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Dear ISPRS Member,

With this letter Council would like to thank you very much for having contributed to the request to comment the suggestions made last October concerning the restructuring of the ISPRS governing board. We have received significant feedback, most of it very supportive, but some pointing out weaknesses of the suggestions we had made. At its recent Council meeting in Toronto, Canada, Council has dealt with the topic and has refined its suggestions based on these comments. This letter informs you about the current status.

Let me first recall the underlying rationale of this restructuring effort:

- As witnessed by various letters of interest, the organisation of the ISPRS Congress and the Geospatial Week is becoming increasingly attractive to Ordinary Members, among which some have excellent local capabilities and facilities, but lack a large structured ISPRS community. The most recent example is the bid to organise the Geospatial Week in Dubai. As you know, the respective contract for 2021 was signed a few weeks ago. Council feels that this development is very positive, as it offers a large potential for the society to grow. A pre-requisite, however, is that we can provide adequate help with the scientific-technical programme of the respective meeting.
- The current practice of serving on Council for up to 4 terms, i.e. 16 years, does not appeal to everyone. For a number of people, it is impossible or unattractive to serve such a long time. Therefore, it is advantageous for ISPRS to be able to offer multiple ways to serve on Council, including leading the society as president. An alternative, shorter cycle will result in more individuals being interested in Council positions. At the same time, more fresh ideas will lead to faster adaptation of the society to new developments in the quickly changing environment of today.

Council had suggested various measures to implement this rationale. Among them, a few drew some criticism. These were in particular the introduction of a *President Elect*, who would be appointed *President* after a first term of four years in office without election, and who would work together with the Congress Director/Geospatial Week Director to set up the scientific-technical programme of the respective meeting if needed. Another point concerned the suggestion to delete

the position of the *1st Vice President*; some comments mentioned that the experience of the President should be available for the Council of the following four-year period. Finally, some comments said limiting the number of consecutive terms on Council for any individual to three was unnecessary.

Council also received a few comments which are apparently based on misunderstandings. Perhaps the most important one is the suggestion to explicitly formulate a set of expected skills for each Council position. Comments indicated that this explicit formulation was not only unnecessary, but harmful, as it would make the work on Council more difficult. Also, there is a perception that it might lead to a separation of Council positions into scientific and administrative ones, going along with the assumption that only the scientific positions should receive funding in the future. It was feared by some that in such a case Council would not work as a team anymore, but that Council members would act upon individual aims and perspectives.

Council has considered these and all other comments and has revised its restructuring proposal. The main points are:

- ISPRS always was and should remain to be a scientific society. The suggestion to describe more clearly the necessary skill set of individuals to serve on Council was not intended to suggest some positions can or should be filled without scientific expertise. For many years Council has emphasized that ISPRS is built on three columns (science, application and education), and that science is the fundamental one. Thus, science is at the very heart of ISPRS, and therefore all Council members require an adequate scientific background.
- What does become more clear when explicitly describing the role and necessary skills of individual Council positions, is the expectation ISPRS has for somebody to fill this position. We believe that communicating these expectations also adds to running the society as a whole in a more transparent way. We consider it only fair to potential candidates to clearly communicate the expectations for Council positions upfront. In this way, teamwork is further encouraged, as everybody knows better the requirements of the position and his/her role in the team. Note, that such description of skill sets was not (and is not) suggested to be included in the ISPRS Statutes & Bylaws. Neither, did we discuss any changes in funding travel expenses for Council members, and we do not have any intention to do so.
- Council understands the concerns raised with respect to the President Elect and does not suggest an appointment without election after the first term anymore. As a consequence, the position is renamed *Vice President*.
- Council also re-discussed how to best make use of the experience of the past president for the following term. It is now suggested to keep him/her on Council without election and call the position *Past President*. In renaming these two positions, a lack of clarity with respect to the meaning of current names (*1st Vice president*, *2nd Vice president*), which we have met a number of times, is avoided.
- We believe that a maximum of three consecutive terms on Council should be introduced as a rule for the reasons mentioned above. It is now suggested, however, that in exceptional cases an additional term should be possible.
- In order to prepare well for large meetings to be organised by Ordinary Members without a lot of scientific-technical expertise in the areas of interest of ISPRS, an International Programme Committee, led by the Chair of ISAC - the International Science Advisory Committee, will be established to help with the scientific-technical programme of the

meeting. Note, that such a Committee was already established for the GSW 2015 in Montpellier and the 2016 Prague Congress, both times with very good success; it has also been set up for the 2020 Nice Congress and will come into being for the 2019 GSW in Enschede and the 2021 GSW in Dubai. The Director of the meeting is the Vice Chair, the Technical Commission Presidents and other qualified individuals are members of the Committee.

We believe that based on your comments, the suggestions for restructuring Council could be largely improved, and we want to express our gratitude to all of you for your efforts. Attached, please find the revised document. Please, once again, feel free to share this document with your colleagues. We will also send it to other ISPRS stakeholders and will continue the blog on our web site so that everybody has the opportunity to comment, see:

— <http://www2.isprs.org/news/blog/detail/council-restructuring.html>.

May I ask you to please let us have your comments until June 10, 2019 at the latest, so that we can continue the discussions and prepare the necessary changes in good time to bring the issue to the General Assembly in Nice.

Thank you very much in advance and all the best,



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Christian Heipke
ISPRS President 2016-2020

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