BYLAWS OF THE INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL GEOLOGY ASSOCIATION

Article 1. Membership Classes and Eligibility

Members of the International Medical Geology Association (hereinafter Association or IMGA) shall be classified as follows:

A. Member - a person whose professional activities or interests are in keeping with the objectives of the Association.

B. Student Member – a student enrolled at least half-time in an institution of higher learning.

C. Honorary Member - a person distinguished in a scientific discipline of significance to the Association.

D. Life Member – a person with 65 years of age or older who has been an individual member for 12 years or more.

E. Institutional Affiliates - corporations, institutions of higher learning, or other organizations interested in fostering the science of medical geology. Institutional Affiliates shall have the right to appoint a person as their designated representative. Such a person could also be a Member. Institutional Affiliates shall enjoy all the privileges of the Association except that they, or their representatives, shall not hold office or vote. Notwithstanding any of the above limitations, a designated representative of an Institutional Affiliate who is also an individual Member, may continue to exercise his/her membership rights and privileges on his/her own behalf.

Article 2. Procedures for Election to Membership

a. A person desiring membership in the Association must petition in writing the Executive Committee via a formal membership application. This can be done by email, online, or by paper copy. New members can also be nominated by other members. The applicant must be informed of the decision just after the Executive Committee meeting that examined the petition.

b. Honorary Members are elected for life by a unanimous vote of the Executive Committee after being nominated by the Awards Committee.

c. Life Members are nominated by the Executive Committee after the Treasurer reports that the candidate has all his/her fees up to date. A Life Member must confirm his/her membership every 2 years coinciding with the International Conference on Medical Geology (hereinafter MEDGEO).

Article 3. Dues

a. Annual dues shall be determined by the Executive Committee and shall be assessed on a calendar year basis.

b. The Executive Committee may waive the annual dues of an individual Member in lieu of services to the Association.

c. The Executive Committee may temporarily waive or reduce the annual dues to members from countries in economic difficulties. The waiver should be reviewed once a year.

d. Annual dues are waived for Honorary Members and for Life Members.

e. Annual dues are payable before the end of January of each calendar year. Notice of dues will be sent by electronic mail, included in the electronic newsletter, and posted on the website. A Member who fails to remit by January 31 should be considered in arrears until she/he remits, and any member still in arrears on April 1 will be dropped from membership. Members may be reinstated upon payment of currently owed dues and a new membership application will not be required, provided such reinstatement occurs within one (1) year of the last payment of dues.

f. Any Member in arrears, as defined in Article 3. e., is not–allowed to vote or to hold office.

g. All dues are set in Euros and payable in EU or in US equivalent currency amount. Alternate methods of payment may be approved by the Executive Committee on a case-by-case basis.

Article 4. Editor, Webmaster, Standing Committees

a. The Executive Committee may appoint an Editor, who will be responsible for all official publications of the Association such as the newsletter, and a Webmaster, who will be responsible for the website of the Association.

b. The Executive Committee shall have the authority to establish, direct, and dissolve Standing Committees whose purpose is to consider specific questions or conduct specific studies.

c. The appointment of committee Chairs shall be at the direction of the Executive Committee Chair and approved by Executive Committee.

d. The Executive Committee may appoint the following Standing Committees:

Nominations Committee
Conference Committee
Statutes & By-Laws Committee
Awards Committee
Publications Committee
Education Committee
Students Committee
Development Committee

The Secretary may send an email to the membership to prepare a list of members interested in participating in the committees.

e. All committee chairs shall prepare and submit an annual written report to the Executive Committee.

f. The Nominations Committee must be appointed at least one year ahead of a MEDGEO. It shall consist of the Chair, two Councilors and two individual members of the Association not currently serving on the Executive Committee.

g. The Chairs of the Conference Committee and the Statute & By-Laws Committee shall be appointed just after the MEDGEO. The Chairs shall nominate the Members of their respective Committees, which shall consist of 5 members, and shall submit the list of names to the Executive Committee for approval.

h. The Awards Committee shall consist of the Chair, the two Co-Chairs and two Executive Committee Past-Chairs or two Honorary Members.

i. The Publications Committee, the Education Committee and the Students Committee shall consist of the Chair and at least two members of IMGA not in the Executive Committee.

l. The Chairs and Members of the Standing Committees shall each serve in the period between MEDGEO conferences. They may be elected for further terms.

Article 5. Election of Governance Bodies

Four months before the election date of the Governance Bodies, the Chair of the General Assembly will send a call (via email) to all members of the General Assembly to announce the election period. This communication should include the date of the elections, the voting option(s) and the period for the reception of candidacies to the Governance Bodies, which must not exceed 2 months before the election date.

