

ERIH Plus: National Experts' Role and Expertise



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POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

INSTITUTE OF ART

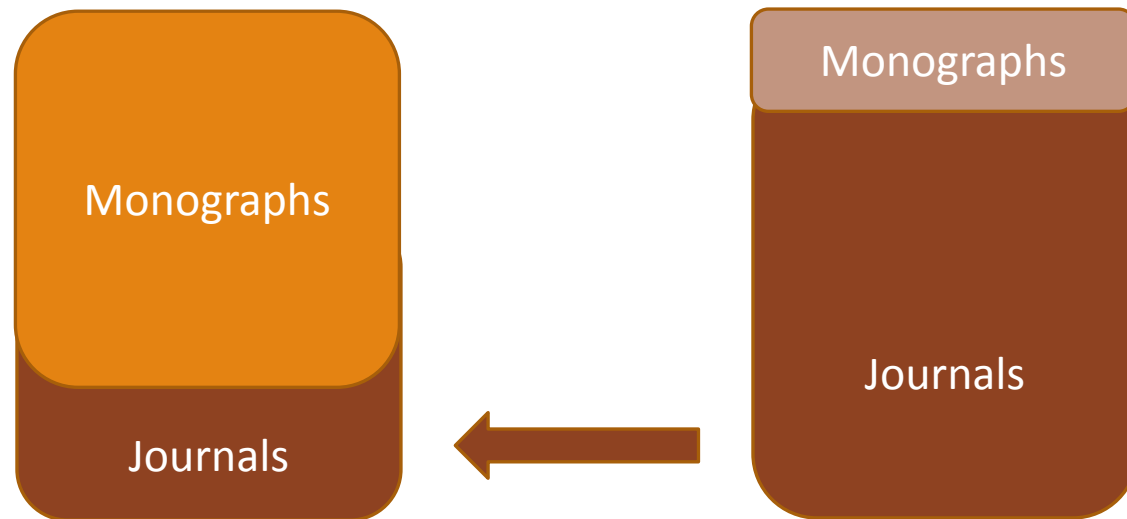
**The primary duty of (most of) the humanists
is to communicate knowledge
to their own society
in their own language**

Humanities are very special in their mission of taking responsibility for the intellectual culture of the society and for social discourse.

On one hand, we have to write in **native** languages, not only because we are obliged to communicate the knowledge to our own societies, but also because it is our duty to take care of the language as such.

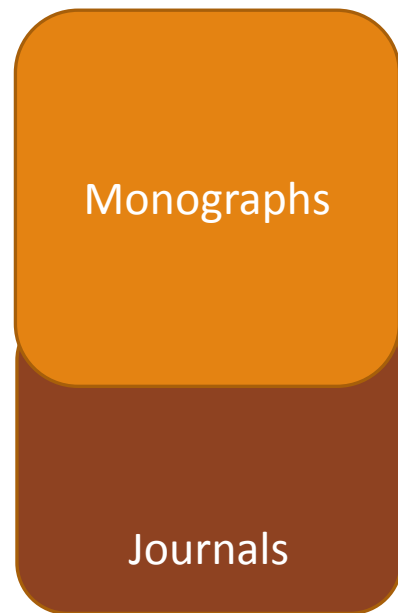
On the other hand, we communicate with our respective research communities in **different** languages.

Although traditionally the most important form of publication are monographs and book chapters, publishing patterns of hard sciences have been strongly influencing the humanities, leading to the increased communication through journals, and – what is much more dangerous – to the attempts to assess humanities with bibliometric tools, although volumes have been written about inadequacy of such approach, usually based on unofficial and unjustified primacy of English.

