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# Report from the Meeting of Presidents of EMS Member Societies in Berlin, 23–24 March 2019

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*This is a slightly abbreviated report, as several of the topics discussed were also covered in the immediately preceding Executive Committee meeting – see above.*

The meeting of Presidents of EMS member societies has been an important annual tradition since 2008. This year, in a break from previous practice, it was held immediately following an Executive Committee meeting. This brought two advantages: a reduction in the society's travel, and an increase in the number of Executive Com-

mittee members and guests present. So it was that 38 representatives of European Mathematical Societies gathered in Berlin in March, along with 12 EMS officers and committee-representatives.

As with the Executive Committee meeting, it was held at Technische Universität Berlin, on the kind invitation of GAMM and the DMV, whose respective Presidents Heike Faßbender and Friedrich Götze offered warm words of welcome to the assembled company.

## EMS round-up

After a tour-de-table in which everyone introduced themselves and their society, EMS President Volker Mehrmann opened the meeting, for his first time as Chair. He emphasised the theme of mutual respect for his presidency: respect between different mathematical and geographical areas, and between mathematicians of different ages, nationalities, genders, races, sexualities, and identities. He then updated the group on his recent activities, and on developments within the EMS and in the broader political and scientific context. (See EC report on page 3.) He invited member societies to make nominations for EMS Prizes, and to submit proposals for scientific events such as Joint Mathematical Weekends.

## Presentations

Over the two days, the meeting enjoyed several presentations. Elena Resmerita, Deputy Convenor of the society European Women in Mathematics (EWM) discussed her society's work. Since 1986, the EWM's aims have been to encourage women to pursue mathematics at every level, to support women in their mathematical careers, to shape research and university policies, as well as providing a meeting place for like-minded people, promoting scientific communication, and cooperating with other groups with similar goals. The EWM has long had a close relationship with the EMS through its standing committee on Women in Mathematics, but since 2018 it has been an EMS member society, providing a new opportunity for collaboration. In particular, common goals include getting more female students into STEM, stopping the so-called "leaky pipeline" in women's career progression, improving the gender balance on committees, editorial boards, among invited speakers, etc., but without increasing the burden on the most active women, and increasing respect for the achievements of women with interrupted careers. Elena also made several more concrete proposals for ways in which the two societies can work together.

Next, Klavdija Kutnar provided an update on preparations for the 8th European Congress of Mathematics in Portorož (Slovenia), 5–11 July 2020. In particular, she announced that the Scientific Committee chaired by Maria Esteban had finalised the list of Plenary and Invited speakers, which can be viewed at [http://8ecm](http://8ecm.si/program).

si/program, and also that Vaughan Jones (Fields Medal, 1990) will deliver a public lecture. She also announced that the meeting will be held under the honorary patronage of His Excellency Mr. Borut Pahor, President of the Republic of Slovenia.

Lucian Beznea presented a report on the 9th Congress of Romanian Mathematicians, held 28–3 July 2019, in Galati (Romania), which hosted over 350 participants from more than 25 countries.

Hrvoje Kraljević, President of the Croatian Mathematical Society, delivered a presentation on its work. Its history dates to 1885 with the founding of the Croatian Society of Natural Sciences, and it now boasts around 700 individual members (of whom over 100 work in universities), along with 7 institutional members. It has four sections: scientific, educational, engineering, and professional, each of which is active in organising meetings and special events.

Next, Ivan Fesenko provided an update on preparations for the next International Congress of Mathematicians to be held in 2022 in St Petersburg, noting that all registered ICM participants are promised visa-free entry into Russia.

Ivan Fesenko then delivered a second report "On advancement of young mathematicians' research and a proposal for a Mathematical Research Institute of new type", regarding a plan for a new top-tier international institute with branches in several countries.

Tomás Chacón, representing the Sociedad Española de Matemática Aplicada (SEMA), presented a report on preparations for the International Congress on Industrial and Applied Mathematics (ICIAM), 15–19 July 2019, in Valencia (Spain).

Stéphane Seuret, President of the Société Mathématique de France (SMF), presented a report on his society, drawing attention to the major expansion underway at CIRM (Centre International de Rencontres Mathématiques) in Marseilles. (Delegates will be able to enjoy the improvements next year, as it is the venue for next year's Presidents' Meeting.) He also announced the completion of the SMF's digital transformation, including its new website [www.smf.emath.fr/](http://www.smf.emath.fr/).

Finally, Thierry Horsin, President of the French Société de Mathématiques Appliquées et Industri-



elles (SMAI), reported on his society. SMAI's activities include political engagement on education (jointly with SMF) and human rights, the creation of the Jean Jacques Moreau Prize in Optimization (jointly with the SMF), an annual mathematics careers fair, plus a range of publications, meetings, and mathematical outreach.

### **Discussion and close**

At every Presidents' meeting, a generous amount of time is set aside for free discussion. Of course, it is not possible to summarise these sessions in detail. On this occasion, this focussed initially on improvement of gender balance within the EMS, with several contributions regarding what can be done at a national level and what at a European level, and how can we learn from each other's successes. Several concrete proposals were made, regarding how the EMS can serve as a platform for the exchange of best practices. The Chair urged the Presidents of the National Societies to become more active and more

diverse in their nominations for prizes and speakers, and to consider not only candidates from their own country. This is the way to enrich our lists of nominees.

The Chair continued the discussion by asking the presidents for ideas of how to involve more young mathematicians in our societies, noting that GAMM has a successful programme of "GAMM Juniors".

The Chair closed the discussion with an appeal to work together and speak with one voice. It is the responsibility of national societies to lobby at the national level, and of the EMS to unify these initiatives to create a strong and clear European voice to stress the importance of mathematics.

On behalf of all the participants, the Chair thanked GAMM and the DMV, and their Presidents Heike Faßbender and Friedrich Götze, for the generosity and smooth running of the two meetings at the Technical University of Berlin. The next Presidents' meeting will be held at CIRM in Luminy (France) in 2020.