

ICO

Activities' Report - Year 2017

Paolo De Natale

1. Introduction

The ICO promotes Optics since 1948, mainly through international research collaboration and co-sponsorship of international events (10-12 per year) and fosters north-south collaboration through a traveling lecturer program. Through a Committee for the Regional Development of Optics and Photonics, ICO looks for ways to assist optical scientists and engineers in developing countries through the exchange of information with joint organization of schools, often in collaboration with the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Trieste, Italy.

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

The main activity during 2017 was the organization of Schools at ICTP in Trieste.

3. Activities carried on by the Italian Delegate, Paolo De Natale. within the Union during 2017 and impact on the Italian scientific community

In Summer 2017, during the ICO General Assembly in Japan, I have supported the election of an Italian colleague, Prof. Roberta Ramponi, at present director of CNR-IFN, to the role of President of ICO. After writing a support letter and having discussed with several colleagues with key roles in the ICO organization, Prof. Roberta Ramponi was indeed elected President of ICO. This is of course a prestigious role for Italy and the Italian community of Optics and Photonics.

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

ICO is the only truly international Organization in the field of Optics and Photonics and the election of an Italian to the role of President witnesses the importance and the reputation of the Italian community at the international level. Of course, it is difficult to quantify relevance and reputation in a worldwide community as compared to the cost: if it is affordable for Italy and CNR it is well worth to be paid.

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

In general, the Italian attendance to ICO events is scarce, also due to the travelling costs. Moreover, the top scientific conferences for Optics and Photonics (like CLEO or Photonics West) are managed by other organizations (like SPIE or OSA) that are international, though mainly rooted in USA. Therefore, Italian scientists generally prefer to invest money to take part to these scientific events, rather than ICO ones.

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

As explained above, Prof. Roberta Ramponi, at present director of CNR-IFN, is ICO President since the summer 2017.

7. Conclusions

I think that, considering the truly international nature of ICO, without preferential roots in any specific Country, the Italian role within ICO should be more significantly used to promote Programs in Optics and Photonics at the Italian and especially at the European Union level. Indeed, the wide representativeness of ICO could help, by organized events and meetings, fostering Optics and Photonics, convincing decision makers how useful investments in these areas can be. An important example can be, definitely, to provide support and lobbying towards the EU that is, in these months, shaping the next seven-years-long Framework Program for research and innovation and deciding budget allocation. The Italian community of Optics and

Photonics should leverage present roles within ICO to make a convincing case that investing in Optics&Photonics research is very beneficial for the EU society.

Signature

Place and date

Firenze, May 5th 2018