

International Geographical Union ***Union Géographique Internationale***



2014 Annual Report of the International Geographical Union

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IGU Regional Conference, Krakow (Poland), 18-22 August 2014

The 2014 IGU Regional Conference took place in Krakow, Poland, in the Jagiellonian University. This combination of time and location has a few dimensions which contributed to the conference organization. In 2014, Poland celebrated 25th anniversary of the political independence resumption, the Jagiellonian University celebrated the 650th anniversary of its foundation, and Polish geographers celebrated the 80th anniversary of the 14th IGU congress organized in 1934 in Warsaw. Therefore, the 2014 IGU RC in Krakow was organized under the honorary patronage of the President of the Republic of Poland, Bronislaw Komorowski, and the members of the conference Honorary Committee were Professor Vladimir Kolosov, President of the International Geographical Union, Professor Michal Kleiber, President of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Professor Jacek Majchrowski, Mayor of the City of Krakow and Professor Wojciech Nowak, Rector of the Jagiellonian University in Krakow.

The idea of hosting the IGU conference in Poland for the second time in history was initiated in 2002 by the Polish Geographical Society which acted as an umbrella for the consortium of eight Polish geographical institutions which cooperated to promote Polish geographical research worldwide and which prepared the conference proposal. The consortium consisted of the following institutions:

- Polish Geographical Society
- Jagiellonian University, Institute of Geography and Spatial Management, Krakow
- Pedagogical University of Cracow, Institute of Geography
- Adam Mickiewicz University, Faculty of Geographical and Geological Sciences, Poznan
- Polish Academy of Sciences, Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization, Warsaw
- University of Lodz, Faculty of Geographical Sciences
- University of Silesia, Faculty of Earth Sciences, Sosnowiec
- University of Warsaw, Faculty of Geography and Regional Studies

The Regional Conference was the major event for the world geographical community this year and gathered 1372 participants from 60 countries. The host country, Poland, was naturally represented by the largest number of participants (357). Seven other national groups included more than 40 persons each: Germany (about 100), Japan (79), Czechia (60), UK (59), China (Beijing, 50). 40 participants came from each of four more countries – France, Hungary, Russia and the USA. As at the Regional Conference in Kyoto a year earlier, the total attendance considerably exceeded the expectations of Polish Organizing Committee and of IGU Executive. The meeting in Krakow turned to be of particular interest for geographers from neighbouring European countries. It matches the very idea of IGU Regional Conferences.

The conference programme was rich and diverse: it comprised key lectures, sessions organized by IGU Commissions, thematic sessions initiated by groups of scholars, poster sessions, and business meetings. 36 IGU Commissions of 41 used the conference in Krakow as the venue of their meetings. It is particularly important for the development of cooperation between them and the progress of interdisciplinary studies. There were 19 joint sessions organized by two or more IGU commissions. The Commissions on Urban Challenges in a Complex World (urban geography), on Political Geography, on the Dynamic of Economic Space, on Cold Regions Environment, on Gender and Geography, and on Geographical Education hold the largest number of sessions. Altogether, there were 1171 oral and 227 poster presentations.

The conference motto was “*Changes, Challenges, Responsibility*”. Each days’ programme included key lectures. The directions of both traditional and new areas of *changes* in the environment were discussed by Professor Benno Werlen, Germany, who stopped in particular on the research plans of the UN International Year of Global Understanding (IYGU, see below) – the most important IGU initiative. The plenary lectures by Professor Zbigniew Kundzewicz, Poland (‘Climate change, related challenges and responsibilities’), and Professor Gideon Biger, Israel (‘The Challenge of Historical Geography and the geographical question of "Where is the Holy Land"?’), offered an insight on contemporary *challenges*. They emphasized the role of both natural and social aspects of global issues with their strong local repercussions. An attempt to determine the *responsibility* of human kind for the observed changes were undertaken in the lectures by Professor Julie Winkler, USA (‘Embracing the Complexity and Uncertainty of Climate Change: Responsibilities for Geographers’), and Professor Andreas Faludi, the Netherlands (‘Place is a no-man's land, so who is responsible?’).

