Statement by 17 March 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Within the last 10 days the Coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19) has evolved to a situation which makes the realization of VAL4 unfortunately no more possible. By today the Federal Government of Germany recommends to avoid all meetings, in the German capital Berlin (registered office of DVM) the Senate Administration forbids meetings with more than 50 participants and in the conference location Darmstadt itself all kinds of meetings are forbidden by a general ruling from 16 March to 30 April 2020. Also borders are already closed to several neighbouring states of Germany.

Nobody could have imagined such a situation – however, in the proceedings VAL4 will still be alive! Most of the work for our international conference was done in advance. The editorial work for the proceedings is nearly finished. We will produce a fine printed version and of course a version available for download. On top, the VAL4 Special Issues of the two highly reputed journals IJF International Journal of Fatigue (Elsevier) and FFEMS Fatigue & Fracture of Engineering Materials & Structures (Wiley) will be prepared. Hence, the valuable contributions of the authors will still be published and you will have full access in printed and digital format. The guest-editors will contact you in due course.

We would have been very happy to welcoming you in March 2020 in Darmstadt and Germany – now we can merely wish you and your families good health and that everybody gets hopefully unharmed through these extraordinary times!

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DVM is a registered association at the local court Berlin-Charlottenburg under the registration number VR5130B, tax ID number: DE136624358
Board members authorised to represent DVM: Dr. Martin Brune (Chairman), Prof. Dr. Hans Albert Richard (Vice-Chairman)
Statement by 5 March 2020 / reconfirmed 10 March 2020

Dear VAL4 conference participants,

in the sense of a responsible handling and after extensive information and discussion about all eventualities of the current novel Coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19), the DVM board has decided to announce the following precautionary measures for all DVM events:

- The German Infection Protection Act IfSG § 28 regulates whether an event has to be cancelled. Responsible for this decision are the local health authorities as part of the district administrative authorities. There is by 10 March 2020 no such arrangement for Darmstadt, but the situation is dynamic and we are constantly monitoring it. As of today, VAL4 will not be cancelled neither on on part of the local health authorities in Darmstadt nor on part of the conference organiser DVM.

- In the case of the travel trade show ITB Berlin, the local health authority has imposed very strict conditions on the organiser. These were not feasible in the case of this major event, but they are within DVM. As a precaution, we will implement these requirements for VAL4. We therefore ask you to submit the attached declaration of commitment with the date of VAL4 when registering. Submission of the signed declaration is a prerequisite for participation in VAL4. This measure is mandatory.

- Other basic protective measures apply as a matter of principle / WHO Information
  - Comply with hand hygiene (wash hands thoroughly with soap and water) cf. WHO information attached
  - When coughing and sneezing cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow

We hope you understand these measures as they serve to protect us all. You will receive the final information for participants in due time. Until then we wish you a healthy spring start and a good time and are looking forward to welcoming you in Darmstadt!

Best regards
Susanne Bachofer, MA(Berlin)
on behalf of your VAL4-Team

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