

Committee on International Research and Education

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The mission of the Committee on International Research and Education is to enhance the role of the Acoustical Society of America in international research and education in acoustics.

The Acoustical Society of America (ASA) Committee on International Research and Education (CIRE) was appointed in 2006 after a long process of careful discussion about the need to assist acousticians in Eastern Europe (EE) and the former Soviet Union to survive the severe economic and political changes that followed the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991. In this article, we trace the development of this process from the precipitating event to the present moment of broad internationalization of the ASA. **Figure 1** provides a timeline of the critical events in this process.

In the fall of 1992, ASA President Herman Medwin appointed an Ad Hoc Committee to Study ASA-EE Cooperation. This committee included Ira Dyer, who served as chair, and David Blackstock, Malcolm Crocker, and Mark Hamilton as members. This was followed in 1993 with the appointment of a new committee called the Selection Committee for Grants to Former Eastern Bloc Countries. The committee included Peter Mikhalevsky, chair, and Joseph Blue, Malcolm Crocker, James Lynch, and Joseph Pope as members. In collaboration with the International Science Foundation, a program of the Soros Foundation, this committee supported student grants and distribution of free subscriptions to *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* (JASA) to 60 universities and institutes in EE, Russia, and other nations comprising the former Soviet Union.

In 1994, this committee's purview was broadened and further specified. Specifically, the ASA Executive Council approved plans and committed ASA funds to help acousticians from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and EE.¹ This new ASA committee, the Committee for Support for Acoustics in the Commonwealth of Independent States and Eastern Europe, implemented four major new initiatives.

- (1) The CIS/EE Research Grant Program to provide up to \$15,000 for 2 two-year grants and between 5 and 10 one-year grants of \$500 to \$1,000 each.
- (2) The CIS/EE Student Fellowship Program to provide a small stipend to deserving students in acoustics at universities and institutes.
- (3) The CIS/EE Membership Program to sponsor ASA memberships and pay dues for a limited number of "needy" acousticians.
- (4) The CIS/EE Personal Computer Initiative to obtain and distribute used PCs donated by ASA members or their organizations.

This initiatives also resulted in the funding of two research grants, one related to atmospheric research and one in the area of speech communication. In addition, six students received fellowships of \$600 each. ASA also added a one-time request for donations to support acousticians in the former Soviet Union and EE countries on its 1994 membership renewal invoices. The request resulted in a donation of \$13,000 from ASA members that, when added to the \$20,000 committed by the

