

# NEWSLETTER

OF THE EUROPEAN MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY



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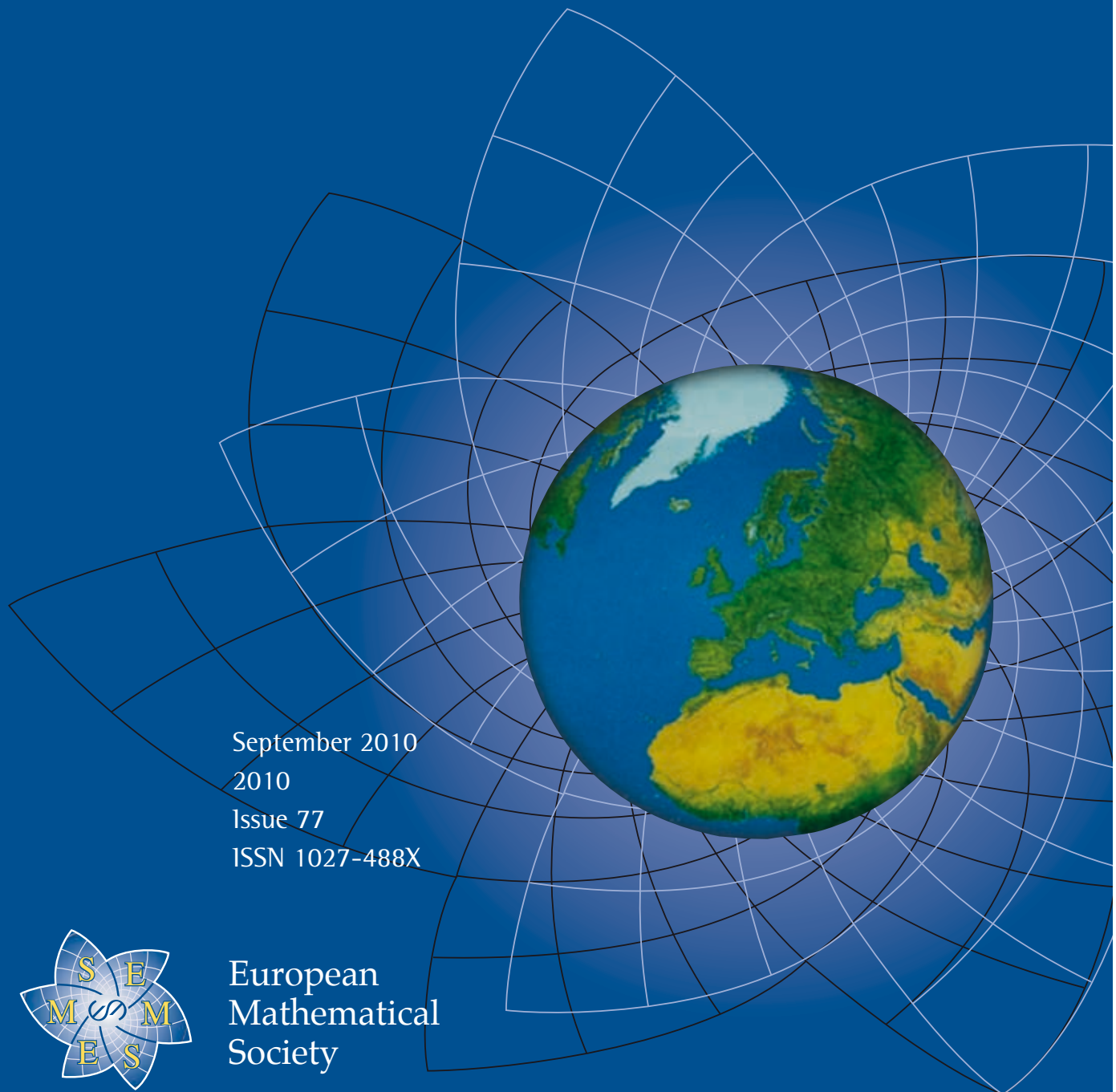
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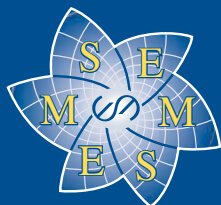


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# European Mathematical Society

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Ehrhard Behrends, Chair of the rpa committee



Ehrhard Behrends

### Public awareness

A large number of editorials have been published in the Newsletter of the EMS in which the importance of public awareness activities has been stressed. There is no need to repeat those arguments here.

A subcommittee of the EMS – the raising public awareness (rpa) committee – was founded several years ago to improve public understanding of mathematics and a number of projects have been realised since then.

The Diderot forums have been particularly successful, taking place simultaneously in a number of European cities and including activities such as lectures, panel discussions and exhibitions. Each Diderot forum was devoted to a specific aspect of mathematics (e.g. “Mathematics and Music”).

