

Projekt pomocowy MNiSW-PW pt. „POLSKO-UKRAIŃSKA WSPÓŁPRACA INSTYTUCJI PRZEDSTAWICIELSKICH  
REPREZENTUJĄCYCH REKTORÓW, NA RZECZ DOSKONALENIA DZIAŁANIA UCZELNI”

Lider: prof. dr hab. Jerzy Woźnicki

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**NOTES**  
**OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> POLISH-UKRAINIAN SEMINAR**  
**POLISH-UKRAINIAN COOPERATION OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES**  
**IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND DOCTORAL TRAINING**

On-line meeting

Thursday, 24th September 2020, 11.00 – 13.30 CET

**Participants:** 14 participants: project team: prof. Jerzy Woźnicki, dr Iryna Degtyarova; delegation of PKA: prof. Krzysztof Diks, dr hab. Maria Próchnicka, Izabela Kwiatkowska-Sujka; delegation of NAQA: prof. Serhiy Kvit, prof. Nataliia Stukalo, prof. Bohdan Morklianyk, Albina Tsiatkovska; honorary guests: Wojciech Dziedzic, Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Poland, Vitalii Bilyi, Embassy of Ukraine in Poland, prof. Zbigniew Marciniak, National Council of Science and Higher Education, University of Warsaw, prof. Łukasz Sułkowski, Jagiellonian University, Public Consulting Group Polska; special NAQA guests: Liliya Hrynevich, Yuriy Rashkevich, Oleh Sharov (Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine).

The meeting held on Zoom platform and hosted by NAQA

The list of participants, agenda and presentations are attached.

**Opening session. Welcome, moderator – prof. Jerzy Woźnicki**

- **Prof. Jerzy Woźnicki** – The Polish-Ukrainian Aid Project Leader, President of the Polish Rectors Foundation welcomed all participants at the Second Polish-Ukrainian Seminar of the national agencies for quality assurance in higher education and in doctoral training, reminding that the 1<sup>st</sup> Seminar was held physically on 9th of March in Warsaw, and it was focused on cooperation in the field of doctoral training and cooperation of National Agency for Quality Assurance of Ukraine and Committee for Science Evaluation of Poland. Prof. Woznicki stressed that these Seminars are organised within the Polish-Ukrainian project called „*Polish-Ukrainian Cooperation Of Academic Stakeholder Organisations Representing Rectors For Improving University Performance*” which is conducted by Warsaw University of Technology and funded by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Poland in cooperation with the national conferences of rectors in Poland (CRASP) and Ukraine (URHEIU), and the Polish Rectors Foundation, under the patronage of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.
- **Mr Wojciech Dziedzic** - Deputy Director of the Department of International Cooperation at the Ministry for Science and Higher Education of Poland – expressed MNiSW support for Polish-Ukrainian cooperation and underlined that partnership between quality assurance agencies is of great value, also taking into account the utmost importance of quality assurance in higher education nowadays. It takes years to raise quality, but much more efforts to maintain it. Quality of higher education is important for students but also for young researchers to start their doctoral training. This seminar is a unique opportunity to understand better higher education systems in both countries and exchange good practices.
- **Vitalii Bilyi** – First Secretary of the Embassy of Ukraine in Poland congratulated the organisers of the Seminar and underlined the high importance of joint efforts to set up bilateral collaboration in a very difficult circumstances caused by coronavirus and stressed that reforms

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in higher education are crucial for Ukraine and the seminar will contribute this process and bring the mutual benefits.

- **prof. Zbigniew Marciniak** – President of the National Council of Science and Higher Education of Poland: this Seminar is a meeting of friends who have common problems and meet to discuss common standards, learn from each other in the spirit of friendship and good cooperation.

