# TO RUSSIA, FOR MATH

The St. Petersburg ICM is rapidly approaching, and soon its foreign participants will be planning their trips to Russia. The ICM Local Organizing Committee felt that, at this important moment, mathematicians in many countries might receive very one-sided information about Russian mathematics in general, and preparations for the Congress in particular. We thought that it would be good for our foreign colleagues to hear directly from the chairs of Russian mathematical centers, institutes, departments, societies, etc. We thus partnered with the Notices of the American Mathematical Society, the world's premier publication dedicated to the mathematics profession, and sent out the following questionnaire.

① What does the ICM means for you and your team? How important is international cooperation for you and your team ?

② Do you plan to send young mathematicians working or studying with you to the congress (for example, as volunteers, recipients of the Kovalevskaya grant, etc.)? What do you think participation in the ICM will mean for students, graduate students, and young scientists ?

③ Is there something you are planning for the guests of the ICM in your city/ department/... ? Which result do you expect from the satellite and other events of the congress for the development of mathematics in the Russian Federation ?

④ What would you personally say to your foreign colleagues planning their trip to Russia ? What would you say to those calling for a boycott of Congress ?

⑤ What would you say to our foreign colleagues about the future generations of Russian and probably world mathematics who are still sitting at the desks of Russian schools ? What is the strength of our traditions of school mathematics and what could Russia share with the world community here ?

⑥ How would you describe the interest for mathematics in Russian society ?

Here we publish the complete responses received. The last two questions ⑤ and ⑥ were supplemental for directors of mathematics high-schools and other outreach programs, who sometimes felt they are lacking material for questions ①,②,③. A collection of quotes from from the responses received will be published in the August 2021 issues of the Notices of the AMS.
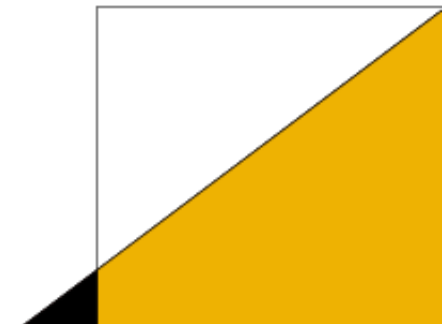
Sergei Ivanov

Chair of the Mathematics and Computer Science Department at the Saint Petersburg State University
Principal Researcher at the Saint Petersburg Department of Steklov Mathematical Institute
Research Interests: geometry and dynamical systems

① Mathematics is international by its nature, and mathematicians are a global community. It is important for us to be a part of this community. Here in Saint Petersburg, we explore all possibilities of international collaboration. We have two young mathematical organizations in the city, the Euler Institute and the Chebyshev Laboratory at Saint Petersburg State University. Both have a special focus on international collaboration. We are holding conferences, encouraging students' academic mobility, inviting international postdocs and visitors. Our faculty and research fellows collaborate with coauthors from all across the globe.

Our local community is excited about ICM 2022 being in our city. Such a major event will boost the popularity of mathematics in the country, promote new ideas and trends of modern mathematics. We are hoping that the ICM will let many of us find new contacts and collaborations with colleagues across the world.

② We are in Saint Petersburg, the ICM venue, and we have over 200 math students at our bachelor and master programmes. They are strong and motivated students, many of them are eager to attend conferences and lectures by visiting professors. Some of them are preparing to volunteer at the ICM, most are anticipating great lectures where they can learn new ideas and inspiration.

④ Welcome to Saint Petersburg! The ICM is a good occasion to visit this beautiful city and its many tourist attractions.

It is hard to comment on the political campaign against the ICM. The logic of linking mathematics to politics is beyond my understanding.

