

Editorial – Report from the EMS Council Meeting in Prague, 23rd & 24th June 2018

Richard Elwes, EMS Publicity Officer

The EMS Council is our society's highest authority. It is made up of delegates representing individual, institutional, and society members, and meets every two years, most recently in 2016 in Berlin. This June, 78 delegates gathered with 11 guests for two days in the Czech National Library of Technology, in the magnificent surroundings of Prague, home city of the current EMS President Pavel Exner. The meeting's full agenda would include the appointment of his successor. At 2 pm on Friday afternoon, the President welcomed the assembled company and opened the meeting. The Council then paused for a few moments of silence, to honour the memory of those colleagues who have departed since the last meeting.

Officer reports and finance

The first order of business was a report from the President on his recent activities (several of the topics mentioned feature separately later in this report). This was followed by a report from EMS secretary Sjoerd Verduyn Lunel outlining the activities of the EMS Executive Committee. Over the last two years, the committee has officially met four times, in Tblisi, Bratislava, Portorož, and Rome. (A report from the Rome meeting can be found on page 5, and reports from other meetings have appeared in earlier editions of the Newsletter.) It also gathered for an

informal retreat in Koli (Finland) in January 2018. EMS Treasurer Mats Gyllenberg next presented his report, noting that the society's finances are healthy. (We record two small contributing factors: the contribution of the EMS Publishing House which provides this Newsletter and the EMS Mathematical Surveys series at no cost to the society, and the University of Helsinki which generously houses the EMS Office.) The Treasurer was therefore able to propose an increase in the budget for scientific activities, with no accompanying rise in membership fees. A useful discussion then followed, about further activities the EMS might choose to support financially. The Council was pleased to approve the society budget for 2019-2020, and to agree the appointment of auditors.

Membership and publicity

The Council reviewed the society's membership statistics and the list of new EMS individual members, bringing the total to 2707. After a presentation by Tomaž Pisanski, President of the Slovenian Discrete and Applied Mathematics Society (SDAMS), the Council was pleased to approve SDAMS's application for full EMS membership. Cooperation agreements with the Chinese and Australian Mathematical Societies were also approved. Four new institutional members (already approved by the



Executive committee) were welcomed by the Council: the University of Lisbon, the Mathematical Institute of University of Oxford, the Mathematics Department of University of Pisa, and the Department of Mathematics “F. Casorati” of the University of Pavia; along with one new associate member: the society of European Women in Mathematics.

Although the EMS by its nature is an inclusive organisation, the council then took the sad decision to terminate the EMS memberships of the Malta Mathematical Society and the Association of Mathematicians of the Republic of Macedonia. Both of these societies have fallen severely into arrears on their dues, and have repeatedly failed to respond to letters from the EMS President.

After a lively debate, the council then approved a proposal to introduce life-membership. The new rules state that a member aged w where $w > 60$ may apply for life-time membership, for a once-and-for-all fee of $(77 - \frac{4w}{5}) \cdot \frac{y}{5}$ where y is the standard, undiscounted fee for annual EMS membership (currently $y = €50$).

The society’s Publicity Officer Richard Elwes gave a presentation on EMS publicity, both in physical form (a new flyer has been produced, and promotional materials have regularly been present at mathematical meetings over the last two years) and online. EMS social media presence has significantly increased recently, and we currently have over 3000 followers on Twitter (@EMSNewsletter) and over 2000 on Facebook (@EMSNewsletter).

Elections to Executive Committee

It was now time for Council’s most exciting moment. After presentations by the candidates, the council was delighted to elect Volker Mehrmann (Technische Universität Berlin) as EMS President and Betül Tanbay (Bogaziçi University) as Vice-President. Each will take up their new positions in January 2019. Mats Gyllenberg and Sjoerd Verduyn Lunel were each re-elected for second terms as (respectively) EMS Treasurer and Secretary.

The candidates just mentioned came on the recommendation of the executive committee, and these elections were uncontested and approved by large margins. Next there followed a contested election for the remaining position of member-at-large of the Executive Committee. After presentations by the candidates, a vote was held, and won by Jorge Buesco.

ECM2020 and EMS committees

Local organiser Klavdija Kutnar presented an update on preparations for the 8th European Congress of Mathematics, to be held 5–11 July 2020 in Portorož (Slovenia), birthplace of Giuseppe Tartini, the great 18th century composer, violinist, and amateur mathematician. There are now open calls for Minisymposia, Satellite Conferences, and Exhibitors. In the ensuing discussion council delegates enquired further about the plans, and made several suggestions to the local organisers.

The Council then heard reports from representatives of all the EMS’s standing committees, starting with Stéphane Cordier, new Chair of the Applied Mathemat-

ics Committee, who discussed his committee’s activities, including the current year of Mathematical Biology.

Leif Abrahamsson Chair of the Committee for Developing Countries, talked about its work, including the ongoing Simons Foundation for Africa scheme. We are currently in the second year of this programme, which is funded by the Simons Foundation at \$50,000 per year for 5 years.

