



**Botanic Gardens
Conservation International**

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Prof. Dr. Emil Erjavec, Dean of the Faculty
Prof. Dr. Mihael J. Toman, Pro-dean

8 June 2020

Ref: the Botanical Garden of the University of Ljubljana

Dear Sirs,

I am sending you this email in support of the University's Botanical Garden.

Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) is an international networking organisation linking botanic gardens and arboreta around the world. BGCI provides a wide range of tools, resources and guidelines to support the work of botanic institutions, with a focus on plant conservation, sustainable use and environmental education. BGCI's mission is *to mobilise botanic gardens and engage partners in securing plant diversity for the well-being of people and the planet*. Our members include the largest, most renowned gardens on the planet – Kew, New York, Missouri, Singapore, Sydney and Shanghai – but they also include many smaller gardens situated in the world's plant diversity hotspots. All of these member gardens share a commitment to making sure that no plant species becomes extinct and a combined workforce of many thousands of horticulturalists and scientists working towards that end.

The Botanical Garden of the University of Ljubljana is Slovenia's *national botanic garden* and it is more than 200 years old, making it one of Europe's oldest botanic gardens. It is also hugely respected globally, in Europe and in Slovenia for the work carried out by its staff. Four years ago, Dr Bavcon was awarded the Marsh Christian Award for services to international plant conservation, an award of global importance that is conferred on just one person each year. In addition, over the past two years BGCI has awarded 'botanic garden' and 'conservation practitioner' accreditation to the University botanical garden, based on a rigorous evaluation, and confirming that the University's botanical garden is world class. With accreditation comes a commitment to at least maintain standards for a minimum period of five years. It is therefore with some dismay that I read that the university is due to demolish important parts of the garden, including an entrance, 450 m² of glasshouses that house important collections, and a cherry tree orchard.

National botanic gardens are cultural icons in the same way that national museums are. More importantly, they are centres of conservation, research, specialist horticulture and public engagement. At this time of heightened environmental and social challenges they have never been more vital - we need to prevent plant species extinctions and we need to provide safe outdoor spaces for people. Botanical gardens do both. I urge you to reconsider how much of a priority the botanical garden is for the University and for Slovenia, and to revise your plans accordingly.

Yours sincerely

Dr Paul P. Smith
Secretary General
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