



Activities 2014 – 2015

International Federation of Classification Societies
29th and 30th year from the foundation

Report of the President
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Council of IFCS
Bologna, 7, July, 2015

Dear Council of IFCS,

at the end of my term, as President of the Federation for the years 2014-2015, I wish to show you the main activities of the year 2015 and take the opportunity to recall briefly the work done with the Executive Committee and many members of IFCS in the entire period.

I wish to start this report remembering two eminent scientists Peter Ihm and Alfredo Rizzi, who passed away in the last days of March 2014. Peter and Alfredo have very much positively influenced the life of IFCS. Peter was one of the representatives of GfKI who signed the document of foundation of IFCS, at Cambridge, in 1985, and Alfredo was organizer of the successful IFCS1998 in Rome.

1. Admission of new Societies in IFCS

The Federation founded 4th July 1985, started with 6 associations and raised to 12 in 2005 in 20 years. In 2006, IFCS admitted the 13th association and in 2009, the 14th. At the end of 2013 IFCS raised from 14 to 15 members, with the admission of the *Moroccan Classification Society*.

On the topic of the admission of new Societies, together with the help of the Executive Committee, I followed two ways to proceed:

- (1) Ask to well-known researchers of a country to organize a Classification Society; or
- (2) Identify Associations which are interested in Classification and related methods and that have a group of researchers who are willing to collaborate with IFCS. The typology of collaboration has two possible formats:

- *Protocol Agreement for Communication and Cooperation between IFCS and Cooperating Society;*
- *Affiliation of a subgroup of the Society to IFCS, as a new member of the Federation.*

During these two years, we have found very difficult to find researchers who are able to organize new Classification Societies, while we have found very successful to contact well-known associations interested in IFCS.

In order to reach this aim we have first created a flyer of the Federation, downloadable from our website that has been used to promote the Federation and show the major activities.

Thus, we have prepared a general *Protocol Agreement for Communication and Cooperation between IFCS and the Cooperating Society*, specifying the government-to-government relationships expected, that is, the key terms of collaboration and communication.

As President of IFCS I have contacted several Associations sending the flyer of the Federation and asking for possible partnership.

I started to contact the International Association for Statistical Computing, with which we already had good relationships, and together with the President Maria Paula Brito we tested the feasibility of the protocol and together we contacted the International Statistical Institute.

The key interests of the protocol are: for the communication, the exchange of information in websites and newsletters of the two Associations; for the cooperation, the exchange of invited sessions in their meetings, and in particular the proposal of a joint session to the ISI World Statistics Conference, on topics of common interest. In addition there is also the possible organization of joint workshops and/or Summer Schools.

The two Associations, together with ISI, signed the protocol, 8 October 2014.

I further contacted several statistical associations interested in the general topics of research of IFCS and these contacts have been very fruitful. In particular at the end of December 2014 two new groups have applied to become new members of IFCS:

Multivariate Statistics and Classification Group of the Spanish Society of Statistics and Operation Research SEIO-AMyC (<http://amyc.seio.es/>);
and
Multivariate Data Analysis Group of the South African Statistical Association (SASA-MDAG) (<http://www.sastat.org.za/mdag-0>).

SEIO-AMyC was founded in 2008, while SASA-MDAG was constituted in 2014. Both are groups within well-known and large national statistical societies.

The ballot of the Council of IFCS ended 30 March 2015 with the unanimity of the voting members. Thus, now, the Federation collaborates with 18 Associations: IASC with the protocol agreement and the 17 Societies affiliated members of the IFCS.

Very recently the 15 of June I received a new request of admission from the Hungarian Statistical Society one of the oldest Associations of Europe, constituted in 1922. The IFCS Executive Committee has expressed a very positive appreciation on this new potential member of IFCS and together with HSA we are now finalizing the documentation necessary to be presented to the Council of IFCS and to start the ballot on this new application for IFCS membership. Thus, we hope to arrive to 19 Associations collaborating with IFCS for the end of 2015.

Other contacts are open with India and China, but we have not concrete news on these countries.

2. Novelties in IFCS conference

During the last two years we have worked to facilitate the participation of researchers to the IFCS conference and increase their interest in this event. Taking in strong consideration the classical determinants that increase participation such as high level invited speakers on hot topics, good organization of the program, and nice location of the conference; in addition, we have introduced two useful novelties.

The Open Conference Systems has been installed in the website of IFCS. This is free software, developed by several universities, that provides a set of tools for every step of IFCS conference organization. In fact it allows to: register participants; submitting papers and abstracts and electronically accept papers; organize papers in searchable form. Thus, from now on, IFCS can provide a new service from its website for the organizers of the IFCS conferences, that is, a permanent home for our recurring biennial IFCS conferences. This means that we will maintain all the information of the conferences in the website of IFCS for the years to come.

The second novelty regards the reorganization of the Awards. I will discuss this point in the following section of this report.

