

Report on the Meeting of Presidents of Mathematical Societies, in Lisbon

Sjoerd Verduyn Lunel

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*Please refer to the separate list for attendance.
Presentations marked like this* are available on the web site
[EMS Meeting of Presidents 2017 Lisbon](#)*

Section A: Preliminaries

Pavel Exner, President of the European Mathematical Society and Chair of the meeting, welcomed everybody to the meeting and thanked the organizers very much for the invitation to meet at the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian in Lisbon. A special welcome was given to Manuel Heitor, Minister of Science and Technology of the Government of Portugal and to Guilherme d'Oliveira Martins, Administrator of Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. The President also thanked the Sociedade Portuguesa de Matematica for the invitation to meet in Lisbon, and explained the agenda.

Presentations were given by the special guests. Guilherme d'Oliveira Martins introduced us to the work of the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, and Manuel Heitor outlined the commitment of the Government of Portugal for fundamental research and asked support for a position paper: *On the evolving nature of EU research funding* to create a movement to increase the level of support for fundamental research at the European level.

Section B: Introductions

1. Everybody present introduced themselves in a tour de table, saying which Society they represented at the meeting.
2. Jorge Buesco welcomed the Presidents of the EMS member societies to the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian museum and presented* a report on the Sociedade Portuguesa de Matematica.

Section C: The European Mathematical Society

1. The Chair gave his report as President of the EMS. After noting that the political situation in the world has changed drastically in the past year, the President recalled his welcome address at the ECM in Berlin where he said, in particular, that while the EMS is not a political institution and we cannot publicly adhere to all relevant public protests, we have to speak

out when life of mathematicians is in danger and care about keeping the mathematical community together. He looked back to 2016 and concluded that it was an important and successful year for the EMS with the ECM and the Council in Berlin. At the Council, the Executive Committee (EC) was significantly renewed after a serious election indicating the increasing interest in our society. Most of the candidates for the EC that were not elected were invited to become member of one of the standing committees of the EMS. Council also adopted a motion that all members of standing committees of the EMS should be individual members in good standing. He finally asked the Presidents to spread the news that Council adopted a modification of Rule 30 of the [By-laws](#) which allows students to enjoy a three-year introductory period with membership fees waived. He continued with the good news that ICM will return to Europe in 2022 since Paris and Saint Petersburg are the remaining competitors. Both bids were endorsed by the EMS. A proposal for a scheme for the spending of the grant from the Simons foundation for Africa (\$ 250.000 for a five-year period) was developed by the Committee for Developing Countries (CDC). He also asked attention for the fact that members of the EMS have special benefits at [MathHire](#), a site to find and advertise jobs for mathematics supported by the EMS. In two years the EMS will evaluate the cooperation with MathHire. He concluded his President's report with some recent developments regarding the EMS Publishing House.

2. The Chair announced that the Czech Academy of Sciences will host the EMS Council 2018 on June 23-24, 2018 and that further details will be given in due time. At Council, successors of the current President and one current Vice-President will be elected, the present Secretary and Treasurer can be elected for a second-term. He also announced that the EC will bring a proposal for life-time membership to Council. The next Congress will be hosted by the University of Primorska, Faculty of Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Information Technologies in Portorož, Slovenia, from July 5 till July 11, 2020.
3. The Chair reported on the wide range of scientific activities of the Society, and in particular encouraged member societies to prepare proposals for scientific activities, such as Joint Mathematical Weekends and Summer Schools. See the [call for proposals](#). He also asked attention for the fact that 2018 will be the [Year of Mathematical Biology](#), a joint venture of the EMS and the European Society for Mathematical and Theoretical Biology (ESMTB), and a presentation was given by Mats Gyllenberg.
4. The Chair started by reminding the Presidents that the ten Standing Committees are the working body of the EMS. Among other things he addressed the substantial renewal in the members of the Standing Committee, and the merger of the Electronic Publications and Publications Committee into one new committee named Publications and Electronic Dissemination.
5. The Chair reported on the latest developments regarding Horizon 2020 and ERC, and in particular about running calls, the open EU consultation on Mathematics and the High-Level Group of Scientific Advisors of the EC Scientific Advice Mechanism (with Cédric Villani as a representative for Mathematics). He also updated the Presidents on the on-going discussions about the future of Initiative Science Europe (ISE) and whether the EMS should continue to be a member of ISE after a two-year evaluation period. He concluded with an update on IMU, the call for next officers is now closed and Helge Holden will continue as

