



# ICSU

International Council for Science

Russian Academy of Sciences  
Prof. Vladimir Fortov, President  
Leninsky Prospect, 14  
119991 Moscow  
Russian Federation

9 July 2013

Dear Professor Fortov, Dear President,

I write as Chair of the Committee on Freedom and Responsibility in the conduct of Science (CFRS) of the International Council of Science (ICSU), of which the Russian Academy of Sciences has been a National Member since 1955. Composed of eminent scholars from around the globe, CFRS is the guardian of the globally accepted Principle of Universality of Science that advocates the free and responsible practice of science.

It is my understanding that the Russian Parliament is considering new legislation that would radically transform the Russian Academy of Sciences, including proposals to merge the Academy with two other science academies and abolish any distinction between fully-fledged academicians and corresponding members. From the perspective of CFRS, the free and responsible conduct of science also requires the independence of Academies. We are therefore concerned about the proposed reforms, which appear to have arisen without proper consultation and to threaten the long-respected autonomy of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

In particular, I would like to emphasise the importance of maintaining the independence of the selection processes for Academy membership, based on scientific merit, free of any political interference. It is only when these issues are respected that Academies can appropriately assume their responsibility to make available independent and evidence-based scientific advice to government and for the benefit of society. This capability has been the hallmark of the Russian Academy of Sciences and ensured its status as an institution of high standing in the international science community, including ICSU. You can be assured of our full support in your efforts to preserve this status.

Yours sincerely,

Leiv K. Sydnes  
Chair, ICSU CFRS

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*ICSU Principle of the Universality of Science*

The free and responsible practice of science is fundamental to scientific advancement and

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human and environmental well-being. Such practice, in all its aspects, requires freedom of movement, association, expression and communication for scientists, as well as equitable access to data, information, and other resources for research. It requires responsibility at all levels to carry out and communicate scientific work with integrity, respect, fairness, trustworthiness, and transparency, recognising its benefits and possible harms. In advocating the free and responsible practice of science, the International Council for Science (ICSU) promotes equitable opportunities for access to science and its benefits, and opposes discrimination based on such factors as ethnic origin, religion, citizenship, language, political or other opinion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or age.