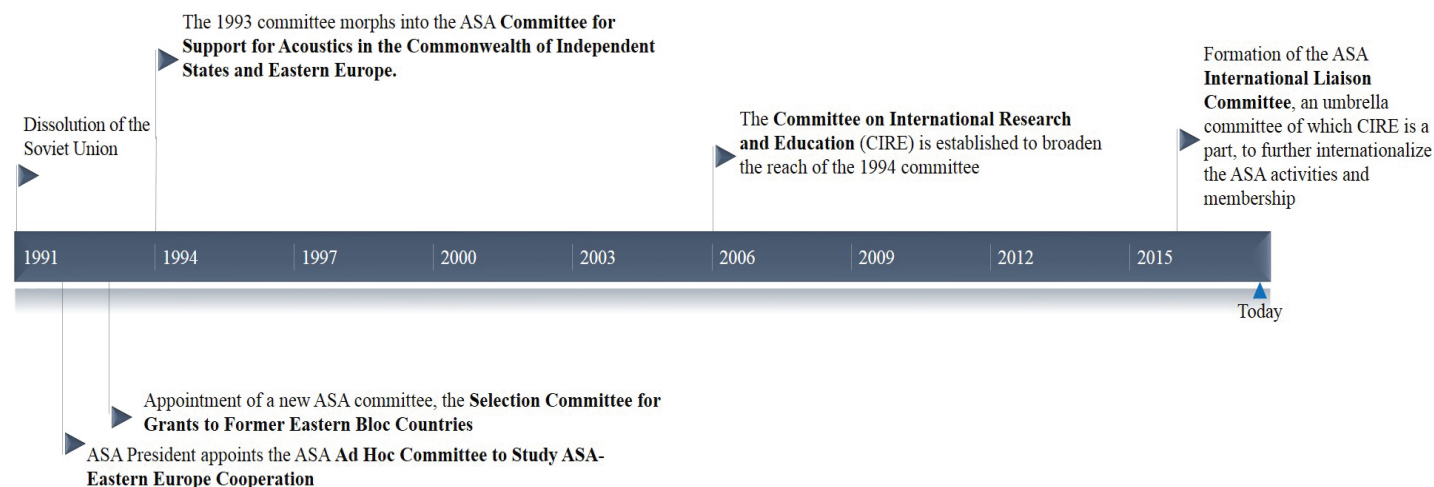


Figure 1. Timeline of development of the Acoustical Society of America (ASA) Committee on International Research and Education (CIRE).

ASA Executive Council, enabled the ASA to assist acousticians in the CIS and EE with 20 student grants and ASA member dues for 16 acousticians.

Since the mid-1990s, the ASA has continued to provide funds to support about 20 grants of \$750 each per year to acousticians from the CIS/EE. The ASA was joined in this program by the International Institute for Sound and Vibration (IIAV; www.iiav.org/) and later by the Acoustical Society of the Netherlands (NAG; www.nag-acoustics.nl/). The IIAV sponsored two of the grants annually and further arranged for the sponsorship of one grant by the NAG.

In 2006, the committee was renamed the CIRE and its objective and mission were furthered broadened. Today, the CIRE supports acoustics not only in EE but also in many developing countries by providing student grants and funds for specialized symposia. Nevertheless, Russia has always been a central focus of CIRE, particularly with the involvement of ASA members Vera Khokhlova and Oleg Sapozhnikov, who together with other colleagues coordinate the administrative process of the preselection of grant applications within the Russian Acoustical Society (RAS; www.akin.ru/e_rao.htm). This excellent collaboration will now serve as a model for extending and coordinating the grant application and selection process to other continents.

As shown in **Figure 2**, to date, well over 300 grants have been awarded to student acousticians in 18 countries spread over 4 continents.

The benefit of these student grants is twofold: recognition and financial. First, grant recipients receive a certificate in recognition of their success in the competitive selection process that they can use on CVs to indicate international experience and recognition. Second, grant recipients may use the funds for acquiring laboratory equipment, books, conference participation, and other research-related expenses that allow them to continue their graduate studies in acoustics in their home countries. As an addition to the award, they are offered a three-year membership as a student member of the ASA, with online access to *JASA* and other ASA publications. And if they attend one of the ASA meetings, they are invited to contact the CIRE chair so that arrangements can be made to meet with a senior member of the ASA.

In addition to the International Grants Program, the CIRE has partnered with the International Commission for Acoustics (ICA; www.icacommission.org/) to provide funding for specialized symposia in developing countries. Sponsored conferences are normally limited to a specialized topic with an expected attendance of about 100. Support for regional or national conferences, especially in developing regions, will be considered as long as the conference has an international character. Funds are provided to partially cover travel expenses for distinguished speakers and young scientists. Examples of supported symposia are the 12th School on Acousto-Optics and Applications in Druskininkai, Lithuania (<http://acousticstoday.org/optics>), the 3rd International Conference of the Acoustical Society of Nigeria in Nsukka,

¹The CIS consisted of the independent states that previously formed the Soviet Union, namely, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Ukraine. The EE included Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria.

