

International Geographical Union ***Union Géographique Internationale***



2021 Annual Report of the International Geographical Union (IGU)

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1. Highlights of the IGU Executive Committee meetings of 2021

The year 2021 was another extraordinary one for everyone on earth as the pandemic continued to wreak havoc. This had major implications for the International Geographical Union as, despite initial plans, the 34th International Geographical Congress was held online in Istanbul. In addition to the Congress and its associated online General Assembly, three IGU Executive Committee meetings were held during 2021 using the online meeting platform Zoom, while a fourth was convened in Rome in December 2021 with some EC members able to attend in person.

The First IGU Executive Committee The first meeting of the year was held on 8th April and 15th April 2021. The online meeting was chaired by President Michael Meadows. Barcus reported briefly on the IGU account, funds for which have now been transferred to Macalester College. The IGU Honors and Awards Committee has considered nominations for the 2020 IGU Lauréat d'Honneur and Planet and Humanity Medal and made recommendations to Executive Committee. Elena dell'Agnese agreed to chair a sub-committee to consider the 2020 Commission Excellence Award. Meadows reported that editing of the Bulletin Volume for 2017-2018 is complete and a pdf version posted on the website. Rozenblat presented a brief report on the new format of IGU e-Newsletter which for circulation to the broader IGU community using listservers at the University of Lausanne (<http://syma.unil.ch>). Fu tabled a brief report on the IGU Journals project noting that his team had scrutinized and double-checked all entries and invalid journals were deleted and in total 80 new journals (UK 15, China 13, Canada 09, USA 08, Australia 05, Germany 04, Netherland 04, Poland 04, New Zealand 03, Japan 03, and Others 12) were added to the IGU journal database. Brief updates on the Elgar and Springer IGU book series were presented. Gönençgil presented a brief report on progress regarding the upcoming Congress and iGeo Olympiad whereas Lemarchand presented a brief report on arrangements and progress for Extraordinary IGC Paris 2022.



Screenshot of the First EC meeting of year 2021 on 8th April, 2021

The Second IGU Executive Committee of 2021 was held online on Monday, 28th June 2021. There was considerable discussion about the IGU EC Finance subcommittee could be appointed to review IGU accounts and report findings to IGU General Assembly scheduled in Istanbul in August 2021. The IGU Commissions Excellence Award subcommittee reported its unanimous nomination of the Commission on Geography of Governance for the IGU Commission Excellence Award for 2020. Gönençgil presented a draft framework for the forthcoming 34th International Geographical Congress and Lemarchand discussed ongoing preparations for the Paris Congress 2022. It was decided to request to Republic of Kazakhstan (one of the bids for the IGU Regional Congress 2026) to prepare a more detailed bid document.

The Third IGU Executive Committee was held online on Thursday, 19th August, 2021 during the Istanbul Congress. The meeting was held online and chaired by IGU President Meadows, although some EC members (Gönençgil, Lois-Gonzelez, Lemarchand) were able to attend in person. EC members stood for a minute's silence in remembrance of the late Prof RB Singh, IGU Secretary General and Treasurer who passed away on 22nd July 2021. After soliciting the views of EC members regarding the filling of the vacant IGU Secretary General and Treasurer position, it was agreed that Gönençgil should take over the position in an interim capacity until the Extraordinary Geographical Congress in Paris in 2022 and that Kumar would retain his position as co-opted Assistant to the Secretary-General. A proposal to establish a new IGU commission on 'Informality, Social Change and Development' was tabled and approved. Revised revised draft guidelines for IGU awards, viz. Lauréat d'Honneur, Planet and Humanity Medal, were approved, and the new awards, viz. Early Career Award in Geography and Award for Distinguished Geographical Practice were formally established.



Screenshots of the August 2021 EC Meeting

The Fourth IGU Executive Committee took place at 7th and 8th December, 2021 in Rome, Italy. The hybrid meeting was chaired by Interim Secretary-General Gönençgil. There was considerable discussion around procedures for the elections of Secretary General and four Vice President positions. Considering the pandemic situation, it was decided to conduct the elections via e-ballot. Barcus reported briefly on the status of the IGU funds held at Macalester College. Gönençgil and Kumar agreed to compile the list of national members in good standing ahead of the call for EC nominations. Gönençgil tabled the full membership application for the United Arab Emirates, UAE, proposed by the Emirates Geographical Society of UAE and agreed to administer an e-ballot with a closing date for voting of mid-January. The EC agreed to send season's greeting emails to their respective liaison Chairs. Gönençgil presented a detailed report on the Istanbul Congress, the 34th IGC, which was held in online format for the first time ever (detail report in the next section). The next IGU e-newsletter, is due at the end of January, 2022. The EC approved of new editors of the Springer series 'Advances in Geographical and Environmental Sciences'.

