



Newsletter

*Official Newsletter of the
International Federation for Systems Research*

Editor-in-Chief: Gerhard Chroust

Volume 25, no. 1 (Dec. 2007)

***Merry
Christmas
and a
Happy
New Year!***



Dear Members!

The IFSR had a successful year 2007. The President's letter provides many details of what we achieved in 2007. At the meeting of the Executive Committee in Tokyo in August 2007 we reviewed IFSR's current situation and made extensive plans for the future.

In the second half of 2007 we have completely renewed the IFSR Web site (<http://www.ifsr.org>) and also moved it to a new provider, the Austrian Computer Society. I will act as Webmasters, which means that many of my activities as Secretary/General, as Editor in Chief of the Newsletter and as Webmaster can be performed hand-in-hand with less risk of duplications and discrepancies.

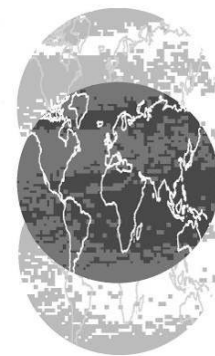
In March/April 2008 we will organise 3 key events:

The Board Meeting on Wednesday, March 26 (the invitation is enclosed) and a IFSR-Day similar to the one of 2006, but this time not looking into the past but looking into the future.

The largest event obviously will be our bi-annual Fuschl Conversation which will take place in the week following our Board Meeting (i.e. Saturday, March 29 to Thursday April 3). Join us at these events!

As usual you find your Newsletter on our Web site (<http://www.ifsr.org>) together with past Newsletters.

*A Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year 2007
Gerhard Chroust*



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**Presidents Address:
IFSR's activities and programs
(Matjaz Mulej)**

Over the recent years the number of member organizations of IFSR has grown from initial three ones in 1981 to 33 with membership on all continents. Many more could meet criteria to join, if they wanted to; they work on different versions of systems thinking and related methodologies of (requisite) holism or on application of systems thinking and cybernetics to several special fields, such as technical or business etc. informatics, management, mechatronics, medical and other cybernetics, sustainable development, business excellence, innovation promotion, complexity mastering, etc. Everybody with a contribution to the worldview of holism and reduction of reductionism and to related methodologies by e.g. interdisciplinary co-operation implicitly shares values that make an essential part of the statutes of IFSR. I am grateful to pioneers of IFSR – the Austrian Society for Cybernetic Studies, The Dutch Systems Group and the ISSS (International Society for Systems Sciences, the oldest of all of them) – for passing so broad constitution.

We are currently working on a number of initiatives to make all such organizations more interested in joining IFSR family. The Nobel prize for peace 2007 (praising effort for sustainable rather than one-sided and therefore fictitious development) demonstrated clearly that the common denominator of all major troubles of humankind lies in the lack of human application of human knowledge in a requisitely holistic manner. This lack is due to current growing narrow specialization, which would be much more beneficial to its authors and users, if it was applied in a more interdisciplinary approach. More systemic thinking is required in the contemporary innovative society due to its many dangerous side-effects and most of the world-wide population benefiting from it much less than possible.

Good *fifty years after* the authors of Systems Theory had succeeded in making this theory known, and since politicians of the world had succeeded in using it (informally) by making the *United Nations Organization* (with UNESCO etc.) as the most holistic political organization of humankind, the *European Union* (EU) found it necessary to explicitly link 'systemic' view with *innovation*. In (EU, 2000),

EU after reminding readers of its previous documents enhancing innovation, states on page 6:

'The Action Plan(see First Action Plan for Innovation in Europe, 1996, based on Green Paper on Innovation, 1995) was firmly based on the 'systemic' view, in which innovation is seen as arising from complex interactions between many individuals, organizations and environmental factors, rather than as a linear trajectory from new knowledge to new product. Support for this view has deepened in recent years.'

Like the original authors of systems theory and cybernetics, today again and permanently, humankind needs interdisciplinary creative co-operation of mutually different specialists to stop damaging and ruining humans' preconditions of survival by dangerous oversights. Humankind needs systemic thinking of many forms to survive.

IFSR current activities are not aimed at making IFSR a government over its member associations, but a shared organization that provides shared possibilities for all of us and all other humans to be better able to cope with serious consequences of one-sided observations, decisions and actions of so far and of now and of future, and to prevent them from appearing.

These IFSR activities include, first of all, the following:

a) Continuing so far successful activities

1. Continuing the publication of the journal *Systems Research and Behavioral Science* with six editions a year. (Many thanks are expressed to Michael Jackson and his team for their very good work on editing and marketing the journal.)
2. Continuing the sponsoring of the *Fuschl* conversation every second year right after the *ECSR* Conference in Vienna, Austria. (Discussion at *Fuschl* 2006, from which many of the ideas listed here result, should continue, and it does in the program of *EMCSR* 2008 to invite a broader participation than *Fuschl* is able to.)

