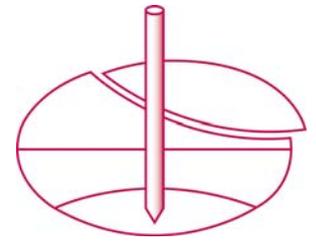


International Society for Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering

Société Internationale de Mécanique des Sols et de la Géotechnique



July 8th 2017

Dear Members of ISSMGE,

This circular letter is aimed at promoting and supporting the XVI Danube-European Conference on Geotechnical Engineering (DECGE), with the hope of obtaining a large participation of delegates, together with numerous and high quality technical and scientific contributions. Information on the Conference can be obtained in <http://www.decge2018.mk/>

There are many and important reasons why we should participate in and contribute to this conference. Among others, mention can be made of the long tradition of this conference series (sixteen events from 1964 to 2018), its always very high scientific and technical level, the organization, participation and contribution of outstanding members of the geotechnical community from all over the world and the charm of a European area where the Father of Soil Mechanics, Karl Terzaghi, was born and spent an important part of his life working on and teaching our discipline. Last, but not least, the large amount and variety of natural beauties, historical sites and monuments that characterize the Danube Region and, in particular, Macedonia.

In addition, there is, in our opinion, another outstanding reason to join and promote this DECGE in order to keep it alive and successful. This reason is closely related to one of the fundamental roles of any scientific and technical community, that is, to promote links, communication and discussions among scientists and professionals from different countries, even in the middle of difficult social and political situations. The ISSMGE has always been very active in this endeavour, since one of the main aims of Geotechnical Engineering is that of improving the safety and quality of life of populations through natural risk mitigation, environment safeguarding and civil progress enhancement.

It is well known that, in spite of the close cultural, economic and personal relationships, the Danube Region, from Germany to the Black Sea, had been frequently in a geopolitically exposed situation since ancient times; from being the boundary between the Eastern and Western Roman Empire to the existence of the “Iron Curtain”, which, during the “Cold War”, separated Europe into Eastern and Western Blocks (1945 – 1989/1990).

In this context, one of the most important roles and contributions played by DECGE after the 2nd World War was the creation of a mental and cultural reunification of this great region by supporting personal contacts and promoting diplomatic flexibility until an extended “Geotechnical Family” was created. The recent disappearance of the artificial division in Europe has brought countries closer together. Consequently, multiple possibilities of international and multilateral cooperation have developed to an extent that even the most optimistic visionaries in the initial phase of the Danube-European Conferences could not have dreamt of.

We believe that this short excursion on the history of the DECGE series can show how the Geotechnical Engineering community has been able to anticipate and promote in some ways the recent positive historical events by remaining, at the same time, both *super partes*, from the political point of view, and *sub partes* as required by our discipline that must always look below the ground level.

In conclusion, we warmly invite you to participate in and to contribute to the XVI DECGE in Skopje and to take the opportunity to enjoy the hospitality of the Macedonian Association of Geotechnics and to visit the capital city of one of the youngest member societies.

Prof. Heinz Brandl
(A Founder Father of DECGE)

Prof. Antonio Gens
(Vice-President for Europe of ISSMGE)

Prof. Mario Manassero
(Incoming Vice-President for Europe of ISSMGE)

ISSMGE Secretariat, City University, Northampton Square, London EC1V 0HB UK Tel: +44 20 7040 8154; Fax: +44 20 7040 8832; E-mail: secretariat@issmge.org

ISSMGE Board Members

President	R. Frank	Vice-President Africa	F.E. Baligh	Vice-President Europe	A. Gens	Appointed Member	M. Ballouz
Secretary General	R.N. Taylor	Vice-President Asia	I. Towhata	Vice-President N America	P. Mayne	Appointed Member	E.M. Kana
Past President	J.-L. Briaud	Vice-President Australasia	M. Jaksa	Vice-President S America	J. Milititsky	Appointed Member	V. Szavits-Nossan