



GREEK TUNNELLING SOCIETY (GTS)

Member Nation of the
INTERNATIONAL TUNNELLING AND UNDERGROUND SPACE ASSOCIATION
196 Ippokratous Str., 11472, Athens, Greece.
e-mail: eesyeg@gmail.com / www.eesyeg.gr

To the Kind Attention of

- a. **Mrs Jinxiu (Jenny) Yan**, President of ITA Executive Council
- b. **Mr. Olivier Vion**, Executive Director of ITA Secretariat

Athens, 7th September 2020

Prot. No. : εξ129

Subject: Election of the Member Nation to host the 49th G.A. and associated World Tunnel Congress 2023

- Ref:**
- a. The letter of ITA Secretariat dated 1-9-2020 concerning a request for vote postponement for the 49th G.A. and WTC2023 during the virtual GA on 15-9-2020
 - b. The invitation letter for the 46th ITA General Assembly and the attached agenda (sent by ITA secretariat to MNs on 28-7-2020)
 - c. The ITA and IEM Joint Announcement for the execution of a virtual WTC 2020 (dated 13-7-2020)
 - d. The letter of ITA Secretariat concerning the postponement of WTC2020 (dated 26-2-2020)
 - e. The review submitted by GTS on 2-2-2020, on the proposal of the Task Force (see Encl_PI_2_Item 4 GA, § 4.1 f) iii) on new WTC guidelines as well as on the working version of modifications to the By Laws and its annex 1 (see also ref g. below)
 - f. The official submission of GTS Candidacy for the 49th GA and WTC2023 (dated 10-1-2020)
 - g. The invitation of ITA Secretariat (dated 17-12-2019) for the GA 2020 Kuala Lumpur including a request for a review of a draft version of the "WTC guidelines", as well as of a working version of modifications to the By Laws and its annex 1, concerning WTCs
 - h. The "WTC Planning Guide – Working Draft" delivered to the MNs during the 45th GA in Naples
 - i. ITA statutes and By-Laws (2019)

Dear Mrs. Yan and Mr. Vion,

The continuous efforts of ITA and its Member Nations to promote Tunnelling and Underground Space Use are of utmost importance for all of us involved in such an extremely exciting industry. Having got such passion, the Greek Tunneling Society (GTS), being a member of ITA since 1995, officially submitted on 10-1-2020 (see ref. f) the Candidacy to host the 49th G.A. and the associated WTC2023 in Athens as per current valid ITA Statutes and By-laws (see ref. i). GTS hopes that the Member Nations will vote for Athens and will provide us the opportunity to host a WTC for the first time ever in Greece, enhancing the value for the circulation of WTCs within the Member Nations around the planet.

Under normal conditions by today the ITA family would have been aware of the host Member Nation for the 49th G.A. and the associated World Tunnel Congress 2023. However, force majeure reasons, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, forced ITA to initially postpone the 46th G.A. and the associated WTC2020 of mid May 2020 (see ref. d) and secondly to shift to a virtual congress (see ref. c) and a virtual G.A. (see ref. b) in order to ensure the health and safety of the congress participants and of the voting delegates of the G.A.

As ITA Statutes and By-Laws requires ¹, the Secretariat of ITA on 28-7-2020 (see ref. b) delivered to the MNs the invitation for the "Virtual" 46th GA including the agenda of the meeting which clearly states that:

¹ ITA By-Laws 2019 / Chapter II §2.2/b: "At least two months before the General Assembly, the Secretariat will forward to each Member Nation representative the final information concerning the date and place of the meeting, the agenda, and detailing the questions to be dealt with during the General Assembly. No issues not contained in the Agenda shall be decided (Section VIII, paragraph 8.7. of the Statutes); nevertheless, a Member Nation can propose a topic for discussion at the General Assembly of a question of apparent importance, by submitting it in writing to the Secretariat; providing it is received at least two weeks before the date of opening of the General Assembly; in such a case, the President will decide if it is appropriate to discuss this question at the General Assembly and, if appropriate, will announce this decision at the beginning of the session."



