

# Central European Group for Separation Sciences (CEGSS)—Brief History and Memoirs on the Creation and Activity

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## 1. Introduction

The origin of the International Symposia on Separation Sciences (ISSS) can be found in the national gas chromatography scientific meetings held in Zagreb, Croatia, from 1967 and later at Plitvice Lakes until 1988. Over the years, these meetings have grown to include all chromatographic and other separation techniques. Jože Marsel from Ljubljana, Slovenia, and Srećko Turina from Zagreb, Croatia, organized joint Slovenian–Croatian meetings on the topic of chromatography. Starting from 1990, these scientific meetings became international and were alternatively organized in Bled, Slovenia, and in Opatija, Croatia, until 1998. In spite of the war involving part of Croatia, the organizers decided to continue these meetings, supported mostly by Slovenia but also by many scientists from abroad.

## 2. Creation and Activity of the Central European Group for Separation Sciences

The first such meeting took place in 1990 in Bled, Slovenia, and the next in 1992 in Opatija, Croatia. Later, Jože Marsel and Srećko Turina decided to also invite participants from other countries. In the course of the welcome dinner before symposium in Bled in 1994, Jože Marsel and Srećko Turina met the invited speakers Szabolcs Nyiredy from Budapest, Hungary, and Dušan Berek from Bratislava, Slovakia. They exchanged information regarding the current scientific research and education in their countries in general and in the separation sciences in particular. Jože Marsel discussed plans for future meetings and their possible internationalization. The debate continued the next evening with the attendance of Vratislav Švob from Zagreb, Croatia, and Branko Nikolin from Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina. Szabolcs Nyiredy informed the group about his intention to organize a symposium in Siofók every two years under auspice of the Hungarian Society of Separation Sciences, which he had just founded. Jože Marsel presented his readiness to help organize the next Croatian–Slovenian symposium on chromatography in Opatija in 1996. Srećko Turina informed that he could not take part in the organizational work and Vratislav Švob proposed Nikola Šegudović from Zagreb as a suitable organizer from the Croatian side. He was accepted and eventually became the most active meeting organizer. It was agreed that a group of organizers of these symposia will create a joint Steering Committee. The next night, the name of the future joint organism was discussed along with its mission and basic rules of operation. During the fourth ISSS in Opatija, Croatia, in October 1996, the idea of extending the mutual scientific cooperation by inviting corresponding societies from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, and Slovakia was born, with the help of the nominated Steering Committee (Dušan Berek, Bratislava—Slovak Chemical Society; Jože Marsel, Ljubljana—Slovenian Chemical Society; Szabolcs Nyiredy, Budapest—Hungarian Society



