

**THE INTERNATIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL UNION REGIONAL CONFERENCE
AUGUST 17–21, 2015, MOSCOW, RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

One of the foremost scientific events of the world's geographical community in 2015 was the **Regional Conference of the International Geographical Union (IGU)** which was held in Moscow, Russian Federation (17–21 August), for the third time since the International Geographical Congress in 1976. The central theme of this event was "*Geography, Culture and Society for Our Future Earth*", a topic with tight connections with the global international research platform which supports interdisciplinary approaches on global environmental change – *Future Earth*.

The IGU Moscow Conference was jointly organised by the Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Russian Geographical Society and was held at the Lomonosov Moscow State University under the patronage of Dr. Vladimir Kolosov, the incumbent president of International Geographical Union. The main areas covered by this scientific event were: urban environments, polar studies, climate change, global conflicts and regional sustainability. Noteworthy is that the conference coincided with the celebration of the 170th anniversary of Russian Geographical Society.

This prominent event was attended by over 1,650 participants from 73 countries, the largest groups originating in Russia, China, India, USA, Japan and Germany. From Romania, researchers and professors from the Institute of Geography, Romanian Academy, the Faculty of Geography, University of Bucharest, the Faculty of Geography and Geology, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University, Iași and Faculty of Geography, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj were present. Throughout the conference, the IGU Commissions and task forces integrated their business meetings on the current topics of modern geography and the participating scientists displayed their scientific results during the Plenary Sessions, as well as during Commissions sessions (e.g. Local and Regional Development, Land use and Land cover change, Biodiversity and Biodiversity, Political Geography, Urban Challenges in a Complex World, Distributed Spatial Data and GIS, Geographical Systems' Modeling, Natural and Anthropogenic Risks and Hazards, Contemporary Geographical Technologies, Sustainable Land and Water Use). Therewith, two sessions were devoted to the work on the flagship IGU projects, i.e. International Year of Global Understanding (IYGU) and Our Sustainable Cities (Oursus). Overall, the scientific programme included 312 scientific sessions consisting of 1084 individual oral presentations and 451 poster presentations.

The conference agenda also included different workshops and interdisciplinary field trips organised by the IGU Commissions and the Conference Steering Committee in order to allow the participants to get in touch with the particular features of the Russian natural and cultural landscape.

Associated to this event was the 12th edition of the International Geographical Olympiad (iGEO) which was organized in the region of Tver and in Moscow. The 2015 theme of the Olympiad was "*Challenges of Contemporary Urban Areas*". Once again, the Romanian Geography obtained a remarkable success, thus being awarded with four medals: one gold, two silver and one bronze, ranking first among the participating countries.

On behalf of the Institute of Geography, Romanian Academy three scientific papers were presented: "*Invasive terrestrial plant species in Romanian protected areas. Key environmental features and spreading pathways*" (M. Dumitrașcu, I. Grigorescu, Gh. Kucsicsa, M. Doroftei), "*Post-communist urban sprawl related built-up dynamics in the Bucharest Metropolitan Area*" (I. Grigorescu, Gh. Kucsicsa, B. Mitrică, I. Mocanu) and "*Water demand for the main agricultural crops under climate change impacts in the Oltenia Plain. Romaniatudes*" (B. Mitrică, C.S. Dragotă, I. Grigorescu, M. Dumitrașcu, E. Mateescu).

The next foremost global geographical event will be the 33rd **International Geographical Congress** which will be held in Beijing, P. R. China, August 21–25, 2016 with the theme "*Shaping Our Harmonious Worlds*".

Monica Dumitrașcu, Ines Grigorescu

**WARSAW REGIONAL FORUM 2015 TERRITORIAL UNCERTAINTY
AND VULNERABILITY AS A CHALLENGE FOR URBAN AND REGIONAL POLICY,
POLAND, OCTOBER 14–16, 2015**

On October 14–16, WARSAW REGIOAL FORUM 2015 *Territorial uncertainty and vulnerability as a challenge for urban and regional policy* was organized by the Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization of the Polish Academy of Sciences in collaboration with the Ministry of Development and Polish Geographical Society.

The principal topic of the Conference was concentrated around such problems as vulnerability, uncertainty and resilience of territories. The subject of discussion was the threats of an economic (global crisis), environmental, institutional and geopolitical nature. These issues were analyzed in the light of multiple spatial scales at European, transborder, national, regional, urban and local levels. The Conference topic fits well into the current ongoing debate over spatial development that takes place in the EU, combining academic discussion with presently territorial policies carried out, including especially the policy of cohesion.

In particular, the nine Sessions of the Forum focused on discussions regarding the following dilemmas and research questions: Vulnerability and resilience of cities/towns; Resilience of natural the environment to spatial and economic changes; The role of infrastructure in promoting the development and safety in the regions; Stability of local development vs. regional and European policy; Social transformations vs. instability of development; Public management under varied social and economic conditions.