3. IFCS Awards

Together with the Executive Committee we have renovated the awards of IFCS by considering different and more specific categories with the aim to increase participation and quality of the presentations by attracting the best young and experienced scientists from all world.

We have maintained the Chikio Hayashi Award for Young Researchers, limiting the age of participants between 30 to 35 years, because we observed that winners of these awards had about 35 years. In fact, young scientists such as PhD and postdoctoral students had a lower possibility to win due to the low age with respect to candidates of about 35 years. So for younger scientists we created the Student/Postdoctoral Fellow Paper Competition and Travel Award (age 22 – 29). IFCS offers a

grant towards their attendance expenses, conference fees and the local/university hotel. Furthermore, the winners will be invited to submit their paper to ADAC or JOC for possible publication. To complete awards dedicated to young researchers we also propose a Student Poster Session Competition Award on innovative research including applications. This is a competition dedicated to applicants who are students in the fall of the year prior to the competition.

Finally, to allow the participation at researchers with more experience, a new award has been created.

To have a clear distinction we have proposed the IFCS Research Medal for outstanding research achievements (age > 35). This is an award to recognize the exceptional achievements of an individual scientist, who has made fundamental contributions to the advancement of Classification, Clustering and related topics over a number of years, and has contributed to the activities of IFCS, with at least 10 years from studies.

The award is open to individuals whose research, teaching, service and advocacy has had international impact and significantly benefited the Classification, Clustering and other topics of interest of IFCS. Fellows of the Societies, affiliated to IFCS, have been invited to submit and/or sustain nominations.

4. IFCS 2015 Conference

I wish to underline the particularly high level of the keynote speakers invited in this conference: Gerda Claeskens (Belgium), Professor of Statistics at Leuven University; Trevor Hastie (USA), Professor of Statistics and Biostatistics at Stanford University; Marco Riani (Italy), Professor of Statistics at Parma University; Robert Tibshirani (USA), Professor of Statistics and Health Research and Policy at Stanford University; Terry Speed (Australia), Professor of Statistics, Head of Bioinformatics Melbourne.

This time to strengthen the direct collaboration of the Classification Societies to the organization of the IFCS meeting, we asked the Presidents of the Associations to participate to the SPC, and together with the usual work of the SPC we required to each classification society to organized one or two sessions on topics, where, in the recent years, members of Societies have achieved relevant theoretical, methodological and/or applied advances, in order to disseminate and discuss their outstanding scientific contributions with colleagues of IFCS. In order to increase the collaboration among Societies, each Invited Session, was asked to be formed by 4 Speakers, preferably with researchers coming from more than one Society of the Federation.

On behalf of the Council of IFCS I wish to thank the Scientific Program Committee and in particular the president Francesco Palumbo and the president of Local Organizing Committee Angela Montanari for the excellent program organized rich of interesting invited and solicited sessions. I also wish to take the occasion to warmly thank the LOC and again Angela Montanari for the great given hospitality and for a so perfect organization in the beautiful city of Bologna.

5. IFCS 2017

During the 2014 the Japanese Classification Society expressed the interest to organize the IFCS 2017 conference in Japan, and at the beginning of 2015 the president of JCS presented a BID in the standard format also followed by conferences of Bologna and Tilburg. As it is usual practice the President has discussed with the President Elect the proposal of BID with a skype meeting. Together they have verified all details of the proposal and compared it with the previous two BIDs

of Bologna and Tilburg. The President and the President elect found the BID ready for approval of the Executive Committee that, after some small refinements, in April sustained the final version recommending the approval of the IFCS Council. The Ballot for the BID 2017 was completed in May with the final approval.

The Conference will be organized in Tokyo 8-10 August 2017. The Chair of the SPC is prof. Tadashi Imaizumi and the Vice-Chair of the SPC is Sadaaki Miyamoto.

This time we have the possibility to immediately create the webpage of the conference in the website of IFCS with the Open Conference System. So I invite the President of the Scientific Program Committee to ask to quickly upload this information in our website, in order to inform possible participants and reduce potential overlaps with other conferences.

Let me take the occasion to thank the Japanese Classification Society, and the President Tadashi Imaizumi for willing to organize the next IFCS conference and for the excellent work done in organizing the BID together with the President Akinori Okada. In 1996, members of IFCS met in Kobe for our biennial conference. It is still in our minds the very impressive conference entitled: "Data Science, Classification and Related Methods". Here for the first time the term Data Science was included in the title of the conference. This information is reported in the recent history of Data Science and testifies that this conference was very innovative and advanced. After 21 years we will have the pleasure to appreciate again the great hospitality of Japan, we are sure, that we will have excellent results in 2017 in Tokyo.

