

In tune with change

100 years, 100 countries, one world and one mission – international cooperation for the advancement of knowledge, research, development and education in photogrammetry, remote sensing and spatial information sciences – that's the International Society of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS) for you in a nutshell. Words fall short to chronicle and describe the illustrious achievements of this august body that has seen the metamorphosis of geospatial technologies over the decades. Yet, here is a humble attempt by GIS Development to bring out the origin, evolution, objectives, milestones, aspirations and the vision of the presidents (past and present) on the occasion of the centenary celebrations through – ISPRS: In Retrospect and Prospect.

Established as the International Society of Photogrammetry (ISP) in 1910, ISPRS is the oldest international umbrella organisation in the field which addresses 'Information from Imagery'. A century old, yet this Society continues to be relevant and a thriving international community of national and regional Societies, Institutes and related member organisations and groups that are allied by having and sharing common interests in photogrammetry, remote sensing and spatial information sciences and technologies.

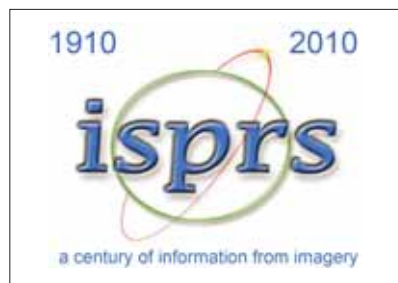


Origin and first steps

Expecting a rapid growth of photogrammetry, **Dr Eduard Dolezal**, Rector and Professor for Practical Geometry at

the Technical University of Vienna, reorganised the Austrian Society of Photogrammetry and founded the International Society of Photogrammetry (ISP) on July 4, 1910, to "gather interested specialists in this field for the common work". The first major milestone for ISP was the conduct of International Congress of Photogrammetry at Vienna in September 1913 which saw the participation of 400 photogrammetrists and scientists from all European countries. Germany, France and Austria pointedly participated in an exhibition supplementing the Congress. In founder president, Prof Dolezal words, "This first Congress was a promising beginning and a magnificent base for international cooperation." Unfortunately, this achievement was interrupted by the First World War and all international activities thereafter were suspended for many years.

The 2nd International Congress of Photogrammetry was held in 1926 at Berlin with aerial photography and photogrammetry in the foreground of interest. As a consequence of this Congress, international competition between Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland and other countries resulted in the inventing of better and



improved ingenious photogrammetric cameras, plotting apparatus and other photogrammetric equipment. "The Congress again paved the way for international scientific cooperation which contributed to the re-establishment of connection between nations torn apart by the war," opines Prof Dolezal. This Congress also saw a valuable exhibition being arranged. Once again the impulse to coordinate was felt. Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland and the Baltic countries agreed to form a 'Northern Section', until the creation of national societies in these countries. It was also decided that the Congress be held every four years. The Berlin Congress elected the first ISP Council composed of a president, honorary president, secretary general, and Congress director. Dolezal, who served as president until 1926, was elected honorary president and continued to play a significant role in the scientific activities of the Society until 1938. The Congress also selected 11 "Technical Committees" (three of which had two parts) covering 14 specific areas of the science and assigned each to a member nation with its named individual to preside.

After this Congress, many new national photogrammetric societies were organised in swift succession. The 3rd International Congress held at Zurich in 1930 was attended by 13 national societies. The 1930 Statutes renamed the technical committees as 'Scientific Commissions' but by 1948, the title had evolved to become 'Technical Commissions'. During this, the national delegate meetings were held at which a new set of ISP Statutes to codify societal organisation, operations and administration were decided upon.

