

# Professor chameleon

**A Polish lawyer impersonated a foreign professor at five Polish universities and, working hand in hand with their corrupt V-Cs, exploited the naïvety of their students. The fraud was exposed, the fake has vanished, the graduates lost their degrees but the corrupt academics flourish.**

**by Marek Wroński**

Published in *Academic Forum* 06/2011<sup>1</sup>

Translated from the Polish by Anna Schneider

In a recent academic scandal, a human chameleon, Mr. Mariusz Kornilowicz from Warsaw, taught college classes at five universities, pretending to be two different people while in his suburban home he was a third person – an unscrupulous lawyer plotting to defraud the schools that employed him. The losses suffered by the victims should serve as a warning to the Polish higher education institutions who blatantly and repeatedly violate the law in a desperate attempt to ‘improve’ their student-faculty ratios.

I first published my articles about the talented fake, in the May 11<sup>th</sup> and June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011, issues of the Poland’s highest selling weekly, the prestigious *Politics*<sup>2</sup>. The exploits of the ‘adaptable academic’ could be perceived as humorous, were it not for the appalling consequences experienced by his unfortunate victims.

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1 This is an English translation of an article published originally in the Polish language in a monthly magazine for Poland’s academics, *Academic Forum*, in June 2011. (Falszywy profesor, Marek Wroński FA 06/2011 Forum Akademickie, Lublin: Akademyka Oficyna Wydawnicza, ISBN:1233-0930. Retrieved on 22 Oct 2013 from <http://forumakademickie.pl/fa/2011/06/falszywy-profesor/>)

The publication is from a series of articles that has been appearing from 2002 each month in the magazine’s section called ‘From the Archives of Scientific Misconduct’ [Z archiwum nieuczciwości naukowej] <http://forumakademickie.pl/publicystyka/nauka/z-archiwum-nieuczciwosci-naukowej/>

2 *Politics* is an influential news magazine. It has had many prominent editors and permanent contributors and is presently selling more copies in Poland than Newsweek.

'Professor chameleon's' beginnings date back to 2009 when, in the middle of the year, he materialised in the capital of Poland, Warsaw, and paid a visit to the Helena Chodkowska College of Management and Law<sup>3</sup>. Having introduced himself there as Mariusz Kornilowicz, he had made such a good impression on the institution's senior decision makers that they immediately engaged him as a full-time academic teacher. Astonishingly, the documentation on the basis of which they employed Prof. Kornilowicz consisted of just two photocopies the fake had on him. One was a copy of a PhD certificate from Germany and the other of a post-doctoral degree diploma from Israel, both of which had been forged. For a period of one year, during which the imposter taught college classes as well as administered exams and awarded students credits, his employer waited patiently for the originals of the documents to be delivered to their Human Resources Department. When the fake professor was unable to present any of the paperwork by the end of September 2010, the College has had enough and HR, acting on the instructions they had received, quietly terminated the imposter's academic contract.

### **Professor with two names**

The charlatan who later became Prof. Rosenkranz was born Mariusz Kornilowicz in Warsaw in 1967. In 1991, after graduating from the Faculty of Law and Administration at the University of Warsaw, he became a trainee judge. Following the national exam, he worked as a judge in the district courts in Warsaw and in two popular resort towns, Augustów<sup>4</sup>, and Pisz<sup>5</sup>. In 2003 and already married with two children and an owner of a large house in a lovely garden in Piaseczno, a popular Warsaw suburb, he decided to change his professional direction. He became legal counsel with his own law firm in the capital, which he ran as Mariusz Kornilowicz for the next six years. Then, he exchanged his legal practice for a career in higher education, becoming Prof. Kornilowicz, a scholar at the aforementioned Helena Chodkowska College. By the time he was dismissed from his first academic post, which

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3 The Helena Chodkowska College of Management and Law in Warsaw is a private university, established in 1992.

4 Augustów is a popular resort town in north-eastern Poland in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship, about 200 km from Warsaw.

5 Pisz is a town in north-eastern Poland in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship about 150 km from Warsaw.

happened in September 2010, he had already changed his name. This he did in order to secure further professorial engagements at three new schools. And thus he was now Prof. Noah Rosenkranz, a German-Israeli lawyer and an academic who had come to Poland from the Middle East to teach law. To his prospective Polish employers he showed his Israeli passport, issued in September 2009, and said that he had a PhD in law from the University of Berlin and a post-doctoral degree from the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem. This all happened by the end of March 2010.

