

Editorial



On 16th April 2008 in Warsaw the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland Donald Tusk and the Minister of Science and Higher Education Prof. Barbara Kudrycka met with the representatives of the scientific and academic societies. The Prime Minister presented the reforms of the system of science and higher education, prepared by the government. He emphasised that the realisation of those assumptions is to lead to the increase of chances of present and future generations of the Poles in the world. He said: "Let us make an effort in order to reach the final which will be the winning Pole in the global competition and winning Poland in the competition in all field of life. Let Polish intellect and mind become the highest value".

In the field of higher education management the promotion of the best and the most modernly managed universities so called National Scientific Leading Centres is foreseen. The connection of the university and the economic sector and the realisation of researches and education directions to order of economics and their internationalisation as a result of the participation in the international research programmes and the increase of the number of foreign students is to support that aim. At the same time State Colleges are to be in charge of Provincial Governments. The directions and methods of accreditation are to be adapted to the requirements of the European Area of Higher Education and the Domestic Structure of Qualifications, and also the market requirements. The diversity of the cadre requirements among colleges and universities is acceptable. Universities should be opened for new forms of education such as e-learning and life-long learning. The limitation of the branches of study and the development of macro-branches and interdisciplinary studies, and also theoretical and practical sandwich studies are foreseen. The possibilities of enrolment of foreign students and the exchange of Polish students and also the achievement of foreign scientific cadre will be broadened.

The changes of the system of financing of higher education deal with the standardisation of principles of public and non-public education and the broader consideration in the algorithm of the share of finances the rates of quality of education and innovative development of the University. Pro-developmental algorithm will lead to the reinforcement of well acting units inside the university. The scholarships are to be easier available for the youth coming from countries and the poorest societies, and also the ones studying at branches of studies priority for the State. Criteria enabling to achieve scientific scholarship will be toughened. New principles of financing the studies by the system of student loans guaranteed by the State and repaid after beginning the professional career will be introduced. The introduction of the payment for studies is not foreseen.

Serious changes are to deal with the model of academic career. First of all the defense of a DSc thesis as a basis of granting the scientific degree is to be cancelled. However, the right to be a supervisor granted by the Central Commission on Degrees and Titles as a certificate confirming scientific adulthood and giving the right to take care of PhD theses and participation in the procedure of their granting will be introduced. The university will have freedom for employment of doctors and doctors with mentioned certificates in the position of associate and visiting professors. Mentioned elements are to simplify and fasten the scientific promotion. Contract employment and obligatory PhD stages at other Universities, including those abroad or in economic units are to force the mobility of scientific cadre. The rejuvenation of academic cadre and the introduction of the system of the evaluation of scientific output on the basis of conducted surveys and internationalisation is also foreseen. The title of a professor is to be handed as at present by the President of the Republic of Poland and is to be a basis of the employment through nomination and the resigning at the retiring age together with the creation of suitable funds enabling the realisation of that intention.

Serious changes are announced in the field of science. The aims of proposed changes are variable. The increase of the level of the research potential and competitiveness of the Polish science in the international scale and its adjustment to the directives of the European Union is assumed. Effective and dynamic development of the scientific career in Poland, especially of younger scientific staff and persons staying abroad is expected. Effective mechanisms of functioning of scientific institutions and their cooperation with economic subjects will be created and innovativeness and the implementation of scientific research results will be stimulated. The increase of financing science and higher education from the state budget ultimately till 2013 for ca. 0,158 % gross domestic product yearly (without resources from EU structural funds) is announced. The necessity of the increase for 2% of gross domestic product of financial resources for that field in the given period is one of the main elements which is to have influence on the development of science and higher education in Poland. The increasing government grants for science is to be allocated for research projects, investments in infrastructure and costs of restructuring. The increase of non-governmental resources on research and developmental activeness and infrastructure connected with it is foreseen. Mentioned aims are going to be achieved through changes in management and organisation of science, changes in science financing, changes in human capital management in the scientific and research sphere, pro-innovative changes and mechanisms of the connection of science and economy and the

interdepartmental cooperation and also the reform of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

The Council of the Development of Science and Innovation at the Prime Minister's, the National Centre of Science and fully active National Centre of Researches and Development will be founded. The Minister of Science and Higher Education will be responsible for carrying out strategic politics in the field of science and higher education and also among others for sharing resources into three fundamental pillars, that is: programmes of the Minister and of both mentioned National Centres. Systematic and obligatory external audits of all research units in order to achieve the accreditation in A category – a high level, B – an acceptable level and C- an insufficient level will be introduced. The amendment of the scope and principles of financing through the replacement of a statutory subsidy by the fundamental subsidy introduced instead, which is ultimately to cover only the readiness of a scientific unit for research work. Resources achieved in this way must be transferred in total for financing researches in scientific unit achieving a subsidy. Parametric evaluation of scientific units will be made in three groups of science; humanistic and social sciences, fundamental and technical sciences, life and earth ones. Scientific researches will be financed only by grants granted during competitions. Mechanisms of the faster development of scientific and research cadre, increase of mobility of domestic and foreign scientific cadre at all stages of the development, the elimination of permanent job stabilisation at all career stages except titular professors and filling all positions during a solid competition on the basis of achievements not on the basis of achieved degrees or scientific titles. Numerous pro-innovative mechanisms are foreseen. It is necessary to transform scientific and research units through accreditation, the emerging, in a case of units realising tasks especially important for the State and commercialisation.

The reform of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAS) deals among others with retiring of the active fellows of PAS at the age of 70. The chairman of PAS chosen out of active fellows of PAS would be responsible to the Prime Minister. All essential decisions concerning PAS institutes would be done with the approval of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

According to the Prime Minister Donald Tusk prepared assumptions of the reform of science and higher education are to be the basis for the discussion on that subject matter with the representatives of scientific and academic societies. The aim of assumptions to reforms prepared by the Government is to lead to the increase of the quality of research and developmental works, the raising the quality of education and increase of international competitiveness of science and higher education. Thanks to the reform objective and clear procedures of sharing financial resources for research and developmental activeness and higher education are to be introduced. More effective and efficient methods of management of scientific units are to be implemented. It seems that in spite of controversial character of some of proposals the scientific society requires changes. It is important that those changes were not hidden by something what we usually call the autonomy of that society, in spite of that fact that not rarely it can be characterised by the lack of objective criteria and hallmarks of carelessness of too forgiving evaluations. It is not only connected with the legal state and implemented economic and legal mechanisms but also with the high ethic level of representatives of scientific environment. It is necessary to hope that the society will not let down also in the new situation created by the changing legal system.

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