FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

This second IAVCEI Newsletter in 2020 issues as our world is still being impacted by the Covid-19. While noticeably reduced in Asia and Europe, the pandemic is still active or expanding in some other regions (USA, South America, the Middle East and some parts of Africa). In your name, let me express the strong support of IAVCEI to our colleagues who have been directly or closely affected by the disease, as well as our warm thoughts to colleagues in volcano observatories who warranted continuous monitoring despite sanitary risks. Luckily, no major volcanic event requiring massive evacuation happened during the first months of this unprecedented global crisis, while so many countries and people were locked down!

Inevitably, the Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted our plans of international meetings, which were either cancelled, postponed or transformed into online conferences. You were recently advised that our 2021 Scientific Assembly in New Zealand (Rotorua) has been postponed by one year, precisely to January 20–24, 2022. This heavy decision, taken by the New Zealand LOC and the IAVCEI Executive Committee, was forced by Covid-related uncertainties on international travel restrictions to New Zealand, making it impractical and unfeasible to plan for and hold the assembly on the original dates. As a consequence, the call for nominations to the IAVCEI Medals and Awards that are delivered during our Scientific Assembly is postponed by one year. We do hope your strong participation to the IAVCEI SA in New Zealand in a post-Covid world in 2022.

Instead, on March 18 you were informed of our tentative rescheduling of the COV11 Conference in Crete (Heraklion) on September 25–30, 2020. Since then the Greek LOC and POC, the IAVCEI Exec and leaders of the Commission Cities and Volcanoes have regularly interacted to assess the possibility to hold the conference depending on the evolution of the global situation. Information was regularly updated on COV11 webpage (www.citiesonvolcanoes11.com) and a dedicated survey, opened until June 25, allowed us to sound the willing of both registered and potential participants. Considering the favorable evolutions currently observed in Greece and Europe as regards the health situation, the reopening of international borders, and the official authorization of renewed scientific meetings in Greece, an optimistic consensus was reached on June 29 that COV11 could be safely held in Crete by late September, combining both in-person attendance and online access for those not able to attend. This official decision will be communicated on July 1st. On site, the conference will be organized with all necessary safety conditions (50% meeting room capacity, availability of masks and antiseptics, etc.) for a maximum number of 300 in-person participants. The post-field trip to Santorini volcano will be realized on October 1–4. We also hope being able to physically deliver in Crete the second IAVCEI Award for Volcano Surveillance and Crisis Management to the selected nominee. For the online participation the Greek POC will provide us with a very professional system. Therefore, given the incredible number of cancelled meetings and travels over the first half of 2020, I warmly encourage you to consider participating to COV11 by late September.

Otherwise, this Newsletter includes a summary on the fourth Workshop of VOBP (Volcano Observatories Best Practices), held in Mexico City in November 2019, and a report by Claire Horwell on new informational products for the public published by the International Volcanic Health Hazard Network (IVHHN, www.ivhhn.org). The latter ones concern volcanic gas hazards and the protection from exposure to volcanic ash.

Take care of you and keep in touch.

Best regards,

Patrick Allard
Paris, June 30, 2020

Geoscience Commits to Racial Justice (EOS, June 2020).
“It’s not enough to be non-racist, be antiracist”, Angela Davis.
MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Dear colleagues and friends,

just a few words in complement to the letter from our President.

We are living unprecedented times, so everything is new and decisions have to be taken without support from past experience. In the last weeks we faced with very difficult decisions about our 2021 SA in New Zealand and COV11. As you know, we decided to postpone the 2021 SA to January 2022 but to go ahead with COV11 in September 2020. Why these two different decisions? Our two priorities were the health of participants and the success of the conferences, so our decisions have been carefully grounded on these two main issues. For the SA in New Zealand we considered the impossibility for foreigners to enter the country during most of 2020, which would have prevented travel arrangement for 90% of potential participants. Our decision for the COV11 was cautiously proportionated to the improving evolution of health conditions in Europe, Oceania, Japan and a large part of Southeast Asia. Inner European borders have been all reopened on June 15 and outer European border are now reopened to several non-European countries among which Canada, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. Most likely this will apply to additional countries during summer time. Greece does not apply any quarantine to foreigners and now allows meeting of people if necessary safety rules are well respected. Though apparently simpler, the alternative option of postponing the COV11 conference to 2021 was considered highly uncertain considering the potential risk of a second Covid wave in Europe and elsewhere during next autumn-winter in the northern hemisphere and also owing to the colliding agenda of postponed 2020 meetings and planned 2021 meetings. Based on all considerations, going ahead with an hybrid (physical and virtual) attendance to COV11 conference in Crete by late September has been considered the best option.

For those of you who will decide to participate physically to the conference and the post-conference field trip to Santorini we can say that all safety rules will be warranted following the guidelines of the Greek government.

Registrations and abstract submission will be re-opened on July 7. Early bird registrations will be opened for one month at least in order to facilitate the participation (physical or virtual) at convenient price of colleagues who were not yet registered.

