



Human Resources Excellence in Research

Internal Gap Analysis and Action Plan

Kraków, September 2016



The Human Resources Strategy for Researchers

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview of the Mineral and Energy Economy Research Institute, Polish Academy of Sciences

The Mineral and Energy Economy Research Institute, Polish Academy of Sciences (MEERI PAS) was founded in 1985. The main aim of its activity is complex interdisciplinary research on mineral raw materials and energy, e.g. in the areas of minerals management, mining and applied geology, mining geophysics, mineral processing and chemical technology, energetics and environmental engineering. According to the initial assumptions, the scientists employed at MEERI PAS were to be fully devoted to scientific work, excluding didactic obligations.

The present scientific profile of MEERI PAS is strongly related to the global trends in minerals, fuels, energy technologies and management. Currently, the main areas of detailed research of MEERI PAS are as follows: rational management and use of mineral deposits, optimization of minerals and mineral waste management, mineral processing technologies, mineral and fuel markets and their forecasting, economics of minerals and fuels, pricing of minerals and fuels, mineral policy, fuels and energy policy, renewable energy, life cycle analyses of products and investment projects. The progress towards scientific excellence was acknowledged by the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education in a recent evaluation of research institutions in Poland, where MEERI PAS received category A.

MEERI PAS currently employs 108 employees, of which 79 persons deal with research and development (9 persons with a title of professor, 12 doctors of science, 25 doctors, 33 persons of lower academic staff (MSc., BSc., Eng.), supported by 29 persons are administrative staff. It is divided into 4 Departments and 12 Divisions, dealing with e.g. mineral and energy sustainable development, minerals production technologies, economic geology, mineral policy, energy and environmental policy, research on minerals, fossil fuels and energy markets, mining geophysics, environmental engineering, environmental research, waste management and renewable energy. MEERI PAS has 3 research laboratories: geothermal, engineering geology and geophysics, and environmental research laboratory. In the last 5 years (2011–2015) MEERI PAS scientists published 115 papers indexed in the Thomson Reuters Web of Knowledge. The articles have been published in such prestigious journals as Energy, Fuel, Energy Policy, Resources Policy, International Journal of Coal Geology, Applied Clay Science, Desalination, Environmental Science and Pollution Research, Journal



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of Cleaner Production, International Journal of Environmental Science and Technology, International Journal of Life Cycle Assessment.

In the last 5 years MEERI PAS was involved in 16 European research projects, 10 domestic research projects, as well as ca. 300 projects, works and expertizes for domestic Ministries, Provincial Offices, mineral and energy companies and others. Since 2015, MEERI PAS is Associate Partner in EIT Knowledge and Innovation Community on Raw Materials. MEERI PAS is a publisher of four scientific journals – one of them the “Gospodarka Surowcami Mineralnymi – Mineral Resources Management” is indexed at the Web of Science list. For over 20 years, MEERI PAS prepares annually “The Minerals Yearbook of Poland” for purposes of the Polish Ministry of the Environment. It also manages databases on minerals and fuels production, trade and consumption in Poland since 1990.

MEERI PAS is authorized to confer academic degree of doctor (doctorate) in technical sciences in the fields of mining and applied geology. It also recently applied for such authorization to confer academic degree of doctor (doctorate) in Earth sciences, in the field of geology.

The ultimate goal of MEERI PAS is high-quality scientific activity in the field of minerals, fuels, energy technologies and management. This is the reason why the Institute constantly strives for improvement and to enhance the quality of researches. It also requires creation of better and more friendly environment to attract skillful creative scientists (i.e. through inspiring environment, freedom of research, supportive supervisors), supporting the scientific development of already employed researchers (e.g. Fund of Young Researchers Development, access to trainings, scientific seminars) and their engagement in MEERI PAS activities (mainly through participation in decision-making bodies and social responsibility). MEERI PAS recognizes the value of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, wishing to officially adopt both the Charter and Code. The detailed scrutiny of European standards, analysis of our practices compared with European practices, and identification and elimination of shortcomings will allow MEERI PAS to upgrade and strengthen its recruitment practices and employment conditions. By implementing these rules, we want to become an internationally attractive employer, delivering top research results.



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1.2. The employment structure of employees engaged in research and development

As of 01.01.2016, the Institute employs 79 persons dedicated to research and development. Scientific researchers of the Institute represent 56% (44 persons) of the total employed in the implementation of research. They are:

Assistants – 16

Adjuncts – 11

Associate professors – 9

Professors – 8.

35 engineering and technical employees provide support for scientists.

The age structure varies. It is shown in Fig. 1.

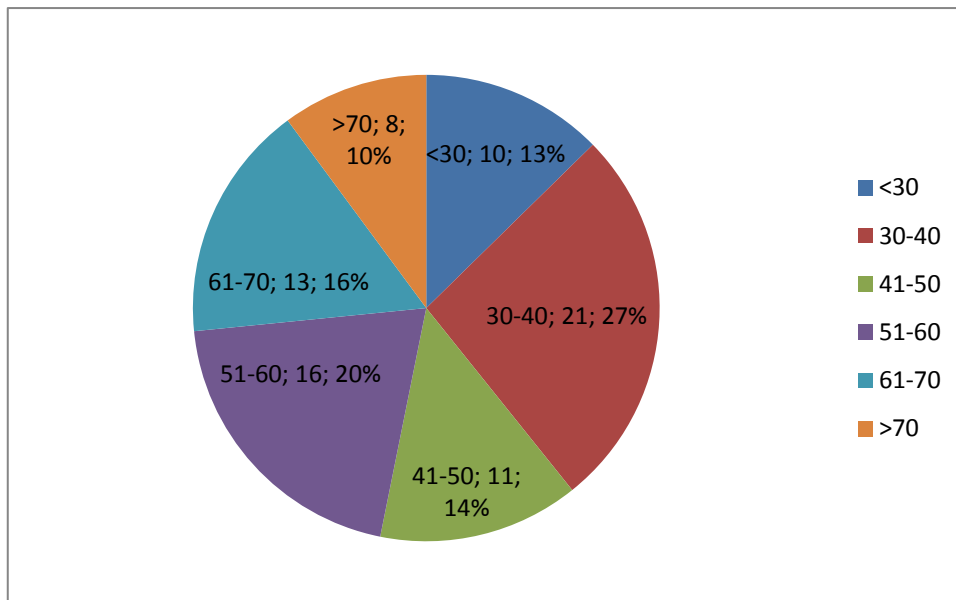


Fig. 1. The age structure of the Institute's employees dedicated to research and development

The largest group consists of workers aged 30–40 years (27%), while the employees aged 51–60 years constitute the second largest group. The youngest group of workers (<30 years) is slightly larger than the group of older workers (> 70 years).

The structure of employees broken down by gender is 29 women and 50 men.

The population of older workers (over 60 years) is distinctly dominated by male workers – 15 men to 6 women – due to the fact that until recently, women in Poland used to reach retirement age much earlier than men. What is more, they were more eager to retire.



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In the age group 40–60 years, the male employees also dominate (19 men to 13 women). The similar situation is in the age group 31–40 years (13 men to 8 women). However, in the group of the youngest workers (under 30 years) there are 4 male employees and 6 female employees.

