

ISRM Newsletter No 54 – June 2021

Message from the President

Dear Rock Mechanics colleagues,

Following a difficult year in 2020 due to Covid-19, we all also continue to navigate the challenges of the pandemic in this year. Last year we could not have imagined how the world would respond to the fight against Covid-19. But now a rapid increase in the rate of vaccination with the determination and dedication of the scientists in the world and the measures seriously taken by many countries against the pandemic give us great hopes to achieve better conditions on the way back to normality. Therefore, in these difficult days, ISRM also continued the use of techniques, such as video conferences, webinars and similar tools, for the communication with its members and continuation of its activities. I am glad to update you on the news and activities in our society that are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Since April, the Board continued to work on the planned issues and became in constant dialogue with the organizing committees of the ISRM events planned in 2021. The organizing committee of EUROCK 2021, the ISRM international symposium, that will be held in Turin, Italy, has been working hard to guarantee an event in presence but unfortunately, the pandemic situation and its resolution is still uncertain, and therefore, they had to evaluate the possibility of guaranteeing the conference online via live links and downloadable recordings. 5th Early Career Forum postponed to this year will also be held in this event. As ISRM, we would like to show our deep appreciation for the kind work of the Organizing Committee and of the Italian National Group for Rock Mechanics, who did everything they could to go ahead with the organization of this event.

ARMS 11, was postponed to this year, will be held on 21-25 October 2021 in Beijing. In order to avoid the influence of Covid-19, the organizing Committee of ARMS11 decided to organize ARMS11 both online and offline. For those who cannot travel internationally, they can choose to attend ARMS11 online. 5th International Workshop on Rock Mechanics and Engineering Geology in Volcanic Fields is another ISRM regional conference, that will be held on 9-11 September in Fukuoka, Japan, as a hybrid conference in order to minimize the impact of the virus. 9th International Symposium on Geomechanics will also be held on 5-6 May 2021 in Colombia as a virtual ISRM Specialized Conference. Some ISRM specialized conferences have had to be postponed again as health and safety take precedence while global travel restrictions cause uncertainty, but we believe they will still be going ahead. These include 5th Symposium of the Macedonian Association for Geotechnics (June 2022) and 9th Brazilian Rock Mechanics Symposium (August 2022). We thank to all organizers for their continued dedication in ensuring these face-to-face events will prevail. Despite the postponement of these important events, we are glad to see the growth of webinars and online events allowing members and non-members to continue learning and networking from their homes or offices.

The Board organized the first interim meeting of 2021 in June where 24 agenda items were discussed and several relevant decisions were taken. First time in ISRM, the Technical Oversight Committee (TOC) organized a meeting with the Chairmen of the ISRM Commissions on 3rd of May. In this meeting with the participation of all Commissions' Chairmen and myself, some important issues such as "collaboration among the Commissions", "how can the TOC assist you in achieving the goals of the Commissions?", "course or video lectures by the Commissions" and "publication of the Commissions' products in the ISRM Book Series" were discussed and it was decided that the Commissions should increase the contributions on the above issues.

34th ISRM On-line Lecture on "Rock Slope Engineering" was delivered by Prof. Doug Stead on 24 June. We thank to him for his time and kind contribution to ISRM. The next two On-line Lectures of this year will be delivered by Professors Christine Detournay and Michael Alber in September and December, respectively.

As the digital developments, our members, students and engineers can hear from some of the ISRM's eminent experts via our new video courses. The most recent two new courses on "Monitoring Data Interpretation" and "Rock Mass Characterization and Monitoring based on Advanced Remote Sensing Techniques" are also available in our website now. I am glad to inform you that four new video courses on "rock burst", "ground control considerations in long-wall mining", "rock dynamics" and "rock slope stability", which are in preparation, will also appear in our website soon. Not only the ISRM members, but also everyone can benefit from these video courses.

The ISRM also pays attention to the publication of new books included in the ISRM Book Series, based on the agreement with CRC Press. The book entitled "Continuum and Computational Mechanics for Geomechanical

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Engineers", written by Prof. Ömer Aydan, was published in April 2021 as the first book of this series in this year. The next book of the series will be the product of the ISRM Commission on Underground Nuclear Power Plants and it is expected to be published this year.

There is interest amongst young members to form associations and collaborate. This can benefit ISRM. The Board and the ISRM Young Members Committee (YMC) pay attention on "How ISRM can provide platform for these groups to achieve their goals whilst enabling sustainability of the society into next generations". For this purpose, based on the comments by the EMC, the ISRM initiatives for consideration are establishing "ISRM Students' Chapters", "ISRM Young Members' Groups", "Young Members' monthly seminars" and "ISRM You Tube channel".

After 2008, a new ISRM survey form has been prepared by the ISRM-YMC and approved by the Board and is ready to be sent out to the rock mechanics community. It is planned to be sent to the community after the new ISRM website is tested and launched probably in July.

I am also glad to inform you that the number of the candidates for the ISRM awards are increasing each year. This year we received 23 PhD theses for the Rocha Medal Award, and 5 and 12 candidates applied for the "Technological Innovation Award" and "Young Rock Engineering Award", which will be given first time in 2021, respectively.

We continue to translate the ISRM Glossary into new languages and Vietnam and Hungary are on their way. In addition, creation of new videos for the ISRM Suggested Methods is still continued with contribution of colleagues from our society.

After 2009, this year a new ISRM Lecture Tour will be organized in areas of interest in rock mechanics and rock engineering for ISRM National Groups in Latin America. Due to the pandemic conditions, it will be organized as a virtual Lecture Tour and first the courses will be delivered to the members from Latin America and then they will be put in the ISRM website to be listened by all ISRM members.

The deadline for presentation of nominations for the next ISRM President, for the term of office 2023-2027, was over to the end of April and three nominations were received. The videos of their background and intentions can be watched on the ISRM website, where the candidates' nomination documents are also available. We wish successes to all candidates.

I wish all of you the best, healthy days and successes.



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