Zeitschrift: IABSE bulletin = Bulletin AIPC = IVBH Bulletin

Band: 10 (1986)

Heft: B-39: IABSE bulletin

Vereinsnachrichten: The joint committee on structural safety

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3. The Joint Committee on Structural Safety

A Look to the Past

In 1971 the Liaison Committee which coordinates the activity of seven international associations in Civil Engineering, CEB, CIB, ECCS, FIP, IABSE, IASS and RILEM, created a Joint Committee on Structural Safety, JCSS, with the aim of improving the general knowledge in structural safety. Until 1984 the JCSS under the continuous chairmanship of Professor Júlio Ferry Borges, Portugal, has had 14 meetings not included meetings of the various subcommittees. During these meetings more than 200 papers on structural safety and related matters have been discussed. Several documents of general character and interest have been prepared and published. These documents supplied the background for the preparation of guidance documents concerning the design and construction of different types of construction and materials, among others several ISO documents and the CEB and ECCS Model Codes.

Reorganisation of the JCSS

Upon request of the JCSS the Liaison Committee discussed the possibilities and the details of a reorganisation and the terms of reference. The Member-Associations of the Liaison Committee agreed in 1985 that there was a continued need for a Joint Committee coordinating and promoting matters in the field of safety and reliability at an Inter-Association level. The Liaison Committee felt that in maintaining the name and the well known abbreviation «JCSS» the field of activity should be updated, working procedures improved and membership reconsidered.

The reorganisation of the JCSS was introduced by creating the following bodies and respective functions:
- The **Plenum** of the JCSS, chaired by the **President**
- The **Working Party** of the JCSS, chaired by the **Reporter.**

The Plenum of the JCSS consists of up to six specialists designated by each Member-Association of the Liaison Committee and in addition six specialists selected by the President. All members are designated for a four-years period but may be re-appointed after consultation with the President. It meets at intervals of about two years and discusses, approves and submits to the Liaison Committee results obtained within the JCSS.

The Working Party of the JCSS consists of about ten to twelve really active members selected by the President and the Reporter. It meets twice a year on the average and establishes long-term and short-term working programmes, sets up task groups and reports within adequate intervals to the Plenum.

From the terms of reference the following points may be listed:
- To transform new basic scientific knowledge into principles usable in a pre-codification state.
- Upon request to provide appropriate support for the work of the Associations forming the Liaison Committee, by means of updating existing or preparing new guidance documents.
- To improve the general knowledge and understanding within the fields of safety, reliability and the interface between quality assurance techniques and the assessment of structural reliability.
- To offer a framework for technical coordination of the related activities of the associations, to encourage research and to disseminate information.

The JCSS does not dispose of any financial funds. All members work on a voluntary basis. The Liaison Committee hopes that secretariat expenses related to the JCSS will be covered by National Institutes and/or offers in kind by its Member-Associations.

Appointments

The Liaison Committee in 1985 appointed the following persons:
- President: Professor Júlio Ferry Borges, Portugal
- Reporter: Dr. Marita Kersken-Bradley, FRG.

The IABSE designated the following six members: G. Breitschaft, FRG; B. Hillemeier, FRG; F. Knoll, CDN; H.O. Madsen, N; J. Schneider, CH; C.J. Turkstra, USA. Other Member-Associations of the Liaison Committee did the same and the new JCSS meanwhile is set up for the period of 1986 to 1989. It hosts a considerable number of well known and promisingly active experts, many of them also distinguished members of IABSE and its various commissions.

Work Has Started

The first meeting of the reorganized but still incomplete JCSS was held during the IABSE-ECCS Joint Symposium 1985 in Luxembourg. The Working Party has met twice since then and will meet again in October 1986. The almost complete Plenum met in Paris on April 29, 1986.

There is a rather long list of topics to be promoted within the Working Party within the next years. These topics all relate to one of the major goals of the new JCSS which is drafting a «Harmonized inter-associational Model Code for probability based decision making and design» which could form the basis for a new generation of Model Codes to be elaborated by various organizations and associations at the end of the Century.

Rather short term activities are pursued within the Plenum itself. Among others the elaboration of a so-called Short Term Model Code Volume 1 is under way intended to replace the Model Code Volume 1 issued in 1976 by CEB on the basis of a former work of the JCSS. Also a paper on «Professional Ethics» has been discussed at the recent Plenum meeting.

The IABSE expresses its deep interest in the work of the JCSS. It thanks its members who are willing to devote some of their rare spare time to this undertaking and is looking forward to a fruitful cooperation of members and specialists from various countries and international associations.

J. Schneider
Secretary, Technical Committee
IABSE