

## LAUDATIO FOR Dr. h. c. prof. Ing. MIKULÁŠ ŠUPÍN, CSc.



This year, Professor Mikuláš Šupín, former rector of the university, dean of the Faculty of Wood Sciences and Technology, and founder of the Department of Marketing, Trade, and World Forestry, celebrated a significant life anniversary.

Dr. h. c. prof. Ing. Mikuláš Šupín, CSc., was born on March 16, 1953, in Ružina, Lučenec district. In 1976, he completed his Master's studies at the Faculty of Wood Sciences and Technology at the University of Forestry and Wood Sciences and Technology in Zvolen in the field of Mechanical Wood Technology. He started working as a researcher at the Research and Development Institute of the Wood and Furniture Industry Bratislava – the workplace in Fil'akovo. In 1977, he was hired as an assistant professor at the Department of World Forestry and Wood Science at the Faculty of Wood Sciences and Technology at the University of Forestry and Wood Sciences and Technology in Zvolen. As a university teacher, he focused on world forestry, world wood resources, international trade, timber trade, sales science, marketing, digital marketing, timber marketing, global marketing, international management, international economic relations, forest economics and management, and cross-sectoral economies in all three degrees of study in the fields – 3.3.16 Economics and Enterprise Management, 3.3.20 Sectoral Economies and Management, 5.2.42 Woodworking, 5.2.43 Wood-processing Technology, 5.2.45 Constructions and Manufacturing Processes of Wood Products. He introduced and guaranteed courses, gave lectures, and developed several university textbooks in the fields of world forestry, marketing, international management, trade, and international economic relations.

In the years 1981 – 1990, the Section of World Forestry and Wood Science was part of the Department of Economics and Forestry Management (KERLH) of the Faculty of Forestry of the University of Forestry and Wood Sciences and Technology in Zvolen, where, in addition to being an assistant professor, Professor Šupín served as secretary and later as a deputy head of the Department. After returning to the Faculty of Wood Sciences and Technology in 1991, he was appointed the head of the Department of World Forestry and Wood Science. He became its head after establishing the Department of Marketing, Trade, and World Forestry of the Faculty of Wood Sciences and Technology in 1997.

The changes after November 1989 also affected the Faculty of Wood Sciences and Technology of the TU in Zvolen, mainly because since its establishment in 1952 it was conceived as the only one in Czechoslovakia. In 1992, Professor Šupín served as a vice-dean of the Faculty of Wood Sciences and Technology for Foreign Relations, and in the same year, he became the dean of the Faculty of Wood Sciences and Technology. He held the position for two terms (1992 – 1998). Among other proposals, in his speech before the academic community, he suggested measures to increase the number of people interested in studying at the Faculty of Wood Sciences and Technology TU in Zvolen after losing the opportunity to be a federal faculty.

During his tenure as a dean of the Faculty of Wood Sciences and Technology, a credit system was introduced in the study field of Wood Engineering and, among other fields, a

completely new study field of Enterprise Management was created, which in its concept represented university studies with a more profound practical orientation of students (two so-called combined semesters with teaching were introduced in practice) and enabled the education of highly qualified experts – managers in accordance with the requirements of the labour market. At the same time, it also became the supporting programme of the newly introduced distance education. The guarantor of the study programme was Professor Šupín. For the preparation of this form of education, the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic provided funds in accordance with the Distance Education Act, including the possibility of obtaining payments from part-time students. The funds could be used to motivate teachers to prepare textbooks and teach. The distance form was designed for the Faculty of Wood Sciences and Technology and the newly founded University of the Third Age. The Faculty of Wood Sciences and Technology obtained the right to conduct PhD studies in four fields in full-time and part-time form through accreditation. The guarantor of the Department of Sectoral and Cross-Sectional Economics, specialization Economics of Trade and Industry, was Professor Šupín, who was also a member of the Trade Union Commission for the Slovak Republic.

These and other changes led to new Faculty of Wood Sciences and Technology departments. In 1995, the Department of Furniture and Wood Product Design was established. In 1997, the Department of Marketing, Trade and World Forestry was established. In 1998, the Department of Fire Protection was appointed as a new separate department of the Faculty of Wood Sciences and Technology.

Reforms of the educational process at the Faculty of Wood Sciences and Technology in the years 1992 – 98, when the dean of the Faculty of Wood Sciences and Technology was Dr. h. c. prof. Ing. M Šupín, CSc., stabilized the position of the Faculty of Wood Sciences and Technology even after the dissolution of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic. Among other things, he was also responsible for increasing the interest of potential applicants in studying at the Faculty. While less than 150 students were accepted in 1992 (compared to the planned 250), in 1998, more than 1550 applicants applied, of which more than 900 applied to Enterprise Management. Since 1997, the new direction of the Faculty of Wood Sciences and Technology scientific research activity has become the direction entitled Wood Valuation by its Transformation into New Generation Products Forming a Complex Interior. In December 1998, Professor Šupín was elected as chairman of the Academic Senate of the TU in Zvolen (1998 – 2001).

In 2001, Professor Šupín became the rector of the Technical University in Zvolen. The Slovak Rectors' Conference elected the rector of the TU in Zvolen as vice president of the Slovak Rectors' Conference and a representative of the Slovak Rectors' Conference in the European Association of Universities. As a rector, he faced significant changes regarding Slovakia's higher education. Above all, it was Law No. 131 on Higher Education and on Changes and Supplements to Some Laws. The TU in Zvolen ceased to exist as a state budget organization; 2002 it became a public university. It was connected to numerous organizational changes and, inevitably, new strategic goals, including implementing a three-degree study model and the university's integration into the European Research and Education Area.

During his time at the TU Zvolen, Professor Šupín was the principal investigator and co-investigator in more than fifty scientific research projects here and abroad, including research on the composition of tropical forests in Africa and Asia, Food and Agricultural Organization projects, the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme of the European Union, COST,

VEGA, and KEGA. It has 232 registered outputs of publishing activity. It has a total of 596 recorded citations. He supervised more than 150 bachelor and master theses and trained 25 PhD. students – five of them were international students.

Dr. h. c. prof. Mikuláš Šupín, CSc. in the post of Chief State Counsellor – Superior, Director General, Division of Science and Technology – Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic and Secretary of the Government Council of the Slovak Republic for Science and Technology confirmed to the development of science and technology in Slovakia in the years 2006 – 2011. Equally important is his representation of the Slovak Republic in international organizations (ČSAV, IUFRO, EUA, CERN, JRC EU, OECD EU), functions and membership in Slovak authorities (Government Council, APVV) and membership in professional organizations (WoodEMA), commissions and scientific councils of domestic and foreign universities.

We wish Dr. h. c. prof. Ing. Mikuláš Šupín, CSc., for his life jubilee, good health, and the successful fulfilment of other goals.

The members of the Department of Marketing, Trade and World Forestry.