

Dear Friends

The phrase *Dear Friends* is a typical salutation currently commonly used in electronic communications. For participants of the **Russian-Polish-Slovak Seminary Theoretical Foundation of Civil Engineering (RPS Seminar TFoCE)**, this phrase has a much deeper dimension than the typical *Dear Friends*. A group of scientists from three neighbouring Slavic countries (occasionally from other countries also) has been systematically meeting annually for nearly 30 years, alternately in Russia, Slovakia or Poland, on the occasion of the exchange of information in the scientific field of Civil Engineering. During such a long series of meetings, seminar participants will get to know each other much better than in typical sporadic conference meetings. This is the basic specific feature of RPS Seminar TFoCE. The participants got to know each other, but by the way they got to know the countries that they briefly but systematically visited. They could exchange scientific information taking into account the geopolitical specificities of the three countries, of which Russia, due to its size and ethnic diversity, was perhaps the most important. In my opinion, it is not possible to exchange scientific knowledge only. Seminar participants also exchanged socio-political views and information. They presented their points of view on scientific and other topics, including those related to the "vagaries of history" in the informal discussions. In total, I think at least 1,000 scientists have participated in the Seminary over these 30 years. But a certain group of people, the backbone of the conference, has been basically unchanged for many years. There have been times when some of them disappeared for some time for various reasons, such as health care or excess of responsibilities resulting from the performance of organizational functions at home universities. After a while, however, most returned. Those who retired – unfortunately not. Nevertheless, as you can see from today's perspective, a slightly "nebulous" group of scientists has formed the "core" of the seminar. And this group of scientists is, in my opinion, the seminar's greatest achievement. Those who have known each other for so many years and remained faithful participants of the Seminary, because they wanted to, really became friends with a capital "F". That's why, for the RPS Seminar TFoCE, the phrase *Dear Friends* has such a completely different, much deeper and literal meaning!

Dear Friends!

In 2020, the XXIX RPS Seminar TFoCE was organized in Poland. According to previous determinations, the organizer was to be the Wrocław University of Science and Technology. From the beginning, there were troubles. Practically a revolution in the organization of science in Poland. The new law 2.0, turning upside down almost everything related to the science in the *strict sense* of its organization, but above all to the financing of science in the already hugely underfunded Poland. All this posed a threat that the Seminary would not take place. It was disturbing and frustrating. But the worst was yet to come. Pandemic! Coronavirus! Covid-19! SARS-CoV-2.

What to do?!

After many discussions and deliberations, including with colleagues from the Warsaw University of Technology supporting us, we decided! We posted a message on the conference page:

What should we do about the pandemic? We don't interrupt our meetings. This year we will meet virtually (online). The articles will be published as last year in the IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering. If you have any suggestions for our virtual meeting, please write to rsp2020@pwr.edu.pl.

After a short time we received information from Žilina in Slovakia, from Moscow and from Samara in Russia. Everyone supported this decision!

And today we finished developing conference materials – articles for publication in the *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering*.

In the end, 106 articles were sent to the editor of the magazine divided into 5 Sections. In Section 1. – Mechanics there are 23 articles, in Section 2. – Structures there are 24 articles, in Section 3 – Geodesy there are 13 articles, in Section 4. – Materials there are 36 articles and in the last Section 5. – Transport is 10 articles.

The seminar will take place online from 30.11-04.12.2020 and then it will be possible to perform a final scientific evaluation of the entire conference.

On behalf of the Organizers from Wrocław, I also encourage you to participate in the next jubilee XXX RPS Seminar TFoCE. Participants from other countries are also welcome.

Wrocław, 17.11.2020

Prof. Zbigniew Wójcicki