

Statement in Support of the Polish National Science Centre

6 October 2023

In light of the parliamentary elections in Poland on 15 October, Science Europe expresses its strong support for the Polish [National Science Centre](#) (NCN). A highly valued member of Science Europe, the NCN is a key component of both the Polish and European research and innovation systems, playing a crucial role in funding high-quality fundamental research in Poland across all career stages. Furthermore, Science Europe strongly opposes any actions that politicise research funding or infringe on the freedom and autonomy of research, which are shared values in the association as well as across the European R&I landscape.

Current situation

In August 2023, a statement by the Polish Ministry of Education and Science suggested that the government would [abolish the NCN](#), which was [further confirmed](#) by a spokesperson for the Ministry. This news has provoked concern from members of the research community, resulting in a number of open letters (including from [48 ERC grantees](#), from [61 L’Oreal-UNESCO Scholarships for Women and Science](#), and from [49 FNP grantees](#)) being sent to the Ministry in support of the NCN and highlighting concern over possible encroachments on scientific freedom and autonomy.

Taking note of these developments, Science Europe would like to emphasise the key role that the National Science Centre plays in the European research landscape. The NCN has been a valued member of Science Europe since 2012. It has actively participated in many of Science Europe’s activities and has established numerous successful research collaborations across Europe. Established to emulate the European Research Council (ERC) in Poland, the NCN provides support for basic research. Although it initially had grant success rates around 20–25%, these currently sit around 10%: comparable to those of the ERC. This drop is linked to a real-term reduction in static budget (not adjusted for inflation), resulting in the underfunding of calls whilst demand remains high.

The NCN’s funding calls focus on knowledge advancement and support for high-quality research. The organisation is actively involved in the development and execution of internationally recognised good practices, policies, and standards, including through the implementation of expert-led, international, gender-balanced grant review panels across research assessment processes. The NCN also participates in, and is a valued member of, international collaboration efforts in research funding – such as [Weave](#).

Complete scientific independence is a key component of modern R&I systems. The value of this independence is brought to light during times of crisis, when tackling grand societal and environmental challenges, and in periods of socio-political instability.