

International Council of Science Union - Extraordinary General Assembly ICSU EGA&

International Social Science Council - General Assembly ISSC GA

Oslo, Norway, 24 October 2016

Report to the IUPESM AC

The ICSU EGA and the ISSC GA were organized together in order to evaluate, discuss and act on the proposal of the Executive bodies of ICSU and ISSC to merge the Unions.

Steps in preparing the merge of ICSU and ISSC

Based on the decisions of both Unions, sessions of General Assembly of (both) Unions were organized at the same time and hosted by local Norwegian Unions' members in Oslo on 24th October 2016. The aim of the meeting was to discuss benefits and drawbacks of (possible) merge of ICSU and ISSC and to vote, **in principle**, on the merge of the Unions after the discussion.

The documents which present the reasoning, the aims and the motivation for the merge were prepared by the Executive bodies of both, ICSU and ISSC, and these documents were sent to member organizations of both, ICSU and ISSC, before the General Assemblies, unfortunately at a very short notice. There was no time to discuss the documents within the ICSU membership, so the representatives of the member organizations had to decide on how to vote based on previous consultations within their Unions and the presented documents. Just as a reminder, there was a ballot within IUPESM on the matter of the merge, and the AC voted in favor of merging of the Unions.

Due to publishing of the merge preparatory documents at such a short notice, the ballot at the General Assemblies was to accept the merge **in principle**, i.e. allowing repeating the ballot in a year, at the ICSU General Assembly to be organized in conjunction with the Extraordinary General Assembly of the ISSC in October 2017. In this period of approx. one year, the Transition Task Force, appointed by the GAs of both Unions shall prepare all necessary documents: Statutes, Activity Plan, Budget etc. of the "New Organization" for discussion and final acceptance by the Unions.

In order to understand the complexity of the merge of the Unions, one has to visit the home pages of both Unions, to understand how different the structure of these Unions is, what is the difference in volume and target of their activities, and also in the way of financing their activities.

At this point of reporting, for all those who do not feel necessary to go into the details of the decisions made, I would like to report on the results of the ballot in both Unions, which was in favor in both cases, and in particular, in ICSU, from the member organizations that voted at the EGA, by the delegates or on line,

out of 53 National members, 48 voted in favor, and 5 against, with 1 abstention,

out of 27 Unions, 18 voted in favor, 9 against, with no abstention,

or, in percentages, after applying the rules for voting in ICSU, 76,4% of votes was in favor of the merge.

In ISSC, out of 23 voting members, 19 voted in favor, 2 against and there were 2 abstentions.

(There is a possibility that some absolute values or percentages in the chapter above will differ from the Minutes of the EGA since they were not presented to delegates in writing at the EGA. However, the majority of votes were no doubt in favor of the proposed merge).

Therefore, it was announced that the decision of the EGA of ICSU, in principle, was to merge both Unions, and the same decision was made by the GA of ISSC.

In addition, there was a ballot on extension of the term of office of the Executive Board of ICSU for one year, i.e. until October 2018, and the extension was accepted by 79.9% of the voting delegates.

Motivation and Impact of ICSU / ISSC Merge

Both Presidents of Unions, Dr. Gordon McBean (ICSU) and Dr. Alberto Martinelli (ISSC), spoke on motivation and impact of the proposed merging of Unions. Alb mentioned that the event shall have an impact on all science since today, most of research is interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary, and it combines natural, social and other sciences. McBean stated that the joint ICSU/ISSC event is a historical event and spoke on absolute excellence in science. He mentioned that the ideas on merging the two Unions was initiated a long time ago, and was formally initiated in 2015 by exchange of letters by the Presidents of Executive bodies of both Unions. He especially thanked two members of the joint task group, Khotso Mokhele, ICSU past president (2005-2008) from South Africa, and P. Ricchi from ISSC, for their contributions in preparing the documents for the meeting in Oslo.

The motivation for organizing the Meeting was pointed out also by the representatives of the host of the event, Dr. Christen Krogh, who hoped that the meeting shall meet the expectations of the Unions' membership, and Dr. Ole M. Sejersted, who argued that science is mainly fragmented today and that there is a need to bridge these fragmentation. Also, he spoke on the need for scientific freedom today, which is not present neither guaranteed in all countries. In many countries, there are restrictions and one of the aims of the Unions is to fight those restrictions. Only in such a way, one can expect advancement of science in future.

Merge Roadmap

The project of merge of the Unions was presented to the representatives of the Unions by Dr. Khotso Mokhele. On the roadmap of the merge, there are three major steps: the first, the **"in principle"** decision on merging the Unions to be met at the current ICSU EGA and ISSC GA; the second step, at the joint event in October next year, when the model of the Unions' merge together with accompanied documents shall be confirmed and approved, and finally, the third step, founding and establishing of the "new organization" and elections of its governance and other bodies in 2018.

