

Mittwoch | Weber [eds.]

The Interest of the Company – A Driving Concept for Sustainable Business?

A European Inquiry Inspired by
a Polish-German Comparison



Nomos

Anne-Christin Mittwoch | Anne-Marie Weber [eds.]

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Preface

This volume, *The Interest of the Company – A Driving Concept for Sustainable Business? A European Inquiry Inspired by a Polish-German Comparison*, brings together a unique set of scholarly perspectives on one of the most pressing questions for corporate governance in the twenty-first century: can the interest of the company serve as a meaningful legal and conceptual anchor for sustainable business conduct? The contributions in this book reflect a collective European effort to explore this question through the lens of national company laws and their evolving role in the context of sustainability-related reforms.

The book is the outcome of the research project *The Company Interest in Germany and Poland – A Comparative Legal Analysis in the Context of the European Sustainable Corporate Governance Initiative*, generously funded by the Polish-German Science Foundation (Polsko-Niemiecka Fundacja na Rzecz Nauki / Deutsch-Polnische Wissenschaftsstiftung). The project was conceived as a bilateral scholarly collaboration, and it flourished as such – building intellectual bridges between legal systems, academic cultures, and individuals.

The volume is structured in two parts. The first part, *Sustainable Business and the Interest of the Company: Legal Perspectives from Poland and Germany*, offers a detailed bilateral analysis that reflects the project's comparative origins. The second part, *Sustainability and the Interest of the Company in Europe*, expands the discussion to include legal perspectives from across the European Union, encompassing eight jurisdictions and offering broader insights into the potential for convergence or divergence in the interpretation and function of the company's interest in a sustainability context.

We are deeply grateful for the support of the Polish-German Science Foundation, whose funding made this research possible. We also wish to express our sincere thanks to the University of Warsaw and the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, which served as institutional homes for the project and offered generous academic and logistical support throughout its duration. We would also like to thank the Publication Fund of Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg for supporting the open access publication of this book. Finally, we would like to express our sincere

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thanks to Cristina Lloyd, who has optimised the linguistic quality of the contributions in this volume through her careful and dedicated English proofreading and editing.

The project team consisted of the two lead investigators and editors of this book, Anne-Christin Mittwoch and Anne-Marie Weber, doctoral researchers Tonio Friedmann and Aleksandra Szczęśna, and student assistant Helena Kordasiewicz. Together, we worked in close cooperation with seven associated researchers who contributed jurisdictional reports from across Europe and whose expertise and dedication substantially enriched the entire project.

A highlight of the project was the international conference held on 2 October 2024, at the University of Warsaw, which provided an invaluable forum for exchange between the project team, the associated researchers, other scholars, and practitioners. The conference not only informed the final shape of this book but also underscored the enduring importance of transnational dialogue in the development of company law at the national and EU level.

Beyond its academic achievements, the project yielded something equally valuable: it deepened a sense of mutual trust, intellectual kinship, and personal friendship between the Polish and German members of the research team. The cooperation was marked not only by professionalism and scholarly commitment but also by warmth, generosity, and a shared spirit of curiosity. This seamless and enriching collaboration across borders became one of the most gratifying outcomes of our work. We look forward, with hope and enthusiasm, to continuing this path together.

Anne-Christin Mittwoch and Anne-Marie Weber
Editors

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