The primary form of employment in the Institute is the permanent employment contract – this applies to 75 people (almost 95% of employees working on the implementation of the research). The other 4 people are employed for a specified period (fixed-term contracts) – in order to carry out specific tasks. 63 people are employed in full-time work. The work at the Institute is an additional employment for seven out of 16 employees in part-time employment, while their primary workplace is another scientific institution. 9 people have chosen part-time employment – usually for personal (family or health) reasons.

When assessing the compatibility of the Institute activities with the requirements resulting from the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, the management of the Institute conducted an analysis and evaluation of these recommendations in order to check to what extent the Institute's activities are consistent with them.

As a result of an initial assessment the management of the Institute concluded that:

- It fully agrees with the recommendations contained in these documents.
- Many of the Commission recommendations are already common practice in the Institute.
- The search for deviations from the best practices and the improvement of operations in those aspects where the Commission recommendations are not fully implemented and respected, will favor creating a better working environment for both the academic staff and managers.
- The full implementation of the Commission recommendations in the areas where it is dependent on the quality of management of the Institute, will raise the prestige of the scientific unit, contribute to the qualitative research and improve mood, self-esteem and prestige of academic staff employed.

Based on these conclusions, the Director of the Institute – Professor E. Mokrzycki – sent the European Commission (Directorate-General for Research and Innovation) the Declaration of support for the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers on 27 July 2015.



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At the same time the management of the Institute has decided that it will apply to obtain the "HRS4R" logo for the Mineral and Energy Economy Research Institute, Polish Academy of Sciences.

The compatibility analysis was performed separately for the Recommendation on the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

The reason for this approach was the belief that the procedures regarding scientists should be evaluated by all of the Institute's employees of the Institute involved in scientific and research and development work, while the rules relating to the principles of recruitment of staff at the Institute are not widely known, apply to a small number of people and most employees have limited contact with them.

The Gap analysis and action plan was performed and the document was sent to the European Commission – Directorate-General for Research and Innovation for review on 12.02.2016.

The Consensus report form has arrived on 15.03.2016 with a general conclusion:

“ ACCEPTED pending minor alterations

Your application broadly meets the criteria but the assessors have some concerns/questions about specific areas/criteria. Please reflect about the feed-back given above update the documentation before resubmitting; till then the ‘HR award’ is put on hold”

The feedback given was as follows:

Gap Analysis:

The GAP analysis was carried out by management staff and almost all key points were covered. It's very strange that in the survey the issues under score of 4 have been considered for actions in HRS4R and issues equal or above 4 not. For instance “Carrier development” which scored 3,99 is the target on an action, and “Complaint/appeals” that scored 4,0 doesn't appear in the action plan. It's hard to understand that 0,01 in the survey scoring makes such a difference. This should be rationalized.

Institutional HR Strategy for Researchers / Action Plan

The proposed actions for public engagement are fairly weak.

In general the conclusions of the management staff are that no substantial deviations from the recommendations of the C&C were detected and it is stated that only monitoring on the recruitment process should be advisable.

It is not possible to assess whether the analysis of the management staff is coherent with the real perception of the interviewed staff: it is not clear what is the level of involvement of stakeholders in the process. The strategy plan in fact is adopting a top-down approach.



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Publication

There is a mistake in the title of the website: HR4R, the S is missing. On the other hand the Strategy and any details about HRS4S and C&C are very well advertised. They are on the home page easily accessible and with high evidence.

<http://min-pan.krakow.pl/en/institute/HR4R.php>

This document is a report on the implementation of the first phase, aimed at applying for the logo and involving the evaluation of the current Institute management in light of the Recommendation of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, identifying the shortcomings and defining proposals for measures to improve the situation in these aspects of the activity. It has been updated, comparing to the document sent to the EC in February 2016, namely by:

- 1) Rationalization of the brake-down between those issues that demand actions and those assumed to be appropriate in the view of their perception by surveyed staff.
- 2) Adding the additional actions to promote public engagement of the Institute's researchers.
- 3) Description of an additional survey performed in the Institute to assure that the recommendations in the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers are evaluated using bottom-up approach. The results of the survey are presented.
- 4) The evident mistake in the title of website has been corrected – the new version of the document has been displayed there.



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2. The assessment whether the rules applied in the Institute are compliant with the Recommendation on the European Charter for Researchers

2.1 Methodology

All of the employed scientific and technical workers dedicated to research work were surveyed in order to assess the conformity of the principles used in the Institute with the Recommendation on the European Charter for Researchers. At the meeting, which was attended by Heads of Divisions, the key recommendations of the Commission and the usefulness of actions to best match the functioning of the Institute to these requirements have been discussed. Then the Heads of Divisions provided the information and conclusions to all of their employees.

In the next step, a survey with 31 questions about the rules and requirements applicable to both the academics and employers has been prepared. The survey asked the following question: *"How, in your opinion, do you see the implementation of these principles and requirements in the Institute"*. Each of the points allowed one out of five answers:

5 – very good

4 – good

3 – (neutral) neither good nor bad

2 – poor

1 – bad

0 – (zero) was reserved for no response – due to the indecisiveness of the respondent or in the case when the issue does not apply to a given researcher or employer.

Each of the questions contained space for the respondent's comments.

The survey was sent to 79 employees of the Institute – including scientific, engineering and technical staff engaged in research and development works, regardless of their position and the type of employment (specified or unspecified period). A two-week deadline for its completion has been set. The respondents returned the completed surveys by throwing them into the urn in at the Secretariat of the Institute, which ensured their anonymity. When returning a questionnaire, each employee was obliged to sign on the list, which in turn enabled to send a reminder to those who were late with returning the surveys, urging them to do it as soon as possible. The list with signatures was used only for statistical analysis (no pressures or penalties for not returning the surveys were used).



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2.2 The obtained results

A total of 67 completed surveys were returned, which represents 84.8% of all employees involved in research work.

The structure of respondents is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The structure of involvement in the analysis of the compatibility of the Institute activities with the Recommendation on the European Charter for Researchers broken down by academic rank.

Group of employees	The number of returned surveys	All employees	The percentage of all employees
Professors (full professors and associate professors)	15	17	88.2
Adjuncts	9	11	81.8
Assistants	15	16	93.8
Post-doctoral engineering and technical staff	15	16	93.8
Engineering and technical staff without doctoral degree	13	19	68.4
Total	67	79	84.8

Assistants – scientific researchers with no doctoral degree and just starting a career in research – have shown the greatest commitment to the process. On the other hand, the number of returned surveys was the lowest (68%) for engineering and technical employees with no doctoral degree. The conclusion is that some of those employees do not fully identify with the objectives of the Institute, and their long-term plans for career development only to a limited extent are related to the Institute.

The responses obtained were analyzed and averaged, and the result is shown in Fig. 2.