In addition, an attempt was made to organise competitions to identify the best popular mathematical articles in the media. But despite Herculean efforts to encourage colleagues and journalists to submit contributions, the committee received only a few.

### A popular mathematical webpage

A new idea arose at the beginning of 2009: the rpa committee was asked by the Executive Committee to launch a popular mathematical webpage under the auspices of the EMS – [www.mathematics-in-europe.eu](http://www.mathematics-in-europe.eu).

It was hoped that this domain would address everyone with an interest in mathematics. It would also make available rpa material developed in European countries and provide a forum for the exchange of ideas.

Initial suggestions for the structure of such a domain were discussed at a meeting of the committee in Brussels (May 2009). The basic language would be English but the majority of the articles would be presented in other European languages as well.

After negotiations in the summer, a sponsoring agreement with the Munich RE (a large German reinsurance company) was signed at the end of 2009. (For more details see the author’s article in Newsletter 75, March 2010.)

Since then, much work towards realisation of [www.mathematics-in-europe.eu](http://www.mathematics-in-europe.eu) has been undertaken.

One of the first important decisions concerned the design. The committee accepted the proposal of the graphics agency Iser&Schmidt (Bonn, Germany). The key idea is to have pictures at the top of the screen that

play with the motifs “circles in nature” and “the digits of Pi”. Each day, another picture, chosen at random, will be presented.

The graphic design has already been transformed into a real webpage with a preliminary address - it will serve as our working platform in the coming months.

A considerable quantity of material has already been collected. These articles will find their way to the various subpages of [www.mathematics-in-europe.eu](http://www.mathematics-in-europe.eu): information, popularisation activities, competitions, mathematical help, mathematics as a profession and miscellaneous.

The webpage will be advertised at the ICM in Hyderabad. A large poster has been prepared that will be presented at the booth of the IMU. The actual state of [www.mathematics-in-europe.eu](http://www.mathematics-in-europe.eu) on the Web, however, will be rather sketchy at that time. The official launch is scheduled for the opening of an international rpa conference in Óbidos (Portugal) at the end of September 2010 (see [www.cim.pt/RPAM](http://www.cim.pt/RPAM)).

### The dream ...

Those of us who are working for the realisation of [www.mathematics-in-europe.eu](http://www.mathematics-in-europe.eu) have a vision. Our ambitious aim is to create a webpage that provides interesting information about mathematics for many groups.

For example: schoolchildren will find help if they fail to understand a particular mathematical topic in class; students can prepare for visiting a university where mathematics is spoken in a different language; teachers will find suggestions on how to present special aspects of mathematics in an attractive way; and from colleagues who want to be active in the popularisation of mathematics we will collect ideas for projects that have been realised successfully in other countries.

We hope that the domain will have extensive name recognition in Europe rather soon and that this will increase the visibility of the EMS and attract additional sponsors to support our work.

### The realisation

An Italian proverb says “Tra il dire e il fare c’è di mezzo il mare”: there is often a huge gap between first ideas and a satisfactory realisation. In order to bridge this gap as quickly as possible, the help of many will be necessary.

Indeed, we are asking *you* who are reading this editorial to collaborate. “What can I do?” you may ask. You could send us one (or some) of your popular articles or help us with the translation of the menus into your language or with the creation of a database of rpa activities in European countries.

While this is a rather general desire, there is also a more concrete one. On the subpage “Mathematical help” we will provide a mathematical dictionary, where one can





selecting the speakers. The Prize Committee is charged with the responsibility of nominating the EMS Prizewinners. For each of these committees the Chairs are appointed by the EC. The members of the committees are suggested by the Chairs and approved by the EC. The EC must be kept informed by the Chair of each committee about the progress of their work.

The local organizers are responsible for seeking financial support for the Congress and for the meetings of its committees. However, the EMS will provide some financial support for the travel of Eastern European mathematicians to the ECM, and will also assist and advise in seeking sources of funding.

The level of the registration fee is of great importance to the success of an ECM, and the EC must be involved before a final decision on the level of fees is made; members of the EMS normally receive a reduction of some 20% on the registration fees. The EC would be pleased to offer advice to the local organizers on matters such as the scientific programme, the budget, registration, accommodation, publications, web site, and so on, but in any case the EC must be kept informed of progress at its regular meetings. Publicity for the ECM via the EMS Newsletter and the EMS site, <http://www.euro-math-soc.eu/> should appear regularly.

Ari Laptev and Stephen Huggett

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## Report on a cancelled EMS meeting

### or The effect of the volcanic ash cloud on mathematics

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Vasile Berinde, EMS Publicity Officer

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On the occasion of the centenary of the Society “Gazeta Matematică” – one of the forerunners of the Romanian Mathematical Society (RMS) – celebrated as the centenary of the RMS itself, that was held in Bucharest on 17 April 2010 (see the EMS Newsletter article) the EMS planned to organise a meeting of the presidents of the (national) mathematical societies in Europe that are (or will soon be) institutional members of the EMS.