The swindler's diplomas had been translated from the German into Polish by a certified translator but he had with him only the photocopies of these documents and could not present any of the originals. He also had photocopies of two letters from 'his' Israeli Institute that proclaimed that Prof. Rosenkranz had been granted a sabbatical leave of absence and that on his return will be re-employed to the same position. The imposter academic must have been very persuasive because the photocopies had an unusual effect on those who had seen them. For example, Dr. Tadeusz Koźluk, Vice-Chancellor of the Private Higher School of Business, Administration and Information Technology in Warsaw<sup>6</sup>, was so captivated by the papers that without checking any details or asking further questions, he hired the counterfeit German-Israeli to teach classes at the Institute of Law of his School. At about the same time, Prof. Daria Nałęcz, Vice-Chancellor of the Ryszard Łazarski University of Commerce and Law in Warsaw<sup>7</sup>, entranced by the fake documents, employed the cosmopolitan academic as a lecturer at the Faculty of Law and Administration, headed by Dean Dr. Zbigniew Lasocik. Prof. Rosenkranz also had no difficulty in convincing the Vice-Chancellor of the Higher School of Enterprise and Social Sciences in Otwock<sup>8</sup>, Dr. Andrzej Pietrych who, after a friendly meeting, offered him a position of an academic teacher.

A charismatic man of elegant manners, impeccably dressed and wearing a yarmulke, Prof. Noah Rosenkranz impressed his students with his knowledge and the dynamic, captivating lectures which he used to illustrate with the stories of his own legal accomplishments. Wherever he taught his classes were extremely popular. However, it must be stressed that

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6 The Private Higher School of Business, Administration and Information Technology in Warsaw is a non-public higher education institution.

7 Ryszard Łazarski University of Commerce and Law in Warsaw is an internationally-oriented non-public higher education institution with over 4500 students, founded in 1993.

8 The Higher School of Enterprise and Social Sciences in Otwock is a non-public higher education institution near Warsaw.

around his peers, the ‘professor from abroad’ was more reserved.

On the basis of the falsified documentation the imitation academic became a faculty member at every institution that engaged him. As they all believed to be his primary employers, the imposter was included in each of the colleges’ faculty complements. His name was used by each of the schools in their reports to the Ministry for Science and Higher Education and to the Polish Accreditation Commission<sup>9</sup>. The assessment of the quality of teaching in higher education was based on the data from these documents and in the national statistical calculations Prof. Rosenkranz was included not once but several times. Thus, the human chameleon has reached his aim. Having morphed and multiplied, he was now not one academic teacher but was split into several fake professors. Having achieved his final transformation, he taught students civil, commercial and international law at various higher education establishments in Poland. In each college he pretended to be the original version of the foreign professor, while at each, albeit one, he was only one of his counterfeit copies.

His dismissal in September 2010 from the Helena Chodkowska College of Management and Law in Warsaw was only a minor hitch in the sly fox’s meteoric academic advancement, as he already had three other parallel positions, and soon was to find the fifth professorial engagement to replace the one he had lost. The post that caught his attention this time was advertised on the home page of the University of Natural Sciences and Humanities<sup>10</sup> in Siedlce<sup>11</sup>. The imposter again used the same, well tested routine. Having introduced himself

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9 The Polish State Accreditation Commission assesses the quality of education, including the compliance with the requirements for the provision of degree programs; reviews applications for higher education institutions; and reviews applications of higher education institutions for the authorisation to provide degree programmes.

10 The University of Natural Sciences and Humanities in Siedlce is a public higher-education institution, which was created on October 1, 2010. However, its development started already in 1969. It has faculties of Natural Sciences, Humanities, Exact Sciences, Law and Economics Studies and is entitled to award PhD degree in selected fields. The University has introduced integrative studies for disabled students, and now has the largest number of students with disabilities of all Polish tertiary education schools. This was made possible by removing architectural barriers and it initiated similar changes in most of the institutions and shops in the city, an advanced development for Poland.

