



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR OPTICS

Commission Internationale d'Optique (ICO)

Activity Report 2025–2026

Submitted to the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics (IUPAP)

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Optics and Photonics for a Better World



Contents

1. Executive summary.....	3
2. Governance.....	3
2.1 ICO Bureau (2024–2027)	3
2.2 Bureau meetings.....	4
3. Membership and territories	4
3.1 Situation of the U.S. territory	4
4. Awards and prizes.....	5
4.1 Selection process and award ceremonies	5
5. Conferences and scientific meetings	6
5.1 Highlights	6
6. Education, outreach and development	7
7. Communication.....	8
8. Towards the ICO-27 General Assembly (Beijing, 2027)	8
9. In memoriam	9
10. Outlook	9



1. Executive summary

The International Commission for Optics (ICO) is the international body that brings together the optics and photonics community through its Territorial Committees and International Society Members, and acts as an Affiliated Commission of IUPAP. Its mission, summarised in the motto “Optics and Photonics for a better world”, is to contribute, on an international basis, to the progress and diffusion of knowledge in optics and photonics, with particular attention to regions where scientific development takes place under difficult circumstances.

During the reporting period the Commission held three Bureau meetings (Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, November 2025; online, April 2026; and Lisbon, Portugal, July 2026), selected the laureates of its 2026 awards, including the ICO-IUPAP Early Career Scientist Prize in Optics, supported nine scientific meetings on four continents through co-sponsorship, grants or the use of the ICO logo, organised a Quantum Optics School in Bolivia, published four issues of the ICO Newsletter and started the preparation of the ICO-27 General Assembly and World Congress, to be held in Beijing, China, in August 2027.

The main challenges for the coming period are the decline in the number of Territorial Committees paying their dues (from 24 in 2021 to 18 in 2025) and the withdrawal, effective 1 July 2026, of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences as the adhering body of the United States. The Bureau has postponed the decision on the future representation of the U.S. territory until the General Assembly in 2027.

2. Governance

2.1 ICO Bureau (2024–2027)

The current Bureau was elected at the ICO General Assembly held in White River, South Africa, in 2024, and its term ends at the General Assembly in Beijing in 2027.

Position	Members
President	Eric Rosas (Mexican Photonics Cluster, Mexico)
Secretary General	Humberto Michinel (Universidade de Vigo, Spain)
Past-President	John Howell
Treasurer	Kent Choquette (University of Illinois, USA)
Associate Secretary	Adrian Podoleanu (University of Kent, UK)
Elected Vice-Presidents	A. Candeo, J. Czarske, Y. Huang, K. Minoshima, A. Naumov, J. Niemela, R. Nogueira, N. Westbrook
Appointed Vice-Presidents	B. Gu (SPIE), Y. Ismail (Optica), L. Lilge (OWLS), P. Segonds (EOS), A. Wagué (LAM), M. Costa, C. Londoño
IUPAP Council representative	C. Cisneros
Newsletter Editor-in-Chief	H. Michinel



2.2 Bureau meetings

Date	Place / format	Main business
17 November 2025	Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia (in person, during RIAO-OPTILAS 2025)	Regular Bureau meeting; minutes approved at the April 2026 meeting.
8 April 2026	Online	EXECOM report; contacts with new potential territories (Uruguay, Bolivia); decision on sponsorship requests; extension of award deadlines to the end of May; preparation of the Lisbon meeting.
8 July 2026	Lisbon, Portugal (in person, during AOP2026, at ISEL)	President, Secretariat and Treasurer reports; approval of the 2026 awards; situation of the U.S. Territorial Committee; ICO-28 bid; status of the ICO-27 General Assembly.

All decisions were taken by motions moved and seconded by Bureau members, following Robert's Rules of Order. Between meetings, the Executive Committee (EXECOM) handled the day-to-day business of the Commission: preparation of minutes and reports, processing of sponsorships, contact with awardees and territories, liaison with ISC and IUPAP, and publication of the Newsletter and updates of the website.

3. Membership and territories

Membership dues paid by the Territorial Committees (TCs) remain the main source of income of the Commission. The value of a share remains fixed at US\$ 235, each territory holding between 1 and 25 shares. All TCs that paid in 2025 have been invoiced for 2026. The EXECOM updated the contact list of the territories and the list of pending fees, and noted that for some TCs a payment procedure still has to be established (for example, through the IEEE vendor system).