Secretary for a second term, and expressed the hope that the Presidency will return to Europe again.

Section D: Presentations

1. Klavdija Kutnar presented* a report on the progress of the organization of the 8th ECM to be held in Portorož, Slovenia, from July 5 till July 11, 2020.
2. Ian Strachan presented* a report on the work of the Edinburgh Mathematical Society.
3. Albert Erkip presented* an update on the organization of the second Caucasian Mathematical Conference.
4. Waclaw Marzantowicz presented* an announcement for the joint meeting of the Italian Mathematical Union, the Italian Society of Industrial and Applied Mathematics, and the Polish Mathematical Society.
5. Christian Kassel presented* a report on the work of the Société Mathématique de France.

Section E: Discussion

After a short introduction by the Chair, the Presidents had an informal discussion about the impact of open access policies on the mathematician's work. The discussion started with the observation that present day technology, for example arXiv, changed the role of mathematical journals from disseminating content (serving the reader), to providing a quality stamp of the work that is published in the journal (serving the author). An illustrative initiative in France along these lines is [Episciences-Maths](#). All participants agree that open access developments where the author pays to publish his work involves huge risks for young mathematicians. So-called predatory journal aggressively approach (young) authors by promising immediate publication without any backlog. Authors might not be aware that the journal has a bad name in the community and therefore it is very important that we take responsibility by separating good from bad journals and can provide a quality stamp for journals (following a similar initiative as in Australia). The newly formed EMS Committee Publications and Electronic Dissemination should play a role here and it would be interesting to know the opinion of its Chair Thierry Bouche on the ramifications of open access for mathematics. The Chair invited all Presidents to come forward with suggestions for themes to be discussed in the Publications and Electronic Dissemination Committee, either to him or directly to the Chair of the Committee.

The Chair recalled that the EMS co-signed the open letter *European science organisations: maintain transparency, open communication and mobility of scholars and scientists*, but that the EMS remained reluctant to be involved in political protests. We have to raise our voice when harm to mathematics is done and the unique organizational structure of the EMS makes our voice strong, but we are not a political organization and we have to be selective when to raise our voice. The Presidents fully agree with this stand of the EMS and discussed the fine line between being a mathematical society and a political organization, and agreed that a case by case decision is needed when to react and that general guidelines cannot be given.

The Presidents discussed problems and challenges ranging from the relation between Mathematics and Computer Science to life-long learning of mathematics teachers in Germany and France, and project-oriented teaching. In the ensuing discussion, the Chair urged the Presidents to bring proposals and ideas for discussion to him or directly to Jürg Kramer, the new Chair of the Education Committee.

Summarizing the discussion. (1) Open access concerns every one of us, but is maybe a danger especially for young people. The Presidents are invited to share their thoughts and ideas with the Chair or directly with the Chair of Publications and Electronic Dissemination Committee. (2) We have to be aware of the changing political landscape, but have to give priority to stay together and united as a society of mathematicians supporting each other, and react if there is a threat to any member of our community. (3) Education is close to our heart and determines our future, the Presidents are invited to share their thoughts and ideas with the Chair or directly with the Chair of the Education Committee.

Section F: Any Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

Section G: Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held from 14th to 15th April 2018 in Dublin.

Section H: Closing

On behalf of all the participants, the Chair thanked the local organizers of this meeting for their excellent preparation and hospitality and their warm welcome at the beautiful grounds of the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian in Lisbon.