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**Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the ranking practices of 25 European higher education ranking systems (HERSs). Ranking practices were assessed with 14 quantitative measures derived from the Berlin Principles on Ranking of Higher Education Institutions (BPs). HERSs were then ranked according to their degree of congruence with the BPs. Additionally, the three domains of methodology, transparency, and consumer-friendliness were proposed to underlie the BPs, and the measures were also applied for assessing HERSs regarding these domains. Results indicate that the cooperating HERSs by CHE (Germany), AQA (Austria) and swissUp (Switzerland) exhibit the highest congruence with the BPs. However, no European HERS demonstrates good overall congruence with the BPs, mainly due to methodological shortcomings. Results further show that HERSs compiled and published by non-profit research entities seem to perform better than the majority of HERSs published by for-profit news outlets. International comparisons indicate that HERSs published in German-speaking countries and the Netherlands tend to exhibit a higher

**09.2.2026**

congruence with the BPs. Overall, this study hopes to stimulate the improvement of ranking practices through benchmarking with existing exemplary models. The quantitative assessment tool further promises to be useful in explaining relative stability or change of higher education institutions in HERSs, as well as in helping to explain resource allocation pressures within higher education institutions. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Hendel, Darwin D., E-Mail: hende001@umn.edu