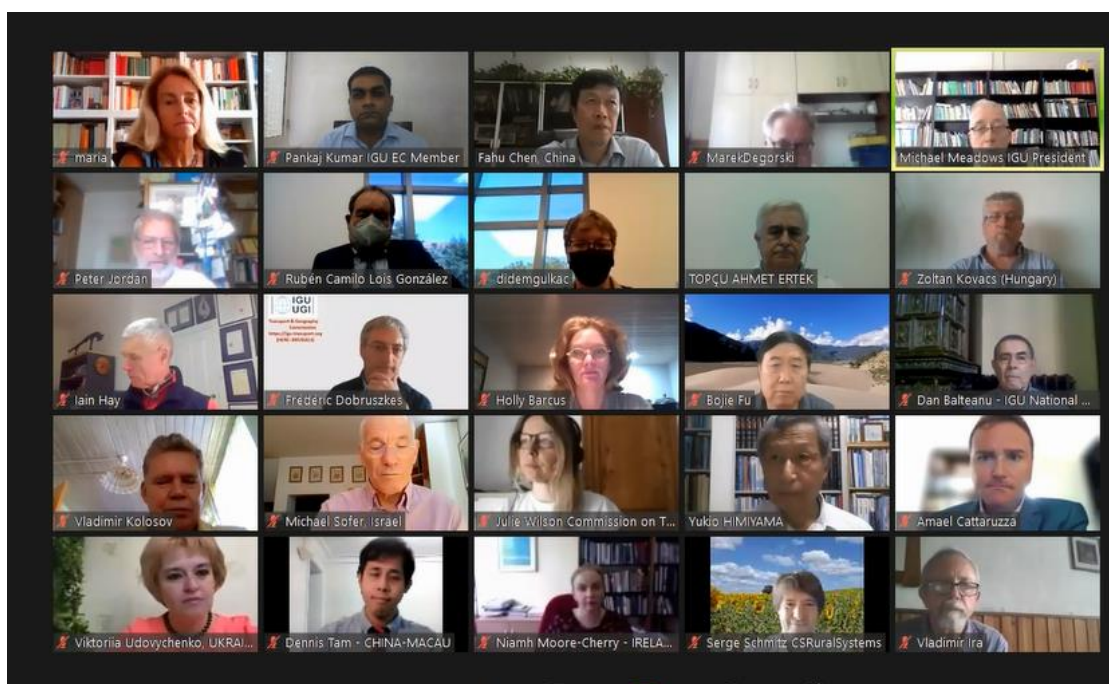
2. IGU Virtual General Assembly (16th and 17th August 2021, 10h00 to 12h15 GMT)

The General Assembly was hosted on the Zoom platform and chaired by IGU President Michael Meadows, who welcomed congress delegates, IGU National Committee representatives, as well as IGU Commission & Task representatives, observers, and guests to the assembly. The Assembly commenced with a minute's silence in remembrance of the late Professor RB Singh, former Vice-President and Secretary-General of the IGU. Representatives of 41 countries were present over the two sessions. Major items of business at the General Assembly included scrutiny of the IGU 2016-2020 financial report scrutiny by the Finance Committee and approval, following discussion, by the General Assembly in accord with IGU Statutes. As an interim arrangement to ensure continuity of financial operations, Vice-President Professor Holly Barcus has agreed to continue in the position of Assistant Treasurer.

In his report, the IGU President briefly highlighted major developments, which were dominated by the ongoing war against COVID-19, a health crisis that has precipitated a global economic crisis. Meadows noted that the IGU community of Geographers, directly or

indirectly, has clearly been very productive in studies that engage with a diverse array of aspects of COVID-19. The IGU Commission on Geography of Governance, winners of the 2020 IGU Commission Excellence Award, proposed the “IGU-CGOG COVID-19 Action Plan. Meadows also reflected on climate crisis and the quest to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) referring to the UN Conferences of the Parties on Biodiversity (COP 15) in Kunming China, and on Climate Change (COP26) in Glasgow. As part of our commitment to actioning the Strategy, in 2021 IGU formalised relationships with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLASCO), and with the Standing Committee for Gender Equality in Science (SCGES). We continue to engage actively with the International Science Council (ISC) and the International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences (CIPSH).

