



The 36th European Seismological Commission General Assembly

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In Trieste, during the 35th General Assembly of the European Seismological Commission (ESC), the Department of Geosciences at the University of Malta was chosen to host the 36th General Assembly (Fig. 1). The city of Valletta won the bid among competition from three other European cities. The event took place at the Mediterranean Conference Centre (Fig. 2) from the 2–7 September 2018 and was preceded by a one-week Young Seismologists Training Course (YSTC; Fig. 3).

The ESC is a commission within the International Association for Seismology and Physics of the Earth's Interior, whose General Assembly takes place every two years. It is primarily a meeting ground for academics and researchers working in the field of seismology and related applications, including applied and social aspects of seismology, such as earthquake hazard and risk, earthquake engineering, education and awareness, and risk prevention.



Figure 1: Speakers addressing the Assembly at the opening ceremony. From left to right: Prof. Ina Cčić, ESC president; Dr Sebastiano D'Amico, Chairperson of the Local Organising Committee and ESC Vice-President; Prof. Alfred Vella, Rector of the University of Malta; the Hon. Dr Michael Farrugia, Minister for Home Affairs and National Security; Prof. Pauline Galea, Head of the Department of Geosciences; Prof. Stefano Parolai, ESC Secretary General. H.E. Marie Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta, delivered a video-recorded message.

More than 800 seismologists from Europe and other parts of the world gathered to present their latest research and engage in discussions about the theory, applications and implications of earthquakes and their effects. This year's ESC had a record participation and was deemed a great success for the number of high-level presentations, grouped into 42 separate sessions (494 oral presentations and 438 posters) and a daily poster session in the Sacra Infermeria Hall. This was one of the largest conferences ever hosted by the University of Malta. The scientific sessions covered themes such as seismic hazard assessment, induced and triggered seismicity, seismic tomography, historical seismology and macro seismology, the physics of earthquake sources, tsunami hazard, seismic risk to cultural heritage sites, earthquake risk, communication and mitigation, earthquake engineering, and many others. Internationally renowned experts in various fields delivered keynote lectures every morning, which included a wide range of topics. Keynote lectures were as follows:

- Prof. Pauline Galea (Department of Geosciences, University of Malta, Malta): Doing seismology on a small island – history, problems and opportunities.
- Dr Oona Scotti (Institut de Radioprotection et de Surete Nucleaire, France): Modelling fault systems in seismic hazard assessment: challenges ahead.
- Prof. Keith Koper (University of Utah, USA): Using CTBTO international monitoring system seismic arrays for basic science.
- Jaroslava Plomerova (Czech Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic): Upper mantle discontinuities – anisotropic view on the lithosphere-asthenosphere system. (Inge Lehmann Distinguished Award Lecture).
- Prof. Atilla Ansal (Özyeğin University, Istanbul, Turkey): Uncertainties in site-specific response analysis.

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Figure 2: The halls at the Mediterranean Conference Centre. Top: The Sacra Infermeria hosting the poster sessions and exhibitors stand. Bottom left: La Cassiere Hall during one of the oral sessions. Bottom right: La Valette Hall during the closing session.



Figure 3: Participants of the Peter Bormann Young Seismologist Training Course of 2018 at the Malta University Residence.

- Dr Alessandro Amato (Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia, Italy): Early warning systems for earthquakes and tsunamis - some reflections on their physical, social and legal impact.
- Mitsuyuki Hoshiba (Meteorological Research Institute, JMA, Japan): Ten years' experience of nationwide earthquake early warning in Japan.

5 students were awarded for best poster and oral presentation and the IASPEI Early Career Award was also presented. During the week preceding the Assembly, the Peter Bormann Young Seismologist Training Course was held for about 50 international participants (Fig. 2) at the Malta University Residence in Hal Lija. This course was intended for postgraduate students of seismology and early career scientists. The course theme was Array Seismology; lectures and practical sessions were delivered by an international faculty, which included staff from the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) in Vienna, who sponsored a

number of African students to attend the course and the General Assembly. The course exposed the students to the theory and practice of seismic arrays at a wide range of spatial scales, under the tutorship of a number of experts in the field. This topic had not been addressed previously in the preceding editions of the YSTC. The Assembly social dinner was held on Wednesday 5th September at a tourist Resort Qawra, along the northern coast of Malta (Fig. 4).



Figure 4: The social dinner in Qawra attend by many participants.

During the ESC Council Meeting the titular members voted to hold the next General Assembly in 2020 in Corfu, Greece.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our warmest gratitude to all who contributed to the organization and success of this event: the entire Local Organising Committee (Fig. 5), the international scientific committee, ESC-Executive Committee, and organisers of special sessions and other parallel events, without whose enthusiasm, support, and devotion it would not have been possible to make such an event happen. A special thanks goes also to the invited speakers, conveners, and authors for their excellent work and interest in the conference. Finally, we are glad that the Young Seismologist Training Course provided a unique opportunity for the students to learn and exchange ideas about “Array Seismology”. Our sincere thanks goes to all the lecturers, the European Geosciences Union and CTBTO for making this Training Course a big success. Finally, we would like to also thank the Embassy of United States of America in Malta, the Embassy of Italy in Malta and the Italian Institute of Culture for providing grants to support students to attend the General Assembly.



Figure 5: Left: Local Organizing Committee: (from left to right) Damiano Pesaresi, George Bozionelos, Daniela Farrugia, Emanuele Colica, Sebastiano D'Amico, Pauline Galea, Matthew R. Agius. Right: Local Organizing Committee together with volunteers helping during the event.