Sergei Kislyakov

Former director of St Petersburg Department of Steklov Mathematical Institute (PDMI)
Executive director, Leonhard Euler International Mathematical Institute

① I think I can speak on behalf of the two institutions mentioned above. PDMI is an internationally recognized mathematical center fully involved in international mathematical life since very long ago. Euler Institute was especially created in the late 1980s to boost international mathematical activity in the city and in the entire country. Since 2019, it is run jointly by PDMI and St Petersburg State University under a special program directed by the Government of Russia and devoted to the support of the mathematical sciences. The Congress in our city will be a great event, very much expected by all mathematicians here. This is only the second ICM in Russia, the previous one was held in Moscow in 1966. I was a schoolboy (of a special mathematical school however) at that time, but even in that status I could personally feel the enthusiasm of the Soviet mathematical community. Moreover, in later years (when I was a student and then a young researcher), the impact of Congress-1966 on the mathematical life in Soviet Union was quite perceivable.

We expect an impact of the same sort but at a greater level from ICM-2022. Not to list all evident things, I'd like to mention that much more talented young people are expected to choose mathematics as their profession in the years to come, precisely as this happened half a century ago.

③ The Euler Institute will host 9 satellite conferences. Their intended participants are quite enthusiastic and definitely plan to come to St. Petersburg. In general, satellite conferences are planned in various regions of Russia. We expect an increased level of mathematical activity there as a result. Surely, the same is expected in greater mathematical centers like St.Petersburg, but at a higher level. The impact of these events will be especially important for young mathematicians.

④ You will be very welcome. People here will do their best to make your stay comfortable, pleasant and useful.
As to the calls for the boycott of the ICM, as a mathematician I know that, even in everyday life, it is easier to communicate with people (no matter mathematicians or not) who understand what a mathematical proof is. Nevertheless, I also know that

in fairly rare cases this understanding is compatible with certain common sense aberrations, from slight to total. Surely, this is neither good nor bad, such is the nature of our World. I would be happy to suppose that we are merely watching yet another manifestation of the latter natural phenomenon for, otherwise, the behavior of the actors would have been described in quite different terms.

Igor Krichever

Director of Skoltech Center for Advanced Studies, Moscow, Professor, Higher school of Economics, Moscow, and Columbia University, New York

I was admitted to the Department of Mathematics (Mech-Mat) of Moscow State University in 1967. A year before that, ICM-66 was held in Moscow. As a freshman I was too young to appreciate fully the role of that event. Later, from my professors and senior fellows, I heard numerous stories about what the Congress meant to them. For almost everyone, this was the first opportunity to meet, talk about mathematics with their foreign colleagues, who were previously known only from journal publications.

For me, the model of what happened is my own impressions of the first international conference in which I was "allowed to participate" - the first Soviet-American conference on the Soliton Theory held in 1979 in Kiev. Two weeks of almost round-the-clock (we all stayed in the same hotel) talks about mathematics with great mathematicians and physicists: Gelfand, Sagdeev, Mark Kac, McKean, Lax, Novikov, Zakharov, Kruskal and others. Ideas for many of my papers were born then.

In 2022, 56 years after the Moscow Congress, the International Mathematical Congress is to be held in St. Petersburg. What do I expect from it, or rather what I would like it to become?

Over the decades that have passed since the beginning of "perestroika", life in Russia has changed a lot. Both externally and internally. External changes are immediately visible to everyone. Today's Moscow is a modern beautiful (and extremely well-kept) city with fantastic museums, old and new music halls and theaters, tons of restaurants, cafes and nightclubs.

When speaking on today's mathematical life in Russia, one has to change the tone to the opposite. Young talented youth are still born in Russia. The remarkable traditions of Soviet school education are also still alive. As a result, the level of undergraduate students at Math Department of Higher School of Economics or at the new bachelor program at St.-Petersburg University are at least on par with

math majors at top Universities in the US or in any other part of the world. But who will teach and introduce them to modern mathematics after that?