Last but not least, in the next days you will receive all the necessary information for reimbursement in case you would prefer changing your participation from physical to virtual.

We will do our best for continuing to offer young and senior researchers, as well as stakeholders, the adequate space for mutually exchanging experience and research, as usually promoted by Cities on Volcanoes conferences. This is a mission of IAVCEI, even in pandemic times.

Roberto Sulpizio
IAVCEI SG

VOBP4 WORKSHOP

VOBP summary for the IAVCEI Commission on Hazards and Risk

Presenters at VOBP4 were asked to share their experiences with crisis operations as they answered three main questions: 1) Which of your actions have been key to successes in your crisis responses? 2) Were there any actions that you forgot/now wish you had taken and what would you do differently, now that you can look back at your actions? 3) If you were to choose just three lessons that you’d like the rest of the participants to take home and consider as the basis for best-practice recommendations, what would they be? Through synthesis and discussion sessions, rapporteurs compiled notes that were used to catalog key lessons and best practices. Volunteers among the meeting participants are currently writing a journal article that summarizes the generated ideas.

The fifth day at VOBP4 was spent on a field trip to Popocatépetl, one of two very active volcanoes in Mexico. Popocatépetl poses significant hazards to major population centers around Mexico City and ash from the volcano has repeatedly affected nearby communities as well as operation of the Benito Juárez International Airport in Mexico City. Participants learned about the hazards and communities at risk and also toured CENAPRED’s volcano observatory to learn about volcano monitoring and crisis operations in Mexico.

The VOBP4 meeting was conducted under the aegis of IAVCEI and EUROVOLC and was hosted by CENAPRED, who also provided abundant logistical support. Travel funds and additional financial and logistical support was provided by the USGS+USAID Volcano Disaster Assistance Program (VDAP) and Italy’s Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia (INGV), as well as numerous volcano observatories around the world who supported participation in the meeting by their staff. VOBP5 will be held in Pucón, Chile and will be hosted by SERNAGEOMIN (date to be decided).

Meeting organizers:
Paolo Papale and Laura Sandri (INGV)
John Pallister and Jake Lowenstern (USGS)
Ramón Espinasa (CENAPRED)

New public informational products from the International Volcanic Health Hazard Network

The International Volcanic Health Hazard Network (www.ivhhn.org) has recently published a range of new information products, for the public, related to volcanic gas hazards and protection from exposure to volcanic ash.

The latest pamphlet in the IVHHN series explains the health hazards and impacts of volcanic and geothermal gases and aerosols, and gives guidance on how to protect yourself. The pamphlet was published in June 2020 with USGS, and is currently available in English.

In 2018, IVHHN published a suite of products on reducing personal exposure to volcanic ash. The suite includes videos and complimentary printable products (pamphlet, poster and leaflet) on ash protection, including how to fit a facemask. The products were produced by the Health Interventions in Volcanic Eruptions (HIVE) consortium which has built the first evidence base of the effectiveness of respiratory protection for use in eruption crises. The printable products are endorsed by the World Health Organization and all products are available in a number of languages. All products were co-developed with communities living near Merapi volcano, Indonesia.

In recent years, IVHHN has also partnered with Hawaii state and US Federal agencies to assist in protecting communities from emissions from Kilauea volcano. IVHHN hosts the Interagency Vog Dashboard which was accessed by more than 50,000 people per week during the 2018 LERZ crisis, and co-produced new public information products (booklet, rack brochure and poster) on protection from vog, with the agencies.

The IVHHN informational products are printed and distributed to local communities by local governmental and non-governmental agencies during eruption crises and during preparedness phases. If you would like to translate any IVHHN product into your own language, please contact IVHHN.

The IVHHN website also has a section on scientific protocols for use in eruption crises. This includes ash collection and physicochemical analysis protocols, including new leachate protocols, for rapid health hazard assessment. Also, new in 2020, are a set of standardized epidemiological protocols for medical assessment of health impacts in the days and weeks following an eruption.

The third section of the IVHHN website is a library of all of the papers published in the field of volcanoes and health. This section is currently undergoing development and will soon be available as a searchable database. Watch this space!

IVHHN was founded in 2003 and became an IAVCEI Commission in 2004. IVHHN is an umbrella organization for all research and public information on the health hazards and impacts of volcanic eruptions. IVHHN represents academics and practitioners working across diverse scientific disciplines such as volcanology, epidemiology, environmental science, toxicology, public health and exposure science, with a common aim of trying to determine the health impacts of volcanic emissions and to protect exposed communities. IVHHN advises governmental and non-governmental agencies on the health aspects of eruption preparedness and response.

IVHHN is directed by Prof Claire Horwell (Durham University, UK), Dr Carol Stewart (Massey University, NZ), Dr David Damby (USGS, Menlo Park, USA) and Tamar Elias (USGS Hawaiian Volcano Observatory, USA).