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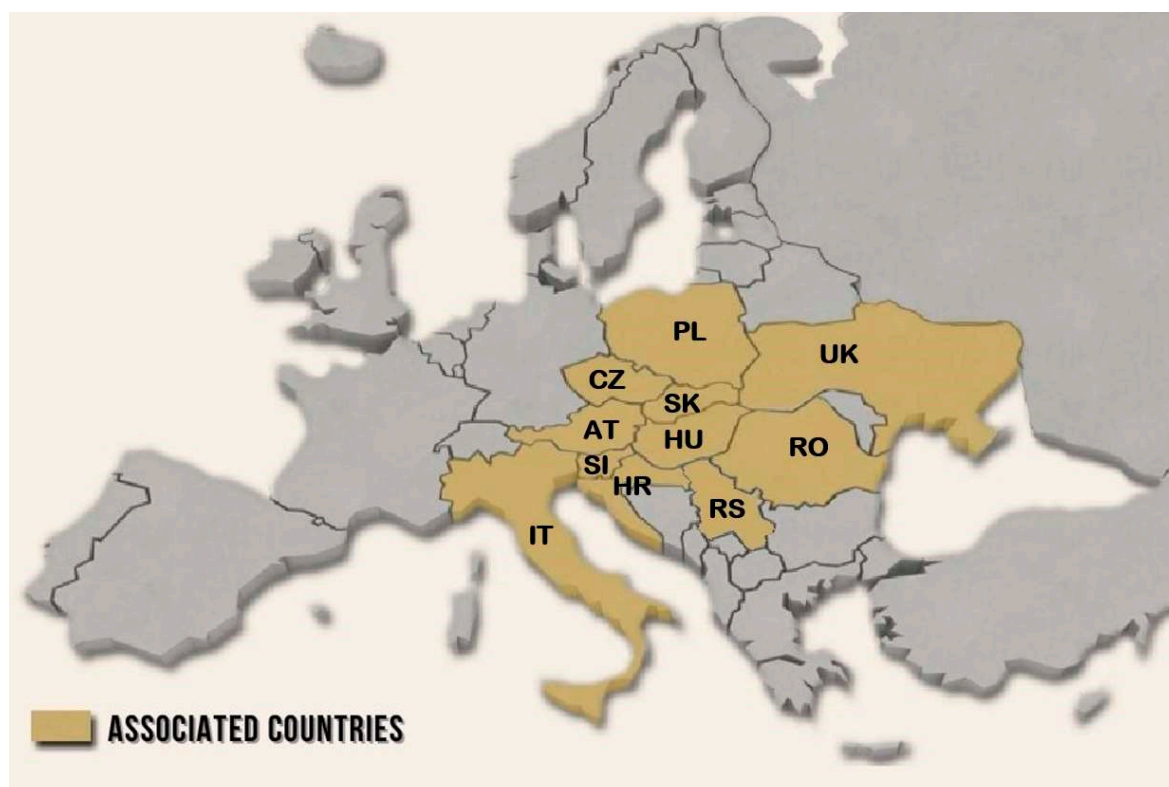
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for Separation Sciences and Nikola Šegudović, Zagreb—Croatian Society of Chemical Engineers). This idea came to fruition at the fifth ISSS held in Bled, Slovenia, in October 1998, when the Central European Group for Separation Sciences (CEGSS) was founded under the leadership of the Steering Committee formed by Dušan Berek, Jože Marsel, Branko Nikolin, Szabolcs Nyiredy, and Nikola Šegudović. The name “Central European Group for Separation Sciences” was proposed by Szabolcs Nyiredy and was accepted. Following discussions, it was concluded that the CEGSS would also include several other member countries. Jože Marsel proposed Italy, with Corrado Sarzanini as representative of the Italian Chemical Society, and Austria, with Wolfgang Buchberger as representative of the Austrian Society for Analytical Chemistry. Dušan Berek proposed the Czech Republic, with Pavel Jandera as representative of the Czech Chemical Society, and Poland, with Bogusław Buszewski as representative of the Polish Chemical Society. He also suggested to consider Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Ukraine as possible members (Figure 1). Following discussions, the extension of the CEGSS by including the last four countries was postponed. Jože Marsel and Dušan Berek considered it necessary to address the Chemical Societies of the corresponding countries to accept their mentioned representatives. The Rules of Operation were outlined and their principles accepted.



**Figure 1.** The eleven CEGSS countries in order of adherence: Slovenia, Croatia, Slovakia, Hungary, Czechia, Austria, Italy, Poland, Ukraine, Romania, and Serbia.

Remembering the successful Bratislava symposia on chromatography, which had been organized in the sixties and seventies and had attracted a large international audience, Dušan Berek suggested that a series of symposia devoted to separation sciences should be in turn arranged in several central European countries. The proposal was accepted. During the third Balaton Symposium held in 1999 in Siófok, Hungary, the CEGSS was extended with the addition of the Czech Chemical Society, with Pavel Jandera from Pardubice as representative. Szabolcs Nyiredy promised that some of his Siófok symposia could be included in the CEGSS series, beginning in 2003.

In the year 2000, during the sixth ISSS at the Plitvice Lakes, Croatia, the following three societies joined the CEGSS: the Austrian Society for Analytical Chemistry, with Wolf-

gang Buchberger from Linz as representative, the Italian Chemical Society, with Corrado Sarzanini from Torino as representative, and the Polish Chemical Society, with Bogusław Buszewski from Toruń as representative. It was decided that the joint meetings organized by the CEGSS Steering Committee would be called the International Symposia on Separation Sciences (ISSS) (Figure 2, Table 1).



**Figure 2.** CEGSS Steering Committee meeting during the eighth ISSS 2002 in Toruń, Poland. In the photo, above from the left: Jože Marsel, Josef Schmidt, Nikola Šegudovič, Szabolcs Nyiredy, Bogusław Buszewski, Corrado Sarzanini, Francesco Dondi, Pavel Jandera, Dušan Berek.

