

“NEW IDEAS AND NEW GENERATIONS OF REGIONAL POLICY
IN EASTERN EUROPE” CONFERENCE,

APRIL 7–8, 2016, PÉCS, HUNGARY

Between April 7–8, 2016, the Hungarian city of Pécs hosted the Regional Geography Conference on *New Ideas and New Generations of Regional Policy in Eastern Europe*, organised by the Institute for Regional Studies, Centre for Economic and Regional Studies, Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

In the opening session, the Director of the Institute for Regional Studies, Mrs. Ilona Pálné Kovács, and the Secretary General of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Mr. Adám Török, extended a wellcome address to the participants.

The Conference proceedings, attended by 110 researchers and professorial staff from the universities of Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Serbia, and Turkey, were held in the former Conference Hall of the Palatinus Hotel in Pécs, the city with the oldest University in Hungary.

A Primary Session of Communications was scheduled in the first part of the Conference, in which four papers on issues of resilience, governance, territorial cohesion and social polarisation were presented: *Resilient territories and territorial cohesion: different origins, same destination* (Simin Davoudi); *Territorial governance in Europe: Same policy issues, different instruments* (Dominic Stead); *Democratic citizenship and social polarization: evidence from mezo-level contexts and policy implications* (Gabriel Bădescu) and *European Union territorial governance: understanding Europeanization* (Giancarlo Cotella).

The second part of the Conference dwelt largely on such aspects as: From globally-ranked metropolises to rural ghettos: the changing patterns of socio-spatial inequalities across East Central Europe; Challenges and specialties of the cohesion policy in Eastern Europe; Regional aspects of the new environmental paradigm; Borders and mental spaces; Smart City, the liveable city; Economic competitiveness, industrialisation, growth; International migration processes and migrant trajectories in Eastern-Central Europe; Human capital, creativity, social innovations in rural areas; Different forms of capital in regional development. Representing the Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy, Mr. Radu Săgeată and Miss Mihaela Persu delivered their paper on *Cross-Border Euro-Regions in the Lower Danube Basin*.

Discussions focussed on the results of scientific research, the papers speaking of inequalities as challenges of space-related policies; sustainable urban development; European Energy policies; cross-border co-operation programmes; changes of the mental space; polarisation structures; social exclusion; multi-functional agriculture versus ecosystem services; the new industrial revolution, etc.

Mihaela Persu

EUROPEAN GEOSCIENCES UNION – GENERAL ASSEMBLY

APRIL 17–22, 2016, VIENNA, AUSTRIA

The European Geosciences Union (EGU) is a non-profit union of scientists from all over the world, which is promoting excellence and networking in geosciences, planetary and space sciences. EGU was established in September 2002 as a merger of the European Geophysical Society (EGS) and the European Union of Geosciences (EUG) and currently has over 12,500 members, including professionally engaged individuals (researchers, students, retired seniors) with interests and activity in or related to geoscience, planetary and space sciences. Nowadays, the annual assembly of EGU is the largest geosciences conference in Europe with more than 500 sessions and various side events dedicated to a wide range of topics, which attracts on average over 11,000 scientists each year.

