The ninth World Congress of the International Council for Central and Eastern European Studies (ICCEES) was held in Makuhari, Chiba, on August 3–8, 2015. The total number of participants was about 1300. By size, this World Congress could not match those held in Berlin (2005) and Tampere (2000), both of which rallied about 1800 participants. However, while previous World Congresses were characterized by short-term participation (attending the congress for a few days before and after their own presentations), many participants in this congress participated in the entire event, as indicated by the presence of more than 400 colleagues at the closing ceremony. As a result, most panels enjoyed sufficient numbers of attendants, which guaranteed the quality of discussions.

First, I would like to thank various academic organizations, Kanda University of International Studies (the main venue of the World Congress), the Chiba International Convention Bureau, the Foreign Ministry of Japan, the Makuhari Messe, Chiba City and Prefecture, the Chiba Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and other organizations supporting the ninth ICCEES World Congress. I would like to share some notes here that might be useful for future organizers of ICCEES World Congresses.

**Early Days toward Makuhari**

Institutionally, ICCEES consists of the International Council (IC), composed of national representatives (comparable to parliament), and the Executive Committee (EC; comparable to the cabinet of ministers). Seven or eight years before the World Congress, ICCEES invites national Slavicist
organizations capable of hosting the future World Congress. Applicant organizations compete to host the World Congress that will be held seven or eight years later. An EC meeting held six years before the congress tentatively concludes this competition by determining the city they will recommend as the site of the next World Congress to the IC meeting to be held the following year during the World Congress. In considering this recommendation, the IC finalizes the site of the next World Congress, five years before the event. Frankly speaking, although the IC ultimately decides the site of the subsequent World Congress, it is practically determined by the EC six years before the congress. Therefore, it is crucial for applicant organizations to prepare well before this EC meeting and give an attractive presentation at the meeting in order to gain the status of next host.

At the IC meeting held during the Seventh ICCEES World Congress in Berlin (2005), I became an ICCEES EC member, replacing Professor Hiroshi Kimura, who had served as the Japanese representative to the ICCEES and as an ICCEES vice president for a long time. The same IC meeting chose Stockholm as the site of the next ICCEES World Congress, in 2010. The atmosphere was depressing, since this would be the fifth World Congress held in succession in Europe, starting with the 1990 World Congress in Harrogate. The EC meeting in 2007 was held in Lyon, France, to survey the city and its conference center, since French colleagues had first applied to be the site of the 2015 ICCEES World Congress. Later, they canceled this proposal. About at that time, I began to think that the ICCEES World Congress in 2015 should be held in Japan. I was not concerned about Japanese Slavicists’ interests, but was motivated by my own belief that if the ICCEES were to hold its World Congress in Europe six times in succession, the ICCEES would lose legitimacy as a world academic organization. Indeed, the ASEEES (then the AAASS), the largest member organization of the ICCEES, ceased to send a representative to ICCEES meetings after the death of US representative James Miller (GWU) in 2008 and stopped paying membership fees in 2010.

In February 2008, the presidents of the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Slavicist organizations held a summit at Seoul University. The memorandum
formulating the agreements achieved at this summit declared that these associations were inviting the ninth ICCEES World Congress to one of the East Asian cities; if this were to be achieved, they would regard it as common honor of the East Asian Slavistic community and would support the host country with their full power. In a promotional video filmed to invite the World Congress to Japan, Chinese and Korean colleagues repeated the catchphrase that “not only Japan, but also the whole of East Asia will host you.” Because of the erroneous cadre policy of the ICCEES in 2010, this idea that three East Asian countries would be the hosts practically disappeared; however, we should not forget that this was the first motif of inviting the World Congress to Asia.

The IC meeting held in Stockholm in July 2008 confirmed the accession of the Chinese Association for Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies and normalized relations with the Korean Association of Slavic Studies, which had not paid membership fees for fifteen years due to an unfortunate misunderstanding in the 1990s. At this council, the British Association for Slavic and East European Studies applied to host the 2015 World Congress. Considering that Japan did not have sufficient experience in contributing to the world Slavistic community to merit hosting a World Congress, I stated that Japan would invite the World Congress if the first East Asian Conference on Slavic Eurasian Studies scheduled to be held in February 2009 at Hokkaido University were successful and if many Japanese Slavicists registered for the Stockholm World Congress to be held in July 2009. In other words, I raised my hand halfheartedly. These conditions were fulfilled in early 2009; however, we had not found a venue capable of accommodating the World Congress. This problem was solved thanks to contact from the Chiba International Convention Bureau. On May 30, 2009, the EC meeting held in Toronto unanimously voted to hold the 2015 World Congress in Makuhari, Japan, “considering the abnormality of holding World Congresses in Europe five times in succession, the necessity of building a non-Eurocentric approach to the Slavic Eurasian world, and the vigorous building of a Slavistic academic community in East Asia in recent years.”

