

All European Academies



Secretariat ALLEA | Jägerstr. 22/23 | 10117 Berlin | Germany

Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic
The Honourable JUDr. Robert Fico
Úrad vlády Slovenskej republiky
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President

Prof. Dr. Günter Stock

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Berlin, 03 November 2014

Dear Prime Minister,

We learned in recent exchanges with the Slovak Academy of Sciences that the government is considering severely cutting the budget allocated to the activities of the Academy. We understand that the Academy's budget is planned to be diminished by 17% for the year 2015, which would lead to a corresponding reduction of the staff at the Academy and would subsequently induce negative long-term social and economic effects.

The Slovak Academy of Sciences is a founding member of the European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities, ALLEA, which today comprises 58 Member Academies from 42 countries in the Council of Europe region. In the last 20 years the academy has been – and is today – a renowned and pro-active partner in the European scientific collaboration.

Bringing together the most eminent scientists and scholars of the Slovak Republic and operating internationally competitive research institutes, as in many other European countries, the Academy is an integral and indispensable driving force for a successful innovation and growth policy.

While we perfectly understand that budgetary shortages do occur, we fear that the proposed reductions would put in danger the scientific base in your country and could negatively affect its role within the European research and science community. We thus feel obliged to point to the sustained negative effects that a decreasing support for the Slovak Academy of Sciences would imply.

A budgetary reduction would not only lead to an immediate dramatic decrease in research performance. In parallel and as a consequence, the Academy's ability to raise funding from external sources, especially from funds of the European Union, would be severely weakened, thereby ultimately reducing the Academy's competitiveness in the European Research Area.

Such a scenario inevitably leads to the migration of top researchers to neighbouring states – a scientific brain drain – as can currently and sadly be witnessed in many Southern European countries which have reduced the budget for science and research. This loss of human resources, particularly of the younger generation of excellent scientists, represents a loss of innovation potential and will eventually lower the Slovak Republic's economic strength.

Dear Prime Minister, we hope you will understand the boldness of this intervention, which is guided by our severe concerns about the future of excellent science and research in your country and its role in the international scientific community. We would therefore like to encourage you to seriously reconsider the reversal of the proposed cuts in the Academy's budget.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Prof. Dr. Günter Stock
President of ALLEA

A letter with the identical content has been sent to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of the Slovak Republic, Mr Peter Kažimír, the Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic, Ing. Peter Pellegrini, and the Speaker of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, Mgr. Pavol Paška.