3. Continuing the sponsorship of the Ashby Memorial Lecture during EMCSR.
4. Continuing the sponsorship of up to ten delegates to EMCSR from less developed countries in the form of paying their conference fee.
5. Continuing the sponsorship of an IFSR-D during EMCSR. (This might be possible to arrange at other member association conferences as well, based on their initiative.)
6. Continuing publication of the book series edited by George Klir (so far, only, due to retirement?) and adding another book series working more on soft systems contributions, which an IFSR member association works on.
7. Continuing the sponsorship of the IFSR board meeting during the EMCSR and Executive Committee (EC) meetings during EMCSR and in the year with no EMCSR during the ISSS conference, while most of the EC daily work takes place in correspondence sessions by e-mail. (about ten in 2006-2007.)
8. Accepting new member associations, once they apply for membership in IFSR and meet constitutional criteria of IFSR.
9. IFSR Newsletter remains, but offering it from the IFSR website in order to diminish cost and make it more easily available to all member associations and their members. So is IFSR flyer / brochure.
10. Keeping the number of EC member to 4, one for Americas, one for Western Europe, one for Eastern Europe, one for Asia, Australia, New Zealand etc., but engagement of all willing to cover any part of IFSR programs in teams/committees for these program parts.

b) New activities:

11. A complete renewal and upgrade of the IFSR website (access remains as <http://www.ifsr.org/>)
12. Co-operation with SAUR Publishers, Munich, Germany, on promotion of the International Encyclopedia of Systems and Cybernetics, edited by Charles François (2004).
13. Preparation of Systemspedia, which should become a Wikipedia-style encyclopedia containing abstracts of articles published in systems-and-cybernetics related journals (with their permission and quotation). This might be a next step after the seminal work of Charles François. All member associations and their members (only!) should have the right to upload abstracts of their papers after publication in a renown journal concerned with systems thinking and its explicit

application, which is cited and thus publicized. Abstracts may be in English and in one more language chosen by authors. Systemspedia is a part of IFSR new website, in the first phase. Nobody edits uploaded abstracts. But committee decides which journals are eligible and supervises the practice, including the permission/authorization to erase any submission.

14. Collecting information on systems-and-cybernetics related courses to strengthen their diffusion and co-operation of their authors and users in order to promote their use at universities around the world (perhaps also in earlier education).
15. Establishment of the International Academy of Systems and Cybernetics Sciences (IASC). IASC is readily drafted to be put to public discussion in IFSR member associations (bylaw, membership criteria). It should be finally decided by IFSR board in March 2008 in its Vienna session during EMCSR. Both documents appear in the IFSR day at EMCSR. The basic principle: only outstanding scientists and practitioners who are active members of IFSR member associations can become IASC members, after they have been proposed by their respective IFSR member associations. Decision is up to IFSR board.
16. Archives: Vienna may evolve to the world-wide center of archives in systems sciences and cybernetics. There is material of H. v. Förster, L. v. Bertalanffy, Ch. François, others are supposed to be provided, such as Gordon Pask. There is a need to persuade government of Austria to help this important step to happen and make Vienna a world-top center in one more topic. Other archives are on many locations and should get connected in the 'yellow pages' style through IFSR website.
17. Workshop/Tutorial Meeting of new officers of IFSR member societies. IFSR will use the opportunity of EMCSR to arrange an informal meeting of them. Both actions should take place in Vienna during EMCSR on Tuesday right after symposia finish. (The experience of IFSR officers meeting with IFSR member associations' officers during ISSS conference in Tokyo in August 2007 was very good.)
18. Invitation to member associations to put on their letterheads: 'member of IFSR, established 1981', and in the case of ISSS, Austrian Society for Cybernetics Studies, and Dutch Systems Group 'establishing member of IFSR in 1981'.
19. Finalizing the DVD of the 25 years celebration to make it available to all IFSR member associations and their members.

20. Inviting IFSR member associations to send their 1-2 delegates to the Fuschl conversation, thus to strengthen links and co-operation of them.

To make all these agreed-upon activities happen in reality we are asking for co-operation:

1. Everybody should spread the news to all lists of addresses possessed, especially the IFSR member associations. IFSR website should become the central lively connection point.
2. Proposals for the next IFSR EC: Since Gary Metcalf is the new president of ISSS, he feels unable to be the next president of IFSR in 2008, and Matjaz Mulej is accepting suggestion to cover 2008-2010

period as president. Gerhard Chroust is willing to continue as secretary general, Gary Metcalf as vice-president covering Americas, Jifa Gu is not; Prof. Nakamori from JAIST, Japan, is suggested to be a valuable replacement for him.

3. The open question is what committees do IFSR member associations find necessary to help IFSR board and EC. We suggest: Fuschl conversation committee, Academy committee, IFSR website committee, Systemspedia/Encyclopedia committee, Archives committee, Systems/Cybernetics related courses committee.

Dr. Dr. Matjaz Mulej, professor emeritus
(University of Maribor, Slovenia)
President of the IFSR



A new Website for the IFSR: <http://www.ifsr.org>

A key in a more active role of the IFSR in the systems community is a flexible, interactive homepage where members can add information on their own and communicate with one another.