**Table 1.** The ISSS symposia with places and names of particular organizers.

Symposium	Year	Place	Country	Chairperson
1st ISSS	1990	Bled	Slovenia	Jože Marsel
2nd ISSS	1992	Opatija	Croatia	Srećko Turina
3rd ISSS	1994	Bled	Slovenia	Jože Marsel
4nd ISSS	1996	Opatija	Croatia	Nikola Šegudović
5th ISSS	1998	Bled	Slovenia	Jože Marsel
6th ISSS	2000	Plitvice Lakes	Croatia	Nikola Šegudović
7th ISSS (regional)	2002	Pörschach/Wörthersee	Austria	Wolfgang Buchberger
8th ISSS	2002	Toruń	Poland	Bogusław Buszewski
9th ISSS	2003	Siófok	Hungary	Szabolcs Nyiredy
10th ISSS	2004	Opatija	Croatia	Nikola Šegudović
11th ISSS	2005	Pardubice	Czechia	Pavel Jandera
12th ISSS	2006	Lipica	Slovenia	Lucija Zupančič-Kralj
13th ISSS	2007	Štrbske Pleso	Slovakia	Jozef Lehotay

**Table 1.** *Cont.*

Symposium	Year	Place	Country	Chairperson
14th ISSS	2008	Primošten	Croatia	Nikola Šegudović
15th ISSS	2009	Siófok	Hungary	Imre Klebovich
16th ISSS	2010	Roma	Italy	Danilo Corradini, Corrado Sarzanini
17th ISSS	2011	Cluj-Napoca	Romania	Virginia Coman
18th ISSS	2012	Toruń	Poland	Bogusław Buszewski
19th ISSS	2013	Poreč	Croatia	Tomislav Bolanča
20th ISSS	2014	Prague	Czechia	Aleš Horna, Pavel Jandera
21st ISSS	2015	Ljubljana	Slovenia	Irena Vovk
22nd ISSS	2016	Toruń	Poland	Bogusław Buszewski, Renata Gadzała-Kopciuch
23rd ISSS	2017	Vienna	Austria	Erwin Rosenberg
24th ISSS	2018	Jasná	Slovakia	Milan Hutta, Dušan Berek
25th ISSS	2019	Łódź	Poland	Joanna Kałużna-Czaplińska, Rafał Głowacki
26th ISSS	2022	Ljubljana	Slovenia	Irena Vovk
27th ISSS	2023	Cluj-Napoca	Romania	Virginia Coman, Simion Beldean-Galea
28th ISSS	2024	Messina	Italy	Luigi Mondello, Danilo Corradini
29th ISSS	2025	Belgrade	Serbia	Živoslav Tešić

With minor adjustments, the original Rules of Operation are still valid and are specified in the attached Mission and Rules of the CEGSS. It was also agreed that the Steering Committee would meet at least once a year to determine the directions and priorities of the activities. For organizational reasons and better coordination, Dušan Berek proposed the appointment of an annual rotating chairman to organize the ISSS symposium in a given year, namely, the representative of the country where the ISSS symposium was to be organized and a secretary to represent the group in organizational matters, to be responsible for the administrative and documentation work of the CEGSS. Both proposals were accepted, in accordance with the Mission and Rules, with elections for five years. It was a beneficial decision and the group's work picked up pace. At the request of Dušan Berek, with the support of Pavel Jandera and Bogusław Buszewski, Nikola Šegudović was elected as the first secretary of the CEGSS at the 12th ISSS in 2006, Lipica, Slovenia. He was particularly ambitious and consistent in organizing this series of symposia. He established cooperation with the industry and signed a long-term sponsorship contract for the group.