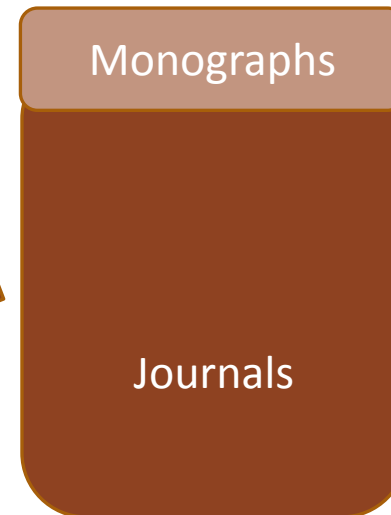


humanities

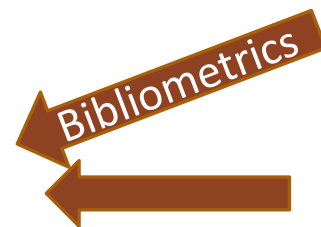
hard sciences



humanities



hard sciences



With the help of supposedly "objective" indicators, bibliometric databases seem to suggest a qualitative **hierarchy** of journals, while in fact what they reflect is larger readership of certain titles, resulting from the width of the journal's thematic spectrum, or the research community. Instead of forcing humanists to publish in journals of high IF, it is much more reasonable to let them follow their own logic of publishing where they expect to have the best resonance and to show them the spectrum of possibilities to choose from.



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▶ Scientific Review Groups

Humanities (HUM)

Scientific Review Group for the

European Reference Index for the Humanities

Humanists' solution was ERIH – a reference index created by humanists for humanists, taking into account relevant national languages, aimed at sharing information rather than creating publishing policy, and enabling researchers in the humanities better disseminate their work in national languages.

Created by humanists for humanists



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▶ Scientific Review Groups

Humanities (HUM)

Scientific Review Group for the

European Reference Index for the Humanities

In its original form, ie. with the classification into categories A, B, C (later changed into less hierarchical INT1, INT2 and NAT) ERIH evoked reactions from full acceptance to rejection - depending on personal or institutional attitudes toward journal evaluation in general.

Categories misunderstood and/or misused

A

B

C

INT1

INT2

NAT

ERIH in Poland

Expectations -> „objective” tool to differentiate journals

In Poland, the humanists' attitude toward ERIH has always been stretched between love and hate. Publication of the initial lists, just when we had been building a national system of research evaluation, raised expectations for an objective tool to measure the quality of research.

Despite clear declarations of the European Science Foundation that ERIH has **never** been intended for evaluation purposes, in Poland we have used ERIH lists and categories as indicators of the presumed prestige of journals, based on their regional or international reach.

ERIH in Poland

Expectations

Mass applications -> getting recognition and visibility

As a consequence of the significance officially assigned to this list by the Ministry of Science, the number of Polish journals applying for admission to ERIH has continuously been growing – the more so that journals accepted for ERIH do not need to undergo the evaluation process on the national list of journals.

Admission to ERIH was considered a nobilitation of the journal.

ERIH in Poland

Expectations

Mass applications

Criticism -> „dead” lists;

Unfortunately, in its final phase the „old” ERIH was rather reluctant to acquire new titles, as the main focus was to publish final lists and not to enlarge the database.

Problems with applications discouraged Polish editors and research policy makers, and the project was criticized as actually dead, with no prospects.

As the National Expert for Poland, I had frequently been asked whether and when ERIH would be revived.

When it finally happened in 2014, Polish editors immediately started to apply again. However, ERIH PLUS will be used as a reference list to judge the scope of international reach of Polish publications in the humanities, without rating journals. Critical voices concern the ease of having the journal included to ERIH Plus – semi-automatically, upon a set of criteria which are mostly formal, without taking quality into consideration.

Criteria for inclusion

To be included in ERIH PLUS, journals must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. Established procedures for external peer review
2. Academic editorial board (or an equivalent)
3. Valid ISSN code, confirmed by the [international ISSN register](#)
4. Publication of all original articles with abstracts in English and/or another language relevant for the field
5. Information on author affiliation and address
6. International or national authorship

The admission criteria are very reasonable, but their application may raise some doubts..

Established procedures for external peer Review, declared by editors, are in fact hard to verify.

Established procedures for external peer review

- **hard to verify**

Academic editorial board (or an equivalent), primarily consisting of scholars from universities, research institutes etc.;

- **professional level of academic staff is as different as the level of institutions they represent**

Professional level of academic staff is as different as the level of institutions they represent. In other words, the fact that the editorial board consists of scholars, does not guarantee the quality of the journal.

-International or national authorship

Scientific journals with local authorship will not be included in the ERIH PLUS list.

