



Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Nencki Institute of Experimental Biology is celebrating its 100th Anniversary. This is a special time for reflection on the past, enjoying the present, and looking toward a bright future. From its founding, the Nencki Institute has been extremely successful in recruiting the best scientists in biological research. Indeed, the Institute's people have always been its greatest asset. The combination of a high intellectual capacity, pioneering spirit, can-do attitude, and optimism for the future has enabled the Nencki Institute to defy tradition and constantly provide new opportunities.

The Institute's mission is deeply rooted in its long history of excellence in basic scientific research, which must be continually revised to meet the demands of a dynamically changing scientific research environment while being mindful of economic and societal implications. In February 2018, when I began my role as Director of the Nencki Institute, I had to ask myself important questions: How can we ensure that the Institute continues moving forward? How can we further advance our service to society as a whole? What priorities should guide the Institute in the next decade and beyond? The answers to these questions are crucial because we live in a world that is marked by accelerating change, reflected by rapid technologi-

cal transformation and greater societal challenges.

Thus, today's priorities of the Nencki Institute are to excel in basic scientific research by maintaining the highest-quality scientific output in terms of created and disseminated knowledge that can be applied to broader societal needs to improve quality of life. We fulfill this mission by investing in human capital and modern technologies, by stressing the importance of effective international collaborations, and by supporting translational research. Our scientific goals are focused on understanding animal and human physiology and pathology at all major levels of analysis: molecular, subcellular, cellular, whole organism (systems), and social-behavioral. Our main focus is related to novel therapies and diagnostic methods in neurodegenerative diseases, metabolic disorders, cancer, and other diseases that afflict modern civilization. The Nencki Institute also provides a wide range of services, including preclinical trials, DNA sequencing, genetic engineering, transgenic animal production, and biological imaging, from light and electron microscopy to magnetic resonance imaging as a part of the EuroBioImaging network. We also cooperate with industry to bring novel products to the pharmaceutical, biomedical, and biotechnological markets.

The Institute currently hosts 30 scientific laboratories within its Centre for Basic and Translational Research in the Field of Biology and Biomedical Sciences and the Neurobiology Centre that comprises eight core-facility labs. Employing over 350 full-time staff (over 120 research scientists) and training over 180 PhD students from 12 countries, the Nencki Institute is currently the largest non-university biological research center in Poland. In 2018, 155 research grants are being performed at the Institute, of which 120 are funded by NCN, eight are funded by the European Commission, six are funded by FNP, 10 are funded by NCBiR, nine are funded by MNiSW, and two are funded by the private sector. There are over 100 foreign institutions that have ongoing collaborations with the Institute in ne-

arly 120 research areas. The Institute's international collaborations continue to result in successful applications for external funding. The Institute is currently the home of eight Horizon2020 projects (ERC Starting Grant, MSCA COFUND, MSCA ITN, MSCA RISE, INFRADEV, and FETOPEN), with several other projects funded externally.

During the next decade, we would like to further increase the excellence and international standing of the Nencki Institute as a primary research center in life sciences. Our work is still in the incipient stage, and we are taking actions to support these priorities. We were already successful in acquiring the resources that are needed to achieve our goals. In July 2018, the Institute was awarded a grant from the Foundation for Polish Science under the International Research Agenda Programme (MAB) to create a research center to study the complex mechanisms of brain plasticity. BRAINCITY (Centre of Excellence for Neural Plasticity and Brain Disorders) will be launched by the end of 2018 in cooperation with the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL). The bilateral Partnership Agreement between the Nencki Institute and EMBL was recently signed. The Institute is also in the process of establishing two DIOSCURI Centres of Scientific Excellence, supported by the Max Planck Society. The first Dioscuri Center of Scientific Excellence focused on the regulation of gene expression, will be launched at the Nencki Institute at the beginning of 2019. The second Dioscuri Center of Scientific Excellence focused on metabolic disorders, will be launched in January 2020.

I am excited and optimistic as we embark on this journey together. The vision to make the Nencki Institute more focused on interdisciplinary and translational research can be achieved. I strongly believe that when we come together, set ambitious goals, and strive to achieve these goals, great things happen. I wish the Nencki Institute a very happy 100th Anniversary!

Prof. Agnieszka Dobrzyń

Director of the Nencki Institute
Warszawa, October 19th, 2018