We therefore re-implemented the whole IFSR website using the open source tool DRUPAL. From now on the Secretary General will be the Webmaster and the key person for maintaining the home page. The new implementation offers many means for authorised users to enter information themselves. It also offers the possibility to attach comments to many of the pages.

We hope that these features will be used by you to disseminate information about your society and its activities. I hope this will also improve communication between members!

With respect to **access** you should know:

- Accessing "<http://www.ifsr.org>" without registration is read-only and certain pages might not be visible.

- In order to register you click on 'create new account'. On the registration panel you can choose (any!) user name you like and you have to enter (one of) your actual e-mail addresses. Note that the systems requires a unique, not yet used, user name and only accepts for each email *one user*.
- After entering the data the system will send you an email with a one-time password which allows you ONE access to the system upon which you can choose your own password.
- From then on you can log-in with your username and your chosen password.
- As the Webmaster I see the names of the registered users and their e-mails but not their passwords.
- Recognizing new members who should have special permissions I will assign these permissions.

We have set up a hierarchy of types of users:

- **Users without registration:** may only read certain pages
- **Registered user:** may make comments on certain pages
- **VIP** (very important person): may additionally add page contents to some pages
 - **P-C-Member:** (member of an IFSR Committee or Project)
 - **Board Member** (representative of a member society)
 - **EC-Member** : (member of the Executive Committee)
 - **Webmaster**

VIPs, P-C-Members, Board Members and EC-Members receive increasingly more rights with respect to reading from and writing to pages. We are still experimenting with the details of permissions.



IFSR-Day at EMCSR on March 26th, 2008

University of Vienna



University of Vienna



IFSR-Day 2006

At the EMCSR 2008 IFSR will again (like in 2006) organize a whole day (Wednesday, March 26th, 2008) with topics important for the systems community in general and IFSR in particular. The preliminary schedule is as follows:

9:00 – 9:30 What is the IFSR? (PLENARY) (presentation of the IFSR, aims, achievements and plans)

9:30 – 10:30 Ashby lecture: (PLENARY): A lecture by a prominent systems scientist, sponsored by the IFSR

11:00 – 17:30 Symposium: Systems Sciences - Challenges, Visions and Roadmaps

(In PARALLEL with other symposia of EMCSR)

Preliminary Detailed Programme:

11:00 – 13:00 Session 1: Preserving and Utilizing past knowledge and Experience: (chair **G. Chroust**)

- Paper: Gerhard Chroust, W. Hofkirchner, Karl Müller: Vienna Systems Archive - Dream or maybe?
- Paper: Manfred Drack: Early System Thinking in Biology Exemplified by the works of Paul Weiss and Bertalanffy
- Workshop Discussion

14:00 – 15:3 Session 2: Establishing Communication between systems practitioners and theoreticians, (chair: **G. Metcalf**)

- Paper: Gary Metcalf: The Evolution of Conversation
- Paper: Christian Fuchs, Wolfgang Hofkirchner, Celina Raffl, Matthias Schafranek: The Web as Techno-Social System: The Emergence of Web 2.0
- Workshop Discussion

16:00 – 17:30 Session 3: Creating Excellence, Impact and Future Visions
(chair: M. Mulej + Jifa Gu)

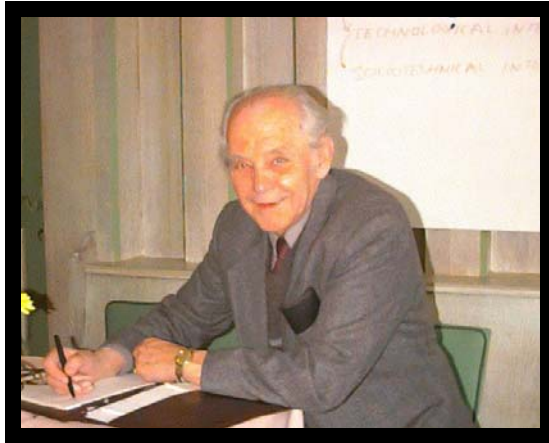
- Introduction: Matjaz Mulej: *What does IFSR want to achieve?*
- Paper: Matjaz Mulej and Jifa Gu: *The international Academy of Cybernetics and Systems*
- Workshop Discussion



14th Fuschl Conversation 2008 (Saturday March 29 - Thursday April 3, 2008)

Why conversation and what form do they take?

The main reason for conversations as initiated by the IFSR was a dissatisfaction with the conventional style of conferences: An individual writes a paper, has 20 minutes to present it and then 10 minutes of questions. After that the conference is virtually over for the individual. Clearly, this format is not the most effective way to progress in the exchange and development of ideas on pressing major issues.



