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Ministry of Science  
and Higher Education  
Republic of Poland

Panel Discussion:

Main Challenges in Assuring and Improving Quality in Europe

# The New Policy Framework for External QA in Poland in light of the Draft Law on Higher Education and Science

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## Draft of new law: participatory model of policy development

- ✓ More than 1,5 year of “pre-consultation” process,
- ✓ A competition for draft guidelines for the new law („Law 2.0”):
  - three variants of guidelines developed by expert teams coming from the academic community,
- ✓ Intensive consultations with stakeholder organisations,
- ✓ Peer review report: *Poland’s Higher Education and Science system* (in the framework of the Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility),
- ✓ National Congress of Science.

# National Congress of Science

- ✓ A cycle of 9 conferences devoted to particular areas, organised in different Polish cities (5,500 participants),
- ✓ National Congress of Science (19-20 September, Kraków): almost 3,000 participants.
- ✓ The first draft of a new law announced.





## Main areas of the reform

- ✓ Autonomy and structure of higher education institutions,
- ✓ System of higher education,
- ✓ Funding,
- ✓ Quality and relevance of study programmes (including quality assurance),
- ✓ Doctoral training,
- ✓ Academic career,
- ✓ Evaluation of research output.

## The first attempt to limit the problem of bureaucratic burden

- ✓ Prior to the „Law 2.0”,
- ✓ “Breaking ties” (to certain extent) between criteria for programme assessment and formal *ex-ante* conditions,
- ✓ More general criteria for programme assessment set in the ministerial regulation:
  - even more flexibility for the Polish Accreditation Committee (PKA) to set detailed criteria,
  - ESG 2015 – important point of reference.
- ✓ New provisions have come into force in the academic year 2016/2017.

## External quality assessment in light of the draft new law

- ✓ Most of the key tasks of PKA remain the same:
  - programme assessment – still the basic type of quality assessment,
  - providing the minister with an opinion regarding new programmes to be opened (as regards HEIs which do not have the full programme autonomy).
- ✓ System-wide analysis and practice-sharing mentioned among the basic tasks of PKA,
- ✓ Lifting numerous formal ex-ante conditions for study programmes (i.a. minimum number of staff with scientific degrees) - further empowerment of external quality assessment.

## Institutional (“complex”) assessment

- ✓ General criterion: effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system in the whole institution,
- ✓ Consequences of the positive outcome (for 6 years):
  - full programme autonomy (also a pathway to full programme autonomy for the best vocational HEIs),
  - no burden related to programme assessment (this provision may be limited to particular broad fields of science study programmes are related to).
- ✓ 2-year period for the provision to come into effect:
  - time for stakeholders to develop criteria (ESG 2015 – the main point of reference) and detailed procedure,
  - pilot assessments.

## More straightforward framework for cross-border QA

- ✓ Clear legal basis (in an act) for the right of PKA to make an assessment resolution “on the basis” of the assessment carried out by an EQAR-registered agency (or an agency being a subject of an agreement on mutual recognition of accreditation decisions).
- ✓ PKA may acknowledge an assessment carried out by other QA agencies (like professional accreditation bodies)



## Quality assurance of joint programmes

- ✓ Currently: ex-ante formal conditions are the main source of difficulties for HEIs as regards provision of joint programmes,
- ✓ Ex-ante conditions in the draft law:
  - ✓ lifting formal ex-ante conditions for regular study programmes with a positive impact on joint study programmes,
  - ✓ more flexible provisions regarding international joint programmes.
- ✓ A separate category of „quality assessment” dedicated to international joint programmes:
  - ✓ carried out by an EQAR-registered agency,
  - ✓ based on „international standards” regarding quality assurance of joint programmes (opportunity for the „European approach” to be directly used),
  - ✓ a substitute of programme assessment in terms of consequences. [www.nauka.gov.pl](http://www.nauka.gov.pl)



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Thank you for your attention!

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