

A message from the president



Dear EMS members,

Even though hybrid and virtual events are still ubiquitous, the increasing return of personal contact in academic life through lectures, conferences, and workshops means that the mathematical community needs to start thinking carefully about the future, starting now. I am fairly certain that we will never completely return to the in-person-only procedures that existed before the pandemic, but at the same time, having attended numerous virtual and hybrid meetings and lectures, I have found that the technological facilities for setting up well-functioning hybrid conferences still often lack professionalism. There is also the fact that particularly for the younger generation, but also for established scientists, personal contact is really essential for the purposes of networking, becoming known in the community, and efficiently learning about new developments. In fact, if we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that given the huge number of publications coming out every day, and despite the fact that almost all of them are freely available on the arXiv or via subscribe-to-open publishing like that of EMS Press, reading research papers is becoming less common, and we rely increasingly on conferences and lectures to find out about new research.

All in all, this means that in fact we are facing another crisis, which the pandemic has only brought more clearly into view.

I already addressed these issues in my last editorial, together with some observations on the 8ECM congress, which was almost entirely virtual with very few people actually physically present. I received quite a lot of supportive feedback on that editorial.

Since these issues concern the future of our profession in a fundamental way, I believe that we need to begin this discussion here and now. Please write to me what you think about the following questions concerning the future:

1. After the pandemic, will we and should we return to the exact same style of meetings, conferences, lectures, and publications we had before the pandemic?
2. Does the community still need big international congresses that cover the broad spectrum of all fields of mathematics?
3. Are there better ways to spread mathematical knowledge than hundreds of new publications every day?
4. Do we need so many scientific prizes, and if we do, should they exist for all age groups or mainly for the young?

Any further suggestions of important questions to add to this list are also welcome. I plan to set up a discussion forum devoted to these topics, and perhaps even to organise an online meeting.

With best wishes for a healthy fall and winter.

Volker Mehrmann
President of the EMS

Brief words from the editor-in-chief



Dear readers of the EMS Magazine,

With this issue, the first year of publication of the EMS Magazine comes to an end. Of course, our Magazine is a continuation of the “old” Newsletter (as implied by the numbering), but it is also in some ways a brand-new publication, with a new look and some new content. Even though some parts are still in the process of fine-tuning, I believe that the challenge of renewing the journal of the European Mathematical Society has been largely successfully met.

In this issue, you can read many interesting articles, of which, and in no way disparaging the other contributions, I would like to highlight the interview with the 2021 Abel prize winners Avi Wigderson and László Lovász by Bjorn Dundas and Christian Skau.

A regular feature of the Magazine (and of the Newsletter before it) that is almost coming to an end is the series of articles about the history and current activities of EMS full member national societies. Indeed, with the article about the Bosnian Mathematical Society in the current issue, almost all of these societies have had the opportunity to present themselves to readers of the Magazine. I therefore take advantage of this particular moment to publicly thank all the national societies for their continuing support of the European Mathematical Society in general, and of the Newsletter/Magazine in particular.

Fernando Pestana da Costa
Editor-in-chief