On behalf of the late Secretary-General, Assistant Secretary-General Pankaj Kumar presented highlights of the report that had already been prepared by Professor RB Singh before his death. He briefed the Assembly regarding the Executive Committee Meetings, IGU Honors and Awards Committee, Publications, Communications and Relations with other organisations and Conferences. The IGU President announced that the 2020 IGU Lauréat d’Honneur awardees, Professor Joos Droogleever-Fortuijn (The Netherlands) and Professor Yoshitaka Ishikawa (Japan) and 2021 IGU Lauréat d’Honneur awardees, Professor Helen Kerfoot (Canada) and Professor Eckart Ehlers (Germany), would be presented with their awards at the opening ceremony of the 34th International Geographical Congress (virtual) on 16th August 2021. The 2020 IGU Planet and Humanity Awardee, Jack Dangermond, would be accepting his award at the Extraordinary International Geographical Congress in Paris, July 2022.



Screenshots of the Virtual General Assembly

3. Report on the 34th International Geographical Congress (IGC)

The IGU General Assembly convened during the 32nd IGC held in Cologne in 2012, had unanimously decided to hold the 34th IGC in Istanbul, Turkey in 2020, but this was of course postponed due to the COVID-19 lockdown and associated travel restrictions. The theme of the congress was Geography: Bridging the Continents. The 34th IGC was held in

online format for the first time ever. The congress was hosted by Istanbul University, the establishment of which goes back to AD 1453. The Turkish Geographical Society, which organized the congress, carried out all its preparations in cooperation with the Geography Department of Istanbul University. The congress, which was held with the idea of bringing together continents and people, producing information for a sustainable future, and having a say in the future of the world, was concluded with the closing ceremony held on 20th August 2021. Both the opening and closing ceremonies were also broadcast live on the Istanbul University Youtube channel.

The opening ceremony, which commenced at 12:00 GMT on 16th August 2021, was held in accordance with the general rituals. In addition to the speeches made by the Rector of Istanbul University Prof. Dr. Mahmut Ak and the Dean of the Faculty of Letters Prof. Dr. Hayati Develi as the host university at the opening, Prof Dr Barbaros Gönençgil as the chair of the LOC, Associate Professor Dr. Ahmet Ertek as the TGS president and Prof. Michael Meadows as the IGU President briefly addressed the congress. Professor Geoffrey Boulton, representing the International Science Council also delivered an address. In addition, a video prepared *in memoriam* of the late Prof. R.B Singh was shared with the participants.

In total, 628 presentations were received from registered participants, of which 555 were oral and 83 were poster presentations. Presenters from 77 countries participated, notably from Japan, China, India, Spain and Russia. Seven keynote speakers delivered addresses that covered the range of geographical topics. The Geographical Olympiad was organized immediately prior to the Congress, also in virtual mode for the first time, with 190 registrants from 46 different countries. In general, the programme proceeded smoothly, with the exception of occasional technical glitches. The organizers received a number of highly supportive messages from participants. The Spanish IGU community for preparing and sharing a book published to commemorate the IGC Istanbul. Several commissions have subsequently submitted formal reports on the Congress. The Istanbul local organising committee has prepared abstract volumes with ISBN numbers and published these on the Congress website. Digital recordings of all presentations are also available on the website which will remain available. Some 75 young and early career geographers were awarded IGU travel grants in the form of free registration.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, several positive emerged from the virtual format of the congress, such as lower registration fees, on-demand access provided for the sessions, zero travel and accommodation cost for participants, and the possibility of viewing session recordings after the congress.

