

Report of the Secretary General to ECM 133 Virtual Meeting, Saturday, October 10th, 2020

1. General

This report covers the period from ECM 130 in Malmö, Sweden, in July 2019, to now, October 2021. The meetings in Malmö, which covered ECM 130, IVC 21, the highlight congress of the Union, the 20th General Meeting of the Union and ECM 131, were the last face to face meetings we had within IUVSTA. Because of the COVID-19 crisis, ECM 132 and also ECM 133 had to be organized as virtual meetings, which took a lot of adaption and flexibility from all our members. Therefore, no report of the Secretary General was submitted to ECM 130, because many things had to be organized in uncharted territory and preliminary procedures had to be developed to keep the Union running despite the impossibility to meet physically. In this respect, I would like to thank all persons which were involved in this process for their commitment and dedication to establish a way of operating IUVSTA in a virtual mode. Having said this, I would like to continue this report in the usual manner, highlighting the ways we intend to work in the near future.

2. Minutes and Communications

The Minutes of the previous ECMs were posted on the web site by the Recording Secretary. I urge all Committee Secretaries to ensure that the Recording Secretary receives their reports as soon as possible for posting. Our minutes bear official value and may have to be supplied to authorities on short notice, so these should be easily accessible by our members. It is also important to state that our meeting minutes serve as a means to keep track on the evolution of the Union in these rapidly changing times, where it is necessary to keep a close look at ongoing changes and fluent situations. For this, a written record of actions having been taken is important to avoid redundancies and inefficient work.

3. Web Matters

Our web-site will be an important tool of our communication in times where we cannot meet physically. I have posted and will post relevant documents which are created between our Executive Council Meetings in the "Meantime" area of the members' section. Usually, such documents appeared there shortly before our meetings, and this is still the case. However, as the Officers of the Union now meet regularly via Web bases services, in the future the same should hold also for our committees, so that significant work will also be done between the meetings. So I urge you to periodically have a look at the "Meantime" section to be aware of eventual progress made in the fields of our Committees. Of course, also information on events submitted to the Executive Council for financial support, like Workshops schools or courses, can be found there.

For timely response whenever troubles with the web-site occur I convey special thanks to our Webmaster, John Koudelka. I also would like to thank Ivan Petrov for permanently keeping track on ongoing events which are posted in a timely manner as a "Newsflash" item. Reports on concluded events can be found in the News Bulletin, which Ivan also publishes on the Web-site in a regular manner.

Of course also social media gain an increasing role in presenting the Union to the Outside World. The Union now has a twitter account, <https://twitter.com/iuvsta> which is taken care of by our Australian colleague Jennifer MacLeod. I would like warmly thank her for all the effort she puts into this task.

4. New Memberships

It is my pleasure to report that at GM 20 the Cuban Physical Society and the Serbian Vacuum Society were granted full membership to the Union. Both societies are willing to contribute one share as a membership fee. I would like to express my thanks to all persons, and especially to the members of the Emerging Societies Committee, for their continuous efforts in soliciting new members. Unfortunately,

given the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, no new applications for membership have been received up till now.

5. Interactions with other Bodies

5.1 International Bodies

We interact with UNESCO, ISC and ISO and receive information on the actions of these bodies mostly by email. Within the liaison of the Union with ISO, ASSD and VSTD links to selected technical committees. Our exchange with UN based entities may become more important in the near future if the International Year of Basic Sciences for Sustainable Development (IYBSSD), in which IUUSTA plans to take part, is granted by the UN General Assembly.

5.2 Commercial Bodies

Many convention centres, travel agents, etc., contact me with offers to host conferences and meetings. If your Society is looking for a venue, contact me and I will check to see if I have any information on anything in your vicinity that might be of interest. This also holds of course also for Professional Organizers which focus on virtual meetings, a sector which will gain considerable importance in the foreseeable future.

6. Future Executive Council Meetings

During our virtual ECM 133, which supplements the face to face ECM 133 which would have been held in conjunction with VASSCAA-10 in Shanghai, China, the President will suggest to hold ECM 134, for which no bids were received up till now, as a face to face meeting in conjunction with EVC 16 planned in Marseilles, beginning of June 2021.

7. Procedures for Virtual Meetings and Events

The present situation, which may still last for some time to come, has made it clear that the Union has to develop guidelines to hold virtual ECMs. A procedure to do this has evolved during our first virtual ECM 132 and will be refined by Statutes Committee until ECM 134. Especially a proper way to hold online votes should be devised, and I invite everybody who is willing to help in this process to collaborate with Statutes Committee in this matter.

The same holds for the other events of the Union, i. e. Workshops, Schools and Courses. Proper guidelines to organize these events, without infringing their general spirit shall also be developed by Statutes Committee until ECM 134. I would like to make it clear at this point that this is a matter of procedures, which will leave our Statutes and By Laws, which basically constitute the legal frame and the purpose of the Union, untouched. The purpose of these new procedures is solely to give event organizers a financial and organizational framework to implement their planned virtual event.

8. Finally

I would like to thank all of you, but especially the officers of the Union who dedicated their time to several meetings which took place in the last month, and also to the Recording Secretary, Ana Silva, to run the Union in these challenging times. I am looking forward to ECM 133 which is now very close, and to the upcoming new developments, which, as I hope, will broaden the scope of IUUSTA without changing its spirit of being a Scientific Union devoted to further scientific progress on a personal basis.

Christoph Eisenmenger-Sittner
October 2020