

*INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH INTO THE ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY
CONFERENCE INSTITUTE OF GEOGRAPHY, ROMANIAN ACADEMY*

JULY 7, 2017, BUCHAREST, ROMANIA

On July 7, 2017, the Institute of Geography hosted the annual scientific communication session “Interdisciplinary Research into the Environment and Society” devoted to the late Academician Liviu Constantinescu (1914–1997). The event was organised by the Romanian Academy’s Institute of Geography, and the “Simion Mehedinți” Cultural-Scientific Foundation. Prof. Dan Bălțeanu, member of the Romanian Academy, took the floor in the Plenary Session, presenting the results of the RO-RISK Project on landslide risk-connected interdisciplinary research.

Proceedings unfolded within three sections: I. Physical Geography – natural hazards; II. Geography of the Environment; III. Human Geography and Regional Development. The papers presented in *the First Section*, focussed on a wide range of subjects, e.g. landslides in Alunu, Vâlcea County; earthquakes-triggered landslides in Vrancea Seismic Region: landslide distribution in the Nemira Mts.; climatic anomalies in the south-west of Romania in the spring of 2017; changes in the evolution of the summer-thermal stress and agricultural production in the lowlands; air-and-soil freeze; *Second Section* papers – Geography of the Environment – had in view the assessment of eco-system services by means of some environment and socio-economic indicators; the dynamics and conservation of forest ecosystems, quantification of socio-economic vulnerability and preliminary evaluation of the population’s health state vulnerable to extreme climatic phenomena; spatial modelling of Romania’s deforestation actions; irrigations in Romania. *Third Section* papers discussed such issues as changes in the demographic structures of the Southern Carpathians; the humanisation process in the Bălăcița-Piedmont Tableland; Europe within the current geo-political context; economic characteristics in Sălătrucel Commune; tourism in the Romanian Danube Valley; relationship between the ethnical and confessional structures of the German population in Romania; the geographical spread of the Romanian toponym “obcina” (hillside). The scientific session ended up with a round-table on the subject of *A Dynamic Planet. Transdisciplinary Geographical Research Prospects*. The papers presented followed some major Geography development directions, research-work relying on field investigations, GIS methods, satelleyte recordings, etc.

This scientific session was attended by researchers and teaching staff from the Romanian Academy’s Institute of Geography in Bucharest, the University of Bucharest – Faculty of Geography, ESRI Romania, Oltenia Meteorological Centre, and Fundulea National Institute of Research-Development in Agriculture.

Mihaela Rodica Persu

*IGU THEMATIC CONFERENCE ON LAND USE/COVER CHANGES, BIODIVERSITY,
HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT, LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT*

SEPTEMBER 11–15, 2017, BUCHAREST AND TULCEA, ROMANIA

Romania, through the Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy and the Faculty of Geography, University of Bucharest as main organisers, hosted the second IGU Thematic Conference. This type of conference was put into practice after the 33rd International Geographical Congress which was held in Beijing China (August 21–25, 2016) when IGU engaged itself into a new set of conferences planned to be more focused on specific research topics than the regional and global meetings. The *IGU Thematic Conference* was jointly organised under the auspices of IGU, through four Commissions: Land Use/Cover Change, Local and Regional Development, Biogeography and Biodiversity and Health and the Environment thanks to the presence and involvement of 3 steering members from Romania: Dr. Monica Dumitrașcu (Institute of Geography) – Land Use/Cover Change and Biogeography and Biodiversity IGU Commissions; Dr. Ines Grigorescu (Institute of Geography) – Local and Regional Development IGU Commission and Prof. Liliana Dumitrache (Faculty of Geography, University of Bucharest) – Health and the Environment IGU Commission. The Romanian Committee for Future Earth – Research for Global Sustainability and Romanian National Geographical Committee were also partners of this scientific event.

The IGU Thematic Conference took place in Bucharest and Tulcea between 11 and 15 September 2017 and had as main theme ***Land Use/Cover Changes, Biodiversity, Health and Environment, Local and Regional Development***. The main rationale of the *IGU Thematic Conference* was to bring together scientists and stakeholders from various connecting fields to address different effects of ecosystems changes, to set-up mitigation and adaptation strategies and contribute with scientific information to local/regional land use, planning and environmental policies.

The event gathered about 85 participants from 20 countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Poland, Romania, Russia, Belgium, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain and Turkey. The *IGU Thematic Conference* was also attended by outstanding members of the IGU such as: Prof. Yokio Himiyama, President of IGU, actual and former chairs of the involved commissions (Prof. Michael Sofer – Israel, Prof. Ivan Bicik – the Czech Republic, Prof. Jerzy Banský – Poland, Prof. Matej Gabrovec – Slovenia).

The main topics of this event were related to: Land Use/Cover Change and Land Degradation; Impacts of Land Use/Cover Changes on Biodiversity Loss; Causes and Consequences of Land Use/Cover Changes; Biodiversity Conservation and Management; Extreme Weather Events; Socio-Territorial Vulnerabilities and Impacts on Public Health; Environmental Changes and Human Health: Impacts and Inequalities; Distribution of Health Resources; Access to Health Care and Spatial Justice; Local Resources and Regional Specialization; Local and Regional Development: Socio-economic Disparities; Spatial Development and Territorial Cohesion; Cross-border Cooperation and Neighbourhood Policies; Governance and Policies in Planning; Land Use and Biodiversity.

During the first day of the *IGU Thematic Conference*, four plenary lectures were given by leading geographers from different parts of the world, also known for their prestigious activity within the IGU: *Environmental Change and Regional Development in Romania* given by Prof. Dan Bălțeanu (Director of the Institute of Geography, Romanian Academy), *Reorganisation of International Academic Community* by Prof. Yukio Himiyama (President of International Geographical Union), *Ecosystem Services as a Tool for Local and Regional Development* by Prof. Marek Degorski (Director of the Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization, Polish Academy of Sciences) and *The Changing Landscape of the Rural Urban Fringe: An Israeli Case Study* by Prof. Michael Sofer (Bar-Ilan University, Israel).

The second day of the *IGU Thematic Conference* was held in Tulcea, where the largest part of the lectures were presented in nine Panels dedicated to the four IGU Commissions, two thematic sessions on “Spatial Development and Environmental Risks”, one poster session and one roundtable entitled “Transdisciplinary research on environmental issues”. The Roundtable was moderated by prof. Dan Bălțeanu and the discussions were held between the governor of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (Mr. Mălin-Matei Mușetescu), a group

of scientists and stakeholders from the Danube Delta National Institute for Research and Development (dr. eng. Iulian Nichersu, dr. eng. Ion Năvodaru), the Institute of Geography, Romanian Academy (dr. Monica Dumitrașcu, dr. Diana Dogaru), the Romanian Geographical Society – Tulcea branch (prof. Gheorghe Băisan) and several local actors.

The Conference Agenda also included the business meetings of two of the involved IGU Commissions: Local and Regional Development and Land Use/Cover Change.

Two types of excursions were organised for the participants during and after the *IGU Thematic Conference*. Thus, during the Conference, a scientific boat trip to the **Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve** was organised on September 13th and a field trip in the **Dobrogea Region and the Black Sea Coast** on September 14th.

After the Conference, between 15 and 16 September, an optional post-conference excursion was organised to the Romanian Carpathian Mountains and the hilly region of the Subcarpathians.

Overall, the main scope of the IGU Thematic Conference was to connect land use and biodiversity in order to understand the relationships between ecosystems and socio-economic systems, ecosystem services, and the potential risks and benefits to regional development and human health and welfare.

Monica Dumitrașcu, Ines Grigorescu