The participants came from several counties: Poland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia, Israel, Austria, Romania, and Ukraine, as well as from different fields, such as geography, economy, sociology, regional studies, spatial planning, environmental studies, etc. Three papers were presented by the authors from the Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy: *Spatial and temporal dynamics of urban sprawl in Bucharest Metropolitan Area over the past century* (Ines Grigorescu, Gheorghe Kucsicsa, Bianca Mitrică, Irena Mocanu), *Competitiveness, cohesion and sustainability in the urban development of the Romania's border regions* (Bianca Mitrică, Monica Dumitrașcu, Irena Mocanu, Ines Grigorescu), *A preliminary approach to the assessment of socio-economic vulnerability to dryness and drought phenomena in Bucharest Metropolitan Area* (Irena Mocanu, Bianca Mitrică, Ines Grigorescu, Carmen Dragotă, Monica Dumitrașcu).

The field trip organized on October 14, in the southern metropolitan area of Warsaw, occasioned some meetings to be held between participants in the Conference and representative from various institutions that play an important role in local development. Thanks to a diverse group of speakers, the participants had the opportunity to confront their own theoretical knowledge with the practicalities of regional and local development. The study trip provided the possibility for discussing the rapid development of the suburban zone south of Warsaw, the natural and agricultural landscape near Warsaw, new road investments, the present-day situation of fruit producers, social disparities in the metropolitan area and governance at local level.

Bianca Mitrică

**INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH-INNOVATION RELATED TO THE EU STRATEGY
FOR THE DANUBE REGION SYMPOSIUM
NOVEMBER 10–11, 2015, BUCHAREST, ROMANIA**

The fourth edition of this international Symposium, hosted by the Romanian Academy, was organized by the Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy, the National Research and Development Institute for Marine Geology and Geoecology – GeoEcoMar, the National Committee for “*Future Earth–research for global sustainability*”, the Institute of Biology of the Romanian Academy, the Danube Delta National Institute for Research & Development, and the National Institute of Research and Development for Biological Sciences.

The Symposium was organized within the framework of the ‘*Development Strategy of Romania for the next 20 years – The European Danube Project/The National Danube Strategy – Priority Project no. 8*’, developed under the Romanian Academy aegis over the 2015–2016 period. This event was attended by specialists from various Romanian and foreign research institutes and universities from Germany, Switzerland, Poland and Romania.

The Symposium focused on interdisciplinary research related to the four pillars of the EU Danube Strategy – connectivity, environmental protection, economic development and governance. A special topic targeted macro-regional issues aimed at ensuring territorial cohesion and future sustainable development within a socio-economically diversified space connected with the Research Programme Horizon 2020 and with the “*Future Earth – research for global sustainability*” Programme.

Updated information, focused on several main international projects was discussed with special attention to the following: National Scientific Research and Innovation Strategy for the Romanian Danube Region (N. Panin, Romanian Academy, Bucharest); International Centre for Advanced Studies on River-Sea systems – DANUBIUS – RI (A. Stănică, M. Sidoroff, National Research and Development Institute for Marine Geology and Geoecology and National Institute of Research and Development for Biological Sciences); Global Change Atlas of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region – a tool for the stakeholders in the decision-making process (D. Bălteanu, D. Dogaru, M. Dumitrașcu, I. Nichersu, B. Mitrică, M. Jurchescu, M. Sima, Institute of Geography, Romanian Academy, Danube Delta National Institute for Research & Development); Sturgeon conservation in the Danube River Basin – a complex environmental-economic-social approach (C. Sandu, O. Popescu, R. Suciu, Institute of Biology, Romanian Academy, Danube Delta National Institute for Research & Development).

Of special scientific interest proved to be the papers on the Impact2C Atlas (S. Preuschmann, Climate Service Center Germany); in need of partnerships – environmental computing and European e-Infrastructures (A. Frank, Leibniz Supercomputing Centre, Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities); and the GLOCAD network – International collaboration for Global Change research in the Danube Region (M. Muerth, Ludwig-Maximilians University, Munich);

The issue of sturgeons focused on the following: the need for trans-national implementation of Sturgeon Action Plan objectives (H. Rosenthal, University of Kiel, Germany, President World Sturgeon Conservation Society); a scientific approach to ensure and restore the river continuum for migrating sturgeons in the Danube (J. Bloesch, International Association for Danube Research).

This scientific approached to territorial cohesion in the Baltic See Region had in view a presentation of the EU Strategy for this region (M. Konopski, D. Mazurek, Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization, Polish Academy of Science).

Discussions pointed out new possibilities for interdisciplinary co-operation research into the Lower Danube Basin in close correlation with the economic, administrative and political stakeholders.

Bianca Mitrică