Bela Banathy (1919 – 2003)

The experience we will have during the week at Fuschl is of quite a different nature. It is in the form of a *conversation*. Bela Banathy defined a conversation as follows:

A Conversation is

- a collectively guided disciplined inquiry,
- an exploration of issues of social/societal significance,
- engaged by scholarly practitioners in self-organized teams,
- who select a theme for their conversation,
- which is initiated in the course of a preparation phase that leads to an intensive learning phase.

In the meantime some 45 Fuschl-type conversations have been held in many places around the world.

The first Fuschl conversation was held in 1980 in Fuschl. Fuschl is a beautiful, romantic little Austrian village on a small lake (Lake Fuschl) in lovely Salzkammergut, near Salzburg in Austria. It is surrounded by mountains of approx. 1600m height.

In summer it is beaming with life and tourists, in March/April it is quiet and sleepy, a good place to communicate, to listen and not to be disturbed by hectic, sightseeing tourists.

Traditionally at the Fuschl Conversation we will spend 5 days in intense discussion around our chosen themes and triggering questions.



Hotel Schlick, Fuschl

We will have five teams with 6 participants each. The team members provide an 'input paper' prior to coming to Fuschl. In Fuschl they follow a set of conversation rules that guide their action (they modify the rules according to their needs during the initial stage of the conversation). They document and share their findings, prepare a team report, and often additional reflection papers that present their own findings. The IFSR publishes the outcome of the conversation in the form of proceedings

(see Rules for the Fuschl Conversation, below).

Members take their experience with them and apply what they have learned in their own contexts of life. The conversation process never ends.



Steps in the Fuschl Conversation

Formation Phase (til Jan. 13, 2008)

Deadline: December 15, 2007

The five topics of the Fuschl Conversation are selected together with a short description of the topic and initial trigger questions. The designed Team Leaders (or an interim Team Leader) coordinates the initial formation of each team.

The Call for Participation is communicated to the Member societies, the Board Members, previous Fuschl participants and published on the web site and in the IFSR Newsletter. Addressees are invited to apply for participation or identify potential participants.

The Call for Participation asks potential participants to submit their application together with their input paper to the Team Leader with a copy to the Secretary General (Gerhard Chroust, gc@sea.unilinz.ac.at)

Team members are selected by the Executive Committee in coordination with the Board Members and the Team Leaders in an ongoing fashion. The Secretary General will liaise with the Team Leaders etc. in order to select the participants. Logistic and financial considerations restrict the number of participants to about 30.

Deadline: December 28, 2007

Initial round of nominations/application ends. The EC and the Team Leaders start planning for further accessing more potential participants and a first set of invitations is mailed.

Deadline: January 21, 2008

This is the deadline for submitting applications for participation and the arrival of the input paper! The input paper should be between one and three pages long and should suggest the directions for the discussion within the topic area of the team.

Deadline: January 29, 2008

Invitations to the accepted participants will be issued by this date at the latest.

All Team Leaders are assigned. The Team leader sends out the input papers to the team.

Deadline: February 18, 2008

Payment of the registration fee must have arrived at the Secretary General.

Preparation Phase (Jan 22 – March 26, 2008)

The participants of each team start under the coordination of the Team Leader by exchanging ideas and feedback with respect to the input papers. They refine their topic and agree on the set of final trigger questions for their conversation.

Deadline March 10, 2008

Each Team Leader prepares a short summary of key ideas from the input papers, including the selection of a coherent range of trigger questions from the suggested ones and send it to the Secretary General for posting on the IFSR home page.

Learning Phase: the Conversation **(Fuschl, Saturday March 29 – Thursday April 3, 2008)**

On Saturday afternoon the learning phase begins in Fuschl at the Seehotel Schlick. The participants follow their course of Conversation, also communicating with the other teams. At the end of each day, the teams report on their progress.

At the end of the Fuschl Conversation each team prepares a short initial report of the outcome of their conversation. It present its findings to all participants.

A plan is developed how to accomplish the Dissemination Phase.

(There might be deviations from this over-all plan depending on the specific needs of the individual conversation teams.)



Dissemination Phase (April – November)

It is the teams' duty and the explicit wish of the IFSR that the outcome of the Conversations be disseminated to a wider audience. This will be done by publishing a preliminary report in the IFSR Newsletter and later by publishing proceedings of the Conversation as a report of the Kepler University Linz with an ISBN-number.

15 July 2008

For each team an intermediate team report (1 to max. 2 pages) sent by the Team Leader to the Secretary General (G. Chroust) for inclusion in the IFSR Newsletter.

October 2008

The Team reports are published in the IFSR Newsletter.

20 October 2008

The final papers of the teams are sent to the Secretary General as editor to be included in the proceedings. Individual additional supporting papers should also be submitted.

November 2008

Proceedings of the Fuschl Conversations are published as a report of the Kepler University Linz with an ISBN-Number. Each participant and the member Societies of the IFSR will receive a copy





Call for Participation

Fourteenth Fuschl Conversation

Saturday, March 29 to Thursday, April 3, 2004
at Seehotel Schlick,, Seepromenade 35
5330 Fuschl am See, Austria

The Fuschl 2008 Conversations will to a large extent be the continuation of the Conversations held until 2004, taking into considerations the outcome of the Fuschl Conversation 2006.