Several generations of mathematicians left Russia. I myself have been a professor at Columbia University since 1997. For the last 7 years I have been spending at least half a year in Moscow. One of the reasons is that I want to return what I received from my teachers and to be a part of efforts for preserving and fostering the great traditions of the Soviet and Russian mathematical schools. My main affiliation in Moscow is Skoltech -- a new university that emerged 10 years ago in the west of Moscow. One stop by high-speed train, 18 minutes from the historical center of Moscow and you will find yourself among the buildings of the 21st century. Skoltech new campus was awarded Prix Versailles 2019 prize at UNESCO HQ in Paris.

I sincerely invite everyone to take part in the satellite conference on Isomonodromic Deformations, Painleve Equations, and Integrable Systems that will be organized at Skoltech. Some of the sessions of two other satellite conferences ("Geometric representation theory" and "Combinatorics of moduli spaces, cluster algebras and topological recursion", organized by Skoltech in cooperation with the HSE and the Steklov Institute) will also be held at Skoltech.

Conditions for doing research at Skoltech, the only private university in Russia are comparable to that at US universities, but for a revival of the mathematical life in Russia there should be many more of such places. I would like to believe that the upcoming Congress, whose main goal is to be a milestone in the mathematical life of the whole world, in addition will become a push in this direction for the mathematical life of Russia.

I know that there are those who are calling for a boycott of the Congress because of violations of basic human rights in Russia. I agree that today's political landscape in Russia is dire. If I am in Moscow, I always take part in protest rallies. But I strongly disagree with the calls for a boycott of Congress. It will be counterproductive. At the political level, it will be just one another protest, but it will be a severe blow to mathematical life in Russia.

There is a toast in Russia: let's drink to the success of our hopeless cause. Possibly, the desire to foster next generations of young mathematicians in Russia, who will enrich the world community is just as hopeless as the struggle for an ideal world and human rights in it. But it is worth doing both instead of counterpose the two.

Daud Mamiy

Rector of the Adyghe State University, PhD in Mathematics
Areas of interest: differential equations, dynamical system,
mathematical education

① The International Mathematical Congress is a historic and significant event for the entire mathematical community of Russia, including the mathematicians of the Caucasus. The leadership of the Adyghe State University, the faculty and research staff of ASU consider it as one of the most important scientific events held in Russia in recent decades. International cooperation is extremely important for the university. In the last 5 years, the university has actively engaged in the implementation of scientific and educational projects in mathematics, including those on the international level. International conferences, schools and Olympiads are held annually at ASU, and their range and focus are growing.

② Adyghe State University plans to send a team of students of the Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science, as well as 2-3 young mathematicians, if possible, to the congress as volunteers. We believe that the experience of participating in such a large-scale international event is extremely important for young people, especially from regional universities. This will allow them both to expand the range of understanding of what is happening today in modern mathematics, and to get a unique life experience of participating in such a large-scale event.

③ Adyghe State University plans to hold a number of events dedicated to the congress: satellite conference "Models, games", international conference "Mathematical talent and mathematical education" , international Caucasian Mathematical Olympiad, a series of evenings and concerts within the framework of the project "Music in the Mathematical Park", a camp for schoolchildren "Young Mathematician" in the All-Russian Children's Center "Orlyonok", a student school "Modern Combinatorics and game theory", a summer mathematical school in Adygea for schoolchildren and a number of other events. Satellite events, in our opinion, will promote the development of mathematics in regional universities and international cooperation and collaborations, and help strengthen friendly ties between mathematicians in Russia and other countries.

④ Dear friends and colleagues! Russia as a whole and the entire Russian mathematical community are waiting for you at the congress. We want to show you the beauty and diversity of the regions of our country, to show you our hospitality. The Caucasus Mathematical Olympiad held by Adyghe State University is held under the slogan "Caucasus without Borders" and is an example of how mathematics can unite students from the Black Sea region and the Caucasus region, torn by political contradictions and conflicts. Mathematicians have always been an example of how to cooperate, be friends and communicate regardless of political circumstances and events. Boycotting has never been an effective way to solve problems. Examples of this are the Olympic Games in Moscow and Los Angeles in 1980 and 1984. We are waiting for you in Russia, we are waiting for you in the Caucasus, we are waiting for you in Adygea.

