The winners of the "SCIENCE IS FREEDOM" competitions have been announced

- Over the last 25 years we have been able to be wherever we wanted to be and do what we can do best. In science and clinical medicine we achieved really a lot. Our successes became an opportunity to show Poland in the best light possible - said Prof. Henryk Skarżyński, the winner of the competition organized by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education for the most interesting Polish invention, scientific achievement or event of the last 25 years. The results of the competition were announced by Minister Lena Kolarska-Bobińska. Internet voters chose from among 25 choices that which was the most important achievement of Polish science in the last quarter century.

While announcing the winners of the competition, Minister Kolarska-Bobińska stressed, among other things, the relevance of the popularization of scientific achievements. - We constantly need to learn about open science, i.e. such that will enter into dialogue with the society. I would like scientists to shape both public opinion and the modern society as such. Science has to be open and friendly.

The first place in the competition went to Professor Henryk Skarżyński, whose scientific achievements received almost one fourth of all votes. Professor Skarżyński is a world class otosurgeon and a specialist in otolaryngology, audiology and phoniatics. In 1992 he was the first person to conduct an operation to restore hearing to a deaf person. In 2002 he conducted the first operation in the world on an adult patient with partial hearing loss and in 2004 he operated on the first child in the world with similar hearing loss. The method he employs is considered to be a Polish specialty and is well known in the world as the "Skarżyński method".

– The introduction into Poland in 1992 of the complete deafness treatment programme (resulting both from inborn as well as acquired defects) with the help of cochlear implants completely changed the standards of otolaryngology. In the last 10 years we not only caught up with European and international centres but also found ourselves in the top position - declared Professor Skarżyński.

Professor Skarżyński is also the founder and director of the International Centre of Speech and Hearing, created in 2003, which was renamed in 2012 as the International Hearing and Speech Centre - the first and only such institution in the world. At present, the biggest number of hearing correction operations in the world are conducted in Kiejtany.

Second place in the competition was awarded to Professor Grzegorz Petrzyński from the Astronomical Observatory of the University of Warsaw. He led an international team of scientists that determined, with stunning accuracy, a measurement of the distance to the nearby galaxy - the Large Magellanic Cloud. The results of these studies were published in "Nature", a prestigious weekly magazine. Measurement of distance is the basis of all astronomical research, and it is also a key factor in learning about the evolution of the entire Universe.

Professor Bogdan Marciniec won third place. He is an outstanding chemist from the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. A world authority in organosilicon chemistry and organometallic catalysis, Professor Marciniec co-created a new discipline of knowledge - metallic-nonorganic catalysis. Thanks to the result of his research, new advanced materials and nanomaterials are created today. He has published 15 books (including nine in English) and 380 publications, he holds 170 patents and patent applications as well as 42 technological solutions. 14 of which have been implemented in UNISIL in Tarnowo-Mościce, the first university spin-off.

– What is most important for modern civilization is the effective relation between the following elements: scientific discoveries-innovation-business -said Professor Marciniec. – We created in Poznań the first Polish science and technological park. It hosts over 80 companies and we are also building laboratories for the next ones. It is a place where science meets business and young people commercialize the results of scientific work. The integration of science and business is a tremendous challenge - stated Professor Marciniec.

Internet voters also appreciated very highly the original technology of graphene manufacturing that was developed by Dr. Włodzimierz Strupiński from the Institute of Electronic Material Technology (ITME). Graphene is a completely new material, which can alter the very nature of technology. Dr Włodzimierz Strupiński emphasized - It is an extremely difficult task, but whoever - both the research center and the country in which this center is located - shall control this technology will obtain the highest degree of scientific advancement.