This series of meetings was initiated in 2007 by the current EMS President Ari Laptev. The first meeting in the series was hosted by CIRM (Centre International pour Rencontres Mathématiques), Luminy, France, 26–27 April 2008, while the second was held at the Banach Center in Warsaw, 9–10 May 2009. So, the Bucharest meeting, planned to be hosted on the Campus of University “Politehnica”, would have been the third one in this series, if it had been held. But, unfortunately, it wasn’t – at least in the originally planned format.

Fifty-five presidents, vice-presidents, secretaries and other representatives of 40 mathematical societies in Europe, from 33 European countries, confirmed their participation at the EMS meeting of presidents in Bucharest. The countries represented were Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and United Kingdom.

The EMS itself was to be represented at the highest level by: Ari Laptev (*President*), Pavel Exner and Helge Holden (*Vice-presidents*), Stephen Huggett (*Secretary*),

Jouko Vaananen (*Treasurer*), Terhi Tuulia Hautala (*from the Helsinki EMS Secretariat*) and Susan Oakes.

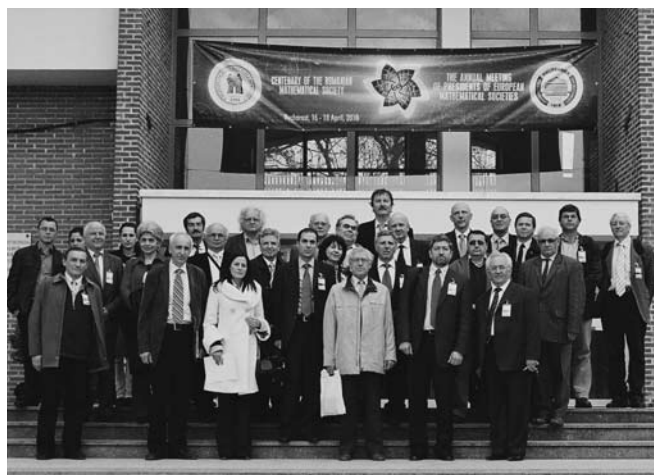
Due to the almost closed air traffic in Europe at the time preceding the meeting, only 20 of the total 55 foreign registered participants eventually arrived in Bucharest. They represented the following 17 national mathematical societies: Albania, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Israel, Latvia, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and United Kingdom.

For most of the rest of the registered participants it was impossible to fly to Bucharest and some few others (e.g. the representatives of Greece, Turkey and MAS-SEE) cancelled their trip soon after they got the circular message from Ari Laptev, sent to all registered participants on Friday 16 April at 11:00, local hour in Bucharest, to announce the cancellation of the meeting itself.

A special case was with Harry Dim, President of the Israel Mathematical Society, who, immediately after he met the RMS president Radu Gologan at the Bucharest airport and found out that the meeting was already cancelled, decided instantly to go back to Israel with the same aircraft, a few hours before the airport was totally closed!

Under these unexpected circumstances, the local organisers of the meeting in Bucharest proceeded as initially scheduled and so, on Friday 16 April, 16.00–19.00, the planned Round Table “Current trends in mathematics education in Europe” attracted about 40 people.

Because, after the anniversary ceremony of the RMS held at the Romanian Academy on the morning of Saturday 17 April, about 30 people (including a few Romanian participants) were prepared to attend the EMS meeting



Group photograph

of presidents, the local organisers decided to also have an informal meeting of the presidents in the afternoon, from 16.00 to 19.00. Of the initial agenda of the meeting, we went first to Section B: Introductions, which lasted exactly two hours. The following briefly presented their societies: Ervisa Kosova (Albanian Mathematical Society, Secretary); Fikret Aliev (Azerbaijan MS, Vice-president); Stefaan Caenepeel (Belgian MS, President); Muharem Avdispahic (Bosnian MS, P); Stefan Dodunekov (Bulgarian MU, P); Andrejs Reinfelds (Latvian MS, P); Vesna Manova-Erakovik (Macedonian Union of Math, P); Mitrofan Choban (Moldova MS, P); Stefan Jackowski (Polish MS, P); Miguel Abreu (Portuguese MS, VP); Roman Nedela (Slovak MS, P); Angus MacIntyre (London MS, P); and Doru Stefanescu (MASSEE, P). Gregory Makrides, President of the Cyprus Mathematical Society, who attended the Round Table on the previous day where he had a presentation, missed this informal meeting in his desperate attempt to catch a last flight leaving from Bucharest airport before it totally closed! Note that the RMS was not more presented in this session because there were long stories about its history during the ceremony in the morning on the same day.

