

Minutes

ICSU GeoUnions (GUs) Steering Committee Meeting

Friday, 1 September 2017, 09:00 - 17:00

Venue: German Research Centre for Geosciences (GFZ), Historical Archive, Telegrafenberg
A17, 14473 Potsdam, Germany

Present:

ICA: President Menno-Jan Kraak
INQUA: President Allan Ashworth
ISPRS: Secretary General Lena Halounova
IUGG: President Michael Sideris
IUGG: Secretary General Alik Ismail-Zadeh (CHAIR)
IUGS: Vice President William Cavazza
IUSS: Past President Rainer Horn
URSI: Past President Paul Cannon

Guests:

Orhan Altan, ICSU Executive Board Member
Reinhard Hüttl, GFZ Scientific Executive Director
Franz Kuglitsch, IUGG Executive Secretary

A. Ismail-Zadeh chaired the meeting. *F. Kuglitsch* took the minutes.

1. Introduction by GeoUnions Steering Committee's Chair

A. Ismail-Zadeh welcomed the participants of the ICSU GeoUnions (GUs) Steering Committee Meeting, thanked *R. Hüttl* for hosting and *F. Kuglitsch* for organizing this meeting. *A. Ismail-Zadeh* gave a presentation about the GeoUnions, their principle goals, recent activities, added value and scientific challenges.

2. Welcome by Prof. Dr. R. Hüttl, GFZ-Potsdam Scientific Executive Director and Chairman of the Board

A. Ismail-Zadeh invited *R. Hüttl* to give a welcome speech. *R. Hüttl* reported about the History of the Telegrafenberg and the German Research Centre for Geosciences (GFZ), major research activities of the GFZ, and its national and international collaborations.

3. Introduction of the meeting participants

The participants introduced themselves.

4. Group Photo



Meeting participants from left to right: Franz Kuglitsch (IUGG Executive Secretary), Menno-Jan Kraak (ICA President), Alik Ismail-Zadeh (IUGG Secretary General), Michael Sideris (IUGG President), Paul Cannon (URSI President), William Cavazza (IUGS Vice President), Orhan Altan (ICSU Executive Board Member), Lena Halounova (ISPRS Secretary General), Allan Ashworth (INQUA President), Reinhard Hüttl (GFZ Scientific Executive Director), Rainer Horn (IUSS Past President)

5. Approval of the minutes of the 2016 GeoUnions Business meeting in Paris

The minutes of the 2016 GeoUnions Business meeting in Paris were accepted. The agenda of this meeting was approved.

6. Updates from the Unions

Seven GU representatives gave a short presentation of their current activities followed by a Q&A session. There are some similarities in the way that unions are organized, managed and conduct their business, but there are some differences.

7. 32nd ICSU General Assembly in Taipei, ROC (23-24 October 2017)

The GU representatives clarified, who will represent the unions at the 32nd ICSU General Assembly in Taipei, ROC, 23-24 October 2017. They did not have any specific comments on the draft agenda.

8. Joint Meeting of the ICSU and ISSC Membership in Taipei, ROC (25-26 October 2017)

Overview the key discussion points and decision of the Extraordinary General Assembly of ICSU, 24 October 2016, Oslo, Norway – impression from the Unions

The GU representatives presented their impressions on the ICSU Extraordinary General Assembly (EOGA) on 24 October 2016. Some of the union representatives were in favor of the merger, while some others were against the merger of ICSU and ISSC. The GU representatives agreed that an implementation of the recommendations taken during the EOGA about a possible

merger has not been clarified in detail in the documents received so far from the ICSU/ISSC Secretariats. Particularly, no proposals are presented regarding:

- Recommendation 7 on launching (with secured resources) at least one new integrated global initiative for a new merged organization;
- Recommendation 11 on a new membership structure;
- Recommendation 13 on new fees;
- Recommendation 22 on a future merged Secretariat.

The GU representatives agreed that a letter should be sent to ICSU with a request for clarification of (1) the financial situation of ICSU and ISSC to see the financial state of a merged council, and (2) the implementation of the decisions of the EOGA. *P. Cannon* agreed drafting an email to be sent to ICSU. The letter can be found in *Appendix 1*.

Advancing science as a global public good

The GU representatives discussed some aspects of the high-level strategy, for example, current ICSU (and future council's) Grant Programme and its improvements. Partnership with UN specialized agencies have been established and can be strengthened only via Scientific Unions of ICSU or of ISSC but not of the ICSU or ISSC or new council itself. No (important) role of International Scientific Unions is mentioned in the document.

Proposal for the development of a new dues structure

The GU representatives agreed that many things regarding the development of a new dues structure (e.g., amount of future dues proposals, increase of annual fees by 2% or 3%) is not yet presented and clarified, and more information is needed before any decision can be taken on the merger.

Draft Statutes and Rules of Procedure & Possible Alternatives to Draft Statute Article 8 and 15

The GU discussed the draft Statutes and the Rules of Procedure. They agreed that the version of Articles 8 and 15 as presented in the draft document and rejected the alternatives. They agreed that the voting procedures should be clarified in the case of several "National Members" from one country.

9. Interactions with ICSU Interdisciplinary Bodies: e.g., Future Earth, WCRP, IRDR, CODATA, WDS, Health and Well-being

Due to time limitations, the union representatives agreed to drop this agenda topic.

10. Other topics

The union representatives discussed the organization of the GeoInformation for Disaster Management Conference – Gi4DM 2018 by URSI and ISPRS in (Northern) Cyprus and how to deal with the organization of meetings in non-UN recognized countries.

The next GeoUnions Steering Committee meeting will be held on 21 October at 14:00-18:00 in Academia Sinica in Taipei.

11. Farewell words and short guided tour by Prof. Dr. H. Schuh (Director, GFZ Department 1 "Geodesy and Remote Sensing")

A short guided tour to the major sights at Telegrafenberg was given by *H. Schuh* after lunch.

Appendix 1. A letter to the ICSU Executive Director

(sent on 5 September 2017 by e-mail)

To: Dr. Heide Hackmann, ICSU Executive Director
CC: Prof. Gordon McBean, ICSU President
CC: Prof. David Black, Secretary General
CC: ICSU GeoUnions Steering Committee

Dear Heide,

The GeoUnions Steering Committee has recently met to discuss the background papers provided in preparation for the Taipei series of meetings. The Steering Committee is concerned that insufficient documentation has been provided to decide whether or not a merger should take place. In order to reach such a conclusion, we request that this situation be rectified and that additional documentation be sent out in sufficient time for all Scientific Union and National Delegates to better assess the situation prior to leaving for Taipei.

We have identified two overarching issues, where we believe it is both reasonable and essential to have further information.

1. Finance: We expected to see the most recent audited accounts of both ICSU and ISSC. We assume that these show income, expenditure, and both the book values and actual values of any investments. We also assume that these make clear the contingency for winding up both organisations. Only with these data can the Members understand the financial risk of the merger.

2. Oslo: The Oslo meeting gave authority in principle for amalgamating ICSU and ISSC. However, this was only after detailed discussions reported in document JM3 which includes recommendations and actions to be completed prior to the Taipei meetings. Yet no commentary has been provided of progress on these recommendations and actions. We assume that good progress has been made but the GeoUnions believe that the Members need this confirmed through a point by point critique.

Without these documents, the GeoUnions Steering Committee has concluded that the appropriate due diligence by ICSU Members cannot be achieved and the best outcome that could be expected in Taipei would be to delay the decision by a further year.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Alik Ismail-Zadeh

Chairperson (pro tem), GeoUnions Steering Committee
(<http://www.icsu-geounions.org>)