



Predsednica Republike Slovenije

**NATAŠA PIRC MUSAR**

**Keynote speech  
by the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Nataša Pirc Musar  
at the ceremony  
marking 150 years of organised beekeeping in Slovenia**

Ljubljana, 30 September 2023

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*Mr President of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association,  
Mr President of Apimondia,  
Dear Minister,  
Your Excellency the Apostolic Nuncio, Doyen of the Diplomatic Corps,  
Esteemed ambassadors,  
and above all, dear beekeepers,  
Ladies and gentlemen,*

*Today we celebrate 150 years of traditional Slovenian beekeeping and its excellent organisation. We celebrate beekeeping as a way of life for you, dear beekeepers and your families. Beekeeping connects us from generation to generation, it brings us joy and strength.*

*We celebrate beekeeping as a symbol of Slovenian identity, because Slovenia is a country of beekeepers with the world's highest number of beekeepers per capita.*

*Today, we also celebrate our native Carniolan honey bee, which has exceptional qualities such as tranquillity, industriousness and longevity.*

*It is precisely this Slovenian tradition and the symbolism of bees and beekeeping that led to the Slovenian initiative for a World Bee Day, proclaimed by the United Nations five years ago.*

*In the spring of this year, at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome, I had the honour of attending the main international event to celebrate World Bee Day. Over the past five years, World Bee Day has contributed significantly to raising awareness of the importance of bees and other pollinators and to promoting international cooperation to protect them. During this time,*

*thousands of actions have taken place worldwide, and at the initiative of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association, the Slovenian Honey Breakfast was launched. This event is promoted every year in Slovenia and through Slovenian diplomacy also around the world.*

*I am proud to say that Slovenia is a beekeeping superpower. We are the first country in the world to include beekeeping as a way of life on UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. In the spring, I was honoured and delighted to present the Golden Bee Award to a young Serbian scientist. This year is the third year that Slovenia has awarded this international prize.*

*I am also proud of Slovenia's contribution to raising awareness of the importance of bees and other pollinators and its efforts for their protection. Slovenia is proud to share its beekeeping knowledge and technology, and you, dear Slovenian beekeepers, are known and sought after as excellent and well-organised professionals who keep bees in a bee-friendly and sustainable way.*

*I am particularly proud of the knowledge developed in Slovenia on beekeeping for persons with disabilities, including the adaptation of apiaries and the Beekeeping Manual for Persons with Disabilities. Wheelchair-bound beekeepers in Slovenia have been successfully beekeeping for many years, which gives them constant contact with nature and, last but not least, an additional source of livelihood. Recently, we have also started to successfully implement beekeeping projects for persons with disabilities abroad, as beekeeping has a unique potential to reduce social and environmental vulnerability.*

*We live in a time of triple planetary crisis – climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution – that threatens the survival of humanity. Food security, to which I am paying particular attention, is closely related to this, and in just over a month's time I will dedicate the Second Presidential Forum to this issue.*

*As we know, bees and other pollinators are of key importance to global food security. Every third spoonful of our food depends on them.*

*They are also essential to the global health of ecosystems, because almost 90% of wild plant species depend on them for reproduction.*

*As we are celebrating today, it is appropriate to mention the fathers of Slovenian beekeeping, among them the greatest, Anton Janša. Johannes Antonius Scopoli, the 300th anniversary of whose birth is being celebrated this year, was also active in Janša's time and described beekeeping in Carniola in his Discourse on Bees.*

*The tradition of beekeeping has been preserved in our country to this day thanks to the transfer of skills of beekeeping with the Carniolan honey bee from generation to generation. Today we know that without bees and other pollinators, there is no life. In today's deep environmental and climate crisis, it is therefore vital that the beekeeping tradition is preserved for future generations. And the most important thing is to involve and work with young people. I am therefore delighted that Slovenia hosted young people from various countries for a beekeeping competition this summer.*

*Let me conclude with a call to help young people and empower them to live in greater harmony with nature. Instead of cutting back on biology lessons in schools, I wish that schools could encourage the setting up of apiaries in their surroundings and that young people could get the chance to visit you, our beekeepers. I firmly believe that by learning outdoors, young people would acquire new knowledge and test out new skills, including beekeeping.*

*Thank you and may the honey flow!*