

Candidate's statement

Dear Colleagues,

I was both humbled and touched by the nomination to run for a President of the *International Society of Electrochemistry* (ISE) – a scholarly organization that I understand, admire, and deeply feel being a part of. The past three years were challenging beyond our imagination: a pandemic that cut the normal ways we worked, engaged, and communicated, and a war that is challenging the peace all we were trying to build since 1989. Yielding from Bulgaria, where I received all my degrees and started my career in the Academy of Sciences, enriched by my training in Frumkin's Institute of Electrochemistry, Moscow, Russia, the Biochemistry Institute in Vilnius, Lithuania and (then) East Berlin, I do feel the rift and the pain of Europe in this perilous moment. The nightmares of the Cold Wars, which we never wanted to remember, are now exploding missiles on the streets of Kiev, Odesa, and Mariupol.

Finding a compass in this world torn by a hot conflict is a challenge for any international organization and ISE is not an exception. We have civilizational responsibility to our students to give them professional preparation and moral guidance and the only way I can think of doing it is through leading by example. Today the countries of Europe and Americas, Asia, and Oceania – we all are faced with the societal and technological demands for decarbonization and shifting away from fossil fuels. This call is being amplified and urged by the war that uses energy resources as a blackmail note. Decarbonization is the focus of the most immediate industrial transformation and electrochemical sciences and engineering play critical, fundamental part in it. There were never better employment opportunities for electrochemists, never stronger demand on our advice by the governments, and never higher the excitement from our science by broader communities. This lays the burden of responsibility on our Society and its members to rise to the public expectations and deliver knowledge, technology, preparation, and participation. As ISE President I will work to rise the role of the Society in the formal and informal government, business, trade, and industry organizations that deal with green energy, sustainability, just transition to new economy and highlight the role of electrochemistry for decarbonizing the future.

The Society should turn its eye on the needs of its membership and, first of all, stabilize and deepen its connection with the students and young professionals. Fellowships, academic and professional preparation programs, building cohort's sense among the new generation of electrochemists, and creating the tangible belongingness to ISE through aspiration, competition, and recognition, should be my top priority. Meetings, seminars, and colloquia will attain to the new standards of effective hybrid format and in-person participation will restore the immediacy of scientific discussions. I will engage in fundraising from industrial sponsors and foundations to make proposal-writing and team-building schools for young professionals and will work with Divisions and Regional Sections to establish such cohort-building practices.

Notoriety and recognition among all membership ranks should follow the need of inclusive excellence and the promotion of diversity on every level: regional and intellectual, gender and professional, and should establish a proportion in representation and service commensurate with the highest standards and expectations. In this very competitive environment, we shall rely on the experience of the old and enthusiasm of the young – all driven by the joint adherence to excellence in electrochemical science and engineering. I am most eager to try doing all that in the next 2+2+2 years.

Yours,
Plamen Atanassov, Irvine, USA