



# THE OMBUDSMAN FOR ACADEMIC ETHICS AND PROCEDURES OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

## REGARDING THE COMPLAINT OF D. Š. OF 11 APRIL 2016

7 July 2016, No. SP-15  
Vilnius

The Ombudsman for Academic Ethics and Procedures of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter - the Ombudsman), in accordance with Part 1 of Paragraph 18 of the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania and with the Resolution No. XI-1583 of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania of 15 September 2011 “Regarding the establishment of the Office of the Ombudsman for Academic Ethics and Procedures of the Republic of Lithuania and the approval of the provisions of the Office of the Ombudsman for Academic Ethics and Procedures of the Republic of Lithuania“ approved by Subparagraph 1 of Paragraph 13, after examination of the complaint of D.Š. (hereinafter - the applicant<sup>1</sup>) received in the Office of the Ombudsman for Academic Ethics and Procedures of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter - the Office) on 11 April 2016 m. as well as the submitted material on the actions of Assoc. dr. D. A. <sup>2</sup> of Vytautas Magnus University (hereinafter - VMU) as possibly violating the academic ethics,

### **determined that:**

The applicant indicated in the complaint that the actions of Assoc. dr. D. A. violates the academic ethics: 1) it is demanded to remove the material from the website of the of the Lithuanian Language Institute (LLI) which is related to the project at the beginning of the expert assessment of the project, and 2) D. A., as an expert, possibly provided the unethical assessment [of the project]<sup>3</sup> in which it is required to cooperate with the Centre for Computational Linguistics of VMU. The second subject of appeal – the actions of the Research Council of Lithuania (hereinafter the RCL): 1) “the requirements to cooperate with the Centre of Computational Linguistics of Vytautas Magnus University are constantly raised in the conclusions of the experts, <...>”; 2) the expert from the competing institution is assigned - the conflict of interests; 3) the project is assessed by one expert.

---

<sup>1</sup> “Applicant” in the text of the Ombudsman’s decision is given generally as a noun of masculine gender without linking it to the sex of the applicant.

<sup>2</sup> the name and surname are known to the Ombudsman for Academic Ethics and Procedures of the Republic of Lithuania.

<sup>3</sup> The information provided in the square brackets is ours.

The following is requested in the complaint: 1) “to give the description of the project, <...> article <...>, to the specialist in Lithuanian philology of the neutral institution (for example, of Klaipeda University), so that they write their opinion on whether the project actually can not be funded and is unnecessary for Lithuania. Is it really enough of what is done by VMU, i.e. the database which sometimes provides even misleading information“; 2) to revoke the negative evaluation of the project LIP-16111, in order to receive funding for this project.“

On 14 April 2016 (letter No. S-187) the Office addressed to the RCL regarding the participation of Assoc. dr. D. A. of VMU in the expert activities in evaluating the funded scientific projects of the RCL. Given the fact that the response from the RCI was not received by the target date, on 11 May 2016 the Office (letter No. S-210) addressed to the RCL regarding the repeated provision of the information about the documents supporting the participation of the mentioned person in the expert activities.

On 12 May 2016 (letter No. G-372) the RCL informed that D. A. “<...> is not [the expert] <...> of the R|CI and did not [assess] the applications submitted for the tenders of the research projects on the activities administered by the Council.”

It should be noted that the Ombudsman for Academic Ethics and Procedures of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter - the Ombudsman), after examination of the circumstances of the complaint, was able to assess the potential violations of the academic ethics, but the Ombudsman is not authorized to assess the activities of the Lithuanian Science Council related to expert assessment of the projects. Also the Ombudsman is not competent to assess the content of the project.

On 15 January 2016, D.A. addressed to the applicant regarding the information on the project present in website (the e-mail sent from the official e-mail. In the e-mail it was requested to provide the clear information based on the facts on the changed situation, the arguments were stated. The e-mail states that “<...> I am [obliged] to inform you about the false and misleading information to the public <...> published in the public space <...>“ “In the mentioned website <...>, [considering] “The current situation“, you: 1) summarize not the current situation, but the situation existed before 30 April 2015, and provide false information about the public services and their quality that were provided before the mentioned date by Vytautas Magnus University (hereinafter - VMU) <...>; 2) did not take into account the basic changes to the Lithuanian language made by the language technologies after 30 April 2015 when the public services of the language technologies, created during the project “SemantikaLT” that was implemented by Vytautas Magnus University, became available for the users in the electronic gate of the Lithuanian language [www.rastija.lt](http://www.rastija.lt), electronic government gate [www.epaslaugos.lt](http://www.epaslaugos.lt) and in the website of the project [www.semantika.lt](http://www.semantika.lt); 3) did not take into account that, for the economical and efficient use of the budget Lithuania and the European structural funds, the requirement was raised to the implemented projects of the

program “The Lithuanian Language for Information Society” to allow freely and free use of the results created during the Project <...> for the third persons in order to continue the development of these results and (or) adapt them to the development of the new electronic solutions and electronic services. Seeking by this that the achieved results would not be duplicated (obtained again), and the results, that have already been developed, would be further developed and applied. The experts of the Central Project Management Agency determined and confirmed that Vytautas Magnus University fulfilled this requirement adequately.“

