

**ISRM Newsletter No 63 – September 2023  
Message from the President**

Dear ISRM colleagues and friends,

We are approaching the end of the term (2019-2023) of office of the current Board. In the mid of October 2023, other colleagues will substitute us in the command of our Society under the leadership of our dear colleague Prof. Seokwon Jeon. Particularly 2020 and 2021 have been difficult years for the whole world due to the Covid-19 pandemic as we all know. I think all the Board members can look behind and be proud of the work developed in these four years serving our Society.

We sincerely thank to the Presidents of our National Groups for their participation and collaboration in the activities proposed by the Board. We feel especially pleased because our Society has continued to grow since the start of this present term of office. We succeeded in bringing 3 countries, Mongolia (2019), Sri Lanka (2022) and most recently Bangladesh (2023), to join us as new members of ISRM. We have now 59 National Groups. In addition, Romania intends to return to ISRM and Botswana is in the process of establishing a national group. We started in the mid of September 2019 with 8500 individual members and have now 9300 members. We had also a growth in the number of corporate members which are now 172.

In 2023, one interim Board meeting was held in May and the annual Board meeting will be held on 8 October in Salzburg, Austria, preceding the ISRM Commissions and Council meetings on 10 October. As done in the previous years, until the end of September 2023, ISRM organized three on-line Lectures which were given by Profs. Norikazu Shimizu, Antonio Bobet and Anna Maria Ferrero. As ISRM Board, we thank these lecturers for their kind contributions.

In 2023, the present Board continued to work with the following three Committees that were very successful: (i) the Technical Oversight Committee (TOC) analysed in detail the work of the 14 ISRM technical Commissions and the Commissions have been informed on the evaluations and suggestions by the TOC and Board; (ii) since 2017 the Early Career Forums have been regularly organized. The organization of these Forums by the ISRM Education Fund was possible due to the financial contribution of the ISRM and China, which shared the expenses with travelling and accommodation of the young participants, for the success of the Forum. It provides many benefits to young participants. The 8th Early Career forum in 2023 will be held in the 15th ISRM Congress in Salzburg, Austria, with the presentations by young engineers from six countries in Europe; (iii) the Young Members Committee, which looks after and encourages the participation of young members to ISRM, also organized a new initiative "Young Members Seminar Series" and provided a great contribution to the preparation, realization and evaluation of the most recent ISRM Survey.

The ISRM has been creating a collection of video courses in the field of Rock Mechanics and Rock Engineering. In the end of 2022 two new courses on "rockburst in deep tunnels" and "crustal stress assessment and its application in engineering and earthquake research" were included in the list of ISRM video courses. In 2023 the first part of a new course on "slope engineering" was included. The total number of such courses between the term of office 2019-2023 reached to nine.

The ISRM Commissions have been working actively in the last year. I am glad to inform you that the preparation of new ISRM Suggested Methods (SM) to guide a variety of important rock mechanics tests still continues with an increasing number. A new SM is under evaluation by the Commission on Testing Methods,

*Prof. Dr Reşat Ulusay  
President*

one SM is under review by five experts, six SMs are under preparation by several working groups and three new SM proposals are under revision based on the comments by the Commission. By considering that there are eight Suggested Methods already published in the journal "Rock Mechanics and Rock Engineering" after 2014 and in case of the approval and publication of the new SMs mentioned above in 2024 or until the mid of 2025, these methods will be compiled in a new ISRM Suggested Methods Book to be published in 2025. Videos of three SMs are also in preparation with the contribution of some universities.

From September to December 2023, we will have the 15th ISRM Congress (11-13 October, Salzburg, Austria) and three ISRM Specialized Conferences (10th Nordic Grouting Symposium, Stockholm, Sweden, 11-13 September; 1st Chilean Rock Mechanics Congress, 22-24 November; 1st SLRMES Conference on Rock Mechanics, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 2-7 December) which have been regularly announced in our website, Newsletter and News Journal.

At this moment, the Board is working on the selection of the winner and runners-up of the ISRM Rocha Medal for 2024, who will be publicly announced during the Council meeting in Salzburg. This year 19 candidates applied with their PhD theses. We are very glad with the number of the applicants for this award between 2019 and 2023 and it ranged between 19 and 21. Müller Award, Rocha Medal, ISRM Fellow, Franklin Lecture, Technological Invention Award, Best Performing National Group Award, Outstanding Commission Award and Young Rock Engineer Best Paper Award are the awards that will be given in the 15th ISRM Congress in Salzburg.

In this year, the Board also paid prime attention to continue the publication of ISRM Book Series. The books in this category are published to promote the scientific output of the ISRM. At this moment two new books with titles "Abandoned Room and Pillar Mines and Remediation Measures (Prof. Ömer Aydan)" and "Underground Nuclear Power Plants (ISRM Commission on UNPP chaired by Prof Shun Sakurai)" were already submitted to CRC Press. We hope our other technical Commissions will also publish their products in this book series.

The yearly hard-copy issue of the ISRM News Journal was published in the beginning of this year and the on-line Newsletters are issued every three months. The website and the ISRM Digital Library have been constantly updated and we now have the proceedings of many past conferences, with their respective papers, available for download.

The last annual meeting of the Board of the Federation of International Geo-Engineering Societies (FedIGS), of which the ISRM is a founding member, was held on 21 September 2022 as a video conference and chaired by its new President, Prof. Chungsik Yoo. This year its annual meeting will be held on 9 October in Salzburg, Austria, and ISRM will be the host of this meeting with the participation of the President, the Immediate Past President Dr. Eda Quadros and the Secretary General Dr. Luis Lamas to debate co-operation with the sister societies ISSMGE, IAEG and IGS.

To the end of 2020, upon the request by the International Tunneling Association (ITA), a report on a possible cooperation between ISRM and ITA was prepared by the ISRM and sent to the President of ITA before a formal meeting between the two societies. But no response has been received from ITA. In 2022, the new President of ITA, Prof. Arnold Dix, and his Vice President, Prof. Jamal Rostami, contacted me for asking possibility of a cooperation between ISRM and ITA. We sent them updated version of the ISRM report written in 2020. I am very glad to inform you that the ITA President kindly accepted to attend the annual ISRM Board meeting to discuss the details of an agreement for this cooperation and also the ISRM Council meeting that will be held in Salzburg in this October. We believe that realization of this cooperation between ISRM and ITA would be beneficial for both societies.

*Prof. Dr Reşat Ulusay  
President*

The European Rock Mechanics Debate, which was initiated in 2021, aims at stimulating communication among academics and practitioners of rock mechanics and rock engineering in Europe. The debates are held online as Zoom meetings and they are broadcast on the ISRM YouTube channel. This year two debates (Numbers 3 and 4) were organized in January and June by Leandro Alejano, Philippe Vaskou and Charlie Li.

ISRM Advisory Forum was established in 2011 and the 1st Forum was held in the ISRM Congress in Beijing in 2011. It is organized at every two years and is chaired by the ISRM President and all ISRM Fellows and past and present Board members are invited to attend this forum and discuss on 2 or 3 issues selected by the Board. Since the beginning of the forums, the discussions and comments by the Fellows became very useful guides for the Boards. The 7th Advisory Forum will be held in Salzburg during the ISRM Congress.

Before I finish I would like to thank the Vice Presidents, the Secretary General and the Secretariat in Lisbon for their strong collaboration and contributions given by the National Groups and their members for the success of our activities in 2023.

I am looking forward to seeing you in the 15<sup>th</sup> ISRM Congress that will be held in October in Salzburg, Austria.

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

Resat Ulusay