In August 2009, three months after the decision to recommend Makuhari
as the site of the 2015 World Congress, ICCEES leaders visited Makuhari. The Chiba Convention Bureau did a wonderful job in helping to revise the list of candidate sites. They visited Chiba’s vice-governor and Chiba’s mayor Toshihito Kumagai. At the time the youngest mayor in Japan, Kumagai promised Chiba’s cooperation with the World Congress. There were two candidate venues for the World Congress: Kanda University of International Studies and the Overseas Vocational Training Association. The ICCEES leaders preferred Kanda University.

After this revision, ICCEES leaders moved to Beijing. To my mind, their visit to Beijing had more significance than did their inspection of Makuhari sites because the Chinese Association’s accession to the ICCEES in the previous year was achieved at the IC meeting without the presence of China’s representatives. It was necessary to show the ICCEES leaders the situation of East Asia’s Slavic Eurasian studies. The new ICCEES president, vice-presidents, and secretary elected in 2010 were also invited to an academic event held in 2012 at East China Normal University; thus, the invitation of ICCEES leaders to East Asia had become a good tradition for West-East exchanges in our discipline.

The World Congress held in Stockholm in 2010 demonstrated Asia’s presence, since 61 and 21 specialists participated from Japan and South Korea, respectively, and there were even participants from India and Turkey, which had not been in contact with the ICCEES until then. The IC meeting held during this congress confirmed the decision to hold the 2015 World Congress in Makuhari. Graeme Gill, the new ICCEES president elected at this IC meeting, reviewed Makuhari in March 2011. We were fortunate to talk with officers of the Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which earnestly supported the Makuhari World Congress afterwards.

Traditionally, the ICCEES holds its IC meeting two years before the World Congress at the site of the congress, so it was held in Makuhari in 2013. By chance, this was the year when Japan was to hold the East Asian Conference on Slavic Eurasian studies. Its venue was Osaka University of Law and Economics, whose president, Wakio Fujimoto, was a leading historian of
Russia in Japan. We coordinated the dates of the two events so that ICCEES leaders could move to Osaka after the IC meeting to take part in the East Asian Conference. The East Asian Conference in Osaka had become a general rehearsal of the Makuhari World Congress, “where many Wests meet many Easts.”

In June 2014, the EC meeting, which was held in Norwich, UK, decided to recommend Montreal as the next site of the ICCEES World Congress—to be held in 2020—and the IC meeting held during the Makuhari Congress confirmed this recommendation. It will be appropriate for the ICCEES, as a world organization for Slavic Eurasian studies, to rotate the hosting of World Congresses between Europe, Asia, North America, and the former socialist countries. The Makuhari Congress served as a turning point toward this desirable geographic balance on which ICCEES should be based.

Who Was Affected by the First World Congress Held in Asia and How

A concern in holding a World Congress in Japan was its distance from Europe, the European region of the former socialist countries, and the North American East Coast, where a majority of the world’s Slavic Eurasian specialists live. To what extent did Japan’s geographic location affect attendance at the Makuhari World Congress? The table shows the breakdown of participants by country at the ICCEES World Congresses in Stockholm (2010) and Makuhari (2015). The total numbers of participants in 2010 and 2015 shown in this table are not comparable because the total number from 2010 obviously includes the press and participants from donor corporations, while the number from 2015 does not. However, this difference mainly affects the number of participants from the host country, so we may compare the numbers to analyze participation from non-host countries.

First, we notice that the top seven countries actively participating in the World Congresses are very stable. The first is the host country, Sweden in 2010 and Japan in 2015. The second is Russia. We should be grateful to Russian colleagues sending almost the same number of participants in 2010 (169) and 2015 (166) despite the financial entrenchment caused by
international sanctions against the country after the Crimean Crisis and by declining oil prices. Russia had originally proposed to send about 350 scholars to Makuhari; however, this number was trimmed to 166, not only because of the financial entrenchment, but also because of the Russian government’s policy of raising salaries for university teachers. Little money was left for travel grants.