Under Section E of the agenda, Stefan Dodunekov also made a presentation about the website, registration facilities and other details related to the Council Meeting in Sofia, 10–11 July, and the conference Mathematics and Industry following it. Professor Vasile Brânzănescu, Director of the Institute of Mathematics of the Romanian Academy, gave a short presentation on the main activities of this important research institution.

In the final part of the meeting, some advertising presentations on the EMS were given in order to convince the presidents and vice-presidents present in Bucharest to encourage the members of their societies to join the EMS. In this context, the Albanian MS and the Moldova MS were also invited to apply for EMS membership.

In the last 30 minutes (19.00–19.30) before the start of the Official Dinner, a joint meeting of the Executive Committees of the Romanian MS and the Moldova MS was organised in order to discuss some mutual collaboration matters.



Professor Muharem Avdispahic introducing the Bosnian Mathematical Society

On the morning of Sunday 18 April, instead of the originally scheduled second part of the meeting of presidents, a visit in Bucharest was organised for those participants who did not leave by train (some few did!) to their countries and therefore had to spend some extra days until the re-opening of airports in Europe.

This is the brief story of one of the dramatic effects of a volcanic ash cloud on mathematics...



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# The Centenary of the Romanian Mathematical Society

Vasile Berinde (Baia Mare, Romania)

On 17 April 2010, the centenary of the society “Gazeta Matematică” – one of the forerunners of the *Societatea de Științe Matematice din România* (Romanian Mathematical Society, RMS) – has been celebrated as the centennial of the RMS itself (the other forerunner, the society “Friends of Mathematical Sciences” was founded earlier in 1894). In conjunction with this event, an EMS meeting of the presidents of mathematical societies in Europe has been scheduled (see the article *Report on an EMS cancelled meeting or The effect of the volcanic ash cloud on mathematics* published in this issue of the Newsletter).

The ceremony was organised at the Romanian Academy Aula and was attended by several important Romanian mathematicians, representatives and members of the regional branches of the RMS, the Presidents of the Romanian Physical Society and the Romanian Chemistry Society and 20 representatives of the mathematical societies in Europe, who succeeded in landing in Bucharest for the EMS meeting of presidents despite the volcanic ash cloud.

The first part of the ceremony was devoted to a brief presentation of the most important moments in the history of the RMS and also for accepting the acknowledgements from other societies, while the second part was allocated to the awarding of centennial medals and diplomas to several mathematicians who essentially contributed to the organisational activity of the RMS or the development of mathematical research and mathematical education in Romania in the past decades.

Considering the two articles on the old and middle history of the RMS that have been published in the EMS Newsletter (see [2], [4]), we shall give here a brief account on the current activity of the RMS.

## Goals of the society and membership

The main current goal of the RMS is to help maintain a high level of mathematics education and mathematical research in Romania to continue the good work done over the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The RMS is a non-profit organisation created under Romanian law in 1910 and re-established, after the breakdown of communist rule, in 1990. It consists of individual members only. Over its 100 years of existence the RMS has grown up to a society with more than 5000 members, university professors, teachers, other professionals from research institutes and companies, PhD students, etc., all linked by their interest in mathematics and/or mathematics education.

## Structure and activities of the society

The Council of the RMS, which consists of 91 members, is elected every four years during the General Assem-

bly and establishes the general policy of the society. It meets every year, usually in December, and also elects the members of the Executive Committee (President, Prime Vice-president, two Vice-presidents, General Secretary, Secretary and nine Ordinary Members), to which the activity of the society between the council meetings is entrusted. The current President of the RMS is Professor Radu Gologan from “Politehnica” University of Bucharest and the Mathematics Institute of the Romanian Academy. The RMS is also organised on a territorial basis, its units being the local and regional branches (Filiale) of the RMS (there are 54 branches).

## Meetings, publications and other activities

The RMS organises an annual National Olympiad (in collaboration with the Ministry of Education; the 61st edition took place in 2010), the RMS Annual Conference, the Summer Contest “Gazeta Matematica” for the best problem solvers and the summer school for teachers of mathematics, as well as other meetings, workshops and conferences.

The following three journals are published by the RMS: 1) *Bulletin Mathématique de la Société des Sciences Mathématiques de Roumanie*, which is a quarterly research journal (4 issues a year). It was founded in 1896 and the current volume is **53** (or **101** – old series) in 2010; 2) *Gazeta Matematica, seria B*, which is a monthly journal (12 issues/volume) devoted to elementary mathematics (primary, secondary and high school students and teachers). It was founded in 1895 and has been published continuously in this format. The current volume is 115 (2010); 3) *Gazeta Matematica, seria A*, which is a quarterly journal (4 issues/volume) devoted to teachers of mathematics. The current volume is 107 (or **28** – new series) in 2010.

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