

Concluding remarks of the 2023-2024 RILEM Technical Report

By the time this report is circulated, the “[Workshop Imagine - RILEM and Climate change](#)” would have taken place. For the time being, the report is still a couple of months away, but this does not prevent me from talking about this initiative in this issue of the RILEM Technical Report.



RILEM IMAGINE WORKSHOP

Workshop Imagine - RILEM and Climate change

August 24, 2024

Toulouse, France

The workshop is a strategic event for RILEM, an association that never rests, always evolves. The lockdown period imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the shocking effects everyday of climate change, forced us to think about the impact of our travels to attend a RILEM event. Does a RILEM event with limited carbon footprint exist? If yes, how does it look like? Can you imagine RILEM with a reduced transportation footprint? At the moment, RILEM organises two major events every year: the Annual Week and the Spring Convention. In these occasions, the meetings of the RILEM standing committees and of some Technical Committees are held, and a conference comprising all RILEM topics is organised. It is a very pleasant experience in which we can chat to our colleagues, exchange ideas, shake hands with old friends... but at what cost for the environment? I am afraid that I still do not have the answers to this and the previously mentioned difficult questions, but I acknowledge the importance of this issue and I understand that the answers to these questions will have the power to change the way RILEM members interact.

Another topic to be debated during the “Workshop Imagine - RILEM and Climate change” is the RILEM contribution to the society. RILEM TCs work very hard to produce recommendations and best practice documents in the form of journal papers and, more generally, [scientific publications](#). But are we sure this knowledge reaches the broader scientific community and the society? Many of these documents contain useful information to reduce the carbon footprint of the built environment, but it is up to us, RILEM members, to make sure that these results are well communicated and that they reach the government bodies capable of making a real difference. So, the question becomes: “how do we communicate these TCs’ outcomes”? RILEM is turning its [existing partnerships](#) into active collaborations, and it is also creating new connections with similar associations. The ongoing joint activities, in terms of dissemination of reciprocal

documents and informative webinars, are strategic actions to disseminate knowledge, but can we do more? Within this frame, I am putting a lot of hope in the Globe initiative (+link). By gathering the main active associations in the field, it allows us to be part of something with a louder voice.

We will collect the answers to all these questions during the workshop, and they will be probably shared in the next RILEM Technical Report, released in 2025. Then, I will no longer be the RILEM President, as my mandate terminates in September 2024. I leave the association in the competent hands of Prof. Nele de Belie, but I will continue to stay involved as RILEM out-going President over the next 3 years. My primary focus as RILEM president has been to enhance inclusivity and bolster the involvement of young researchers in RILEM activities. This has included opening RILEM Technical Committees to anyone willing to join, doubling the financial resources dedicated to supporting young members' travel to major RILEM events, and welcoming the creation of the RILEM Youth Council (RYC) to attract more young members.

I think my input to the association as RILEM President has not been different from the one I brought as TAC Chair, TC Chair, or as any RILEM member: RILEM is a bottom-up association where each member is invited to improve the association up to the amount of time and energy any one of us is able to commit and offer to the association. This upcoming strategic workshop is another occasion to do so. I had the pleasure to join RILEM many years ago, to contribute to its development, and I have enjoyed every bit of it since then.



September will be the end of the 9-year long mandate of Prof. Ravindra Gettu, 3 years as Vice-President, 3 as President, and 3 as Out-going President. I would like to take the opportunity here to thank Ravindra for his devotion and commitment to the association. He will probably be remembered as the “COVID-President”, but for those who know him well, he is a real pillar upon which we stand: Ravindra’s care, smile, and kindness has been for me and is for so many of us the quintessence of the RILEM family spirit.

Nicolas Roussel, RILEM President, on behalf of the RILEM Presidency

(Nicolas Roussel - RILEM President, Nele De Belie – RILEM President-Elect, Ravindra Gettu – RILEM Past-President).