

The Czech-Catalan venture: a fruitful collaboration

The Czech Republic and Catalonia share some characteristic features: relatively small European countries with a healthy sense of national identity and a strong belief in culture and science.



Stamps published in occasion of the Congress

The connection between the mathematical communities in the two countries can be traced back to the early 70's, usually based on personal collaboration. These contacts were strong enough to consider the formalization of an official agreement between the Czech and Catalan mathematical societies, which was signed in the occasion of the the second Joint EMS Mathematical Weekend held in Prague in September 2004.

From the very beginning there was a definite will to go beyond the usual reciprocity agreements and to create a real framework of collaboration which would enrich the mathematical and human connections between the two communities.

One of the highlights of this agreement has been the organisation of CSM-SCM Joint Mathematical Meetings. The first edition was held in Prague in May 2005 with great success. The meeting gathered some 100 mathematicians from both communities in areas with existing collaboration: Computational Statistics and Data Analysis, Discrete Mathematics and Computer Science, Homotopy Theory, Logic, Functional and Real Analysis and Ring and Module Theory. A special series of mail stamps was produced to commemorate the event. Moreover, the Catalan partners were invited as observers to the Czech-Slovak competition for young researchers in order to study the organisation of a similar competition involving young researchers of the two countries.

In this first meeting it was agreed to have a second edition in Barcelona, which will be held in September 2006. The meeting is again organised around special sessions, this time involving Computational Statistics and Data Analysis, Discrete Mathematics and Computer Science, Logic, Mathematical Physics and Ring and Module Theory. The meeting will also welcome a special session devoted to the young researchers competition, gathering the winners of the Czech-Slovak and the Catalan ones.

The Czech-Catalan collaboration is sitting on the firm base of a real mathematical exchange. It shows that such cooperation among communities of manageable size can be extremely fruitful and Europe can draw great benefits from its characteristic diversity.

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