

Programme Declaration of the Presidium of the Slovak Academy of Sciences for the Period 2025–2029

The Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS), as the leading scientific institution of the Slovak Republic, acknowledges its shared responsibility in addressing the increasingly complex global challenges of our time.

The world, including Slovakia, is facing a period of constant change and challenges that profoundly affect society. Armed conflicts and their economic and social consequences, the rapid development of artificial intelligence, a deeper understanding of the relationship between human society and nature, as well as the spread of unverified information and disinformation that undermine public trust in scientific knowledge — these are all challenges that, until recently, lay outside the main focus of society, yet have now become increasingly urgent.

The SAS strives to contribute to a better understanding of current issues, to provide expert and evidence-based solutions, and to help society navigate the complex processes of today's world — primarily through high-quality scientific research, the education of researchers, the shaping of state policy, and the active dissemination of scientific knowledge to the general public.

During the 2025–2029 term, the Presidium of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (hereinafter referred to as “the SAS Presidium”) will focus on key areas whose development will contribute to improving research conditions, enhancing the quality of scientific outputs, and strengthening the Academy's position in both the national and international context.

1. Excellence in Science

The main goal of the SAS is to ensure and continuously improve the conditions for world-class science. The SAS Presidium will support both basic and applied research across a wide range of scientific disciplines — research that pushes the boundaries of knowledge while remaining connected to societal relevance. An essential prerequisite for maintaining the high quality of the Academy's scientific outputs and strengthening its position in the international context is active participation in interdisciplinary projects, international collaborations, and consortia. The SAS Presidium will therefore prioritise the participation of SAS teams in European research projects. Planned measures to further enhance the quality of SAS's scientific outputs include:

- updating the principles and criteria for the evaluation of science and scientific outputs through peer review and the responsible use of quantitative indicators, and defining criteria for top-level scientific achievements;
- revitalising the SAS Strategy;
- establishing an SAS Project Support Department focused on assisting applicants for ERC, MSCA, and other prestigious international projects;
- identifying the Academy's key cross-cutting research themes through discussion across SAS divisions;
- promoting the principles of open science as an integral part of research practice and publication activities, in accordance with SAS directives and in cooperation with the SAS Central Library;
- continuing the integration of SAS organisations into larger and more efficient organic

- centres;
- creating conditions for the establishment of interdisciplinary research teams operating across SAS organisations and divisions, aimed at comprehensively addressing major scientific challenges;
- supporting the participation of SAS teams in international consortia within European Partnerships, ESFRI, and other European research infrastructures;
- developing the SAS International Cooperation Strategy and optimising the support of SAS-funded research and mobility programmes.

2. Human Resources and Efficient Governance System

One of the major systemic challenges facing the SAS lies in the area of human resources. A shortage of potential leaders, low interest and motivation among young talents to work at the SAS and in science in general, as well as the outflow of qualified staff abroad, threaten the continuity of scientific activity and the Academy's innovative potential. To address these challenges, the Presidium of the SAS proposes to implement the following measures:

- Human resources development – establishment of a dedicated body to support human resources management at the SAS Office;
- Training and education of current and potential leaders through a structured system of professional development programmes (in cooperation with the Young Scientists of SAS, institute directors, and leaders of excellent research teams);
- Support for lifelong learning among scientific staff;
- Improvement of the working environment – reconstruction of SAS buildings and premises, development of new facilities, and modernisation of research infrastructure;
- Streamlining the activities of the SAS Office and related service functions for SAS institutes through organisational restructuring;
- Rationalisation of the structure of the SAS Centre of Common Activities, public research institution (v. v. i.);
- Enhancement of data processing efficiency and security at the SAS Office and SAS institutes (data management);
- Promotion of non-discrimination, equal opportunities, and diversity in cooperation with the SAS Trade Union by implementing the principles of HRS4R, the SAS Gender Equality Plan, and other European or internal policies;
- Cooperation with secondary schools and universities aimed at strengthening and deepening young people's interest in science, research, and careers at the SAS.

3. Support for Doctoral Students, Postdoctoral Researchers, and Early-Career Scientists

Doctoral studies and the education of new generations of researchers are essential prerequisites for maintaining the continuity of scientific research and the functioning of the scientific organisations of the SAS. Given the current situation marked by a significant outflow of young researchers abroad, the SAS Presidium recognises the importance of creating opportunities and a more attractive environment for this target group.

