

01/ NEW-ELECTED PRESIDENT'S FIRST MESSAGE



Dear members of IAEG, dear colleagues and friends,

I would really like to wish you a happy and safe new year. I also trust, with no doubt, that we will be able to meet again in person and internationally collaborate more actively for the future of our profession.

We, the International Association for Engineering Geology and the Environment serve the "...science devoted to the investigation, study and solution of the engineering and environmental problems which may arise as the result of the interaction between geology and the works and activities of human-kind as well as to the prediction of and the development of measures for prevention or remediation of geological hazards" (text from IAEG Statutes).

Our new Executive Committee consists of highly experienced colleagues from the industry, academia and research institutes. Practitioners in the field of Engineering Geology with deep knowledge of our International Association and its capacities; bearers of new visions.

At this point, I would like to offer my great appreciation to the past Executive Committee for all their efforts in assisting and promoting IAEG during the past, very difficult, 4-year period.

Though these messages are more often focused on wishes and greetings, I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to highlight some of the essential plans and strategies for the next 4 years. In order to further support the IAEG towards its wide activity fields and continue the work of the previous office, I plan to take, together with the new Executive Office, actions on the following fields:

Revisiting Engineering Geology core values: What happens so often to the Geology in Engineering Geology? Where is the integration of Geology to Engineering as seen in the research papers or applied papers in journals? Cases are observed with departure from the common ground in Engineering Geology, Soil Mechanics and Rock Mechanics, sometime with Engineering Geology not even being standing with its intellectual merits, methods and procedures. Our competencies within the geoenvironment community are founded on understanding "how is the ground" and "how the ground works". Apart from "putting numbers in Geology" we need to ensure that there is a sound understanding and knowledge of the processes and provide guidance and promotion for developing geological models and mechanisms; utilizing all the new technological tools and computer visual methods.

Education & Training: Our strategy must be decidedly targeted in education. We must provide our solid views on the matter within the relative JTC with our sister societies in the Federation of International Geo-Engineering Societies (FedIGS). Our Commission in education must be reactivated, work very actively in this matter and provide assistance to the academia to secure the role of Engineering Geology in the geo-engineering teaching community. We also want to continuously address the new needs of the industry in engineering geology and accordingly support the MSc syllabi around the world. Another issue we have to examine and have a clear standpoint about it is who (with what background) teaches "Engineering Geology" in the relevant courses in the universities.

"Why Become a member of IAEG?" - Support career development: This is a principal issue that must occupy the new Executive Office. We plan to create an international network of communication between professionals and academics in order to support career development. We must be able to convey to our members all new practices, trends, technologies and methods in Engineering Geology.

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New fields in Engineering Geology: Promote and establish, under the IAEG umbrella, new fields in Engineering Geology, especially in the geohazard, environmental and climate change topics. Many young colleagues already working in this field. Engineering geologists can soundly collect, present, evaluate and interpret relevant data in these new fields.

Young Engineering Geology group (YEG): We will work with the YEG group to raise a core of YEG members in IAEG through national group membership. Our future! The organization of summer schools and field trips as well as YEG activities such as webinars, specialized workshops during the IAEG events and career days, will be both encouraged and supported.

Continuous interaction with our members: Conduct frequent online surveys and receive feedback from IAEG members with respect to the IAEG workshops and activities, membership and what more IAEG can offer but also getting new suggestions regarding the goals of IAEG future activities and Engineering Geology practices. Our website will be updated, while IAEG – Connector will always be a valuable tool of presenting IAEG activities and worldwide news.

IAEG activities: Create opportunities for Engineering Geologists to partake in and familiarize with the knowledge and the learnings that become available worldwide, by region and by country, through organizing and running of congresses, conferences, summer schools and field trips. This year we have our World Conference in Chengdu, China. We all hope that we will be able to participate in person. Also, we have our own IAEG summer school. The 2nd summer school will be organized in the Alps, Italy, next June.

IAEG Commissions: We will revisit all commissions from scratch so we can support and promote the active ones but also assist others by specifying rules and certain deliverables. Our intention is to monitor their progress, offer advocacy and provide motivation.

FedIGS: We wish to strengthen the bonds with the sister societies and ensure our common goals in the geo-engineering community by co-organizing special workshops and paying particular attention to the Joint Technical Committees (JTCs) encouraging greater interaction among the geo-engineering parties.

Official Journal of IAEG – BOEG: We are generally very proud for our journal and its meters. However, we must address the risks regarding the official journal of the IAEG securing the Engineering Geological and international character. We also need to open the door of our journal to more practitioners. We certainly look for papers with innovations and new findings, but we have to consider very seriously the publications of good papers with remarkable case histories for phenomena, for behaviour, for the design/construction of important works. This is valuable material for the practitioners.

Two Executive meetings have been arranged for the 1st half of 2023: an on-line meeting on the 2nd of February and a two-day meeting in person 3rd and 4th of May.

All Past Presidents have contributed towards the same goals. I am convinced that I too, with the help of the Executive Office, the engineering geology community and the National Groups, will be able to meet the expectations of IAEG, of our members and promote their activities even further.

Vassilis P. Marinos
President of IAEG

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'V. Marinos'.