

News from the International Commission on Stratigraphy

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The International Commission on Stratigraphy (ICS) is the largest and oldest scientific body in the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS). Its primary objective is to define precisely global units (systems, series and stages) of the International Chronostratigraphic Chart that, in turn, are the basis for the units (periods, epochs and age) of the International Geological Time Scale; thus, setting global standards for the fundamental scale for expressing the history of the Earth. Besides other activities, ICS and IUGS ratifies the Global Stratotype Sections and Points (GSSPs) and produced and updates the International Chronostratigraphic Chart (ICC) (<https://stratigraphy.org/ICSchart/ChronostratChart2022-02.pdf>). The Austrian Commission on Stratigraphy (ACS) is the national suborganisation to ICS and part of the Austrian National Committee for Geosciences (ONKG) the national representation to IUGS. While the ICC represents the official version of chronostratigraphic/geochronologic units and terminology in English language, the Austrian and German Commission on Stratigraphy translated the ICC in German (<https://stratigraphy.org/ICSchart/ChronostratChart2022-02German.pdf>) which represents the official units and terminology in German language. After ratification of the hierarchical level subseries/subepoch for the Quaternary (Lower/Early, Middle, Upper/Late Pleistocene; Lower/Early, Middle, Upper/Late Holocene) the International Subcommittee on Stratigraphic Classification (ISSC) submitted a proposal that subseries/subepoch should become generally a formal tier in chronostratigraphic/geochronologic hierarchy. This proposal was ratified by IUGS and subseries/subepoch is now a formal hierarchical level between stage/age and series/epoch and was also included in the online version of the International Stratigraphic Guide (<https://stratigraphy.org/guide/>). If useful, each subcommission can include this rank into their respective interval of the stratigraphic column. After the Quaternary also, the Neogene adopted this tier including Lower/Early, Middle, Upper/Late Miocene; Lower/Early, Upper/Late Pliocene) in the ICC. As a consequence, the positional identifiers have to be written in upper case initials for the Neogene and Quaternary what is important for editors of scientific journals. The ISSC continued in preparing a series of articles dedicated to the various stratigraphic subdisciplines with the basic chapter on lithostratigraphy taking advantage of newly developed techniques to measure and evaluate rock properties and other attributes. This paper was published in Newsletters on Stratigraphy and deals not only with lithostratigraphy s. str. but describes and discusses also the closely related subdisciplines lithodemic stratigraphy and allostratigraphy supported by a selection of case studies.