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Plan of Performance Document – IAEG President Candidate

To:

Athens, 15 June 2022

- IAEG President
Prof. Dr. Rafiq AZZAM
- IAEG Secretary General
Prof. Faquan WU
- Members of the Executive
- Members of the IAEG

Dear President, dear Secretary General, dear colleagues,

It is my great honor to be a candidate for the position of the President of the International Association for Engineering Geology and the Environment (IAEG). I will serve IAEG with the utmost commitment and dedication over the next four years. With this letter of performance, I would like to present you my plans and strategies, as a president for the period 2023-2026.

I had the honor to serve the Association from the position of VP for the European region. During this period, I planned, with my colleague VP Eugene Voznesensky, the re-activation of the European Regional Conference (ERC) of IAEG. A regional conference in Europe that was essential for our International Association, since almost half of IAEG National Groups and members come from the European continent and our IAEG activities were missing for many years. Towards this goal, I was the chairman in organizing the 3rd European Regional Conference of IAEG, the Council and the annual Executive Office meeting in 2021 in Athens.

From 2019 to 2022, despite the Covid-19 restrictions, I have visited many National Groups (NGs) and made several contacts and presentations in promoting IAEG and the Regional Conference of IAEG. In particular I visited in person the National Groups of Albania, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany,

the Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, Turkey, while more others have been planned. In all these meetings with the National Groups there have been several discussions about the current situation in our profession and in education of the Engineering Geology in every country.

Within the Executive Committee works, we have been actively working to revise the Bylaws and Statutes of IAEG. A new version of Bylaws has been compiled while many suggestions have been made towards revising the Statutes also.

As far as the Engineering Geology community of my country, I had been the President of the IAEG National Group of Greece, while I was an acting Secretary for 6 years. As a president or secretary of the Greek national group of IAEG I have promoted the relations of the Greek Group with IAEG, with the Group to participate in activities and publications of IAEG, been present in several council meetings. Apart from our Association, though, I have been an active member in the International Association of Rock Mechanics (ISRM), the Greek Society of Rock Mechanics and Soil Mechanics and (member of ISSMGE and ISRM) and the International Tunnelling Association (ITA), attending several conferences and publishing relative papers.

IAEG has always been very active in promoting engineering geology and its international importance to the public in order to improve human safety and quality of life through geohazards and risk mitigation, infrastructure development and environmental protection. Action areas that have been identified by the IAEG are focused on promoting Education & Training, Professional Standards & Leadership in Engineering Geology and communicate Research, Innovation & Practice.

In order to further support the IAEG towards its wide activity fields, I plan to tackle together with the new Executive Office the following actions:

1) Revisiting Engineering Geology core values

- a. A trend of deviation of Engineering Geology can be seen internationally. Engineering Geology “core values”. What happens so often to the Geology in Engineering Geology? Cases are observed with departure from the common ground in Engineering Geology, Soil Mechanics and Rock Mechanics, sometime with Engineering Geology not even standing up to its intellectual merits, methods and procedures. Where is the integration of Geology in Engineering as seen in the research papers or applied papers in journals? The role of our journal (which is standing well overall). And IAEG in our Statutes and Bylaws? There is the definition of Engineering Geology.
- b. Aim to ensure that there is a good understanding and knowledge of geological processes. To provide guidance and promotion for developing geological models and mechanisms.

- c. We have new fields in Engineering Geology. We need to promote them, enable them. Develop them under our perspectives.
- d. Moreover, we need to address the academics that teach Engineering Geology that are in many cases geotechnical engineers and not engineering geologists. In these cases, there is a deviation from teaching the geology in engineering geology. This is our responsibility to underline and protect.

2) IAEG strategy, promotion and activities

a. Promoting Education & Training

- i. Support the education and training of Young Engineering Geologists with the organization of specialized field trips and summer schools – under the umbrella of IAEG and the synergy of universities, research institutes and Industry.
- ii. Support and endorse the development of methods, codes and guidelines in Engineering Geology and provide assistance and guidance towards updating and possibly improving the geotechnical Eurocodes.
- iii. Assist the advancement of scientific understanding and the practice of Engineering Geology.
- iv. We need to revisit Engineering Geology not only professionally but also in education and in academic posts. We have to investigate the new needs from the industry in engineering geology and modify accordingly the MSc syllabus around the world. Our Commission in Education must be reactivated and work very closely in this matter and provide assistance to the academia to secure the Engineering Geology role in the geo-engineering teaching community. Especially when these MSc programs are taught in Engineering Departments. We need to provide our solid views on the matter within the relative JTC with our sister societies in the Federation of International Geo-Engineering Societies (FedIGS).

b. Promote IAEG activities

- i. Collect, evaluate, and spread the results of engineering geological activities.
- ii. Create opportunities for Engineering Geologists to partake in and familiarize with the knowledge and the learnings that become available worldwide, by region and by country, through organizing and running of:
 - congresses, conferences, symposia and other meetings,
 - summer schools and field trips
 - invited speaker presentations by people from the industry

- iii. Support the career development of engineering geologist working both in academia and in private practice.
- iv. Receive feedback from IAEG members by conducting frequent surveys with respect to the IAEG workshops and activities, membership and what more IAEG can offer but also getting new suggestions regarding the goals of IAEG future activities and engineering geology practices.
- v. Achieve an increase in recruiting new members – YEG has a key role to play towards this undertaking.