11 Siedlce is a city in eastern Poland, not far from Warsaw, and a local educational, cultural and business centre. Until the Second World War, it had a significant Jewish population and a vibrant Jewish cultural and political life. The Siedlce Jewish community was not restored after the Nazi defeat

as Prof. Rosenkranz, he presented the familiar set of photocopies, and without further ado, had his engagement approved by Dr. Antoni Jówko, the Vice-Chancellor of the institution, and Prof. Jarosław Kardas, Dean of the Faculty of Management.

However, this time the Human Resources Department, the only one of the five schools that he had approached, took active part in the hiring process and insisted he produce a certificate from the official assessment of the diplomas he had received from abroad. They explained that the photocopy he had supplied did not meet the requirements for the formal validation of foreign degrees in Poland. The certificate that they questioned was a letter from the Department of Higher Education Organization and Supervision that was signed by Ms. Danuta Czarnecka, its Deputy Director, on March 4, 2010. It stated that the doctoral and post-doctoral titles of Prof. Noah Rosenkranz could be considered being equivalent to their Polish counterparts. Incidentally it later transpired, that this letter, already invalid as a bona fide certificate of approval of his foreign diplomas, was also a forgery!

According to HR in Siedlce, this document was not sufficient to satisfy the Polish regulations and an official statement from the Department for Academic Recognition of Diplomas at the Ministry for Science and Higher Education was required. Subsequently they sent the photocopies of the counterfeit certificates to Warsaw to have them officially assessed and five months later they received a letter. The note stated that the qualifications of Prof. Noah Rosenkranz had not been recognised. Apparently, the foreign establishments that had supposedly issued the documents, had not heard of the German-Israeli academic. The discovery of the forged certificates prompted the Ministry to file a complaint with the City of Warsaw Prosecutor's Office, in which they accused the fake scholar of document falsification and financial fraud. This was in late March 2011.

The allegations reached Prof. Rosenkranz at the beginning of April 2011. At first he reacted with indignation and anger but after his emotions had subsided, he said that he would bring the original paperwork from Israel. Following this assurance, he disappeared from Siedlce. Meanwhile, his other employers also became suspicious. At the beginning of May 2011 the Vice-Chancellor of the Higher School of Enterprise and Social Sciences in Otwock filed a complaint against their unorthodox lecturer with the local District Prosecutor's Office, while an equivalent complaint lodged by the Vice-Chancellor of the University in Siedlce was,

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but the survivors of the town's population established an association in Israel which in 1956 published the community's history.

unfortunately, rejected by the District Prosecutor.

When the latter notified me of their problems with Prof. Rosenkranz, within five days I determined that not only his degrees were counterfeit but his scientific achievements – four papers published in international journals – had never even been written. The alleged research visits abroad to the prestigious Harvard University, USA and the Frazier University in Canada, were also an invention of the skilful manipulator.

### **Universities behaving badly**

Meanwhile another problem arose. The issue was the validity of the credits awarded by an academic teacher who did not have the qualifications essential for this position. In May 2011, after I had described the matter in the first of my articles in the prestigious *Politics*, the awkward issue became public knowledge. From a legal perspective, Mr. Noah Rosenkranz was not entitled to offer courses for credit because his employment by the University in Siedlce was contrary to existing laws as the candidates applying for the position of a university professor must satisfy the requirements of Art. 114 of the Higher Education Act of July 27, 2005, which obliges them to have a PhD as well as a post-graduate degree.

Although paragraph 3 of Art. 119 states that employment of a foreigner as an academic teacher in Poland shall take place without the need to obtain a work permit, before offering an engagement, a Vice-Chancellor must check whether the alien has the qualifications as specified in the Act, i.e. the doctoral and post-doctoral degrees recognised in Poland. Article 24 of the Law on Scientific Degrees and Titles of 2005 states that in the absence of an international agreement, higher education diplomas obtained abroad may be recognised as equivalent to diplomas obtained in Poland on the basis of a special nostrification procedure<sup>12</sup>. Whilst according to Art. 26, in exceptional cases, the Central Commission for Academic Degrees and Titles – at the request of the Faculty Council – may allow a person without a post-doctoral degree, but with a PhD and substantial scientific achievements, to apply for professorship.