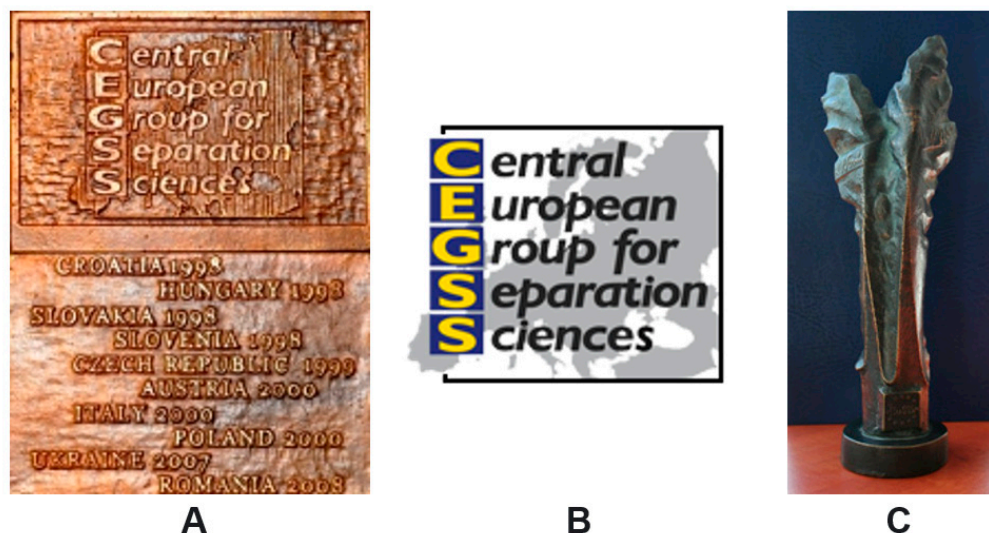
An important task set by the Steering Committee, also in accordance with the Mission and Rules of the group, was to maintain the organization of events under the CEGSS umbrella, with registration fees as low as possible and a high scientific and organizational level. This fact remains particularly important as the prices of "commercially" organized scientific meetings had increased exorbitantly, making it impossible for colleagues from eastern, northern, and central European countries to participate. This especially applied to PhD students and young researchers, even though projects such as Analytics, InCom, ISC, HPLC, and others offered so-called travel grants, but their number was significantly limited.



Following these, the group's plans became active, which was undoubtedly due to the effort to organize the ISSS events at a good level, with the participation of internationally recognized scientists in the field of separation sciences. Szabolcs Nyiredy, Hungary, Josef Schmidt, and Wolfgang Buchberger, Austria, as well as Corrado Sarzanini, Italy, have shown exceptional activity in this area. The appointment of Bogusław Buszewski to the EuCheMS presidium and cooperation with the European Society for Separation Science (EuSSS) [1,2], under the leadership first of Hartmut Frank from Bayreuth, Germany, and then of Bogusław Buszewski from Toruń, Poland, also proved helpful.

The support of Wolfgang Lindner and Günter Bonn from Austria and Klaus Unger, Klaus Albert, Imre Molnar, and Ernst Bayer from Germany, as well as Christ Boven from the United Kingdom, Francesco Dondi from Italy, and Jozef Lehotay from Slovakia has contributed to the promotion and popularization of chromatography and related separation methods in Europe and around the world. The organization of subsequent symposia in the ISSS series turned out to be a success. In addition, there was a generational change in the representatives of some individual countries. Thus, Lucija Zupančič-Kralj replaced Jože Marsel, who retired in September 2002 at the eighth ISSS in Toruń, Poland (Figure 2), and Imre Klebovich replaced Szabolcs Nyiredy, who passed away in June 2007 at the 13th ISSS in Štrbské Pleso, Slovakia. The CEGSS, however, continued to develop. During the 13th ISSS in Štrbské Pleso, High Tatras, Slovakia, at the CEGSS Steering Committee meeting on 28 June 2007, Dušan Berek proposed—and the Steering Committee unanimously accepted—future contacts to include new CEGSS members, namely, Lithuania and Ukraine in 2007 and Romania in 2008. At the CEGSS Steering Committee meeting on 1 October 2008, during the 14th ISSS in Primošten, Croatia, two new CEGSS members were accepted: the Ukrainian Chromatographic Society, with Modest Gertsyuk from Kiev as representative, became the ninth member of the CEGSS and the Romanian Chemical Society, with Virginia Coman from Cluj-Napoca as representative, became the tenth member of the CEGSS.

At this meeting, at the request of Bogusław Buszewski, a prize (medal and diploma) was established for services to the CEGSS, particularly for organizing ISSS symposia and for contributing to the promotion and popularization of separation sciences (Figure 3A,B [3]).



**Figure 3.** CEGSS Awards: (A) Central European Group for Separation Sciences Medal as plaque, (B) CEGSS logo, (C) Tswett–Nernst Award as statuette.