Jürg Kramer, the new Chair of the Education Committee outlined his committee’s new plan of action, which includes applying for EU funding for mathematical educational projects.

Former EMS President Ari Laptev was next to address the council as Chair of the ERCOM Committee, comprising the directors of 26 European Research Centres On Mathematics Committee.

Chair of the Ethics Committee Jiří Rákosník then described the actions his committee is taking to defend our subject from unethical behaviour, and invited feedback in advance of a planned update to the EMS Code of Practice.

Alice Fialowski presented a report from Sandra Di Rocco, Chair of the European Solidarity Committee, which has an annual budget of €14000 to fund travel for researchers from European countries where such funding is difficult to obtain.

Martin Mathieu spoke on behalf of Ciro Ciliberto, Chair of the Meetings Committee which evaluates applications for EMS funding and makes recommendations to the Executive Committee. He noted that certain EMS activities, such as the joint mathematical weekends, have attracted few applications recently, and urged for more focussed advertising of these opportunities.

Since the last Council meeting, the Electronic Publishing and the Publication Committees have merged into a new Publications and Electronic Dissemination Committee. Thierry Bouche, Chair of this new committee, described its activities to date, which include working with the European Digital Mathematics Library and Zentralblatt Math (see separate later items). It has quickly become clear that issues around Open Access pose major questions in this area.

Silvia Benvenuti, Vice Chair of the Committee for Raising Public Awareness of Mathematics, gave a presentation on its work on behalf of Chair Roberto Natalini. She drew attention to their website Mathematics in Europe (www.mathematics-in-europe.eu/) which has published around 75 articles over the last two years, and discussed an ongoing series of interviews with female mathematicians (jointly undertaken with the Women in Mathematics Committee, see next item) for this Newsletter. She also outlined plans for an online Calendar-map of mathematical outreach events, and concluded by requesting the cooperation of national societies in advancing the committee’s work.

Finally, Beatrice Pelloni discussed the committee for Women in Mathematics on behalf of Chair Alessandra Celletti, stressing the importance of encouraging diversity in the EMS’s various activities. Besides the joint work with the RPA committee just mentioned, the commit-

tee's activities include coordinating with the European Women in Mathematics Society to schedule Summer Schools and other mathematical events.

To close this section, the President reiterated the critical role that all these standing committees play in the proper functioning of the EMS, and the council was pleased to join him in thanking all the current and outgoing Chairs and committee members for their hard work.

Mathematics in Europe

The Council heard updates from the President on proposals for Horizon Europe, the successor programme to Horizon 2020. We note that the proposed budget is smaller than expected, and puts Europe behind other advanced economies in terms of the proportion of GDP invested in science. A petition to increase it can be found online at double-ri.eu.

Jean-Pierre Bourguignon current President of the European Research Council (and former EMS President) was not able to attend, but sent a presentation which the EMS President discussed on the ERC's situation 10 years after it was founded, with a focus on how Mathematics fits within it.

Publications and projects

Valentin Zagrebnoy, Editor-in-Chief of the EMS Newsletter, reported on the status of the newsletter and invited suggestions for new members of the Editorial Board. The Council took the opportunity to thank him, along with the editor of the EMS e-News Mireille Chaleyat-Maurel, for their excellent work. With the Managing Director of the EMS Publishing House unable to attend the meeting, the President summarised its current status and plans for its future.

On behalf of Klaus Hulek, Editor-in-Chief of Zentralblatt, Olaf Teschke gave a presentation on zbMATH. The President concluded the section with the view that Zentralblatt has improved significantly and is now a serious competitor amongst mathematical databases, and of

course zbMATH is available free of charge for individual EMS members!

Jiří Rákosník gave a presentation on the European Digital Mathematical Library (www.eudml.org), a digital collection of Open Access mathematics libraries, of which the EMS is one sponsor. There are currently over 260,000 items uploaded and available online. He discussed recent innovations, such as the function to link posts on mathoverflow.net to EUDML articles. He also discussed the linked library eLibM (www.elibm.org) which supports a full journal production system, with a flagship journal Documenta Mathematica now sustainably produced as a Diamond Open Access publication.

With Springer having announced that it will no longer be involved in the online Encyclopedia of Mathematics (www.encyclopediaofmath.org), the EMS will assume the responsibility of hosting of this internet resource.

The EMS Vice-President (and new President-elect!) Volker Mehrmann delivered a presentation on EU-MATH-IN (European Service Network of Mathematics for Industry and Innovation), drawing attention to their recent vision paper on the increasingly commercially important theme of "Digital Twins". For readers who have not encountered this terminology, "a digital twin is a cross-domain digital model that accurately represents a product, production process or performance of a product or production system in operation. The digital twin evolves and continuously updates to reflect any change to the physical counterpart throughout the counterpart's lifecycle, creating a closed-loop of feedback in a virtual environment that offers companies the best possible design for their products and production processes."

The meeting was then brought to a close, with the Council warmly thanking our hosts: the Czech Mathematical Society, the Institute of Mathematics of the Czech Academy of Sciences, and the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics at Charles University. The next Council meeting will be 4–5 July 2020 in Bled (Slovenia).