

EMS Council Meeting

Uppsala, Sweden, 26th-27th June 2004

David Salinger, EMS Publicity Officer

The Council of the European Mathematical Society (its "parliament") met in the weekend before the European Congress in Stockholm on the premises of Uppsala University, about 60 kilometres north of the Swedish capital. There were 65 delegates representing 43 Mathematical Societies from all over Europe, 14 delegates representing individual members, and institutions were represented by 9 delegates. The EMS executive committee and several invitees made up the rest of the assembly.

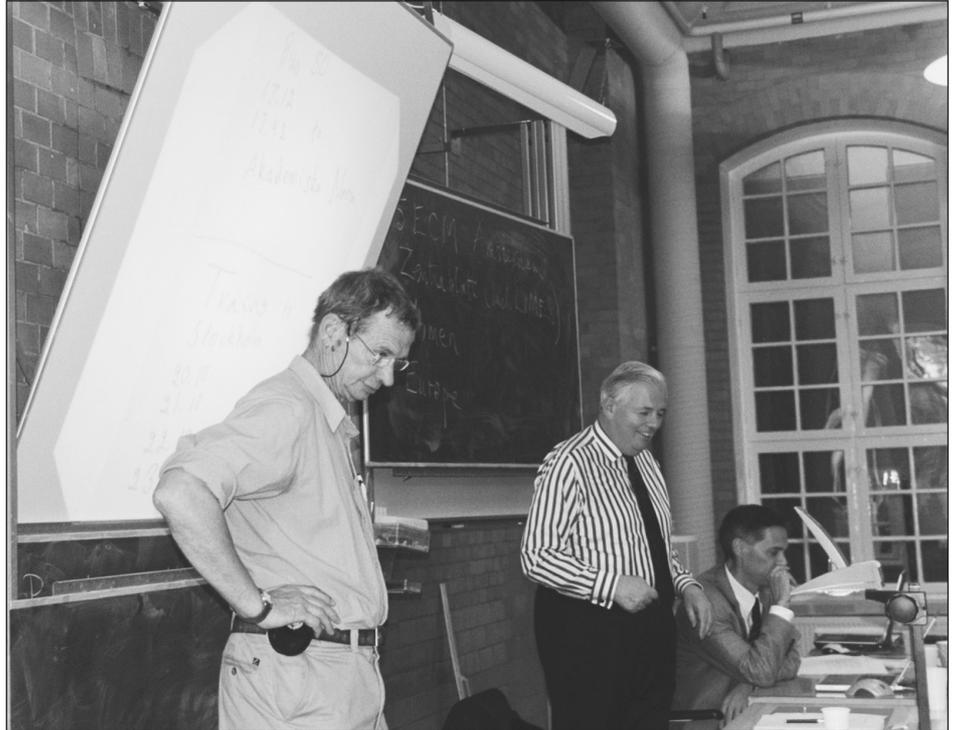
Membership issues, budget and elections

Council had its share of routine business, but finished with several lively discussions. The routine business was, however, important, starting with the approval of the membership applications from the Mathematical Societies of Malta, Cyprus and Romania and the Statistical Societies of Belgium, Sweden, Norway and Spain.

The President underlined two important facets of the Society's many activities: its lobbying for mathematics at a European level, in which Luc Lemaire played an invaluable role; and the successful establishment of its own publishing house, for which Rolf Jeltsch had been the driving force. All activities depended on a small group of dedicated people, in particular he warmly thanked Secretary Tuulikki Mäkeläinen, but the Society needed more volunteers as its work expanded. The President commended the willingness of mathematicians to serve on the recently created Scientific Advisory Panel. Council agreed to send congratulations to Henri Cartan on the occasion of his 100th birthday.

The financial statements, presented by Olli Martio, were accepted. The finances were in good health, but a slight rise in the corporate membership fee was needed, which Council approved.

Pavel Exner was elected as Vice-President; Victor Buchstaber, Olga Gil-Medrano, Carlo Sbordone, and Klaus Schmidt as ordinary members of the



Host Sten Kaijser, Uppsala Univ., and EMS-President Sir John Kingman

Committee. The President thanked the outgoing members of the Committee: Bodil Branner, Marta Sanz-Solé, and Mina Teicher.