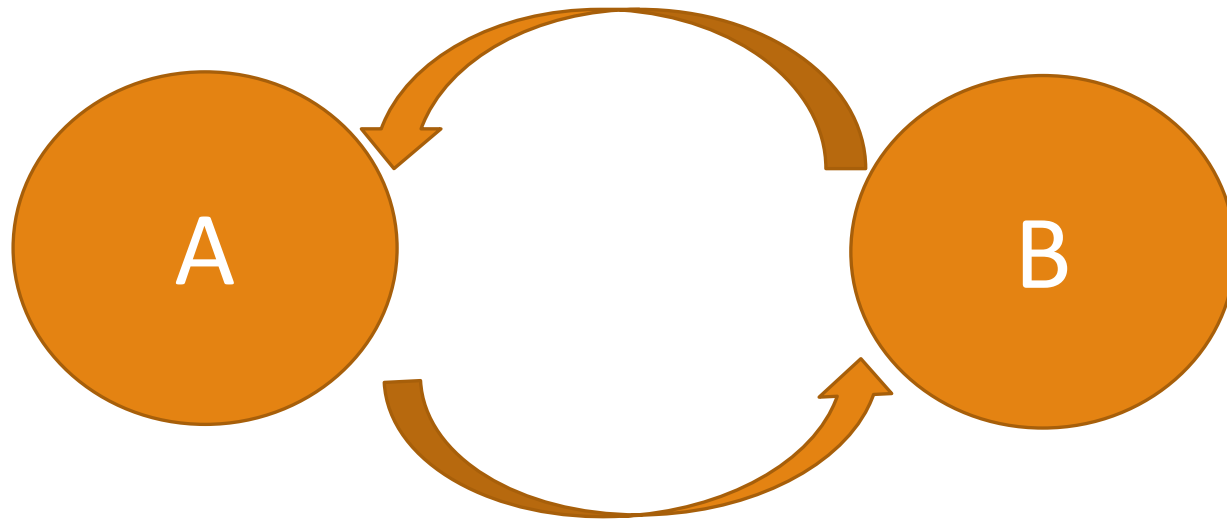
NSD Experts may have problems with stating the actual degree of 'localness' of journals.

According to the definition, „the journal is local when more than two thirds of the authors published in the journal are from the same institution“.

But what about the cases when two local institutions issue their own journals and publish each other's authors? Do they meet the criterion? Such journals can play some role in a small region, but are far from representing the national scale

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What I am arguing is that although the criteria are well chosen, some of them are difficult to verify and therefore do not guarantee high level, while national experts are often able to identify questionable cases. Since ERIH contributes to the international visibility of the humanities, I believe that we should be interested in having our countries represented by journals of unquestioned quality. Even few low-quality examples can destroy the image. In fact, many doubts raised in connection with Open Access Journals, apply also to traditionally published journals.

National Experts for ERIH Plus



In the letter of invitation sent to National Experts we read:

The task of the experts will be to answer questions of NSD staff regarding journals from their country in cases when information accessible to NSD staff is not sufficient. The experts are not expected to make decisions but to provide information to NSD.

National Experts for ERIH Plus



I would like to draw your attention to three points:

National experts answer questions of NSD Staff

- only regarding their own country
- without making decisions

While I absolutely agree that we are NOT to make decisions, I suppose that the recent procedure leaves too little initiative to National Experts whose role could be more active.

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National Experts for ERIH Plus

The most urgent task is to help clean the existing data.

Cleaning the existing data



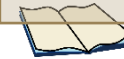
National Experts for ERIH Plus

Cleaning the existing data



The main question is: should the admission criteria be **required** for the journal to be considered for admission or **required and sufficient** for admission.

In other words, should ALL the titles that meet these criteria, be automatically accepted, ...



National Experts for ERIH Plus

Cleaning the existing data

Modifying the inclusion procedure (?)



...or maybe ERIH Plus should be a bit more selective.

If the aim of the ERIH list is to inform the international HSS community of research journals of **recognized scholarly significance**, then, I suppose, the qualitative element should be highly desired.





National journals

National journals

National journals

National journals

National journals database

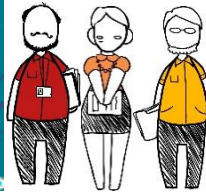
In many countries official lists or databases of scientific journals have been compiled according to national criteria (and with the participation of national experts).

This data could be used in three optional ways:

-the first one is to submit full national lists to ERIH Plus. In this case NSD would have to take a great effort to check all the journals against meeting admission criteria.

