
Report from the Executive Committee Meeting in Bratislava, 17–19th March 2017

Richard Elwes, EMS Publicity Officer

This Spring, the Executive Committee (EC) of the EMS convened at the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, on the kind invitation of the Slovakian Mathematical Society. This meeting was the first sitting of the new committee, following elections at the Council in Berlin in Summer 2016. On Friday evening, the committee was welcomed by Martin Kalina, President of the Slovak Mathematical Society, who told us about his society. Established in 1969, the society is the mathematical branch of the Union of Slovak Mathematicians and Physicists, and welcomes both university mathematicians and maths teachers at primary and secondary level. Its activities include running Olympiads and summer/winter camps in the mountains for school pupils, competitions and events for undergraduate students, seminars for teachers, and domestic & international scientific conferences for researchers. It publishes the journal *Horizons of Mathematics, Physics and Informatics*.

Officers' reports and membership

The meeting got underway with a greeting from the Chair, EMS President Pavel Exner, who welcomed the members of the new committee, and reported on his activities since the last EC meeting at Tbilisi in November 2016. He began by looking back over 2016, observing that it was a significant and successful year in the life of our society, noting especially the 7th European Congress of Mathematicians in Berlin. Laying the foundations for an equally successful 8th Congress in 2020 is an important current task. Beyond the society, the President remarked that 2016 was an unusually turbulent year politically

(notably in USA, UK, and Turkey), and that this upheaval has seen an increase in the number of requests for the EMS to participate in political protests - requests which need to be considered carefully. (This topic was discussed further at the Presidents' meeting in Lisbon. See separate report below.)

The EMS Treasurer, Mats Gyllenberg, presented his report on the society's finances and discussed the budget approved by the Council for 2017-2019. Due to a healthy financial situation, it was agreed in March 2016 that the society will spend more on scientific activities; somewhat disappointingly, however, the number of suitable projects applying for funding has not increased correspondingly. There is thus a need to advertise for high-level applications for scientific activities, such as Joint Mathematical Weekends and Summer Schools. The Treasurer also proposed certain technical simplifications of the budget, which will be discussed further at the next Council. Finally, the Treasurer proposed (on the advice of the Society's bankers) to transfer more capital into investment funds. The committee agreed with this proposal, and adopted the rule that two-third of the society's assets will be kept in such funds. The committee thanked the Treasurer for his excellent work.

The committee was delighted to approve an application for institutional EMS membership from the University of Lisbon. Enquiries have also been received from two national societies; these may progress if they submit applications for corporate membership to be presented at the next Council. The committee was pleased to approve a list of 154 new individual members.

Scientific meetings

Volker Mehrmann, the chief local organiser of ECM7 in Berlin in July 2016, delivered an update on the congress's aftermath, confirming that it ended in deficit by 3000 Euros, and making several recommendations for the smoother running of future meetings. The committee reiterated their thanks to Volker and his team for a magnificent and well-run conference. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be in November in Portorož (Slovenia) at the site of the 8th ECM, where arrangements for the next congress will be discussed in greater detail. The committee agreed that special attention should be given to gender balance in the congress's committees, and to matters of diversity in general. The committee will continue its ongoing deliberations about the mission and goals of the ECM in the changing mathematical landscape, with a view to using the ECM to build our community and make young mathematicians feel welcome and valued.

The President briefly discussed other forthcoming events including the five EMS Summer Schools to be held over the Summer, the joint EMS-Bernoulli Society Joint Lecture to be delivered by Alexander Holevo at the 31st European Meeting of Statisticians (Helsinki, July 24–28, 2017), and this year's EMS Distinguished speakers: Mireille Bousquet-Mélou at the Conference on Foundations of Computational Mathematics (Barcelona, 10–19 July 2017) and Kathryn Hess at the Meeting of the Catalan, Spanish and Swedish Math Societies (Umeå, 12–15 June, 2017). The committee also looked towards future major meetings: ICM 2018 in Rio de Janeiro, ICIAM 2019 in Valencia, and ICM 2022 to be held either in Paris or St Petersburg (and thus certainly in Europe). The committee approved funds for an EMS Joint Mathematical Weekend, 4–5 January 2018 in Joensuu (Finland) to mark the beginning of the 2018 Year of Mathematical Biology.

