



IFMBE - Secretary's Report 2000 - 2003

It is exactly three years ago, the 26 of July 2000, when I was re-elected for a new three-year term as the Secretary General. At that time I knew what was waiting for me, where as back in 1997, after the Nice Conference, I was very enthusiastic about running the secretariat. I cannot say that I would have been pessimistic in 2000 about running the secretariat, but I was realistic. This might sound strange and someone might wonder why I accepted to be re-elected. There is, however many positive sides in this work that outweigh the negative sides. I am certain that even the Secretary Generals before me have had same type of problems. People who are not working with the practical issues do not always understand why certain things can become a problem and cause delays.

DIRECTORY 2000 & STATIONERY

One of the problems that the Secretary General faces is updating the Membership Directory. The Directory 1998 was the last one that was printed; thereafter the Directory has only been available on the IFMBE web site as a downloadable pdf-file. There was no point use money for printing, because the printed version was always out of date. I wrote in my report in 2000 that only two weeks after the delivery of the Directory 1998, I received the first notice of errors in it. The printing cost was £867,15 in 1998. There is only few member Societies that inform the secretariat about changes of their addresses and officers. This is and it has been a major problem for good communication within the Federation.

After each World Congress it is customary to print new stationery, showing the new member societies, new officers and the logo of the next World Congress. This new stationery was delivered in September 2000.

WEB SITE

The development of the IFMBE web has not proceeded as planned. In 1999 an offer for the development was tabled during the Administrative Council (AC) meeting in Seoul, Korea. The offered development included a discussion forum for the membership, a "Project Office", an address database, a news site for the membership and a list-server function. The "Project Office" is a system that has been developed specially for project groups with geographically isolated colleagues. This product functions as a kind of office on the web where information (all types of documents) is made available to the colleagues. The system also handles user authority and is a unique combination of a web based "Message Board" and "Document Archive". The address database consists of web pages for searching, presenting and administrating an address database. The National secretaries would get access to this database so that they could update the information for their Society. This would certainly facilitate the communication between the Secretariat and the Member Societies as well as between the Societies.

To make all this would cost approximately \$6500 or £4100. This sum included also the design of the new pages. More offers were taken in late September 1999, but none of them were cheaper than the first one. AC rejected all the offers, because they were considered as too expensive. Therefore, I decided to design and make the first step of the new Home Page myself. The new Home Page was placed on the Internet in December 1999.

A proposal for a new layout of IFMBE web site was presented in Pula in 2001. The company that hosted the web site and that made the first offer in 1999 did the work. Unfortunately, there was no discussion in Pula about this proposal and the Officers reviewed it in their meeting in Sydney in 2002.

The Officers decided about a new structure for the web site and I contacted, in February 2002 the company that made the proposal. However, I was informed that the person who was responsible for the development had finished and the new person who had taken over the former person's duties was not informed about the IFMBE project. This was the

beginning for a long discussion about the obligations that the company had towards IFMBE and finally in the autumn 2002 they agreed to make the basic layout according to the discussion the Officers had in Sydney in January 2002. I started to fill the new pages with information in December 2002 and the new site as it is now was launched in the beginning of June 2003.

During the autumn 2002 and spring 2003 new offers for developing and hosting the IFMBE web site have been discussed. The agreement with the company hosting the IFMBE web site today will be terminated in December 2003 and new host must be found during the autumn. The offers discussed include functions that are comparable or equal with the functions that are described above. The costs for the offers are between €200 and €14500 corresponding to £5638 and £9970 respectively.

The total cost for the IFMBE web site from March 1999 when it was moved from Amsterdam to Stockholm to July 2003 was £5455,98. This sum includes the running cost to December 2003.

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL AND OFFICERS' MEETINGS

Administrative Council of the IFMBE and the Officers meet usually in connection to the conferences and have in that way a theoretical possibility to participate in the scientific programme of the conference. In December 2000 the Officers' meeting was arranged just after the 10th International Conference on Biomedical Engineering held in Mandarin Singapore, December 6th to 9th 2000. The Officers' meetings are important in order to prepare for the ordinary meeting of the AC and hold discussions on important matters concerning the Federation and its relations with its international members and other organisations like the IUPESM and ICSU.

