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Ljubljana, 9 November 2025

SPEECH BY PRIME MINISTER ROBERT GOLOB AT THE CEREMONIAL PRESENTATION OF STATE PRIZES AND AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Dear colleagues, dear researchers, distinguished representatives of higher education institutions, research institutes and innovation centres,

At a time when the world is too often divided by ignorance and doubt, it is science that brings light. Every researcher carries that light, and every country that values science illuminates its path to the future.

This year, on 10 November, we will celebrate Science Day as a national holiday for the first time. This is a symbolic recognition that science – alongside culture – forms the foundation of Slovenia's development, identity and future. With this holiday, we wish to highlight the importance of science for society, to raise its profile and to bring it closer to the public.

On this occasion, I would like to acknowledge our most distinguished scientists and researchers – recipients of the Zois and Puh Prizes and the Ambassador of Science Award. Thank you for your outstanding contribution to the development of science in Slovenia and around the world.

Through your work, you show that science in Slovenia is not confined to laboratories and institutes, but reaches into everyday life – into health, technology, the environment, culture, language and our understanding of society. You exemplify creativity, perseverance and the ethics of scientific endeavour, and you enhance Slovenia's reputation across the world.

During this term, the Government has made science and knowledge one of its top three priorities. In four years, we have achieved something of which we can be justifiably proud. At the beginning of the term, funding for science was below EUR 400 million per year. Next year it will exceed EUR 800 million. Doubling the funds in a single term says much about our approach – that where we give our word, we also provide the means. Only in this way can we truly show respect for this field. In doing so, we are strengthening the foundations of research excellence and opening doors for future generations of researchers, innovators and creators.

Among the concrete achievements, I would like to highlight two important laws. After thirty years, a new Higher Education Act has been adopted, which will not only strengthen the autonomy of universities, but also ensure legally defined funding and a gradual increase in resources to 1.5% of GDP. Similarly, the amendment to the Scientific Research and Innovation Activities Act provides for an increase in funding to 1.25% of GDP.

In this way, we aim to create a stable and predictable environment for all of you, so that you can continue to create and to explore new worlds, without fear that your own might change first.

Slovenia has become a full member of two major organisations – the European Space Agency and CERN. At the same time, Slovenia is becoming home to one of six new European artificial intelligence factories, supported by a supercomputer. In Maribor, a modern, internationally recognised centre for cutting-edge technologies in computing and artificial intelligence is taking shape.

Science is leading Slovenia into the future – from artificial intelligence, hydrogen and satellite technologies to gene therapies for rare diseases. It is the key to sustainable development, to peace and to the prosperity of future generations.

Because we believe in this future, tomorrow, on Science Day, I will host a consultation with leading experts in artificial intelligence. Together, we will discuss Slovenia's place on the global map of AI development, the opportunities ahead of us and how best to seize them – including in connection with space research. These discussions will be forward-looking, providing guidance to the Government in designing thoughtful, long-term measures.

Dear researchers,

The year 2025 is the year in which we, as a nation, have clearly shown that we believe in science.

Let Science Day be a celebration for all who believe that the future belongs to those who understand, explore and create. Let it be a celebration of reason, enlightenment, cooperation and courage.

Albert Einstein once wrote: "Science without faith in the meaning of the world is lame; faith without science is blind."

Slovenia needs science – and science needs a Slovenia that believes in its reason and its greatness, in the light that guides us towards our common future.

Thank you.