

# Report on the Meeting of Presidents of Mathematical Societies, in Istanbul

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Please refer to the separate list for attendance.

Presentations marked like this\* are available on the web site.

## **Section A: Preliminaries**

Marta Sanz-Solé, President of the European Mathematical Society, welcomed everybody to the meeting and thanked the organisers very much for the invitation to Istanbul. She also introduced the guests, Günter Törner and Nikolai Andreev, and explained the agenda.

## **Section B: Introductions**

- B1** Everybody present introduced themselves, saying which Society they represented.
- B2** Betül Tanbay welcomed us to the Boğaziçi University and gave a presentation\* of the history and recent activity of the Turkish Mathematical Society.

## **Section C: The European Mathematical Society**

- C1** Marta Sanz-Solé gave her report\* as President of the EMS, concentrating on plans to increase the individual membership of the EMS, the work of the Committees (especially the Publications Committee and the Committee for European Solidarity), the new EMS Monograph Award, and the journals published by the EMS.

This led to a brief discussion of gold open access, which focussed on the discrimination between rich and poor academic communities and the important role of libraries and learned societies.

- C2** Marta Sanz-Solé announced the EMS Council in Donostia (San Sebastián), June 28–29, 2014, reminding Presidents about the nomination of delegates and asking for suggestions for the agenda.
- C3** Preparations for the 7ECM in Berlin in 2016 were presented\* by Jürg Kramer. Marta Sanz-Solé reported on the Scientific and Prize Committees for the 7ECM, thanked the *Foundation Compositio Mathematica* for contributing 50% of the prize money, and described the very interesting Hirzebruch Lecture initiative.
- C4** Marta Sanz-Solé gave a brief description of the EU-MATHS-IN project, and Gert-Martin Greuel did the same for EuDML.
- C5** Martin Raussen gave a presentation\* on the development of the EMS web site:  
[www.euro-math-soc.eu](http://www.euro-math-soc.eu)  
 There was a comment that what is currently regarded as “user-friendly” can in fact be very unfriendly. Presidents were also invited to comment on the EMS news sent by email.
- C6** Marta Sanz-Solé reported\* on Horizon 2020. She explained that she had been collecting data on the 7th Framework Programme which indicated that one would have expected mathematics to receive about 6% of the funding, whereas it had only received about 2%. We need to encourage more applications, or the funding will further decrease. Another problem was that there were open calls for “experts”, which has led to them being of extremely variable quality. The EMS is trying to address this. In discussion it was suggested that perhaps our researchers need training in how to apply for these grants. It was also noted that the success rate for mathematics in the European Research Council system has been much higher.

## Section D: Discussion

Günter Törner gave a presentation\* on “How national societies can influence at the national level suitable policies for mathematics” especially in the context of education. He emphasised the importance of collaboration in this work.

Terry Lyons gave a presentation\* on the same topic, but concentrating on activity in the UK. He emphasised the importance of trying to understand the other side’s point of view, he talked a little about the Deloitte Report, and he noted that the people who are having such an enormous effect in the economy are those we sometimes regard as our “failures”.

Marta Sanz-Solé drew attention to the document “Mathematical Sciences in the Netherlands”, which is available on the EMS web site.

Gregoire Allaire noted that the declining standards at entry to University are posing a serious threat to the survival of many small departments.

Gyula Katona reported that in Hungary there is an annual conference for mathematics teachers, with prizes awarded by the Hungarian Mathematical Society. This is a good form of recognition for teachers.

Jouko Väänänen reported that in Finland there has been a very successful initiative for arousing interest in the natural sciences among school children. He noted that even extremely small children are invited to visit Universities. He regarded it as crucially important that mathematics teachers have to do the same degree as mathematicians.

Radu Gologan described the big effect that joint conferences between mathematicians and teachers have had in Romania: mathematics is now much more visible, and the number of students is increasing.

Armen Sergeev described the dramatic drop in standards in Russia caused by the unified testing regime. Mathematicians are doing their best to modify the system in such a way as to limit the damage.

Joan Solà-Morales observed that since everybody has been exposed to some form of mathematics teaching, we must be doing something terribly wrong if we still have to work to convince politicians of its importance.

Martin Raussen argued that having good ambassadors for the subject is very important, but it is a problem that evaluation of academics does not include this aspect of our work.

Betul Tanbay reported that in Turkey in 1980 there was a separation of the undergraduate degrees for teachers and mathematicians, and the bad effects are still being felt, one of which is that mathematicians now have much more difficulty in gaining access to politicians. Also, the exclusive focus on preparing students for the University entrance exam causes such damage that it takes the first two years at University before the student recovers.

Marta Sanz-Solé emphasised the importance of reports such as the Deloitte Report, and encouraged Mathematical Societies to try to produce similar reports in their own countries. The EMS will be keeping all such reports in a folder on the web.

## Section E: Presentations

- Gert-Martin Greuel presented\* IMAGINARY.
- Nikolai Andreev described the work of the ETUDES laboratory at the Steklov Institute:  
<http://www.etudes.ru/en/>
- Antonio Campillo presented the First Joint International Meeting RSME-SCM-SEMA-SIMAI-UMI, to be held in Bilbao, Spain:  
<http://www.ehu.es/en/web/fjim2014>

- Armen Sergeev presented\* the Caucasian Mathematical Conference, and the Annual Conference of the Georgian Mathematical Union.
- Gregoire Allaire presented\* the new SMAI Journal on Computational Mathematics.
- Martin Mathieu presented the Irish Mathematical Society's 2014 meeting in Belfast:  
<http://ims2014.martinmathieu.net>
- Eugenijus Manstavicius presented the 11th Vilnius Conference on Probability and Statistics.

## **Section F: Next Meeting**

To be decided.

## **Section G: Closing**

On behalf of all the participants, Marta Sanz-Solé thanked the local organisers of this meeting for their excellent preparation and hospitality and their warm welcome.