

**Title:** [www.mathematics-ineurope.eu](http://www.mathematics-ineurope.eu)

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## Public awareness

A large number of editorials have been published in the Newsletter of the EMS in which the importance of public awareness activities has been stressed. There is no need to repeat the arguments here.

A subcommittee of the EMS - the raising public awareness (rpa) committee – was founded several years ago to improve public understanding of mathematics, and a number of projects have been realized since then.

Rather successful have been the Diderot forums which took place simultaneously in a number of European cities and included activities such as lectures, panel discussions and exhibitions. Each Diderot forum was devoted to a particular aspect of mathematics (e.g. "Mathematics and Music").

In addition, an attempt was made to organize competitions to identify the best popular mathematical articles in the media. But despite herculean efforts to encourage colleagues and journalists to submit contributions, the committee received only a few.

## A popular mathematical webpage

A new idea arose at the beginning of 2009: the rpa committee was asked by the Executive Committee to launch a popular mathematical webpage under the auspices of the EMS: [www.mathematics-in-europe.eu](http://www.mathematics-in-europe.eu).

It was hoped that this domain would address everyone with an interest in mathematics. It would also make available rpa material developed in European countries and provide a forum for the exchange of ideas.

Initial suggestions for the structure of such a domain were discussed at a meeting of the committee in Brussels (May 2009). The basic language would be English, but most of the articles would be presented in other European languages as well.

After negotiations in the summer, a sponsoring agreement with the Munich RE (a large German reinsurance company) was signed at the end of 2009. (For more details see the author's article in Newsletter 75, March 2010.)

Since then, much work towards a realization of [www.mathematics-in-europe.eu](http://www.mathematics-in-europe.eu) has been undertaken.

One of the first important decisions concerned the design. The committee accepted the proposal of the graphics agency Iser&Schmidt (Bonn, Germany). The key idea is to have pictures at the top of the screen that play with the motifs "circles in nature" and "the digits of Pi." Each day, another picture, chosen at random, will be presented.

The graphic design has already been transformed into a real web page with a preliminary address - it will serve as our working platform in the coming months.

A considerable quantity of material has been collected by now. These articles will find their way to the various subpages of [www.mathematics-in-europe.eu](http://www.mathematics-in-europe.eu): information,

popularization activities, competitions, mathematical help, mathematics as a profession, miscellaneous.

The webpage will be advertised at the ICM in Hyderabad. A large poster has been prepared that will be presented at the booth of the IMU. The actual state of [www.mathematics-in-europe.eu](http://www.mathematics-in-europe.eu) on the Web, however, will be rather sketchy at that time. The official launch is scheduled for the opening of an international rpa conference in Óbidos (Portugal) at the end of September 2010 (see [www.cim.pt/RPAM](http://www.cim.pt/RPAM) ).

## The dream ...

Those of us who are working for the realization of [www.mathematics-in-europe.eu](http://www.mathematics-in-europe.eu) have a vision. Our ambitious aim is to create a webpage that provides interesting information about mathematics for many groups.

For example, schoolchildren will find help if they failed to understand a particular mathematical topic in class; students can prepare for visiting a university where mathematics is spoken in a different language; teachers will find suggestions on how to present special aspects of mathematics in an attractive way; from colleagues who want to be active in the popularization of mathematics we will collect ideas for projects that have been realized successfully in other countries - ...

We hope that the domain will have extensive name recognition in Europe rather soon and that this will increase the visibility of the EMS and attract additional sponsors to support our work.

## The realization

An Italian proverb says ``Tra il dire e il fare c'è di mezzo il mare": there often is a huge gap between first ideas and a satisfactory realization. In order to bridge this gap as quickly as possible, the help of many will be necessary.

Indeed, we are asking *you* who are reading this editorial to collaborate. ``What can I do?" you may ask. You could send us one (or some) of your popular articles or help us with the translation of the menus into your language or with the creation of a database of rpa activities in the European countries.

While this is a rather general desire, there is also a more concrete one. On the subpage ``Mathematical help" we will provide a mathematical dictionary, where one can find basic mathematical terms in all the European languages. Here one can learn not only that, for example, the German ``Körper" is equivalent to the English ``field," but also how an expression such as  $a/b$  or  $n!$  is correctly pronounced.

The webpage will need a large matrix containing the terms and the translations to fulfill this task. The English column of mathematical items has already been prepared, and some further columns (Croatian, French, German, Italian, Polish, Turkish) have been supplemented by members of the rpa committee. However, not all European languages are represented, and thus we would be grateful if you could provide a column in your language corresponding to the column with the English terms.

Please send me an e-mail ([behrends@mi.fu-berlin.de](mailto:behrends@mi.fu-berlin.de)) if you are willing to assist us!

Let me conclude with another proverb: ``Rome wasn't built in a day.'' And the same is true with [www.mathematics-in-europe.eu](http://www.mathematics-in-europe.eu).

The ``blueprint'' as well as many ``buildings'' already exist, and we will do our best to realize carefully and systematically the ``districts'' we have in mind.