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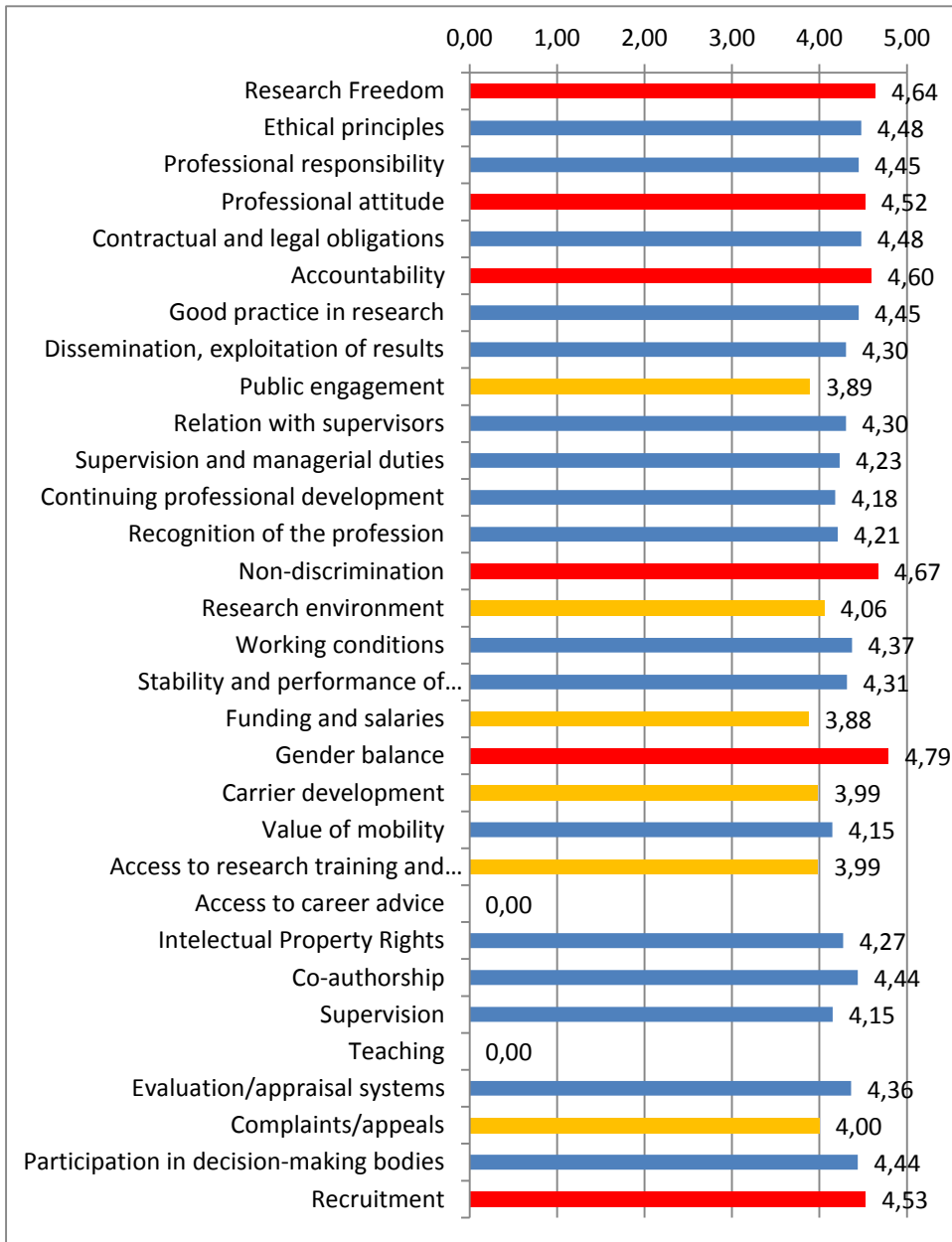


Fig. 2. The survey results – The analysis of the compatibility of the MEERI PAS activities with the Recommendation on the European Charter for Researchers Identified weaknesses (yellow) and strengths (red) of the Institute.

Among the issues examined in the survey, according to the respondents, two of the issues are not applicable at the Institute. These include:

- Accesses to career advice – The respondents have accepted that it is not a must for the Institute, as employed workers are not looking for work. While a single comment indicated that one such case occurred, generally all respondents assessed this aspect as not applicable to the Institute.



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- Teaching – The Institute does not hold classes for students or PhD students. Some employees conduct such classes in other scientific institutions, but the comments have shown that the management of the Institute does not create obstacles and problems connected with this issue – all of the respondents felt that this aspect is not applicable to the Institute.

The average results obtained in the individual issues ranged from the lowest value of 3.88 – for the „Funding and salaries” issue up to 4.79 for the „Gender balance” issue.

At first (in the document sent to EC in February) it was assumed that the average values in the range above 4.0, and thus at least good, do not require intervention. The results below 4.0 were identified as weaknesses of the Institute. The highest results – amounting to more than 4.5 (on average) were identified as strengths of the Institute.

Looking for the rationalization of the break down, as suggested by the EC assessors, the statistical approach was applied. The results were divided into quartiles, and it was assumed that the results from the first quartile (Q1) are the weaknesses of the Institute and the results that ranked above the Q3 are the strengths of the Institute.

The values of cut points of the survey results are:

Q1 = 4.15; Q2=4.31; Q3=4.48.

Strengths:

The conducted survey has shown that the following aspects should be classified as strengths of the Institute:

„Gender balance” – the obtained result of 4.79.

„Non-discrimination” – 4.67,

„Research freedom – 4.64,

„Accountability” – 4.60,

„Recruitment” – 4.53,

„Professional attitude” – 4.52.

The aforementioned elements were considered by the employees of the Institute to best match the good practices recommended by the European Commission.

Weaknesses:



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The following aspects of the Institute's activity received the lowest scores from the respondents in the survey:

“Funding and salaries” – the obtained result of 3.88;

“Public engagement” – 3.89;

“Carrier development” – 3.99;

“Access to research training and continuous development” – 3.99;

“Complains/appeals” – 4.00;

“Research environment” – 4.06.

2.3 The analysis of the weaknesses of the Institute and the ways to improve the situation

2.3.1 Funding and salaries

According to the „European Charter for Researchers”:

Employers and/or funders of researchers should ensure that researchers enjoy fair and attractive conditions of funding and/or salaries with adequate and equitable social security provisions (including sickness and parental benefits, pension rights and unemployment benefits) in accordance with existing national legislation and with national or sectoral collective bargaining agreements. This must include researchers at all career stages including early-stage researchers, commensurate with their legal status, performance and level of qualifications and/or responsibilities.

The result of the assessment by the respondents: 3.88.

The comments received on this issue come down to conclusion that the salaries are not attractive, and the unsatisfactory level of remuneration is due to low funds granted by the State within the framework of budgetary subsidies. The salaries are particularly low in the case of young researchers.

When analyzing the issue of remuneration for the work it should be noted that the remuneration systems at different positions are regulated in the "Rules of remuneration of employees of the MEERI PAS" – a document that has been developed at the Institute, approved by trade unions and introduced by the Regulation of the Director of the Institute No. 11/2011 of 29.08.2011.

Wages at different positions must be within the allowable ranges, which are quite wide. The remuneration of employees depends on the decision of the Director of the Institute at the request of the Head of the Division. The level of wages in the various divisions depends on the size of available funds, which are derived:



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- From the subsidy for statutory activity from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education obtained by the Institute, divided between the individual Divisions,
- From won competitions for grants and projects (including EU projects), carried out in the Division,
- From funds received from external customers for the execution of works commissioned by the Division.

