



Editorial Office: Prof. F. de P. Hanika, International Secretariat of the Austrian Society for Cybernetic Studies, Haus Hanika, A-8524 Bad Gams 92 to whom all material submitted for publication should be sent.



## IFSR's NEW HOME

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### EDITORIAL

If IFSR were to add a motto to their "logo" — logos are after all progressively taking the place of the earlier company and institutional shields — it might at this stage well read: "All Systems Go!", as outlined on the top of page two of this issue. The key to IFSR's permanent premises at Laxenburg has been handed over. Name, publisher and editor-in-chief of its Journal (to be called "Systems Research" — The Journal of the International Federation for Systems Research") have all been settled and the membership position is also developing satisfactorily. All-in-all, the members of the board, who individually and collectively put in so much effort, have every reason to be pleased with the results of their labours, although they are well aware that their work for the Federation is still at its beginning. What has been achieved is the construction of a solid enough base to promise success for the future.

# IFSR NEWS

IFSR held its official 1982 Board Meeting as planned on May 12, in Vienna, in conjunction with the Sixth European Meeting for Cybernetics and Systems Research, organized by the Austrian Society for Cybernetic Studies. The reports below outline the progress achieved in the various fields at issue. The date of the next Board Meeting has been provisionally fixed for October 1983.

**Offices:** Our front-page picture shows the house Hofstraße 1, A-2361 Laxenburg, Austria. The seven first-floor windows indicate the 125 square meters of accommodation, now handed over by the appropriate government department to the IFSR for a period of 8 years at a nominal rental of one Schilling per annum. IFSR's immediate neighbours are STUDIA (the Study Group for International Analysis) and the Austrian Institute for International Politics. Professor Trappl, IFSR Vice President, is fully occupied getting everything straight, services arranged, and furnishing the premises. However, by the time this Newsletter reaches the readers, the IFSR will be settled in and: All Systems Go!

**Journal:** Thanks to the efforts of Professor G. J. Klir and Dr. Bela Banathy arrangements finalized by the IFSR Board Meeting last May have since been accepted by Pergamon Press who will publish „Systems Research” — The Journal of the International

Federation for Systems Research — as a quarterly. The likely date of the first issue will fall in late 1983/early 1984 due to the 18-month lead time required for the issuance of a new journal of this high quality.

**Editorial:** The Federation is fortunate in having secured the agreement of Professor Dr. John N. Warfield, President of the Society for General Systems Research, to fill the position of editor-in-chief of the new publication. Some aspects of editorial policies of interest to would-be contributors will be noted in our next issue.

**Reception:** The members were honoured by an invitation extended by the Austrian Federal Minister of Science and Research, Frau Dr. Hertha Firnberg, to meet her at her offices at Minoritenplatz in Vienna. Copies of the first two issues of the IFSR Newsletter, as well as a number of recently published volumes of "Proceedings" of the past European Meetings for Cybernetics and Systems Research, organized by ASCS, together with a bouquet of flowers, were presented to the Minister. Her questions showed interest in, as well as familiarity with the activities of the Federation and its leading members. The best part of an hour was spent in discussing systems science, education, and the application of this science to social, technological, and cultural issues.

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## CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

Information building up shows increasing interest. To borrow from Prof. Troncalli "Everybody loves a Market-Place" seems also to apply to the academic world. Meetings are getting more frequent and are getting bigger all the time. Meetings by IFSR member societies include:

### The Society for General Systems Research

announces its 27th Annual General Meeting, to be held May 23—27, 1983, at the Book Cadillac Hotel, Detroit, Michigan. The theme of the meeting is "The Relation between Major World Problems and Systems Learning." The organizing committee is chaired by Prof. J. N. Warfield, SGSR's President. Organizers of sessions are being sought, as well as proposals for plenary sessions. Anyone interested should communicate with:

Dr. Georg E. Lasker  
Chairman, SGSR Proceedings  
School of Computer Science  
University of Windsor  
Windsor, Ontario, Canada N9B 3P4

### Systeemgroep Nederland

"Problems of Actors and Actions" is the title chosen for the 1983 Research Meeting to be held in Amsterdam, 5—7 April. These meetings are designed to deal with selected abstract terms within the systems field in order to clarify their meaning by making it more precise.

Previous meetings examined "Context" (1979) and "Levels and Boundaries" (1981).

Inquiries and papers (by December 15<sup>th</sup>) to Prof. Gerard de Zeeuw, c/o Subfaculty Andragology, Systeemgroep Nederland, Grote Bickerstraat 72, 1013 KS Amsterdam, Netherlands.

(IFSR Newsletter Autumn 1982 issue will carry further information on these events.)

### Austrian Society for Cybernetic Studies

The date of the Seventh European Meeting on Cybernetics and Systems Research has been fixed, in line with the tradition dating back to 1972, for the week following Easter Sunday, April 24—27, 1984. The pattern of this event will probably follow (with some modifications) the arrangements which have proved themselves so successful in the past.