- the continuation and development of motivational and support instruments for doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers;
- the strengthening of the internationalisation of doctoral studies and SAS research teams, as well as the promotion of cooperation with domestic and foreign universities in the field of education;
- the further development of the SAS Doctoral School;
- the simplification of the system of study accreditation and supervision within the SAS.

4. Science as a Pillar of the State

Given the scope of its scientific and research activities and the breadth of its professional expertise, the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS) plays a key role in the Slovak Republic as an essential partner in shaping scientific and public policies, as well as in contributing to the state's strategic decision-making. In order to make more effective use of the SAS's scientific potential and to enhance its societal impact in policy formulation, the Presidium of the SAS will seek to implement the following measures:

- establishing effective communication and systematic cooperation with public authorities, in particular with the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic and the ministries of the Slovak Republic, as well as with the Committee of the National Council for Education, Science, Youth and Sports;
- creating a formal communication platform with the Office of the President of the Slovak Republic;
- providing expert analyses and assessments for state and governmental institutions in the preparation of legislative proposals, strategies, and public policies;
- continuing active cooperation with national agencies in the development of science and research policies in the Slovak Republic;
- providing services to the state, particularly in the areas of strategic infrastructure protection, national defence and crisis management, preservation of collections of national importance, safeguarding of cultural heritage and contemporary values, and provision of SAS research infrastructure;
- preparing the document "*Slovakia 2040 – Vision and Strategy for the Development of Slovakia until 2040*" under the auspices of the SAS;
- securing sustainable funding for the operation and development of research infrastructure with a long-term vision, such as national supercomputing capacities;
- maintaining active engagement in European academic associations providing scientific advice to the European Commission and the European Parliament;
- promoting the development of an innovative society based on the triple-helix model — cooperation between academia, industry, and government.

5. Independent, Safe, and Ethical Research

Respect for the principles of safety is an essential condition for the independent pursuit of scientific inquiry, research, and publication. The Presidium of the SAS will strive to integrate the principles of research security with the preservation of freedom of scientific research. The SAS Presidium will continue to systematically promote and protect academic freedom as an

integral part of a democratic society and to guarantee researchers the right to independence in their scientific work. Adherence to ethical principles is also a key element in ensuring the credibility, integrity, and social responsibility of research. To uphold the principles of scientific integrity and achieve these objectives, the SAS Presidium plans to implement the following actions and measures:

- aligning the SAS Code of Ethics with international and national ethical standards (specifically with the European Code of Research Integrity and the Code of Scientific Integrity and Ethics in Slovakia);
- supporting measures for data protection, cybersecurity, resilience of critical infrastructure, and risk management in international cooperation, with a focus on research security within the European Research Area;
- updating and implementing the Action Plan for the Safe Research Strategy at the SAS, including internal regulations and training for member organisations;
- actively engaging the SAS in international activities and discussions on the protection of academic freedom and human rights;
- creating an information platform to provide guidance on the principles of academic freedom and human rights.

6. Raising the profile of the SAS and improving the public presentation of science

Increasing the profile of the SAS, together with the popularisation and promotion of science, represents another key priority of the SAS Presidium. These activities make a significant contribution to achieving strategic objectives that are essential not only for the development of the Academy and Slovak society, but also for the promotion and advancement of science as such. Transparent and clear communication of scientific results also helps to reduce the spread of misinformation, strengthens public trust in science, and promotes critical thinking and informed decision-making in society. During its term of office, the SAS Presidium will focus on the following priorities:

- systematically strengthening the Academy's media presence through modern communication channels, including social media, podcasts, multimedia content, and press releases;
- maintaining and enhancing the credibility of the SAS, including through open and transparent communication with the public;
- promoting the institutional identity and brand of the SAS so that it becomes a recognised symbol of quality and credibility in science and in society;
- improving internal communication with employees of individual SAS organisations to strengthen their sense of belonging to the Academy;
- establishing a systemic framework for cooperation with science popularisation coordinators within SAS organisations;
- actively countering misinformation and unverified claims, primarily through expert statements and public discussions;
- providing strong support for the Open Academy programme as an active tool for disseminating expert knowledge, addressing current social issues, and offering evidence-based explanations.

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Mgr. Martin Venhart, DrSc., m.p.
President of the SAS