The Congress then moved to Paris in 1934 and to Rome in 1938. This Congress was held at a time of great international tension. The Munich agreement was made on the first day of the Congress. The delegates approved the initiative of Prof Schermerhorn to found an International Review of Photogrammetry publication at no expense to the Society. This became 'Photogrammetria' which was first published in 1948. In 1989, it was re-titled 'The ISPRS

Journal of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing' to reflect the full scope of ISPRS. The Second World War and the subsequent political turmoil led to a lull in ISP's activities. No meeting could be held until ten years later. "At Scheveningen in 1948, good results were obtained, although all the consequences of the past years were not overcome," writes Prof Dolezal. The Congress was held in more tranquil circumstances in Washington in 1952. Each Congress served as a forum for its member organisations to administrate their common interests; to present, discuss and coordinate their scientific activities; to exhibit their latest individual and joint scientific & technologic successes (S&T) in a public arena.

International NGO

The dual membership issue for UK representation in 1952 was the first significant issue for which the 1930 Statutes were clearly insufficient. Further issues surfaced at the 1956 Stockholm Congress. It was felt that the structure and volume of ISP has changed a lot since its Statutes were written. The 1956 General Assembly (GA) tasked revision to a Statutes Committee consisting of Brown (Chair, UK), Härry (Switzerland), Janicot (France), Möller/Fagerholm (Sweden), Reading (USA) and Schermerhorn (Netherlands). On 9 July 1968 at the Lausanne Congress, the GA approved their more comprehensive set of 29 Statutes and 34 Bye-Laws. These new regulations contained the essence and much of the prose contained in the pre-2008 ST&BL. Notable administrative and operational changes to the ISP structure in this Congress include - stating of ISP as an international NGO devoted to the development of international cooperation for the advancement of photogrammetry and its application.

New Name

The next significant changes were made at the 1980 Hamburg Congress. The General Assembly approved amendments to change the name of the Society to International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS) and included remote sensing in the scope and description of all Technical Commissions. This change has come after 70 years of the Society's functioning under its original name. It was also recommended that all Members consider extending their name and activities to include remote sensing. As there were a number of organisations promoting remote sensing, it took ISPRS some time to establish its reputation in remote sensing. Soon after the Hamburg Congress, the Society adopted its first logo - a globe-shape overprinted with ISPRS. It was designed by Commission II President, Dr Jarko Jaksic of NRC, Canada.

Outreach and Positioning

At the 1984 Rio de Janeiro Congress, 2nd vice-president Antipov presented the results of a Statutes committee originated by 1972 President Gamble (1977) and completed by Council under the leadership of President Doyle. The reordered ST&BL were approved by the GA. This brought a high level of order and clarity for managing the affairs of the Society. After 1984, most GA modifications to the ST&BL were relatively minor. But some had a significant impact on how ISPRS conducted its activities and developed its widening interaction with other international organisations.

As computer storage techniques advanced, the ISPRS image acquisition activities began to blend with cartographic activities. This was first recognised by denoting Commission IV in 1980 as "Cartographic & Data Bank Applications" and then in 1992 as "Cartographic & Data Base". The topic was initially identified as Geographic Information Systems (GIS), but by 1996 it was evident that

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ISPRS Congresses - 1913 to 2008