The following five topics are planned for the Fuschl 2008 Conversation. Note that depending on the response by our members,

changes will be made. This could be both an expansion and a reduction of the topic.

For each Team we list the Team Leader (in some cases an interim one) who will help starting the team, taking care of the initial formation of the team, helping to find participants, modifying trigger questions etc.

Team 1: Basic Concepts of Systems Sciences

Interim Team Leader: Gordon Dyer (g.c.dyer@open.ac.uk)

This team would include deans and professors from universities involved in administrating programs and teaching courses focused on systems research and applications. This would be based on the work done in 2006, gathering information about current systems programs and courses, as well as proposing new concepts for integrating systems courses and concepts into universities.

Triggering Questions:

- (1.1) What concepts must a person know in order to call him/herself a 'systems scientist'?
- (1.2) Can we establish an ontology of systems concepts using Charles Francois' Encyclopaedia.
- (1.3) Can we define a Systems Science Body of Knowledge?
- (1.4) What are existing / desirable University programs and courses - how much are they covering, compatible with (1.1.) and (1.3)
- (1.5) Given the fuzzy borders of Systems Sciences would it be helpful to separate the field into LARGE subfields, similar to e.g. informatics (practical, applied, theoretical).
- (1.6) Given that in Fuschl we cannot fully solve these questions, what is an appropriate road-map to achieve it, what should be the collaborators and what is the time frame?

Topic 2: The trajectory of systems research and practice

Team Leader: David Ing (daviding@coevolving.com)

The team would include individuals with experience in both systems research and practice and/or experience in industry, academia and/or public policy. The discussants should appreciate Lewin's idea that "there's nothing as practical as a good theory", with an emphasis on the relevance, evolution and usefulness of systems research.

Triggering Questions:

- (2.1) In which domains are systemic foundations -- either explicit or implicit -- significant and valuable for practice and methods?
- (2.2) Which organizations or institutions represent centers of competency and/or continuing development of systems knowledge?
- (2.3) How could systems research contribute to extending and/or linking the knowledge centers?
- (2.4) How can systems research respond to changes in institutions (public, private, not-for-profit) and technology (wikis, blogs, voice over Internet)?
- (2.5) What are the limits of systems research -- past and current -- and is overcoming those limits feasible on a mid-term (e.g. 5-year) horizon?
- (2.6) What role can the IFSR play and what are the requirements?

Topic 3: Disseminating, Accessing and Communicating Systems Knowledge

Interim Team Leader: Gerhard Chroust (gc@sea.uni-linz.ac.at)

This proposed team would include current managers of systems archives, of systems journals as well as systems historians, communication experts and others who could contribute to the preservation and dissemination of seminal systems literature and information. The team would also need human engineering and psychological experts. The team members must also have some understanding of multi-cultural issues.

Triggering Questions:

- (3.1) How can we increase the accessibility of contemporary articles/books/journals on systems more effectively using modern technology, ?
- (3.2) How can we increase the dissemination of systems research ideas and achievements?
- (3.3) Can we design recommender system and assessment procedures to identify important publications?
- (3.4) How could we organize an information base to help people to find relevant information and pointers (given our limited resources!) ?
- (3.5) How can we preserve, analyze, record and make available publications of historical value and legacies of great systems scientists?
- (3.6) Could we compile a catalogue of the locations of important systems materials?
- (3.7) What modern means can be established to connect both our member societies and their members better?
- (3.8) How could such a system look, given that many of our members are not really interested in technology and just want to 'use' a system?

Topic 4: Marketing Systems Ideas and Research projects to industry, politics and the general public

Interim Team Leader: Gary Metcalf (gmetcalf@interconnectionsllc.com)

This team would include both individuals involved in funding systems research as well as those experienced in writing and administering grants, or joint programs of systems research and application between industry and government or universities, especially in view of shaping governmental policies to include systemic perspectives. Its goal would be to propose the best current sources and new possibilities for funding systems research and applications especially the exploration of current policies which most reflect systemic perspectives and proposals about the ways of affecting future policies.

Triggering Questions:

- (4.1) What would be projects which IFSR can propose to the European Commission, given its limited resources?
- (4.2) What would be projects which could be proposed to industry?
- (4.3) What new organizational entities would the IFSR need to accomplish (4.1) and (4.2)?
- (4.4) What additional organization would the IFSR need to perform projects like (4.1) and (4.2)?
- (4.5) Which current policies (on any governmental level) most strongly reflect systemic perspectives?
- (4.6) What are feasible ways of affecting future policies?
- (4.7) How can we make systemic ideas more popular and implant them into normal people's thinking

Topic 5: Quality and Excellence in Systems Research

Team Leader: Matjaz Mulej (mulej@uni-mb.si)

This team would include individuals experienced in assessing, judging quality of systems research (journal editors, teachers, conference organizers, members of academies ...), experienced in working in high-quality/high excellence institutions (academies etc.). Its goal would be the identify forms of organisation and mechanisms to identify and highlight excellent achievements in the system sciences.

