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## **10 questions to Dr. Jean Paul Chabard IAHR Vice-President**

HydroLink

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# 10 QUESTIONS TO...

## Dr. Jean Paul Chabard IAHR Vice-President

Interviewed by Michele Mossa and Corrado Gisondi

**Mossa/Gisondi: What do you think about the future development of research in hydraulics in the near future?**

*Chabard:* In the future, research in hydraulics will become more and more trans/pluridisciplinary and will integrate more and more sophisticated modeling. These models will require improvement of numerical models as well as experimental studies and field measurements.

Moreover new applications will develop due to the need for CO<sub>2</sub> free electricity production and climate change. Already, research on marine energies is developing very rapidly.

As research is becoming more and more transdisciplinary, IAHR should probably develop stronger relationships and partnerships with other water associations.

**“IAHR has to develop stronger regional events”**

**Over the past 30 years our membership has remained fairly constant at just over 2,000, but the centre of mass of membership has shifted significantly from USA and Europe. Even if it is important that IAHR membership has expanded so much in the Far East, and particularly China, many of us are concerned about the decline in members from the U.S.A. and Northern Europe. What is your opinion on this point?**

It is a real problem. Even if new markets for hydraulic applications are mainly in Far East, I think that IAHR has to work to develop the membership in USA and European countries. Membership expectations can be different according to the countries and IAHR has to develop stronger regional events. The IAHR European Congress for instance is a very good opportunity.

**The world of hydraulics has moved on since the early 1980s; we have the EU Water Framework Directive, the World Water Forum, Environment Agencies etc, all dealing with water. In many countries, particularly northern Europe and the USA, our profession has also moved on and changed with the times. How can the research community drive and give directions for the environmental legislation of the future?**

Research people can be more proactive. They should establish research agenda documents on water research, which can be sent to the decision-makers. IAHR can help in establishing the link between the various shareholders.

**Research areas in hydraulics include “water management”, “river basin management”, “coastal zone management”, “environmental risk protection”, “classic hydraulics”, etc. In your opinion, which of these hydraulic branches will have a major development and interest in the next years?**

In my opinion, climate change will probably be one of the main drivers for research in the next 10 years. This is why I think that the fields which will have major developments are “water management” and “river basin management”. But Climate Change will also need to reinforce research on “coastal zone management” and “environmental risk protection”.

**Contaminated water and poor sanitation is still a major cause of illness, with diarrheal disease being the principal cause of morbidity and mortality in children under 5 years in developing nations. [...] Engineering solutions drove the reduction of water-related illness in the emerging nineteenth century conurbations of the industrialized nations of today. In your opinion how can the hydraulic community help to solve this worldwide problem? Which are the IAHR steps in this direction?**

IAHR can help in promoting efficient technologies in the developing countries. For that, the association has to bridge the gap between



Dr. Jean Paul Chabard is currently IAHR Vice-President and he is the Chair of IAHR Division IPD (Innovation and Professional Development). Jean Paul Chabard's professional background is in fluid mechanics and thermal transfer. From 1984 he worked in the Research and Development Division of EDF (EDF &RD) where he was successively Director of the Laboratoire National d'Hydraulique Department and of the Thermal Transfer and Aerodynamics Department.

research and practice more efficiently. We should be in a situation to innovate more and helping transferring new ideas in applications. IAHR has created a new division named "Innovation and Professional Development". In this framework, we can launch new initiatives, for instance in the field of water desalination. The question is to find for each of them a champion who is in a good position for managing them! This is always a key point in an association – which is based on volunteers.

**Climate change has been called "an inconvenient truth". What is your opinion on this point?**

As I mentioned before, I am really thinking that Climate Change will modify in depth our relationship to our world. With overpopulation and primary resource scarcity, they are the 3 main challenges for the next century!

***"I cannot imagine a hydraulics research laboratory which is only "virtual"!"***

**IAHR has recently updated its by-laws, including the name and some organizational rules. What is your personal feedback in this regard?**

IAHR is moving and changing and it is absolutely necessary in a changing world. But the change of by-laws and the change of name are not enough. We have to be sure that every member is also changing in his/her relation to the association. This is expected through the fact that each member has to elect a preferred committee and feel personally engaged in its activities. We still need to promote that idea.

**Typical expensive research topics involve physical hydraulic laboratories. What future do you expect for these large laboratories? Do you have any suggestion for their rationalization?**

Experimental work is absolutely necessary in order to understand the physics of flows. I cannot imagine a hydraulics research laboratory which is only "virtual". Nevertheless, it is true that very large facilities can be shared between several institutes. In the past the European Community launched several projects for encouraging that. I think that they were quite a success.

**Could you tell us your future move to reach the main goals of your IAHR vice-presidency?**

A. Well, as IAHR Vice-President, I am also chair of the IPD Division. My purpose is to work with the Division Secretary, Angelos Findikakis, and all the people involved in the activities of the Division for developing its activities and especially for the benefit of our corporate and institute members. This will be accomplished through a better understanding of their expectations. In the IPD workplan, we have also the goal of establishing a new strategic plan for IAHR.

**The last question is not exactly a question. You are free to direct to our readers a message of yours on a topic that is dear to your heart.**

My message would be: "Move fast, be imaginative and creative. Nothing is impossible, just try it!"