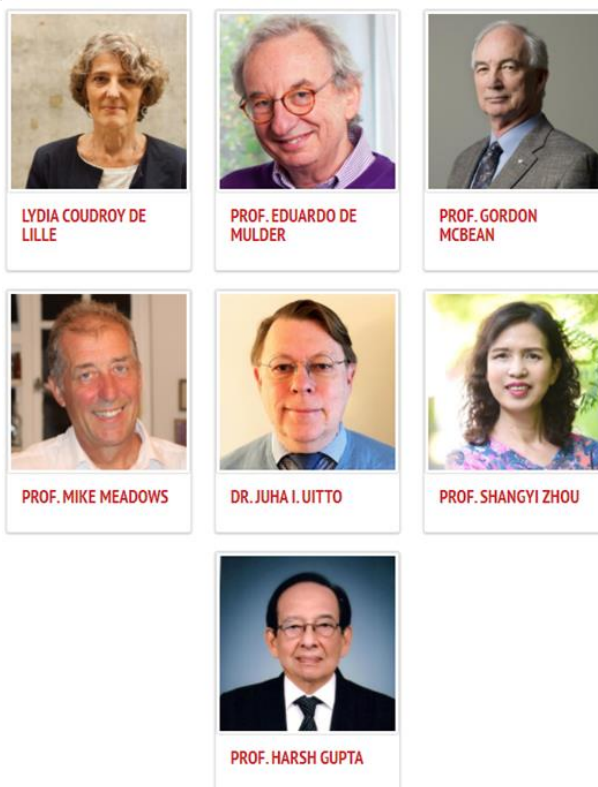


IGC Istanbul received abstracts from different 77 countries across globe. The list of

participating countries with 10 or more abstracts is as follows:

Sl.No	Country Name	Abstracts Received
1	Japan	54
2	China	52
3	India	38
4	Spain	38
5	Russia	35
6	Poland	34
7	France	32
8	United Kingdom	20
9	Brazil	19
10	Germany	19
11	South Africa	18
12	Italy	16
13	Romania	15
14	Turkey	15
15	United States	14
16	Hungary	13
17	Indonesia	13
18	Korea, South	12

IGC Istanbul had seven eminent scientists and academicians as keynote speakers. These speakers were Prof. Gordon McBean from Canada, Prof. Eduardo De Mulder, The Neatherland, Prof Lydia Coudroy Del Lille, Prof. Juha I. Uitto from Prof. Shangyi Zhou, China, Prof. Harsh Gupta, India, and Prof. Michael Meadows from South Africa.



Keynote speakers at IGC Istanbul

The International Geography Olympiad (iGEO) was also held online for the first time. 180 students from 46 countries participated in iGEO which was completed one day before IGC. Students who won a gold medal were allowed to attend the opening ceremony of the IGC online. Several IGU commissions and task force actively participated in the the Congress. IGU commissions held sessions in the Congress an in addition, thematic conferences and a symposium were held. IGU Spanish Committee published the papers presented in the 34th IGC as a book.“Spain: Bridge Between Two Continents: Spanish contribution to 34th IGC Istanbul 2020”. In addition to the program booklet for the congress, a book of abstracts with associated ISBN number has been obtained by TGS and published electronically.



Glimpses of the IGC Istanbul LOC Team

At the closing ceremony, Local Organising Committee co-chair Nathalie Lamarchand, hosting 100th Anniversary Congress Extraordinary Congress in Paris, July 2022 was formally handed the Congress flag.



Vice President Prof Nathalie Lemarchand receiving Congress Flag
 (In presence of Professor Dr. Ahmet Ertek Head, LOC IGC Istanbul and Prof. Barbaros Gonengcil, Secretary, LOC, IGC Istanbul)

The 17th International Geography Olympiad (iGEO)

The 17th International Geography Olympiad (iGEO) was held online for the first time due to pandemic conditions. 180 students and 82 team leadres from 46 countries participated in the Olympiad, which was organized from Istanbul as the Local Organizing Committee. The Olympiad, which was held between 11-16 August 2021 on internet platforms, was completed with a multimedia test, a written response test and a field work task, as well as a poster competition and cultural activities. Team Ranking (By Score) first three were;

1. Russia
2. Singapore
3. Japan

Gold Medals Winners

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Rustam Bigildin – Russia | 2. Aarne Heikkilä - Finland |
| 3. Goh Si Jing Sophie – Singapore | 4. Koo Yu Tang - Singapore |
| 5. Rustam Valeyev – Kazakhstan | 6. Ryo Nakamori - Japan |
| 7. Dzianis Rabchuk – Belarus | 8. Onatans Miks Melgalvis - Latvia |
| 9. Su, Tz-Chiang - China-Taipei (Taiwan) | 10. Teodor Kostov - Bulgaria |
| 11. Choi Yung Kin - China-Hong Kong | 12. Bob Jeurgens - Netherlands |
| 13. Lili Csada – Hungary | 14. Lee, Shixuan - China-Taipei (Taiwan) |
| 15. Szymon Kłapiński Poland | 16. Otokawa Bunryu Japan |
| 17. Edgaras Zaboras Lithuania | 18. Wang Zicheng Singapore |
| | 19. Nikita Panfilov Russia |