Triggering Questions:

- (5.1) What are key quality issues in systems research?
- (5.2) How could an Academy of Systems Research and Cybernetics work? What are the Needs, Challenges, Structure?
- (5.3) How can we establish cooperation between excellence centers of system Research?
- (5.4) What means/organizations exist now or are?



Application Form (Fuschl Conversation 2008)

Application: Participation in the Fuschl Conversation 2008

This is your commitment to attend, if selected, and the basis for making reservations for you at the hotel in Fuschl. Please complete and return this form as soon as possible to:

- 1) Gerhard Chroust, Kepler University Linz, Altenbergerstr. 69, A-4040-Linz, Austria, e-mail: GC@sea.uni-linz.ac.at AND
 - 2) the Team Leader whose team is your first choice.
-

I have read and I accept the Rules for Fuschl Conversations (attached). I also agree to pay a non-refundable registration fee of € 100 by February 15, 2004 to

Account no. 405.924.865 at Raiffeisen Landesbank Ooe, AG, (bank code: 34000) indicating "Fuschl 2008" (IBAN: AT18 3400 0004 0592 4865, BIC: RZ00AT2L)

Name _____

Address: _____

e-mail: _____

affiliated with (name(s) of member society): _____

First preference of Conversation Team: No. ____ Short Title _____

Second preference of Conversation Team: No. ____ Short Title _____

I plan to make contributions to the Conversation in the following area(s):

My partner will accompany me (double room!): Name:

My input paper is attached

My input paper has been sent separately on _____

I will submit my within the next week _____

Additional comments: _____



Rules for Fuschl Conversations (Fuschl Conversation 2008)

- The overall thematic responsibility is vested in the Executive Committee of the IFSR. It selects in close cooperation with potential Team Leaders the topics for the individual Teams
- Attendance at the Conversation is by invitation only and is only available to a severely limited number of participants (approximately 30)
- Participants are selected based on proposals by Board Members, Team Leaders, and individual applications (see Application form!)
- Applications will be considered by the Executive Committee in coordination with a strong voice from the Team Leader. The input paper stating the potential contribution of the applicant to the Conversation plays a decisive role. Geographic and disciplinary distribution is also a factor.
- Persons interested in participating should immediately e-mail the Application Form to Gerhard Chroust (GC@sea.uni-linz.ac.at) and to the Team Leader whose team they wish to join. The DEADLINE is announced in the schedule.
- Applicants will be informed of acceptance/rejection by date given in the schedule
- Participants will be contacted again by the Team Leader and asked for additional comments, feedback, and information.
- Participants are required to supply the requested input pages, contribution to proceedings etc. as requested by your Team Leader.
- The proceedings will be published under the auspices of Austrian Society for Cybernetic Studies, Vienna with an ISBN-Number.
- The non-refundable registration fee is € 100 and should be paid to account no.: 405.924.865 at RAIKA Linz-Traun, Austria, (bank code: 34000) indicating "Fuschl 2008".
- Lunch and drinks will have to be paid by the participants themselves.
- A participant may take the partner to Fuschl, but at your own cost. The additional cost for half pension (breakfast and dinner) is approx. €55 per night.
- If you have further questions please contact Gerhard Chroust (GC@sea.uni-linz.ac.at)



International Federation For Systems Research

Secretary/Treasurer: Gerhard Chroust

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Em. o.-Univ.-Prof. Dr. G. Chroust, Kepler University Linz, A-4040 Linz

BOARD MEETING OF THE IFSR

(FOR REPRESENTATIVES OF IFSR MEMBER SOCIETIES AND INVITED GUESTS ONLY)

(*version 2007-12-11*)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 2008 18.00 – 21:00

WIENERWALD-SCHOTTENKELLER

FREYUNG 6, 1010 VIENNA

(10 WALK MINUTES FROM THE VIENNA UNIVERSITY)

Opening

Minutes of the Board Meeting April, 2006

Report of the President

Report of the Secretary/Treasurer

4.1 Membership Status and decisions

- a. New members
- b. Inactive members
- c. Membership fees
- d. Fellowships
- e. Potential new members

4.2 Financial Status and Outlook

Report on IFSR Activities

- the Fuschl Conversations 2006
- the Fuschl Conversation 2008
- IFSR-day 2006 and 2008
- IFSR Projects
- The International Academy of Systems and Cybernetics (Statutes etc.)

IFSR-Publications

- a. Status of the IFSR-Newsletter
- b. Status of the Journal „Systems Research and Behavioral Science“
- c. IFSR Book Series
- d. IFSR Web-Site

IFSR supported events

- a. Ashby lectures
- b. EMCSR 2006, 2008
- c. Other events

Exoneration of the Executive Committee

Election of Officers (President, 2 Vice-Presidents, Secretary/Treasurer)

IFSR Committees

Additional Activities of the IFSR

Other Business

Closing

A small dinner will be offered after the meeting



News from Our Member Societies

Welcome Heinz von Förster Society! *'to navigate is to construct'*

In July 2007 the Heinz von Förster Society joined the IFSR. Thus we now have 34 members!