The third largest group of participants was from the United States; unfortunately, the first World Congress in Asia did not change the tendency of declining participation from the United States (from 134 in 2010 to 112 in 2015). Both in 2010 and 2015, the fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-place countries were Germany, the United Kingdom, and Finland. However, the absolute numbers of these three traditional participants significantly decreased from a total of 311 in 2010 to 177 in 2015. There was no indication of this decline at the time of the proposals. Germans, Britons, and Finns earnestly wished to participate in the first ICCEES World Congress to be held outside the North Atlantic; however, when the time for the congress drew closer, they had no alternative but to cancel their proposals for financial reasons. Future non-European organizers of World Congresses will need to expect a decrease of approximately 130 to be caused despite the best intentions of traditional participants. The countries with the seventh most participants were Japan in 2010 and Sweden in 2015, the next and previous World Congress host countries. Canada also demonstrated its sense of responsibility for being the next host country of the World Congress, increasing its participants from 10 to 19. I should add that the special evening event presented by the Canadian Association of Slavists attracted many Makuhari Congress participants.

The geographical closeness undoubtedly stimulated participation from the People's Republic of China (increasing from 5 to 33), Taiwan and Mongolia (both from zero to three), and Kazakhstan (from 13 to 21), while barely impacting the participation of South Korea (from 21 to 23) and Australia (8 both years). China actively took part in the Makuhari World Congress, not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. It is necessary to remark that Kazakhstan and Mongolia established their national associations of Slavic and Eurasian studies and were accepted as ICCEES member countries.
between the two congresses (2010–2015). To be honest, however, I expected more active participation from these two new member countries. Concerning Kazakhstan, a chain of economic crises caused by the Crimean conflict undoubtedly damaged its ardent interest in the ICCEES. The ICCEES should continue to pay close attention to these young members, Kazakhstan and Mongolia. Concerning other central Asian countries, we noticed a disappointing result: Uzbekistan’s participants fell from nine to four; Tajikistan’s from three to one. We have been unable to attract a single participant from Kyrgyzstan.

How did the geographic remoteness damage participation from Europe? It is true that the congress suffered decreases of participants from France (from 36 to 17), Hungary (from 18 to 10), the Netherlands (from 15 to 10), Lithuania (from 11 to 5), the Czech Republic (from 10 to 5), Austria (from 15 to 2), Italia (from 12 to 2), and Romania (from 9 to 2). Yet Poland (from 13 to 21) and the Transcaucasian countries (from 8 to 12 total) had become more actively involved in the World Congress. Overall, travel expenses are not a decisive factor. A country's participation in the World Congress depends much on domestic factors and the ICCEES's support of the national organization’s activities in that country.

Conclusion

After Makuhari, I resigned my position as vice president of ICCEES because of some disagreement regarding organizational rules. This was a bitter decision; however, I believe my successor as EC member from Japan, Yoshiro Ikeda, will continue my task. After Makuhari, ASEEES, the largest Slavicist organization in the world mainly based in North America, decided to regain full ICCEES membership, and therefore to pay their membership fees. I think this is a wise decision that will establish ASEEES’s cooperation with Chinese, Taiwanese, Indian, Turkish, Mongolian, and Central Asian colleagues, with whom ASEEES has not had close contacts. Legitimately, ASEEES is interested in reforming the governance of ICCEES.

In my view, ICCEES’s Executive Committee should be more active. IC is
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a representative organ of member national organizations, while, because of the constant expansion of ICCEES, a significant part of EC’s operations are dedicated to assisting non-member (future member) countries. The quality (academic, linguistic, and, first of all, devotion) demanded of EC members has become much higher than before. Presently, EC member seats are distributed to countries, not to specific individuals. Personal qualities as a scholar and an organizer have not been considered when EC members are selected. This is devastating for the further development of ICCEES as a world organization. I believe that ICCEES will overcome this problem and continue to grow.