OdM = Ordinary Members

AsM = Associate Members

RgM = Regional Members

StM = Sustaining Members

TERM	Active at end of Term				CONGRESS		LOCATION
	OdM	AsM	RgM	StM	NUMBER & DATE		
1910-1913	5	-	-	-	I 24-26 Sep 1913		Vienna, Austria
1913-1926	14	-	-	-	II 22-26 Nov 1926		Berlin, Germany
1926-1930	15	-	-	-	III 5-?? Sep 1930		Zurich, Switzerland
1930-1934	19	-	-	-	IV 26-?? Nov 1934		Paris, France
1934-1938	23	-	-	-	V 29 Sep-8 Oct 1938		Rome, Italy
1938-1948	8+	-	-	-	VI 2-10 Sep 1948		The Hague, The Netherlands
1948-1952	17	-	-	-	VII 3-15 Sep 1952		Washington, DC, U.S.A.
1952-1956	25	-	-	-	VIII 16-26 Jul 1956		Stockholm, Sweden
1956-1960	38	-	-	-	IX 6-16 Sep 1960		London, U.K.
1960-1964	43	-	-	-	X 7-19 Sep 1964		Lisbon, Portugal
1964-1968	52	-	-	-	XI 8-20 Jul 1968		Lausanne, Switzerland
1968-1972	58	-	-	-	XII 24 Jul-4 Aug 1972		Ottawa, Canada
1972-1976	61	-	-	-	XIII 11-23 Jul 1976		Helsinki, Finland
1976-1980	66	-	-	14	XIV 13-25 Jul 1980		Hamburg, F.R. Germany
1980-1984	73	-	-	33	XV 17-29 Jun 1984		Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
1984-1988	81	-	5	30	XVI 1-10 Jul 1988		Kyoto, Japan
1988-1992	94	-	5	20	XVII 2-14 Aug 1992		Washington, DC, U.S.A.
1992-1996	99	6	7	35	XVIII 9-19 Jul 1996		Vienna, Austria
1996-2000	103	12	9	49	XIX 14-26 Jul 2000		Amsterdam, The Netherlands
2000-2004	89	9	12	62	XX 12-23 Jul 2004		Istanbul, Turkey
2004-2008	-	-	-	-	XXI 3-11 Jul 2008		Beijing, China

CREDITS: John Trinder & Lawrence W. Fritz, Historical development of ISPRS, in: Zhilin Li, Jun Chen and Emmanuel Baltsavias (eds), *Advances in Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences: 2008 ISPRS Congress Book*, pp. 3-20. © 2008 Taylor & Francis Group. Used with permission

in reality ISPRS addresses data acquisition, data processing, data storage, data integration and data presentation to produce information at close- as well as far-range which in sum reality is 'the topic of the spatial information sciences'. At the 2000 Amsterdam Congress, President Fritz presented "ISPRS - A Strategic Plan for the 21st Century". He stated to the GA, "In early 1997, the leadership of ISPRS realised the need to define the future of the Society and enhance its ability to stay abreast of the changing global community that it serves.

The sciences and technologies we work and depend upon are advancing ever faster. These are not times for a strong vibrant society such as ISPRS to sit back and assume our activities, structure, outreach and most importantly, value, will be sufficient to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future."

In the Strategic Plan, the 1996-2000 Council redefined the ISPRS Mission and the 11 aims of ISPRS to that listed in the current Statutes. To enact the plan, Council decided to encourage and facilitate research and development, advance knowledge by scientific network creation, promote international cooperation, pursue interdisciplinary integration, facilitate education and training, enhance and promote applications and develop recognition of photogrammetry, remote sensing and spatial information sciences. The GA approved the Strategic Plan by acclamation.

This resulted in approval of numerous modifications to the ST&BL articles. Other Societal activities were initiated as a result of

the plan which include the ISPRS Foundation, formalisation of international outreach with membership in UN agencies such as COPUOS, and other NGOs and IGOs such as ICSU and CEOS and adding an ISPRS tagline "Information from Imagery. The Strategic Plan redefined the ISPRS vision as 'the' international focal point for excellence in photogrammetric, remote sensing and spatial information sciences. Its mission and activities have altruistic roots and it flourishes on the voluntary efforts of its Members. It works on open democratic principles and it subscribes to an internationally accepted non-discriminatory doctrine."

In 2004, the areas of activity of the Technical Commissions were completely revised and an eighth Commission was added. Two Commissions were assigned to each of the three science areas of photogrammetry (Commissions III and V), remote sensing (Commissions VII and VIII), and spatial information (Commissions II and IV), with one emphasising theory and the other application. Included were two further overarching Commissions (Commissions I and VI) to cover 'image acquisition' and 'education and outreach' that support all Commissions. This action was a significant departure from the structure that had been in place for 55 years, but was considered necessary to ensure the future communities of individuals in ISPRS will be adequately identified with ISPRS by the titles and the terms of reference of the Commissions.

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