

Dear colleagues,

It is hard to believe that it will be soon four years that we had our 10th ECEE in Vienna. Atilla Ansal asked me to summarise these four years and especially my experience. As we are getting older, he suggested, the view could also be a little bit more philosophical.

Hence, I want to go back to the roots of my presidency. Our Austrian Association for Earthquake Engineering is a small association but some of the members are very active. Hence a small group around Franz Ziegler and Rainer Flesch wanted to organise the 10th ECEE and prepared a bid. I was sent to Moscow and during the voting process at the General Assembly I got more and more happy and finally I was Vice President of EAEE. I remember the time in Moscow after the election, at different occasions I had to give speeches and toasts, sometimes it was a little bit difficult because I had to drink a lot of vodka at the same time. But as a new Vice President, I had also big advantages, it was relatively easy to get a functioning overhead projector for my presentation, which was fortunately scheduled after the General Assembly. Back in Vienna, after some weeks of delight, I had to start the work and especially to raise funds. We formed a small but very powerful and effective team. I am especially happy that we managed late but not too late to offer some considerable financial support to colleagues from the former eastern countries. I think the conference was a success and I was very proud to become the President of EAEE.

Since our bulletin 15/2 in December 1996, I am now writing the column ***From the President***, this is the fourth time. I always was touching the four main activities of EAEE, the European Conferences, the bulletin, regional seminars, working groups and task groups and in addition I informed about the latest developments in my personal scientific life.

Let me start also as the outgoing president in the same way. When you will read this column the 11th European Conference will be running. On behalf of the Executive Committee, I want to address our warmest thanks to our French colleagues for the enormous and excellent work they have done. I think that we have really learned a lot from the 11th WCEE in Acapulco, where the organisers managed for the first time to raise the status of the poster presentations. Also at our conference the posters will be the main format for the presentations. I hope that also the workshop-style Special Sessions will be a success. I myself initiated and organised part 1 of Eurocode 8 Special Session, where we will have an overview by the chairman, visit of poster stands, additional oral presentations and discussion of all posters.

Concerning bids for the next European Conference, up to now I know only the bid from UK. This is a very strange situation, it is the first time that we have only one candidate. I am aware of the problems, a lot of time and money must be invested by the member association organising a conference and probably it will become more and more difficult in the future. Nevertheless, I hope that we will find also for our future conferences always at least one candidate.

The next topic is our bulletin. The main work is done in an excellent way by our Secretary General Atilla Ansal, we have to be very grateful to him. Not only that the whole editorial work is done by himself, he found also funds in his country to publish 1500 copies which are distributed to our National Delegates. He also takes care for the Internet-EAEE web Pages, where you can find all published bulletins and all other EAEE documents. Probably the Internet

will become more and more important for the distribution of the bulletin. Since many years the Associations of Germany, Austria and Switzerland publish together a bulletin in German language for the information of their members (D-A-CH Bulletin). During the General Assembly of the Austrian Association in May 1998, it was suggested to discuss the idea to include the D-A-CH bulletin in the EAEE bulletin. As the concept of both bulletins is to provide information about Earthquake Engineering activities for the members, it should be possible to combine the bulletins and hence to avoid unnecessary doubling of information. In principle the D-A-CH related contributions could be prepared in English, but it could also be discussed to allow a limited number of pages in other languages (German, French, etc.) which can be understood by a considerable number of readers.

I am coming now to the Regional Seminars. The 18th Regional Earthquake Engineering Seminar was held in Sept. 1995 in Lyon. It was located in Ecole Centrale de Lyon, which is an engineering high school with particular interest for civil engineering and mechanical engineering. The French Association for Earthquake Engineering was in charge of the organisation, the local organising committee was led by Prof. P. Labbe. Eighty five young scientists from 20 member countries of EAEE attended the seminar.

In December 1997 the 19th European Regional Earthquake Engineering Seminar was held in Cairo. It was organised by Prof. M. Sobaih and his team from the Egyptian Society for Earthquake Engineering. Before the seminar the world was shocked by the cruel terror act in Luxor. The situation caused also a lot of activities within the Executive Committee of EAEE. Many participants were concerned about their safety. I am very grateful to Prof. Amr Elnashai, who provided good information which finally allowed to take the right decision and to held the seminar. We had a very nice and fruitful time in Cairo. 10 lecturers and 20 participants from Europe attended the seminar. The seminar attracted a large number of Egyptian participants, about 110, which is more than the number of participants that attended the latest Egyptian National Conference.

We are pleased that we have preliminary proposals from Skopje, Germany and Bulgaria to organise future European Regional Earthquake Engineering Seminars. During the latest meeting of the Executive Committee the new Guidelines for EAEE Regional Seminars prepared by the Secretary General were discussed, adopted and approved for dissemination to all national delegates.

The next topic is Working Groups and Task Groups. Atilla Ansal has reported all the details in this bulletin. We have to be very grateful to him, because he elaborated the greatest part of the draft for the reorganisation of EAEE Working Groups as Task Groups. I think the reorganisation was a very important action of the Executive Committee but it will take some longer time before the advantages will clearly turn out. At the beginning we have planned 9 Task Groups. Four of these Task Groups have become active. In June 1995 a meeting of EAEE and ESC Joint Task Group 3 on "Seismic Risk and Earthquake Scenarios" took place in Vienna. Fortunately I was in the position to provide some funding for this meeting. Then the coordinator of TG 3 (Prof. M. Dolce) prepared a project proposal to establish a network within the INCO-COPERNICUS program of EU. Eleven institutions from our member countries participated to the proposal. The proposal was accepted by EU in July 1997. Two project meetings were held in the meantime.

