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 Parliament. 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.

In August 2006, Madrid will host the International Congress of Mathematicians (ICM), a quadrennial event that is the most important of all mathematical events held in the world since 1897. This is the first time that an ICM is organised in Spain. This honor and responsibility was awarded by the International Mathematical Union in 2002 to a committee formed by four mathematical societies, one of which is the Catalan Mathematical Society.

This is an excellent occasion to increase the influence of the Catalan mathematical community among Spanish scientists, while reinforcing its international prestige and its representation capability, thanks to the worldwide impact of the ICM. At the same time, this is an opportunity to make Mathematics more visible within the Catalan society and especially among the student population.

It is convenient and even necessary that the Catalan Government assumes these goals as proper in the framework of its scientific, educational and cultural policy, by programming and starting suitable actions on the occasion of this Congress.

On these grounds, the Parliament adopted the following resolution on March 1, 2006.

The Parliament of Catalonia asks the Government:

a) *To give institutional and financial support to the Catalan universities, research centres, the Catalan Mathematical Society and the FEEMCAT in order to make possible their joint participation at the ICM 2006 as national representatives of Catalonia.*

b) *To give institutional and financial support to the Catalan Mathematical Society, the FEEMCAT and the Catalan universities in order that they ellaborate jointly a programme of actions that, starting from the existing initiatives, leads to a further development of the mathematical capabilities of the students of Catalan educational centres and their interest for Mathematics and all sciences.*

c) *To give institutional support to the Catalan Mathematical Society in order to promote its presence at international entities.*

The recognition awarded to the ICM 2006 by such a high political body is emphasised and acknowledged. It is of course much deserved. On the more practical side, this support has made possible that the main mathematical centres and associations of Catalonia are jointly present at the ICM 2006 by sharing a booth and displaying information on their aims and activities.

The building of the Parliament of Catalonia

History of the Catalan Parliament

(Text retrieved and summarised from the Parliament's website.)

The Parliament of Catalonia has its roots in the distant past. These roots were the Assemblies of Peace and Truce and the Court of Counts. The Catalan Court of Counts was founded in the eleventh century in line with the French royal Curia, as the counts of Barcelona consolidated their position as reigning princes. It was made up of civil magnates and the clergy, high councilors and judges. The Assemblies of Peace and Truce were promoted by the church and taken on by the reigning power, the counts of Barcelona, with the aim of ensuring breaks in the continual private wars between feudal lords, establishing a system of guarantees and compensation for the clergy and civil population and also making agreements of a fiscal nature.

During the reign of James I the Conqueror (1213–1276), the Court of Counts became the General Courts of Catalonia, by gradually increasing the number of members invited and, above all, by consolidating the incorporation of the bourgeois state, represented by leading men from towns and cities. But the decisive step was taken during the reign of his son, Peter II the Great (1276–1285), when, at the Barcelona Courts of 1283, the system of negotiated rule

characteristic of Catalan medieval and modern constitutional law was established.
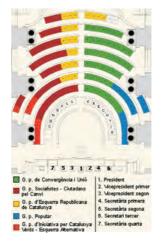

The Parliament of Catalonia

During the reign of Peter III the Ceremonious (1336–1387), the institution of the *Diputació del General* was created (the meeting of the Courts was called the *General de Catalunya*), with delegated powers to collect and administer the funding the Courts granted to the king. Gradually, the *Diputació del General* or *Generalitat* became more autonomous and accumulated executive and governmental powers, and by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was acting as the government for the Principality.

The first monarch of the Bourbon dynasty in Spain, Philip V (1700–1746), respected the rights of the Catalan people by holding the Courts in 1701 and 1702. But, in the war of Succession, Catalonia opted to support the archduke Charles of Austria and recognized him as king. On losing the war and with the consequent fall of Barcelona in 1714, the victor abolished all public Catalan laws and the institutions representing it via the Decree of *Nova Planta* or New Proposition (1716), the most important of these institutions being the Courts.

Since that time, the Catalan people have aspired to recover their lost freedom. The *Mancomunitat de Catalunya* or Commonwealth of Catalonia from 1913 to 1925 was the first institutional step in recovering self-government. Once the Second Spanish Republic was proclaimed, a provisional Catalan government was set up in 1931, taking the name of the *Generalitat de Catalunya* in remembrance of the for-

mer institution. Chosen by the majority of the Catalan people, the Statute of Autonomy that definitively legitimized and structured Catalan self-government was approved by the Courts of the Republic in 1932.

The parliamentary tradition of Catalonia, interrupted in 1714, was therefore reinitiated. The first elections for the Parliament of Catalonia took place on November 20, 1932, and the constitutive sitting was held on December 6 of the same year. The first President of the Parliament was Lluís Companys.

Franco's dictatorship destroyed the hopes of the Catalan people for self-government for a long time (1939–1975). During the process of re-establishing democracy in the Spanish State, Catalonia was able to recover the *Generalitat*, provisionally, via the return of its President (1977), Josep Tarradellas, who had kept the institution alive in exile. Once the Spanish Constitution was approved in 1978 and the new Statute of the Autonomy of Catalonia was approved and endorsed in 1979, the *Generalitat* was re-established definitively. The first elections for the re-established Parliament of Catalonia took place on March 20, 1980, and the constitutive sitting was held on April 10 of the same year.

Room sessions of the Parliament

Five political parties are currently represented at the Parliament of Catalonia (Convergència i Unió, Socialistes - Ciutadans pel Canvi, Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, Partit Popular, and Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds - Esquerra Alternativa), after the elections held in November 2003.