

MAŁGORZATA SKÓRZEWSKA-AMBERG<sup>1</sup>

## A Report: The First All-Polish Conference for Editors-in-Chief, Editorial Assistants and Publishers of Legal Scientific Journals *Nowe kierunki i wyzwania w prawniczej komunikacji naukowej*<sup>2</sup>

Submitted: 26.05.2021. Accepted: 3.06.2021

On 24 May 2021, the First All-Polish Conference *Nowe kierunki i wyzwania w prawniczej komunikacji naukowej* took place. It was organised by the editorial board of the journal “The Critique of Law” and the Legal Interdisciplinary Science Centre at Kozminski University, under the media patronage of “Dziennik. Gazeta Prawna”. The purpose of the conference, to which editors-in-chief, editorial assistants and publishers of Polish legal scientific journals, as well as all those interested in the issue of legal scientific communication, and representatives of publishing houses were invited, was not only a discussion on the future of legal communication in general, but above all creating an opportunity to integrate the environment and talk together about how legal scientific journals should be modernised and how to smoothly adjust to changing rules in relation to scientific publications.

Over 80 editors-in-chief, editorial assistants and publishers participated in the conference. There were also guests from other countries (Mexico, Ukraine). The meeting took place – due to the pandemic – via the MS Teams platform.

The conference was opened by Prof. Grzegorz Mazurek, PhD, Rector of Kozminski University. The participants were welcomed by Deputy Dean of Law School – Rafał Pasternak, PhD, on behalf of the Dean of Law School – Professor at Kozminski University Robert Zieliński, PhD.

At the beginning of the conference, Prof. Jolanta Jabłońska-Bonca, PhD – the Editor-in-Chief of “The Critique of Law” – spoke on behalf of the organisers and emphasised the uniqueness of the conference. It was **the first ever all-Polish meeting of editorial boards and publishers of legal scientific journals, discussing**

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<sup>2</sup> *New Directions and Challenges in Legal Scientific Communication* (translator’s note).

**legal scientific communication.** It was made possible above all thanks support of the Polish Ministry of Education and Science, as part of the programme *Doskonała Nauka*<sup>3</sup>.

Prof. Jolanta Jabłońska-Bonca explained the term of legal scientific communication, which covers a whole range of fields. So-called internal communication can be distinguished between i.a. scientist-student communication, transfer to politics and the economy, legal journalism, etc. – and internal communication, covering i.a. communication between lawyers (both in internal and external turnover), transfer of knowledge to legal practice, publication language, publication ethics. Prof. Jabłońska-Bonca emphasised that the conference would cover only a small part of possible aspects of legal communication, including, above all, state scientific policy and the EU's scientific policy (as part of external communication) and the question of scientific journals, rankings, evaluations, types of access (closed/open access), international visibility of research or communication between legal sciences and other humanities and social sciences (as part of internal communication).

At the end, Prof. Jolanta Jabłońska-Bonca, on behalf of "The Critique of Law", extended heartfelt congratulations for "Ruch Prawniczy, Ekonomiczny i Socjologiczny" ["Journal of Law, Economics and Sociology"], celebrating its 100th anniversary, to its editor-in-chief, Prof. Marek Smolak, PhD.

Prof. Marek Smolak, PhD, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, whose speech *Cichy prolog. Jak stan nauk prawnych kształtuje prawniczą komunikację naukową*<sup>4</sup> opened the essential part of the conference, defining legal scientific communication as communication between scientists on the one hand, and communication transferred by lawyers to legal practice, on the other hand. Its basic form is publishing articles and reviews both in traditional scientific journals and with the use of other platforms and media, including i.a. scientific services, repositories, blogs, etc. Prof. Smolak emphasised that the quality of scientific legal communication depends above all on what scientific studies are published and what is expected of scientific papers. The effective performance of tasks assigned to legal scientific journals depends on many factors, and the vital ones include i.a. the prestige and scientific position of a journal, the authority of its authors, the language and style of the publications and the availability of the journal. The speaker emphasised that the form and the quality of legal scientific communication are strictly dependent on the Polish legal science – the higher the quality of the science, the higher the quality of scientific legal communication, especially of its basic medium, which is legal

<sup>3</sup> 'Perfect Science' (translator's note).

<sup>4</sup> 'A Quiet Prologue. How the State of Legal Sciences Shapes Legal Scientific Communication' (translator's note).

scientific journals. Improving the quality of legal scientific communication essentially means supporting Polish legal practice and education and building the prestige of Polish legal culture and science in the world.

The next speaker was Professor at the University of Opole, Piotr Stec, PhD, who reflected on the upcoming evaluation of science in Poland in his presentation entitled *Nauki prawne w przededniu ewaluacji*.<sup>5</sup> Based on data from parametrisation from 2014 and 2017 and data concerning Polish journals and the number of journal publications indexed in the SCOPUS database and with the use of statistical analysis, he offered an estimated position of Polish legal sciences against European background and – perhaps above all – the influence of evaluation processes on legal sciences. He also formulated some conclusions *de lege ferenda*, of which one is particularly essential from the perspective of the future of Polish legal scientific journals – the visibility of Polish journals in the SCOPUS database will also depend on the level of inter-academic co-operation.

