

# Jacques Combault: New President of IABSE

The IABSE Annual Meetings and Symposium in Weimar were the last major events Prof. Manfred A. Hirt presided before ending his term as President on October 31, 2007.

During his presidency, Professor Hirt has taken excellent care of the Association. He has looked after the stability of the finances and the membership of IABSE. By conceiving and develop-

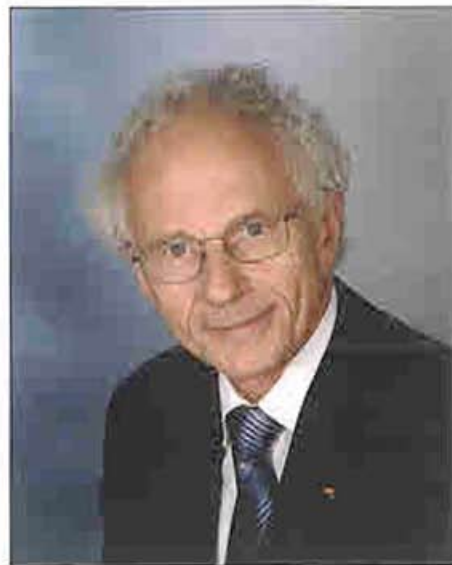
ing the idea of the Young Engineers Programme, he invested in the future. Professor Hirt has widely contributed to raising the visibility of IABSE through his many improvements and

useful guidelines for the Association in the coming years.

During the Closing Session of the Weimar Symposium, Jacques Combault took the opportunity to thank Professor Hirt and also his charming wife Hanna-Lisa, who has continuously assisted and supported her husband during his presidency term.

Jacques Combault - one of the world's leading cable-stayed and long-span bridge engineer - will become the first French President of the Association on November 1, 2007, for a period of three years.

Since joining IABSE in 1987, Mr Combault has been very active within the Association. He was engaged as Member of many Scientific and Organising Committees for IABSE conferences. Most recently, he acted as Chair of the Scientific Committee for the 2005 IABSE Symposium in Lisbon. He was Chair of Working Commission 3 on 'Concrete Structures' and Member of the Technical Committee of IABSE from 1997-2001. In the following five years he dedicated his time as Vice-President of IABSE and last year became the President Elect and member of the Administrative Committee.



*Jacques Combault*



*Manfred and Hanna-Lisa Hirt*

Mr Combault works as a Technical Advisor and is Technical Director of Finley Engineering Group, Tallahassee, Florida, USA. For more than thirty years, he was key designer and Technical Director of Vinci, involved mostly with complex projects, providing major innovations in the fields of pre-fabricated concrete and steel - concrete composite bridges.

Considering that it is an honour to represent IABSE and to serve it as well as the future of structural engineering, Jacques Combault intends to consolidate the attractiveness and visibility of the Association through the involvement of National Groups and Young Engineers to make it even stronger and even more attractive in its field.

# IABSE Today and Tomorrow



*It is not my role to draw up an assessment of the few last years or judge the performance of my predecessors. However, it seems to me that this assessment is particularly positive, a state of affairs I not only wish to recognize but also emphasize.*

*Our Association is indeed more dynamic than ever; a powerful movement of revival and innovation in all its related fields has moved it forward: the training of young engineers, their integration among our members by the means of a program specifically dedicated to them, the follow-up of new techniques and those in full expansion by newly formed working groups which may later become working commissions where ideas, practices and techniques, conference themes and topics for articles can be exchanged, the publication of the quarterly journal SEI relating the latest research and technical achievements on an international level, the regular update of the IABSE website where our members can download past issues of SEI and which soon will offer innovative online teaching and training practices in all fields of structural engineering, to say nothing of the numerous conferences that national groups throughout the whole world are ready to organize. This multitude of encouraging signs allows me to believe that IABSE has the resources necessary to face tomorrow with a certain serenity, even though, as I have observed looking at our list of members, there is a tendency of non-involvement among some countries and national groups that once participated so brilliantly at our past symposia and congresses.*

*Indeed, we must not attempt to do without the profitable exchanges available to us through symposia and congresses that allow us to share the experience of others in a field where humility is most probably the first step in avoiding major errors. This is why I, with the full support of the Executive Committee, ask that our next meeting in Chicago in 2008 mark the rehabilitation of the IABSE congress every four years, a valuable appointment where national groups may expose their scientific findings and technical activities through publications or special editions which will not fail to interest all participants.*

*In addition, we must reflect upon the education of the engineers of our profession called to conceive the structures of the future. I have observed that most codes have become so ponderous and so complicated that they prevent professional training from being carried out in favorable conditions. In addition, computer software has become so powerful that far too many young engineers trust it with eyes closed. It is necessary that the authors of engineering codes and educators in the field of Civil Engineering exchange their ideas and their demands, while taking into account the everyday realities facing engineering and design departments. I would like IABSE to be host to this exchange in the near future, with the support of other concerned associations when appropriate. It would indeed be regrettable if, driven by an obsession of leaving nothing to chance, we deprive ourselves of the imagination of our young engineers or forget to perform basic checks, however trivial once we take the time to actually think.*

*IABSE tomorrow will not be without enthralling subjects on which all our members will have the possibility to express themselves.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'J' followed by a series of connected loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Jacques Combault**  
President of IABSE