PI's COMPLAINT
Written by Grzegorz Plebanek and addressed to the ST1 panel of NCN

Overall, the tone of the panel's discussion of my proposal was quite sympathetic:

> (. . .) the proposal (. . .) is well-written and ambitious, (. . .) PI, as a leading figure, (. . .) the questions are deep and technical in nature, (. . .) the PI has a very strong publication record.

In the light of these flattering remarks, however, the accompanying objections appear far too superficial to justify the weight of the final decision:

> The panel was less convinced that the project would have significant impact on the wider mathematical community.

One can wonder whether all the NCN grants have such an impact. Working on the previous project we solved a number of problems posed or previously discussed, to drop some names, by Pełczyński, Lindestrauss, Rosenthal and Kalton. One might call it **some** impact.

> (. . .) the proposed topic of research remains slightly restricted to a fairly technical niche which (unfortunately) can no longer be said to be widely pursued or fashionable.

Indeed, we do vintage mathematics: certain unresolved problems in Banach spaces, rooted in the 20th century, are simply too challenging to be deemed fashionable. Assuming that "fashionable" equates to "profound and valuable" seems to be quite risky. We certainly wouldn't apply such a standard to music, would we? While working in that "fairly technical niche" I collaborated with Dales, Magidor, Todorcevic and many other fantastic mathematicians so it is quite exciting to be part of it.

> Another weakness of the proposal is that it requested a substantial amount of money for travel, but without adequate justification.

> (. . .) there are plans for extensive international collaboration with researchers in Mexico, Spain, Austria and Czechia.

The substantial amount in question was 16 000 PLN ($\approx$ 3600 EUR0) per person per year, a reasonable level, though business-class travel was not included. Does the expert cited above suggest hitchhiking?

> (. . .) a very strong publication record with publications in Advances Math., JFA, Israel J. Math. and PAMS. (. . .) No publications in the leading generalist journals, nor in the leading functional analysis journal GAFA. No ECM/ICM talks.

> (. . .) including a strong publication record featuring multiple papers in leading generalist mathematical journals (such as Adv Math) as well as strong specialist journals (such as JFA).

The panel might have reached some compromise on the standing of Advances in Math. GAFA is an excellent journal with an interesting title but. . . MathSciNet records 1 411 papers published in GAFA, of which only 63 (repeat 63) are classified under primary MSC 46 (functional analysis). Mercy! Would one evaluate projects in PDE by the number of articles in Journal of Symbolic Logic?

I admit that my number of ECM/ISM talks is miserable.