⑤ In Russia, students' interest in mathematics is traditionally high. Millions of school-age children take part in the All-Russian Olympiad of Schoolchildren in Mathematics and other mathematical Olympiads and competitions. The system for identifying mathematically gifted children and further developing their abilities has a long-standing tradition in Russia, dating back to the 30s of the twentieth century. Various forms of conducting mathematical competitions in Russia are in many cases unique and may be of interest to colleagues from other countries. Innovative methods of teaching mathematics have been created and developed over many decades, and they can also be very interesting.

⑥ In the Russian society, interest in mathematical education and mathematics has always been high. In recent years, there has been an increase in interest in mathematics, not only among children, but also among adults seeking to expand their knowledge. Various forms of popularization of mathematics make mathematical education in the country fashionable.

Yuri Matiyasevich

President, St Petersburg Mathematical Society
Interests: Algorithmic problems of algebra and number theory, graph coloring, algorithms in words, Riemann zeta function

① I was fortunate to participate in the Moscow Congress of 1966, which was the first and so far the only International Congress of Mathematicians that took place in my country. I was a sophomore at the time, just getting my first meaningful results. The opportunity to see the great foreign mathematicians (in my case, they were, in particular, the logicians Kleene, Tarski, and Henkin) made a huge and inspiring impression on me, and I continued to work even more diligently on Hilbert's 10-problem (which, by the way, was formulated at the Paris Congress of 1900).

My efforts were successful by the time of the next congress in Nice, where I reported on it. That Congress is memorable for me because I met the American mathematician Martin Davis there. He started work on Hilbert's 10th problem much earlier, and at the beginning of the 1950s, he formulated a very bold hypothesis that had, in addition to the unsolvability of Hilbert's 10-problem, many other consequences, some of which seemed completely implausible. By the end of the '60s, Martin Davis, along with two other American mathematicians, Julia Robinson (who later became the first woman President of the American Mathematical Society) and Hilary Putnam made significant advances in proving the Davis conjecture. I was lucky enough to take the final step in proving this hypothesis, which is now known as DPRM-theorem. This is a vivid example of successful international cooperation, although at that time my communication with my American colleagues was exclusively through their publications. Subsequently, our cooperation went by correspondence (through the "iron Curtain" and without Internet), and I have joint papers with Martin Davis and Julia Robinson (I first met her in 1969 in Bucharest at another international congress on Logic, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science).

③ In 2011, as part of the agreement on our cooperation with the Turku University, St. Petersburg hosted the First Russian-Finnish Symposium on Discrete Mathematics (RuFiDiM). Since then, these symposia have been held alternately in Russia and Finland, and they quickly turned from bilateral to international. The symposium,

which will be held in Petrozavodsk in 2022, has received the status of a satellite event of the Congress.

The venues of satellite events in Russia are not only St. Petersburg, but also small cities like Veliky Novgorod and Petrozavodsk. For mathematicians living and working there, the arrival
of foreign scientists and Russian mathematicians from major mathematical centers is an important event that stimulates their scientific activity.

④ Welcome!
And to those calling for a boycott of Congress: think whether a boycott is an adequate means to achieve your stated goals, and what negative consequences it may have for Russian and world mathematics.

Olga Pochinka

Chair of Fundamental Mathematics program, HSE Nizhny Novgorod, and Chair of International Laboratory of Dynamical systems and Applications, HSE Nizhny Novgorod

① ICM is a very significant event for all mathematicians, an opportunity to see like-minded people from all over the world, hear firsthand about modern research, feel like part of a large creative team and be sure that you are doing something worthwhile. International cooperation is not an end in itself for me and my team, but expanding the range of professional contacts, exchanging ideas and working together on common problems with top mathematicians is definitely useful for a scientist.

