



Get to know the corrosion fighters

They have told us their story, how will yours be?

↘ **KLARA PRIJATELJ**

Winner of the student grant to access the
Nuclear Corrosion Summer School

Could you give us a little presentation of yourself?

I am Klara, a young researcher, employed at Slovenian National Building and Civil Engineering Institute. I am a first year PhD student and I am eager to learn new knowledge in the field of nuclear waste disposal. In 2022, I received my master's degree at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Engineering, Slovenia. In the same year, I got the opportunity to continue my studies and decided to pursue a PhD in corrosion science.



What do your studies consist of?

My studies consist of lectures, seminars, experiments and general research curiosity. The aim of my research is to determine how surface oxides affect the corrosion properties of copper used in nuclear waste disposal containers.

What is its relation with nuclear corrosion?

My studies involve the corrosion of copper and steel, which are materials used for nuclear waste containers. It is important to know and understand the corrosion processes that take place on a container in certain environments.

What do you like the most about nuclear corrosion?

Nuclear corrosion is a very complex area to study. It is important to pay attention to many things that can affect the corrosion of nuclear waste containers. Even a small change in the composition of groundwater or bentonite has a significant effect on corrosion properties during long-term exposure of containers. Through my research, I hope to contribute to safe and reliable solutions - the construction of permanent storage facilities.

How did you get here? How did you discover this world?

I first discover the world of corrosion with my master's degree, where I studied the corrosion properties of aluminized steel. After master's degree, my supervisor presented to me a PhD subject about nuclear corrosion. It was very interesting and I knew I want to pursue a career in corrosion science.

If you didn't dedicate yourself to study this field, what would you have liked to do?

If I hadn't studied material science, I probably would have become a manicurist.

Where do you see yourself in the future?

Il hope to be a good researcher and contribute to the field of corrosion science.

Do you think networking will be important to get there?

Yes, I think networking is very important, because that is how you meet different people and get to know colleagues for possible future collaborations. Through networking, you also hear different opinions, aspects, perspectives and ideas for solutions regardless of your field. And it is always great to meet new people.

Do you think the nuclear corrosion field needs more visibility?

Yes, more visibility is needed. I only heard of the field of nuclear corrosion when it was presented to me by my PhD supervisor. I think it is necessary to familiarize students with the current issues of corrosion already in college, since corrosion of materials has a large economic, social and environmental impact.

In your opinion, what is the single most valuable attribute a researcher should have?

From my opinion, a researcher should have curios mind.

What advice would you give to students in an early stage of their careers?

At the initial stage of their research career, I advise them to be determined and curious, because the beginning is sometimes difficult, but you just have to keep on going.

Could you say what it is and how you see the future of engineers/corrosion scientists?

The future is bright for corrosion engineers and scientist. Every day, scientists are working on new materials and technologies, so corrosion processes will always be present and a corrosion scientist will always be needed.

Corrosionist... is it born or made?

Made.

TO END... COULD YOU TELL US...

- **A color:** Orange
- **A number:** 12
- **A song:** Prinesi mi rože (Stanka Kovačič)
- **A hobby:** Puzzles