

International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry

152nd MEETING OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Coimbra, Portugal, 13 April 2014

MINUTES

Attendees: Dr. Mark Cesa (Chair), Prof. Kazuyuki Tatsumi, Prof. John Corish, Prof. Natalia P. Tarasova, Prof. Qi-Feng Zhou, Mr. Colin Humphris, Prof. Ram Lamba

Secretary: Dr. Fabienne Meyers

Dr. Cesa welcomed the members of the Executive Committee (EC), including Colin Humphris in his new role as new Acting Secretary General.

1. NAOs Inquiries

The first item discussed was in response to recent inquiries from the Swiss and Spanish NAOs.

The Swiss had sent a request to the Secretariat on April 2, with the subject "Assessment of our affiliation with IUPAC as National Adhering Organization." They have initiated an evaluation process of their participation in all international organizations with the goal of determining the cost-benefit of these activities for their Academy. They reached out to IUPAC to request details about the role and the strategy of IUPAC. They requested a list of current activities and projects.

Spain has asked about the "value" of being member. They have not yet paid their 2014 subscription. The NAO is trying to make a case (with hard data and strong arguments) to convince their Ministry of Science and Education to pay their fee. They are making an attempt to estimate on much they will lose in terms of money and opportunities if they fail to pay our fee.

Dr. Cesa indicated that in US, similar questions were being asked. He commented that the US National subscription comes from a grant from the National Science Foundation and the National Academies (i.e. the US NAO) was routinely assessing the cost and value of the membership. The NAO felt that the IUPAC membership has benefits to individual US chemists.

The Committee brainstormed over the question and concluded that the Finance Committee should contribute to the formulation of value propositions for the different NAOs. The Executive Committee pointed out that there is a clear difference between the value of IUPAC to the NAO when compared to that to individual chemists from each country.

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Ram Lamba indicated that the Swiss request is not unique; in Puerto Rico the value gained from the IUPAC subscription was questioned. He stressed however that regional differences are not to be ignored; for example while in Europe, the importance of Science might be a 'standard', each NAO and each chemist views IUPAC differently.

Qi-Feng Zhou indicated that we must recognize that the benefits of IUPAC are for all, and not limited to members – that makes it tricky to recruit, but it is an important tradition to be retained. He pointed out that for example Chinese chemists value the opportunities for international activities arising from IUPAC membership highly as international opportunities are otherwise limited for them. This may be different in other NAOs.

Qi-Feng Zhou mentioned that IUPAC would be seen to provide a real benefit if it were able to engage young chemists to contribute more effectively. He also explained that some Chinese companies operating in Africa may for example have an interest in supporting other NAOs.

Colin Humphris pointed out that RSC was trying to support young chemists from around the world; RSC supported two Young Observers from Ghana to join the GA 2013.

Natalia Tarasova felt that while the new NAOs might ask what are the benefits of being a member, the 'old' NAOs are likely to forget why they joined. IUPAC needs to be able to justify to existing Organizations how/why to continue their support and adhesion to IUPAC.

To respond to the Swiss request in a timely manner, Mark Cesa asked the Secretariat to review numbers of active and recent Swiss members of IUPAC. Mark Cesa will also contact Chris Buxtorf to seek a Swiss perspective on the request and to ask for the Financial Committee's input.

John Corish will contact David Black to find out if there is relevant ICSU experience on which IUPAC could draw. ICSU has the added difficulty that they charge many countries twice: first as national member and then a second time through the Science Unions.

2. ICTNS Workload

The second topic of discussion related to Ron Weir's comment about the workload of ICTNS. Colin Humphris offered to talk to Jeremy Frey and Gerry Moss to find out how the committee, and not only its chair, is engaged in the work of reviewing all IUPAC technical reports and recommendations, and book projects.

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3. IChO in Vietnam

It was pointed out that IUPAC involvement in the Olympiad has two components: one was the financial support and the second was the presentation of the awards and IUPAC books.

There might be a misunderstanding if IUPAC lack of financial support this year was interpreted to preclude the awards presentation as well. Natalia Tarasova suggested that IUPAC made this clear with the organizers and that we explain that still IUPAC can present the awards.

4. SG Election Process

Professor Corish confirmed that in view of the election of Colin Humphris as Acting Secretary General, that he will inform Anders Kallner of the outcome of the Bureau voting.

Colin Humphris pointed out that with his position changing, a seat on the Executive Committee was now opened; he asked if there was a requirement to fulfill that position.

Mark Cesa stated that according to the Statutes, the EC is limited to, but not required, to have eight members. There was therefore no need to act.

5. IUPAC Stationary

Professor Corish asked for the Secretariat to arrange for an editable letterhead given the recent changes.

The President thanked everyone for their participation and indicated that discussions will continue by email.

Adjourned 2:20 PM