Those three sources of financing are variable and therefore, to ensure the payment of wages, the vast majority of Heads of Divisions prefer a low base salary for Division's employees. If a given Division has more resources – thanks to the implementation of tasks for external customers – part of the work can be done by a given team on the basis of additional the so-called contract of mandate and contract of specific work.

On one hand, this system allows employees to obtain a higher annual income, although they have to work at non-scheduled hours (overtime), and on the other hand it allows to avoid – in case if the possibilities of obtaining grants and projects or external contracts were limited – employment reduction.

Low rates for lowest-paid employees are controversial. Therefore, for the sake of greater employees' satisfaction, the change of remuneration rules for employees of the Institute will be necessary; the limits of wages for various positions, with special emphasis on assessing the possibility of raising the lowest limit of wages, will be verified.

In this regard it was decided to take the following actions:

- An internal analysis of the remuneration system in the Institute and its modification.
- Negotiation of the new remuneration regulations with trade unions.
- Implementation of the new employee remuneration regulations.

2.3.2. Public engagement

According to the „European Charter for Researchers“:

Researchers should ensure that their research activities are made known to society at large in such a way that they can be understood by non-specialists, thereby improving the public's understanding of science. Direct engagement with the public will help researchers to better understand public interest in priorities for science and technology and also the public's concerns.

The obtained average result: 3.89.



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Three respondents rated this aspect of the Institute activity as a weakness (rating – 2) while 17 as very good (rating – 5). The only comment in the surveys was positive and informed that the respondent knows many examples of press statements and media appearances of scientists from the Institute while many scientists are involved in public consultation on law making in their area of competence.

The involvement of scientists in the activities of a social nature is not part of the evaluation of the Institute by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. This element is not promoted when granting subsidy for statutory activity. It is also not included in the assessment of the scientific researchers' activity. However, the management of the Institute decided that if this aspect of the Institute's activity was recognized by the scientific community as a weakness, certain actions should be taken in order to:

- Make the public engagement of the Institute employees better known to the staff.
- Increase the interest of academics in such activities, and thus increase their involvement in promoting science to the general public.

The actions described below should ensure better information for all employees.

An employee taking such activity should provide information on this subject, in the form of a note, to the Deputy Director for Research. This data, after assessing its significance, will be distributed by posting on a web page of the Institute or forwarded to the general staff via e-mail or a special news bulletin. Increasing employees' activity in the field of science dissemination activities can be achieved through taking into account such measures in the criteria of assessment of the scientific researchers activity.

The assessment of the scientific researchers activity is performed at the Institute every two years, as a result of the obligations imposed by the Act on the Polish Academy of Sciences. The rules of the next evaluation of the scientific researchers activity are under development at the Institute and will be submitted for the approval of the Scientific Council of the Institute. Ultimately, they will be approved by the President of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

The next assessment of the scientific researchers activity is planned for 2016 and will cover scientific achievements in the years 2014 and 2015. The introduction of the assumed changes in the regulations would mean that the changed conditions of the assessment would apply to past activities, which does not seem right.

However, the actions to encourage scientists to public engagement through the promotion of the Institute activity and the dissemination of achievements must be taken. A draft of changes in the scientific researchers' assessment system can be prepared and presented to the scientific



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researchers as early as 2016. The introduced changes in regulations would be applicable from 2018 on and concern the assessment of scientific researchers for the years 2016 and 2017.

It was decided to take the following actions:

- To prepare and issue an order requiring researchers to take notes from the "public engagement" activities and determining the procedures for their dissemination.
- To modify the website of the Institute for better information on the "public engagement" appearances of researchers of the Institute.
- To develop a new "Rules of assessment of the scientific researchers activity in the Mineral and Energy Economy Research Institute, Polish Academy of Sciences" together with the procedure of its approval by the Scientific Council and approved by the President of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

Taking into account that those actions the EC assessors evaluated as “fairly weak”, the management of the Institute have undertaken a broad discussion with employees on what other actions should be taken to improve the employees perception of this aspect of the Institute’s activity. As a result, at the meeting of a Institute’s Board on 28 of June 2016, in which the participants were the Heads of Divisions of the Institute and the management of the Institute, it was decided that the Institute will actively participate in the “Science Festivals”, that are usually organized each spring (April or May) in Krakow. These are festivals arranged by Universities and Scientific Institutions located in Krakow for the citizens. In spite of different attractions (music, trade fares of folk art, etc.), the stress is put on promotion, with special sessions on their scientific achievements and promotional booths. The additional action was decided:

- Join the group of organizers of “Science Festival” in Kraków, so that researchers take part in scientific sessions of the “Science Festival” to make known their research to public.

2.3.3. Career development

According to the „European Charter for Researchers”:

Employers and/or funders of researchers should draw up, preferably within the framework of their human resources management, a specific career development strategy for researchers at all stages of their career, regardless of their contractual situation, including for researchers on fixed-term contracts. It should include the availability of mentors involved in providing support and guidance for the personal and professional development of researchers, thus motivating them and contributing to reducing any insecurity in their professional future. All researchers should be made familiar with such provisions and arrangements.



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The survey results have shown that this aspect of the Institute's activity is ranked just below the "good" level – the obtained average result: 3.99.

The Institute does not have a document setting out career development strategy for researchers, but essentially the career path is specified in the Act on the Polish Academy of Sciences, which establishes, inter alia, how long an employee can hold a given scientific position and what requirements should be met in order to reach the next career level.

A person employed on the Assistant position has 6 years to write and defend a doctoral thesis. Then, it is possible to hold the position of Adjunct, which can be held for 8 years; during this time, the postdoctoral dissertation should be presented (and be promoted to D.Sc. scientific position). Then, a position of Associate Professor, with no time limits provided for by the law, can be held. In order to become a Full Professor, one can apply or be promoted after obtaining the title of professor – the title given by the President of the country.

In practice, young researchers (Assistants, Adjuncts) are not always able to obtain the following academic degrees within the time limits specified by the Act. Then, they are usually transferred to work as engineering and technical staff until obtaining the degree required for the promotion. They can be considered for a scientific position after obtaining the required degree, but the promotion requires them to win a competition in the recruitment procedure.

Supporting the development of young workers in the Institute depends, among other things, on the allocation of additional funds for a given Division to finance part of the wages for young workers: Assistants writing the doctoral thesis and Adjuncts working on a postdoctoral dissertation. The applicable regulations are contained in the "Regulations on granting subsidies for statutory activity for the development of young staff of the Institute and co-financing the employment of young scientists", being the annex to the Order of the Director of the Institute No. 6/2011 of 09.06.2011. The assigned tasks aimed at obtaining a degree are audited annually by the Management and Scientific Council. Progress reports are reported in seminars and in front of a specially established Commission.

Among the comments received from surveyed researchers, there were comments about the lack of proper contact between young employees and their supervisors, usually due to lack of time. A supervisor of a young employee starting a career scientist is essentially the Head of a given Division or a person designated by him. It seems, however, that senior researchers should be clearly made aware that it is their duty to be mentors, responsible for the development of young scientists.

It was decided to take the following actions:



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- Conducting consultations with the Division Heads on the overview of the situation and the progress of young scientists in the field of scientific development. Monthly verification of the scientific progress of young employees by the supervisors in addition to participating in joint research work.