In 2016, the EGU General Assembly was attended by 13,650 scientists from 109 countries. The Conference program scheduled 601 scientific sessions organized under 23 disciplinary divisions: e.g. Atmospheric Sciences (AS), Biogeosciences (BG), Climate: Past, Present and Future (CL), Cryospheric Sciences (CR), Natural Hazards (NH), Energy, Resources and the Environment (ERE), Earth and Space Science Informatics (ESSI), Geodesy (G), Geomorphology (GM), Planetary and Solar System Sciences (PS), Seismology (SM), Soil System Sciences (SSS), Tectonics and Structural Geology (TS). The conference program also included numerous special side events like: five union symposia (e.g. NASA-ESA-EGU joint union session; Geosciences in Anthropocene; EGU award ceremony), 34 medal lectures (e.g. Sergey Soloviev medal lecture by Irasema Alcántara-Ayala), five theme lectures on active planet (e.g. *Solid Earth; Liquid Earth; Solar system*), four great debates (e.g. *Plan it Earth: is there enough resource for all? Is it just a matter of planning for the future?; Is global economic growth compatible with a habitable climate?*), eight townhall meetings (e.g. *European Research Council (ERC) funding opportunities; The Science of Climate Change Communication: Engaging the Public, Policymakers, and Journalists*), 65 short courses particularly addressing to early career scientists and students (e.g. *Practical tips for applying to the EU Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowships program; Modelling soil water time series data using R program*), 22 division meetings, union meeting, editorial board meetings of the 17 journals included in the EGU portfolio, 69 splinter meetings (and other 47 only by invitation), movies in the GeoCinema (e.g. the asteroid impact missions; 365 days under Antarctic ice), a photo competition, as well as other various exhibitions in booths (e.g. companies, publishers, research facilities, scientific organisations).

The 2016 EGU General Assembly was the largest EGU meeting to date. The number of submitted abstracts was of 16,500 for: 4,863 oral presentations, 10,320 posters and 947 PICO presentations. The conference attracted a lower number of students than in the previous years, which counted for 25% of the total number of attendees, but a greater number of early career scientists (under the age of 35), namely 53%. The wide spectrum of scientific sessions and side events included in the program of EGU assembly in 2016 have reflected core theme of the conference (*Active Planet*). The contributions highlighted unique and outstanding scientific insights and discoveries in the fields of geosciences and space sciences, technological and methodological advances, (re-)evaluations of established paradigms, as well as the ongoing and future challenges and opportunities in these sciences, for a better understanding of the Earth as an integrated system, as well as of the impact that human activity and climate change is having on natural Earth processes.

The number of the Romanian scientists attending EGU Conference was the greatest over the last five years (82), showing a constant increase of the overall interest (a 22% increase relative to 2015). The Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy was represented by four researchers who gave presentations in six scientific sessions of four EGU disciplinary divisions, as follows:

– Natural Hazards Division: Session NH3.2/SSS2.26 (Mechanisms and processes of landslides in seismically or volcanically active environments): *Distant, delayed and ancient earthquake-induced landslides* (Havenith H-B., Torgoev A., Braun A., Schlögel R., Micu M.); Session NH3.9 (Uncertainty and quality evaluation in landslide hazard and risk assessment (including Sergey Soloviev Medal Lecture): *Challenges and limitations of a statistical Pan-European landslide susceptibility evaluation* (Jurchescu M., Günther A., Malet J-P., Reichenbach P., Micu M.); Session NH9.6 (Resilience and vulnerability assessments in natural hazards and risk analysis): *Assessing public flood risk perception for understanding the level of risk preparedness – Evidence*

from a community-based survey (the Bend Subcarpathians, Romania) (Bălteanu D., Micu D., Dumitraşcu M., Chendeş V., Dragotă C., Kucsicsa Gh., Grigorescu I., Persu M., Costache A.);

– Climate: Past, Present and Future Division: Session CL4.08/AS1.13/BG4.14/CR1.12/HS11.5 (Mountain climates: processes, change and related impacts): *Changes in the distribution of isotherms across the Carpathian Mountains in response to climate warming* (Micu D., Dumitrescu A., Cheval S., Birsan M-V.).

– Geomorphology Division: Session GM3.1/SSP3.22/SSS2.19 (Erosion and sedimentation processes in the high mountains): Linking landslide susceptibility to sediment yield in the Romanian Carpathians (Broeckx J., Vanmaercke M., Bălteanu D., Chendeş V., Sima M., Enciu P., Poesen J.).

– Soil System Science Division: Session SSS10.1/HS5-12 (Irrigated agriculture: Natural Resources Management for the sustainability of the terrestrial ecosystem maintaining productivity): *Crop water productivity under increasing irrigation capacities in Romania. A spatially-explicit assessment of winter wheat and maize cropping systems in the southern lowlands of the country* (Dogaru D.).

