

Cern, 3 July 2025

Speech by Prime Minister Robert Golob at the ceremony marking Slovenia's accession to full membership of CERN

"The probability of success is difficult to estimate, but if we never search, the chance of success is zero." Giuseppe Cocconi

These words, spoken by one of CERN's earliest visionaries, remind us why we are here today. Because we chose to try to achieve more, and to believe that knowledge is not only power but also meaning.

It is a great honour for me to be here with you today, not only as the Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia but also as a fellow scientist and as someone who understands the revolutionary power of knowledge, as someone who sees the unknown not as a limitation but as an inspiration to imagine beyond what is already known, to reach further, to become greater.

Dear Madam Director-General, Excellencies, fellow scientists, friends,

Today, the Slovenian flag is raised at CERN. This is a moment of deep national pride and an even deeper commitment – a recognition of Slovenia in the global scientific community.

Slovenia has a clear vision: from nurturing curiosity in preschool to fostering global innovations through high-quality public education, research and investment. In just a few years, we have doubled investments – our government's budget investments – in scientific innovation. This speaks volumes about our commitment, as only through knowledge and its people can a small country think globally.

CERN undoubtedly represents the best that Europe can showcase and contribute to humanity – and Slovenia is ready to contribute fully. Our scientists have long played an important role in projects such as ATLAS. Our companies provide cutting-edge technologies. Our supercomputing infrastructure is ready to serve international science.

But more important than any machine is the human potential behind it – our young researchers, engineers and teachers. With full membership at CERN, new paths open up for them and for generations to come. In Slovenia, talent will always find support. Curiosity will always have room to grow. Science will always find a partner.

Slovenia is joining CERN at a crucial moment. We are here to help shape the future – a future in which science is a promise of peace – not just progress.

Because peace is not the absence of conflict. It is the presence of dialogue, cooperation and mutual understanding. Science, when it is free, open and collaborative, is the purest expression of this spirit.

At a time when too many build walls, we choose to build knowledge. At a time of widening divides, we invest in what brings us together.

This is what the Slovenian flag symbolises: a nation proud to think beyond itself; a country that believes science can connect where politics divides; and a people ready to co-create not only discoveries, but above all, a more peaceful world.

When I listen to the discussions of my colleagues in the European Council, I hear many complaints about Europe lagging behind. But standing here with you today, I hear a broad discussion, and this is surely one of the last pillars of true European leadership in this very volatile world – and may it remain so. Personally, I can commit – not only as the Slovenian Prime Minister – to doing everything in my

power to support CERN's new project, and also to share the inspiration I have found here today with my colleagues at home and across Europe. Not just because CERN deserves it but because we, as Europeans, need it.

Thank you very much and good luck!