



Speech André Mischke YAE Prize for Science and Policy 2019

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As you are probably aware, the Young Academy of Europe started in 2012 as a bottom-up initiative of a dynamic young group of recognised European scholars with outspoken views about science, science policy and the best way how to support young scholars. From the start, one of the aims was setting up a YAE Prize, which after several years of intense discussions took off in 2017. In Budapest we awarded the first edition to Rianne Letschert, Top Woman of the year 2019 in NL, and a vocal and active advocate of science communication for young people, and for promoting diversity. In her excellent speech in Budapest, she introduced the TEAM index, which is determined by the diversity of competences within a team.

After such a successful start of the YAE Prizes, last year was tough when our Founding Chair André Mischke suddenly passed away. André had an efficient yet gentle approach to making a difference to society, academia, and science policy. As Founding Chair of the Young Academy of Europe and Member of Academia Europaea he dedicated time and energy to foster the development of a pallet of opportunities available to young researchers and as such make a difference to Europe's next generation of scientists and beyond. Beyond his impressive research achievements, André played a pivotal role in gathering scientists around Europe to encourage participation in science policy and communication from a bottom-up approach, in particular through the establishment of a pan-European initiative that continues to shape Europe for a greater tomorrow. The Young Academy of Europe has given the next generation of scientists a voice and it is with great fondness that we can say André has made a difference to Europe and beyond, at a level that is difficult to capture in words. In honour of André's legacy we decided to rename the YAE Prize after him.

It is therefore with humbleness, and pride and gratitude at the same time, that I'm standing here to introduce the first winner of the **André Mischke YAE Prize for Science and Policy**: Prof. Janusz Bujnicki. *The André Mischke YAE prize recognizes the outstanding achievements and contributions by early to mid-career professionals to support and promote science and evidence-based policy in Europe, science communication and more generally support future generation scientists and scholars in Europe.*

Prof. Bujnicki is Professor of Biology, and head of a research group in the International Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology (IIMCB) in Warsaw and at the University of Poznań. He graduated



in Biology at the University of Warsaw in 1998, defended his PhD in 2001, and became professor in 2009. In 2016 he was elected to the Polish Academy of Sciences and is currently the youngest member of the Academy. His research combines bioinformatics, structural biology and synthetic biology. He is an author of > 300 publications, which have been cited >10000 times. For his successes in research, he received numerous honours, including Young Investigator Programme award, ERC Starting Grant, awards by the Polish Ministry of Science and the Polish Prime Minister, and was decorated with the Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta by the President of the Republic of Poland.

Prof. Bujnicki started his activities at the science and policy interface as a representative of the Polish Young Academy in committees of the Polish Parliament and later he organized the collaboration between the Polish Young Academy and the Citizens of Science movement, which has been the key stepping stone towards the development of the Pact for Science. Because of these activities, he was elected to the Scientific Policy Committee – the key advisory body of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in Poland. There, he was leading the development of policy recommendations in the area of science, and of a strategic document adopted by the Ministry of Science. This document became the foundation for the currently implemented reform of the science and higher education system in Poland, both as the member of the Scientific Policy Committee and the Council of the National Science Congress. Most recently he was appointed to the Science Evaluation Committee, with a critical task of evaluating scientific excellence of scientific institutions and doctoral schools.

Prof. Bujnicki's involvement in science and policy at the international level included the policy-for-science activities in the Life, Environmental and Geo Sciences (LEGS) panel of Science Europe, and most importantly, science-for-policy advice in the Scientific Advice Mechanism of the European Commission. As a member of the Group of seven Chief Scientific Advisors (2nd term) he has contributed to a number of scientific opinions that advise the European Commission (based on input from SAPEA). As an extension of his activities in the GCSA, he is actively involved in representing Poland in the area of the science-for-policy advice as a member of the European Science Advisors Forum (ESAF). His current efforts focus on establishing a science-for-policy advice system in Poland, with the involvement of the Polish Academy of Sciences (including the Polish Young Academy) and Polish universities. *And of course, he is also actively involved in trying to get people to pronounce his last name properly.*

For all of these reasons, it is with great pleasure that I invite Prof. Bujnicki to the stage to receive the award, which will be handed over by the YAE Chair.