

## REPORT TO IFSR BOARD ON 26 MARCH 2008

After the IFSR board meeting in April 2006 in Vienna three face-to-face meetings of president and secretary/treasurer M. Mulej in G. Chroust in Austria (22 Feb. 2007 in Chroust home), in Czech Republic (during conference on 25-27 May, 2007 in Prague and in India (during conference 2-6 Jan., 2008 in Hyderabad) as well as a several-days meeting of all IFSR EC during ISSS conference in Tokyo on 3-8 August 2007. Besides, beyond one hundred e-mails are there in my computer for discussions among IFSR EC members (at the cost of one train ticket Maribor-Enzersdorf-Maribor).

### 1. MEMBERSHIP

Four new member associations were accepted between the two sessions of IFSR board in the 2006-2008

After establishment of the Academy, IFSR may more easily approach rather big international associations that have grown out from the systems science and cybernetics tradition and forgot about their roots.

Some member associations put in their letterhead along with their own name words 'Member of the International Federation for Systems Research'. EC of IFSR should suggest to:

- (1) Its three founding member associations – the Austrian Society for Cybernetic Studies, the Dutch Systems Group, and the International Society for Systems Sciences – to put in their letterhead **FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR SYSTEMS RESEARCH, EST. IN 1981;**
- (2) Its other member associations to put in their letterhead **MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR SYSTEMS RESEARCH, EST. IN 1981.**

### 2. FINANCIAL STATUS AND OUTLOOK

Thanks to results of the very good work of the journal Systems Research and Behavioral Science the financial status is stable. The major expenditures in 2007 were:

- (1) EC meeting during ISSS conference in Tokyo, Japan, but it will be reduced by Mulej and Metcalfe covering their flight cost from other sources, and Jifa Gu all cost as well.
- (2) Mulej's trip to Wroclaw for the commemorative session concerning the late Prof. Bubnicki caused no cost to IFSR.

Other projects did not cost much in 2007, but there were a few subsidies for actions by member associations, although not all initiatives received EC support in e-mail sessions:

HFG receives support from IFSR for its work on archives of Heinz von Förster in Vienna, A, amount: 3000 Euros for Gordon Pask material. Of it 1.500 Euros were paid.

Sponsors of Symposium celebrating retirement of the first IFSR president George Klir from University of Rochester, NY, USA receive support from IFSR: 400 Euros. It was not yet requested.

### 3. IFSR ACTIVITIES IN 2006

3.1. IFSR 25 years' celebration: tapes are done and last about eight hours. We saw a part of them and we suggest a version of up to 90 minutes to be produced including the introductory speeches by Jifa Gu and Gerhard Chroust, complete, a few minutes of Mulej's Ashby memorial lecture (which is in the conference proceedings anyway), and about one hour of the discussion in the afternoon session, exposing the former presidents, first of all, and suggestions for new activities and policies of IFSR.

3.2. The Fuschl Conversation 2006: it was exceptionally devoted to the future of IFSR. Proceedings exist due to the very fruitful effort of Gary Metcalfe and Gerhard Chroust and inputs from conversation groups. Every some years a similar concept might be worth repeating, but not every time, at least not in such a complete concentration of all discussion. Suggestions for the content of Fuschl Conversation 2008 should be collected by mail from member associations in the autumn of 2007 by GC, along with several other topics (see below).

#### 4. IFSR PROJECTS AGREED IN 2006 BOARD MEETING

4.1. ESCO – Ch. François's Encyclopedia: We are making a new suggestion as follows:

- a) The given material is very rich and printed. It should remain as it is rather than transferred to an electronic version, except the list of topics, or by publisher's initiative, unless IFSR can reach another agreement, which Gerhard Chroust was and is working on.
- b) This list of topics should be used as the basis for a new edition of encyclopedia in Wikipedia style called SYSTEMSPEDIA. It should be published on IFSR website. There should be no editor saying what is acceptable and what is not. See 4.1.c) for the way of accepting.
- c) Authors of new articles published in journals should be entitled to publish abstracts of these articles, if they meet criteria of Encyclopedia. It should be their right and duty to classify their contribution under a topic in Systemspedia. There should also be area for topics that have not yet been covered to be introduced in Systemspedia. It should be in English and in the authors' mother tongue. All contributions should explicitly refer to the journal of publication. Outside journal publications abstracts about books should have their room, equally explicitly referring to the publication. Conference papers are not eligible.
- d) Authors of articles published in earlier years should be equally entitled as in 4.1.c).
- e) A committee should be nominated to make a list of eligible journals. Amanda Gregory agreed in Tokyo to join it. An elected committee is supposed to help her by IFSR board decision.

4.2. Bertalanffy's Legacy: Room for storing all material is difficult to find. GC and Wolfgang Hofkirchner are trying to find it in IIASA at Laxenburg, A, where IFSR was established and housed in its initial period, and where it should return in order not to be bound to the job of the Secretary General as now.