2.3.4. Access to research training and continuous development

According to the „European Charter for Researchers“:

Employers and/or funders should ensure that all researchers at any stage of their career, regardless of their contractual situation, are given the opportunity for professional development and for improving their employability through access to measures for the continuing development of skills and competencies. Such measures should be regularly assessed for their accessibility, take-up and effectiveness in improving competencies, skills and employability.

The result obtained in this aspect of the Institute activity is: 3.99, just below the "good" level. The respondents' comments focused on two issues. The first is insufficient information on the courses and development opportunities and the second is the lack of sufficient funds, necessary for the Institute to send employees for courses they are interested in. Usually, the information about courses, marked "for optional use", is sent from the Management Board to the Heads of Divisions via e-mail. The survey has shown that Heads of Divisions do not always forward such information to their employees. It is therefore necessary to change the mailing list in order to provide information about courses and take into account all the employees of the Institute.

In the financing model of the Institute, the Head of Division is primarily responsible for providing the financial resources necessary for the functioning of the Division, and for the decision on allocation of funds for training of the Division's employees. Sending an employee for training and incurring the cost of this course by the Division can cause problems when balancing revenues with costs. This does not mean, however, that sending employees to various meetings, including trainings, does not take place. In 2015, 30 scientific researchers of the Institute attended various trainings and paid conferences at home and abroad. The employees spent a total of 175 days of work on trainings¹. The conditions for this are, however, that the Division must have an adequate amount of funds and a close relationship between the subject of a conference or training and the activities of the Division.

¹ Excluding conferences and trainings organized by the Institute



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The reported needs of the overall development of employees and improvement of their skills require a different funding scheme.

The Management of the Institute decided to assign the funds for courses in 2016 and organize internal training on a topic selected by the employees. However, the implementation of this method of improving qualifications in the following years will depend on several factors:

- The availability of funds for this purpose.

The Institute receives a subsidy for statutory activity from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education; its amount covers only about 40% percent of the general needs of the Institute. If the grant will be reduced in the following years, there will be a need to reduce operating costs. In this case, reducing the cost of additional training (other than those that are financed) will be one of the least troublesome actions.

- The interest of employees in courses.

Experience shows that the reported demand for training does not correspond to the actual determination of an employee. This would require such organization of working time to be present at lectures.

- The skills and qualifications acquired during courses, which will be used in further scientific activity.

It is expected that a group participating in a training will use the acquired skills in research work after training completion. This should result in carrying out studies using the knowledge gained, confirmed by the publication of the results in at least one publication.

The experience gained from the training planned for 2016 will be the basis for the implementation of such training system in the following years.

It was decided to take the following actions aimed at improving the access of workers to scientific training and their continuous professional development:

- To change the mailing list in order to provide information about available courses.
- To organize internal training on a selected topic in 2016 in order to improve qualifications of the employees.
- To assess the effectiveness of the training conducted in 2016 and to decide on the cyclical nature of such courses.

2.3.5. Complains/appeals

According to the „European Charter for Researchers”:



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Employers and/or funders of researchers should establish, in compliance with national rules and regulations, appropriate procedures, possibly in the form of an impartial (ombudsman-type) person to deal with complaints/appeals of researchers, including those concerning conflicts between supervisor(s) and early-stage researchers. Such procedures should provide all research staff with confidential and informal assistance in resolving work-related conflicts, disputes and grievances, with the aim of promoting fair and equitable treatment within the institution and improving the overall quality of the working environment.

The result obtained in this aspect of the Institute activity is: 4.00.

The statute of the Institute states that the person who deals with complains of employees and disobeying discipline by personnel, so called “Disciplinary Proceedings Attorney” should be chosen for 3 years term by the full-time staff employed for research. It is done in secret ballot. At least half of those eligible to vote must be present for the validity of the voting.

The election was organized on 19.10.2015. In a secret ballot three persons were selected as candidates for the position of “Disciplinary Proceedings Attorney”. According the statute the final choice is done (also in a secret ballot) by Scientific Council of the Institute. Out of three presented candidates the Scientific Council, on 1.04.2016 has chosen prof. Ryszard Uberman to serve as “Disciplinary Proceedings Attorney” in 2016–2019 term.

He serves as trusted person, to whom all the employees of the Institute may address their problems. He is the one who can give confidential and informal assistance in resolving work-related conflicts both of scientific and interpersonal character.



Fig. 3. Prof. Ryszard Uberman chosen by Institute’s employees to be “Disciplinary Proceedings Attorney” in 2016-2019 term

In the event of a breach of discipline at work or misconduct ethical rules, the Disciplinary Proceedings Attorney may initiate disciplinary procedure against the employee breaking the rules. The procedure in such cases is ruled by Disciplinary Commission. These are four



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persons chosen by researchers of the Institute in secret ballot. The election was done in two rounds on 02.02.2016 and 09.02.2016. The following persons have been chosen to the Disciplinary Commission to serve in term 2016–2019: Prof. Marek Nieć, D. Sc. Elżbieta Pietrzyk-Sokulska, D. Sc. Zbigniew Grudziński, Dr Urszula Lorenz.

Fortunately, in long history of the Institute there were no cases that were ruled by the Disciplinary Commission.

As concerns the “Disciplinary Proceeding Attorney” he serves as impartial (ombudsman-type) person in eventual conflicts in the Institute. He gives confidential and informal assistance in resolving work-related conflicts, disputes and grievances. His mediations are done without publicity, so his work is not seen by all.

The results of survey show, that some employees do not know where to go to complain, as this aspect got into weaknesses of the Institute, so the following action was decided:

- To make clear for all the employees about the possibility of mediation by “Disciplinary Proceeding Attorney” in case of conflicts or any difficult problems, so that they know that their problems might be solved without unnecessary prominence.

2.3.6. Research environment

According to the „European Charter for Researchers”:

Employers and/or funders of researchers should ensure that the most stimulating research or research training environment is created which offers appropriate equipment, facilities and opportunities, including for remote collaboration over research networks, and that the national or sectoral regulations concerning health and safety in research are observed. Funders should ensure that adequate resources are provided in support of the agreed work programme.

The result obtained in this aspect of the Institute activity is: 4.06.

The respondents' comments concerned the modest office conditions, lack of appropriate funds to purchase modern research equipment, limited access to laboratories and lack of library space.

They also mentioned that they understand the difficulties. In the opinion of some respondents the lack of funds has large impact on opportunities to create an appropriate work environment. Some other say that at this point, research environment is appropriate for the resources, but not sufficient.

These difficulties are commonly known, and the Institute tries to get subsidies from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education for expansion of research infrastructure. The



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appropriate applications are submitted every year, but although the results of the evaluation by experts in the Ministry are good, the financing has not been granted by now.

Location of the Institute is in a building where two other institutions are also located. At the beginning of 2016 a part of the building has been bought using own financial sources of the Institute to expand and improve office conditions. Additional 292 square meters will allow to build a laboratory, modern conference room and give the researchers better working space. In the view of this situation the following actions have been decided:

- develop and approve the expansion project of the Institute,
- apply for the grant for equipment to open the laboratory of “biomass combustion”.

