

100th anniversary of the Institute for Ethnic Studies (Academic Network)

In 2025, the Institute for Ethnic Studies (INV) celebrated its centenary – a century of scientific research into ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity and the promotion of understanding between communities. It is the oldest scientific institute in Slovenia, founded in 1925, and the first non-university research institution in the country, as well as one of the first institutions in the world to systematically study national minorities and their rights.

The INV filled the year of its centenary celebrations with a wide variety of events, activities, conferences and celebrations.

In the spring and autumn, the Institute opened its doors to the public with an Open Day as part of Slovenian Science Month. A total of 120 primary school pupils visited the building. Researchers and other INV employees designed a "maze" of content stations for the schoolchildren, through which they traveled in search of new knowledge. Three thematic stations were particularly highlighted, conveying the main message and research mission of the institute to the schoolchildren: the Italian and Hungarian minorities and the German-speaking community in Slovenia, immigrants and Roma in Slovenia and Slovenian minorities in Italy, Austria, Hungary, and Croatia.

In addition to the open days, the institute promoted its research activities to the public through its publishing activities. At the Liber.ac academic book fair, the institute presented its most extensive book selection to date, which was offered to readers free of charge and attracted record interest.

Part of its selection was compiled into book packages, which were donated to bilingual libraries in Croatia, Hungary, and Porabje, as well as to German-speaking communities in Slovenia.



New book publications in 2025 included:

- Dr. Barbara Riman and her co-author Dr. Aleš Gabrič presented their anthology *Slovenski mediji na Madžarskem in Hrvaškem nekoč in danes* (Slovene Media in Hungary and Croatia: Past and Present),
- Dr. Robert Devetak presented his book *In zopet kliče domovina ženo na pomoč* (And Once Again, the Homeland Calls on the Wife for Help),
- The Ethnicity collection published a translation of Marjan Sturm's book *Identiteta brez sovražnika* (Identity Without an Enemy).
- Dr. Katalin Munda Hirnök presented her monograph *Porabje z otroškimi očmi: Pravljlični pogled* (Porabje Through the Eyes of Children: A Fairytale View), which was the result of her research work in Porabje.

- An expanded edition of the monograph *Dr. Vanek Šiftar: Slovenski romolog* (Dr. Vanek Šiftar: Slovenian Romologist) was published.
- The editorial team at INV compiled and prepared special edition monograph called *Raziskovanje etničnosti, razumevanje raznolikosti* (Exploring Ethnicity, Understanding Diversity) to celebrate the 100th anniversary.



In addition to monographic works, the institute has traditionally prepared an issue of its [serial publication](#) *Razprave in gradivo, revija za narodnostna vprašanja* (Treatises and Documents, Journal of Ethnic Studies). The publication is an international journal that publishes articles in the field of ethnic and minority studies, particularly on racial and ethnic relations, ethnic identity, nationalism, xenophobia, the protection of (ethnic, national, linguistic, religious, and other) minorities, migration, discrimination, citizenship, multiculturalism, and related topics.

The institute celebrated its international integration by organizing an international scientific conference entitled "**The Importance of Exploring Ethnicity in the 21st Century**", which took place on May 15 and 16, 2025, in Ljubljana. The event was attended by nearly 100 participants and representatives of the general public from 16 countries, and more than 50 researchers presented their contributions on various ethnic and minority issues in 11 diverse panels.

The full program can be found on the [conference website](#).

In addition to the contributions, we listened to inspiring introductory lectures by three leading figures in the field of ethnic studies:

- Dr. Francesco Palermo (University of Verona and EURAC Research Center, Italy)
- Dr. Maurice Crul (University of Amsterdam, Netherlands)
- Dr. Sonja novak Lukanović (Institute for Ethnic Issues and University of Ljubljana, Slovenia)



In parallel with the events and other activities, guest lecturers gave monthly lectures at the institute. At the invitation of the Institute, the following guests came to Slovenia:

- Dr. Jarmo Lainio gave a lecture entitled "The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages,"
- Dr. Lászlá Göncza lectured on the history of Prekmurje in his lecture "The Path of Prekmurje to the Kingdom of SHS,"
- Dr. Eduardo Ruiz Vieytes presented legislation relating to migration, minorities, and diversity at the local level in his lecture entitled "Migration, Ethnicity, and Religious Diversity: Researching for Policies at the Local Level,"
- Prof. François Grin held a discussion with Dr. Sabina Zorčič on the topic "Current Challenges in Language Policy and Planning,"
- Dr. Andreja Zevnik and Dr. Andrew Russell gave a lecture entitled "The Politics of Unbelonging."

Lectures can be found [here](#).



The main event of the anniversary year took place on Monday, November 17, 2025, when a ceremonial academy was held at the National Gallery in Ljubljana to mark the 100th anniversary of the Institute for Ethnic Studies (INV) entitled "Exploring Ethnicity, Understanding Diversity."

As part of the ceremony, the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Dr. Nataša Pirc Musar, presented the Institute for Ethnic Studies with the Golden Order of Merit, a high state decoration, for its historic contribution to the understanding of national and ethnic relations and the development of scientific and professional knowledge in this field.

The Institute for Ethnic Studies is the first scientific research institute in Slovenia to receive such a high state decoration.

The President of the Republic of Slovenia, Dr. Nataša Pirc Musar, emphasized in her ceremonial address the importance of investing in the study of national and ethnic issues, as it is impossible to formulate appropriate policies without a scientific basis. She particularly emphasised that national issues are not just a matter of the past, but also of the present and the future, enriching our region and holding up a mirror to it. The topics studied by the Institute for Ethnic Studies are more urgent today than ever before, as they are one of the foundations of a modern and tolerant society.

The Minister of Higher Education, Science, and Innovation, Dr. Igor Papič, congratulated the INV, as the institute's work is applicable and relevant today and offers support in finding a balance between technology and the humanities and social sciences amid rapid technological development.

The President of SAZU, Acad. Dr. Peter Štih, outlined the development of the Institute and highlighted the most important milestones to date.

The Director of the Institute for Ethnic Studies, Prof. Dr. Sonja Novak Lukanović, emphasized that the INV contributes to a better society through its scientific work. A hundred years of research into ethnicity and diversity is a celebration for everyone, as research into ethnic diversity is not merely an academic mission, but a reminder of how rich human society is. It is a reminder and an incentive, as well as a moral compass when society needs it, and at the same time a glimpse into the future of how to build an inclusive society and an example of cooperation between different scientific disciplines.



In 2025, the INV also received an award from the City of Ljubljana, which the Municipality of Ljubljana awards to exceptional individuals or institutions from Ljubljana who contribute to the reputation and development of the city of Ljubljana through their achievements and excellence.



INV has received several national honors and awards in the past. In 1995, it received the Silver Medal of Freedom of the Republic of Slovenia from the then President of the Republic of Slovenia, Milan Kučan, for its long-standing systematic and successful study of minority issues in Slovenia and issues relating to the Slovenian national community outside the borders of the Republic of Slovenia. In 2021, on the 30th anniversary of Slovenia's independence, the Institute also received a commemorative medal.