

Foreword

The publication of this issue marks a milestone in the International Olympiad in Informatics (IOI): for the first time in three years, the IOI is returning on-site. Alongside it, we will have the first face-to-face IOI conference since 2019.

The COVID-19 pandemic is still with us, but – like many international events – we are beginning to explore how we can manage the health risks yet still bring the community back together again. After all, the IOI is a prestigious international competition, but it is also more than that. It is an exchange of cultures and ideas; an opportunity for young students to travel and experience new places and meet new people; an opportunity for team coaches and educators to share the different ways in which they identify and nurture talent in their own countries.

We must acknowledge that the world is not an equitable place. Different countries are moving through the pandemic in different ways, due to a mix of geography, policy, economics, access to vaccinations, public opinion, and of course sheer luck. Not every country will be able to attend IOI in person, and not every speaker will be able to speak live at the IOI conference. For this reason we are enormously grateful to our hosts in Indonesia for committing to a hybrid IOI, where countries who cannot attend on-site are still able to compete online. Unlike some other international events, this ensures that the IOI can start to move out of the pandemic without leaving anybody behind.

The pandemic is of course not the only challenge that we are facing as an international community. The invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation has impacted many international events, and the IOI is no exception.

The IOI's response to Russia and Belarus has been to accept online contestants from these countries, but only under a neutral IOI flag, with no national names or symbols. By doing this we aim to take a clear stand against what Russia and Belarus are doing in Ukraine, yet remain engaged with the young teenagers who are the future of these countries, and for whom a genuine engagement with the international community can only help.

We do appreciate that the IOI is a scientific event, not a political one, and that there have been many conflicts in the past where we have remained silent. However, it is also difficult to ignore the scale of the destruction, the widespread attacks upon civilian, medical and educational targets, and the potential for this to spark a greater conflict that is unspeakably worse. While it is impossible to draw a precise line as to when IOI should or should not take a stand on international matters, we have nevertheless decided that this time a line has been crossed.

I am very excited for the Olympiad this year, and for the chance to discuss in person some of the other challenges that our community faces. One of our longest and still most significant challenges is diversity – in particular, gender diversity. To this end it was wonderful to see the first ever European Girls' Olympiad in Informatics hosted by Switzerland last year. I encourage you to keep an eye out for the second edition in Türkiye in late 2022 (<https://ubilo.tubitak.gov.tr/egoi2022/>).

Finally, my thanks to the editors and organisers of this journal, as well as all of the authors who have submitted papers. I look forward to seeing the talks in August in Yogyakarta!

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President of IOI