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*“3. The Agenda of the General Assembly this year will be limited to compulsory subjects (activity report, financial report, report of the Governance Council, modification of the Statutes and By- Laws, presentation of the 2020-2023 strategy, budget, and **election for WTC 2023**):*

and additionally below clarifies further that:

*3.5 2023 General Assembly (item 13): **the Executive Council has received the valid candidacies of Greece and Turkey**, to hold the General Assembly in 2023 (Encl. 7 and Encl. 8).*

While we are approaching the last steps of such a wonderful journey both for the preparation of the bid-book material as well as for supporting the Greek Candidacy, we were asked just a few days ago (on 1st-9-2020, see ref. a) by ITA Secretariat to agree on the postponement of the vote for choosing the host Member Nation of the 49th G.A. and the associated WTC2023, in the virtual 46th G.A. that is scheduled for the 16th-9-2020, since possible new arrangements, still unspecified, may be proposed to apply even for WTC2023. Moreover, GTS was offered the option to modify its candidacy or even to withdraw it in case that the new arrangements will not suit the already submitted (according to the current valid By-Laws) candidacy proposal of GTS.

Upon the receipt of the aforementioned “last minute” proposal from the ITA Secretariat (see Ref a.), the GTS examined in detail the potential consequences of such modification on the submitted Greek candidacy, while in principle we do see positively the alteration of the organization of future WTCs with shared responsibilities between ITA and the elected Member Nation. After a thorough evaluation of all data, the GTS shares with ITA the following concerns:

- Irrespective of the efforts of the numerous members of the GTS who voluntarily worked thousands of hours in order to submit a bid to ITA on time (www.athenswtc2023.gr), which we are all greatly proud of for its content, completeness and quality, GTS, as it could be very easily understood, got unavoidably into certain serious commitments. Such commitments include, among others, agreements with our assigned PCO, pre-booking with the Venue etc. Possible alternation of current valid terms of the ITA election process and of the criteria for Candidacies of Member Nations may cause serious additional obligations to GTS as a result of the violation of certain clauses of the signed agreements i.e. contract penalties, non-refundable guarantee letters etc, where all current valid specifications are referred to.
- A possible, of an already scheduled, voting process re-cancellation may harm the reputation of our Association. Moreover, the option for candidacy modifications, which is proposed to be offered by ITA, annuls the pros of each candidacy since every candidate may take advantage of the knowledge of the already duly submitted candidacies.
- The Task Force’s comment which worked on the new WTC Guidelines / WTC Process (see ref b / Encl Pj_6_modif_By Laws V and Appendix 1) that clearly states “*four years, not three, are required to secure large venues suitable for WTC*” will be largely violated in case of another vote postponement for at least four (4) months.
- It is understood, as per the wording of the letter received on 1st-9-2020 (see ref. a), that the new arrangement will modify dramatically the work that has already been done by the Task Force (see ref b / Encl Pj_6_modif_By Laws V and Appendix 1) which is scheduled to be discussed during the G.A. of 2020.



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- The consequences that the new - still unspecified - arrangements, that EXCO examines to work on during the next months and to propose to an extraordinary GA next January, won't be ready on time (i.e. up to the end of 2020 as ref a. assumes) will remain unknown.
- Similarly, the consequences on the selection of the WTC2023 host in case that the new arrangements do not get the G.A's consent next January may have an unknown result.
- A possible assent of both Candidates for WTC2023 to adjust their proposals on the new arrangements will require some additional time following the completion of the new requirements of the arrangement by EXCO which is scheduled for the end of 2020. Hence, the organization of an extraordinary G.A. next January may be a very short notice for both candidates to modify their proposals. The latter introduces also another issue which concerns the alteration of WTC2023 candidacy proposals based on a draft version of new By-Laws which will be presented afterwards in a G.A. for approval.
- The consequences of the possibility that both candidates will withdraw their candidacies to host WTC2023, as a result of the new arrangements that will be set, hopefully, in the near future will remain unknown.
- The code of ethics of any election process, and particularly the ones of non-profit organizations as ITA, dictates to avoid the modification of applied terms / arrangements / rules once the procedure has started. This is particularly valid in case that any procedure (especially voting) is suspended just before its scheduled termination.
- Voting postponement implies a possible violation of current Statutes and By-laws in force. According to Chapter II / § 2.2.a and to Chapter V / § 5.1.1 of the valid current version of recent (2019) By-Laws the Member Nations that will host the G.A. and the associated WTC should be elected three years in advance. Moreover, according to Section VIII / § 8.7 *"No matters shall be decided at meeting of General Assembly which do not appear on the approved agenda², issued in accordance with the By-Laws"*.
- A possible voting postponement, which is a well-established process during the G.A., as the process is on-going and the Candidacy proposals have been delivered to the MNS, may have a deterrent effect on the decision of some member nations that are examining the option to stand as future candidates for a WTC.
- The uncertainty that will be caused as a result of any "still unspecified" upcoming term's and conditions modification for the Tunnel Congresses may for sure have, temporarily, a negative effect on the decision of Member Nations for future bids and particularly for WTC2024 which has a Candidacy submission deadline for next January (10-1-2021).

