

**ISRM Newsletter No 62 – June 2023****Message from the President**

Dear Colleagues,

After the normalization of the human life, that was considerably affected by the Covid 19 pandemic throughout 2020 and 2021 in the whole World, as for other societies, 2022 became a positive year for ISRM and its face-to-face events have been successfully realized. The existence of positive conditions in terms of the pandemic in 2023 also enabled the continuation of ISRM activities successfully.

We feel especially pleased because our Society continues to grow. After the membership of Sri Lanka to ISRM in the second half of 2022, it is with great pleasure that we welcome the Bangladesh Society for Rock Mechanics (BSRM) in April 2023 as the new ISRM National Group. With the participation of Bangladesh to ISRM family, the total number of ISRM National Groups reached 59.

This year our Society is the sponsor of four specialized conferences. Since the 15th ISRM Congress will be held this year, the number of ISRM conferences in 2023 is less when compared with those in previous years, because no Regional Symposia take place in the year of the Congress. The ISRM specialized conferences are: 10th Nordic Grouting Symposium, 11-13 September 2023, Stockholm, Sweden; 1st SLRMES Conference on Rock Mechanics for Infrastructure and Geo-Resources Development, 2-7 December 2023, Colombo, Sri Lanka; 1st Chilean Congress in Rock Mechanics, 29 November-1 December 2023, Lima, Peru. The 15th ISRM Congress will be held in conjunction with the 72nd Geomechanics Colloquium between 11 and 13 October 2023 in Salzburg (Austria), where the ISRM was founded in 1962. The congress is organized by the Austrian Society for Geomechanics. The Organizing Committee prepares an interesting and attractive scientific program, organizes site visits to tunnel and rock engineering projects, short courses, workshops and seminars. I am also glad to inform you that during this Congress, the 8th Early Career Forum for young engineers will be organized by the ISRM Education Fund Committee under the support of the ISRM, the National Group of China and the National Group of Austria. In addition, the 8th international edition of the very popular rock mechanics game between university students, "RockBowl", will also be organized during the ISRM Congress.

The focus of the Board on the improvement of our virtual platform also continues in this year and a new ISRM video course on "Slope Engineering" was prepared by Prof. Wu Shunchuan from Kunming University of Science and Technology, China. The first three parts in a total of 8 lectures of this course were added in our website. Another video course is also in preparation and will appear in the ISRM website this year.

The series of European Rock Mechanics Debates (ERMD) continues with an increasing interest. 3rd ERMD on "Different approaches for tunnelling: Empirical, observational, modelling" was held in January 2023 with the participation of Dr Nick Barton (Norway) and Prof. Yossef H. Hatzor (Israel). The 4th ERMD with Prof. Wulf Schubert (Austria) and Prof. Krishna Kanta Panthi (Norway) was held on 19 June. Its title is "Two

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different tunnelling approaches: The New Austrian Tunnelling Method (NATM) and the Norwegian Method of Tunnelling". Both debates were moderated by Dr Philippe Vaskou from France.

One of the most important activities of ISRM to which the Board pays attention is the "On-line Lectures" series. The first two ISRM On-line Lectures of this year with titles "Monitoring rock displacements using satellite technology" and "The mechanics and imaging of slip along frictional discontinuities" were delivered by Prof. Norikazu Shimizu (Japan) and Prof. Antonio Bobet (USA) in March and June, respectively.

In the first half of this year, the Board organized one virtual interim meeting on 20 May. The annual meetings of the ISRM Board, ISRM Commissions and ISRM Council will be held in Salzburg, Austria, between 8 and 10 October before the 15th ISRM Congress. In addition, the 2023 annual meeting of FedIGS will be held on 9 October in Salzburg, hosted by the ISRM, with participation of four sister societies: ISSMGE, IGS, IAEG and ISRM, and ISRM.

The International Tunnelling Association (ITA) is an engineering society involved with various aspects of tunnelling and underground space utilization. There are some common topics between ISRM and ITA, and some possible means of collaboration, which are in accordance with the goals and principles of ITA and ISRM. Therefore, we believe that the cooperation between these societies will benefit not only both ISRM and ITA, but also the industries of tunnelling and underground construction as a whole. We are in contact with the new Executive Committee of the ITA for cooperation with this international society.

Since 2020 it is a great pleasure for us receiving PhD theses between 19 and 21 which are nominated for the Rocha Medal Award. For the year 2024 we received 19 theses and at this moment, the Board is working on the selection of the winner and runners-up of this award. An invitation is now being extended to the whole Rock Mechanics for nominations for the Rocha Medal Award in 2025. Each nomination shall comply with the ISRM By-law No. 7, namely as concerns articles 2 and 3, and shall be received by the ISRM Secretary General not later than 31 December 2023.

We will be grateful and very happy to see you again in the 15th ISRM Congress in Salzburg in this October and other coming ISRM events.

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



Reşat Ulusay