

Dear Colleagues,

Perhaps it is not yet known to you that a few days ago the Russian government proposed the liquidation of the Russian Academy of Sciences that was founded by Peter the Great three centuries ago. This project was prepared in dead secret in the best traditions of totalitarian societies without any discussion with scientific community, although our government declares itself as a democratic institution in a democratic country. These plans are not widely broadcasted by mass media since it is not a resonant political event. Through all its history, even in cruel Stalin's time the Russian (Soviet) Academy of Sciences survived and remained the only democratic institution where the President of the Academy was not appointed by the country authorities, but elected by ballot. And despite the wild introduction of capitalism in Russia since 1990s, the Academy is now the only national-level organization in which the property and infrastructure has not yet been sold and simply stolen. This concerns, in particular, significant territories and infrastructure in the extremely expensive regions in the center of Moscow and many other major Russian cities. Now under the pretext of improving the efficiency of management of this property, it is proposed that all these lands and infrastructure will be confiscated and managed by the governmental bureaucratic structures, but not the professional scientific experts as was before. We believe it is possible to speak about killing of science in Russia.

To get information in more detail you can visit the site of Russian Academy of Science: <http://www.ras.ru/> Unfortunately, they don't have an English version of this site yet. Also you can read the text in English published by a Russian science magazine: <http://news.sciencemag.org/scienceinsider/2013/06/new-law-would-deal-a-blow-to-rus.html> or simply Google "Russian Academy of Science reform".

Besides the transformation of the Academicians into a club of experts deprived of any real influence, the reform proposed is mainly about the property of the Academy, first of all legalization of its privatization. In recent years we saw very well how such "efficient management" operates in Russia. Everything will be dispersed, rapidly sold and simply stolen as was observed many times in the near past. This governmental "care" has nothing to do with real care about efficiency of research.

Scientists are often out of politics and this is usually a right choice. Now bad political decisions and big money are knocking to our doors. The realization of the declared plans means that many of us will have to break research activity, teaching young students and popularizing science. The education level has already strongly dropped thanks to similar governmental "care", although the Soviet education system was one of the best in the world. Our country is quickly becoming a barbarian society with thermonuclear weapons. It is very dangerous for people all over the world.

If you are with us against ignorance and obscurantism, please, support our petition to Russian President and Parliament (the text and the response of the Russian scientific community is possible to find at www.ras.ru although it is in Russian only). If you would like to support us, please, either FAX your letter with support expression to +7(831)4365976 (fax of Geophysical Research Division of the Institute of Applied Physics RAS) or e-mail your message to swan@hydro.appl.sci-nnov.ru and we will forward your letters to our coordinators.

It is also possible to submit a letter directly to President Putin via an English-language web-interface: <http://eng.letters.kremlin.ru/send> This is maybe the strongest variant, although you'll need to spend a few minutes for registration.

Please share this information with anyone who may be interested. As much as possible people should know about this erroneous and actually monstrous decision of our government. This is the only legal to push those guys in right direction and stop killing the science in Russia. They are eager to get the approval of this law in the Parliament of Russia in the nearest days and have specially chosen the last session before the summer break hoping that wide masses even would not realize what is happening.

Thank you in advance for your solidarity with us!

On behalf of Russian scientific community in Nizhny Novgorod,
Members of the Geophysical research division
Institute of Applied Physics,
Russian Academy of Sciences