In the light of all the above points, our conclusion is as following:

GTS welcomes and encourages all immediate actions of our Association (ITA) to adapt to any new reality that life holds for us, although we believe that this year's extraordinary situation will not persist, particularly until 2023, and consequently conditions can -and should according to us- be the same as those for which we submitted our candidacy. We firmly believe that we will manage this situation together and countries affected will quickly overcome and recover from this pandemic.

The adaption of the regulations with which ITA functions, during these difficult and challenging times, towards current and future needs, should be a concern for all Member Nations and we should all work

² The agenda of the 46th G.A. was received by the MN's on 28-7-2020 (see ref. b)

	<p align="center">GREEK TUNNELLING SOCIETY (GTS) Member Nation of the INTERNATIONAL TUNNELLING AND UNDERGROUND SPACE ASSOCIATION 196 Ippokratous Str., 11472, Athens, Greece. e-mail: eesy.e.gr@gmail.com / www.eesy.e.gr</p>
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united towards this target. Nevertheless, any modifications should be carefully arranged and, undoubtedly, require a maturing period which should be disconnected from the valid ITA procedures.

We look forward to the new arrangements which are believed to help ITA in its future functions, but we strongly suggest that you consider implementing them for the period after the WTC2023 and whenever all new arrangements are solid and well known in advance to all potential WTCs Candidate MNs.

Therefore, the Greek Tunnelling Society is adamant in its position to proceed with the voting for WTC 2023 during the upcoming virtual G.A. as per the G.A. agenda sent to the MNs on the 28th-7-2020 which fully complies with the Statutes and By-Laws of ITA and will allow the successful candidate to proceed smoothly to the organization of WTC2023 and the relevant G.A. as per their agreed arrangements and commitments.

Last but not least we wish to acknowledge the efforts of all EXCO members and of the ITA secretariat who succeeded to manage extremely successfully the unforeseen situation that we have been experiencing during the last months, as well as the efforts of our colleagues from Malaysia who were - amazingly fast - adapted to the new COVID -19 imposed conditions reality and forced to switch to a virtual WTC2020.

We wish you and all the tunneling community good health.

Sincerely yours,




Ioannis Fikiris

*Chair of the Organizing Committee bid for WTC2023 / ATHENS
 President of the Greek Tunnelling Society*



*Dimitrios Alifragkis
 Vice President of GTS*



*Dimitrios Litsas
 General Secretary of GTS*



*Evangelos Pergantis
 Treasurer of GTS*



*Marilia Balasi
 Editor of GTS
 (Responsible for Publications)*



*Dimitrios Pappas
 Member of GTS*



*Nikolaos Roussos
 Member of GTS*

Attachments:

1. The letter sent to GTS by ITA Secretariat on 1-9-2020
2. The invitation letter for the 46th ITA General Assembly and attached agenda (sent by ITA secretariat to MNs on 28-7-2020)



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Attachment 1:

The letter sent to GTS by ITA Secretariat on 1-9-2020



Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council since 1987

Geneva, September 1st, 2020

Candidates WTC 2023
Greek Tunnelling Society -GTS
Turkish Road Association - TRA

Dear President,

First of all, I hope this letter will find you in good health as well as your families and colleagues.

