Nomination for the election of an ICA Board member to the following election constituency: South Eastern Europe & Former CIS Republics

Dean Marina Pintar,
Biotechnical Faculty, University of Ljubljana, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

Personal statement for the ICA Board election

I started my professional career as an irrigation system designer at the Water Management Institute of the Republic of Slovenia and continued my academic career at the Biotechnical Faculty of the University of Ljubljana.

My narrow field of research is water and agriculture, more precisely irrigation and related soil physics, the impact of agriculture on water and the impact of water on agriculture. All this recently also against the background of climate change, intensive digitalization, social change, etc.

A particular research challenge for me is interdisciplinary projects, which usually involve several partners with lively mutual interaction. Examples of this are the European projects from the FP7 program, H2020 and HE, in which I was able to gain a lot of international experience. Let me just mention a few large projects I have been involved in: PLUREL, GreenSurge, FoodMetRes, EdiCitNet, FairWay, etc. and Minagris, which is still ongoing.

Research and teaching are inextricably linked in the academic world. Professors who successfully combine these two areas can create a rich and dynamic learning environment that benefits both themselves and their students. Such synergy contributes to the advancement of science and education and prepares students for successful careers in a variety of fields.

Four years ago, I joined the leadership team of the Biotechnical Faculty as vice dean for Academic Affairs. In October 2022, I started the role of Dean. The Biotechnical Faculty is one of the larger faculties of the University of Ljubljana, which otherwise comprises 23 faculties and three academies. The Biotechnical Facultyoffers study programs in the fields of agronomy, biology, forestry, wood processing, food technology, microbiology, biotechnology, animal husbandry and landscape architecture.

Degree courses at life science universities are often interdisciplinary, so that students can acquire a wide range of skills required to solve complex problems in practice. At the Biotechnical Faculty, we also organize interdisciplinary courses in cooperation with other faculties: for example, Applied Statistics, Bioeconomics, Bioinformatics.

When I took the Dean's position, I took part in the activities to establish the Association of the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences in South East Europe (Skopje). We assume that the association will soon begin its work.

Life science universities play a key role in the European region, as they contribute to scientific progress, economic development, solving social challenges and training future generations of experts. With

their research, innovation and education programs, they are shaping the future of Europe and the world.

Life science faculties in Europe face many challenges that require adaptation, innovation and strategic planning. Despite these challenges, they have many opportunities for growth and development, particularly by taking advantage of opportunities for international collaboration, new technologies and sustainable practices. Flexibility and proactivity in addressing these challenges will be key to their successful future.

I believe that with my international experience and the experience of the Dean at the multi-faculty university, I will be able to contribute to the discussion in the ICA Board from the perspective of Southeast European universities. It will be a great pleasure and honor for me to serve on the ICA Board.