6. Celebration of the 30th anniversary of the founding of IFCS

This year the International Federation of Classification Societies celebrates the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Federation. After 30 years the scope and purposes of the Federation -to promote mutual communication, co-operation and interchange of views among all those interested in scientific principles, numerical methods, and practice of data analysis and classification in a broad sense and in as wide a range of applications as possible- is still very innovative. As I just told you the Federation in 1996 in Kobe, and also 1998 in Rome was the first scientific Society to use the term Data Science as a title of the conference qualifying the pioneering research on data analysis presented. Recently, at the end of 2012, after that the Harvard Business Review, wrote that the *data scientist* is the sexiest job of the 21st century, all are crazy for scientists with skills that are very familiar for those researchers participating to IFCS.

In this year of celebration I would like to stress the high quality of papers presented at the IFCS conferences, as can be proved from the individual, average annual increase of the h-index (hi-annual) of papers presented in IFCS conferences and published in *Studies in Classification, Data Analysis, and Knowledge Organization*. Indeed, the hi-annual of these papers is comparable with the hi-annual of the *Journal of Classification* for the same years and with the *Journal Advances in Data Analysis and Classification* as can be seen in Table 1 of appendix A.

Therefore, after 30 years, we can certainly say IFCS clearly serves as an agency for the dissemination of technical scientific information related to classification and data analysis.

7. Administrative Activities of IFCS

I really wish to take this occasion to thank the Scientific Secretary of the Federation Christian Hennig for the excellent work done during this period. The administrative work and the procedures adopted during this period were always functional to efficiently organize and complete activities of

the Federation. I also thank him for all his efforts, wise advice, and enthusiasm during the Executive Committee meetings.

I also wish to thank the Treasurer Nema Dean for the work done as treasurer of the Association.

8. IFCS Activities of Communication and Dissemination

IFCS NEWSLETTER

IFCS Newsletter appears three times a year (March, July, and November). The scope of the Newsletter is to create communication among National Societies, realizing a medium where information is exchanged within the scope of interest of IFCS. The task of producing the IFCS Newsletter is of the Publication Officer Paul McNicholas, who I wish to warmly thank for the excellent work and patience in requesting contributions for the newsletter. In the number 49, in addition to the usual information, Paul has started to publish interviews with Presidents of national societies. The aim is to help readers to understand new trends in research and appreciate new strategic activities of member societies. We also plan in the future to publish non-technical articles, written by eminent researchers, outlining current trends in scientific developments in classification, data analysis, and related methods.

IFCS WEBSITE

The website of IFCS is the major medium to know the Federation and follow its activities. It should include information on National Classification Societies, the Governance of the Federation, IFCS congresses and prizes, scientific projects and activities of committees.

I wish to thank Robert Wiedermann for the work done in renewing the website and for the installation of the OCS.

Together with the Publication Officer and the Webmaster the President in the rest of his mandate will discuss how to include more information, continuously updated directly by the Associations, to give a more concrete use of the medium and show to the international scientific community a modern Federation with several activities.

JOC and ADAC

We have already cited two Journals: the *Journal of Classification* (JoC) and the journal *Advances in Data Analysis and Classification* (ADAC). Both are supported by IFCS and are very active and with a relevant impact on the scientific community.

The Journal of Classification has recently changed the Editor. Let me take the occasion to congratulate Douglas Stanley, who is the new Editor of JoC, wishing him all the best in continuing to publish a very important Journal. Let me also warmly thank the outgoing Editor Willem Heiser who has served as editor for several years and greatly contributed to the very good reputation of this Journal.

9. IFCS Financial Activities

I really wish to take the occasion to thank the Donors of funds to IFCS.

Springer contributed with 1400 euros and some books to the IFCS Awards.

SAS contributed with 3000 euros to the organization of IFCS 2015.

10. Acknowledgments

I wish to take the occasion to warmly thank the Executive Committee: Iven van Mechelen, Akinori Okada, Christian Hennig, Paul McNicholas, and Nema Dean who have greatly worked during this period. I finally thank the IFCS Council of the Federation which we have contacted several times these years for several ballots and admittance of new members. Thanks a lot for your patience.

Appendix A

Table 1. Impact of the papers presented in the meetings of IFCS these values are comparable with those of papers published in JoC and ADAC. Values have been computed using the software Publish or Perish.

1. Papers presented in IFCS Conferences and published in

Studies in Classification Data Analysis and Knowledge Organization

Year	Cite/paper	h-index	citations	hi-annual*
Paris, 1993	9.12	15	739	0.52
Kobe, 1996	5.81	12	540	0.65
Rome, 1998	6.32	14	594	0.65
Namur, 2000	8.18	10	556	0.53
Cracow, 2002	9.26	11	491	0.77
Chicago, 2004	9.77	12	635	0.82
Ljubljana, 2006	7.51	10	631	0.78
Dresden, 2009	3.34	9	264	0.83
Frankfurt, 2011	1.42	4	168	2.00

(*)The average annual increase of the h-index called hi, annual was proposed by Anne-Wil Harzing, Satu Alakangas and David Adams in their paper hla: An individual annual h-index to accommodate disciplinary and career length differences, *Scientometrics*, vol. 99, no. 3, pp. 811-821. This index is computed in Publish or Perish.