The number of paying TCs has decreased from 24 in 2021 to 18 in 2025. To reverse this trend, the EXECOM has opened contacts with potential new territories, in particular Uruguay (Prof. Erna Frins) and Bolivia (Prof. Omar Ormaechea).

3.1 Situation of the U.S. territory

By letter of 25 June 2026, the President of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences (NAS) informed ICO that, owing to financial constraints, NAS withdraws as the adhering member of the United States with effect from 1 July 2026, in the context of the withdrawal of the United States from most international scientific organisations. NAS expressed its continued appreciation for ICO's mission and indicated that leading U.S. scientific societies are committed to maintaining U.S. engagement. The U.S. dues for 2026 had already been paid. During the Lisbon meeting, Prof. Bo Gu suggested the Laser Institute of America as a possible new adhering body. The Bureau decided to postpone a final decision until the General Assembly in Beijing, when the term of the current U.S. delegation ends.



4. Awards and prizes

ICO grants four international awards, each managed by a dedicated committee chaired by a Bureau member. The 2025 laureates were announced in the ICO Newsletter No. 146 (January 2026), and the 2026 laureates were approved at the Bureau meeting in Lisbon on 8 July 2026.

Award	2025 laureate	2026 laureate
ICO Prize (Chair: K. Minoshima)	Chao Zuo (Nanjing University of Science and Technology, China), for his contributions to computational phase imaging and optical metrology	Shuntaro Takeda (The University of Tokyo, Japan), for pioneering contributions to optical quantum computing, particularly deterministic quantum teleportation of optical qubits
ICO-IUPAP Early Career Scientist Prize in Optics (Chair: Y. Ismail)	Edoardo Baldini (University of Texas at Austin, USA), for precision spectroscopy tools for the metrology of interactions and correlations in quantum materials	Víctor Rodríguez López (Instituto de Óptica, CSIC, Spain), for his research on the perception of static and dynamic defocus and its application to ophthalmology and optometry
Galileo Galilei Medal Award (Chair: A. Naumov)	Miroslav D. Dramićanin (University of Belgrade and Vinča Institute, Serbia), for his work on luminescence thermometry	Voting in progress at the time of the Lisbon meeting; final approval delegated to the EXECOM [to be completed]
ICO/ICTP Gallieno Denardo Award (Chair: N. Westbrook)	—	Mahdy Rahman Chowdhury (North South University, Bangladesh), for multidisciplinary research connecting quantum technology and artificial intelligence with optics, and for mentoring young researchers in Bangladesh

4.1 Selection process and award ceremonies

- **ICO Prize 2026.** After a one-month extension of the deadline and a call sent individually to all TCs, seven nominations were received. Given very close average scores, the committee held a second vote between the two finalists before recommending Prof. Takeda.
- **ICO-IUPAP Prize 2026.** Eight nominations (six men and two women) were evaluated on scientific excellence, originality, impact, international collaboration, independence and innovation. The committee's recommendation was unanimous.
- **Galileo Galilei Medal 2026.** The call ran from January to May 2026 and received three new nominations, in addition to ten still valid from previous years.
- **Gallieno Denardo Award 2026.** Five nominations were received (Bangladesh, Colombia, Egypt, India and Turkey). As no Winter College of Optics took place at ICTP Trieste in 2026, the laureate will receive the award and lecture at the ICTP Winter School expected in February–March 2027, together with the 2027 laureate. The eligibility criterion is being changed from an age limit to a maximum of 12 years after the PhD.
- **Award deliveries.** The ICO-IUPAP Early Career Medal 2020 was presented to Prof. Bhavin Shastri (Canada) by the ICO Secretary General at EOSAM 2025 in Delft (August 2025). The 2021 Galileo Galilei Medal was delivered to Prof. V. Balykin (Russia) on 26 November 2025. The presentation of the 2025 ICO-IUPAP Medal to Prof. Baldini was arranged for AOP2026 in Lisbon. The ceremonies for the Galileo Medal laureates of 2024 (Prof. V. Reshetnyak, Ukraine) and 2025 (Prof. M. Dramićanin) remain to be scheduled, and the ICO Prize 2025 will be presented at a forthcoming congress.