Each candidate list must have a representative –mandatary-, who is responsible for sending all the information to the Chair of the General Assembly. The representative is the candidate for the position of Chair of the Executive Committee. In addition, each list should include the program/plan for the two years' period of mandate, and the names of the members who will take part of each Governance Body: the Executive Committee (Chair, Co- Chair for Geological Sciences, Co- Chair for Medical Sciences, Secretary, Treasurer and 6 Councilors), the General Assembly Board: (Chair, Co-Chair and Secretary) and Supervisory Board (Chair, 2 other members), according to Articles 4 to 7 of the IMGA Statutes and in good standing with the payment of their dues. The chairs of each Governance Body must be members with at least 5 years of membership. Representation on the Governance Bodies should strive to reflect global demographics, the different disciplines within medical geology, and gender balance. If any Governance Body member resigns for any reason, the Chair of that Governance Body will nominate another member to substitute for the resigning member within one month.

The Lists to be submitted must include:

- The name of the "mandatary" who is representing each list. (The mandatary is the EC chair nominee).
- A working plan for two years
- The names of the candidates for:
    - Executive Committee: Chair, Co-Chair for Geological Sciences, Co-Chair for Medical Sciences, Secretary, Treasurer, and 6 Councilors
    - General Assembly Board: Chair, Co-Chair, and Secretary
    - Supervisory Board: Chair, 2 Other members

Total number of members proposed: 17.

It is incumbent upon the General Assembly Board to verify the legitimacy of all candidate lists, in accordance with the Statutes and the By-laws, and inform the mandatary of each list about this decision up to 5 days after receipt thereof. The General Assembly Board has 5 days to verify and approve the list.

Fifteen days after the closing of the candidacy period, the Chair of the General Assembly will send the information about the candidacy lists to all members of the association via email. The voting will take place on the Association's webpage. Members will need their unique login and password in order to cast their votes. If voting cannot take place through the IMGA webpage, voting should be done by e-mail.

A simple majority of those members voting shall determine the winner of each Governing Body. The results of the election will be announced and the new Governance Bodies will become effective in the current MEDGEO meeting or in the next international meeting with IMGA representation/sponsorship where an extraordinary assembly can take place.

The period of service of Executive Committee shall be from the end of the MEDGEO at which it was elected to the end of the subsequent MEDGEO. The Chair, Co-Chairs and Councilors shall serve only two such consecutive terms as Chair, Co-Chairs and Councilor. The Secretary and Treasurer may be elected for further terms. [Note: It is preferable that, at the first application of this Bylaws, half of the Councilors serve only one term. In this way, the turnover of the Executive Committee will be gradual and there will be people who will preserve institutional memory and share information with the incoming Executive Committee.]

In case of an unforeseen vacancy occurring in the office of Chair, she/he may be replaced as Acting Chair first by the oldest (in age) Co-Chair, then by the other Co-Chair. In the case that none of these

three Officers can serve in this function, the Acting Chair, will be a member unanimously voted by the Executive Committee, who will serve for the rest of the term.

In the case of an unforeseen vacancy occurring in the offices of Co-Chair, Secretary, or Treasurer, the Executive Committee shall select one Councillor to fill the position on an interim capacity until the end of the term.

Article 6. Business

a. The Executive Committee shall appoint committees and arrange representation to other organizations; produce journals and/or special publications; organize short courses and symposia; conduct all initiatives in the interest of the Association; and prepare an annual report on the activities of the Association.

b. The Association is under no obligation to pay expenses that are incurred without the approval of the Officers. Before incurring any expenditure, committees appointed under Article 4 must obtain the approval of the appropriate Officers, who may require a current financial statement from the Treasurer before reaching a decision. The amount spent by each Committee or representative shall be itemized in the corresponding report.

c. The Treasurer shall provide a detailed financial report at the end of each year and prior to the installation of the newly-elected Treasurer.

d. The Executive Committee is responsible for the annual budget, which shall be based on the calendar year.

e. The Executive Committee shall call for an internal audit of the Association's financial records to be performed by the Supervisory Board at the conclusion of the Treasurer's term of office and prior to the installation of the newly-elected Treasurer. The Executive Committee may call for an external audit of the Association's financial records. [Note: Organizations usually have external audits. Depending on the actual IMGA budget, an external audit may not be needed every year]

Article 7. Awards

a. The Executive Committee shall have the responsibility for establishing Awards, approve the recipients of awards as nominated by the Awards Committee, and accord them appropriate recognition.

b. The Executive Committee may award, every two years during the MEDGEO, up to two certificates of recognition for *exceptional service* to the Association or to the discipline of Medical Geology. The award could be in recognition for a single act such as organizing a particularly successful medical geology conference, writing an especially influential published article, organizing active Local Chapters, or similar accomplishments. The award can also go to an individual for his/her body of work such as long and distinguished service to the Association or to the discipline of Medical Geology. The award will consist of a framed certificate of recognition and the awardees will be acknowledged in the IMGA Newsletter and on the website of the Association. In case of extraordinary service, the Executive Committee may also consider other appropriate recognition such as funds for participating in a MEDGEO conference. Any active Member of the Association can offer nominations. A majority vote (2/3) of the Executive Committee is required for approval of any of these nominations.