3) Why Become a member in IAEG?

This is a principal issue that must occupy the upcoming Executive Office.

- a. Create an international network of communication between professionals and academics. This can be achieved by encouraging experienced people in our community to act as tutors. Present experiences from projects around the world from people that have been incorporating in our society.
- b. Support career development. We must be pioneer into presenting to our members all new practices, trends, technologies and methods in engineering geology. Organise career days, special lectures around the regions and bring in contact our members with the people from the industry.
- c. We must find opportunities especially for our IAEG members to publish in our BOEG. We need to encourage such publications. Especially from the practitioners.

4) Support and promote the work of the Young Engineering Geology group (YEG)

- a. Raise a core of YEG members in IAEG through national group membership. Every NG should seek to nominate representatives for the YEG group and boost their presence in the society.
- b. Via summer schools and field trips, organized by the IAEG. National groups will be encouraged to organize such summer schools. Special funding can be discussed to support these summer schools (through the budget of the YEG, which can be increased).
- c. Via the YEG activities. Webinars, specialized workshops during the IAEG events, career days must be organized.
- d. Via prizes. New prizes must be introduced to mobilize and motivate young engineering geologists within the IAEG community. The RWP must be further endorsed from the IAEG community and attract more PhD nominees around the world. Here though we need to secure the engineering geological character of the work of the nominees. Certain suggestions have been made in the revised bylaws.

5) IAEG Commissions

- a. Revisit all active commissions from scratch. Specify the rules, the works and deliverables. Monitor the progress.
- b. Strengthen the bonds with the sister societies and ensure our common goals in the geo-engineering community by co-organizing special workshops and paying particular attention to the Joint Technical Committees (JTCs) encouraging greater interaction among the geo-engineering parties. We need to allocate very active colleagues within our society in these JTCs.; regenerate also the liaisons with the very active groups of the International Society of Hydrogeologists in the common fields
- c. Offer advocacy to the commissions. There is a risk of losing the scope and motivation of the IAEG commissions. The work of IAEG commissions must be published in BOEG. This must be a regular process as it would constitute a motivation for the IAEG commissions. Their work must be promoted (after peer review) and in this manner, BOEG should dedicate a special section for this. Commission's meetings and their products must be also privileged in conference proceedings, in our newsletter, in our Connector, in specialised webinars.
- d. It would be of great importance to facilitate the organization and operation of specialized commissions (and other organizational units as required) for the study of subjects that have wide (global) implication. This would also benefit membership and would support the mission and goals of IAEG.

6) Bulletin of Engineering Geology and the Environment (BOEG)

- a. We are generally very proud for our journal and its meters. We must though address the risks regarding the official journal of the IAEG. The key lies in securing the engineering geological and international character: Risk to deviate our journal elsewhere - Deviate from the subject of "Engineering Geology". Papers where Geology - Engineering Geology is absent (e.g. in defining a geological model and its parameters, inputs, behaviour, structural conditions) but stay only in the mechanics of the rock-soil, to be considered with care for publication. The submissions are greatly focused on geotechnical engineering and mainly on numerical analysis. Geology is totally missing there.
- b. Yes, we certainly look for papers with innovations and new findings, but we have to consider very seriously the publications of good papers with remarkable case histories, nice descriptions and/or applications of existing methods that offer experience and could make reference. Often the reviewers, these days, adhering to the constraints of academia, suggest "reject" if they do not find innovation.

The IAEG must not be trapped. Case histories for phenomena, for behaviour, for the design/construction of important works should be seriously considered for publication (many case-study papers have numerous citations in BOEG). This is also how we highlight the importance of our discipline. This is how we remind and galvanize our role to engineering works. Do we opt for a journal to represent only the academia or also the practitioners? Which people are going to “buy” the journal? Papers that present common cases with other parts of the world are very valuable and practitioners seek for them.

- c. We must also focus on the risk to deviate from the international character of the Journal. BOEG is the official scientific journal of IAEG and it should also be the professional journal of IAEG. In this respect, manuscripts received from parts of the world with "difficulties" in communicating their work, must to be considered with some lenience in the review process. Of course, attention should be paid in avoiding poor quality.
- d. How are going to “open a door” to more practitioners to buy our journal? Our members in many parts of the world are professionals and practitioners and less academic (that, in any case, may access the journal free of charge from their Universities-Institutes).

The letter in hand contains my goals and aspirations for the future of the Association and the stature of Engineering Geology. All Past Presidents have contributed towards this same goal. I am convinced that I too, with the help of the Executive Office, the engineering geology community and the National Groups, will be able to meet the expectations of IAEG, of our members and promote their activities even further.

Yours Sincerely,



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