4.3. New legacies to be archived: Archives owned by Charles François, except the ones in Spanish, are donated to IFSR. So are some others. This is worth a lot, but also requiring room for storing. See 4.2. There are archives of various pioneers of systems science and cybernetics at several locations around the world. They should remain locally stored, but networking information on IFSR website should be created by inputs of information coming from anyone knowing any piece of the situation. Member associations should be invited for contributions as soon as the website is ready, which GC has taken care of.

4.4. IFSR Website: It is making a good progress in technical terms. GC works on it. He did announce to member associations when IFSR website is ready for contributions, but reaction has not been very active so far. Suggestion: Systemspedia should make an essential part of IFSR Website, along with organizational messages. Access at the moment: <http://ifsr.ocg.at/world/>

4.5. Meeting with officers of IFSR member societies: In EMCSR time, on the Tuesday evening right after the end of symposia, and in ISSS conferences time, the first or second evening right after the end of symposia, too, which is before dinner time, officers of IFSR member associations should be invited for informal meeting with each other and IFSR EC. This is called 'community building exercise' sometimes and helps people to talk to those from other associations. No agenda and no expenses. Perhaps a room might be reserved for groups to have dinner together to continue discussions and community building.

4.6. International Academy of Systems and Cybernetics Sciences: M. Mulej and JiFa Gu drafted criteria for membership of scientists to be admitted. They were discussed at IFSR EC meeting in Tokyo in early August 2007, and now submitted to IFSR member associations for discussion. IACS should be established by IFSR board in April 2008 in Vienna. Bylaws were be drafted by MM and Jifa Gu and passed by IFSR EC in meeting in Tokyo, and now submitted to IFSR member associations for discussion.

4.7. Courseware on systems science and cybernetics: Based on agreement in Fuschl Conversation 2006, G. A. Swanson took initiative to collect information on courseware. His action runs insufficiently well because of the poor response of so far from member associations.

4.8. Contact with UNESCO: The earlier draft suggestion that IFSR should contact world wide organizations in order to share actions to promote systems thinking, was reduced by IFSR member associations to contacting UNESCO as the organization dealing with education rather

than politics. It was undertaken so far, because some member associations expressed opinion that such contacts are up to them. IFSR is a shared instrument of sharing activities, which individual member association established IFSR for and can less well cover them alone.

## 5. IFSR PUBLICATIONS

5.1. IFSR Newsletter: It does not stop being published on paper, but the number of copies is smaller, and is put on IFSR Website under editorship of G. Chroust, unless EC and IFSR board nominate new persons. IFSR member associations should provide information on an ongoing basis.

5.2. Systems Research and Behavioral Science: is working very well under the current editorial team. We suggest no changes. IFSR member associations should make suggestions to the IFSR board, as they deem necessary. We congratulate M. Jackson and his team for their great job.

5.3. IFSR book series: BCSSS as the IFSR member association dealing with Bertalanffy legacy suggests a new book series to deal less with the mathematical and engineering aspects of systems theory, cybernetics and their application, and more with the soft systems approaches, humanity and social topics. The recent experiences of e.g. Ecimovic, Mulej, and Mayur (2002) and of Giancarlo Minatti (2006) etc. suggest that publishing a book series could be done by the IACS and on its website as a part of the IFSR website. An editorial board should be nominated by IFSR board on the basis of suggestions if IFSR member associations, which should also suggest books to be published.

5.4. IFSR flyer/brochure: should be no longer on paper, but on website for IFSR member associations to download as they please and deem necessary to use for announcing IFSR at their conferences and otherwise. GC is in charge of it, and G. Metcalfe helps him.

5.5. IFSR web board: should provide a blog-style discussion area on the IFSR website. GC is in charge of it, and G. Metcalfe helps him. It has not been activated so far, although it is partially available, but not in use.

## 6. IFSR SUPPORTED EVENTS

6.1. Ashby Memorial Lecture at EMCSR 2008: IFSR member associations should make proposals of their members to be given this honor, because they have are/becoming celebrities with their new contributions to cybernetics and systems theory and/or their application. They did not. IFSR EC suggested Prof. Nakamori from JAIST, Japan.

6.2. Scholarships for participation in EMCSR 2008: up to ten students or participants from soft currency countries accepted as speakers of published papers in EMCSR can receive scholarships covering their conference fee.

6.4. EMCSR 2008: The IFSR organizes one 'symposium', i.e. one session in the EMCSR to gain more visibility - it is the IFSR day now.

Based on IFSR board decision, IFSR will not sponsor conferences, but can provide help to IFSR member associations, if they suggest so, but without taking any risk or financial benefit of IFSR. Thus, initiative is with IFSR member associations. The Slovenia Systems Research Society asked IFSR to co-sponsor its 9<sup>th</sup> STIQE conference that is the only one on linking Systems Thinking, Innovation, Quality, Entrepreneurship, and Environmental Care around the World, along with the European Academy of Arts and Sciences, Salzburg, A, with no financial duties and rights, and received approval of IFSR EC.

Matjaz Mulej

26 March 2008