Article 8. International Conference on Medical Geology

a. IMGA shall promote International Conferences on Medical Geology (hereinafter MEDGEO) at two-year intervals. Ideally, each such Conference shall be in a country different from those in which the preceding two were held.

b. Firm, complete bids to host an International Conference on Medical Geology must be sent to the Secretary in writing at least 6 months before commencement of the MEDGEO held preceding the bid under consideration (That is, 2.5 years before the MEDGEO for which the bid is being proposed). The Conference Committee should evaluate whether he proposals are complete and issue a recommendation to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall report on the bids received at a public meeting to the General Assembly at the preceding MEDGEO and shall submit them to a vote.

c. The selected hosts for the next MEDGEO, who must be part of an established Chapter of the association, shall appoint a Local Conference Organizing Committee to be responsible for all arrangements in connection with the Conference, including publication of the proceedings, *e.g.,* in special editions of peer-reviewed journals or in a separate publication.

d. The members of the Executive Committee of the Association shall be advisory members of the Local Conference Organizing Committee as appropriate, but may not be full members of this Committee.

e. Members of the Executive Committee shall assist the Local Conference Organizing Committee in all matters of publicity and outreach.

f. If necessary, arrangements for timely publication of the proceedings in special editions of peer-reviewed journals or in a separate publication shall be made by the Conference Organizing Committee in collaboration with any editorial board that Executive Committee may appoint.

g. For activities in the host country or region, the Local Conference Organizing Committee shall have a banking account separate from that of IMGA, into which all money received for that MEDGEO shall be paid, and from which all debts incurred shall be paid. The account shall be in the custody of the Local Conference Organizing Committee, or of a Treasurer of the Conference appointed by the Local Conference Organizing Committee.

h. The Local Conference Organizing Committee will ensure that the Conference's income will cover all Conference expenses and will set the registration and field trip fees accordingly. The registration fee structure shall be arranged to give a financial incentive to IMGA members to attend, i.e., the registration fee shall be higher for those who are not members of IMGA. The Local Conference Organizing Committee is encouraged to formulate a registration fee structure that encourages membership in IMGA, making the differential between membership and non-membership registration fees equal to at least the cost of a two-year IMGA membership.

i. The registration fee for every registrant will include €15 (or its US equivalent), which will be paid to IMGA. This fee per registrant will go directly to the IMGA Student Travel Fund and can only be used to support duly registered in any institution of higher learning students attending the MEDGEO.

j. IMGA will not be responsible for any financial shortfall resulting from the Conference.

k. Any surplus funds, after payment of all just and lawful expenses and repayment of any loans, will be divided equally between the host institution and IMGA. If the entity responsible for organizing a MEDGEO is not a professional scientific society, then the surplus will be paid in full to the Treasurer of IMGA for deposit in the IMGA main banking account.

Article 9. Chapters

a. The Executive Committee can decide on the establishment of national groups of the Association, named Chapters, aimed to facilitate the growth of medical geology in a given country.

b. No more than one Chapter may be constituted for the same country unless there are social, geographic, or operational needs.

c. A request to the Association to form a Chapter shall be signed by at least five (5) members from that country in good standing of the Association and shall be submitted to the Executive Committee.

d. All members of the Chapter must be members of the Association.

e. All chapters must send regular reports for the Newsletter.

Article 10: Termination of Chairs of Chapters
The Executive Committee of IMGA may discharge Chair(s) of a Chapter for misconduct. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Committee is necessary for dismissal.

Article 11. Termination of a Chapter
The termination of a Chapter can be done by approval of the Executive Committee either at the justified request of its Chair or after due consideration by the IMGA Executive Committee.

Article 12. Professional Ethics
a. Members of the Association are expected to maintain the highest level of professional ethics.

b. Any Member of the Association who is found guilty by due legal process of a legal infraction that includes a breach of professional ethics, shall have her/his membership in the Association terminated on the basis of the Statutes.

Article 13. Amendments
a. Amendments to these By-Laws may be proposed by the Executive Committee, or by written proposal signed by ten (10) percent of the voting Members of the Association.

b. Proposed amendments shall be discussed by the Executive Committee, which then shall submit such amendments to the Members by ballot or to the Members present at the General Assembly meeting and shall be passed by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the Members voting with a minimum of twenty (20) percent of the membership responding.