

60th anniversary of the Slovenian Sociological Association

Geoffrey Pleyers, President of the International Sociological Association
Online message for the introductory plenary of the Slovenian Congress of Sociology.
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The Slovenian Sociological Society celebrates its 60th anniversary this year. Over these six decades, the Society has remained a vibrant and insightful space for Slovenian sociologists, with its journal, its thematic groups, and, from what I could read from your president's short introduction to the society, has gained a solid reputation as much for the quality of the session as for the insightful debates over dinner and drinks in the evening.

It is very unfortunate for me not to be able to join you in person. Still, I am grateful that you gave me this opportunity to deliver this online message to congratulate the members of the Slovenian Society on this 60th anniversary and thank those who have built the Society as a lively and welcoming space for Slovenian sociologists over the past 60 years. The current president, Roman Kuhar, deserves a special acknowledgement for his work in the Society and for his crucial and insightful contributions to sociology, notably on the rise of reactionary movements and anti-gender campaigns. I would also like to greet Kaja Gadovska, the president of the European Sociological Association, who is doing an extraordinary job and promotes sociology tirelessly all over the continent.

You will celebrate this 60th anniversary with a congress dedicated to the *"role and legacy of the society in Slovenian society after six decades of operation, and on the importance of sociology today and in the future"*. This is a very timely choice, not only in Slovenia, but also in Europe.

The attacks on academic freedom are rising on our continent, as much as the trends of *anti-intellectualism*. I had the pleasure of welcoming your keynote speaker, Eric Fassin, to my university recently. You couldn't have chosen a better speaker for this opening plenary.

When sociologists read the news these days, it is easy to get discouraged. The world is changing fast, and almost everywhere it seems to be moving away from democracy, human rights, global solidarity, and our responsibility to preserve

nature for future generations. Sometimes, we wonder if sociology may still have an impact on this world. Is it worth spending months, sometimes years, conducting rigorous research, when a single post on X or Instagram reaches more people in a few hours than our work does in years?

These doubts are understandable, especially at a time when populist and reactionary leaders promote distrust in science, when fake news travels faster and broader than research-based analysis, and when hate speech and denial of scientific evidence have become commonplace.

Precisely in such moments, it is essential to meet in national congresses, to remind ourselves why we are sociologists, to reassert the values and commitments at the core of our work as researchers, teachers, and public intellectuals.

In these times, it is vital to defend

- A *critical sociology* that questions rising inequalities and challenges the myth of the *self-made man*, the simplistic emphasis on markets and consumerism
- A *public sociology* that engages in civic debates, not from a pedestal of alleged intellectual superiority, but in dialogue with those striving to transform society and defend the common good;
- A *rigorous sociology* based on facts and analysis, that rejects simplistic narratives and embraces the world's complexity;
- An *independent sociology* that reminds us that the words of the powerful are not always true, and that a lie repeated a thousand times is still a lie;

In a world changing so rapidly, amid crisis, climate change, war, rising inequality and hatred, we share the conviction that sociology is more necessary than ever as a tool that helps us to understand our world, to unveil false information and misleading narratives and to live together on a planet with limited resources.

This is the sociology we defend in the ISA declaration "[A time for sociology](#)". Translation is underway in more than 20 languages (and hopefully it will be available in Slovenian), and it has been signed by more than 1.200 sociologists worldwide, including Kaja Gadovska, Eric Fassin and Roman Kuhar.

In 2025, the challenges faced by our discipline seem at least as broad as they were 60 years ago, when the Slovenian Sociological Society was founded. It is important to meet and bring together our research and perspectives on these challenges, at the national, continental and global scales.

I wish you a fruitful congress. I wish you get inspired, meet colleagues, share analyses and perspectives and have fun. I look forward to hearing and reading some of its outcomes to feed the global dialogue among sociologists.

And yes, 2025 can sometimes feel depressing, even frightening. But it is never boring.

2025 is a fantastic time to be a sociologist. *This is a time for sociology.*