The next EGU General Assembly will take place in Vienna (Austria) from 23 to 28 April, 2017.

Dana Micu

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
“DENDROLOGICAL DAYS AT ARBORETUM MLYŇANY 2016”,
SEPTEMBER 5–6, 2016, NITRA, SLOVAKIA

The International Conference *Dendrological Days at Arboretum Mlyňany 2016* was held from 5 to 6 September 2016 in Nitra, Slovakia. The event was hosted by the Institute of Forest Ecology – Arboretum Mlyňany, Slovak Academy of Sciences.

This scientific meeting gathered over 20 scientists from various research institutions and universities in Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Romania. The conference addressed issues related to the relationship between invasive terrestrial plant species and the environmental conditions, modeling the distribution potential of invasive terrestrial plant species, the ecological characteristics of the various plants that populate the Mlyňany Arboretum Park, the morphological plasticity of plants, the impact climatic factors on plant phenology etc.

On behalf of the Institute of Geography, Romanian Academy one paper was presented: *Assessing invasive terrestrial plant species in selected protected areas in Romania. A geographical approach*” (I. Grigorescu, Gh. Kucsicsa, M. Dumitraşcu, M. Doroftei) which synthesised the scientific results achieved within FP7 enviroGRIDS project. The participation to this event was made in the framework of the inter-academic exchange between the Romanian Academy and the Slovak Academy of Sciences through the project “*Assessing invasive terrestrial plant species in the natural ecosystems along the Danube River. Case-studies from Romania and Slovakia*”.

After the conference, a study visit to Mlyňany Arboretum Dendrological Park, which owns the largest collection of exotic evergreen wood species in Slovakia and one of the biggest in Central Europe, was conducted by the organisers.

Furthermore, within the inter-academic exchange, the Mlyňany Arboretum Forest Ecology Institute organized a series of scientific field trips aimed at assessing and mapping *Amorpha fruticosa* L. species in the Danube Alluvium protected area and in the urban area of Nitra. In addition, two medieval towns, whose historical centres are listed as UNESCO World Heritage, were visited: Banska Bystrica and Banska Stiavnica.

Ines Grigorescu, Gheorghe Kucsicsa

*INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP “CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS AND THEIR
IMPACT IN THE LANDSCAPE”*

OCTOBER 25–26, 2016, BRNO, CZECH REPUBLIC

On the 26th–27th of October, 2016 the city of Brno (Czech Republic) played host to the International Workshop on “Current environmental threats and their impact in the landscape”, organised under the aegis of the Czech Academy of Sciences. The event enjoyed the participation of teachers and researchers from Belarus, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Nepal, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

This event, part of the “Natural Threat” AU 21 Research Programme Strategy, focused on two main issues:

- Natural threats (slope deformations, floods and drought), their impact on the landscape, and the possibility of appraising them);
- Social and economic consequences of natural and man-made disasters.

A number of 27 papers were presented in the Plenary Session, discussions being further continued in seven sections with focus on problems of arctic zone pollution, global climate change and its impact at local level, natural disasters as tourism constraints, methods of cartographic representation of natural and technological hazards, global climate change-induced modification in the river discharge regime, in animal behaviour and in man – protected fauna relations, soil changes, the management of some polluting industries, or of household wastes.

The Workshop concluded with a field survey in the surroundings of Brno, the biggest city in Czech Moravia. On that occasion, they would underline the city’s territorial and functional evolution, the changes occurred in its relationship with the influence area, the post-communist economic decline and the challenges posed by EU integration, urban metabolism and physiognomy intra- and- inter-urban flows, projects and opportunities for sustainable urban development.

The purpose of this Workshop was to strengthen scientific co-operation in order to cope with the threats of global environmental impact on the Central and Eastern Europe, at regional and local scale. The aim was on the one hand, to sanction some theoretical-methodological concepts regarding local and regional development, recently launched in the academic circles and to bridge relationships among the academic, economic, entrepreneurial and decision-making milieus, on the other hand.

Radu Săgeată

