Prof. Seokwon Jeon
President

ISRM Newsletter No 72 – December 2025
Message from the President

Dear ISRM colleagues,

As 2025 draws to a close, I hope you are finding a moment to pause and reflect on the this year. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks and warm congratulations to all ISRM colleagues for your dedication, hard work, and accomplishments over the past year.

Over the last year, ISRM has recorded a number of noteworthy milestones, both large and small. Above all, EUROCK 2025, held in June in Trondheim, Norway, as ISRM 2025 International Symposium, was an outstanding success. With more than 400 participants, the program featured the Rocha Medal Lecture and the Franklin Lecture, seven keynote lectures, and over 200 paper presentations, giving rise to lively and wide-ranging discussions. The event also included the induction ceremony for three ISRM Fellows, along with the presentation of several awards and honors. At the 10th Early Career Forum, six young scholars presented their work, making it a particularly meaningful occasion. I would like to congratulate all presenters and award recipients on their excellent achievements, and to express my sincere appreciation to Henki Ødegaard and Jorge Terron, the Organizing Committee Chairs, for their tireless efforts in making the symposium such a success.

Ahead of the symposium, the ISRM Council Meeting was convened. During the meeting, the election for the next President took place, and Sérgio Fontoura (Brazil) was elected to serve as ISRM President for the 2027–2031 term. Please join me in congratulating our President-elect and wishing him every success as he leads our Society forward.

During the event, the Advisory Forum brought together 22 Fellows, together with past and current officers, to discuss two key themes: the impact of AI on ISRM activities and diversity within ISRM membership. We shared a common view that AI is already having a significant influence on research, international collaboration, education and training, and the dissemination of knowledge. Despite the technical challenges ahead, we agreed that ISRM should respond proactively by preparing dedicated sessions at future international events to discuss the latest developments. In particular, we recommended the creation of an open international database of rock mechanics and engineering data to provide high-quality resources for training and benchmarking AI models, and we agreed to explore the use of AI in academic publishing under strict expert supervision as a means of accelerating the preparation of monographs, guidelines, and educational resources. Regarding diversity, we acknowledged that our membership profile remains uneven in terms of age, gender, and regional representation, and that a more systematic, data-informed approach will be needed to guide future actions.

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I would also like to congratulate the Commissions on Soft Rocks, Rockburst, Radioactive Waste Disposal, Bio-Rock Mechanics, and DDA, as well as other Commissions, on their successful conferences and workshops this year, and to thank the Commission Chairs, members, and all participants for their valuable contributions.

As previously shared, within FedIGS, the four sister societies have reaffirmed their joint commitment to hosting the Geo-Engineering International Conference in 2030, and a Planning Task Force Group is currently in operation. An announcement calling for proposals to host the event is planned for early 2026, and I encourage interested National Groups to consider this opportunity and begin internal discussions.

This year, our community also lost one of the great teachers of rock mechanics. Professor Richard Goodman has left an enduring legacy, and the achievements and memories he shared with us will be long remembered. An online memorial event was held in March to honor his work, during which many contributions and personal recollections were shared. I would like to express special thanks to Yossef Hatzor and to the Chair and members of the Commission on DDA for their efforts in organizing this meaningful tribute.

Looking ahead, LLM-based AI technologies are developing at a remarkable pace and are rapidly becoming part of everyday life. In rock mechanics as well, their use in both research and practice is expected to grow significantly. Recently, I had the opportunity to analyze the keywords of papers published over the past five years in three of the most influential journals in our field: approximately 1,300 papers in *International Journal of Rock Mechanics and Mining Sciences*, around 2,795 papers in *Rock Mechanics and Rock Engineering*, and about 1,380 papers in the *Journal of Rock Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering*. When AI-related keywords are defined broadly to include AI, ML, DL, and data-driven approaches, the number of AI-themed papers has increased by roughly 1.6 times over five years, reaching around 11% in 2025. The upward movement over the last three years has been particularly pronounced, and it is reasonable to expect this trajectory to continue. As discussed at the ISRM Advisory Forum this year, we will seek to expand society-level activities and contributions that align with these developments and help shape the technological direction of our field.

Finally, thank you again for your commitment and efforts throughout the year. I wish you and your families a peaceful holiday season and a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year.

Warm regards,

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