As you know, for several years, ITA has been studying possible changes in the organization of WTCs and notably in the share of responsibilities between ITA and the Host member Nation.

This year, due to COVID-19, we had first to postpone and then to move the WTC into a digital conference. These changes have needed many meetings and talks between ITA Executive Council and the Host Member Nation and has brought some confusion among the tunnelling community.

The Executive Council, then thinks that the changes planned to take place in a few years need to be implemented more rapidly and possibly as early as for WTC 2023.

Therefore, the Executive Council will seek ITA Member Nations General Assembly endorsement allowing the ExCo to work on WTCs new arrangements to be presented to the Member Nations by the end of 2020 and submitted to a vote during an extraordinary General Assembly planned early 2021. The goal is that these new arrangements can be implemented for the WTC 2023.

At the beginning of the year, you have presented the candidacy of your Member Nation to host the WTC 2023 in applications of the rules in force (ITA Statutes and By-laws 2019). As new rules might be applied, we think that it won't be fair to make a choice now and then apply new rules to the chosen Member Nation.

Therefore, we officially ask your agreement to propose to the General Assembly to postpone the vote for choosing the Host Member Nation of WTC 2023 to the extraordinary General Assembly after the new arrangements have been adopted.

The proposed new arrangements will be sent to you in advance and you will have the possibility to modify your candidacy if necessary or even to choose to withdraw it.

We will appreciate an official answer from your part by September 8th, so we will be able to send to the Member nations an updated agenda.

I remain at your disposal if you have any questions.

Best Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'O' and 'V' followed by a horizontal line and a vertical stroke.

Olivier Vion
Executive Director



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Attachment 2:

The invitation letter for the 46th ITA General Assembly and attached agenda (sent by ITA secretariat to MNs on 28-7-2020)



ENVOYE AUX NATIONS MEMBRES

Copie : Membres du Bureau Exécutif – Prime Sponsors – Supporters - MAC - MAI
Animateurs – Vice-Animateurs des groupes de travail - Présidents – Vice-présidents des
comités, Associations Sœurs - Contacts –

SENT TO THE MEMBER NATIONS

Copies: Executive Council Members – Prime Sponsors – Supporters - CAM - IAM
Animateurs – Vice-Animateurs of working groups - Chairs – Vice Chairs of Committees,
Sister Organisations - Contacts –

46^{ème} ASSEMBLÉE GÉNÉRALE DE L'AITES

VIRTUAL MEETING –

16 September 2020 - 1–4 PM CET

46th GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF ITA

Genève 25.07.2020

Monsieur le Président,

1. En raison de la crise sanitaire mondiale et malgré un premier report de date, il est apparu qu'il était impossible de convoquer une Assemblée générale en présentielle à Kuala Lumpur aux dates prévues. En application de nos statuts et de l'article 6a de l'ordonnance 2 COVID-19 édictée par la confédération Suisse, j'ai l'honneur au nom du Bureau exécutif de l'AITES de vous convoquer à la 46^{ème} Assemblée générale qui se déroulera le 16 Septembre de 13 :00 à 16 :00 CET par visio-conférence. Les modalités exactes vous seront fournies en temps voulu.

Vous trouverez ci-joint l'ordre du jour (**PJ 1**).

2. Conformément aux Statuts, chaque Nation Membre est représentée par un délégué votant; dont la nomination est de votre responsabilité. Je vous prie de bien m'indiquer le nom de votre délégué votant à l'Assemblée Générale, avant le 17 août 2020.

Dear President,

1. Due to the global health crisis and despite several attempts to reschedule, it was impossible to convene a General Assembly face-to-face in Kuala Lumpur in 2020. In accordance with our Statutes and article 6a of ordinance 2 COVID-19 decreed by the Swiss Confederation, I have the honour, on behalf of the Executive Council of ITA, to invite you to the 46th General Assembly which will take place on 16 September from 1 pm to 4 pm CET by videoconference. The details will be provided to you in due time.

You will find enclosed the Agenda (**encl. 1**).

