

International Mineralogical Association

Activities' Report - Year 2017

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1. Introduction

Founded in 1958, the IMA is the world most important organization aimed at promoting mineral sciences, in particular modern studies of the chemical-physical properties of minerals and their synthetic analogues, their use to develop industrial production and technological applications, to preserve cultural heritage, to improve human health and make it safer, to make mineral classification and conservation in the museums more rational and effective. Making the public aware of these scientific results and of their impact on human health and wellness as well as on the preservation of the environment is also a major issue for the IMA. IMA organizes scientific and managing meetings, promotes international cooperation among the present 39 member societies (after the recent affiliation of Georgia) and represents them in the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS).

2. Main activities carried on by the IMA during 2017 relevant for Italy and for CNR

No formal meeting was planned in 2017 (Council and Business meeting are planned every two years by statute). Information on Council decisions was distributed by e-mail to the national delegates. The main issue was the organization of the XXII IMA Meeting and General Assembly, which will be held in Melbourne (13-17 August 2018). The updated program can be found at www.ima2018.com. Based on the peculiarities of Australian interests, the meeting will mainly focus on raw materials, mining processes and their environmental implications. Issues closer to the Italian mineralogical community and to CNR will also be discussed, such as planetary mineralogy, physics and chemistry of minerals, geo-bio interactions, the development of mineral analogues with technological properties, mineral fibres and their impact on human health. Nine plenary lectures will be given by worldwide recognized experts, and 43 scientific sessions are planned so far. Among their convenors, Gilberto Artioli (Univ. Padova; Geosciences and Cultural Heritage), Andrea Giuliano (Macquarie University; Mantle xenoliths), Alessandro Gualtieri (Univ. Modena) e Elena Belluso (Univ. Torino, associated to CNR-IGG); Mineral hazards, Federico Pezzotta (Museo Storia Naturale di Milano; Minerals and Museums), Massimo Nespolo (Univ. Nancy; Modular aspects of mineral structures), Marco Pasero (Univ. Pisa; Mineral diversity in the Earth and in the Solar system), Paola Comodi (Univ. Perugia; Unseen but integral to the Earth's interior: how minerals determine properties and processes).

The IMA database on mineral properties, a crucial service to the mineralogical community worldwide, has been implemented further and is available at <http://ruff.info/>.

The XXIII IMA meeting will be held in Lyon in 2022 and will focus on "Mineralogy and space"; special attempts will be made to make both the society and the media more aware of the recent results and of the importance of mineral sciences. This is actually a very important goal also in Italy, where this perception is presently inadequate.

The 2017 IMA Medal of Excellence in Mineralogical Sciences was awarded to Emil Mackovicky (Bratislava), not only an excellent and innovative crystallographer expert both in complex minerals and in the understanding and modelling symmetry in cultural heritage (e.g., in islamic art) but also a good friend and co-worker of many Italian mineralogists.

The project for a new international journal on mineralogical sciences, launched by the present IMA President (Peter Burns, Univ. Notre Dame, USA) is still under discussion. The Italian representatives had several collaborative exchanges with him and other councillors, among whom Marco Pasero.

During 2017, David Bish (Univ. Indiana, USA) replaced Robert Downs as IMA Treasurer.

3. Activities carried on by (Italian Delegate name) within the Union during 2017 and impact on the Italian scientific community

Both the CNR representatives c/o the IMA, (Roberta Oberti and Simona Quartieri (Univ. Messina), substitute) have been in contact with IMA Councillors and have promptly informed the Italian mineralogical

community using the mailing list of the Società Italiana di Mineralogia e Petrologia. Roberta Oberti is also serving as auditor for the IMA budgets 2016 and 2017 (to be approved in Melbourne).

A proactive participation to IMA activities is crucial to allow the Italian community know about, steer and vote new IMA plans and initiatives. The IMA has recently decided to improve its participation to IUGS in order to promote mineralogical sciences and open a new horizon for mineralogy-oriented projects worldwide. This decision is expected to promote (and hopefully allow to fund) mostly projects related to environmental issues,

4. Evaluation of the participation in terms of benefits and membership cost

The IMA is the most important international organization for mineral sciences. It is crucial that the Italian community (represented by the CNR) may remain in the IMA and play a proper role at the international level, is solicited to be proactive and to take part to IMA decisions. Moreover, the annual fees for IMA membership are really low (360 \$ in 2017) with respect to the benefits that can be obtained.

5. Evaluation of Italians' attendance and how to improve interest and involvement

The Italian contribution to the design of the scientific initiatives for the XXII Meeting and General Assembly to be held in Melbourne was important; however, the now chronic lack of proper funding will limit the number of Italian participants. The SIMP Council has been continuously and timely informed on IMA news by Roberta Oberti, and often offered useful comments and suggestions. This team work will certainly provide the Italian mineralogical community new international contacts and the chance to be proactive in new projects and initiatives launched by the IMA, and perhaps IUGS.

6. Italian experts with important roles within the Union or within related Commissions and Programs (if known)

IMA officers do not represent their countries but their expertise and roles; however, they are chosen taking into account also geographical distribution. Italian participation to IMA activities has been always characterized by a strong involvement and an high profile. Stefano Merlino (Univ. Pisa) has served as IMA President in the term 1994-1998 and as vice-President in the term 1990-1994; Marcello Mellini (Univ. Siena) served as councillor in the two subsequent terms 2002-2010. At present, Marco Pasero (Univ. Pisa) is serving as Councillor, also on behalf of the IMA Commission on new minerals, nomenclature and classification, the most active in the IMA, of which he is presently vice-president. A number of further Italian researchers is serving in the IMA Commissions: Federico Pezzotta (Museo di Storia Naturale, Milano) is chairing the Commission on museums, in which Giovanni Pratesi (Univ. Firenze) is serving as member; Christian Biagioni (Univ. Pisa) is the Italian member of the Commission on new minerals, nomenclature and classification, Paola Comodi is serving as secretary of the Commission on physics of minerals, in which Francesco Di Benedetto (Univ. Firenze) and Mauro Prencipe (Univ. Torino) are serving as members.

7. Conclusions

In 2017, the involvement of Italian researchers in IMA activities has been important and proactive, and was greatly appreciated. The Italian mineralogical community has been timely informed on each activity, and its efforts have been properly highlighted on the IMA stage.

Signature



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