#### Plenary session I, moderator - dr Iryna Degtyarova

- **Presentation of the institutions:** Prof. Serhiy Kvit, Head of The National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance, Ukraine , and prof. Krzysztof Diks, President of The Polish Accreditation Committee, Poland, presented the national agencies of quality assurance (NAQA and PKA respectively), and informed about details of the accreditation framework in Ukraine and Poland.
- **Comments from moderator:** on the significance of the launch of NAQA: there are 2 major systemic reforms in higher education system in Ukraine: the introduction of the independent external testing for school leavers (like matura in Poland) and establishment and real start of work of the National Agency of Quality Assurance in higher education in Ukraine. Second comment is to clarify scope of quality assessment conducted by PKA: PKA covers BA and MA programs and institutional or complex assessment, evaluation of doctoral schools belongs to the Committee for Science Evaluation of Poland. In Ukraine NAQA covers BA, MA and PhD programs as well as the institutional accreditation. Third comment was to clarify the number and types of HEIs in Poland – both academic and professional HEIs (it is not VET). Unfortunately the language of the Ukrainian legislation is more general, vague and metaphoric than normative, the quality of legal acts should be increased.
- **Discussion:**
  - Status of the national agency and its independence: operational and organizational independence is the requirement of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education 2015 (p. 3.3) and it is one of the key commitment of the Bologna Process,. *Lessons from Poland:* the status of PKA is defined by the Law on Higher Education and Science as well as its organizational and operational independence. Minister appoints the members of PKA but due to the certain procedure and criteria defined in the Law. Minister cannot dissolve PKA or dismiss its member, there is no influence on the experts and operational decisions. PKA adopts its Statute independently by the members, Minister has no capacity to intervene, also into the decision process.
  - Status of the members of the national agency: *Lessons from Poland:* in Poland the members of PKA are not civil servants, members are employed in their academic institutions and may continue their academic work (besides the restriction to occupy some managerial positions which is specified in the Law).
  - Costs for accreditation: *Lessons from Poland:* In Poland the quality assessment process is funded from the state budget, not by universities. In Ukraine the universities pay to NAQA for accreditation, and this also could be changed and included to the state budget in the direct funding to NAQA. The assessment conducted by PKA is obligatory for the Polish HEIs by the Law.

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- The right of the national agency to provide accreditation for other quality assurance agencies: Lessons from Ukraine: NAQA while drafting the regulations in 2012-2014 was inspired by the German experience, where there is one central/federal QA agency and also agencies in the lands, so the central agency has to assure that those agencies are providing their activity in line with QA procedures and ESG. So this possibility was also opened in the Ukrainian Law. It was supposed that some, e.g. sectoral accreditation councils would emerge. In this situation should be one national/centralized agency which will prove their commitment to the key requirements and would monitor such accreditation activity.
  - Main challenges in organising QA process: For Ukraine, the main challenge is the independence of the agency, attempts to discredit the Agency and its members, huge number of HEIs and its branches and underregulation of their functioning, post-Soviet practices, the issue of the university autonomy (lack of real financial autonomy). Quality assurance in the COVID crisis is one of the main challenges globally, also for Polish and Ukrainian higher education institutions.

#### Plenary session II, moderator – prof. Zbigniew Marciniak

- **Presentation of good practices and challenges in the accreditation process in higher education in Poland and Ukraine:** Good practices in conducting of the on-line accreditation during COVID-19 period by prof. Nataliia Stukalo, Vice-Head of The National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance, Ukraine; PKA reflections on external quality assurance during coronavirus crisis prof. Maria Próchnicka, Secretary General of the Polish Accreditation Committee, Poland; Quality Assurance in post-COVID-era by prof. Łukasz Sułkowski, Vice-President of PKA in 2016-2019, Jagiellonian University, President of the Management Board of Public Consulting Group Polska.
- **Comments from moderator:** The discussion about general framework and challenges requires a series of seminars on specific topics organized in future, in order to exchange good practices and challenges. The biggest challenge for higher education is always to establish the system of quality assurance. In Poland it also took some time (PKA was established in 2002) but it is worth to stress that it was created by the universities themselves, by the academic community (the conferences of rectors created their own commissions as the first step), and then it developed into the independent agency. Ukraine established the QA system already and it's a great achievement. But the problem of payment should be resolved, the government must pay for the accreditation, to ensure equality for all HEIs in assurance QA.
- **Discussion:**
  - Online accreditation: Lessons from Ukraine: NAQA is more experienced in conducting online accreditation and organizing experts visits remotely, also thanks to creating the digital platform before pandemic and making the accreditation process as transparent as possible (public and online). But sometimes it is hard “to feel the spirit” of the university in online accreditation, that's an issue for the universities of art. *Lessons from Poland:* the assessment procedures were temporarily suspended. Replacing of normal accreditation process with virtual environment is a big challenge. Quality assurance is about enhancement and trust, which is better achieved with personal