2. In accordance with the Statutes, each Member Nation is represented by a voting delegate whose appointment is your responsibility. Please let me have the name of your voting delegate for the General Assembly before August 17, 2020.

2.1 Procédure de vote.

En application de nos statuts et de l'article 6a de l'ordonnance 2 COVID-19 :

Les votes habituellement effectués au scrutin secret auront lieu de manière électronique. Ils seront ouverts sur une période de 24 heures se clôturant au moment de l'annonce des résultats en fonction de l'Ordre du Jour. Cela signifie que les Nations Membres pourront voter avant ou pendant l'Assemblée générale (si pour une raison quelconque, alors que vous avez décidé de voter pendant l'AG vous n'êtes pas en mesure de le faire, votre vote ne pourra pas être pris en compte).

Aucun vote ne pourra avoir lieu ni par correspondance ni par procuration. Les détails exacts de la procédure vous seront fournis au plus tard le 8 septembre. Les Nations Membres qui à cette date n'auraient pas désigné leur délégué votant ne pourront pas voter.

L'attention des Nations Membres est attirée sur l'application du Chapitre III du Règlement Intérieur relatif au paiement des cotisations annuelles ; en application des dispositions envisagées lors de l'Assemblée générale 2006 (point 9b) le Bureau a décidé que les Nations Membres qui n'ont pas réglé leur cotisation 2019 ne sont pas autorisées à prendre part aux votes pendant l'Assemblée Générale 2020. Les Nations Membres qui n'auraient pas régularisé leur situation au 31 août 2020 ne pourront être admises à voter.

3. L'ordre du jour de l'Assemblée Générale qui cette année ne traitera que les sujets obligatoires (rapport d'activité, rapport financier, rapport du conseil de gouvernance, modification des statuts et règlement intérieur, présentation de la stratégie 2020-2023, budget, élection pour le WTC 2023) appelle les commentaires suivants :
- 3.1 Rapport d'activité du Bureau Exécutif (point 5) : comme les années précédentes, le rapport ne sera pas lu pendant l'Assemblée Générale ; il est joint à cette convocation, afin que vous ayez la possibilité de le lire et de présenter vos commentaires pendant l'Assemblée Générale. **(PJ 2).**
- 3.2 Le rapport du Conseil de Gouvernance (point 7) vous sera adressé avant la date de l'Assemblée Générale. **(PJ 3).**

2.1 Voting Procedure.

In accordance with our Statutes and Article 6a of Ordinance 2 COVID-19:

Voting which is usually carried out through secret ballot will take place electronically. Electronic voting will be open for a period of 24 hours immediately prior to the time that the results of the vote are announced according to the Agenda. This means that Member Nations will be able to vote before or during the General Assembly (if for any reason, you are not able to vote within the specified time period, your vote will not be counted).

No vote may be taken by post, email, text, or by proxy. Details of the procedure will be provided to you no later than September 8. Member Nations who have not designated a voting delegate by this date will not be able to vote.

We draw Member Nations' attention to the application of Chapter III of the By-Laws related to the annual membership fees; in order to apply the measures considered during the 2006 General Assembly (item 9b), the Executive Council has decided that the Member Nations who have not paid their 2019 membership fees will not be allowed to vote during the 2020 General Assembly. Member Nations that have not paid in full their fees by 31 August 2020 will not be allowed to vote.

3. The Agenda of the General Assembly this year will be limited to compulsory subjects (activity report, financial report, report of the Governance Council, modification of the Statutes and By-Laws, presentation of the 2020-2023 strategy, budget, and election for WTC 2023):
- 3.1 Report of Activity of the Executive Council (item 5): as per previous years, the report will not be read during the General Assembly; it is joined to this invitation, so that you will have the possibility to read it and may present your comments during the General Assembly. **(Encl. 2).**
- 3.2 The Governance Council report (item 7) will be sent to you before the date of the General Assembly. **(Encl. 3).**

3.3 Rapport financier (point 9) : les documents de clôture de l'année financière 2019- 2020, ainsi que l'attestation de l'expert- comptable (**PJ 4 & 5**) sont joints à la présente convocation.

3.4 Préparation des autres décisions de l'Assemblée Générale :

Modification des Statuts et du Règlement Intérieur (**PJ 6**).

