



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF AUTOMATIC CONTROL

Pedro ALBERTOS

President

To: IFAC National Member Organizations
cc.: IFAC Council Members
IFAC Technical Board Members
IFAC Executive Board Members

Valencia, April 24, 2000

Ref.: Informal meeting in Laxenburg

Dear Friends and Colleagues

It is my pleasure, as well as my grateful duty, to address this note to all of you about the activities of our Federation. The main purpose of this letter is to inform you about some of the ideas and actions discussed in the last Informal meeting (IM) of the IFAC elected officers in Laxenburg, last month, and also to present some issues to be dealt with in the next IFAC Council meeting (CM), in Patras, Greece, July 11-15.

Also, I would like to take this opportunity to comment on some other issues and update you on the status of some pending actions. Please, recall that any feedback from you is extremely appreciated.

This year, the elected officers, the secretary and the Secretariat staff met from March 24 to 27. In two full-day meetings at the Laxenburg IFAC Secretariat premises, on Saturday and Sunday, many issues were discussed and they will be addressed below for your knowledge and consideration. They were followed by a technical-social presentation on Monday 27 delivered by myself on the topic of *Control and Society* and a working lunch with our guests from the Ministry of Science, the Academy of Sciences and the Technical University.

The lecture (copies are available at the IFAC Secretariat) was organized in cooperation with the Austrian Research and Development Society Arsenal and the Austrian "IFAC Beirat", which arranged the infrastructure and invited the audience. There were about 40 people from different fields of Science, Engineering, Industry and Public Offices. This provided a good opportunity to publicize the role of Automatic Control and our Federation. We are convinced that this kind of activities is a must to improve the visibility of our field in the Society, the Industry and the University.

Arranged in cooperation with the Greek NMO, a Panel discussion is being organized in Athens July 10, 2000, just before the CM. Again the idea is to forward to the Society the same message. The panelists are members of our Technical Board as well as local experts.

To improve the visibility of IFAC even more, I shall attend the regional Control Conferences which are organized in cooperation of IFAC, i.e. the American Control Conference, the Latin American Control Conference, the European Control Conference and the Asian Control Conference.

Some of the technical issues discussed in the IM result in suggested actions and activities to be forwarded to the corresponding committees. Let me summarize those more general and interesting.

You know that each term we started the selection of the World Congress site well in advance. It appears that the lead time for the Congress (and President) bids is too long and it could be shortened by one term. That means, to initiate the process for the 18th World Congress (2011) only three years from now. This will



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require some minor changes in the Article 17b of our Constitution, to provide similar opportunities to all the NMOs. Thus, a proposal will be discussed at the time of the next Council meeting, followed by a postal ballot among the NMOs if it is the case. So,

- ?? *Bids for the XVII World Congress.* It is proposed to delay them by 3 years
- ?? *Rewording of Article 17b of the Constitution.* To avoid the requirement of the President Elect to be previously a Council Member, but requiring strong activity in IFAC.
- ?? *Elections Committee.* In order to prepare proposals for the next term officials, I have appointed R. Isermann (TB Chair), M. Masten (Council member) as members of the Elections Com., chaired by V. Kucera (President Elect), and they agreed to serve in these positions.

IFAC's prestige and know-how is based on its NMOs, event organizers and officials we rely on. For that purpose, the activity of the different committees was reviewed. Minor delays were observed and quick actions are planned to have all the IFAC bodies as active as possible. Any suggestion is always welcome. As agreed, the Ombudsman's "box of complaints" will be active shortly on the IFAC webpage.

IFAC membership is quite heterogeneous and so are the activities of the different NMOs. I regret to inform you that we have not received any reply from the Kuwait NMO, so, according to the GA resolution in Beijing its membership termination procedure is underway. Some good news were received from Mexico and Brazil which should regularize their status again, without fees in arrears. Also two new candidates (Cuba and Vietnam) are preparing their applications. You will be informed if any progress is confirmed. Nothing new, for the moment, from India.

The finances from our publishing side are also in good shape. Nevertheless, being in this changing electronic era, we must carefully think about the future and consider any new opportunity to use this formidable tool to reach our community. Our Publications Committee is working on that.

The new IFAC homepage has been designed and it is under development. We plan to present and discuss it at the time of the CM. Both, Alfons Crespo (UPV, Spain) and H. Kwon (IFAC Vice-president) are in charge of this voluntary project. A cable connection of our Secretariat to Internet (by June) will allow faster access, with the local support of the Vienna Tech. University.

Dear friends, let me end by saying that the Spanish team is working hard to prepare the 15th Congress in Barcelona two years from now, (a report and Call for Papers will be issued after the CM). Please, make a note in your agenda and do not miss to attend this big event. We are working to that end and hope to bring the Automatic Control community together on that occasion.

Looking forward to meeting most of you in Patras, next July, sincerely

P.S. I will appreciate if a representative of your NMO acknowledges the receipt of this letter. Thanks.