The AC had a meeting in connection to the MEDICON 2001, which was held in Pula, Croatia in June 12-15. This year there were no Officers' meeting. Next time the Officers met was in January 2002 in Sydney. During this meeting the facilities for the World Congress 2003 were inspected. The Officers had also very fruitful discussion with the organisers.

The 12th Nordic Baltic Conference on Biomedical Engineering and Medical Physics organised in Reykjavik, Iceland was the scene for the AC meeting in 2002. In 2002 there was an additional Officers' meeting held in London in connection to the Federation Journal Committee meeting (FJC).

In 2003 year the Officers met in Stockholm just before the FJC meeting held in London in April. In this way the circle has been closed, because the first Officers meeting that I organised was also held in Stockholm in March 1998.

The minutes from all these meetings are available on the IFMBE web, under "Business meetings".

MAIL BALLOTS

The General Assembly (GA) has carried out four mail ballots during this three-year term. The first mail ballot was dealing with the re-vote process of the World Congress 2006.

During the autumn 2001 an e-mail ballot was sent out to the GA delegates. The two motions were dealing with amendments to the Bylaws. However, only 16 ballots were returned and the AC decided in Reykjavik that the vote on changes should be redone by postal mail. The preparation of this vote was done during autumn 2002 when I sent an e-mail to every delegate in order to check that the mailing address in the register is correct. This took several weeks because the delegates did not reply in time. (This is one of the problems that the Secretary General has to face). In many cases I asked the national secretaries for help. The ballot was sent out on the Nobel day, December 10, 2002 and the vote was finished in February 2003.

The two last ballots were sent out by e-mail at the same time. These votes were dealing with the election of Honorary Life Members 2003 and election of two new Member

Societies; a second Society from France and the Nigerian Institute for Biomedical Engineering.

Results of these mails can be seen on the IFMBE web.

ELECTIONS

Each General Assembly will elect new Officers, AC-members, and members in the boards of the IFMBE Divisions. This time the call for nominations was sent out in April 2003 and posted on the web site at the time when the first reminder was sent out. The mailings were addressed to the National Secretaries and they were asked to send the nominations back to the Secretariat no later than June 15. Results to these calls are compiled in nominee information, which is available on the web and of course during the WC2003 in Sydney prior to the General Assembly. The call for nominations for IFMBE and IUPESM Awards were announced already during the autumn 2002.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The interest for the IFMBE membership is on a constant level. During the last three years following countries have requested for information about how to become a member of IFBME: Georgia, India, Lithuania, Mongolia, Russia, Turkey, Uruguay, Malaysia, Indonesia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Egypt and FYR Makedonia. Thailand is a member, but they have not been so active during many years. Now there is interest again to revoke the membership and I have sent information to the person who has been in contact with us. However, he replied that they have to await endorsement from their government before they can send information needed.

There are also several individuals who have shown interest to join IFMBE. Back in 60's there was a quite large number of individual members, but they organised Societies in their countries and became members through the Societies instead. Since February this year it is again possible to become individual member of IFMBE under certain circumstances.

The transition of the secretariat can be started already in September. The archives are gone through again and re-marked and re-packed to boxes that are easier to identify and handle. Most of the archives from my years as Secretary General can be stored on a CD. All the old material, documents, books and correspondence that came to Stockholm in March 1998 can be shipped over to the new Secretary General during October. These archives are complete from the very beginning with correspondence of Vladimir K. Zworykin, Jan Kuipper and others. It has been discussed that the old archives should be scanned in and stored on CDs. This would of course be very interesting and good thing to do, because some papers are old photocopies and the quality of them is not so good any more. The scanning process is time consuming, but I think that it is worthwhile to do. I wish all the best to the coming Secretary General with this task and the many other tasks that the Secretary General has.

Stockholm July 26, 2003
Heikki Terio, Ph.D.
Secretary General
1997-2003