

# Report from extraordinary General Assembly of the International Council for Science (ICSU) and a General Assembly of the International Social Science Council (ISSC)

Oslo, 24 October 2016

After several years of discussion and preparations, ICSU and ISSC – as prevailing part members in the management of each organization - prepared a proposal to reach an agreement with both societies and begin the process of merging these two scientific Councils. Both Councils' members were invited to participate in General Assemblies – extraordinary for ICSU, as the ordinary takes place in Taiwan in September 2017, and ordinary for ISSC.

The first part of the meeting was dedicated to the presentation of the future process on how to merge these two Councils. The presentations were followed by intensive discussion on many issues: the short time period for voting on the approval for the merger, the financial issues of present Councils and those arising after the merger, etc.

GeoUnions, with which ISPRS is a member, highlighted the importance of Unions in ICSU and their potential weakening of influence in the merged Council.

Voting was held separately for each Council. The members of the two leading international science councils voted overwhelmingly to merge. It is the launch of a process to form a single global entity that represents all social and natural sciences.



Delegates at the joint ICSU-ISSC General Assembly. Photo: Lizzie Sayer/ISSC

[http://www.icsu.org/news-centre/news/top-news/world2019s-top-bodies-representing-the-social-and-natural-sciences-vote-to-pursue-a-merger-forming-a-single-organization-representing-all-social-and-natural-sciences-by-2018/image/image\\_view\\_fullscreen](http://www.icsu.org/news-centre/news/top-news/world2019s-top-bodies-representing-the-social-and-natural-sciences-vote-to-pursue-a-merger-forming-a-single-organization-representing-all-social-and-natural-sciences-by-2018/image/image_view_fullscreen)

From the ICSU web page:

*“– At an extraordinary General Assembly of the International Council for Science (ICSU) and a General Assembly of the International Social Science Council (ISSC),*

*the two organizations' members voted overwhelmingly that the two organizations should merge. This in-principle decision followed a recommendation by the two organizations' executives, setting the two councils on a trajectory to become one by October 2018.*

*For the plans to go ahead, the majority of both councils' voting members needed to vote in favour. 76% of the ICSU members and 87% of the ISSC members voted in favour of a merger of the two organizations, thereby setting the merger process in motion."*

Both presidents of Councils, Alberto Martinelli, President of ISSC, and Gordon McBean, President of ICSU, appreciated the result to continue with the preparation of the merger.

Gordon Mc Bean said that:

*"The Task Force proposal will be put to a vote during a joint meeting of ICSU and ISSC Members in October 2017 at the 32nd ICSU General Assembly in Taipei. If the two organizations' members endorse these plans in 2017, the transition will be implemented and overseen by the ISSC and ICSU executives, with a founding General Assembly of the new organization tentatively planned for October 2018."*

As part of today's meeting, the ICSU Members also voted to extend the mandates of their ICSU Executive Board which would usually have expired in October 2017, until October 2018, (Orhan Altan represents Earth and Space Sciences Cluster - GeoUnions). In June, ISSC Members had already agreed to extend the term of office of the organization's current Executive Committee until completion of the merger process.

The GA was followed by the ISSC public conference "On the Move – Global migration, challenges and responses", on 26 October.

Presenters talked about hot topics: migration in many parts of the world, refugees, global displacement crisis, etc. Many of them used spatial data application as one of the important parts of their research.

I believe, thanks to my long year experience with ICSU and GeoUnions, that the merger process is very important and it is the role of all members, including ISPRS and GeoUnions, to aid the process to avoid potential negative impacts on some ICSU members and to allow for mutual profit from the merger.

If the ICSU Grant Proposal, prepared by Petros Patias and submitted by ISPRS, is accepted, GeoUnions will not lose their important position, neither in ICSU, nor in the new Council.

Lena Halounová

Prague, 31 October 2016.