The problem with the legal aspect of the German-Israeli scholar's academic appointment originated from the fact that his diplomas did not meet the validity requirements, including

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12 Nostrification is the process or act of granting recognition to a degree from a foreign university.

the issue that Poland does not have an agreement with either Germany or Israel. However, the deciding factor was that the certificates of his foreign PhD and post-doctoral degrees were forgeries! This meant that Mr. Noah Rosenkranz's employment as a university teacher was illegal and thus, he was not accredited to give lectures, administer exams or award credits. As a consequence, the academic results of his students are, under the law, invalid. In this situation the best solution is to enable the graduates to retake the examinations and then the institutions affected by the scam can re-issue the diplomas to the students that were taught by the imposter. Dr. Jarosław Kardas, Dean from the University of Natural Sciences and Humanities in Siedlce, has already decided on this course of action. The other schools, in a manner typical of bureaucratic administrators who use procrastination as a way to solve problems, are still 'deliberating' over the issues.

The case involving the imposter professor and his forgeries finally ended up being examined by the District Prosecutor of the City of Warsaw. He asked all those involved or affected by the manipulations of the counterfeit scholar to supply any documentation that may help with the investigation of the fraud. Director of the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem sent a letter stating that Mr. Noah Rosenkranz used the name of this prestigious institution as well as his name on the forged documents. The Embassy of Israel has been informed of the developments and is now waiting for the Polish authorities to take the appropriate formal steps to resolve the issues. Meanwhile, Mr. Rosenkranz has managed to obtain two months of sick leave from one of Warsaw's rehabilitation centres. The letter states that the academic is unable to work until the end of June 2012 – supposedly due to a road traffic injury. He sent the certificate of the inability to perform his duties to Human Resources of the Private Higher School of Business, Administration and Information Technology in Warsaw, the only institution from which he has not yet been dismissed.

The scandal has brought to light significant weaknesses in the governance of our higher education system. The fact that an imposter without appropriate qualifications effortlessly obtained professorial appointments at every college he approached proves how little our tertiary education institutions respect law. This should be a warning to those who accredited the schools that engaged the swindler, namely the Polish Accreditation Commission. The manipulator easily persuaded the senior decision makers at each of the five colleges to join him on his fraud by exploiting their character flaws such as opportunism and irresponsibility. The hiring procedures were not adhered to, leading to an embarrassment of having a respected foreign research institute complain of a Polish professor forging their researchers'

signatures. This is not the best way to advertise Polish universities around the world.

Among the senior academics that hired Mr. Rosenkranz is an advisor to the Ministry for Science and Higher Education, who is involved in devising and implementing higher education improvement programs. Yet even she did not refrain from hiring a teacher of dubious credentials. That fact that the counterfeit academic without postgraduate qualifications was one of the most successful lecturers at every college he taught is an indication of the low quality of teaching at our universities. The self-serving academics of the institutions involved in the affair have stood firm and united against modernising the education system in Poland and are not willing to cooperate with the Ministry on the improvement programs. This is much more disturbing than the irresponsible actions of one imposter. More of that kind of scandal may erode the prestige of the Polish higher education system for many years to come.

### **A Vice-Chancellor behaving badly**

At the end of April 2011 a long awaited event took place at the Medical University of Wrocław. It was the resignation of Prof. Ryszard Andrzejak<sup>13</sup>, the Vice-Chancellor of the Medical University in Wrocław, a city famous for researchers such as Dr. Alzheimer of the Alzheimer's Disease and Dr. Robert Koch, creator of modern bacteriology and a 1905 Nobel Prize winner. The development disrupted the long established power structure typical for medical academia.

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13 Prof. Ryszard Andrzejak's case was also covered by Marek Wroński in *Academic Forum* in the following issues:

Nov 2008, Utracona część rady wydziału, FA 11/2008. Retrieved on 22 Oct 2013 from <http://forumakademickie.pl/fa/2008/11/utracona-czesc-rady-wydzialu/>

Dec 2008, Klonowanie słabeuszy, FA 12/2008. Retrieved on 22 Oct 2013 from [http://www.forumakad.pl/archiwum/2008/12/38\\_klonowanie\\_slabeuszy.html](http://www.forumakad.pl/archiwum/2008/12/38_klonowanie_slabeuszy.html)

Oct 2010, Skandal we Wrocławiu, FA 10/2010. Retrieved on 22 Oct 2013 from <http://forumakademickie.pl/fa/2010/10/skandal-we-wroclawiu/>

