

The Year 2011 – International Year of Chemistry and the 60th Anniversary of the Slovenian Chemical Society



Dear Colleagues

2011 – International Year of Chemistry

The 63rd General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed the year 2011 the International Year of Chemistry (IYC 2011) with a purpose to increase global recognition of how chemistry and its related sciences contribute to numerous aspects of everyday life and to the future. Partners coordinating the activities during IYC 2011 are IUPAC and UNESCO.

The International Year of Chemistry, IYC 2011, is a worldwide event, celebrating the achievements of Chemistry and its contributions to the well-being of humankind. A unifying theme entitled “Chemistry – Our Life, Our Future” has been chosen for this year. This theme suggests that is important for the future to focus on young people and general public and to reflect upon the Chemistry education that they are offered.

In January 2011 there was a two-day inaugural opening ceremony in Paris, where the following important topics were discussed:

- Chemistry and the progress of humankind
- Women in chemistry

- Chemistry and sustainable development (including themes on environment, climate, water, foodstuffs, health, energy, new materials and various economic and social aspects).

The year 2011 also marks the 100th anniversary of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry awarded to Marie Skłodowska Curie, for the recognition of her discovery of the elements radium and polonium. Marie Curie’s achievements still nowadays continue to inspire students, especially women, to pursue their careers in chemistry.

International Year of Chemistry 2011 in Slovenia

Our understanding of the material nature of our world is related to our knowledge of chemistry. In fact, all processes around us are controlled by chemical reactions. Chemistry, appropriately called the Central Science, is on one hand a philosophical query and an applied scientific endeavor on the other hand. The science of chemistry is fundamental to our understanding of the world around us.

The honourable sponsor of the IYC 2011 activities in Slovenia is the President of the Republic of Slovenia.

Partners for the activities in IYC 2011 are: Universities in Ljubljana, Maribor and Nova Gorica, National Institute of Chemistry, Jožef Stefan Institute and Slovenian Science Foundation.

The following activities will take place in Slovenia during IYC 2011:

- 17th Slovenian Chemistry Days will be organized by Slovenian Chemical Society, this time in Portorož, 14–16 September
- Slovenian Science Festival, an annual event, will be organized by Slovenian Science Foundation and mainly devoted to chemistry
- Numerous local events focusing on the topics of IYC 2011 will be organized throughout the country with an intention of increasing public appreciation and understanding of chemistry.

Activities will be appropriate for all levels of students, from preschool children to university students, and will focus on chemistry demonstrations at appropriate levels.

The purpose of numerous chemistry-related activities in Slovenia in 2011 is:

- To improve the understanding and appreciation of chemistry by the broadest audience and to promote the important role of chemistry to contributing to global challenges solutions
- To increase interest of young people in chemistry by generating enthusiasm for the creative future of chemistry. The activities will underscore the role of chemistry in sustainable management of natural resources.
- To promote and enhance international cooperation by serving as a focal point for activities by national chemical societies, educational institutions and non-governmental organizations.

Chemistry and chemists will inevitably play a key role in overcoming the numerous challenges facing today's world, creating new materials and sustainable sources of food and energy. These are key contributions to developing human knowledge, advancing economic progress and supporting a healthy environment.

The 60th Anniversary of the Slovenian Chemical Society

The beginnings of the Slovenian Chemical Society date back to the year 1951 when Slovenian chemists decided it would be an advantage to have an own professional society. A group of specialists from the Chemical Section of the Society of Engineers and Technicians was the driving force behind the establishment of the Slovenian Chemical Society in Ljubljana in February 1951. The organizational structure had been widened in its scope and aims and grew into an independent professional and scientific, not-for-profit, society. The purpose, goals and aims of the Society are clearly set out in the Statute of the Society.

From the Slovenian Chemical Society's earliest days, its growth has mirrored the ever increasing importance of chemistry in the world. Also, from its inception, the Slovenian Chemical Society was committed to sharing its professional work and interest with

specialists, students as well as with a broad public audience. Over the years, the expanding activities of the Slovenian Chemical Society continued to focus on the science and application of chemistry to a variety of fields. Slovenian Chemical Society continues to pursue the aims of the advancement of chemistry as a science, the dissemination of chemical knowledge, the development of chemical applications and the establishment of the links between academic and industrial chemical scientists. Over these 60 years, however, the Society's responsibilities have broadened and its activities have become more extensive.

The Slovenian Chemical Society grew from the initial 200-member society into an organization that now, after 60 years, includes 1200 members.

During the past 60 years the Society has gone through several cycles of ups and downs with periods of intense activity but also with periods when the activity was almost at standstill, although it never came to a complete halt.

For better fulfilling its mission and for enabling the members to unite within the area of their professional interests, the society has two divisions:

- Division of chemistry,
- Division of chemical engineering and chemical technology

Further subdivisions include several sections, committees and branches.

After the international recognition of Slovenia as an independent sovereign country in 1991, the Slovenian Chemical Society started the processes of integrating into international associations of chemical societies. The Slovenian Chemical Society has since 1991 become a member in FECS (now transformed into Eu-ChEMS), IUPAC and EFCE associations. The Slovenian Chemical Society has also been very active in bilateral relations with chemical societies around the world.

To achieve its mission in the future, the Slovenian Chemical society will focus on:

- Outreach, education and career development
- Support for local sections
- Member recruitment and retention
- Recognition of all aspects of the chemical profession.

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