

Conference Report: 4th Congress of the WFPhC



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(Received 13 October 2008; accepted 28 November 2008)

Abstract

We present a brief report of the 4th Congress of the World Federation of Physics Competitions (WFPhC) held from July 30th to August 1st 2008 in Ha Long City, Vietnam.

Keywords: Physics tournaments', competitions.

Resumen

Se presenta un reporte breve del 4^o Congreso de la Federación Mundial de Competiciones en Física (WFPhC) celebrado del 30 de julio al 1 de agosto en la ciudad de Ha Long, Vietnam.

Palabras clave: Torneos de Física, competiciones.

PACS: 01.10.Cr, 01.10.Fv, 01.50.Rt

ISSN 1870-9095

The 4th Congress of the World Federation of Physics Competitions (WFPhC) held from July 30th to August 1st 2008 in scenic Ha Long City in Vietnam. Delegates from 18 countries participated in the congress (Armenia, Austria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Singapore, Thailand, Turkey and Vietnam). There are more than 80 physics competitions or scientific activities, respectively, associated in the WFPhC; international, continental, regional from particular countries. Each competition has got its prestige, some are more famous, older and others are starting and fiercely entering the international tilyard—these competitions join up natural sciences: physics, chemistry and biology. But all of them have got the common goal: to cultivate secondary school pupils' interest in physics, to prepare pupils for university study of physics and technology branches, to allow occupy pupils' minds with physics in their spare time.

The congress was entered by the WFPhC president H. Jordens who briefly put in remembrance the WFPhC's history. The deputy of Minister of Education of the Vietnam Socialistic Republic Mr. L. Banh Tien saluted the congress proceeding. In his speech he also mentioned an increasing level of Vietnamese pupils' successes in natural sciences. N. Tran Van distinguished the work with physics gifted pupils at special secondary schools by the University of Hanoi in detail in the following lecture. (There is roughly 300 universities in Vietnam in common days or independent faculties, respectively; 11% university lecturers have the PhD. degree.)

The first day was dedicated to plenary lectures. Their motto was: "Interdisciplinary Relationships in Teaching Physics."

Problems of "Rotary chair, birds and other objects in teaching physics" were the subject of H. Mayer's speech. Its sense was referring to some analogies in motion description.

Z. Kluiber adduced contribution to "Interdisciplinarity Between Physics and Economy." Especially bindings between physics and economy intrigued the audience according to the field of utilisation in statistical physics, sports, transportation or health care. The European Union subject for secondary school pupils called "Energy Education" was also discussed as one of really concerning.

"Utilising the Scientific Literacy in the Process of Teaching Physics" was the subject of Z. Rajkovits's and J. Illy's speech. The physical properties of water were mainly accented.

I. Haraldsdottir concluded the results of her two years research in Iceland in her speech; the research proved that members of national teams who represent their country in the International Physics Olympiad will from a third study physics, about another third will study technical subjects and those remaining will then study mathematics and another even social sciences. The following full-scale discussion showed that there is a similar situation in most of countries. In this point of view the Physics Olympiad prepares pupils well for studying technical branches; it offers a great possibility of retrieving the "language of technology." On the other hand the international survey shows that members of Young Physicists' Tournament teams study at the universities the physics firstly.

The congress proceedings climaxed in the Assemblage of the WFPhC members. H. Jordens informed about the WFPhC activities, exposed the financial accounting in place of the absenting treasurer. The chairman of the Board for Prizes, Mr. M. Rajamakki, mentioned that in

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2008 the WFPPhC awards Mr. W. Gorszowski, Poland, by its prestigious prize; former chairman of the International Committee of the Physics Olympiad, who died in 2007. The prize will be given to Mrs. M. Gorszowski by J. Mostowski in personam. The chairman of the Editor's Board, Mr. A. Kotlicki, informed about contents of the Physics Competitions journal. The texts of all the 4th WFPPhC lectures will be published in it.

For the period oncoming a new Executive Committee has been elected: president – H. Jordens, the Netherlands, vice-president – Z. Rajkovits, Hungary, secretary – H. Mayer, Austria, treasurer – G. Friege, Germany, Board for

Prizes chairman – M. Rajamakki, Finland, members: I. Haraldsdottir, Iceland, Z. Kluiber, Czech Republic, A. Kotlicki, Canada, J. Mostowski, Poland, M. Suria, Indonesia.

The World Federation of Physics Competitions will henceforward creating optimal conditions for the development of all physics competitions and scientific activities of primary and secondary school pupils in physics.

The participation on the congress was a part of solving the MŠMT ČR LA 270 project.