5. Conferences and scientific meetings

ICO supports international meetings by co-sponsorship, financial grants paid as treasury advances, and authorisation to use the ICO logo. Requests are processed by the Associate Secretary and must be endorsed by the corresponding Territorial Committee. To avoid excessive risk, the Bureau limits the support that a single territory can receive in a short period; for this reason, a second request from Colombia (LAOP 2026) was granted logo use but not financial support.

Meeting	Dates	Venue	ICO support
Correlation Optics 2025	8–12 Sep 2025	Chernivtsi, Ukraine	Co-sponsorship
RIAO-OPTILAS 2025 and Quantum Optics School	17–21 Nov 2025	Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia	Co-organisation of the school by the ICO Education Committee; Bureau meeting
CIFI-SEMA 2026	27–29 May 2026	Barranquilla, Colombia	Co-sponsorship, grant of US\$ 2,000; plenary by the ICO President
Light Conference 2026 (15th edition)	11–15 Jun 2026	Changchun, China	Co-sponsorship, ICO logo
OPTIQUE 2026 (Congress of the SFO)	6–10 Jul 2026	Dijon, France	Event with ICO participation
AOP2026, 7th Int. Conf. on Applications of Optics and Photonics	7–10 Jul 2026	Lisbon, Portugal	Host of the ICO Bureau meeting
EOSAM 2026 (XIV Annual Meeting of the EOS)	24–28 Aug 2026	Tampere, Finland	Sponsorship of 1,000 € and ICO logo
Advanced Laser Technologies	28 Sep – 3 Oct 2026	Samarkand, Uzbekistan	ICO logo only (non-ICO territory)
LAOP 2026	9–12 Nov 2026	Bogotá, Colombia	ICO logo only

A request from ODF'26 (Toyama, Japan, 3–5 June 2026) was not finalised, as no endorsement from the ICO territory was presented.

5.1 Highlights

Correlation Optics 2025 (Ukraine). Despite the difficult circumstances, the conference gathered about 120 researchers from 24 countries, with 24 invited talks, 52 regular oral contributions and 132 posters, and more than 55 graduate and PhD students attending in person. Prizes for the best student posters were awarded, and a special session for young scientists was organised.



Awarded students at Correlation Optics 2025, Chernivtsi, Ukraine (ICO Newsletter No. 145).



RIAO-OPTILAS 2025 (Bolivia). Within this meeting of the Red Iberoamericana de Óptica, an International Society Member of ICO, the ICO Education Committee co-organised with RIAO and the IEEE Photonics Society the First IEEE Photonics Society – RIAO Topical Workshop on Quantum Optics / Quantum Optics School (17–20 November 2025, Universidad Privada Boliviana), with seven lectures.

Light Conference 2026 (China). The 15th edition, organised in conjunction with the journal *Light: Science & Applications*, featured around 150 invited talks and 100 posters, plenary lectures by leading scientists, and best paper and poster awards for young researchers. ICO Vice-President J. Czarske opened the Optoelectronics Expo, served on the Advisory Committee and co-chaired one of the tracks.



Organisers of the Light Conference 2026 in Changchun, China (ICO Newsletter No. 148).

AOP2026 (Portugal). Organised by the Portuguese Society for Optics and Photonics (SPOF) at the Lisbon School of Engineering (ISEL), AOP2026 covered topics from quantum optics and biophotonics to nanophotonics and hosted the in-person meeting of the ICO Bureau on 8 July 2026.

EOSAM 2026 (Finland). ICO sponsored the annual meeting of the European Optical Society, an International Society Member of ICO, which in 2026 celebrated the 35th anniversary of the EOS and 20 years of EOSAM, with around 500 participants from over 30 countries.

