

Prof. Dr. Alojzy Nowak  
University of Warsaw, Rector-elect

Prof. Dr. Jerzy Duszyński  
Polish Academy of Sciences, President

Prof. Dr. Maciej Zylicz  
Foundation for Polish Science, President

Dear Professors Nowak, Duszyński, and Zylicz:

The International Research Agenda Program (IRAP) was established by the Foundation for Polish Science with the objective to foster scientific excellence in Poland and to establish competitive and internationally visible research units. The ReMedy unit, headed by two excellent and internationally acclaimed scientists, Profs. Agnieszka Chacinska and Maria (Magda) Konarska, was one of the earliest winners of the very competitive IRAP program. The University Medical Center Göttingen (UMG) in Germany acts as the strategic partner of ReMedy and its function is supported by an International Scientific Committee (ISC) of highly reputed scientists.

The ISC informed us about the initial success of ReMedy—which managed to recruit several group leaders, establish research programs, organize core facilities, and secure funding—and has now brought to our attention new problems severely threatening its ability to function and even its very existence. For over a year, the current rector of the University of Warsaw (UW) has not fulfilled the conditions of the agreement with IRAP by refusing to recognize ReMedy's organizational and research independence within the university structures. The current and impending detrimental actions include blocking all spending from ReMedy funds, interfering with ReMedy scientists' applications for external grant funding, and freezing the hiring of new personnel, including new group leaders selected by the ISC. Most recently, the rector terminated contracts of multiple ReMedy personnel and canceled the contract between UW and ReMedy in an apparent attempt to terminate operations of ReMedy at the University of Warsaw altogether by August 31, 2020, which date corresponds to the end of current rector's term.

These actions, which will create long-term scientific and financial consequences, are particularly disturbing since they have been made without consulting Prof. Alojzy Nowak, the rector-elect set to enter office on September 1, 2020. Moreover, they significantly threaten the ongoing process of establishing a new institute, the Institute of Molecular Mechanisms and Machines, within the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAS), in which ReMedy could continue its successful development. Both Prof. Duszyński, the PAS president, and Prof. Zylicz, the president of the Foundation of Polish Science, are actively engaged in the formation of the new institute. Understandably, especially with the current pandemic, such a transition process takes time. Current actions of the rector not only seriously threaten the plan to form the new Institute, but also effectively damage the existing groups of ReMedy scientifically, specifically with regard to scientific personnel, thereby threatening their scientific future.

We, as representatives of the international scientific community, express our deepest concern about these recent developments affecting the future of ReMedy. We voice our support of the continued operation of ReMedy at UW until such time as a new encompassing institute within the Polish Academy of Sciences is formed and fully operational. We write this letter to support efforts of the directors and International Scientific Committee of ReMedy who, over the past year, have voiced their concerns about decisions of the rector of UW repeatedly. We also ask Prof. Nowak, the rector-elect, to act within his powers to stop the harmful decisions outlined

above and alleviate their consequences. Our open letter reflects strong support for the initiative establishing ReMedy and its leadership by two outstanding scientists, Profs. Chacinska and Konarska. This initiative has undoubtedly enhanced the international visibility and reputation of Polish science. Compromising its future now would have a very negative impact on the future prospects of Polish science at large.

Sincerely yours,

Phillip A. Sharp, Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 1993  
Recommended future Chair, International Scientific Committee

David Baltimore, Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 1975  
Thomas Cech, Nobel Prize in Chemistry 1989  
Andrew Fire, Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2006  
Venkatraman Ramakrishnan, Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2009  
Richard Roberts, Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 1993  
Michael Rosbash, Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2017  
Randy Schekman, Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2013  
Jack Szostak, Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2009  
Torsten Wiesel, Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 1981  
Michael Young, Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2017

CC:

Prof. Dr. Marcin Palys  
Rector, University of Warsaw, Poland

Wojciech Murdzek  
Minister of Science and Higher Education, Warsaw, Poland

Prof. Dr. Andrei Lupas  
Chair of IRAP Council  
Max-Planck Institute for Developmental Biology Tübingen, Germany

The Council of the University of Warsaw

Prof. Dr. Peter Rehling  
Chair, International Scientific Committee