Sep 2011, Z życia wrocławskiej AM, FA 09/2011. Retrieved on 22 Oct 2013 from <http://forumakademickie.pl/fa/2011/09/z-zycia-wroclawskiej-am/>

Feb 2012, Uszczerbek na reputacji, FA 02/2012. Retrieved on 22 Oct 2013 from <http://forumakademickie.pl/fa/2012/02/uszczerbek-na-reputacji/>



Observers who have been watching the events leading to this highly significant episode were viewing the developments with fascination and found the final development both shocking and exhilarating. It all started in 2005 when Prof. Andrzejak, who had been in charge of the prestigious Wrocław academic institution for three years, was accused of violating the principles of scientific integrity in his post-doctoral thesis. In response to the allegations that in his treatise the respected medical doctor and head of a well known university had breached the rules of research ethics, the Central Commission for Academic Degrees and Titles announced they would investigate the accusation. Since that time there has been a considerable pressure from many quarters on Prof. Andrzejak to resign as head of the Medical University while he himself made it clear that he retains the leadership no matter what. Finally, after six years, the Ministry of Health forced his resignation, aware that the existing situation cast a dark shadow on the integrity of Polish medical academia as a whole, and Prof. Andrzejak had to make an appropriate announcement. A few days prior to this news, there was another surprise when Prof. Marek Ziętek, in charge of the university during the period Vice-Chancellor Prof. Andrzejak was suspended from his duties by the Minister of Health, stepped down from the position of Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Science.

In order to select a new Vice-Chancellor an election was held one month later. Four academics put their candidatures forward. The absolute majority of votes in the first ballot went to the former Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Science, Prof. Marek Ziętek, Head of the Department of Periodontology. To give him an opportunity to select his own team, one of the remaining Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Prof. Halina Milnerowicz, resigned from her post, while Prof. Andrzejak's two other close associates and Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Dr. Jerzy Rudnicki and Dr. Mariusz Zimmer, who had not resigned, were at the request of Prof. Ziętek, dismissed by the Electoral Committee on 31 May 2011. At the same time, Prof. Zygmunt Grzebieniak was elected Vice-Chancellor for Science. The other three deputy vice-chancellor positions will be filled in the first half of June 2011. Prof. Michał Jeleń has been suggested for the post of Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Educational Affairs, Prof. Romuald Zdrojowy for the position of Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Clinical Affairs and Prof. Jacek Szepietowski as Deputy Vice-Chancellor for University Development.

Prof. Marek Ziętek's job is not easy. To achieve credibility he needs to distance himself from his predecessor. This will require making public the information on the university's financial status. As the term finishes on 30 August 2012, the elected officials will only be serving out the remaining fourteen months which makes the situation even more difficult. Meanwhile, the

three months statutory time limit on reviewing Prof. Andrzejak's post-doctoral thesis expires at the end of June 2011. This means that by that time the review reports of this thesis should reach Prof. Tomasz Grodzicki, Dean of the Medical College<sup>14</sup> at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow. This in turn implies that the Faculty Council's ballot to determine the validity of the post-doctoral degree of the former Vice-Chancellor of Wrocław's Medical University will be held after the summer holidays.

### **The latest court judgements**

On 17 May 2011, an appeal hearing took place at the Supreme Administrative Court<sup>15</sup> in the case concerning the alleged fraud in the post-doctoral treatise by Prof. Mirosław Krajewski<sup>16</sup>. The defendant was absent from the proceedings but his lawyer, Mr. Sylwester Szymanski, while not denying that the thesis was flawed due to a scientific misconduct incident involving the author, attempted to show in his speech that under the statute of limitation, the time period to prosecute the offence had finished. He also pointed to a variety of other formal issues. For instance, he argued that the reassessment proceedings breached the disciplinary regulations as the Disciplinary Committee failed to appoint new reviewers. Additionally, Prof. Krajewski, even though a party, was prevented from actively participating in the proceedings.

The Supreme Court under the presiding judge, Her Honour, Chief Justice Dzbeńska, who was also Judge-Rapporteur, rejected all but one of the arguments of the professor's counsel. Without disputing the opinion of the Faculty Council, who determined that the post-doctoral thesis, had been plagiarised from another author's work which is a violation of the principles

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14 Jagiellonian University Medical College, established in 1364, is the oldest and one of the largest medical schools in Poland. and is currently ranked first in this country.