- Statuts 4.4 – Rapport d'activité des Nations Membres
- RI 3.1 – Paiement des cotisations des Nations Membres
- Modification du RI relatif à l'organisation du WTC et notamment de l'annexe 1.

3.5 Assemblée Générale 2023 (point 13) : le Bureau a reçu les candidatures recevables de la Grèce et de la Turquie pour tenir l'Assemblée Générale 2023 (**PJ 7 et PJ 8**).

3.6 Budget 2020-2021 (**PJ 9**) et projet de budget 2021-2022 (**PJ 10**) vous seront envoyés début Septembre.

J'espère que votre pays pourra prendre part à la 46ème Assemblée Générale de l'AITES.

Je vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur le Président, l'expression de ma considération distinguée.

3.3 Financial report (item 9): the closing documents of the financial year 2019-2020, together with the Certification from the financial auditor (**Encl. 4 & 5**) are attached to this invitation.

3.4 Preparation of the other decisions of the General Assembly:

Modification of the Statutes and By-Laws (BL) (**Encl. 6**).

- Statutes 4.4 – Activity report of the Member Nations
- BL 3.1 – Member Nations Membership fee payment
- Modification of the BL including Appendix 1, concerning WTC Host selection and organization.

3.5 2023 General Assembly (item 13): the Executive Council has received the valid candidacies of Greece and Turkey, to hold the General Assembly in 2023 (**Encl. 7 and Encl. 8**).

3.6 2020-2021 Budget (**Encl. 9**) and draft budget 2021-2022 (**Encl. 10**) will be sent by early September.

I hope that your country will be able to take part in the ITA's 46th General Assembly.

Yours sincerely,

Le Directeur Exécutif / Executive Director



Olivier Vion

Liste des pièces jointes / List of enclosed documents

PJ/Encl 1 :	Ordre du jour / Agenda	1 document / <i>1 document</i>
PJ/Encl 2 :	Rapport d'activité du Bureau Exécutif <i>Report of Activity of the Executive Council</i>	1 document / <i>1 document</i>
PJ/Encl 3 :	Rapport du Conseil d'Audit <i>Report of the Governance Council</i>	sera envoyé début Septembre <i>will be sent early September</i>
PJ/Encl 4 :	Rapports financiers 2019-2020 <i>Financial reports 2019-2020</i>	1 document / <i>1 document</i>
PJ/Encl 5 :	Attestation de l'expert-comptable <i>Certification of the financial auditor</i>	1 document / <i>1 document</i>
PJ/Encl 6 :	Modification des Statuts et Règlement Intérieur <i>Modification of Statutes and By-Laws</i>	1 document / <i>1 document</i>
PJ/Encl 7 & 8 :	Assemblée Générale 2023 <i>2023 General Assembly</i>	1 dossier contenant 2 fichiers <i>1 folder containing 2 files</i>
PJ/Encl 9 :	Budget 2020-2021 <i>2020-2021 Budget</i>	sera envoyé début Septembre <i>will be sent early September</i>
PJ/Encl 10 :	Projet de budget 2021-2022 <i>Draft budget 2021-2022</i>	sera envoyé début Septembre <i>will be early September</i>

AGENDA OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2020

Virtual meeting 16 September 2020, from 1PM to 4PM CET

1. Opening speech
2. Approval of the holding of the General Assembly by videoconference – check of Quorum
3. Approval of the agenda
4. Approval of the minutes of the General Assembly 2019
5. Approval of new members
6. Report of Activity of the Executive Council - Comments from the Assembly
7. Information on WTC 2020 and explanation on IEM refund policy
8. Report from the Governance Council
9. Presentation of the Strategy 2020-2023
10. Financial report for 2019 - Comments and approval of the Accounts
11. Modification of the Statutes and By Laws
12. Approval of the budget 2020-2021
13. Draft budget 2021-2022
14. Discussion on possible changes in the organization of WTCs
15. Choice of the place for the General Assembly 2023
16. Preparation of the General Assembly and WTC 2021
17. Preparation of the General Assembly and WTC 2022
18. Other business
19. Closing address