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Santonian Working Group

Subcommission on Cretaceous Stratigraphy
International Commission on Stratigraphy-
International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS)

Chairman: Marcos A. Lamolda

Prof. Felix M. Gradstein
Chairman of the International Commission on Stratigraphy
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Granada, December 18th 2007

Dear colleague,

This is to inform the International Commission on Stratigraphy about continuing irregular procedures against the task of the Santonian Working Group (SWG) and this chairman. The reason for contacting the ICS is because the officials and some voting member of the Subcommission on Cretaceous Stratigraphy (SCS) are involved in such inappropriate practices, as well as other members of the SWG.

The first instance began in 2005 when information relevant to the SWG was not posted to me. Even worse such information is related to a meeting of the SCS at Neuchâtel (Switzerland).

I learned about it in late May 2007 when I contacted Dr. Paul Sikora and Prof. Isabella Premoli Silva (see my correspondence with both of them, files "sikora.rtf" and "premoli.rtf", respectively, and with Dr. Ireneusz Walaszczyk, file "walaszczyk.rtf") about the selection of the base of the Santonian GSSP.

Subsequently, I wrote to the Chairperson of the SCS, Prof. Premoli Silva complaining about these facts (see my messages to her in June and July). Actually, the SWG and this chairman had been ignored. In fact, the report about candidates for the base Santonian GSSP was delayed several months (foreseen to be posted in June, it was posted in middle September), as I had to integrate the unexpected publication. In my message on July 2nd to the Chairperson I was very critical of Dr. Walaszczyk's role (Irek in the message text), as he is the vicechairman of the SCS, not only a member of the SWG.

On November 7th I got a message from Prof. Premoli Silva, whose terms were inappropriate, especially in respect to previous correspondence, and just five days before the deadline for voting between the two candidates for the basal Santonian GSSP.

On November 13th I received a forwarded set of messages between Prof. Premoli Silva and Mr. Christopher Wood (see file "premoli-wood.rtf"). These documents are evidence of the bad practices against the task of the SWG and this chairman, and allow a clearer understanding of the message from Prof. Premoli Silva to me on November 7th.

Some of our colleagues have followed inappropriate procedures. Instead of presenting their objections or comments to me, and consequently to the SWG, before and during the time of voting on candidate sections, they have tried to annul the whole process.

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Eventually, on November 17th (five days after the deadline for voting) I received a message from Mr. Wood and other colleagues (Drs. Haydon Bailey, Andy Gale, Jim Haggart, Jim Kennedy, Rory Mortimore; see file "wood.rft"), with comments on my report. Just a consequence of his correspondence with Prof. Premoli Silva. Another result has been the "change of opinion" of Dr. Jackie Lees (see file "lees.rtf).

In the present circumstances, I feel that neither the task of the SWG nor my own work can be guaranteed. In fact, I have tried to go ahead with my task while the troubles were more or less within the SWG, but now several members of the Subcommission on Cretaceous Stratigraphy are also involved, and it is outside my responsibilities.

Nonetheless, I will continue with my task and produce a proposal about the candidate section selected by the SWG (Olazagutia "Cantera de Margas" section, northern Spain), as I have already written to SWG members (see file "ballotSWG.rtf") giving the results of the voting about the two candidates. Such a proposal should be sent to the Subcommission on Cretaceous Stratigraphy according to the ICS statutes, as soon as it is written.

I expect the ICS will take action to assure the SWG and this chairman's work.

Best regards,

P.S. The enclosed documents contain my correspondence with Drs. I. Premoli Silva (premoli.rtf), P. Sikora (sikora.rft), I. Walaszczyk (walaszczyk.rtf), Mr. Ch. Wood (wood.rtf); the documents forwarded to me with a part of the correspondence between Dr. Premoli Silva and Mr. Wood (premoli-wood.rtf); Dr. J. Lees correspondence (lees.rtf), and the report about the ballot results on the basal Santonian GSSP (ballotSWG.doc).

cc/ to the IUGS, and the Comisión Nacional de Geología (Spanish representative of the IUGS).