At the beginning of September 2012, Nikola Šegudovič passed away. At the Steering Committee meeting on 11 September 2012, during the 18th ISSS in Toruń, Poland, Bogusław Buszewski announced that some CEGSS members could not continue their activity and proposed the initiation of new members in the CEGSS Steering Committee and the election of a new secretary to maintain the high efficiency of the CEGSS. Therefore, in this Meeting, a new generational change took place: in Croatia, Nikola Šegudovič was replaced by

Tomislav Bolanča, and due to retirement in Italy, Corrado Sarzanini by Danilo Corradini and in Slovenia Lucija Zupančič-Kralj by Irena Vovk. Dušan Berek was elected the new CEGSS secretary. All proposals were unanimously accepted. At the Steering Committee meeting on 25 September 2013, during the 19th ISSS in Poreč, Croatia, Dušan Berek, the CEGSS secretary suggested the necessity for some changes in the leadership of the CEGSS. He proposed to elect a president for five years to coordinate and to develop all activities together with the secretary and the annual chairman in charge, forming the Executive Steering Committee (Presidium) of the CEGSS. All members of the CEGSS Committee agreed with this proposal and entrusted Bogusław Buszewski with the position of the president of the CEGSS for the period of 2013–2018. Then, in 2016, during the 22nd ISSS in Toruń, Poland, there was another generational change: in Austria, Wolfgang Buchberger was replaced by Erwin Rosenberg and in Slovakia, Jozef Lehotay by Milan Hutta. Aspects of the Steering Committee Meetings are given in Figure 4 (20th ISSS 2014) and Figure 5 (21st ISSS 2015).



**Figure 4.** CEGSS Steering Committee Meeting of 20th ISSS in Prague, Czech Republic, 1 September 2014. From left to right: Modest Gertsyuk, Aleš Horna (guest), Danilo Corradini, Tomislav Bolanča, Irena Vovk, Bogusław Buszewski, Pavel Jandera, Dušan Berek, Jozef Lehotay, Imre Klebovich, and Virginia Coman.

During the 24th ISSS in Jasná, Slovakia, at the Meeting of the Steering Committee on 19 June 2018, Bogusław Buszewski proposed the appointment of Dušan Berek, the oldest member of the Steering Committee, as the Honorary President of the CEGSS, in recognition of his commitment and activity for over twenty years. Virginia Coman, Romania, was elected the next Secretary of the CEGSS and Bogusław Buszewski was re-elected as president of the CEGSS. These amendments were approved unanimously.

The last ISSS symposium, the 25th edition, before the COVID-19 pandemic, took place in Łódź, Poland, in September 2019 (Figure 6). After a break of more than ten years, a new member joined the CEGSS, namely, the Serbian Chemical Society, with Živoslav Tešić from Belgrade as its representative. The decision was made at the Steering Committee Meeting on 15 September 2019 at the 25th ISSS in Łódź, Poland. Other countries proposed by Bogusław Buszewski to be included in the CEGSS were Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Greece. He has sent appropriate letters/invitations to the Chemical Societies of these countries and positive responses are expected.





**Figure 5.** CEGSS Steering Committee Meeting of 21st ISSS in Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2 July 2015. From left to right: Tomislav Bolanča, Imre Klebovich, Erwin Rosenberg, Danilo Corradini, Irena Vovk, Bogusław Buszewski, Virginia Coman, Modest Gertsyuk, Dušan Berek, Pavel Jandera, and Milan Hutta (guest).



**Figure 6.** CEGSS Steering Committee Meeting of 25th ISSS in Łódź, Poland, 15 September 2019. From left to right: Rafał Głowacki, Renata Gadzała-Kopciuch, Joanna Kałużna-Czaplińska (guests); Modest Gertsyuk, Pavel Jandera, Virginia Coman, Dušan Berek, Bogusław Buszewski, Irena Vovk, Danilo Corradini, Michal Holčapek, and Erwin Rosenberg.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, the group's statutory activities were resumed and organization of the annual itinerant symposium was reactivated, thus continuing the CEGSS traditions (Table 2).

