*Warsaw, 28 April 2020*

*Press Release*

**The Foundation for Polish Science to Distribute €125,000 to Fight the Coronavirus**

**The Foundation for Polish Science (FNP), as the only organization from Poland, received a grant of €125,000 from the European Investment Bank Institute to support research on the coronavirus. The FNP will provide these funds for research conducted by the team of Professor Marcin Drąg from the Faculty of Chemistry at the Wrocław University of Technology.**

The grant for the FNP is part of a €1 million grant that the EIB Institute has donated for the fight against COVID-19. It is the highest grant ever awarded by the European Investment Bank. Half of this amount will go to five leading European institutions that conduct and support scientific research aimed at developing a vaccine or a drug for COVID-19. This group includes the Foundation for Polish Science, alongside such institutions as the Pasteur Institute and the Karolinska Institute. The other half will go to NGOs fighting the effects of the pandemic (including the Red Cross and the UNESCO).

“We are honored with this distinction. It underlines the high quality of FNP’s activity. We are also pleased that we will be able to transfer these funds to one of the leading Polish research teams, which significantly supports the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Professor Maciej Żylicz, President of the FNP

“We are delighted to award FNP with a grant that will contribute to medical research against COVID-19. It is particularly significant to support an institute and a research team that have already been actively involved in this fight. This will enable them to carry on with their work with more means”, said Professor Teresa Czerwinska, Vice President of the European Investment Bank. “Poland has a number of quality research centers and universities, and the Wroclaw University of Technology is one of them”, she added.

The funds will go to the laboratory of Professor Marcin Drąg from the Wrocław University of Technology. Drąg and his team made a discovery that may significantly help in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic. The scientists managed to identify the enzyme (protease) necessary for the coronavirus to multiply. Blocking the action of this enzyme causes the virus to die. This is an extremely important discovery for the development of a quick diagnostic test and a cure for the coronavirus. Drąg’s team has already begun the search for the protease inhibitor among drugs already approved for other diseases. They achieved the results about the protease very quickly thanks to the technological platform – the Hybrid Combinatorial Substrate Library – for whose creation Drąg received the 2019 FNP Award, considered the most important scientific distinction in Poland.

**Professor Marcin Drąg** is a chemist. He has worked at the Faculty of Chemistry at the Wrocław University of Technology since the beginning of his scientific career. Drąg is also associated with the Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute in the USA, one of the most important medical and scientific institutions in the world. He is a laureate of many programs by the Foundation for Polish Science. In 2019, he received the Foundation for Polish Science Award.

**The Foundation for Polish Science (FNP)**, founded in 1991, is an independent, self-financing, non-governmental, non-profit institution pursuing the mission of supporting science. It is the largest non-governmental source of funding for science in Poland. FNP’s statutory aims include supporting outstanding researchers and research teams, and initiatives for transferring scientific achievements into commercial practice.

**The EIB Institute** was set up within the EIB Group (European Investment Bank and European Investment Fund) to promote and support social, cultural, and academic initiatives with European stakeholders and the public at large. It is a key pillar of the EIB Group’s community and citizenship engagement.