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Declaration of Solidarity with the Ilia State University

This declaration is in response to the recent legislative changes affecting university autonomy, academic freedom, and international engagement in Georgia.

We are especially concerned about the state-imposed quota for the Ilia State University that will reduce admissions cut by 92%, eliminating disciplinary diversity across the institution. This is to express solidarity with the Ilia State University and to declare the crucial importance of the protection of university autonomy, meaningful consultation with academic institutions, and continued alignment with the principles of the European Higher Education Area.

In 2020 the Institute of Biology and Ecology, P.J. Šafárik University in Košice, Slovakia, established a scientific co-operation with the Ilia State University in the field of biology and ecology of caves and subterranean ecosystems. Georgia is characteristic as one of the most important biodiversity hotspots in Europe and Asia, with diversity of subterranean fauna still mostly unknown and undescribed.

Therefore, I express my deep support to cave biology research and the team of cave biology researchers at Ilia State University. Recent reform suggested by the government makes negative influence on the subterranean biology studies at the Ilia State University as the only Georgian university where "Cave Ecology" is uniquely incorporated in the study plans.

Sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Ľubomír Kováč, PhD.
Director of the Institute of Biology and Ecology