**Table 2.** CEGSS representatives of member country societies over the years.

Country/Society	Year	Representative	Position and Affiliation
Slovenia/ Slovenian Chemical Society	1990	Jože Marsel <sup>(1)</sup>	Prof. Dr.; University of Ljubljana
	2005	Lucija Župančič-Krajl	Prof. Dr.; University of Ljubljana
	<b>2012</b>	<b>Irena Vovk</b>	<b>Dr. senior scientist; National Institute of Chemistry, Ljubljana</b>
Croatia/ Croatian Society of Chemical Engineers	1990	Srečko Turina <sup>(1)</sup>	Prof. Dr.; University of Zagreb
	1990	Vratislav Švob <sup>(1)</sup>	Dr.; Zagreb
	1996	Nikola Šegudović <sup>(4)</sup>	Dr. Eng.; Industry researcher; INA Zagreb
	<b>2012</b>	<b>Tomislav Bolanča</b>	<b>Prof. Dr.; University of Zagreb</b>
Bosnia and Herzegovina/ Society of Chemists and Technologists of Canton Sarajevo	1990	Branko Nikolin <sup>(1)</sup>	Prof. Dr.; University of Sarajevo
Hungary/ Hungarian Society for Separation Sciences	1994	Szabolcs Nyiredy	Prof. Dr.; Semmelweis University, Budapest
	2006	Imre Klebovich	Prof. Dr.; Semmelweis University, Budapest
	<b>2022</b>	<b>Krisztián Horváth</b>	<b>Assoc. Prof. Dr.; University of Pannonia, Veszprém</b>
Slovakia/ Slovak Chemical Society	1994	Dušan Berek <sup>(2), (4)</sup>	Dr. senior scientist; Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava
	2005	Jozef Lehotay	Prof. Dr.; University of Technology, Bratislava
	2016	Milan Hutta	Prof. Dr.; Comenius University, Bratislava
	<b>2019</b>	<b>Róbert Góra</b>	<b>Assoc. Prof. Dr.; Comenius University, Bratislava</b>
Austria/ Austrian Society for Analytical Chemistry	1998	Josef Schmidt	Prof. Dr.; University of Vienna
	2000	Wolfgang Buchberger	Prof. Dr.; Johannes Kepler University, Linz
	<b>2016</b>	<b>Erwin Rosenberg</b>	<b>Prof. Dr.; University of Technology, Vienna</b>
Italy/ Italian Chemical Society	1998	Corrado Sarzanini	Prof. Dr.; University of Torino
	<b>2012</b>	<b>Danilo Corradini</b>	<b>Prof. Dr.; Italian Research Council, Rome</b>
Czechia/ Czech Chemical Society	2000	Pavel Jandera	Prof. Dr.; University of Pardubice
	2021	Michal Holčápek	Prof. Dr.; University of Pardubice
	<b>2022</b>	<b>Petr Česla</b>	<b>Assoc. Prof. Dr.; University of Pardubice</b>
Poland/ Polish Chemical Society	<b>2000</b>	<b>Bogusław Buszewski <sup>(3)</sup></b>	<b>Prof. Em. Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń; Prof. Jan Czocharlski Kuyavian-Pomeranian Science and Technology Center, Toruń</b>



**Table 2.** *Cont.*

Country/Society	Year	Representative	Position and Affiliation
Ukraine/ Ukrainian Chromatographic Society	2007	Modest Gertsruk	Dr. senior scientist; Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv
Romania/ Romanian Chemical Society	2008	Virginia Coman <sup>(4)</sup>	Res. Prof. Dr.; Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca
Serbia/ Serbian Chemical Society	2019	Živoslav Tesić	Prof. Dr.; University of Belgrade

<sup>(1)</sup> Founders: Jože Marsel, Srećko Turina, Bratislav Švob, Branko Nikolin; <sup>(2)</sup> Honorary president: Dušan Berek; <sup>(3)</sup> President: Bogusław Buszewski; <sup>(4)</sup> Secretaries: 1st Nikola Šegudović; 2nd Dušan Berek; 3rd Virginia Coman; Bold—current representative of member society, member of Steering Committee.

The 26th ISSS, postponed twice (2020 and 2021) due to the pandemic, was held by Irene Vovk as the organizer in June–July 2022 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, along with the 25th HPTLC (High Performance Thin-Layer Chromatography) symposium. Unfortunately, during this well-organized symposium, the group experienced great sadness and shock. The Honorary President of the CEGSS, Dušan Berek, passed away in Ljubljana. He was with the group until the end.

