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The SCM wishes however to sincerely thank all the contributors to this special issue of

SCM/Notícies for their prompt and effective response to the call for contributions. We apologise for the fact that, because of calendar constraints, the time given to authors for writing their contributions has been much less than the usual one. If, after all, the present issue is edited and printed is, doubtless, thanks to the effort of all of them.

Enric Ventura
Editor of *SCM/Notícies*

Catalonia and the ICM 2006

Presentation of the SCM

The Catalan Mathematical Society aims to promote all aspects of Mathematics in the territories where the Catalan language is official or normally used. It was established in 1931 as a section of the Society for the Promotion of Sciences, which had been created by the Institute for Catalan Studies (IEC). In 1986, the Society for the Promotion of Sciences split into three different societies, namely Chemistry, Mathematics, and Physics. Nowadays, the SCM is one of the 26 member societies of the IEC. With more than 1,000 individual members, most of whom are researchers or teachers at one or other level of the educational system, it is one of the most active, prestigious, dynamic and influential among the scientific and scholarly societies affiliated to the IEC.

The SCM is a member of the European Mathematical Society (EMS) since 1992. After a successful bid, it was entrusted by the EMS with organising the Third European Congress of Mathematics in Barcelona in July 2000. This was a major event, which gathered together more than 1,500 participants. The proceedings of this congress were published by Birkhäuser Verlag in the *Progress in Mathematics* series (volumes 201 and 202).

The SCM organises activities of many kinds, publishes books and journals, gives prizes, and represents the Catalan mathematical community before educational authorities and other institutions, both at home and abroad. Some of the courses and lectures organ-

ised by the SCM are aimed at researchers, while others are geared toward secondary school teachers or a general mathematical audience.

The SCM holds reciprocal agreements with several societies from outside Spain, including the American Mathematical Society, the Société Mathématique de France, and the Česká matematická společnost (Czech Mathematical Society). Several joint events have been organised with some of these institutions. In May 2005, the First Czech-Catalan Congress of Mathematics took place in Prague and gathered together more than 100 participants. The second event of this series will be held in September 2006 in Barcelona. In 2003, the SCM and the RSME jointly organised a two-day meeting on Cryptography in Barcelona. The Spanish societies RSME, SCM, SEIO and SEMA organised a major conference in Valencia in 2005, which served as an advertisement and a collaborative rehearsal for the ICM 2006.

The SCM awards an annual prize for students (the Évariste Galois prize), which is given to the author of the best research or essay on a mathematical topic, usually at a postgraduate level. The Institute for Catalan Studies also awards a biannual prize in Mathematics for the best PhD thesis written in Catalan (the Josep Teixidor prize) and an annual international prize (the Ferran Sunyer i Balaguer prize) for a mathematical monograph of an expository nature in English that presents the latest developments in an active area of research in

Mathematics in which the applicant has made important contributions. The prize, amounting to 12,000 euros, is financed by the Ferran Sunyer i Balaguer Foundation of the IEC. The winning monographs are published in the *Progress in Mathematics* series of Birkhäuser Verlag.

In 1996 the SCM took part for the first time in the annual contest of the international association *Le Kangourou sans Frontières*. This competition, called *Cangur* in Catalan, is aimed at students aged 14 to 18, and has become extremely popular in Catalonia, where the 10th anniversary of the event was happily celebrated in 2005. In 2006, close to 16,000 selected students from 487 centres of Catalonia, Valencia and Andorra have participated in the *Cangur* contest. The SCM organises other activities aimed at secondary school students, namely, an online problem competition awarding a prize to the centre whose team answers all the questions in a minimum time, and a literary contest offering a prize for the best written composition in Catalan with Mathematics as its theme.

A selection phase for the International Mathematical Olympiad takes place every year in December in Barcelona. Since 2003 the SCM is also responsible for the local organisation of the Olimpiada Iberoamericana Universitaria de Matemáticas.

The *Butlletí de la Societat Catalana de Matemàtiques* is a journal devoted to mathematical research and high-level expository articles written in Catalan. A volume consisting of two issues is printed every year. Since 1996 the SCM also publishes the newsletter *SCM/Notícies* and, following the launch in 2005, a new series of monographs entitled *Publicacions de la*

SCM is now freely offered in electronic format. All volumes considered so far in this series are written in Catalan, although other languages are allowed.



Thus, the SCM shares the main goals of the Institute for Catalan Studies, namely, to promote scientific research, in particular research related to all aspects of Catalan culture, while furthering the development of society in general and, when necessary, acting as an advisor to the Catalan government and other institutions. In order to achieve this, and in addition to the main activities described above, the SCM organises yearly debates and lectures addressing different aspects of science and culture. On several occasions, SCM officers have led actions aimed at raising the profile of Mathematics among the general public, especially during the World Mathematical Year 2000. The interest of the SCM in launching wide-ranging actions is illustrated by several events, the most recent of which was a Joint Mathematical Weekend held with the European Mathematical Society in September 2005 in Barcelona.

For more information, see the SCM website <http://scm.iec.cat>.

Carles Casacuberta
SCM President

The Parliament of Catalonia supports the ICM 2006

In March 2006, the Commission of Culture of the Parliament of Catalonia adopted a resolution of support for the ICM 2006. The initiative that led to this resolution was started in July 2005 by Carme-Laura Gil, a former Catalan minister of Education and currently a member of the Commission of Culture of the Parlia-

ment. The chief officers of the Catalan Mathematical Society were called by the Commission, where they explained the aims and importance of the Congress and gave updated information about it. After this session, the following text was agreed by all political parties represented at the Parliament in November 2005.