The Heinz von Förster society was founded in Vienna in 2000. Their focus is the works of Heinz von Foersters and questions of Constructivism.

One of the key activities of the society to maintain the Heinz von Förster-Archive which is located at the Institut für Zeitgeschichte of the University of Vienna. (Address: c/o Dr. Albert Müller, Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Universität Wien, Spitalgasse 2, 1090 Wien, email: albert.mueller@univie.ac.at)

Recently they have also acquired the legacy of Gordon Pask which is currently being archived.

For details see: <http://www.univie.ac.at/heinz-von-foerster-archive/>

3rd Heinz von Förster Congress 2007 November 16 – 19, Vienna

From 16 to 19 November 2007 the Heinz von Förster Gesellschaft organized the 3rd International Heinz von Foerster-Congress "Systems / Systemics" (with special sections on Ernst von Glasersfeld and Gordon Pask) at the University of Vienna.

EMCSR 2008 March 25-28, 2008, Vienna

University of Vienna

organized by the Austrian Society for Cybernetic Studies,
in cooperation with the Institute of Medical Cybernetics and Artificial Intelligence, Center for Brain Research, Medical University of Vienna, and the International Federation for Systems Research

Since 1972, the biennial European Meetings on Cybernetics and Systems Research (EMCSR) have served as a forum for discussion of converging ideas and new aspects of different scientific disciplines. As on previous occasions, a number of sessions providing wide coverage of the rapid developments will be arranged, complemented with daily plenary meetings, where eminent speakers will present latest research results.

The deadline for the submission of papers has expired, final papers are due January 31st, 2008. Soon after this deadline the final programme will be published

For further details see: <http://www.osgk.ac.at/emcsr/>

51st Annual Meeting of the ISSS August 5-10, 2007, Tokyo

The 2007 conference of the International Society for the Systems Sciences (ISSS), held in Tokyo, was a success in many ways. It was the first meeting of the ISSS to be held in Japan, but significant groundwork for the conference had been set by the International Congress of the IFSR, held in Kobe, Japan, in November of 2005. Both meetings provided a chance for Western systems practitioners to discover, first-hand, the depth of interest and research into systems that exists in Japan, and the significant level of support for systems ideas which exists within the Japanese government

52nd Annual Meeting of the ISSS “Systems that Make a Difference” July 13-18, 2008, Madison, USA

The Challenge

The modern systems movement draws upon a rich tradition developed by some of the best and brightest minds of the 20th and 21st centuries. Systems and cybernetic concepts have filtered into much of the scientific literature of the past five decades, and the common media of today is infused with systems-inspired words such as feedback, input/output, regulation, and interdependence. And yet, the systems tradition itself appears to remain largely invisible as an actionable, practical body of knowledge to many of the scientists, academics, politicians and business people who are making the decisions that deeply impact our collective social, economic, and ecological future. The low profile of systems thinking as a discipline among the influential leaders of our time represents a crucial opportunity for the systems community to make a difference in the world in ways that may matter most. The questions naturally arise:

- How can we as a community make systems concepts more accessible to decision makers and researchers in the larger global community?
- How can members of the systems community apply the existing, rich knowledge base of systems concepts and methodologies toward making a positive, sustainable difference within our own spheres of influence?

Toward Making a Difference

The 52nd Annual Meeting of the International Society for the Systems Sciences will bring together professionals on the cutting-edge of the systems movement with influential decision makers facing far-reaching, real-world complexities on a daily basis. While we must continue to make systems theories and approaches ever more rigorous, to remain relevant we must also connect our work with the dilemmas in the world for which people are seeking solutions right now. The objective of ISSS 2008 is to further build much-needed bridges between rigor and relevance in systems work. Speakers and authors are invited to present who can address any part of this spectrum, from better methods for systems research to clarifying the nature of real-world problems in need of resolution.

We encourage those interested in attending the conference to register today and begin working with us in creating this important event.

Important Dates

- **December 5, 2007:** The start of abstract submission and registration. Please login to Journals website to submit your abstract for review.
- **December 5, 2007:** The start of registration.
- **February 1, 2008:** The start of on-line hotel reservation system.
- **March 1, 2008:** The deadline for panel, workshop and stream proposals.
- **April 30, 2008:** The end of early, discounted registration.
- **May 10, 2008:** The deadline for abstracts and full papers,

Wittgenstein Symposium August 5-11, 2007

From 5 to 11 August 2007 the 30th International Wittgenstein Symposium on the "Philosophy of the Information Society" took place at Kirchberg am Wechsel, Austria. Peter Fleissner gave an invited speech on

"Information Society: A Second 'Great Transformation'?" (<http://www.peter.fleissner.org/uploads/texte/Wittgensteinsymp07.pdf>) where he analyzed the emerging information society by means of concepts of Political Economy.

