



**Union Internationale de Spéléologie**

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August 1, 2024

**Supporters of UIS International Year of Caves and Karst 2021**

Dear colleagues,

**PROPOSAL FOR INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CAVES AND KARST**

I am writing on behalf of the International Union of Speleology (UIS), a member of the International Science Council, to seek your support for an initiative to recognize and preserve the natural and cultural heritage of caves and karst landscapes worldwide. We propose that UNESCO establish September 13 as the International Day of Caves and Karst.

In 2021, UIS launched the "UIS International Year of Caves and Karst," with a meeting at UNESCO headquarters in Paris on September 13. Extended into 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the international year aimed to enhance exploration, research, management, education, and international cooperation in the field of caves and karst. Over 1,100 activities were reported by national speleological and other professional organizations from 65 countries, including the release of the second edition of the "Guidelines for Cave and Karst Protection" by UIS and IUCN.

Building on this success, on August 1, 2022 the UIS General Assembly, proposed establishing a UNESCO Day of Caves and Karst. This proposal received unanimous support from all UIS national delegates. The goal is to dedicate a day to education, conservation, and public awareness of caves and karst systems, promoting global recognition and sustainable management of these vital environments.

Your support is crucial for the success of this proposal. The Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO has already pledged its support, and we are reaching out to other organizations and stakeholders to build a broad coalition of support for this initiative.

We kindly ask for your letter of support for the establishment of the International Day of Caves and Karst with sending the support letter to the UIS.

Your endorsement will significantly strengthen our proposal and help us achieve recognition and protection for these invaluable natural environments.

Thank you for considering our request. We look forward to your positive response and to working together to promote the conservation and sustainable management of caves and karst globally.

Yours sincerely,

Nadja Zupan Hajna



President of International Union of Speleology (UIS)

Enclosures:

- UIS Proposal for International Day of Caves and Karst
- IUCN CKWG Support Letter

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Please let me know if you need any adjustments or additional information included in the letter.