3. The assessment whether the rules applied in the Institute are compliant with the „Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers”

3.1 Top-down methodology

The assessment of compliance of the activities has been carried out by a working group consisting of:

- Prof. Lidia Gawlik – Deputy Director for Research
- Dorota Smreczyńska – Head of the Organizational Department
- Magdalena Lach – HR Specialist

Supporting persons:

- Prof. Krzysztof Galos – Deputy Director for General Affairs , and:
- Prof. Ryszard Uberman – Disciplinary Commissioner of the Institute.

The team undertaking this task knew that the obtained result of the employees’ assessment of the requirements from the "Recruitment" section of the Recommendation on the European Charter for Researchers was 4.53. Therefore, the employees evaluated this aspect as a strength of the Institute.

Each of the recommendations from the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers were compared with recruitment process applied in the Institute, and the existing discrepancies were described and explained.

It should be noted that the recruitment rules of the Institute are primarily subjected to national rules applying to the employment of workers, particularly the provisions of the Labor Law. In addition, they comply with the Act on the Polish Academy of Sciences.



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The criteria to be fulfilled by candidates for academic staff in the recruitment process (minimum requirements for the various research positions) and the course of recruitment procedures are described in a document "The procedure and criteria of conduct when applying for employment at a research position: Assistant, Adjunct, Associate Professor and Full Professor at the Mineral and Energy Economy Research Institute, Polish Academy of Sciences", which was implemented by the Order of the Director of the Institute No. 1/2013 of 30.01.2013, while the document content was previously adopted by the resolution of the Scientific Council of the Institute of 17.01.2013.

3.2. The analysis of the applied procedures and their evaluation

The procedures on the recommendations from the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and the degree of their implementation in the Institute are described below.

3.2.1. Recruitment

According to the „The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers”:

Employers and/or funders should establish recruitment procedures which are open, efficient, transparent, supportive and internationally comparable, as well as tailored to the type of positions advertised.

Advertisements should give a broad description of knowledge and competencies required, and should not be so specialized as to discourage suitable applicants. Employers should include a description of the working conditions and entitlements, including career development prospects. Moreover, the time allowed between the advertisement of the vacancy or the call for applications and the deadline for reply should be realistic.

Scientific workers are employed at the Institute on the basis of competition. Each contest is announced on the website of the Public Information Bulletin of the Minister responsible for Science, EURAXESS website of the European Commission and on the website of the Institute, at least three weeks before the deadline for submissions. The decision to hold a competition is taken by the Director of the Institute in response to a justified request of the Head of a given Division.

The Competition Committee, appointed by the Director of the Institute, assesses a candidate on the basis of the documents submitted. It is also possible to invite a candidate to appear before the Committee in order to know more about him.

The results of the work, in the form of a protocol, shall be submitted by the Competition Committee to the Scientific Council of the MEERI PAN for approval.



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The announcement of the competition for a scientific position – in addition to the formal requirements for a particular position – contains additional requirements regarding the specific nature of work in a given Division of the Institute reporting the need for a new employee. The announcement shall not include the description of career development prospects, since it follows directly from the provisions of the Act on the Polish Academy of Sciences.

It was decided that a three-week (at least) period between the announcement of vacancy and the deadline for reply is sufficient.

Conclusion: The Institute fully meets the principles and requirements contained in this recommendation.

3.2.2 Selection

According to the „The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers”:

Selection committees should bring together diverse expertise and competences and should have an adequate gender balance and, where appropriate and feasible, include members from different sectors (public and private) and disciplines, including from other countries and with relevant experience to assess the candidate. Whenever possible, a wide range of selection practices should be used, such as external expert assessment and face-to-face interviews. Members of selection panels should be adequately trained.

In order to carry out the assessment procedure of a candidate for the vacant scientific position, the Director of the Institute appoints the Competition Committee composed of Deputy Director for Research, 3 independent senior researchers of the Institute and the person who asked for the announcement of the competition (Head of a given Division). The Committee for each competition is selected from among the employees of different organizational units of the Institute (Deputy Director for Research is the only permanent member of each Committee). They are employees of the Institute, both women and men, with the appropriate experience to assess the candidates, informed about the formal and specific requirements that must be met by the future employee of the Institute when taking up a given position, which is the subject of the competition. People from outside the Institute are not invited to evaluate the candidates, but the candidate selected by the Committee is accepted (or not) in a secret ballot by the Scientific Council of the Institute, involving the selected representatives of other scientific institutions and specialists of different industries.

Conclusion: The Institute fully meets the principles and requirements contained in this recommendation.



3.2.3 Transparency

According to the „The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers”:

Candidates should be informed, prior to the selection, about the recruitment process and the selection criteria, the number of available positions and the career development prospects. They should also be informed after the selection process about the strengths and weaknesses of their applications.

The competitions are announced for individual scientific positions in the relevant Divisions of the Institute. The formal requirements include the required course of education, foreign language skills and specific experience (in case of applying for the position of senior researcher – Associate Professor or Full Professor). The qualifications, considered as an additional advantage for an applicant, are presented.

The Protocols of the Competition Committee explain the reason why a particular candidate has been selected and what factors have contributed to his advantage over competitors. Once the recruitment process is completed, personal documents of people who have not been selected for employment are sent back to them with information about the outcome of the competition, and in the event of failure to comply with formal requirements – with appropriate note.

Conclusion: The candidates are informed about the recruitment process and the selection criteria, the number of available positions and the career development prospects. Once the selection process is completed, the candidates are notified of the results. The procedure used is therefore consistent with the principles of the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

3.2.4 Judging merit

According to the „The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers”:

The selection process should take into consideration the whole range of experience of the candidates. While focusing on their overall potential as researchers, their creativity and level of independence should also be considered. This means that merit should be judged qualitatively as well as quantitatively, focusing on outstanding results within a diversified career path and not only on the number of publications. Consequently, the importance of bibliometric indices should be properly balanced within a wider range of evaluation criteria, such as teaching, supervision, teamwork, knowledge transfer, management of research and innovation and public awareness



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activities. For candidates from an industrial background, particular attention should be paid to any contributions to patents, development or inventions.

Job advertisements for Assistants do not contain additional requirements, but the higher the position, the more evaluation criteria. For example, a candidate applying for the position of Full Professor is required:

- To have scientific achievements and recognition in the scientific community;
- To actively participate in scientific life (participation in national and international conferences, symposiums, national and international organizations and scientific societies and organization of conferences and symposiums, seminars and maintaining contacts with foreign partners);
- To participate in opinion-forming activities (reviews of postdoctoral dissertations, non-serial publications, studies, scientific papers and others)
- To have experience in managing research work;
- To have organizational achievements.

When applying for the position of Assistant Professor an opinion on a candidate's qualifications by a person recognized in the scientific community is required. Such opinion can highlight not only academic or scientific achievements, but also other characteristics of the candidate, which are important but not easily measurable.

In the case of application for the position of Adjunct the applicant should present an opinion of his/her former chief.

Conclusion: The Institute fully meets the principles and requirements contained in this recommendation.