During the ESC General Assembly in Reykjavik, Sept. 1996, the EAEE and ESC Joint Working Group on "Strong Motion" (Coordinator Prof. N. Ambraseys) was established.

Since Oct. 1995 the Joint Task Group of EAEE TG6 "Earthquake Geotechnical Engineering and Microzonation" (Coordinator: Prof. A. Ansal) and ESC WG4 on "Microzonation" held three meetings. The fourth meeting is scheduled during the 11th ECEE.

The European Workshop on the "Seismic Behaviour of Asymmetric and Setback Structures" was organised by Task Group TG8 on "Seismic Behaviour of Irregular and Complex Structures" (Coordinator: Prof. A. Rutenberg) and was held in Anacapri/Italy in Oct. 1996.

In principle, each Task Group is established for the period between two European Conferences. On the occasion of the following conference the Executive Committee decides about a prolongation. Hence, the organisation is now much more flexible and allows a better steering by the Executive Committee. The main problem for all Task Groups is that first we have to find an active scientist willing to devote his/her energy to activate the group and then he/she has to find financial sources. It is one of the most important tasks of the coordinator to look for possible funds. TG 3 was successful to get means from an European program. The Executive Committee tried to start some lobbying in Brussels, but this is not so easy. The problem is, that only projects (needing a big amount of administrative work) but not the basic activities of Scientific Associations can be funded from European Projects. I had several contacts with DG XII / Environment and Climate / Natural Hazards, but unfortunately I cannot report about any new possibilities. Hence for our Task Group activities we should try to get national funding. I invite all colleagues, especially from the richer western countries to start projects which mean a support for our EAEE activities but which are financed by national funds. I am especially hopeful that our very active French friends will come up with a proposal.

One very positive example is the activity of the Icelandic National Society of Earthquake Engineering to start intensive earthquake research in the South Iceland Seismic Zone, which is a very promising geographical area for earthquake engineering. It is a good starting position that they have a strong motion network and instrumented buildings, hydropower plants, earth fill dams and bridges. The project was established with participation of the Federation of Municipalities in South Iceland and The Civil Defence of Iceland. The project has in addition to its earthquake engineering aspects also a strong socio-economic character. I am very proud, that members of EAEE have started a project aiming towards a full scale computerised field laboratory, which will be a large benefit for testing and training in the field of Earthquake Engineering. Especially I have in mind all the young and active scientists from our member countries, who will be very pleased to get the possibility for training and cooperative research.

Concerning UNESCO/NGO I want to thank our Secretary General, that he was very active to get a better classification of EAEE within the international non-governmental organisations. Central Office was informed in July 1998 by the Director of the Division of Relations with International Organisations that EAEE was transferred into the category named as "Informal Relations".

After talking about the basic tasks of EAEE I want to touch quickly the future of the structural part of Earthquake Engineering, which is an important part of my daily work. I think that the Structural - Dynamics - Community has already tried to study each open question. But frequently the things we are doing are too academic. Often we play too much around and forget what is really necessary for practical use. We can use different methods of analysis

(from quasi static methods up to non-linear time history analysis), we can use a more or less accurate structural model but we often have problems to predict the influence of the selected approach on the quality of the results. Especially "average" users of codes which are no Earthquake Engineering specialists, will find only little help for selecting the most adequate approach for a given situation. Although today it is possible to carry out a dynamic analysis of a complex structure with a PC on the designer's desk, this makes no sense in each case. For very detailed structural models one needs a lot of input parameters, which often can be estimated only roughly. Further, the assumed earthquake input will always be a very rough approximation. Hence a very sophisticated design procedure is not necessarily more realistic and it is questionable, if the safety level of the structure can be really increased in this way. A research project funded by the Austrian National Bank was carried out in the past. Five actual buildings having different degrees of irregularity were selected. Each building was modelled and analysed in several variants and the resulting internal forces and displacements were compared. The goal was the elaboration of guidelines for the selection of the most adequate procedure. It is obvious that much more similar test applications will be necessary, before guidelines can be established. Following this idea I initiated the Special Theme Session "Evaluation and Improvement of Seismic Codes via Case Studies" in Acapulco. At our 11th ECEE we will have the Eurocode 8 Special Session with part 1.1: Case Studies (adequate modelling and methods of analysis, experience from (test-) applications) and with part 1.2: Q-Factors and Miscellaneous Experience. I hope that I will convince as much people as possible that we need much more similar work. I will also try again to get money from the Austrian Fund for Scientific Research. The first attempt failed. The proposal was rejected with the argument that the planned sensitivity- and case studies are no scientific research work and no new knowledge can be expected. From the formal point of view this is eventually O.K, but for me it is a crazy situation that I probably would have got the money for a brand new "exotic" topic while no funding is available to elaborate the "golden mean" between sophistication and obtainable safety level, which would be very helpful for the practical application.

I am coming to the conclusions. I think, the period 1994 – 1998 was a fruitful period for EAEE. Some new things have been initiated, but much work remains for the future. EAEE is something like a big European family of specialists, which are good friends at the same time. This is an excellent basis for a fruitful work within Europe. I am sure that you will find in each ongoing or forthcoming European Research Project in the field of Earthquake Engineering at least one consortium partner, which is also well known within EAEE. I am very proud that I had the honour to be the president of this association for the last four years and I promise to do my best as Vice President within the next four years.

Rainer G. Flesch

President

August 1998