Society meetings & officers

The current EMS President's term, and those of Vice-President Volker Mehrmann and the other Officers, will all terminate at the end of 2018. Therefore, the next Council will need to elect a new President and Vice-President, and either to re-elect or replace the current Treasurer and Secretary. The search for a suitable presidential candidate is already underway.

The annual meeting of Presidents of EMS member societies will take place in Lisbon on 1–2 April 2017, hosted by the Portuguese Mathematical Society. (See separate report below.) In 2018, the equivalent meeting will take place in Dublin.

Standing committees & projects

Jiří Rákosník, Chair of the Electronic Publishing Committee, in attendance as a guest, presented a proposal to merge the Electronic Publishing and Publication Committees. The Executive Committee thanked Jiří for his work, and approved the merger. After some discussion, the new committee was named the *Publications and Electronic Dissemination Committee* (PED). The PED's

new remit was also approved, and can be found on the EMS webpage (as can details of all EMS standing committees). The Executive Committee appointed Thierry Bouche as Chair and Olaf Teschke as Vice-Chair of PED, and as well as appointing a full quota of committee members, all for the term 2017–2020.

José Antonio Carrillo, Chair of the Applied Mathematics Committee (AMC), also present as a guest, delivered a short report about the AMC's activities, noting in particular the forthcoming Year of Mathematical Biology 2018. The committee thanked him for his efforts, and discussions followed regarding possible candidates for Chair, as his term will end this year (as will those of six AMC members).

Mats Gyllenberg, responsible EC member for the Committee for Developing Countries, delivered a short report on the first round of applications for funds from the EMS-Simons for Africa programme.

The new Chair Jürg Kramer and Vice-Chair Tine Kjedsen of the Education Committee have restarted that committee's work, and the EC looks forward to hearing more about its activities in due course. The President will consult member societies about useful lines of work for the Education committee.

Reports from the other standing committees (European Research Centres on Mathematics (ERCOM), Ethics, European Solidarity, Meetings, Raising Public Awareness of Mathematics, Women in Mathematics) were received and considered, and the Executive Committee reiterated its gratitude to all members of these committees, which are responsible for so much of the society's work.

Discussions followed on other projects the EMS is involved with, including the online Encyclopedia of Mathematics (www.encyclopediaofmath.org), EU-MATHS-IN (European Service Network of Mathematics for Industry and Innovation), the Global Digital Mathematics Library, Zentralblatt MATH (www.zbmath.org). The society's own newsletter, e-news, social media platforms, and other communications channels were also reviewed.

Funding, political, and scientific organisations

The committee discussed matters around Horizon2020 and the European Research Council (ERC). It was noted that the ERC budget is set to increase again next year, and mathematicians should be strongly encouraged to apply for funding. The President also called attention to the ERC's 10th anniversary this year, and to the various celebratory activities taking place around Europe. He then reported on recent developments regarding the new legal status of the Initiative for Science in Europe (ISE). The EMS's membership fee for the ISE is shortly set to double to 3000 Euros, at which point the Executive Committee will need to decide whether to continue with ISE membership.

Regarding the European Science Open Forum (ESOF), the next meeting will be in Toulouse in 2018, and it would be desirable for mathematics to be well represented. (At the 2016 meeting in Manchester, the EMS's

Raising Public Awareness committee successfully ran a special session on Alan Turing.)

Volker Mehrmann, also a member of the Board of ICIAM (International Council for Industrial and Applied Mathematics), reported on the latest developments there. The calls for ICIAM prizes are now open and the search for a new President to be elected at ICIAM 2019 in Valencia is underway.

The EMS's relationships with other societies, research centres, and prize committees was also discussed, with the EC deciding on several nominations for boards.

Conclusions

The committee will hold an informal retreat before the next official meeting, where members' visions for the society's future can be discussed without the pressure of a full agenda and a ticking clock. The committee's next official sitting will be in Portorož, 24–26 November 2017.

The meeting closed with sincere expressions of gratitude to our local hosts at the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava and the Slovakian Mathematical Society, especially Martin Kalina and Mária Ždímalová, for a thoroughly well-organised and enjoyable meeting.
