Fundacja na rzecz Nauki Polskiej

STATEMENT OF THE AUTHORITIES OF THE FOUNDATION FOR POLISH SCIENCE

The Executive Board and Advisory Board of the Foundation for Polish Science have decided that the FNP should sign the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (the declaration in full can be read at http://am.ascb.org/dora/).

This declaration concerns issues including:

1. Elimination of parameters assessing scientific journals (e.g. impact factor) to replace evaluation of the qualitative merits of a scientific publication or to assess the quality of a scholar's scientific achievements relating to their promotion or application for research funding.

2. Assessing research conducted by scholars based on originality of accomplishments and their influence on the development of the field, and not on the impact factor of the journal in which they were published.

Among the signatories of the Declaration are the American Association for Advancement of Science (AAAS), EMBO, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, and the Wellcome Trust; numerous scientific journals, such as *Proceedings of The National Academy of Sciences* (*PNAS*) *and Public Library of Science* (*PLOS*); and European and American scientific associations. Individual declarations have been signed by several hundred scientists, including many Nobel laureates and editors of scientific journals such as *Science*.

The Foundation for Polish Science authorities have decided to sign the San Francisco declaration based on the fact that for several years a tendency has been developing in the scientific community to reduce the quality of the research of an individual scholar to assessment of the journal in which the achievements were published. Although the scientific communities know which are the most important journals in a given discipline, this should be supporting information that does not replace evaluation of individual research accomplishments.

In assessing applications made to Foundation competitions, we have always endeavoured to evaluate the originality of applicants' individual scientific accomplishments. With experienced scholars a significant additional parameter in assessment of research is the number of citations of their work (depending on the discipline or scientific field), or the Hirsch index (*h*) that derives from this. For various reasons, impact factor, number of citations and *h*-index are not applied in most disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, and as a result the ERIH (European Reference Index for the Humanities) is treated as indicating the relevant values of the impact factor of specific publications.

Following our experience working with parametric evaluation systems in the State Committee for Scientific Research and Commission for Evaluation of Research Institutions, we do not rule out the application of parameters based on an impact factor of journals normalised for a given field, for assessing major research institutions. This experience shows that when an assessed research institution is large enough (60 scientists or more), the total, normalised impact factor of the institution correlates with its citations, and in the case of experimental sciences also with the funding levels of scientific research from external sources. However, there is no such correlation in evaluation of small institutions, not to mention individual research teams and their leaders! It is therefore absolutely necessary to use a peer review assessment system, in which carefully selected scholars evaluate the originality of the individual scientific accomplishments of other researchers, and the number of citations and *h*-index play a supporting role.