The first session of the conference ended with a speech of Prof. Waldemar Paruch, PhD, Maria Curie-Skłodowska Lublin, Editor-in-Chief of “Przegląd Sejmowy”, entitled *Transfer wiedzy do polityki. Konieczność i wyzwanie dla nauk społecznych*.<sup>6</sup> The speaker indicated two important facts, in connection with the upcoming evaluation; firstly, for time it is not higher education institutions that will be evaluated but scientific fields, and secondly, legal sciences (on the Ministry’s list) stopped being a separate field and became part of social sciences, which may significantly influence the results of the upcoming evaluation in Poland. Prof. Paruch emphasised that we are currently in a situation where applying bibliometric instruments to social sciences may be a misunderstanding at least, and may even be harmful if it is translated directly into the evaluation result. Therefore, its weight should be carried first of all by expert assessment. Moving to the main topic of his presentation, Prof. Paruch indicated that today, social sciences seem to be heavily characterised by ignoring empirical knowledge. Scientists often forget about their basic duties, which can be defined at three levels: duties towards the society (science should change reality), duties towards the state (activities are performed based on budget, and therefore, the taxpayer’s interest should also be considered) and duties towards the human being (returning to cognitive realism and thinking about the truth in the categories of correspondence and social consensus).

The second session began with the speech of Professor at the University of Białystok, Elżbieta Kuźelewska, of “Białostockie Studia Prawnicze”, who recalled criteria for journals applying to the SCOPUS database in the first part of her pre-

<sup>5</sup> ‘Legal Sciences on the Eve of Evaluation’ (translator’s note).

<sup>6</sup> ‘The Transfer of Knowledge to Politics. Necessity and Challenge for Social Sciences’ (translator’s note).

sensation *Publikuj albo giń? Czy Scopus gwarantuje sukces polskim czasopismom?*<sup>7</sup> In the second part, Prof. Kuzelewska raised the question of Polish legal scientific journals that have already been indexed in the database, including data on citations, and at the end of her speech, in the third part, she presented an analysis of the benefits resulting from indexation in foreign databases.

The second speaker was Professor at the University of Gdańsk and Head of Legal Journals Team of the Legal Sciences Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Grzegorz Wierczyński, PhD, who in the conclusions of his presentation, entitled *Jak robić ranking czasopism prawniczych?*,<sup>8</sup> proposed the creation of rankings of journals. These conclusions were based on basic assumptions: firstly, creating a list of scientific journals which would represent an official ranking, based on objectified scientific procedures and serving as an objective evaluation (also through restricting expert assessment) and improving the quality of published articles; secondly, all bibliometric tools should only serve as institutional assessment – they should not be used for the purpose of individual assessment of scientists. Prof. Wierczyński pointed out the fundamental flaws of the process of assembling a list of scientific journals at the Ministry of Education and Science. The main weakness of the bibliometric and expert system applied in Poland, in his opinion, is a lack of clear rules of appointing expert teams that have to evaluate scientific journals. Furthermore, Prof. Wierczyński suggested that Google Scholar is also a tool that, despite having certain failings (above all, involving fully automated process of searching for citations), could be used in the evaluation of scientific journals.

The third and last part of the conference was devoted to the issue of legal scientific communication from the publishers' perspective.

The first speaker was the Head of the Department of Periodical Publications in Wolters Kluwer Poland, editor Klaudia Szawłowska, who described good practices related to publishing scientific journals, in her presentation entitled *Jak wydawać czasopismo prawnicze – perspektywa komercyjnego wydawcy*<sup>9</sup>. The practices included a publisher's formal and legal obligations – concerning registration (e.g. registering in work registry, obtaining ISBN numbers), agreements (signing licence agreements and publishing agreements), organisation of editorial board work (necessary entities – e.g. editor-in-chief, editorial college, editorial assistant; optional entities – e.g. programme board, deputy editor-in-chief, editors: issue editor, linguistic editor, statistical editor; and other persons involved in the editorial board's work – e.g. reviewers), the way of working and basic rules applying in the editorial board (e.g. ethics, rules

<sup>7</sup> 'Publish or Die? Does Scopus Guarantee Success to Polish Journals?' (translator's note).

<sup>8</sup> 'How to Make a Ranking of Legal Scientific Journals?' (translator's note).

<sup>9</sup> 'How to Publish a Legal Scientific Journal – A Commercial Publisher's Perspective' (translator's note).

of reviewing) and essential elements of a scientific journal: internal (bibliometric data, the topic that is compatible with the journal's mission, the quality of translations) and external ones (electronic version, indexation in databases, anti-plagiarism procedures). Ms Szawłowska also stressed the necessity of taking proper care of the validity of data on given scientific journal on its website, since the website quality and validity of data presented on it are the bases of assessing the stability of the journal during its indexation in databases.

The final speech at the conference, entitled '*Open Access i indeksacja a rozwój czasopisma prawniczego*',<sup>10</sup> delivered by the Editor-in-Chief of the Publishing House of Kozminski University, Anna Goryńska. Using the example of "The Critique of Law", the speaker presented the development of the journal, from a yearly printed (2009) to the 'Diamond Journal' – a quarterly publication, available in open access – without charging the authors. Editor Ms Goryńska introduced three basic and essential, from the perspective of open access, indexing databases – SCOPUS ("The Critique of Law" indexed from 2020), DOAJ ("The Critique of Law" indexed from 2021) and Web of Science, as well as the journal's road to indexation in the SCOPUS database. A very interesting part of her presentation, was the issue of open research data, related to Open Science and whose part is open access.

The conference was accompanied by an intense discussion, following each of the three parts. Its participants included i.a. Prof. Marek Zirk-Sadowski, PhD, Prof. Stanisław Biernat, PhD, Prof. Ewa Bagińska, PhD, Prof. Vladislav Fedorenko, PhD (Head of the Research Center for Forensic Examination on Intellectual Property of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine), who raised the important issue of plagiarism.

The main conclusion of the First All-Polish Conference *Nowe kierunki i wyzwania w prawniczej komunikacji naukowej* was the decision to continue the discussion on the pages of "The Critique of Law" and as part of cyclical, yearly conferences devoted to legal scientific communication.

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<sup>10</sup> 'Open Access and Indexation vs the Development of a Legal Scientific Journal' (translator's note).