The group began cooperating with the MDPI (Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute) Publishing House, and in particular with the *Separation* Journal. The joint decision (MDPI and CEGSS) was made to publish reports/histories on separation sciences in individual member states, with Bogusław Buszewski and Erwin Rosenberg as editors. So far, they have managed to publish four papers [4–7]. Unfortunately, in 2021, the CEGSS suffered two greatest losses—Milan Hutta, Slovakia, and Pavel Jandera, Czechia. Their places were taken by Robert Góra, Slovakia, and Michal Holčápek, Czechia, who was then replaced by Petr Česla, Czechia. Also, Imre Klebovich, who retired, was replaced by Krisztián Horváth, Hungary. In 2022, during the 26th ISSS at the CEGSS Steering Committee Meeting on 30 June 2022, these changes were unanimously accepted (Figure 7).

In the year 2021, the Steering Committee of the EuSSS decided to dissolve the society (Decision of the Register Court of Bayreuth; Bayern, from 8 November 2023). In 2009, at the request of Bogusław Buszewski, Hartmut Frank, and Imre Molnár, the EuSSS established the European Prize, Tswett–Nernst (Figure 3C [2]), in memory of the two recognized scientists, Mikhail Semenovich Tswett, Russian–Italian biologist, inventor of column chromatography in the year 1903, and Walther Nernst, German physicist and chemist, laureate of the 1920 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. In this way, it was intended to appreciate, at the European level, all those who have made an indisputable contribution to the development of separation techniques and to significantly promote these techniques in the international community. Bogusław Buszewski, Poland, was appointed the chairman of the Tswett–Nernst Award Board and Václav Kašička, Czechia, became the secretary. In accordance with the regulations of this award, the statuette and diploma have been presented during the European Symposia on separation methods from the series of International Symposia on Chromatography, starting in 2010 at the 28th ISC in Valencia, Spain, and the International Symposia on Separation Sciences starting in 2022 at the 26th ISSS in Ljubljana, Slovenia. As a result of a secret ballot, two winners are selected: one from western Europe and one from central, eastern, and northern European countries. The winners are obliged to deliver a laureate plenary lecture. In 2022, under a decision of the last president of the EuSSS, Didier Thiébaud, France, the rights and obligations to conduct the selection and the nomination of candidates were transferred to the CEGSS. Starting in 2022 in Ljubljana, the Tswett–Nernst Prize is now awarded during the Opening Ceremony of the ISSS symposia [3] (Figure 8).



**Figure 7.** Former representatives of CEGSS Steering Committee and ISSS chairmen until 2022; Jože Marsel and Srečko Turina—Founders; Dušan Berek—Honorary president; Nikola Šegudović—1st secretary, 2006–2012; Dušan Berek—2nd secretary, 2012–2018.



**Figure 8.** Two Tswett–Nernst Prizes awarded at the Opening Ceremony of the 27th ISSS Symposium in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, 24 September 2023. From left to right: Bogusław Buszewski, Irena Vovk, Peter Schoenmakers, Didier Thiébaud, Václav Kašička.

The organization of this series of symposia under the CEGSS auspices continues via Cluj-Napoca, Romania (27th ISSS 2023), to Messina, Italy (28th ISSS 2024), and to Belgrade, Serbia (29th ISSS 2025).

ISSS symposia are focused on the fundamental and practical aspects of separation and detection methods, sample preparation for analysis, as well as related or hyphenated, multidimensional and miniaturized techniques for analytical, preparative and applied purposes in various fields such as environmental, food, natural products, pharmaceutical and clinical, forensics, industry, chemometrics, and so on, including new horizons and challenges in separation sciences. They connect scientists and users of chromatography, electrophoresis and separation techniques from academia and industry around the world, giving young researchers the opportunity to learn more about current progress in separation sciences, to present the latest results of their work and to establish new collaborations. The scientific programme includes plenary and keynote lectures by invited speakers, oral presentations, flash-orals and posters by senior scientists and young researchers. This means stable activity of the members of the Steering Committee and national committees of the countries associated with the CEGSS (Figure 9).





**Figure 9.** CEGSS Steering Committee in the year 2023.

### 3. Mission and Rules of the Central European Group for Separation Sciences

The Central European Group for Separation Sciences (CEGSS) is a non-profit association. Its main objective is to coordinate and co-organize the International Symposia on Separation Sciences (ISSS) in central European countries. Currently, the CEGSS covers the following eleven countries, in order of adherence: Slovenia, Croatia, Slovakia, Hungary, Czechia, Austria, Italy, Poland, Ukraine, Romania, and Serbia (Figure 1).