Options:

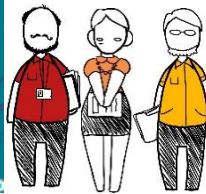
1. including FULL national lists to ERIH Plus



Second option is to include FILTERED national lists, i.e., selecting titles which are guaranteed to meet the formal criteria, BUT ALSO represent unquestioned quality. This would, of course, never be a decision of National Expert, but that of the respective national body responsible for journal list, if such a body exists.

Options:

- 1. including FULL national lists to ERIH Plus
- 2. including FILTERED national lists



National journals

National journals

National journals

National journals

National journals database

Option no. 3 is to use national data as a support for NSD in evaluation procedures. National Experts could support registration of new titles using information they have official access to. I would recommend options 2 and 3, depending on the availability of respective national informational resources and organizational structure.

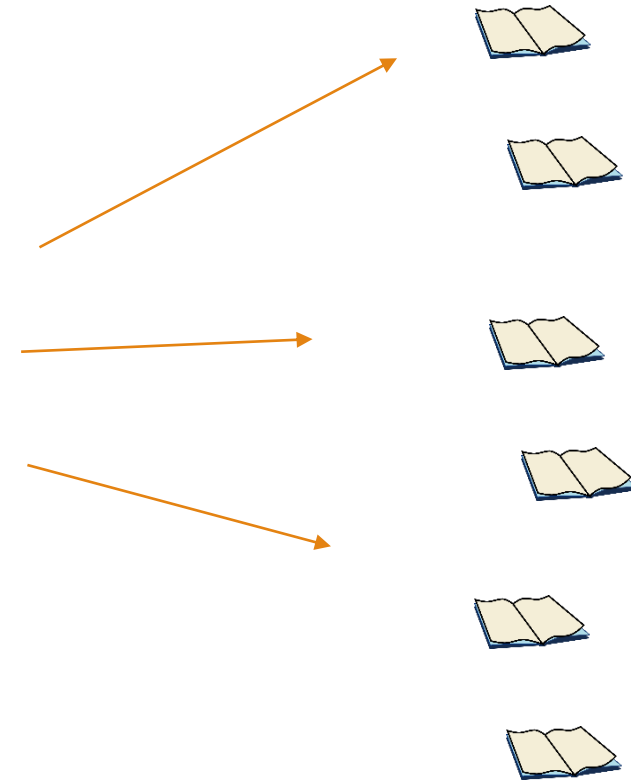
Options:

1. including FULL national lists to ERIH Plus
2. including FILTERED national lists
3. using national data as a support for NSD

National Experts for ERIH Plus

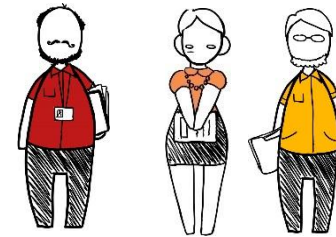
From my perspective I may also tell that National Experts have an important role at home, cooperating with editors who ask questions and need advice.

Cooperating with national journals



National Experts for ERIH Plus

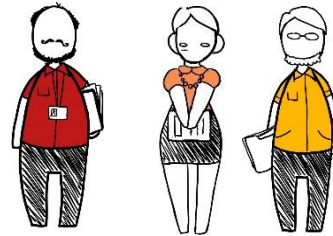
Less officially- we can also contribute to the index with our competences in particular research fields, across countries.



Select discipline

- Select discipline
- Anthropology
- Archaeology
- Art and Art History
- Classical Studies
- Gender Studies
- History
- History & Philosophy of Science
- Cultural Studies
- Library and Information Science
- Media Studies and Communication
- Film and Theatre Studies
- Business and Management
- Demography
- Economics
- Law

ERIH Plus for National Experts



To act effectively, National experts might need more information, for example about application procedures: who submitted the title for evaluation – the editor, an author or a reader? All these categories of applicants have different goals, motivation and information about journal routines.

A separate panel for National Experts on the ERIH Plus website could be an option.



To be fully operational, ERIH Plus cannot function in its present form. Trying to demonstrate the specificity of ERIH versus SCOPUS for one of our Polish debates (using history as an example)...