Berliner November November 7 – 10, 2007

From 7 to 8 November 2007 the annual meeting of "Berliner November", co-organized by Ernst-Bloch Gesellschaft and the Bertalanffy Center for the Study of Systems Science, Wien, and the Congress „Kybernetik-evolutionäre Systemtheorie - Dialektik“ took place at Humboldt-University, Berlin.

Peter Fleissner presented two papers, one on a political-economic assessment of the contemporary information society and on "New Perspectives of the Labour Theory of Value" (see http://www.peter.fleissner.org/uploads/texte/Arbeitswerttheorie_Berlin07_kurz.ppt)

New Books

Lungarella, M.; Lida, F.; Bongard, J.; Pfeifer, R. (Eds.) 50 Years of Artificial Intelligence

Essays dedicated to the 50th Anniversary of Artificial Intelligence

Series: [Lecture Notes in Computer Science](#) , Vol. 4850

Sublibrary: [Lecture Notes in Artificial Intelligence](#)

2007, X, 399 p., Soft cover

ISBN: 978-3-540-77295-8

This Festschrift volume, published in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Artificial Intelligence, includes 34 refereed papers written by leading researchers in the field of Artificial Intelligence. The papers were

carefully selected from the invited lectures given at the 50th Anniversary Summit of AI, held at the Centro Stefano Franscini, Monte Verità, Ascona, Switzerland, July 9-14, 2006

Christian Fuchs:

Internet and Society: Social Theory in the Information Age

New York: Routledge. ISBN 0415961327. 408 pages. Routledge Research Series in Information Technology and Society

In this book, the author develops a theory that shows how Internet has changed society and society shapes the Internet. It discusses the ecology, the economy, the politics, and the culture of transnational informational capitalism.

Further topics are: self-organization in nature and in society, foundations of social theory, theory of capitalism, critical theory in the age of the Internet, transnational informational capitalism, Web 2.0, social software, ecological sustainability and ICTs,

informational monopolies, strategies of accumulation related to the Internet, MySpace, YouTube, Wikipedia, Google, Open Source, Free Software, file sharing, knowledge labor, class theory, multitude and Empire (Hardt and Negri), class theory in informational capitalism, gift internet economy, commodity internet economy, gift commodity internet economy, digital divide, eParticipation, digital democracy,

democratic theory, information warfare, electronic surveillance, cyberprotest, the movement for democratic globalization ("anti-globalization"), virtual communities, social networking platforms, cyberstalking, social relations online, individualization and isolation online, Internet addiction, cyberculture, cyberethics, etc.
More infos: <http://fuchs.icts.sbg.ac.at/i&s.html>

Our Member Societies

ASC: American Society for Cybernetics [7]
 GESI: Asociacion Argentina de Teoria General de Sistemas y Cibernetica [5]
 ALAS: Asociacion Latinoamericana de Sistemas [38]
 AMCS: Asociacion Mexicana de la Ciencia de Sistemas [37]
 Asociacion Mexicana de Sistemas y Cibernetica [19]
 AFSCET: Association Francaise des Sciences et Technologies de l'information et des Systemes [11]
 AIRS: Associazione Italiana per la Ricerca Sui Sistemi [24]
 ANZSYS: Australian and New Zealand Systems Group [33]
 BCSSS: Bertalanffy Center for the Study of Systems Science [41]
 Bulgarian Society for Systems Reseach [30]
 CHAOS: Centre for Hyperincursion and Anticipation in Ordered Systems [28]
 GfK: Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Kybernetik [34]
 GWS: Gesellschaft für Wirtschafts- und Sozialkybernetik [12]
 GIFT: Global Institute of Flexible Systems Management [32]
 Greek Systems Society [14]
 Heinz von Förster Gesellschaft [42]

HSSS: Ελληνική Εταιρεία Συστημικών Μελετών (Hellenic Society for Systemic Studies) [36]
 IAS: Instituto Andino de Sistemas [26]
 IIIS: International Institute of Informatics and Systemics: IIIS [39]
 ISSS: International Society for the Systems Sciences [3]
 ISKSS: International Society of Knowledge and Systems Science [35]
 RC51: International Sociological Association , ISA-RC51 on Sociocybernetics [40]
 ISI: International Systems Institute [4]
 JASESS: Japan Association for Social and Economic Systems Studies [31]
 MSSl: Management Science Society of Ireland [29]
 OSGK: Oesterreichische Studiengesellschaft für Kybernetik [1]
 Polish Systems Society [23]
 SDSR: Slovenian Society for Systems Research [25]
 SESGE: Sociedad Espanola de Sistemas Generales [13]
 SGN: Systeemgroep Nederland [2]
 SESC: Systems Engineering Society of China [21]
 The Cybernetics Society [9]
 KSSSR: The Korean Society for Systems Science Research [22]
 The Learned Society of Praxiology [16]



End of the Newsletter

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