Enquiries will be welcomed by the International Secretariat of the Austrian Society for Cybernetic Studies, Haus Hanika, A-8524 Bad Gams 92, Austria.

Some scientists, who like to make plans very early, might like to know that the date of the Eighth European Meeting for Cybernetics and Systems Research has already been fixed. The meeting will be held April 1—4, 1986, which, following tradition, is, of course, again the week after Easter Sunday.

# IFSR Co-Sponsors IFAC SWIIS Workshop from 11—13 September, 1983

SWIIS stands for "Supplemental Ways of Increasing International Stability". Since the first such workshop, held in Charlottesville, VA, in October 1980, interest in SWIIS has grown so much that a very successful event may be confidently expected.

International stability refers to conditions in which nations, in an interdependent fashion, interact with one another in ways which permit gradual changes with time in a mutually acceptable fashion. Supplemental ways for improving international stability refers to the use of peaceful ways for nations to obtain national security.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

Over the years, many nations have sought to improve their national security by increasing their military forces. Systems theory indicates there may be alternative supplemental methods which should be employed for providing international stability and, thereby, enhancing the possibility of more peaceful relations among nations.

This workshop will seek, from an international and interdisciplinary viewpoint, to explore various system perspectives and methodologies that can be useful in seeking supplemental ways for improving international stability. The emphasis will be on the process of improving international stability with the thought of identifying the resources, needs, timing, and potential means for change that appear likely to achieve the desired goals of improved stability on an international basis.

## TOPICS

The aim of the workshop will be to provide a forum for considering, both formally and informally, the world as a large-scale system with the objective of improving its international stability. The following topics will be welcomed for contribution to the workshop's programme:

1. Present alternative views of the world as a large-scale system indicating potential sources of international instability and ways for improving the stability among nations; i.e. alternative control and policy analysis models.

2. Describe the relationship between stability and controlled change as perceived by developed and developing countries.
3. Explore the nature and role of basic needs and values of people for international stability for different conditions of national development.
4. Clarify the roles of information and education in fostering international development and stability.
5. Describe some of the technological and methodological options for meeting basic national needs and for improving international stability.

Presentations on other subjects appropriate to the aims of the workshop will also be favorably received.

Since the subject of SWIIS is a relatively new one for IFAC meetings, this workshop on SWIIS can serve a useful purpose by helping to define better the problem of improving international stability and pointing the directions towards its solution. According to IFAC's principles, the workshop should aim at finding appropriate means for achieving international stability without getting involved in controversial political issues. People from other disciplines besides control systems, such as political science, economics, law, military science, medicine, psychology, finance, and conciliation, are encouraged to attend and present their viewpoints on topics such as those noted above.

Inquiries may be directed to:

SWIIS 1983  
Oesterreichisches Produktivitäts-  
& Wirtschaftlichkeits-Zentrum  
P.O. Box 131  
A-1014 VIENNA, Austria

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## A DECADE OF EMCSR's

The Sixth European Meeting on Cybernetics and Systems Research organized by the Austrian Society for Cybernetic Studies at the University of Vienna, 13th/16th April 1982, also marked the tenth anniversary of the first of this series of biennial meetings, started as a venture by the newly-fledged ASCS in April 1972. Allowing themselves little more than three months between despatching the initial publicity — the 'Preliminary Programme' cautiously abstaining from labelling it the 'First' to avoid the embarrassment that would have been inevitable, had events proved it also to be the last.

The 72 papers of good calibre then presented, came not only from Europe, to which ASCS had modestly limited its territorial claims, but also from the USA (thanks to the cooperation of the Society for General Systems Research) as well as from another dozen countries altogether.

Numbers of papers, symposia, and participants grew until feedback in information from participants made it clear (confirmed by a formal survey carried out by Professor Dr. Robert Trapp, President of the ASCS who has

chaired five meetings), what they wanted was a meeting big enough to provide a broad cross-section over and around the themes selected for the symposia. What was obviously not wanted was the 'big festival' event where organizers gloried in the astronomical numbers of papers their meeting attracted (we heard of 500, 800, and even 1,000) with the results that (again according to information from participants) only a fraction of the papers was actually read. Consequently, the 1982 event was tailored to a maximum of 200 papers, distributed over ten symposia. With a total of 269 "extended abstracts" submitted, referees were encouraged to adopt strict criteria. Two referees considered independently each paper in their area of competence. Whenever their verdicts agreed the fate of the contribution had been settled. The chairmen of the meeting took it upon himself to take time from a busy enough life to adjudicate. When the referees disagreed, he evaluated the explanatory comments made by them in cases where he felt it would be helpful.

The form of these comments also enabled the chairman to advise would-be contributors that refusal did not

necessarily imply a rejection on account of quality, but might well be due to the chairmen, who, anxious to build their contributions overall in a cohesive pattern, had not found it possible to accommodate the aspects sent in by a particular would-be contributor.