..., I got Scopus (SCImago) data with just one click.
Horatio (Satire 1.1,106)

Home

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Journal Rankings

Ranking Parameters

Subject Area:

Subject Category:

Region/Country: Year:

Order By:

Display journals with at least:

Subject Area: **Arts and Humanities.**

Subject Category: **History.**

Year: **2013.**



[Download data \(Excel .xlsx\)](#)

1 - 50 of 851 << First | < Previous | Next > | Last >>

Related product



Title	Type	SJR	H index	Total Docs. (2013)	Total Docs. (3years)	Total Refs.	Total Cites (3years)	Citable Docs. (3years)	Cites / Doc. (2years)	Ref. / Doc.	Country
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Registered user

ERIH PLUS

Search

Title or ISSN:

Hide disciplines

Discipline:

Search hits

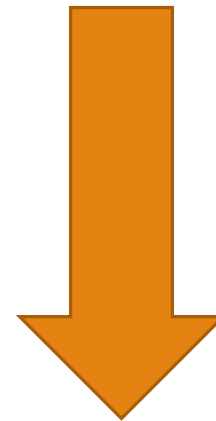
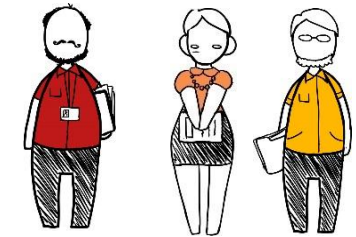
The search returned 1042 hits.

- 1. Modern Asian Studies**
Print ISSN: 0026-749X *Electronic ISSN:* 1469-8099
Country of publication: United Kingdom *Language:* English
Discipline: History
- 2. International Journal of the History of Sport**
Print ISSN: 0952-3367 *Electronic ISSN:* 1743-9035
Country of publication: United Kingdom
Discipline: History
- 3. East European Politics and Societies**
Print ISSN: 0888-3254 *Electronic ISSN:* 1533-8371
Country of publication: United States
Discipline: History
- 4. Journal of Medieval History**
Print ISSN: 0304-4181 *Electronic ISSN:* 1873-1279
Country of publication: Netherlands
Discipline: History
- 5. Polhem : Tidskrift för teknikhistoria**
Print ISSN: 1653-4964
Country of publication: Sweden *Language:* Swedish
Discipline: History
- 6. Journal of Sports History**
Print ISSN: 0094-1700 *Electronic ISSN:* 2155-8450
Country of publication: United States
Discipline: History
- 7. Europe-Asia Studies**
Print ISSN: 0966-8136 *Electronic ISSN:* 1465-3427
Country of publication: United Kingdom
Discipline: History
- 8. Historisk Tidsskrift**
Print ISSN: 0018-263X *Electronic ISSN:* 1504-2944
Country of publication: Norway
Discipline: History
- 9. Collegium Medievale**
Print ISSN: 0801-9282
Country of publication: Norway
Discipline: History
- 10. Arbetarhistoria : Meddelande från Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv och Bibliotek**
Print ISSN: 0281-7445
Country of publication: Sweden
Discipline: History

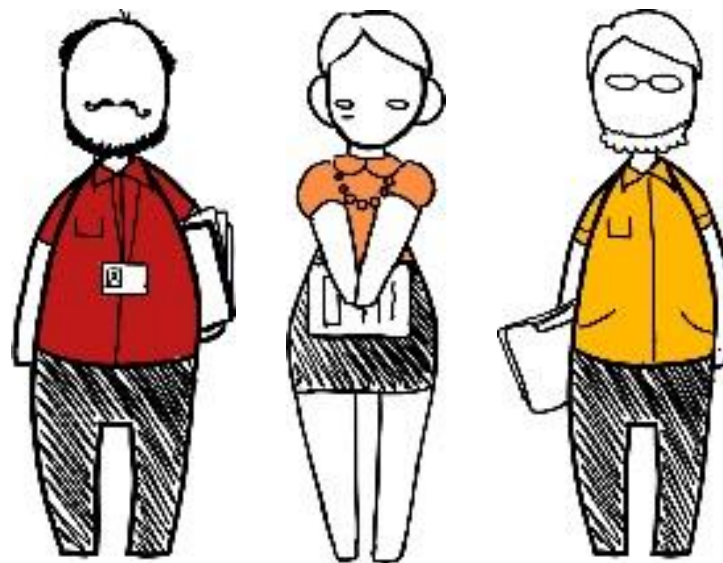
To get the equivalent information from ERIH Plus, I had to scroll and copy information page by page.