6. Education, outreach and development

The ICO Education Committee, chaired by M. Costa, organised the Quantum Optics School in Bolivia described above. Committee members also took part in outreach activities in Portugal (the Discovering Light Competition, Hands-on Science Fairs in 2025 and 2026, the “Light and the City” photo contest and International Day of Light events at INL, Braga) and in Italy (the national competition “Fotonica in Gioco” and the science comic “The Quantum Photonics Issue”), as well as in the European initiatives 360CARLA and Phortify. A new photo contest, “Light & Optics – from Lab to Life”, held its prize ceremony on 10 July 2026 at the closing session of AOP2026.

ICO territories also carried out their own initiatives. The ICO Pakistan Territorial Committee (Active Learning in Optics Group), together with the Optica Student Chapter of Quaid-i-Azam University, celebrated the International Day of Women and Girls in Science with two activities in February 2026 aimed at middle-school girls and at undergraduate female students.

*International Day of Women and Girls in Science, Islamabad, February 2026 (ICO Newsletter No. 148).*

ICO also continues to promote the PIMICS project, launched in 2023 by the then ICO President J. Howell, which aims to build low-cost multispectral and hyperspectral cameras based on the Raspberry Pi for research groups with constrained budgets, and the ICO/ICTP collaboration through the Gallieno Denardo Award and the Winter Colleges in Trieste.

7. Communication

The ICO Newsletter, edited by the Secretary General, is published quarterly and distributed to the territories and international members; all issues are available on the ICO website (e-ico.org). Four issues were published during the reporting period:

Issue	Main contents
No. 145, October 2025	Correlation Optics 2025 in Ukraine; EOSAM 2025 in Delft and delivery of the ICO-IUPAP Medal to B. Shastri; Royal Society theme issue on computational electromagnetics.
No. 146, January 2026	2025 ICO Prize (C. Zuo), ICO-IUPAP Medal (E. Baldini) and Galileo Galilei Medal (M. Damićanin); IOP Lord Rayleigh Prize to M. Dennis.
No. 147, April 2026	AOP2026 and the Lisbon Bureau meeting; call for bids for the next ICO congress; procedures for the ICO Bureau elections and distribution of shares and votes; EOSAM 2026.
No. 148, July 2026	In memoriam William T. Rhodes; Light Conference 2026; International Day of Women and Girls in Science in Pakistan.

The ICO website was also upgraded during the period, with news, award information, sponsorship and membership procedures, and the archive of the Newsletter.

8. Towards the ICO-27 General Assembly (Beijing, 2027)

The ICO-27 General Assembly and World Congress in Optics will take place in Beijing, China, in August 2027. At the Lisbon meeting, Prof. Y. Huang presented the status of the preparations, and the Treasurer confirmed that, according to the ICO rules, ICO can contribute US\$ 10,000 to the organisation.

The General Assembly will elect the new Bureau. The procedures were published in Newsletter No. 147: candidates may be nominated by the Nominating Committee, chaired by Past-President J. Howell, and/or by the Territorial Committees, with endorsement of the corresponding TC; nominations may be received until 24 hours before the election, which will take place in person during the second session of the General Assembly. The Nominating Committee has started its work.



The call for bids to host the following ICO congress was opened in April 2026. A bid has been received from the Portuguese Society for Optics and Photonics, supported by the Portuguese Territorial Committee, to host ICO-28 in Porto, Portugal, on 26–30 August 2030, foreseeing 450–650 participants. The Bureau supports the application and will consider any other proposals until the vote at the General Assembly in Beijing.

9. In memoriam

In June 2026 the international optics community received the sad news of the passing of Professor William T. Rhodes (1943–2026), pioneer of optical information processing, imaging science and Fourier optics, Editor-in-Chief of Applied Optics (1987–1993) and Fellow of Optica and SPIE. Prof. Rhodes devoted many years to ICO as a long-standing member of the editorial committee of the ICO Newsletter, and to the ICO/ICTP educational programmes, lecturing extensively in Latin America, Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. The ICO Bureau expresses its deepest condolences to his family, friends and colleagues.

10. Outlook

For the coming year, ICO's priorities are the organisation of the ICO-27 General Assembly and World Congress in Beijing and the renewal of the Bureau; the resolution of the representation of the United States; the recovery of paying Territorial Committees and the incorporation of new territories, especially in Latin America; the completion of pending award ceremonies and payments; and the continuation of its programmes supporting optics in developing regions in close cooperation with IUPAP, ISC and ICTP.

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