15 A supreme administrative court is the highest court in a country with jurisdiction over lower administrative courts and the administrative decisions of the authorities, but not the legislative decisions made by the government, which are under the jurisdiction of a constitutional court. The Supreme Administrative Court of Poland is the court of last resort in administrative cases e.g. Those between private citizens and administrative bodies. It deals with appeals from lower administrative courts called Voivodship Administrative Courts.

16 Prof. Mirosław Krajewski's case was further covered in *Academic Forum* in June 2012. (Jednak miałem racje, Marek Wroński FA 06/2012. Retrieved on 22 Oct 2013 from

<http://forumakademickie.pl/fa/2012/06/mialem-jednak-racje>)

of academic integrity and the rules of good practices, the Supreme Administrative Court dismissed the ruling of the District Court, from which Prof. Krajewski had appealed. In a very short oral justification, Her Honour Dzbeńska stated that by upholding the decision of the History Department at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Thorn who had decided not to instigate re-assessment of Prof. Krajewski's post-doctoral degree, the Central Commission violated Art. 151 of the Polish Code of Administrative Procedures which, in Art. 151, Par. 1, states: 'Once it has conducted the proceedings referred to in Article 149 § 2 the public administration body referred to in Article 150 shall issue a decision in which: 1) it will refuse to revoke the current decision if it decides that there is no basis to revoke it under Article 145 § 1 or Article 145a, or, 2) it revokes the current decision if it decides that the basis exists to revoke it under Article 145 § 1 or Article 145a, and issues a new decision on the essence of the case.'

I received a written version of the decision of the Board of the Central Commission and have studied it in detail. In my view it is well substantiated and I am surprised by the Court's ruling. I must add that others share my view. I will further elaborate on the Supreme Administrative Court's rationale after I receive the written justification of the decision which should happen in July.

Under no circumstances the ruling acquits Prof. Krajewski of the allegation that he had breached the code of scientific integrity and the principles of good academic practices. I would like to emphasise once more that the decision of the Central Commission is fully justified contrary to the opinion of journalist Cezary Jankowski, published on 3 June 2011 in Włocławek's<sup>17</sup> magazine 'Pulse of the Region'<sup>18</sup>. I think it is clear that all that the Central Commission needs now to do is to take into account the transgressions identified by the Court in their proceedings, make the appropriate adjustments and corrections and re-submit the amended documentation to the Supreme Court – after all it is the Central Commission who rules on the matters related to plagiarism, and not the Administrative Court. I predict that the matter will drag for another year or so but it is unlikely to be delayed more than that. I would like to stress that the case has been already re-submitted to the District Administrative Court for reconsideration.

Thus the legal tricks used by Prof. Krajewski's counsel were not worth his while because "If

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17 Włocławek is a town in northern Poland in the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship.

18 'Pulse of the Region' is the oldest free newsmagazine in Włocławek.

you try to cure evil with evil you will only add more pain to your fate". The academic fraud committed in the post-doctoral thesis authored by him is evident and clear also to the judges while the errors in the procedures that affected the present ruling can be easily amended. Therefore, resolving the issue is only a matter of time. In my opinion, it is the Faculty of History at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Thorn that is to blame for the delay. I have written already several times that the fact that they wanted to save money on the reviewers' fees and did not request new opinions may come to the attention of the judges. In consequence the University may get charged with contempt of court so should keep in mind that sanctions for contempt, for instance incarceration, last so long as the obstruction of justice continues. The money-saving measures may thus easily backfire.

### **Committee on Ethics in Science of the Polish Academy of Sciences<sup>19</sup>**

A nine-member Committee on Ethics in Science elected at the General Assembly meeting of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAS) on 26 May 2011 in Warsaw, will be the highest-level advisory body on scientific integrity in Poland. Among its roles will be advising university disciplinary committees how to resolve issues regarding research misconduct at their institutions.