② For students and young scientists, participation in the congress can give a strong motivation to pursue professional growth.

③ We plan to hold a satellite conference " Dynamical Systems. Theory and Applications" in Nizhny Novgorod, which will include a school for young scientists. Since the middle of the last century, our city has been a center of research in qualitative theory of dynamical systems, which gave rise to the theory of bifurcations. This conference will give strong support to our mathematical traditions, including the tradition of international cooperation.New opportunities to visit Russian and foreign universities and research institutes will possibly open up for our young scientists, and this will lead to an increased interest in a good mathematical education, and the development of the latter.

④ St. Petersburg, where the congress is held, and the Russian cities that host satellite conferences, are located in very beautiful places, have beautiful modern and historical architecture, and the Russian people are very hospitable. In addition to the exchange of professional information, a trip to Russia will surely be a source of inspiration and a lot of positive emotions.

Maxim Pratusevich

Director of Saint Petersburg Lyceum 239, PhD in Mathematics

① As one of the leaders of mathematical education in Russia, we welcome and support the organization of such a significant mathematical event in St. Petersburg. The opportunity for students to see with their own eyes the cream of the crop of the world's mathematical thought is unique and will certainly contribute to young talented researchers choosing mathematics as their profession.

Our lyceum actively cooperates with many foreign schools and universities. For example, an agreement has been signed with Ecole Polytechnique, which allows the graduates of our lyceum to enroll in bachelor's degree programs without entrance tests.

② Many of our students, teachers and graduates are going to work at the congress as volunteers. In addition, we plan to take part in the Congress events related to mathematical education.

③ Our lyceum is one of the organizers of the Satellite for mathematical education. We believe that the Congress and satellite events will give an impetus to the development of mathematics in Russia. In particular, we are confident that the exchange of ideas among a broad community of scientists will lead to new mathematical discoveries.

④ As the 2018 FIFA World Cup has shown, Russia is a hospitable country with a lot to see. St. Petersburg is charming in the summer, and guests, in addition to the events of the Congress, will have a great opportunity to see St. Petersburg and its surroundings. I am confident that the Congress will promote productive, mutually beneficial and respectful communication among mathematicians of the whole world.

Igor Rubanov

Deputy Director of the Kirov Center for Additional Education of Gifted Schoolchildren

A graduate of Leningrad University, Igor Rubanov has been living and working in Kirov since 1981. In his youth, he studied set-theoretic topology, the theory of shapes, and at the same time became interested in working with gifted schoolchildren. He is now a teacher, methodologist and organizer of work with gifted children. Founder and participant of successful projects that still exist today: the Kirov Summer Multi-subject School (founded in 1985), the Kirov Center for Additional Education of Gifted Schoolchildren (1991), the Ural Tournament of Young Mathematicians for grades 6-8 (1993), the Mathematical Tournament of High school students "Kolmogorov Memorial Cup" (1997), the International Mathematical Olympiad for Eighth graders (2008). Member of the Method Commission and the jury of the Russian Mathematical Olympiad. His students have won 10 medals at International Mathematical Olympiads.

④ I, like you, am outraged by the unjust sentence of Azat Miftakhov, whom I know as a former student of the Kirov Summer School. But many examples show that a boycott of the congress will not help the release of Azat, nor will it help to achieve progress on other issues. The Russian authorities may even be pleased with another argument that helps them portray Russia as a "besieged fortress". The Russian mathematical community will suffer a significant loss. Did it deserve such a punishment for the sins of those in power? Think about it – and then do as your conscience tells you.

