

**ISRM Newsletter No 50 – June 2020****Message from the President**

Dear Rock Mechanics Colleagues,

In the March 2020 issue of the ISRM Newsletter, I finished my message with the following sentence: “Finally, a word of hope. We know that there is light at the end of the tunnel, even if we still do not see it. Let us join our forces so that we reach it rather sooner than later.” Nowadays, although it seems that the World will continue to fight the Covid-19 pandemic, which has affected each and every one of us in many ways, some lights giving us hopes are seen and we can clearly see the whole light at the end of the tunnel if we can seriously protect ourselves.

Since 19 September 2019, when the present Board took over the mission from the previous Board, we completed about nine months of activity as the governing body of our Society. I am very glad to emphasize that throughout this period the Board members worked in harmony and enthusiasm and our Secretariat in Lisbon was efficient as usual. We feel especially pleased because we continued to realize the ISRM works and some of our plans in this period despite the influence of the pandemic. One of them was the establishment of the new commission “ISRM Commission on Planetary Rock Mechanics”, which was approved by the Board in the beginning of May. We believe that this will be an interesting commission providing new horizons for our Society. Information on the commission is available from the ISRM webpage.

We are very grateful to the DRC (Slovenian Society for Research in Road and Traffic Infrastructure), SLOGED (Slovenian Geotechnical Society) and IRGO (Institute for Mining, Geotechnology and Environment) for the organization of a very successful and fruitful ISRM Workshop in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 31 January 2020. The members of the newly elected Board and representatives of the ISRM National Groups of the Balkans region delivered lectures. In the Board meeting following the Workshop, several agenda items were discussed by the Board members in a very cordial atmosphere for two days.

The 30th ISRM On-line Lecture with the title “Contact Theory and Algorithms for Discontinuous Computations” was delivered by Prof. Gen-Hua Shi in June 2020. Two lecturers for the 31<sup>st</sup> and the 32<sup>nd</sup> on-line lectures have also been invited and they have already accepted.

The Board pays prime attention to continuing the development and publication of the ISRM Book Series. A new book to be published in this series was submitted to the publisher in May. The title of the book, which has nine chapters and six appendices and was written by Ömer Aydan, is “Continuum and Computational Mechanics for Geomechanicians”.

During the difficult times most of our colleagues are living, due the Covid-19 pandemic, the ISRM decided to give access to the general public to all ISRM courses available on the website. We plan to keep this until the end of July. We are also considering an open-access educational initiative, such as courses on rock mechanics and rock engineering to provide technical and educational content that can be used by practicing engineers and graduate students, which can then be expanded to undergraduate students.

The Board is also now working on the selection of the winner and runners-up of the ISRM Rocha Medal, who will be officially announced during the Council meeting in Trondheim, Norway, in October. This year,

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two new awards, the “John Hudson Rock Engineering Award” and the “Science Achievement Award” will be given for the first time. The winners of these awards have been selected by their Evaluation Committees and were approved by the Board in May and June, respectively. The winners will receive their awards at the International Symposium of the ISRM, EUROCK2020, in Trondheim.

In 2008, a survey was conducted to score ISRM in achieving its goals and search new trends. Since then, no other ISRM survey has been made. We believe such surveys are important to encourage international collaboration and exchange of ideas and information between rock mechanics practitioners, to encourage teaching, research, and advancement of knowledge in rock mechanics, and to promote high standards of professional practice among rock engineers so that civil, mining and petroleum engineering works might be safer, more economic and less disruptive to the environment. Considering this, the Board discussed on the preliminary survey questions which were prepared by a group consisting of three Board members, and this group continues to prepare the final survey. We believe we could get the survey done during 2020.

I do hope that the pandemic will not affect again the two ISRM activities, the ISRM International Symposium 2020 – EUROCK2020 (Trondheim, Norway) and the ISRM Specialized Conference 5th Symposium of the Macedonian Association of Geotechnics (Ohrid, Macedonia), which have been postponed to 12-14 and 29-31 October 2020, respectively. The same can be said concerning the ISRM Specialized Conference Coufrac2020, planned for 11-13 November 2020 in Seoul, Korea.

We sincerely thank the Organizing Committee of EUROCK2020 for their kind acceptance of the request by the Board to give the names of one of our past presidents, Professor Pierre Habib, and of two friends, colleagues and mentors, Professors Giovanni Barla and Ove Stephansson, who passed away in 2019 and 2020, respectively, to three sessions to honour their memory and their great contributions to our field and our Society for decades.

In order to strengthen the collaboration and knowledge exchange among the four societies (ISSMGE, ISRM, IAEG and IGS) forming FedIGS, as one of the possible ways, invitation of one speaker from other three societies to give lecture in the Congress of that society has been thought to be very useful. ISRM did it twice: in the 2015 ISRM Congress in Montreal, Canada, and in the 2019 ISRM Congress in Brazil. Upon the invitation by the President of ISSMGE, an expert from our society will give a plenary lecture in their Congress (20<sup>th</sup> ICSMGE) which will be held in Sydney, Australia, in September 2021.

Unfortunately, every year we have relevant people dying. Recently, Prof. François Cornet, who died suddenly of a heart attack on 23 May 2020, became the most recent great loss of our field. He specialized in measurement and modelling of stress fields, rock-fluid interactions, and development of in situ, geophysical laboratories. He will be missed by many colleagues and friends.

Please do monitor your own health closely, take care of you and stay safe.

I wish all of you the best



Reşat Ulusay