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- contact with HEIs. So virtual meeting should not replace site visits but should be an addition.
- Functioning of the QA agencies in pandemic: Lessons from Poland: PKA faced challenges in delivering ex-post assessment in COVID-19 crisis. PKA took more reflective than reactive approach during lockdown and pandemic, prepared future-oriented procedures and adapted the regulatory framework to a new situation. *Lessons from Ukraine:* Ukraine adopted the regulations adapted to a new situation very quickly and didn't suspend the accreditation process. The number of accreditations granted during last 6 months is bigger than for the previous 6 month.
  - Changes and challenges in higher education due to COVID-19: Part of changes caused by pandemic will stay in the world, as well as in the higher education systems. Globalisation and mobility face dangers which could have long-lasting consequences. The positive effects: the development of digital tools (VLE, LMS, MIS), bringing university management closer to business. We need to name the process of teaching and learning not purely online/digital, but as emergency e-learning, because HEIs switched to online very fast, but to synchronic one, the universities don't have many tools for asynchronous e-learning. The perspective for the future: blended learning will dominate, scientific work (collaboration) will be further virtualized, quality assurance should also be adapted. *Lessons from Poland:* big revolutionary changes in the system of higher education and science are caused by the reform called Law 2.0, so the universities have been in the process of changes and professionalization of the management system.
  - Digital fatigue: the experts stressed that students and the staff are overwhelmed with technologies. In the normal education process teachers also learn from the classroom, but in the digital area it's hardly possible. The face-to-face contact with teachers is also important for students and the quality of education. So HEIs may observe increasing numbers of drop outs in the nearest future. QA agencies, HEIs and governments should realise it and take appropriate measures to prepare for such situations.
  - **General discussion. Signing the Memorandum: moderator – prof. Zbigniew Marciniak**
    - Word from special NAQA guest Liliya Hrynevich, Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine in 2016-2019: Signing the Memorandum between NAQA and PKA makes the dream come true, as Poland and Ukraine are key academic partners in every sphere. This event proves that the quality must be valued, even in unpredicted future. And PKA-NAQA cooperation can provide both sides good ideas, also for raising quality of education.
    - Signing the Memorandum: the Presidents of PKA and NAQA signed the Memorandum in Kyiv and Warsaw and showed the document to the Seminar participants. Further formal actions were agreed before during the technical meeting on 17 September. The copies will be sent by NAQA and PKA secretariats directly to their regular mail addresses.
    - Closing remarks:
      - *prof. Serhiy Kvit:* It was a good experience and satisfaction on the Seminar. In different issues we have our mutual understanding of topics, challenges. Our

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cooperation in the future will help both sides to overcome different obstacles in our development, and we will strength the quality of higher education and good development of our societies.

- *prof. Krzysztof Diks:* “The signing of this Memorandum of Understanding in between our two agencies NAQA and PKA symbolizes the begin of close relations. PKA believes that this initiative is an opportunity to identify common interest via mutual learning process that is essential to foster greater understanding between both institutions. I have every confidence that Memorandum of Understanding will bring mutual benefits to NAQA and PKA as well as will contribute to development of transparency in European Higher Education Area. Moreover, I trust that it will lead us to joint initiatives that create added value to quality assurance systems in Poland and Ukraine. I would like to say that I am confident that through joint efforts and commitment we will be able to achieve more and to be able to establish stronger relations and friendship within the framework of European standards and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education. In my capacity as PKA’s President I would like to assure you that PKA will do whatever it can in order to provide successful implementation of this Memorandum. At this moment of celebration I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone whose dedication brought us to the finalization of MOU.
- *prof. Jerzy Woźnicki:* The Polish-Ukrainian cooperation in higher education has been strengthening during these years of our Polish-Ukrainian Aid project financed by the Polish Ministry for Science and Higher Education (2018-2021), and also thanks to the previous Polish Rectors Foundation activities for the development of Polish-Ukrainian cooperation at different levels, in particular at the systemic level, at the level of the conferences of rectors, as well as at the level of national bodies for quality in education and science. Setting up the cooperation between national agencies of quality assurance in higher education and doctoral training is one of the goals and priorities of the Project in 2020. The project is supposed to be continued in the future, probably there will be other occasions to our cooperation. The Project Leader expressed gratitude for the delegations and all participants and guests for making this Seminar a success for the future mutual benefits.

*Notes taken: Dr Iryna Degtyarova,  
program coordinator of the Polish Ukrainian Project  
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