4. Co-operation with other organizations

ISC: Himiyama and Meadows participated in the online IGC Extraordinary General Assembly (1-5th February 2021) and the IGC General Assembly (11-15th October 2021). The IGU nominee for a position on the ISC Board, Professor Maria Paradiso, was successfully elected at the ISC General Assembly to 2024. Paradiso has pledged to work especially on sustainability and education initiatives within the ISC and is keen to establish better communication between ISC and IGU. Meadows took over from the later Professor Singh as IGU representative on the ISC GeoUnions Standing Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction and Assistant Secretary-General Kumar assumed a similar role in CODATA.

GeoUnions: Himiyama attended the UN-GGIM Geospatial Societies General Assembly meeting held August 2021 and noted that the next chair of this body will be from the IGU Himiyama, Gönençgil and Meadows remain IGU liaison with both the Geospatial Societies and GeoUnions.

Festival International de Géographie (FIG): Lemarchand participated in a roundtable event co-hosted by CNFG, which this year is entitled "From secondary school to university: which European geography(s)?" Additionally, the Association of Secondary School History and Geography Teachers (APHG) and the National Federation of Geography Students (AFNEG) are participating in the event this year, with the aim of examining the place of Europe not only in geography teaching programmes but also in relation to research and will consider such questions as what collaborations do European geographers build? What encounters and common topics are there for European geography students? What is the situation for European geography (ies) post-Brexit? The next *Festival International de Géographie* (FIG) is planned for 30th September to 2nd October 2022 with the theme 'deserts' and focus country Portugal.

Night of Geography: Meadows acknowledged the excellent efforts of the organizing committee and noted that the largely virtual format had facilitated substantial participation across world in celebrating the Night of Geography/La Nuit de Géographie on April 9th 2021. The next issue of GeoNight will be celebrated on 1st April 2022; the IGU will promote the event as usual.

CIPSH: The CIPSH event of relevance to the IGU is the European Humanities Conference on 5th to 7th May 2021 was held as per schedule. CIPSH recently successfully organized the European Humanities Conference, in which Himiyama had participated and he noted that there is concern about the current state of humanities, particularly in Europe. CIPSH wishes to contribute more to SDGs and to sustainability more broadly. CIPSH is scheduled to hold its next General Assembly from 13th -14th December 2021 at Odense, Denmark, in hybrid mode. Former IGU Vice-President Droogleever-Fortuijn attended online on behalf of the IGU and her report will be tabled at the next EC meeting.

UN-GGIM: Singh noted that the IGU report has been submitted and circulated to EC members. The Report of the 2ndUNGEGN Session was circulated and posted on the website

EUROGEO, EUGEO: The virtual conference was scheduled to take place from 22nd to 23rd April 2021. Meadows had to represent IGU at the opening ceremony and the event has also been posted on the website under 'Other Events'. The next EUGEO (Association of European Geographical Societies) conference will be held in Barcelona in 2023 and a EUGEO session is planned during the Centennial Congress in Paris.

EGAL/UGAL: Lois González reported that the next EGAL conference is being held in Córdoba, Argentina at the beginning of December 2022 in the form of a virtual congress. In collaboration with Marco Mitidiero and Joselí M^a. Silva from Brazil, and Fernanda López from Ecuador, both representing their respective IGU National Committees, a session on new perspectives of geographic thinking from the South is proposed. Lois González reported that he represented UGI in the virtual meeting of ANPEGE, the postgraduate geography organization in Brazil, with more than 4000 participants. The first meeting of the IGU Committee on Latin America and the Caribbean will be held in Colombia November 2022. Lois-González reported on the successful outcome of the 18th Encuentro de Geografías de América Latina conference (XVIII EGAL), held online from 30th November to 4th December 2021 with 2500 participants and some 800 papers presented. An IGU session was co-organized by colleagues from Ecuador and Brazil. The IGU relationship with Latin American countries continues to improve and Brazilian geographers are preparing a volume in the IGU Springer series to be released in time for the Centennial Congress. The next EGAL will be held in the Dominican Republic in 2023 and represents an excellent opportunity for the IGU to further consolidate its footprint in the region.