3.2.5 Variations in the chronological order of CVs

According to the „The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers“:

Career breaks or variations in the chronological order of CVs should not be penalized, but regarded as an evolution of a career, and consequently, as a potentially valuable contribution to the professional development of researchers towards a multidimensional career track. Candidates should therefore be allowed to submit evidence-based CVs, reflecting a representative array of achievements and qualifications appropriate to the post for which application is being made.

The Competition Committee fully appreciate the diversity of experience of the candidates. The candidates with experience in the industry are particularly welcomed. The most important



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element, often decisive for the selection, is to have adequate, specific qualifications to work on the position, which is the subject of the competition.

Conclusion: The Institute fully meets the principles and requirements contained in this recommendation.

3.2.6 Recognition of mobility experience

According to the „The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers“:

Any mobility experience, e.g. a stay in another country/region or in another research setting (public or private) or a change from one discipline or sector to another, whether as part of the initial research training or at a later stage of the research career, or virtual mobility experience, should be considered as a valuable contribution to the professional development of a researcher.

Since the Institute does not conduct educational activities, young scientists are recruited from among the graduates of different universities. There are, although rare, examples of employing foreigners or experienced researchers with experience of working in other scientific institutions or internships abroad.

Conclusion: The Institute fully meets the principles and requirements contained in this recommendation.

3.2.7 Recognition of qualifications

According to the „The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers“:

Employers and/or funders should provide for appropriate assessment and evaluation of the academic and professional qualifications, including nonformal qualifications, of all researchers, in particular within the context of international and professional mobility. They should inform themselves and gain a full understanding of rules, procedures and standards governing the recognition of such qualifications and, consequently, explore existing national law, conventions and specific rules on the recognition of these qualifications through all available channels.

The Institute does not create obstacles to the employment of researchers who have gained qualifications required for scientific position in unusual circumstances, for example when abroad. In such cases, the fulfillment of formal requirements for the employment is subjected to a comprehensive assessment, always in favor of a person applying for a job. The recent employment of a foreign full-time Assistant from Ecuador – educated abroad, in different formal conditions – may serve as an example of positive decisions in this matter.



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Conclusion: The Institute fully meets the principles and requirements contained in this recommendation.

3.2.8 Seniority

According to the „The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers”:

The levels of qualifications required should be in line with the needs of the position and not be set as a barrier to entry. Recognition and evaluation of qualifications should focus on judging the achievements of the person rather than his/her circumstances or the reputation of the institution where the qualifications were gained. As professional qualifications may be gained at an early stage of a long career, the pattern of lifelong professional development should also be recognized.

The Institute conducts interdisciplinary research, so if a candidate has experience in other areas of science than required for the position, it is usually considered as an additional advantage. Competition Committees draw attention to the achievements of the candidate and his potential usefulness, not only for a Division with a vacant position, but also for the whole Institute, as the practice of joint activities of several Divisions in solving interdisciplinary problems is very common.

Conclusion: The Institute fully meets the principles and requirements contained in this recommendation.

3.2.9 Postdoctoral appointments

According to the „The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers”:

Clear rules and explicit guidelines for the recruitment and appointment of postdoctoral researchers, including the maximum duration and the objectives of such appointments, should be established by the institutions appointing postdoctoral researchers. Such guidelines should take into account time spent in prior postdoctoral appointments at other institutions and take into consideration that the postdoctoral status should be transitional, with the primary purpose of providing additional professional development opportunities for a research career in the context of long term career prospects.

In the Polish science system, there are four positions for postdoctoral researchers. The relevant laws, including the Act on the Polish Academy of Sciences, define clear rules for such appointments. Under Polish conditions, the position of Adjunct is provided for a person who has obtained a doctoral degree, for no longer than eight years. During this time, the postdoctoral dissertation should be presented.



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Subsequent positions for career developing scientists are: Associate Professor – for persons who presented their postdoctoral dissertations, and Full Professor – for people who have obtained the title of professor.

The employment of a Visiting Professor, from abroad or from different scientific institution in Poland is also possible.

The system applicable in all scientific institutions in Poland is respected in the Institute.

Conclusion: The Institute fully meets the principles and requirements contained in this recommendation.

3.3 Bottom-up verification

Critical remarks of the assessors from EC concerning the application of The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers recommendations state that it is not possible to assess whether the analysis of the management staff is coherent with the real perception of the interviewed staff. To eliminate this deficiency the additional survey was performed in the Institute.

All of the employed – scientific and technical staff dedicated to research work – were asked to assess the conformity of the principles used in the Institute with the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. Additionally they were asked to comment – improve – disagree with the explanations that were already done by working group consisting from managerial and administrative persons (as described in the chapter 3.2).

A survey with 9 questions about the rules and requirements applicable to both the academics and employers has been prepared. The survey asked the following question: “*How, in your opinion, the procedures applied in the Institute are consistent with recommendation of the Code*”. Each of the points allowed one out of five answers:

5 – very well

4 – well

3 – (neutral) neither well nor poor

2 – poor

1 – bad

0 – (zero) was reserved for no response – due to the indecisiveness of the respondent.

Each of the questions contained space for the respondent's comments.

On the 15th of July 2016, the survey was sent to 79 employees of the Institute. The deadline for returning completed survey was 8th of August, 2016. The respondents returned the completed surveys by throwing them into the urn in at the Secretariat of the Institute, which



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ensured their anonymity. When returning a questionnaire, each employee was obliged to sign on the list, which in turn enabled to send a reminder to those who were late with returning the surveys, urging them to do it as soon as possible. The list with signatures was used only for statistical analysis (no pressures or penalties for not returning the surveys were used).

It has to be mentioned that the survey was organized during the summer holidays, so the result of 67 obtained responses seems to be very good.

The responses obtained were analyzed and averaged, and the result is shown in Figure 4.

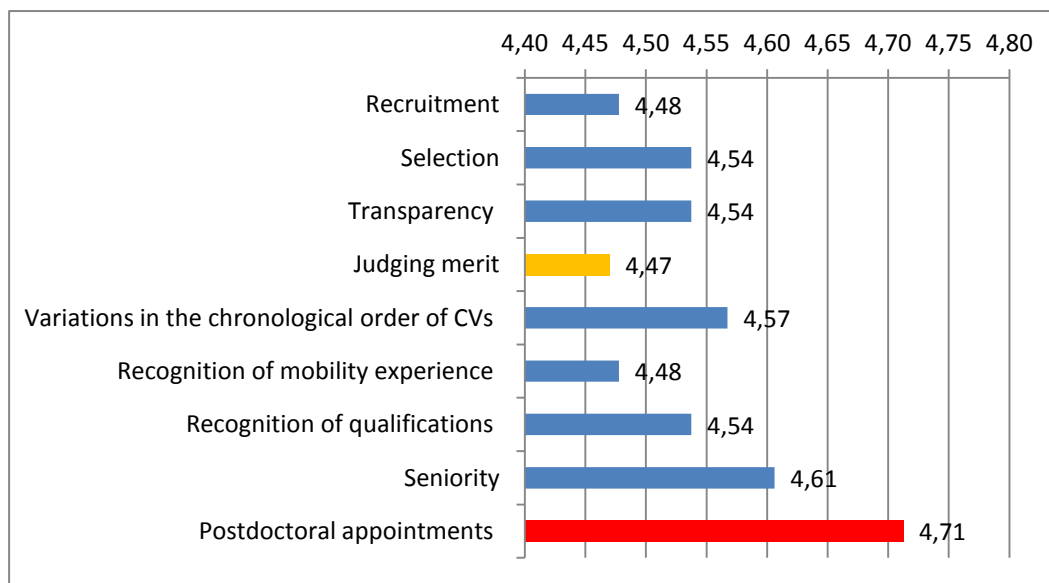


Fig. 4. The survey results – The analysis of the compatibility of the MEERI PAS procedure with the Recommendation of the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

Identified weakness (yellow) and strength (red) of the Institute.

