

Dear colleagues,

Looking back from relatively safe today, we cannot help but be tremendously relieved to be moving further and further away from quarantine and self-isolation. Our labs are once again filled with people, seminars and conferences are back on, and it turns out that we have all greatly missed work and being social. The Korshak Conference was rushed in terms of time to organize it, yet very fruitful when it came to presentations and discussions.

Now that the pre-New Year rush is over and the last reports and articles of 2020 have been submitted, we can catch our breath and take stock of our results—and they are amazing. INEOS had impressively increased the number of publications—505 articles in Web of Science journals and over a hundred of them in the journals belonging to the Q1 quartile. This means that the work had not stopped during the pandemic but moved instead into the virtual space. This also means that our young scientists had self-isolated in the labs instead of clubs and bars. This let the Institute's list of achievements grow this year, and we had plenty to present to the Academy and numerous scientific councils.

Work from home—how loaded this expression has become. The word "Zoom" had entered our lives and it looks like it's here to stay. It would be interesting to see if the sales of Mazda cars have grown since their ads used to end with that mysterious whisper "zoom-zoom". Zoom had certainly saved us a lot of time and gas. We will remember 2020 for a very long time, with its masks and gloves, rushing ambulances, horror stories on TV, record snowfalls, colleagues we have lost, and—hopes, always better hopes for the future. So it is that the pandemic is slowly retreating, while in the meantime the year 2021 has been declared the Year of Science and Technology—what a surprise! But it's a good surprise. For me, the year has also had an auspicious start—I managed to solve "Nesmeyanov's riddle" and even wrote a short analytical article about it. However, in order to fit in better with the "Economics Strategies" journal, I had to change the title, and the riddle became a strategy. The article is available on the Institute's website and it has also been saved for our museum that had got an honorary mention in it. It turns out that Aleksandr Nesmeyanov is still "our everything" and is still teaching and supporting us from the great beyond. We are very grateful to him! Our traditional frosty lineup in front of his bust and virtual poster sessions are all expressions of our gratitude to this extraordinary man.

The new year has had a rather intense start—the afore-mentioned declaration of the Year of Science and Technology, the reorganization of the Council of Science and Technology; it all seems well and good. However, the return of certain personnel, tested and proven during the pogroms of the Academy, not to the Ministry, thankfully, but to "Fiztekhn" means that we cannot relax just yet. Some new "holodets" may yet arise on our horizon. The moors have not done all of their duties yet, they will not go! It's all nice and fine except it's too bad for Fiztekhn.

In other news, our Chemistry Consortium has started its work; it was divided into commissions and also grew a bit more, now the work can start. The chemistry session of the Academy Presidium is also not so far away, with the motto "The chemistry of the 21st century" no less. Let's use synergy to strike chemistry-phobia and chemistry-ignorance! We will talk about the results next time; read INEOS OPEN and your life will be filled with positive vibes.

Our INEOS OPEN CUP will take place twice this year. We will hold INEOS OPEN CUP 2020 in May, and INEOS OPEN CUP 2021 in November, and both those contests will be amazing. Check the website for updates. Together, we have invented a new species of expertise. I call it cluster or decentralized expertise. The algorithm of organizing and holding the contest turned out to be simple and universal, and we will be using it to create an innovation chain around our Institute and other scientific centers that have similar potential. All in all, we will be completing what we failed in 2020. Perhaps, we have forgotten to discover something and publish it in our Journal, but do not despair. We have overcome COVID-19 and have become, as per old Russian custom, that much stronger for it. Keep writing, it's time to move forward. This year, we are storming the State Commission for Academic Degrees and Scopus, join us!

Sincerely yours,

Editor-in-Chief

Prof., Full Member of RAS

Aziz M. Muzafarov