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Connecting Scientists and Practitioners Around the World

We talk with **Prof. Corrado Gisonni**, the IAHR's division chair for Europe, on the organization's activities and on how hydroengineering and hydraulics can help resolve current global problems.

What are the biggest priorities for IAHR today?

CORRADO GISONNI: IAHR is the oldest international association engaged in water science, engineering and research. It was first founded in 1935 by the world's leading research institutes in hydraulics. IAHR's main mission is to engage leading companies, government agencies and research institutes in the field of hydraulic and environmental engineering. This goal is pursued through the organization of Conferences, Workshops and Short Courses, along with and intense editorial activity based on scientific journals, technical publications and magazines.

Worldwide, many governments have listed water and the environment among their top policy priorities for the coming decades. The challenges of the third millennium will depend on our ability to cope with critical phenomena such as expanding urbanization and climate change, which are closely related to water

LOCAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE OF THE 5TH IAHR EUROPE CONGRESS, 2018

and energy issues, alongside strong demand for new infrastructures and retrofitting of the old ones.

In this context, IAHR intends promote international collaboration, connecting scientists and practitioners around the world. Last, but not least, IAHR is strongly committed to creating and disseminating job opportunities for young engineers and researchers at an international level, both in academic and professional organizations.

Are these priorities similar for the worldwide IAHR and for Europe?

Of course, the overall direction and priorities are generally coherent worldwide, even if the European priorities are specifically calibrated towards the predominant regional issues – such as a more effective involvement of professionals and researchers working in the Eastern European countries. Also, we promote closer and wider cooperation among institutes and companies under the framework of European funded research programs. In this context, I am very happy that Warsaw is hosting the 6th IAHR Europe Congress.

What are your expectations for the 6th IAHR Europe Congress?

The preliminary figures provided by the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) looked very promising. Prof. Paweł Rowiński (Institute of Geophysics, Polish Academy of Sciences) reported that by mid-March 2020 approximately 530 papers had been submitted for the Congress and more than 400 people were expected to attend. Such numbers would put the Warsaw congress on the highest level of participation for a regional conference. I am confident that a significant part of the attendance will be from Eastern Europe, thus giving us important feedback about our "Europeanisation policy."

Furthermore, continuing a tradition established during the 4th IAHR Europe Congress back in 2016, during the 6th IAHR Europe Congress two awards are slated to be delivered, based on nominations proposed by the Congress LOC and evaluated by the Executive Committee of the European Regional Division. The purpose of these awards is to bring greater international recognition to the work of local engineers. The IAHR Regional Industry Award recognizes innovative designs of hydro-environmental works, whereas the IAHR Regional Hydro-Environment Heritage Award recognizes local infrastructure of international importance, at least one hundred years old.

Which areas of hydro-engineering and research are the "hottest" nowadays?

The scientific and technical communities are heavily engaged in topics related to the most recent environmental concerns – i.e. environmental protection and climate change. In terms of hydro-engineering, the next generation of water environment research and practice will tackle many themes in the field of both urban and natural environments. In the more urban context, the study of smart water systems and related strategies for climate resilient cities are definitely one of the key issues for the coming years. The study of natural environments, on the other hand, is demanding an increasingly interdisciplinary approach, straddling the boundary of hydraulics, hydrology, and ecology. It will be crucial to develop corresponding countermeasures to such extreme events as droughts and floods, and to seek nature-based solutions for the wide range of environmental problems.

In this regard, I warmly encourage readers to have a look at *Hydrolink*, the primary magazine of the IAHR community, which publishes the latest news in the fascinating world of hydro-environment engineering and research (www.iahr.org/index/detail/56). Its four issues per year, focusing on special topics of relevance to researchers and practitioners, are a unique channel for staying up to date about the most recent findings and exciting developments in the field of hydro-engineering and research!

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