

ISRM Newsletter No 51 – September 2021**Message from the President**

COVID-19 is still around, and each country is handling its situation differently. Things are different than they were at this time last year, and unfortunately, in terms of the effects of pandemic, there is still uncertainty about the future in the entire world. Whatever the conditions are, all societies, like ISRM, should continue to provide continuing activities. With the world being turned upside-down by COVID-19 face to face activities are rather difficult, video conferences, webinars and similar tools have become the new normal. Therefore, in these difficult days, ISRM also began to pay more attention to the use of these techniques for the communication with its members and continuation of its activities.

Since April, the Board continued to work on the planned issues and became in constant dialogue with the organizing committees of the ISRM events planned in 2020. But the cancellation of EUROCK2020, the international 2020 ISRM Symposium, became inevitable and a difficult decision made by its Organizing Committee due to the current COVID-19 pandemic and of the strong restriction to travelling. As ISRM, we would like to show our deep appreciation for the kind work of the Organizing Committee and of the Norwegian National Group for Rock Mechanics, who did everything they could to go ahead with the organization of EUROCK2020. The Organizing Committee and ISRM agreed that more than 200 peer-reviewed papers presented to EUROCK2020 will be published in the ISRM's digital library on the OnePetro.org platform, subject to the authors' consent.

The 11th Asian Rock Mechanics Symposium, ARMS11, has also been postponed to 2021 due to the pandemic to 21-25 October 2021 and it will be held in Beijing, China. One of the two ISRM Specialized Conferences, 5th Symposium of the Macedonian Association of Geotechnics (Ohrid, Macedonia) was postponed to 10-12 June 2021. However, the second ISRM specialized Conference "CouFrac" 2020, to be held between 11-13 November 2020, in Seoul, Korea, was not postponed and has turned into a fully virtual conference with simultaneous offline meetings. Due to COVID-19 crisis, the special session in honor of Prof. Pierre Habib, the ISRM Past President, in Paris, was also postponed to 2021. The exact date of this session will be announced later on and ISRM will also be represented by a Board member in this session. I congratulate the initiative of the Bolivian Geomechanics Association to promote series of webinars on rock mechanics with participation of eight lecturers between 24 September and 16 October 2020. The National Group of Bolivia is a growing society and its Board is very enthusiastic and this activity is related to the celebration of the 10 years anniversary of this group.

Although EUROCK2020 has been cancelled, the ISRM meetings, such as the Council, Board and Commissions' meetings, programmed for the days before EUROCK2020, have been postponed to October 2020 and will take place as video conferences. All ISRM National Groups and the Commission Chairs have already been informed about this.

The 31st ISRM On-line Lecture with a title of "Damage and Time Dependent Behavior of Rocks in Underground Construction" was delivered by Prof. Frederic Pellet from France a few days ago. Dr. Antonio Samaniego from Peru has been invited for the 32nd on-line lecture and has already accepted. The ISRM Commissions on DDA and Rock Dynamics successfully organized a half-day "Cloud Forum" fully in English via ZOOM on 18 July 2020. The forum was given by Professors Genhua Shi, Jian Zhao and Luming Shen. We congratulate these two Commissions for the organization of this activity with more than 1000 participants in these difficult days.

*Prof. Dr Reşat Ulusay
President*

I am glad to inform you that the number of books published by CRC Press as part of ISRM Book Series is increasing. In addition to the book entitled "Continuum and Computational Mechanics for Geomechanical Engineers" by Ömer Aydan, which is in the final stages of pre-production and will be published early 2021, two other books are under preparation and the proposal of a new book and a book from an ISRM Commission on Underground Nuclear Power Plants will also be submitted. We kindly invite our Commissions to publish their main products in the ISRM Book Series.

The current four ISRM courses are still available to the general public on the website and the fifth and final part of "Rock Mechanics Principles", a video course by Prof. Jian Zhao from Monash University is also available at the ISRM Website since 14 July 2020. To improve our virtual platform and the number of courses available in the website of ISRM, the Board focused on this issue based on the following steps: (a) the first step on this initiative is to identify the first set of critical topics that should be focused, (b) once the Board has the list of topics, the Board members can propose experts from their region who are well known to be giving good lectures on the topics.

The winners of the two new awards, "John Hudson Rock Engineering Award" and "Science Achievement Award", which will be given for the first time, are 3GSM GmbH from Austria and Prof. Jinping Zuo from China, respectively. We congratulate all winners and thank to other candidates for their participation. As EUROCK2020 has been cancelled, these awards will be given to the winners in EUROCK2021 which will be held in September 2021 in Turin, Italy. We congratulate the winners.

As I mentioned in my message in the June 2020 issue of the Newsletter, the Board was studying on a new ISRM Survey. The survey form has been prepared by the ISRM Young Members Committee (YMC) and is now being discussed in the Board. After this discussion has been completed, the survey form will be finalized and approved by the Board and then will be distributed. We believe that such surveys are very important, and our members will provide their contributions through their answers to the questionnaires in the survey form.

The 2020 FedIGS Board meeting was scheduled for Warsaw in the mid of September under the hostage of the International Geosynthetics Society after their international congress in Warsaw. But COVID-19 also affected this meeting and it was postponed. This meeting will now be held in November or December 2020 as video conference with the participation of the Presidents, Immediate Past Presidents and Secretary Generals of the four sister societies (IAEG, ISRM, ISMMGE, IGS).

Although we have missed to meet in ISRM events where we can talk, listen and discuss face to face, please do monitor your own health closely, take care of you and stay safe.

Unfortunately, we lost one of the mentors of our society, Prof. Pierre Duffaut from France on 11 September 2020. We lost an incredible source of alive information on the development of geotechnical sciences linked to rock mechanics and engineering geology, particularly in dam engineering.

I wish all of you the best, healthy days and meeting again in ISRM events in 2021 free from COVID-19.



Reşat Ulusay