

INFORMATION ON THE PROPOSED DISSOLUTION OF THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SLOVENIA

The Academy of Sciences for Sustainable Development of Slovenia is a national scientific institution established by law by the Republic of Slovenia in June 2025, in recognition of the public interest in fostering interdisciplinary scientific cooperation to address sustainable development and long-term development challenges.

Just over a year after its establishment, the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth prepared a draft law providing for the dissolution of the Academy. The proposal was prepared without any prior independent expert evaluation of the Academy's work, without substantive dialogue with the Academy, and without clearly stated reasons explaining why the institution should cease to exist. Nor were alternatives to dissolution presented or a comprehensive assessment made of the consequences of such a decision.

After being informed of the intended dissolution, the Presidency of the Academy requested a meeting with the Ministry in order to present the Academy's activities and to understand the reasons for such a far-reaching decision. The Ministry did not respond to this request.

A fundamental question therefore remains unanswered: what has changed so substantially in just over a year since the Academy was established that the public interest which led the Republic of Slovenia to establish it by law is now considered no longer to exist?

The documentation accompanying the proposal does not identify any tasks that the Academy failed to perform adequately, objectives that it failed to achieve, or shortcomings in its work that would justify its dissolution. Nor does it indicate the expert or scientific criteria, if any, against which its work was assessed.

Although the Academy was formally established as a national scientific institution in 2025, its work builds on an earlier civil-society initiative through which a group of scientists had already been cooperating on sustainable development issues for more than two years prior to its formal establishment. The creation of the Academy therefore provided an institutional framework for an existing interdisciplinary scientific initiative, enabling it to further develop its activities, expand scientific networks, and strengthen national and international cooperation.

Before a decision of such magnitude is taken, one would reasonably expect an independent assessment of the Academy's work to date, its achievements, the scientific networks it has established, and its development potential. Such an evaluation would provide the necessary factual and expert basis for an informed decision about its future.

The Academy's mission reflects the increasingly interconnected nature of the major challenges facing contemporary societies. Climate change, the energy and green transitions, artificial intelligence and other transformative technologies, demographic change, migration, food and energy security, the protection of natural resources and biodiversity, and societal resilience cannot be effectively addressed within the boundaries of a single scientific discipline. They require cooperation across the natural sciences, engineering and technology, biomedical sciences, social sciences and humanities, as well as institutions capable of fostering long-term scientific reflection across disciplinary boundaries.

The Academy was established to provide a platform for precisely this kind of interdisciplinary scientific cooperation. For a small and open country such as Slovenia, knowledge, research, innovation, and the capacity to connect different fields of science are essential to long-term economic and social development, competitiveness, and quality of life. Scientific institutions also provide continuity of expertise and scientific reflection beyond individual political terms and short-term priorities.

If the State has now reached a fundamentally different conclusion regarding the need for such interdisciplinary scientific cooperation in the field of sustainable development, the reasons for this change in direction should be clearly explained and substantiated.

The Academy has also established international scientific cooperation and is a member of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), an international network operating under the auspices of the United Nations.

The proposed dissolution therefore has an important international dimension. Such a decision, taken shortly after the Academy's establishment and without prior independent evaluation, substantive dialogue or clearly articulated reasons, may raise questions among international scientific partners about the stability and predictability of Slovenia's institutional environment for science. Long-term scientific cooperation and academic partnerships depend on trust, continuity and institutional reliability. Decisions of this nature may therefore also affect perceptions of Slovenia as a reliable long-term partner in science and research.

The Presidency and members of the Academy oppose the proposed dissolution.

We believe that decisions concerning the future of a national scientific institution should be based on objective and scientific criteria, verifiable facts and an assessment of its work, and should be reached through substantive dialogue with the scientific community.

We therefore call upon the competent authorities of the Republic of Slovenia to withdraw the proposal for the dissolution of the Academy and, before taking any further decision, to ensure an independent expert evaluation of the Academy's work and development potential and to engage in substantive dialogue with the Academy.

The issue extends beyond the future of a single institution. It raises broader questions about the place of science in society, institutional stability, interdisciplinary cooperation, and Slovenia's commitment to a long-term, knowledge-based approach to sustainable development.

Professor Emeritus Rado Bohinc; Professor Boris Cizelj; Professor Emerita Lucija Čok; Professor Emeritus Martin Čopič; Professor Jože P. Damijan; Professor Mladen Dolar; Academician Igor Emri; Professor Andreja Gomboc; Professor Milena Horvat; Professor Jana Javornik, PhD; Professor Emerita Maca Jogan; Professor Lučka Kajfež Bogataj; Dr Tomaž Kalin; Professor Aleksandra Kanjuo Mrčela; Professor Emeritus Andrej Kirn; Dr Zdenko Kodelja; Professor Bogomir Kovač; Professor Tamara Lah Turnšek, Scientist Emerita; Professor Emeritus Franc Lobnik; Professor Vlado Mihelj; Professor Vesna Mikolič; Academician Zdravko Mlinar, Professor Emeritus; Professor Emeritus Stane Pejovnik; Professor Dragan Petrovec; Academician Jože Pirjevec; Professor Rado Pišot; Professor Emeritus Dušan Plut; Professor Emeritus Danijel Rebolj; Professor Božo Repe; Professor Emeritus Ciril Ribičič; Professor Emeritus Rudi Rizman; Professor Nada Rožmanec Matičič; Professor Svetlana Slapšak; Professor Emeritus Lojze Sočan; Academician Slavko Splichal; Professor Peter Stegnar; Professor Veronika Stoka; Professor Emeritus Ivan Svetlik; Professor Darko Štrajn; Professor Emeritus Niko Toš; Professor Boris Turk; Professor Dušan Turk; Professor Goran Turk; Academician Vito Turk; Professor Emeritus Danilo Türk; Professor Emeritus Lojze Ude; Associate Professor Vesna V. Godina; Professor Mitja Žagar.