

Dear colleagues,

Life goes on, although COVID-19 disappointed all our expectations and is still here, having only briefly retreated and now sweeping in new waves again. We are getting used to living under siege, put on masks, utilize sanitizers, undergo tests... What is impossible to get accustomed is our losses. Yesterday we lost the full member of the Russian Academy of Sciences Vladimir Ye. Fortov, a brilliant scientist and one of the major science promoters and facilitators in Russia. His scientific and administrative activities came at challenging times for national science and were aimed at minimizing losses and saving research teams from zealous reformers. He was one of the creators of the Russian Foundation for Basic Research which has played an important role for many scientific groups and became the only efficient alternative to the Soros Fund in the 1990s. The untimely death of the RFBR cofounder ironically coincided with the so-called reformation but, actually, settlement of his creation these days. At the end of the 1990s, he struggled for the survival of Russian science and, being already a minister of science and technology, quickly realized that cannot cope with liquidators.

The latest attempt to affect somehow the process of preservation of fundamental science in Russia was made in 2013. Here Fortov was even less fortunate: instead of creating and searching for new forms of interaction with the Government he had to fight again with faceless liquidators of the Russian Academy of Sciences. He fought so much all these years for the right of Russian researchers to create freely that did not save strength against his invisible enemy. These are the signs of our times.

Of course, his efforts have not been in vain. We have gradually recognized that the authorities do not understand the purpose of RAS and, therefore, try to utilize it as a released resource for the so-called development institutions. The Academy does not rank among these institutions. This fact in itself testifies that the Government did not understand the role of the Academy and still has no idea. So, at least the Government has got some consistency. At the same time, there are certain qualitative changes in RAS and its institutes. We not only recognize the significance of the Academy for Russian and global science but also try to search for routes and forms for explanation to those who are in power how it is important to support and develop this institution of fundamental science. The current program of academic leadership, using the brand of academic science, tries to bend the institutes of RAS to universities and other higher education organizations which still lack the respectability and solidity of the Academy. In response to this, a new grassroots movement is developing that is aimed at joining the academic institutes with the mother Academy to strengthen the relationships between different institutes, special departments, and the Academy on its own. In the near future, the first consortium will be arranged by the Department of Chemistry and Materials Science of RAS and the largest chemical institutes.

The Consortium participants are acutely aware of the problems of the development of chemistry and chemical education in Russia and are going to join their efforts to bridge

the painful gap of misunderstanding of the importance of this direction for the safe development of our country, which is generally demonstrated by our leaders. I hope that INEOS OPEN will highlight the development steps of this grassroots movement directed to get back the Academy its legal position among the development institutions for a simple reason: there are no prospects for growth without fundamental science.

This is quite an unexpected foreword for the fourth issue of INEOS OPEN in 2020. We had to postpone the contest of this year (INEOS OPEN CUP) to the end of February 2021 to avoid rushing through the current restrictions. Several large conferences have been rescheduled and narrowed down our timing potential. The important point is that we have developed a new evaluation format—decentralized or clustered, as we call it. Now we want to suggest this algorithm for expert assessment for the contests on the creation of innovation chains around the leading institutes, which undoubtedly include INEOS RAS.

Taking part in the organization of these events, our Journal will completely fulfill its function of attracting attention to the results obtained in the fields of our major research interests. The stepwise development of INEOS OPEN is now marked with collaboration with leading scientists of INEOS RAS and we are proud to mention that the great researchers and younger talents cooperate with the Journal on a regular basis. The international recognition of INEOS OPEN is also growing and, according to the decision of the CAS Books and Journals Acquisition Group, since November our Journal is included in the respectable CAS databases. I am sure this is only the beginning. The recognition by international indexing databases is directly connected with citing of the Journal publications in international periodicals and, in this respect, we can definitely state that we have something to be cited and someone to be cited. Then, all we need is to proceed to systematic work on the Journal development, which we are already doing as far as we can, and look forward to your continuous support.

Sincerely yours,

Editor-in-Chief

Prof., Full Member of RAS

Aziz M. Muzafarov