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► **To cite this version:**

Carl Winsløw. Preface: CERME13 in Budapest, and beyond. Thirteenth Congress of the European Society for Research in Mathematics Education (CERME13), Alfréd Rényi Institute of Mathematics; Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest, Jul 2023, Budapest, Hungary. hal-04427857

HAL Id: hal-04427857

<https://hal.science/hal-04427857>

Submitted on 31 Jan 2024

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Preface: CERME13 in Budapest, and beyond

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The 13th Congress of the European Society for Research in Mathematics Education – CERME13, for short – was a memorable event in many ways. It was the first CERME held “on site” since CERME 11 in Utrecht in February 2019, almost 4½ years before. After the outbreak of the COVID pandemic in early 2020, CERME12 was postponed to 2022 and was finally held online from Bozen-Bolzano in February 2022, as explained in the preface to the proceedings of that conference. At that time, it was still not clear whether the pandemic was nearing the end – although, as we now know, it was – and it was decided to defer the dates of CERME13 from February 2023 to July 2023. This way, we avoided the risks of new virus-related lockdowns in early 2023, which in fact did not materialize – and also real inconveniences related to the war in Ukraine, such as the energy crisis in the winter 2022-2023. In addition to these reasons, the new dates of CERME13, almost exactly between CERME12 and CERME14 (to be held in February 2025), allowed for a more realistic timeframe for organising CERME13 and CERME14 (1½ year for each). From February 2025, we will finally be back to the normal rhythm of biannual congresses in February of odd years, after CERME12 and CERME13 were exceptionally held in somewhat modified modalities and dates.

CERME13 took place in Budapest, the beautiful capital of Hungary. The many ways the event was memorable include, besides the reunion of our community after the pandemic, also the first and maybe only CERME ever held in the summer. It cannot be denied that central Europe is much warmer in this season than in the winter, and the hospitality of our Hungarian colleagues was equally warm and efficient. To the local organising committee, led by Csaba Csapodi, Katalin Gosztonyi and Ödön Vancsó, and to the institutions and staff who supported the committee, we extend our warmest thanks on behalf of all participants, for preparing and realising the complex organisation of the congress in a way that fully matched the quality of its former editions. The Lágymányosi campus, with the Faculty of Science buildings of the Eötvös Loránd University, provided the extensive facilities required for both plenary events and the sessions of the thematic working groups. The traditional gala dinner was held in the impressive halls of the Museum of Fine Arts, and added another memorable and very distinguished dimension to the social aspects of the congress.

The scientific programme is evidently the *raison d'être* of any CERME, and the contributions of the participants – papers and posters – form the core material. Unlike many other research conferences, CERME is not focused on presentations, but on in-depth discussions of the contributions. This, indeed, is the secret behind the constantly increasing attraction and success of CERME. Since the very first CERME, the purpose of promoting *communication, cooperation and collaboration* among mathematics education researchers has been implemented by organising the work of the congress in *thematic working groups*. In these groups, the main activity is in-depth discussion of the submitted contributions, with only very brief “reminder presentations” of the texts, which participants in each group are expected to read before attending the congress. At CERME13, no less than 28 such groups

were organised – both new groups, reflecting new specialized areas of research, and groups which have already convened at several previous editions. To organise these groups, teams of coleaders are invited by the international programme committee. Both to every member of these coleader teams, and to the programme committee – led this year by Paul Drijvers and Hanna Palmér – the ERME community is deeply indebted and thankful. We also thank our plenary speakers, László Lovász and Berta Barquero, as well as the plenary panel led by João-Pedro da Ponte, for providing deep and state-of-the-art accounts of research themes that can inspire the community as a whole.

CERME13 received, as almost all previous CERMEs, an unprecedented high number of participants (941), from more nations than ever before (54), see Table 1.

Table 1: The success of CERME13 in numbers: 941 participants from 54 countries

| | | | | | |
|----------------|----|-------------|-----|--------------|----|
| Armenia | 1 | Germany | 165 | Romania | 1 |
| Australia | 7 | Greece | 20 | Serbia | 3 |
| Austria | 27 | Hong Kong | 4 | Slovakia | 14 |
| Belgium | 5 | Hungary | 49 | South Africa | 2 |
| Brazil | 9 | Iceland | 3 | Spain | 51 |
| Canada | 19 | Ireland | 13 | Sweden | 46 |
| Chile | 11 | Israel | 27 | Switzerland | 14 |
| China | 7 | Italy | 66 | Taiwan | 2 |
| Costa Rica | 1 | Japan | 9 | Thailand | 1 |
| Croatia | 5 | Lithuania | 2 | Tunisia | 3 |
| Cyprus | 2 | Malta | 1 | Turkey | 46 |
| Czech Republic | 17 | Mexico | 17 | Ukraine | 1 |
| Denmark | 19 | Netherlands | 32 | UAE | 1 |
| Egypt | 1 | New Zealand | 5 | UK | 43 |
| Estonia | 4 | Norway | 66 | USA | 35 |
| Faroe Islands | 1 | Philippines | 1 | Uruguay | 1 |
| Finland | 6 | Poland | 1 | Vietnam | 1 |
| France | 24 | Portugal | 28 | | |

In fact, the number of contributions to CERME congresses has increased almost linearly throughout the history of CERME, to reach a whopping 834 at CERME13. Of these, 757 were finally accepted and presented. Given the capacity of academic venues – roughly 900-1000 participants – and more subtly, of the organisation of a CERME, which depends entirely on voluntary committees and coleader teams – it has become ever clearer that this linear growth cannot continue, even if only one participant for each contribution were to participate. At CERME13, it was only to a small degree possible for co-authors to register, even for experienced scholars who attended all or most of the previous CERME congresses. These dilemmas were discussed at CERME13, and will continue to be worked on in the committees of ERME. Both CERME, and the other venues and supports that ERME offers to scientific exchange and creation by researchers in Europe and beyond, need to be continuously maintained and developed. The enthusiasm and quality of CERME13 promises a bright future for our research field and for the ERME community. See you at CERME14 in Bozen-Bolzano!