Numbers of Participants in the ICCEES World Congresses in 2010 and 2015
A: Rankings  B: Numbers of participants

| A | 2010 | B | A | 2015 | B |
|---|------|---|---|------|---|
| 1 | Sweden | 224 | 1 | Japan | 426 |
| 2 | Russian Federation | 169 | 2 | Russian Federation | 166 |
| 3 | United States | 134 | 3 | United States | 112 |
| 4 | Germany | 114 | 4 | Germany | 67 |
| 5 | United Kingdom | 106 | 5 | United Kingdom | 61 |
| 6 | Finland | 91 | 6 | Finland | 49 |
| 7 | Japan | 61 | 7 | Sweden | 40 |
| 8 | France | 36 | 8 | China | 33 |
| 9 | Ukraine | 26 | 9 | Republic of Korea | 23 |
| 10 | Republic of Korea | 21 | 10 | Kazakhstan | 21 |
| 11 | Hungary | 18 | 11 | Poland | 21 |
| 12 | Austria | 15 | 12 | Canada | 19 |
| 12 | Netherlands | 15 | 13 | France | 17 |
| 14 | Kazakhstan | 13 | 14 | Norway | 14 |
| 14 | Poland | 13 | 15 | Switzerland | 13 |
| 16 | Italy | 12 | 16 | Ukraine | 11 |
| 16 | Norway | 12 | 17 | Estonia | 10 |
| 18 | Estonia | 11 | 17 | Hungary | 10 |
| 18 | Lithuania | 11 | 19 | Australia | 8 |
| 20 | Bulgaria | 10 | 20 | Belgium | 6 |
| 20 | Canada | 10 | 20 | Georgia | 6 |
| Rank | Country          | Count | Rank | Country          | Count |
|------|------------------|-------|------|------------------|-------|
| 1    | Switzerland      | 10    | 10   | Italy            | 2     |
| 2    | India            | 5     | 11   | China            | 5     |
| 3    | Bulgaria         | 4     | 12   | Belgium          | 4     |
| 4    | China            | 4     | 13   | Georgia          | 4     |
| 5    | Netherlands      | 3     | 14   | Portugal         | 3     |
| 6    | Portugal         | 3     | 15   | Georgia          | 3     |
| 7    | India            | 3     | 16   | Portugal         | 3     |
| 8    | Turkey           | 3     | 17   | Spain            | 3     |
| 9    | Turkey           | 3     | 18   | Spain            | 3     |
| 10   | Austria          | 2     | 19   | Mexico           | 2     |
| 11   | Hungary          | 2     | 20   | New Zealand      | 2     |
| 12   | Greece           | 2     | 21   | New Zealand      | 1     |
| 13   | Brazil           | 1     | 22   | Slovakia         | 1     |
| 14   | Romania          | 1     | 23   | South Africa     | 1     |
| 15   | Croatia          | 1     | 24   | Azerbaijan       | 1     |
| 16   | Brazil           | 1     | 25   | Azerbaijan       | 1     |
| 17   | Australia        | 1     | 26   | Canada           | 1     |
| 18   | Israel           | 1     | 27   | Canada           | 1     |
| 19   | Australia        | 1     | 28   | Canada           | 1     |
| 20   | Australia        | 1     | 29   | Canada           | 1     |
| 21   | Turkey           | 1     | 30   | Canada           | 1     |
| 22   | Germany          | 1     | 31   | Canada           | 1     |
| 23   | Germany          | 1     | 32   | Canada           | 1     |
| 24   | Germany          | 1     | 33   | Canada           | 1     |
| 25   | Germany          | 1     | 34   | Canada           | 1     |
| 26   | Germany          | 1     | 35   | Canada           | 1     |
| 27   | Germany          | 1     | 36   | Canada           | 1     |
| 28   | Germany          | 1     | 37   | Canada           | 1     |
| 29   | Germany          | 1     | 38   | Canada           | 1     |
| 30   | Germany          | 1     | 39   | Canada           | 1     |
| 31   | Germany          | 1     | 40   | Canada           | 1     |
| 32   | Germany          | 1     | 41   | Canada           | 1     |
| 33   | Germany          | 1     | 42   | Canada           | 1     |
| 34   | Germany          | 1     | 43   | Canada           | 1     |
| 35   | Germany          | 1     | 44   | Canada           | 1     |
| 36   | Germany          | 1     | 45   | Canada           | 1     |
| 37   | Germany          | 1     | 46   | Canada           | 1     |
| 38   | Germany          | 1     | 47   | Canada           | 1     |
| 39   | Germany          | 1     | 48   | Canada           | 1     |
| 40   | Germany          | 1     | 49   | Canada           | 1     |
| 41   | Germany          | 1     | 50   | Canada           | 1     |

49 countries: 1247
50 countries: 1209