D. A. in his e-mail provided the misleading information of the applicant present in the website of the project, and it was requested to correct this information: 1) “<...> is provided the incorrect information about one of the public services provided by VMU and you indicate its wrong Internet address. VMU had never provided the service of “morphological analyzer”. The provided service is “morphological annotator” <...>”; 2) „<...> also you provide the wrong information on the public service provided by VMU and indicate its wrong Internet address. The service is called not “Alphabetical dictionary of Lithuanian language morphemics“ (as it is indicated by you), but “Lithuanian language morphemics database“. <...> Also there is provided the incorrect interface image of the service of the service user, as well as the display of the data provided by the service“; 3) „the detailed information about the grammatical features of the Lithuanian words is already accumulated in the morphology and syntax analyzers implemented in the project “SemantikaLT” and in the related language resources”; 4) due to the fact that you did not provide other examples (only the case of VMU), we realize that you provided the incorrect information about us, that the morphemics’ “...can be considered not only as providing just a little of useful information, but sometimes even as indicating the misleading data...”. Morphemics database was created in 2010-2011 in the project of the program of the National Lithuanian Philology Development of 2009-2015 of the Lithuanian Science Council. The experts confirmed the project results considering them as appropriate. Therefore, the case of VMU must be removed as the incorrect example, or there must be provided the scientific analysis showing what results of the service are misleading “; 5) “The grammatical information for the general public is provided by the services of “SemantikaLT” not in the form of the codes, but, in the form providing the understandable and useful information. <...> Therefore, your statement that so far everything is available only in the language that is understandable to the language technology professionals, is incorrect“; 6) The services of the text analysis and correction provided in the electronic gate of the Lithuanian language of “SemantikaLT” are provided for the users not only together with grammatical information about the word, but also there is provided the additional information on that word from the common Lithuanian language ontology. This ontology was created during the project “SemantikaLT” and now it is the variant of “WordNet” for the Lithuanian language <...>. Therefore, the information

related with the dictionaries has already been published. It should be noted that it is possible to fill by interfaces with other dictionaries.“

The e-mail of D. A., addressed to the applicant, was subsequently forwarded to the Director of the LLI. After harmonization of the modifiable information based on facts, it has been improved on the project website.

On 14 April 2016 (letter No. S-188) the Office addressed to Assoc. dr. D.A. of VMU requesting to come and explain the circumstances related to the complaint.

On 18 April 2016 in the Office there was held the meeting with D. A. regarding the circumstances of the complaint. D. A. confirmed that he has never been the expert of the RCL. He also explained that, after the assessment of the incorrectly provided information, he applied to the project manager for the material adjustment.

On 25 April 2016 (the letter No. G-354) D. A. provided the explanation and attached the documents that show that on 20 January 2016 the same e-mail was sent to the director of the LLI as to the applicant: “Shortly thereafter, dr. D. Š. informed me via e-mail that the director of the Lithuanian language had received my letter and ordered to harmonize the volume of changes with me. Incorrect information based on fact was changed in the Website <...>. Attention is drawn to the fact that the whole process of changing the incorrect information based on facts took place in collegial atmosphere, in accordance with the legality and ethical standards and with respect to the scientific opinion of dr. [D. Š.]“

On 14 April 2016 (letter No. S-186) the Office requested the applicant to provide the explanation on what are the cooperation relations with Assoc. dr. D. A., i.e. co-promoters, direct colleagues or others.

The applicant, on 15 April 2016 (letter No. G-329) responded: “[Upon the receipt] of [his] e-mail with the requirement to remove my uploaded material from the Internet, I heard about [him] for the first time. Until then, we were not familiar and did not know anything about [him]. At our meeting devoted to discussing the problems raised in the letter, I saw [him] for the first time.”

The applicant, on 13 April 2016 (letter No. G-398) supplemented the complaint material: “On 02-06-2016 I received the notice that there was published the comment of the Centre of Computational Linguistics of VMU on my article<sup>4</sup><...>“ The Centre of Computational Linguistics of VMU argues that the article of D. Š. includes the incorrect references: “The article includes the incorrect reference of the mentioned program, i.e. <http://donelaitis.vdu.lt/NLP/nlp.php>. The program available for all Internet users is presented here: <http://tekstynas.vdu.lt/page.xhtml?id=morphological-annotator>.”

---

<sup>4</sup> The mentioned article is attached to the complaint material, it is related to the information provided in the project website.

On 16 June 2016 (letter No. S-253) the Office addressed to the Centre of Computational Linguistics of VMU regarding the explanation on the difference between these two references.

On 23 June 2016 (letter No. G-407) the Centre of Computational Linguistics of VMU replied that “the reference <http://donelaitis.vdu.lt/NLP/nlp.php> is the Internet address of the wrapper for the morphological annotator written in the PHP programming language, which is located in the working directory of the server <http://donelaitis.vdu.lt/NLP/>. The wrapper is not publicly announced CCL service, it is designed for internal use for technical purposes (for CCL staff and technicians)“, and “the Internet link <http://tekstynas.vdu.lt/page.xhtml?id=morphological-annotator> is the Internet address of the freely and free service of morphological annotation for everyone available in the new version of the website of the Centre of Computational Linguistics.“

*In view of the foregoing, it can be concluded that the actions of D. A., by addressing to the project manager regarding the correction of the incorrect information in the website of the project, do not violate the academic ethics.*

After the evaluation of the information provided by the applicant, Assoc. dr. D. A. of VMU and the RCL and the supporting documents as well as the legal regulation, in accordance with Paragraph 9 of Part 12 of Article 18 of the Law on Higher Education and Research, the Ombudsman:

**decided:**

to recognize the complaint of the applicant as unjustified.

The Ombudsman’s decision may be appealed in the order set by the Law on Administrative Proceedings of the Republic of Lithuania.

---