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Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing as current President of EURALEX, the European Association for Lexicography, at the behest of our colleagues in Slovenia.

It is with great pleasure that we learned from our colleagues that the Slovenian Research Agency recently decided to include scholarly dictionaries in its scientific reward system. We strongly believe that scientifically based lexicographical work should be formally recognised as a fully valid scientific activity on a par with scholarly monographs, peer-reviewed scientific papers and other traditional academic genres. Within academia, lexicography is frequently overlooked, relegated to being a mere craft rather than an academic discipline. We believe that such a notion is misguided and dangerous. Lexicographers not only study language for what it is, the central tool for communication, but also provide the means by which a language, and its underlying cultural and historical values, may be taught and given full value within a society.

While we applaud the decision to recognise scholarly dictionaries as scientific works, it has been drawn to our attention that the criteria for lexicographic works included in this category may raise some concern. From the wording we conclude that the criteria support a rather conservative approach to lexicography that would seem to deny any scientific recognition to the majority of actual work in lexicography. While there exists a wide variety of worthwhile lexicographic work, doubtless also for Slovene, criteria like the number of people involved in a project, or the approach adopted, such as manual compilation, seem to be targeted only to one specific type of lexicographic initiative. These criteria do not follow modern lexicographic principles as the use of computer-assisted technologies is actually becoming the *sine qua non* for scientific progress in lexicography.

We invite you to consider a more general working definition of scholarly dictionaries that was adopted by the EURALEX executive board, which is based on the work in the European Network of e-Lexicography project (cf. Kinable 2015): a scholarly dictionary is a knowledge-oriented dictionary usually compiled by academics to provide detailed word descriptions or - in case of bilingual or multilingual dictionaries - contrastive analysis for the pursuit of lexical insight and research support according to the linguistic and lexicographic standards of their time, and traditionally designed with such main features as the pursuit of completeness with regard to the entries relevant to subject matters, the use of an extensive corpus of observed discourse, the inclusion of documenting example sentences with bibliographic references, the availability of a scholarly apparatus like descriptions of method and project plan, a bibliography of sources, and, in digital specimens, the implementation of advanced search and application tools.

Lexicography is an outstanding example of a discipline that brings together disciplines as diverse as language history, philology and computational and corpus linguistics. This makes dictionaries vital instruments in the development of other branches of science. In our view, lexicography therefore deserves its own place as an independent discipline within academia.

Whilst it is not the task of EURALEX to be involved in any political issue, it is our role to actively promote lexicography as both a craft and an independent discipline and to reflect upon novel ways of evaluating its scientific output. It is for this reason that the board of EURALEX accepts to add its voice to the call to the Research Agency in Slovenia to reconsider its criteria for scholarly dictionaries. The board cordially invites the Research Agency to give full recognition to Slovenian lexicography and its lexicographers.

Bolzano/Bozen, 29 November 2016

Yours faithfully  
Andrea Abel  
President of EURALEX



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