The average results obtained in the individual issues ranged from the lowest value of 4.47– for the „Judging merit” issue up to 4.71 for the „Postdoctoral appointments” issue.

The average score for all nine issues that are the recommendations of the “Code” was 4.55, a little higher as compared with the score achieved for the issue “Recruitment” (4.53) in the first survey concerning the “Charter”.

Several comments expressed acceptance for the explanations formulated by the working group in top-down methodology. Some other commented that thanks to the participation in the survey they could learn in details how the recruitment procedures look like in the Institute, which until now was not known to them.

The lowest average score (4.47) was achieved for in the issue “Judging merit”. This has been identified as the weakness of the Institute and a detailed analysis was done.



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There were four comments by respondents concerning this issue:

1. In my opinion more foreigners could be employed.
2. In the recruitment for the position of Associate Professor and Full Professor one of the criteria should be the number of doctorates he/she has promoted.
3. I miss the verification of competence and knowledge based on the quantity and quality of work commissioned for the industry.
4. So far I have experienced in the practice the recruitment for the position of Assistant. It should be added in the explanations for the EC that the Commission draws attention to overall achievements of the candidate and not only publications. The candidate for the Assistant position may have other achievements like: the whole range of experience of the candidates scientific associations, experience in teaching, awards, scholarships, internships, etc.

All those remarks are in fact the advices how the procedures applied in the Institute should be explained to the EC assessors and do not state about their non-compliance with the recommendations of the "Code". When describing the "Judging merit" in chapter 3.2 only the minimal requirements were stated. In the process of recruitment, if there are more than one candidate applying, the Competition Commission, takes whole range of the candidates' experiences into account.

Nevertheless, it was decided that to assure full compatibility with the "Judging merit" recommendation, the following action will be taken:

- Each member of the Competition Commission before starting the recruitment process will be acknowledged with recommendations of the "Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers",
- The Competition Commission should state in the protocol from the recruitment how the recommendations were taken into account in the process.

3.4 Conclusions from the analyses performed

The results of the analyses on the applicable rules of recruitment are positive. No substantial deviations from the recommendations of the European Commission presented in the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers have been found.

The specificity of Polish science system in relation to the general guidelines of the European Commission is noticeable, but the practice of management in the Institute is fully compliant with Polish law while not contrary to the recommendations of the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. The Management Board of the Institute in order to maintain high



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standards have obliged the Competition Commissions to monitor the recruitment process and proceed according to the EC standards recommended.

4. The action plan for the improvement of the Institute management methods in the context of compliance with the Recommendation on the European Charter for Researchers & the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers

The identified deviations from the guidelines contained in The European Charter for Researchers & the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers are included in the action plan for the coming months and years. Their schedule along with deadlines and indication of the persons responsible for the implementation of individual tasks is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Action plan for MEERI PAS for 2016–2018

Rule according to Charter & Code	Action required and decided	When	Who
Funding and salaries	An internal analysis of the remuneration system in the Institute and its modification	by January 2017	HR Specialist, Head of the Organizational Department, Deputy Director for Research, Deputy Director for General Affairs, Director,
	The negotiation of the new remuneration regulations with trade unions	by May 2017	
	The implementation of the new employee remuneration regulations	by January 2018	
Public engagement	The preparation and issuance of an order requiring researchers to take notes from the "public engagement" activities and determining the procedures for their dissemination	by July 2016 done	Deputy Director for Research, Director,
	The modification of the website of the Institute for better information on the "public engagement" appearances of research workers of the Institute"	by July 2016 done	Logistics marketing specialist, Deputy Director for General Affairs,
	The development of a new "Rules of assessment of the scientific researchers activity in the Mineral and Energy Economy Research Institute, Polish Academy of Sciences" together with the procedure of its approval by the Scientific Council and approved by the President of the Polish Academy of Sciences	by November 2017	Deputy Director for Research, Head of the Organizational Department,



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	Institute will join the group of organizers of “Science Festival” in Kraków and the researchers will take part in scientific sessions of the “Science Festival” to make known their research to the public	April-May 2017	Head of the Organizational Department, Deputy Director for Research, Director,
Career development	Conducting consultations with the Division Heads on the overview of the situation and the progress of young scientists in the field of scientific development. Monthly verification of the scientific progress of young employees by the supervisors in addition to participating in joint research work.	by July 2016 done	Director, Deputy Director for Research,
Access to research training and continuous development	Change of the mailing list in order to provide information about courses	Immediate done	Deputy Director for Research,
	Organization of internal training on a selected topic in 2016 in order to improve qualifications and skills of the employees	by the end of 2016 in progress	Director, Deputy Director for Research, Deputy Director for General Affairs,
	The assessment of the effectiveness of the training conducted in 2016 and to decide on the cyclical nature of such courses	by May 2017	
Complains/ appeals	To make clear for all the employees about the possibility of mediation by “Disciplinary Proceeding Attorney” in case of conflicts or any difficult problems, so that they know that their problems might be solved without unnecessary prominence.	The nearest meeting of the Heads of Departments	Director,
		by October 2016	Logistics marketing specialist, Deputy Director for General Affairs,
Research environment	Develop and approve the expansion project of the Institute	by January 2017	Deputy Director for General Affairs,
	Apply for the grant for equipment to open the laboratory of “biomass combustion”	September 2016 in progress	Deputy Director for Research
Judging merit	Acknowledge the Competition Commission for Recruitment with recommendations of the “Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers”	Always before the recruitment meeting	Deputy Director for Research
	Competition Commission will describe in the protocols from the recruitment how the recommendations of the “Code” were taken into account in the process	Always	Director, Deputy Director for Research



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Some of the actions are already done by now, as majority of the work concerning the identification of gaps in the Institute comes from February 2016, and the actions were scheduled for realization since the first application for the HR excellence in research.

5. Summary

The outcome of the internal analysis of deviations from the principles set out in The European Charter for Researchers & the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers is positive. Six out of 31 rules included in the „European Charter for Researchers”, were recognized as strengths of the MEERI PAS, while six were recognized as areas where improvement is needed. A review of rules for the recruitment of scientists at the Institute allowed concluding that they are compliant with the rules of the “Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers”, but one of the aspects (Judging merit) was identified as the weakness of the Institute, not because it is disobeyed, but as the documents from recruitment process does not clearly say so.

To improve the situation in the areas identified as weaknesses the Institute the action plan was developed that can be implemented within the next two years. The ongoing monitoring of management processes is essential for the further improvement of management practices and bringing them into full compliance with the European Charter for Researchers & the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. This is facilitated by the use of procedures associated with the quality systems ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 already implemented in the Institute.