RGS-IBG/RSGS: Meadows reported that the Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers, in collaboration with the Open University in the UK has approached the IGU to support the development of a novel open access course entitled: 'Thinking geographically about global debates: learning from the 'Global South''. The IGU community may be able to contribute to and benefit from this project. Meadows reported that, following an approach by the Royal Scottish Geographical Society and the Royal Geographical Society, IGU co-hosted a virtual gathering of international geographical societies and associations to propose actions relating to the upcoming COP26 meeting in Glasgow, UK, in November 2021. The outcome of the event, which had been attended by representatives of more than 30 national geographical organizations, was the drafting of a joint statement on the climate and biodiversity emergencies. Supported by signatories representing the global community of geographers, the declaration would be released ahead of the Glasgow event.

Other organizations: IGU is co-supporting the International Year of Basic Sciences for Sustainable Development in 2022 (IYBSSD), an initiative of the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics (IUPAP) and has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). IYBSSD was proclaimed at the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly on 2nd December 2021.

IGU has been approached with a view to establishing a more formal relationship with UNGEGN body to improve communication. Given that IGU already has a Commission on Toponymy, such an arrangement is appropriate. Meadows has indicated IGU willingness to have formal representation on UNGEGN and is awaiting a response.

5. Forthcoming events

11-18 July 2022: International Geography Olympiad 11-18 July 2022 (virtual) host by France LOC

18-22 July 2022: IGU-UGI The Centennial Congress, Paris Details on the website at: <https://www.ugiparis2022.org/>

29 - 31 August 2022: IGU Commission on Geography of Governance - Annual Conference *Local Governance in a Time of Global Emergencies*, Mexico City (Mexico), Details on the website at: [Home \(google.com\)](https://www.google.com)

24-25 November 2022: IGU Thematic Conference, *Sustainability, Future Earth and Humanities: Opportunities and Challenges*, Central University of Haryana, Mahendragarh, Haryana, India

6. Communication and outreach

The main communication tools of the IGU are its website, maintained by Assistant Secretary General Pankaj Kumar and President Michael Meadows, its quarterly newsletter, compiled by Vice-President Céline Rozenblat. Three issues of the Newsletter were published in 2021 and can be downloaded from the website by following the newsletter link from www.igu-online.org.

IGU Series on Contemporary Geographies: The IGU's book series with Springer (edited by Himiyama and Subhash Anand) and Edward Elgar Publishers (edited by Hay and Meadows) are attracting strong submissions.

7. Financials

Towards the end of 2020 and at the beginning of 2022, the IGU opened a new account at Macalester College under the curatorship of the acting Treasurer, Professor Holly Barcus. The Cape Town account remains operational and a proportion of IGU business is still transacted on this account. The balance on this account has been substantially reduced as a total of US\$150,000.00 of IGU assets (US\$50,000 in 2020 and US\$100,000.00 in 2021) has been transferred to the new Macalester Account. The accounts are now presented separately, with a substantially reduced balance (shown as a 'loss') in the Cape Town account (largely due to the substantial transfer). Combining the closing balances in both accounts, it can be seen that IGU has a small operating surplus for 2021 of just over US\$1300.00.

IGU CAPE TOWN ACCOUNT		IGU MACALESTER ACCOUNT	
	USD		USD
Opening balance total	180428,91	Opening balance	50000,00
Revenue		Revenue	
Country dues	18390,30	Transfer from Cape Town	100000,00
Honoraria	2028,40	Country dues	121796,20
Interest	2477,27	Total revenue	221796,20
Total revenue	22895,97		
Expenditure		Expenditure	
Transfer to Macalester	100429,47	Memberhips (ISC, CIPSH)	7970,17
Advance to Paris LOC	9786,46	Grants to Commissions	36000,00
Grants to Commissions	9250,46	EC Travel	1261,66
Travel grants Istanbul	9328,51	Total expenditure	45231,83
EC travel and related costs	13404,70		
Awards and prizes	409,47	Closing balance	226564,37
Bulletin type-setting	567,95	Net profit	176564,37
Honoraria (secretarial, technical)	2028,40		
Software	460,27		
Stationery	22,40		
Printing	148,55		
Phone calls	70,86		
Courier and postage	1401,49		
Website management & technical	3083,16		
Internet charges	486,00		
Bank charges	867,55		
Total expenditure	151745,70		
Closing balance total	51767,33		
Net profit/loss	175261,58		