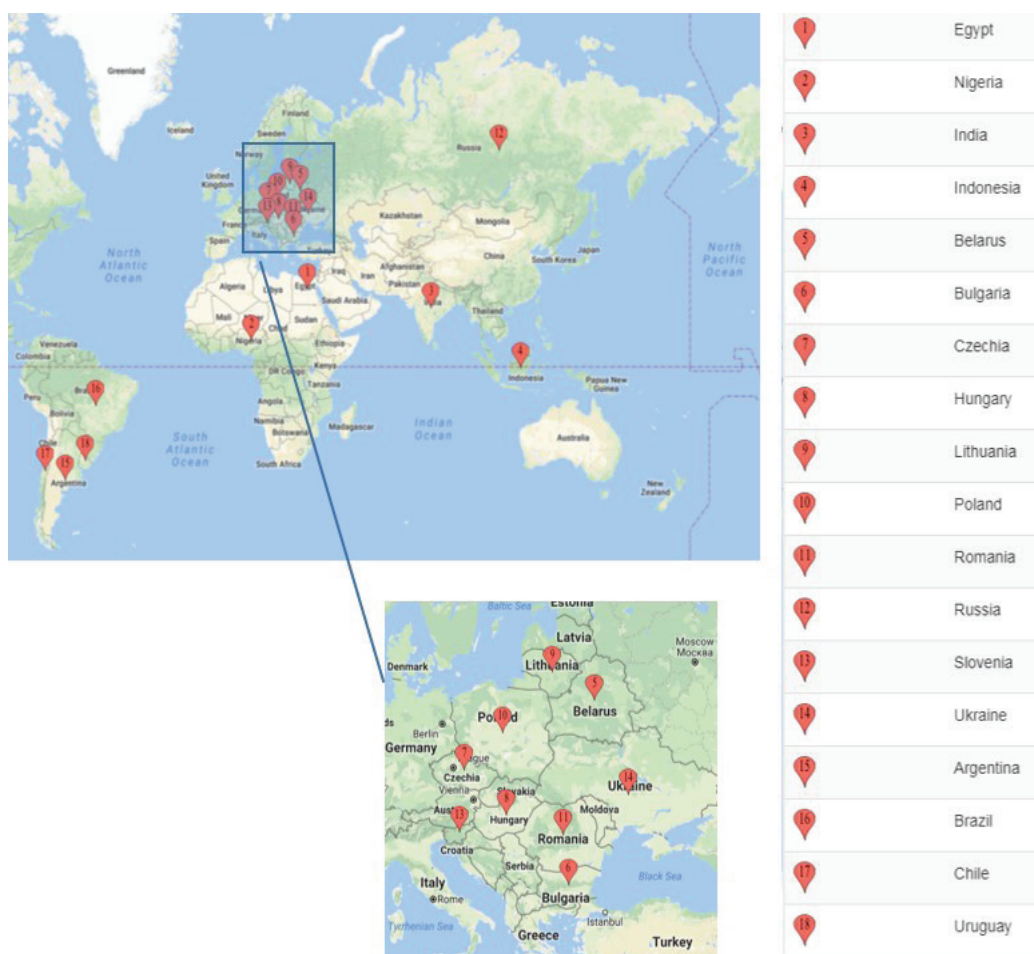


Figure 2. Map of the home countries of CIRE Student Research Grant recipients.

Nigeria (ASON 2015; www.acousticsnigeria.org), and the International Symposium on Music and Room Acoustics in La Plata, Argentina (ISMRA 2016; www.ismra2016.org.ar/). By arrangement with the International Congress on Acoustics (ICA; www.icacommission.org/), students may also apply for conference travel grants to support their attendance at the triannual ICA. Finally, support is also available for the formation or extension of an acoustics network or an acoustical society in developing countries.

Looking to the future, the activities of the CIRE are now embedded within the larger ASA scheme of the recently formed International Liaison Committee (ILC). The overarching aim of this umbrella committee is to increase international collaboration and communication in all matters of acoustics for the benefit of the ASA and the wider community. The purview of this committee includes working with the CIRE

to identify internationally oriented fellowship and grant opportunities. In addition, the ILC will work with various other ASA committees, including the Committees for Regional Chapters, Membership, Meetings, and Publication Policy, in a concerted effort to extend bidirectional engagement and collaborative opportunities for American acousticians and our fellow acousticians across the globe.

What began as a sharply focused response to the tumultuous global political situation in the early 1990s has now developed into a multifaceted and far-reaching effort to infuse a global orientation throughout the activities of the ASA.

Acknowledgment

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