The overall activities of the CEGSS are based on mutual agreement between Chemical Societies and their affiliated organizations in the field of analytical chemistry, particularly separation sciences of the member countries, considering the rules given below:

(i) The main goal of the CEGSS is to deepen the cooperation of separation scientists in central Europe and expand their contacts with other countries; (ii) the CEGSS is managed by a Steering Committee by which each member country is represented by a person nominated by a professional association active in the field; (iii) to become a member country of the CEGSS, the designated representative of a professional association in this field from that country shall express his reasoned intention at a meeting of the CEGSS Steering Committee in the framework of the ISSS Symposium, and then, after approval by the Steering Committee, the country will join the CEGSS; (iv) the Steering Committee shall coordinate the dates of the ISSS, taking into account the conditions of other international meetings on separation sciences; (v) Steering Committee members communicate via email and meet in person at the annual ISSS; (vi) the Executive Steering Committee (Presidium), consisting of the President of the CEGSS, the Secretary, and the Chairman of the ISSS Symposium, in preparation, resolves current matters, in particular those related to the preparation of and accompanying the ISSS Symposium.

The principles of organizing the ISSS are as follows: (i) one general ISSS per year is held under the auspice of the CEGSS; (ii) members of the Steering Committee act as permanent members of the ISSS scientific committee and are obliged to deliver a plenary or keynote lecture; (iii) they also constitute a committee assessing the best oral and poster presentations of young scientists during the ISSS; (iv) the CEGSS may support the organization of local events (conferences, invited lectures, courses, training, etc.); however, this may only be after obtaining written consent of the Presidium with the reservation that the topics and dates of these initiatives do not duplicate or compete; (v) both registration fees and accommodation costs associated with actual participation in the current ISSS are intended to be as low as possible to enable as many researchers as possible to participate; (vi) the CEGSS pays special attention to the younger generation of separation scientists by offering them economical accommodation and prizes for the best contributions; (vii) the ISSS organizer is currently looking for sponsors to financially support this type of award.

Each member of the CEGSS, at the request of the Presidium or members of the Steering Committee, is entitled to receive the Central European Group for Separation Sciences Award for outstanding achievements and activity to the CEGSS or popularization of separation sciences. Detailed provisions regarding the nomination and selection of the laureate are set out in separate regulations.

The CEGSS is responsible for nominating and awarding the European Tswett–Nernst Prize. The award, in the form of a statuette and a diploma, is presented during one of the European conferences devoted to separation science techniques. In addition, the winner is obliged to deliver a laureate plenary lecture. The costs of the winner's participation in the symposium are borne by the organizer. The Tswett–Nernst Prize Committee awards a maximum of two prizes in a given year. The two winners selected are one from western Europe and one from central, eastern and northern Europe countries. This prize can only be received once per person. Detailed provisions regarding the nomination and selection of the laureate are set out in separate regulations.

#### 4. Conclusions

The Central European Group for Separation Sciences (CEGSS) is a professional organization with a history dating back to the 1990s through the agreement between Slovenian and Croatian chromatography scientists based on a rich previous joint collaboration. Over the years, other countries were invited and joined this group: Hungary (1996), Slovakia (1996), Czech Republic (1999), Austria (2000), Italy (2000), Poland (2000), Ukraine (2007), Romania (2008) and Serbia (2019). Today, CEGSS comprises eleven countries, each country being represented by a person nominated by the scientific society in the respective country. CEGSS operates under its "Missions and Rules" statute unanimously approved by

its representatives who form the Steering Committee led by a presidium consisting of a president, a secretary and a symposium chair in preparation. Its basic activity consists in the itinerant symposia (International Symposium on Separation Sciences, ISSS) organized annually by the member countries, which reached its 27th edition this year. CEGSS strongly supports the participation of young researchers. For outstanding achievements and activity, promotion or popularization of separation sciences, CEGSS offers annually, since 2008, the CEGSS Award (diploma, medal) to its members and since 2022 the European Tswett-Nernst Award (diploma, statuette) to two selected winners, one from Western Europe and one from Central, Eastern and Northern Europe.

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