Reports and Debates

Martin Raussen, editor of the Newsletter reported on a smooth handover from Robin Wilson. Much of the Newsletter would be made available on EMIS, and it was hoped that the Book Reviews and Conferences could be made available in a searchable form. Council thanked Robin Wilson and Martin Raussen for their work for the Newsletter.

There had been some excellent work on behalf of the applied mathematics community, including the AMAM conference in Nice and the focus on applications of mathematics in the forthcoming 4ecm, but the applied mathematics committee had been unable to decide whether to recommend a separate series of JEMS for applied mathematics and there had been a loss of momentum in its activities.

Mina Teicher was the new chair of the Education Committee. She would do

some work on the Pisa report and work closely with the education committees of national societies.

Vagn Lundsgaard Hansen talked about the activities of the Committee for Raising Public Awareness and the necessity for mathematicians to engage with politicians, journalists and the general public. This stimulated several suggestions and examples from delegates, such as the forthcoming public activities in Copenhagen during the ICME meeting, links on EMIS and a website for teachers (like that of the DMV).

There was a report from the Special Events Committee and from the Eastern Europe committee, whose principal function remains the allocating of travel grants.

Luc Lemaire reported on the success of the General Meetings Committee in attracting a grant of half a million euros for EMS Summer Schools. A new round of applications was due. The Mathematical Weekends had started with a successful meeting in Lisbon in 2003, with another due in Prague this September and a further one planned for



Delegates and members of the EC during a break

Barcelona in 2005. On the other hand, there had been no suggestions received for EMS lecturers.

A short report on the state of the Bologna process was followed by a stimulating, and occasionally agonised, discussion. The President summed up by saying that the Society should be willing to back the mathematical community in particular countries rather than formulating a general policy.

Thomas Hintermann, managing director of the EMS Publishing House, spoke of its progress. From this year, EMSph was publishing *JEMS*, *Interfaces* and *Free Boundaries*, *Oberwolfach Reports* and, from 2005, *Commentarii Helveticae* and *Elemente der Mathematik* would join the list. Book series had also started. A delegate suggested reduced prices for developing countries.

The Committee on Developing Countries continued to be very active. Herbert Fleischner said the books project was continuing, and the Committee was trying to increase the geographical spread of its work. It had a working fund with contributions from EMS and Zentralblatt-MATH. John Ball spoke of the work the IMU was doing.

Helge Holden talked about the Digital Mathematical Library project. This was being pursued at the national level; the EMS might have a co-ordinating role, but it could not fill it without additional volunteers. John Ball spoke of the importance with which the IMU regards this project, which was moving well.

Council unanimously agreed to hold the fifth European Congress of Mathematics in Amsterdam in July
EMS September 2004

2008.

The President spoke of the importance of having a viable Zentralblatt-MATH, as a counterweight to Mathematical Reviews-MathSciNet. There were currently some difficulties, in that the financial base (mainly German and French) needed to be broadened and that the project rested heavily on the shoulders of too few people. There was a need for a scientific advisory board, not to manage, but to provide scientific input. An EU funding application (two had failed) should be a secondary activity to support

a strategy, but should not be allowed to distort or dominate. Laurent Guillopé spoke of the French government's review of Zentralblatt-MATH.

Reporting on the work of the Committee on Women and Mathematics, Emilia Mezzetti spoke of the limited success of the questionnaire, so that it was not possible to base action on it. But the Committee was collecting data and this did show some improvement in the position of women, particularly at starting levels. The Committee was also involved with mentoring schemes.

Council concluded with a discussion on the position of mathematics within European research programmes. The themed networks were not very good for mathematics. In the Marie Curie and other schemes, the success rate, though low, was fixed to be same in each subject. A delegate spoke passionately about the time-consuming and demeaning bureaucratic hurdles encountered if an application was successful. Though a report had come out in favour of a European Research Council with significant funding, the political will did not appear to be there; nor did this appear to be a high priority for the accession countries.

In his closing remarks, the President appealed to delegates to bore people about the importance of mathematics, particularly the development of abstract mathematics as 'tomorrow's tools'.

Council agreed that the search for a new EMS-president should begin now. The terms of office is four years starting with January 2007. Members of the Society are invited to send suggestions to President Sir John Kingman at emspresident@newton.cam.ac.uk



The Newsletter's Editorial Board held a meeting at Uppsala, too. From left to right: Martin Raussen, Steen Markvorsen, Krzysztof Ciesielski, Robin Wilson.