⑤ I can speak with authority only about the traditions of extracurricular mathematical education of mathematically gifted children. Since the 30s of the last century and up to our time, it has been strong primarily because it relies not on the state, but one the initiative and work of enthusiasts - - - scientists, teachers and students. In Russia, there is now a strong informal community of mathematicians-mentors of gifted children, whose members lead numerous clubs, conduct math camps and various individual and team competitions. Of particular interest to the world

community here may be tournaments of math teams, competitions that develop the ability to work in a team and approach problem solving critically. Over the past few decades, many new ideas have been introduced, developed, and reflected in numerous publications. There is definitely something to share with the world community: for example, the Russian book "Leningrad Mathematical Circles", reflecting the experience of the 1970s, has appeared in several editions in the United States, India, etc. Of great interest to the world community, in my opinion, is the expertise of leading Russian physical and mathematical schools, such as St. Petersburg Lyceum 239 or Moscow Lyceum "School #2".

⑥ Lower than in the USSR, where the cult of exact and natural sciences was partly fueled by the interests of the military, but quite high.

Alexandra Skripchenko

Dean, Faculty of Mathematics, HSE Moscow

① The Faculty of Mathematics actively cooperates with universities in the USA, Canada, Europe, Japan, and China at all levels — from student mobility to joint research work. We have 4 international laboratories, foreign members of which work in the leading universities of the world. Almost all the scientific events (conferences, schools, colloquiums) that we organize — and their number reaches 30 per year — are truly international and attract participants from all over the world. Among the staff of the faculty and associated laboratories, 14 people participated in International Mathematical Congresses as invited speakers, and three gave plenary talks. Therefore, the ICM is, first of all, a panoramic mathematical conference with the highest level of presentations, an opportunity to meet with our colleagues. It is also an opportunity to engage our motivated students with the most relevant problems of modern mathematics, using, among other things, the charisma of outstanding researchers --- the ICM speakers.

② Yes, of course, we will encourage the participation of our students, graduate students, and young scientists in the work of the congress. This is a useful life experience and a unique opportunity to expand your horizons (and not only in the field of mathematics). At the same time, for many young people, participation in satellite conferences focused on a specific topic can be very useful both for mathematical development and for establishing the first scientific connections.

③ The members of our Faculty of Mathematics participate in the organization of 7 satellite conferences, 6 of which will be held at least partially at the HSE. We hope for interesting talks and productive discussions during breaks, in which not only established mathematicians, but also fledgeling mathematicians will be able to take part. We also hope that those of our guests who rarely visit Russia will enjoy Moscow and, of course, our Faculty of Mathematics, so that they will want to come to us regularly.

④ I understand and respect the position of people who are concerned about the politics, the situation with human rights, and consider their participation or non-participation in scientific events as a certain political statement. However, I cannot

share this position. It seems to me that direct interaction is always the most effective. The International Congress of Mathematicians attracts a large number of young researchers from developing countries, where the mathematical culture is still being formed. Who they meet at the ICM will very much determine what this world will look like in the near future. I believe in personal communication and its role both in mathematical discoveries and in spreading the ideas of humanism.

Come visit us !

Mikhail Sluch

Director and mathematics teacher, School #2, Moscow

① The traditions of Russian mathematical education are bases on active mathematicians working with school children. It was so 60 years ago, when Lavrentiev created the first specialized center in Novosibirsk, Kolmogorov created the boarding school #18 in Moscow, and Gelfand created School #2 in Moscow specialized in physics and mathematics. What's important, these were based not on one-time lectures and meetings, but regular work and regular teaching. And today, many teachers of strong mathematical schools are active in research. From this point of view, the ICMis an important event for our team. And a reason to meet and communicate (especially in the current difficult conditions) with mathematicians from other countries.

④ Russia is a country of great hospitality. Russia is a country with the strongest mathematical traditions. In Russia, a lot of schoolchildren and students - especially in recent years - are focused on studying mathematics as a core research area, as well as applications of mathematics in other fields.

For them, the Mathematical Congress is a highly anticipated event that can become a central impetus for their scientific biography.

