



## From CITCE to ISE<sup>☆</sup>

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In September 1970 the change of name from CITCE to ISE was voted by the members. A total of 495 ballots had been sent out, 308 had been returned. A total of 269 members were favorable to the change, 37 opposed, and two ballots were blank. One year later the new statutes were accepted by a large majority. These votes marked a turning-point in the history of our Society.

In the beginning, CITCE was essentially a European association. As the name says, it was even mainly French speaking: CITCE (Comité International de Thermodynamique et de Cinétique Electrochimiques). The founders of CITCE and first members were frenchspeaking or could express themselves in French: Professors M. Pourbaix, G. Valensi, P. van Rysselberghe, N. Ibl, T.P. Hoar, to name only a few of them. As the name ‘International Committee of Electrochemical Thermodynamics and Kinetics’ says, the new association was meant to be more than just a scientific society with its traditional activities: CITCE should have been an international body collecting and publishing electrochemical data, being presented as references and standards. However, very soon the yearly meetings with their presentations of scientific papers and their publication in *Electrochimica Acta* since 1956 became the main activities of CITCE.

CITCE grew very rapidly. There have been several reasons for its fast development: first, the situation of electrochemistry in the 1950s. As Klaus Vetter pointed out in 1960 in the preface to his book ‘Elektrochemische Kinetik’, until the midst of this century electrochemistry was considered and taught as part of thermodynamics. Electrochemical kinetics were just mentioned in the textbooks, without any systematic treatment. It was in the years following the foundation of CITCE, that electrochemical kinetics developed and were a subject worked on by a large number of scientists. At the same time, industrial applications of electrochemistry spread widely: we will just mention that fuel-cells started to be developed at that time. Hence, there was a great need for publication, discussion and exchange in the field of electrochemistry.

But there have been also other important reasons favoring the development of CITCE. After the second world-war, there was no scientific society in Europe dealing mainly with electrochemistry. CITCE filled this gap. Finally, there was the political situation in Europe, divided into ‘western’ and ‘eastern’ countries. CITCE with its french-speaking aspect, politically absolutely neutral, was acceptable as a scientific society and platform for exchange by the communistic countries. As electrochemistry in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and other eastern countries was very strong, CITCE was an ideal place for scientific exchange between east and west.

All these factors which determined the development of CITCE played their role in the process of changing the name to ISE as well.

In the 60s the activities of CITCE became really worldwide. The 14th meeting was held in 1963 in Moscow. The society represented 35 countries and had 421 members. 1966 CITCE met in Japan and represented 36 countries with 539 members. In 1968 the 19th Meeting was held in Detroit. CITCE counted 638 members from 34 countries. It was evident, that in these meetings English became the leading language. As in 1965 the term of presidency had been limited to 1 year (fixed to 2 years from 1971 on), the influence of the founders on the Board and the use of French declined. It was at the Detroit meeting that the idea to change the name of CITCE to ISE and to adopt new statutes was discussed for the first time on the Board. The opinions were divided. On the one hand, practically everybody agreed, that CITCE had developed into a true international scientific society. On the other, it was questioned if this development needed really to be followed by a change of name. Indeed, CITCE was known as CITCE, even when younger members did not exactly know anymore what that acronym meant. Changing the name seemed to be a loss of tradition, or even more, a loss of identity. If this point of view was naturally defended by the founders and older members, it was also considered by the representatives of the eastern countries. They were afraid, that these changes

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might create difficulties with their political administrations and obstruct their participation in the meetings in western countries. Discussions had been vivid, but soon it became clear, that a strong majority was for the change. The decision to change the name of CITCE to ISE and to adopt new statutes was taken by the Board at the 20th meeting in Strasbourg in 1969. It was decided to submit to vote by all members at first the change of name. If it was accepted, new statutes should be voted on one year later. The decision was not easily taken. A lot of discussion was necessary to persuade some of the older members, that the change of name did not change the identity of the society. At the General Assembly of CITCE in Prague in 1970, Professor H. Gerischer, newly elected President, addressed the members on the subject in a humorous way: 'CITCE is now a splendid young lady who celebrates today her 21st anniversary. Already as

a child she was of great promise and she developed beautifully during her youth. Today she has come of age and so she can decide to change her name'. The decision to add '(formerly CITCE)' to the new name ISE gave satisfaction and kept some of the older members from leaving the society. For the members of the eastern countries it was important to draw up the new statutes in Switzerland and to register the society in Geneva: thus the society remained neutral. The Secretary General was asked to work out the new statutes with a lawyer during the presidency of Professor E. Yeager. In October 1971 the changes became effective. Nearly 30 years have passed since. The reminiscences of the events around the change of name are fading out. I am grateful to my wife who reminded me of some episodes and especially of the words of Professor H. Gerischer at the Prague meeting.