Challenges of merging the Unions (ICSU / ISSC)

In spite of the overwhelming majority of votes in favor of merging the Unions at the meeting in Oslo, 24th October 2016, a number of challenges still has to be met and solved before merging of the Unions.

- 1) As already mentioned, the **structure** of the Unions (ICSU and ISSC) is complex: in ICSU, there are two categories of membership, scientific unions (based on associations' membership) and national science academies, where as in ISSC, there are as well two categories of

membership, international scientific organizations (with individual membership) and national science academies. Such structure results in a low number of member unions, still with high number of individual members within the unions' membership, and on the other hand a large number of international organizations with a significantly lower number of individual members. Also, there are National Science Academies being a member of ICSU, ISSC or both. In the "new organization", the benefits and the duties of each member organization, no matter how large or small it might be, have to be determined and presented transparently to all member organizations.

- 2) In terms of finances, both Unions receive membership fees from member organizations, but ICSU has met an agreement with the French Government an annual grant for each year until 2019, whereas ISSC still needs to compete for projects in order to support their current activities. It is obvious that both Unions have to seek new sources for financing their common and for their specific activities. It has to be clear to all member organizations that after a three year period from (possible merge) there won't be any (separate) activities or membership applications for natural sciences union or social science union, but only for the "united, new" science organization. In future, integration with engineering and medical science unions seems to be logical aim, but further planning and actions are needed.
- 3) From the point of formal and legal issues, the Statutes of ICSU do not define any form of merging or dissolving the Union. Appropriate changes must be prepared timely in order to enable (possible) merge of the organizations.
- 4) It is not clear whether all member organizations of ICSU would like to stay a member organization of their Union (ICSU) or whether all National Academies would like to stay a member of the Union. The procedure to regulate the status of Unions' membership in case of the merge shall be prepared well ahead of the ICSU GA 2017.
- 5) It should be made clear who shall be the founders of the "new organization" with the proposed name "Int'l Science Council". Following my direct question in this matter, the ICSU President stated that all ICSU and ISSC members should be founding members.

Concerns in regard to the merge

I must report that there was quite a lot of criticism to the Governing bodies of ICSU (and ISSC) for the proposals and process of decision making:

- 1) Decisions on the merge, both the structure of the "new organization" and the timelines were made top – down, which was considered not to be a democratic way of decision making, since there was no time to receive response from member organizations and include response in form of motions to the proposed documents.
- 2) Many delegates of the ICSU member organizations could not understand the proposed dynamics for merging (i.e. so soon, in two years from the current EGA). Also, there were a lot of complains regarding late sending of documents for the EGA. I do agree with the demand that the founding documents for the "new organization" (statutes, plan of activities and the budget at least) should be presented and open for comments to member organizations of both Unions at least 3 months prior to the ICSU GA in 2017.
- 3) Out of eight (8) proposed models of the merge, only two (yes/no) options were left. No model close to the umbrella organization model of IUPESM was not eligible for vote.
- 4) By merging in the proposed way, the identity of ICSU will be lost. Measures should be taken to maintain that identity within the new organization.
- 5) Therefore, I proposed the ICSU President to present more than two options (models) of merging and managing the new, merged Organization are presented as well as the Statutes

of the “New Organization”, and that those models are presented at least three months before the ICSU GA (in October 2017). (This is important to make sure that the ICSU Unions in the “New Organization” remain value and strength of their position in comparison to a large number of relatively small Int’l Organizations with individual membership from ISSC). I propose that IUPESM sends in writing this request as a note to the ICSU President confirming the demand to get an answer to the proposal (which I made already at the EGA, but got an answer only by oral response).

Recommendations to IUPESM governing bodies

I would like to recommend IUPESM to make sure that IUPESM has a key role in attracting additional scientific organizations from engineering and medicine to the new, global science alliance since our research background is closely related to those fields of science.

IUPESM Biocluster

In addition to the ICSU EGA, on 23th October in the afternoon, I had a chance to meet representatives of two Unions which are members of the IUPESM Biocluster. At that meeting, convened by Dr. Nathalie Fomproix, IUBS Executive Director and Secretary of the Biocluster, Dr. Pingfan Rao from IUFOST, Dr. Fomproix and I were present. We have mainly exchanged our opinions on the documents prepared for the ICSU EGA.

At the EGA, I was approached by Prof. h. c. Gert von Bally from the International Commission for Optics who asked for IUPESM's support to ICO's application to change its status from an ICSU Scientific Affiliate to an ICSU Union. Prof. Bally sent me also an e-mail message early this week with the same request. I will forward the message with attached documents to IUPESM President and SG for further discussion and decision.

Zagreb, 2nd November 2016

Respectfully submitted,

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IUPESM Vice-President

IFMBE Immediate Past President