⑤ The Lyceum "School #2" in Moscow, where I work, is a specialized physics and mathematics school with 60 years of tradition. Admission is based on an entrance exam. And it is interesting that traditionally this exam is very competitive, with more than 10 people per place, which indicates a huge interest in mathematics among quite young schoolchildren.

When entering the Lyceum, children choose hard work. They have extra school on Saturday (ordinary schools have a five day school week), after school they mostly attend additional classes and math clubs, and participate in various math competitions. This speaks of a great love for mathematics!

Modern mathematical education has changed a lot. Many students are well aware that they will be engaged not so much in pure mathematics as in its applications.

Nevertheless, they greatly appreciate the traditions of Russian fundamental mathematical education, realizing that it creates the basis for their further education and scientific activity in a variety of fields.

◎ We, the mathematical educator of Russia, treat the mathematical science with great respect.

Many people understand that it is mathematics that underlies the achievements in high-tech areas that the country would like to be proud of, and which put it among the leading countries in the world. For example, in space exploration, exploration and mining of mineral resources, even in the creation and development of modern weapons systems.

Also, many representatives of Russian society traditionally have a strong desire to develop their own judgments, to analyze - a natural response to the dominance of a certain ideology for many decades. In this regard, people are very attentive to the tools that allow them to make such judgments. And these certainly include mathematics.

Dmitry Treschev

Director, Steklov Mathematical Institute, Moscow
Research interests: Hamiltonian dynamics, integrability and chaos.

① Personally for me ICM is associated with my youth. Zurich 1994, I am slightly under 30, a poster talk, a possibility to see and hear mathematicians known from books and papers, which I studied and referred to. After this event I have understood that I want to be a part of this community, to learn, to work, to teach students, to be surprised and to surprise.

The next association is Beiging 2002. An invited talk, meetings with friends, attempts to understand new people and results from other domains. In that time I realized that the main mission of ICM's is to convince people that mathematics is united and the mathematical community is not restricted by institutions, areas of research and national borders.

② ③ Steklov Mathematical Institute is a leading Russian research institute in mathematics and its applications in mechanics and theoretical physics. We cannot imagine our work without communication with our colleagues throughout the world, without collaboration and competition. Administration of the Steklov Institute always supports international contacts of our research staff. Our colleagues can be found among participants of all ICM's since the date of the institute creation. I expect that our institute will be represented noticeably in the St Petersburg 2022 congress. Especially we will encourage to participate our young researchers. Our Institute hosts four ambitious satellite conferences in algebraic geometry, differential equations, probability theory, and theoretical physics.

④ St Petersburg is one of the most beautiful cities in Russia with long mathematical traditions starting from Euler. I always enjoy visiting St Petersburg and hope that ICM will be another reason for me to visit this city, to enjoy its museums, architecture, rivers and bridges.I have nothing to say to those who have decided to boycott the congress. To people who doubt I would say the following. I am sure that mathematics should be kept as far as possible from politics and the mathematical community should be protected from political influence. If you visit St Petersburg then in addition to the participation in a great mathematical

celebration you will have the possibility to compare images of Russia given by mass media and social networks with reality. I expect, surprises await you.

Victor Vasiliev

President, Moscow Mathematical Society

① I consider ICM (with its satellite events) in Russia an excellent opportunity to show to our national community (especially to its younger part) the large world of contemporary mathematics, in its richness and diversity.

A great problem of our life (in particular of the scientific one) is the trend towards isolation, promoted (besides our own inertia) by too many influential people who cannot accept free competition in accordance with the international standards, or do not like openness and transparency, or for whom confrontation is their only natural business.
Opening the borders, creating scientific ties and collaborations, free exchange of information, fixing a proper image of contemporary scientific life in the minds of our beginners – these are my hopes for this event.

② ③ I am not an administrative person, so formally I cannot send anyone; certainly, many members of the Moscow Math. Society will participate in ICM and its satellites in various capacities.

④ Also, I think that closing the doors would increase the stink in our room.