ERIH Plus for National Experts

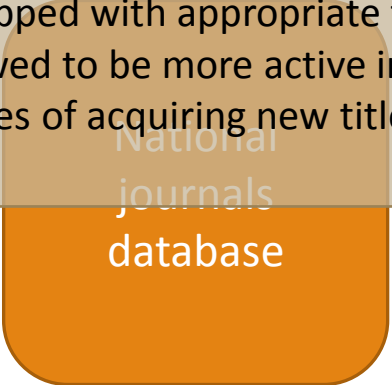
What I find crucial is the possibility to download the lists, optimally as an Excel file. This is necessary to analyze the data, or to work with the data.

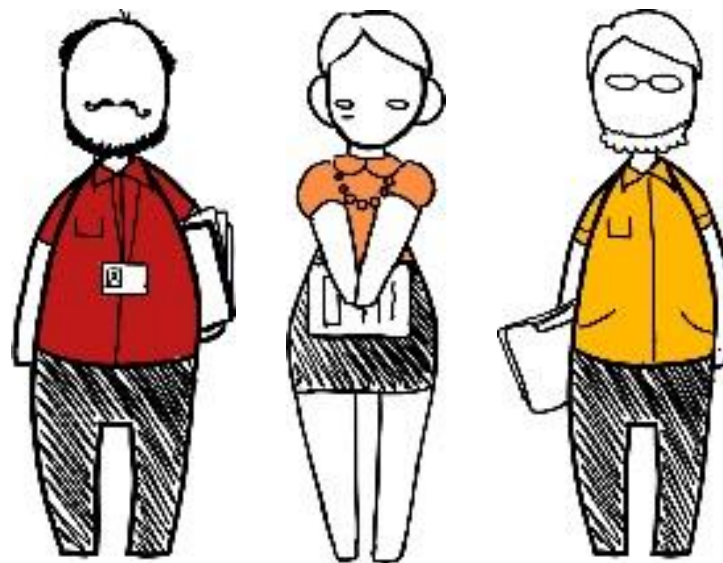


download



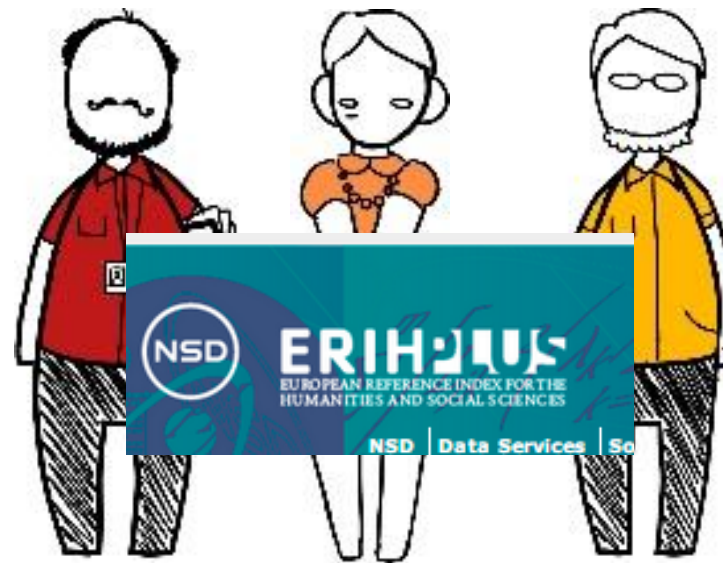
I am aware that not every National Expert will be able to contribute substantially to ERIH Plus. However, I believe that those who want to take responsibility for co-creating the image of national humanities in the international context, should be equipped with appropriate tools and allowed to be more active in the process of acquiring new titles.





For national research communities our involvement is a proof that they also are part of this initiative. All the improvements we make, will improve the lists, thus increasing the credibility of ERIH PLUS, for the benefit of the whole European Humanities. For our colleagues from the former ESF, especially for the ERIH Steering Committee, it will be a visible sign that the work undertaken several years ago, is useful, important and has clear prospects.

National
journals
database



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„Experts” drawn by Marta Dahlig-Orłowska ☺