From the 42 candidates proposed, nine professors were selected in a secret ballot. They were: 1) Osman Achmatowicz from Warsaw, a 79 year old Professor Emeritus of Chemistry and a longtime Secretary of the Central Commission; 2) Andrzej Białynicki-Birula, a 75 year old Professor Emeritus of Mathematics from Warsaw; 3) Andrzej Górski, a 65 year old Warsaw medical doctor, Professor of Clinical Immunology, former Vice-Chancellor of Warsaw's Medical University and now Vice-President of the Polish Academy of Sciences and a longtime member of the Scientific Ethics Panel at the Ministry of Science<sup>20</sup>; 4) Maciej

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19 The Polish Academy of Sciences (PAS) is a Polish state learned institution and a major scientific advisory body, with headquarters in Warsaw. It was established in 1952 and operates through an elected corporation of leading scholars and research institutions and through its committees. Among its aims is also coordination and overseeing of numerous research institutes, which employ over 2,000 people. It receives one third of the Polish government's total budget for science.

20 The Scientific Ethics Panel at the Ministry of Science was established in 1998 to protect the quality and integrity of Polish science. The Panel's mission was to formulate opinions on issues

Grabski, Professor Emeritus of Material Science and Metallurgy from Warsaw, 77 years of age, a longtime President of the Foundation for Polish Science and a longtime member of the Scientific Ethics Panel at the Ministry for Science and The Panel's Chairman; 5) Janusz Limon from Gdańsk, a 65 year old medical doctor, Professor of Genetics; 6) Tadeusz Luty from Wrocław, 69 years of age, Professor of Physical Chemistry, former Vice-Chancellor of Wrocław Technical University and President of the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (CRASP)<sup>21</sup>, 7) Piotr Węgleński from Warsaw, a 72 years old Professor Emeritus of Biology and Genetics, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Warsaw, 8) Franciszek Ziejka from Cracow, age 71, Professor Emeritus of Literature, former Vice-Chancellor of the Jagiellonian University and President of CRASP; and, 9) Andrzej Zoll, 69 years old, Professor of Criminal Law from Jagiellonian University, Cracow, former judge, President of the Constitutional Tribunal<sup>22</sup>, and former Polish Ombudsman<sup>23</sup>.

Prof. Barbara Kudrycka, Minister for Science and Higher Education, has allocated to the newly formed Committee over PLN 200 000 from the 2011 budget. The funds will become available after the summer break and should be sufficient for the basic programs and

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concerning the ethics of scientific research, and specifically violations of research ethics by Polish scientists. The Panel prepared in the year 2000 a reference document for scientific misconduct in Poland. It was published in 2001 in several magazines and websites for Polish researchers, among them in the *Academic Forum* in the hope of inciting a public discussion on this issue but the Polish scientific community was not interested and the Panel did not receive any comments.

21 The Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (CRASP) is the representative body of academic schools and was formed in 1997 by Vice-Chancellors of higher education institutions which had the right to award the degree of PhD. Currently, CRASP has 107 members. It safeguards traditional academic values, including the constitutional principle of higher education institutional autonomy, coordinates the cooperation of the academic schools in Poland, undertakes activities leading to an establishment of an integrated system of national education, represents the interests of higher education and science, and the common interests of its member schools, including the selection of their representatives to international associations of rectors or universities.

22 The Constitutional Tribunal of the Republic of Poland is a judicial body whose main task is to supervise the compliance of statutory law with the Polish Constitution.

23 The Polish Ombudsman is an independent central office and Poland's national human rights institution. It was established in 1988 to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of Polish people who have the right to ask the Ombudsman for intervention if these freedoms and rights were violated.

operations.

‘The Archives of Scientific Misconduct’ wish the newly appointed Ethics Committee all the best in their pursuit to enforce academic integrity in Poland. We will eagerly anticipate the outcomes of their efforts and I hope I will soon be reporting in *Academic Forum* on the progress achieved in resolving scientific misconduct issues as well as on the improved ethical standards in research practices in our country<sup>24</sup>. Admittedly, rather than at the PAS, it would have been better to establish such an institution at the Ministry for Science and Higher Education. I was also hoping that the new authority would be structured and operated similarly to the US Office of Research Integrity which, enabled by its substantially higher budget, employs full-time scholars to conduct research related to scientific misconduct issues. Unfortunately, the Ethics Committee in Poland lacks such features.

Still, it’s a start!

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24 Unfortunately, so far the Committee on Ethics in Science at the Polish Academy of Sciences has failed to impress anybody with its achievements. The main reason for our disappointment is that there has been little information made available by the Committee on the activities they have been involved in – while transparency is of one their slogans!