In terms of criteria for educational programme accreditation, concerning programmatic accreditation, the criterion related to direction-oriented cooperation encompasses the collaboration between the university and the entity responsible for program implementation, aiming to guarantee the achievement of educational goals and ensure quality. Cooperation should be described, documented, and included in an agreement. Cooperation partners can include universities, businesses, and other institutions. The criteria for programmatic accreditation regarding cooperation and partnership linked to the program include the following aspects:

- cooperation requires justification due to “specific” adopted solutions in terms of didactic and research aspects, interdisciplinary nature of educational content, bilateral or multilateral nature of studies, international student body, etc.;
- collaboration with universities and other scientific institutions, as well as scientific networks, and also with entities from the economic and social spheres in areas and fields relevant to the direction (connections within the discipline and/or the university, going beyond them, institutionalised nature);
- the scope and nature of cooperation, as well as the list of entities involved, are included in the appropriate agreement, documented and described;
- the method of defining the scope of partners' competencies, ensuring transparency of mutual relations;
- in the case of jointly conducting education with internal entities (universities) and/or external entities, determining their nature and role in this cooperation, division of competencies, commitment to adhering to quality assurance standards;
- the method of ensuring and enforcing quality standards in education in the case of cooperative implementation of study programmes;
- results regarding the effectiveness and purposefulness of the cooperation, the scope of changes undertaken, including partners;
- activities of the career office and provision of career counselling to promote the employability of graduates, support students/graduates in transitioning from academic education to the job market;
- collaboration and engagement in alumni relations to build a community of graduates from the program/university and obtain feedback on the quality and relevance of education.

In relation to the criteria for the systemic evaluation of university cooperation with the socio-economic environment, there is a criterion concerning cooperation. If a university cooperates with an external entity in the field of studies and education, it ensures the quality of education in the conducted programs and their continuous improvement through implemented actions. The nature and scope of this cooperation should be documented, described, and recorded. The same principles apply to the cooperation of universities with other foreign higher education institutions in the field of joint teaching (including within Joint Programmes). The criteria for systemic accreditation regarding cooperation and collaboration with groups and entities within and outside the university include the following subjects:

- specifics of the partners, areas of activity, the manner of regulating relationships, and their documentation;
- stakeholder impact in the field of studies and teaching;
- the way in which quality is ensured in the joint implementation of education with a university or a social/economic entity (e.g., study programme, pathway, internships), areas under supervision, and actions taken;
- the manner of regulating cooperation in the field of teaching and studies with foreign universities governed by separate legal frameworks.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The conducted comparative analysis of the evaluation of university cooperation with the socio-economic environment, using the examples of the Republic of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany, allows us to conclude that the compared systems differ significantly from each other, which can be considered one of the factors determining the advantage of the German higher education system over the Polish system. The fundamental element that sets apart the analysed systems of evaluating the quality of education in terms of cooperation with the socio-economic environment is the difference in the number of entities authorised to conduct accreditation. In Poland, there is one such entity, while in Germany, there is a plurality of entities in this regard. The multiplicity of German accreditation agencies has led to the formation of a system characterised by a lack of standardisation of evaluation criteria (despite being based on common frameworks), which, on the other hand, is a dominant feature of the Polish higher education system. Different systemic conditions and evaluation criteria for university cooperation with the socio-economic environment are factors influencing the development of higher education in the analysed countries. The solutions developed by the Federal Republic of Germany are an important element influencing the position of German universities on the international stage and serve as a stimulus for development in the analysed area.

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