One particular problem in conference organization remains unsolved: Some of our colleagues, no doubt often in good faith, offer to submit an abstract of a paper, that is accepted and included in a programme, but then fail to turn up, frequently without even the courtesy of an explanation or apology. With this problem, prepaid registration is a help, but tends to complicate the administration of meetings organized by bodies such as ASCS which (in order to keep conference fees low) refrain from employing professional promoters, preferring voluntary efforts on the part of members (and their families and friends!). Moreover, the prepayment condition would virtually debar the colleagues from the Eastern Bloc and many developing countries. Below are the 'statistics' as they appear in retrospect for the EMCSR 82; particularly large 'festival' events fare much worse. According to some reports in Newsletters, only 250 of 500 programmed contributions were actually presented. What ASCS has done, is to ordain that papers which are not presented by the author in person may under special circumstances be permitted to be read by a substitute provided by the author.

One simple technical device to minimize the inconvenience to the participants present at the symposia, is to schedule the papers, where a risk of non-attendance by the author is felt to exist, at the end of each day's or half-day's session, and to keep an eye on the record of "checking in" maintained by the conference secretary.

Comparison of papers accepted and actually read:

	accepted	delivered	author not present
SYMPOSIUM A	24	18	6
SYMPOSIUM B	33	20	13
SYMPOSIUM C	18	12	6
SYMPOSIUM D	16	11	5
SYMPOSIUM E	33	26	7
SYMPOSIUM F	12	6	6
SYMPOSIUM G	6	2	4
SYMPOSIUM H	9	6	3
SYMPOSIUM I	18	12	6
SYMPOSIUM J	27	21	7

It is felt that IFSR could serve a useful function in this context by agreeing with its member societies to advise the IFSR secretary of any defaulters in this respect, and that such reports be made available to member societies. Impressions confirm that it is very often the same person who makes a habit of this practice.

Dr. Hertha Firnberg, Federal Minister of Science and Research, whose official patronage the European Meetings on Cybernetics and Systems Research organized by the Austrian Society for Cybernetic Studies enjoyed since their inception in 1972, was on this occasion joined by Dr. Kurt Steyrer, Federal Minister of Health and Environmental Protection, and Leopold Gratz, Lord Mayor of the City of Vienna. The 32 members of the Programme Committee represented eminent scientists from 13 countries.

Prof. Hans Tuppy, representing the Rektor of the University of Vienna, welcomed the participants filling the Grosse Festsaal of the Vienna University. The Chairman of the Meeting, Prof. Robert Trappl, Director of the Institute for Medical Cybernetics, of the University of Vienna Medical School, then addressed the participants on behalf of the ASCS. Dr. Hertha Firnberg, finding herself prevented by a Cabinet Meeting from opening the meeting in person, sent a telegram of welcome which was read to the audience. Introduction of the symposia chairmen preceded the opening address by Prof. C.S. Holling, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, and Director, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, Laxenburg, Austria. Symposia sessions began at 14:00 that afternoon and continued right through to Friday evening 17:30. The daily plenary sessions lasted from 9:00 to 11:00.

Plenary Presentations:

Prof. P. H. Winston, Director, Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass., USA; "The Challenge of Learning".

Prof. A. Rapoport, Director, Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna, Austria; "Cybernetics as a Link Between Holistic and Analytic Theory of Cognition".

Prof. R. Trappl, Head, Department of Medical Cybernetics, University of Vienna, Austria; "Can Computers Cure Medicine?"

The ASCS welcomed participants at a better than ever attended reception on Monday evening at their premises, Schottengasse 3 (close to the University). The Lord Mayor of Vienna, Dr. Leopold Gratz, gave a reception in one of the large halls of the Rathaus to mark the end of what we believe to have been another successful EMCSR. This being written by a member of both the Programme and Organizing Committees it would be out of place to try and present an evaluation of the impact and the scientific value of the meeting here. Reviews of the published proceedings will offer a much more meaningful judgment on the scientific merits of the meeting. However, it may be permitted to conclude, in view of the many people who found it worthwhile to attend for the 3rd, 4th, or 5th time, that the EMCSR 1982 was a success.

## "Cybernetics" — a new-old journal

The journal of the American Society for Cybernetics, formerly called "Cybernetics Forum", has been renamed "Cybernetics", reflecting the new outlook brought by the two newly appointed main editors (Paul Trachtman, U.S.A. and Ranulph Glanville, Europe).

One of the first things we are trying to do, is to find out just what is the niche of every journal in the field (including, of course, ICNL), and to publish our findings. But we have many other projects and themes.

The journal can be obtained through the ASC, by contacting

Stuart Umpleby, President,  
A.S.C.,  
c/o Dept. of Management Science,  
George Washington University,  
2131 G St. N.W.,  
Washington DC 20052,  
U.S.A.

The (current) price, Aug. 1982, is \$ (U.S.) 25 p.a. (individual)  
\$ (U.S.) 45 p.a. (corporate, etc.)

(We anticipate a modification in ordering procedure following the installation of the new editorial board, but this is not yet arranged. Anyhow, the 'presidential address' is safe enough!)

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