

FROM THE PRESIDENT



INTERNATIONAL MATHEMATICAL UNION

Ingrid Daubechies, President
<http://www.mathunion.org>

July 5, 2013

To: Mr. S. Naryshkin
Speaker of the DUMA

Dear Mr. Naryshkin,

I write to you in my capacity of President of the International Mathematical Union (IMU), as well as in my personal capacity, as a member of the US National Academy of Sciences, and the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, the London Mathematical Society, the French Academie des Sciences, and the Belgian Academie Royale.

It is with great concern that we learned that, last week Thursday, the Russian Government approved a draft law on liquidation of the Russian Academy of Sciences and that the law might be submitted for final approved very soon. Moreover, as far as we know, this proposal has been drafted without any involvement of the scientific community itself, or of the two councils created by the Russian Ministry of Education and Science for consultations with the scientific community.

The Russian Academy of Sciences has a long and very distinguished history; it stands as one of the most prestigious academies of the world, and publishes top journals. Many mathematics departments worldwide encourage their graduate students to acquire a working knowledge of Russian so that they will be able to read mathematical papers in e.g. Doklady Akademii Nauk in the original. Russian mathematicians are respected worldwide, and have been so for many years.

All institutions must undergo changes occasionally, and the Russian Academy of Sciences is no exception; the International Mathematical Union, even though it is much younger, has undergone such changes itself. However, we feel very strongly that changes in the structure and leadership of a productive scientific organization should be done with extreme care and with the full involvement of the scientific community. We urge that you work with the newly elected leadership of the Russian Academy and with the Russian scientific community in general to ensure that the Academy continues to play, as it has in the past, a major role in promoting research of the highest quality in Russia. We respectfully hope you will recognize that an independent scientific academy is fundamental to the progress of science, and that whatever reform plans are finally adopted will respect the integrity of this venerable institution, and will be made in close consultation with the scientific community itself.

Yours sincerely,

Ingrid Daubechies
President, International Mathematical Union