

28 August 2019, Thessaloniki, Greece at IFCS Council Meeting

**Report of the president, Professor Berthold Lausen, of the
International Federation of Classification Societies (IFCS)**

Dear colleagues and friends

I took over as president in January 2018. I had the honour to succeed Professor Akinori Okada. Akinori had been an excellent President. Professor Angela Montanari, joint the Executive Committee (EC) as the President-Elect and Professor Katrijn Van Deun, as Publication Officer. In my report to the IFCS Council, I like to thank Professor Maurizio Vichi as past president and Professor Paul McNicholas as Publication Officer very much for all their hard work and excellent contributions to the EC of the IFCS. It was and is my aim to have good representation of various groups of the classification societies. I am delighted that the current EC has an equal gender representation. I hope and I am confident that we will see in the future equal and fair representation of both genders and of other groups at all levels of the organisation.

After our very successful IFCS conference at Tokyo, Japan, in August 8-10, 2017 we were looking forward to the upcoming IFCS2019 in Thessaloniki, Greece, August 26-29, 2019. Professor Theodore Chadjipadelis is conference chair of the organisation. Professor Tae Rim Lee and I co-chair the scientific program committee (SPC). In preparation of IFCS 2019 I had met with Theodore as conference chair, the local organisers and the company Artion supporting the organisation at

Thessaloniki in June last year. We investigated different conference sites and discussed various options. We decided that the conference centre at the waterfront with beautiful views is the best option – being in the conference centre, I am convinced that you all agree.

As announced in the first call for the IFCS 2019 in 2017 we have several awards related to the conference:

- IFCS Research Medal for outstanding research,
- Chikio Hayashi Award,
- Helga and Wolfgang Gaul Stiftung Award,
- Student/Postdoctoral Fellow Paper Competition and Travel Award.

To aim for good representation from all member societies we extended the deadline in January roughly by one month. The finance situation allowed to sponsor four Hayashi awards to honour excellent contributions. We discuss the awards later in the agenda after the report by the chair of the awards committee, Maurizio.

Later, we discuss the IFCS publication strategy as well. The IFCS2019 will publish the post conference proceedings in *Studies in Classification, Data Analysis, and Knowledge*. We may decide that IFCS publishes the conference proceeding of our biannual conference in the Springer Series *Studies in Classification, Data Analysis, and Knowledge* in general.

We planned to decide on a new visualization of the worldwide distribution of IFCS Member Societies and their members. Note, that not all member societies are organized in line with the borders of national states and many have an international membership. Having large gaps in the worldwide presentation, I think that a simple table, actually a list, summary

by continent illustrates our potential to grow and it does not need to be visualised by a map.

The distribution of the member societies by continents is

Africa: 2; Americas: 2; Asia: 2; Australia: 0; Europe: 12.

In my manifesto, when I stood as president for election, I suggested to support that IFCS should increase joint, regional or continental activities. Looking at the distribution of member societies by continents we should aim to find and to encourage (further) active classification and data science groups especially in Africa, Americas, Asia and Australia.

How can we find new member societies in these regions?

This year, I visited and plan to visit meetings and conferences in Africa, Americas and Asia to encourage and to support that groups are identified which may become member societies of IFCS in the future. If you have suggestions of existing groups in Africa, Americas, Asia and Australia, please, let me know. Health issues reduced my capacity to travel last year and in the current year.

In addition, I like to suggest to strengthen our link to the European classification societies and agree that activities of IFCS and our European members should avoid clashes. For example, having had the ECDA2013 and IFCS2013 in consecutive weeks, we should avoid such arrangements in the future. Moreover, joint regional meetings support the visibility of IFCS and its members as classification and data science societies. For example, ECDA agreed with DSSV of IASC to aim for a joint meeting in Rotterdam 6-9 July 2021, next to the WSC of ISI in The Hague, Netherlands, 11-15 July 2021.

We had more than 300 participants at the first IFCS conference. At our 16th conference we are close to a similar size. Our ambition and plan is to grow the IFCS and the IFCS conference. One way is to close gaps on continents and to reduce the white gaps on the globe.

Another can be – my view – to strengthen our visibility in the digital age. We are embracing data analysis and data science in our conference topics. Data Science since Kobe, 1996. New member societies in Indonesia/Malaysia, Pakistan, East and West Africa, Europe, South-America, Australia may find an IFCS more attractive if they understand from the very beginning that IFCS is an or the International Data Analysis and Data Science Society. How can we achieve and support such an understanding, or how can we support and ease our efforts to grow as a member society and to grow as IFCS directly by having new and more member societies.

Possible answers are that we develop our conference further. Professor Paula Brito suggests for the IFCS2021, Porto, Portugal, 24-28 August 2021, to have pre-conference proceedings, what I strongly support. Paula will present the proposal under the item later on.

Under AOB I like to start the discussion if we can and should do this by adding to the name of the organisation the term “Data Science”; for example to evolve IFCS to

*“International Federation of Classification and
Data Science Societies (IFCS)”.*

Continue to use the abbreviation IFCS, but add in the name “Data Science”.

As said, I like to start the discussion and if it has some support today, we may continue the discussion and decide in due course to have a council vote which may change the name.

In summary, my aim was and is to move the IFCS forward, but this can only be done if all of you and all member societies are active players and if we have an agreed direction to grow and to develop IFCS further.

Thank you very much