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## Special interest session

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### SIS

#### American Society for Microbiology (ASM) Science Policy Forum

Designed, organized and chaired by the ASM Young Ambassador to Poland

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There is currently a heated debate in the United States over various aspects of science policy, including the many roles of scientists and policy makers in the society, putting microbiology on the political agenda, and balancing public health benefits and biosafety/biosecurity. Although these science policy matters are not uniquely an American problem, the dialogue in this field has rarely been pursued in Central Europe. The American Society for Microbiology (ASM) Science Policy Forum was inspired by the science policy activities in Washington, DC, in which the Forum's host, Joanna Karczewska-Golec, had participated. As the ASM Young Ambassador to Poland, Joanna was a part of the training program at the U.S. Department of State, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. National Academy of Sciences and the National Institutes of Health.

**The major aim of the ASM's Science Policy Forum is to actively engage the participants in a dialogue on science policy and to illustrate current cutting-edge, but also controversial, issues in science policy/science diplomacy such as young scientists' contributions to science policy decision making, the session's keynote topic of Dual Use Research of Concern (DURC), and global initiatives towards increasing the involvement of women in science and diplomacy.**

### SIS – Session's keynote topic

#### Homeland Security and publishing sensitive data: The H5N1 publication case

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In late 2011 the U.S. *American National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity (NSABB)*, a governmental unit under the Department of Health & Human Services, had recommended to the journals *Science* and *Nature* to shorten two publications on a mutant-H5N1 virus before publishing them. The NSABB was led by the idea that the complete publications on the H5N1 research project could be misused as a blueprint for the development of biological *weapons of mass destruction (WMD)* by terrorists. Meanwhile the publication process was put on hold and within the scientific community a long overdue discussion on dual-use-research (DUR) has started.

The discussion has reached from organizational settings in science dealing with weapon grade biological agents through issues concerning the freedom of science to publish all its results *versus* justified objections against this principle in favor of Homeland Security aspects.

Finally, an uncensored version of the paper was published but the difficult problems how to deal with publications on DUR by science have maintained.

The lecture gives an outline on the "H5N1 publication case", clarifies the problematic of DUR and discusses possible future settings and structures in science in terms of biosecurity.

**Key words:** H5N1, dual-use-research, weapons of mass destruction, biosecurity