

A CONCISE PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

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The origins of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences date back to the end of the eighteenth century, when Martynas Počobutas, a professor of Vilnius University, and several of his colleagues drafted a programme for the establishment of an academy of sciences, which, unfortunately, was not realised. The idea of establishing an academy was also raised during the period of national revival. It was nurtured by such founders of the Lithuanian Scientific Society as Dr Jonas Basanavičius, Dr Jonas Šliūpas, and others. The most prominent representatives of the intelligentsia of independent Lithuania sought to establish an academy of sciences as an independent centre for the organisation of scientific research and science and as a symbol of the country's prestige. For various reasons, this project was not implemented until 1939, when the Institute of Lithuanian Studies named after Antanas Smetona was established and the Statute of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences was drafted. The Lithuanian Academy of Sciences was founded on 16 January 1941. At present, the Academy is a fully-fledged member of the world community of academies of sciences and a member of a number of international and European science and science policy-making organisations representing the interests of the Lithuanian scientific community.

Several years in office cannot change the priorities of the Academy, and the continuity of the work that has been started is undoubtedly essential.

Continuous and active reinforcement of its mission through expert and advisory activities must remain in the centre of its focus. It is necessary to continuously strengthen relations with the Seimas and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, to implement the provisions of the Statute committing the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences to advise the Seimas and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and to provide them with recommendations and expert evaluations, and, to this end, I am looking forward to increased activity and support of all members of the Academy. Enhancing the interaction between the state and the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences and consulting the Academy on key decisions is a priority for the future.

Mandated by the Government and taking over from the Research Council of Lithuania, since 2012 the Academy has been selecting the winners of the student competition for the scholarships named after the presidents of the Republic of Lithuania: Antanas Smetona, Aleksandras Stulginskis, Kazis Grinius, Jonas Žemaitis, and Algirdas Brazauskas; on behalf of

the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the Academy evaluates the activities of the candidates for the Science Prizes for scientists of Lithuanian origin and scientists of Lithuanian nationality residing abroad.

The Lithuanian Academy of Sciences must continue to maintain its focus on continuous and active promotion of education and science. The Academy must be the coordinator of the country's science dissemination system. In recent years, the Academy has signed a number of cooperation agreements with the country's municipalities, public research institutes, and business partners. It is appropriate to provide the general public with more information on how R&D funds are used each year.

Another important ongoing activity of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences is promotion of talented scientists and innovative research. I think it is appropriate to expand the administration of research programmes or support for other activities in coordination with the Government, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, and the Research Council of Lithuania. The recently-established Young Academy of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, a team of young, ambitious, and promising scientists, is nearing its completion. Young academicians must be strongly encouraged to contribute, as actively as possible, to the implementation of the mission of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, in particular by raising the prestige of science and the scientific profession, by promoting Lithuania's scientific achievements, by intensifying international cooperation between young scientists, and by interacting with the country's young people – from the pupils of gymnasiums to those who have chosen to pursue a master's degree, doctoral or postdoctoral studies.

The expert role of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences has expanded with the coordination of the project 'Publishing and Coordination of Periodical Scientific Publications' funded by EU Structural Funds. Implemented by 14 partners, the project foresees that each year the Academy will organise the evaluation of the journals and continuous supervision of the publishing process (47 journals were published in stages 1 and 2, and 22 journals were selected in stage 3 of the project). At the end of the project, in 2022, it will be necessary to ensure its continuity in order to ensure that the publication of the Academy's periodicals is not interrupted and that adequate funding is made available. Another very important task of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences is publishing as many science popularisation books by Lithuanian authors as possible.

The Academy promotes research ethics. Scholars from all research and higher education institutions are invited to implement this provision of the Statute. It is encouraging that there are not many violations of research ethics in Lithuania, yet the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences must pursue its strong stance on the standards of research ethics.

A very important part of our future work is more active involvement of the foreign members of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, who are scientists with vast international experience, in expert, project, and science dissemination work. Foreign members will be invited to attend events of the Academy, and joint conferences will be organised. It is also important to provide timely and more comprehensive information on the activities of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences in English.

I will uphold an increase in the Academy's funding to ensure its efficient operation, publishing of scientific publications, adequate increase of the salaries of the Academy's staff, and maximisation of monthly allowances paid to the emeriti members and to the unemployed full members over 65 years of age.

I will seek a major overhaul and modernisation of the Academy's IT facilities. This is critical for the efficient and effective work of the Academy's team, especially in the event of unforeseen circumstances when operational functions have to be carried out remotely and in organising events.

It is impossible to list all the work that needs to be done in a concise programme of activities. I have no doubt that the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences will be successful in pursuing its mission through the efforts and sincere work of all of us, depending on the situation and needs and by constantly adjusting our tactics.

Professor Jūras Banys