IGU pays special attention to geographical education. The conference in Krakow marked a new step in the implementation of the joint project of IGU, Eurogeo (the European Association of Geographical Societies) and the association Eurogeo (see below). The 650th anniversary of the Jagellonian University, one of the oldest in Europe and in the world, was widely celebrated in Poland. On the day of the conference’s opening ceremony they solemnly opened in the historical building of the university the exhibition “The Development of Geographical Ideas in Poland showing that geographical research in Poland has been always tuned with societal needs and had a strong impact on the development of the statehood and identity. It presents history of Polish geography and closely related disciplines - cartography, topography, meteorology and others in persons and artifacts, and the unique collection of maps, atlases and globes. As usual, the conference included an exhibition of geographical literature, maps, atlases and multimedia products.



President of the IGU, Professor Vladimir Kolosov, with former Secretary-General of the IGU Professor Leszek Kosiński, seen at the IGU Regional Conference gala dinner held in the banquet hall of the Wieliczka Salt Mine.

The conference hosted the 11th International Geography Olympiad (iGeo), a competition that gathers the winners of national Geography Olympiads. It gathered the teams from 36 countries all over the world. The best score was achieved by the team from Singapore.



Olympiad (iGeo) medal winners at the Conference opening ceremony

During the Closing Ceremony Professor Vladimir Kolosov, President of IGU, handed in the IGU award to the Commission on Gender and Geography, and Professor Janice Monk represented the commission. Professor Michael Meadows, Secretary General and Treasurer of IGU, presented twenty conference participants awarded with the IGU Travel grants.

The conference was wonderfully well organized: everything went exactly according to the programme and schedule, and Polish geographers graciously accommodated countless requests and the diverse interests of their guests. Participants are able to reflect on a memorable excursion programme and the lavish gala dinner in the exclusive environment in the depths of the former salt mine of Wieliczka (a UNESCO world cultural heritage site). The

obvious success of the conference is of course a result of long a hard work of the Polish organizing committee headed by Professors Marek Degorski, Anita Bokwa and Boleslaw Domanski.

Vladimir Kolosov

IGU Executive Committee: Meetings and Decisions

The 2012-2014 IGU Executive Committee consists of eleven elected members:

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The IGU Executive Committee held three meetings in 2014: in Moscow, Russia (April), in Krakow in August, before the Regional Conference, and in Cape Town, South Africa (December).

The approved minutes of the 2014 IGU Executive Committee meetings are made available via the IGU E-newsletters at: <http://www.igu-online.org>

The agenda of these meetings and the decisions taken during them were structured along the IGU priorities for 2012-2016 adopted after the 32nd Congress in Cologne: 1) maintaining and strengthening the role of IGU as a truly global organization; 2) integrating the work of the IGU

Commissions, developing interdisciplinary research by promoting problem- and region-oriented programmes and fostering cooperation between natural and social elements of geography in studying future environmental conditions and their consequences for people; 3) cooperating with local organizing committees (LOC) of IGU Congresses and Regional Conferences for keeping their high standards; 4) cooperating with the leading international organizations in contributing to the cohesion of geography and its better international visibility. The agenda of EC sessions in 2014 comprised, as usually, such questions like the IGU expansion and the establishment of closer relations with geographers of low income countries, particularly in Africa and Latin America, financial reports, the relations with 41 IGU Commissions, Task Forces and National Committees; the progress of IGU projects, the preparation of its Regional Conferences and the 2016 Congress, the affiliation with other organizations, cooperation and outreach, and IGU awards, etc. At the same time, the Executive Committee has considered the major problems and the perspectives of the Union's activity: it adopted its Strategy and the ways of its implementation on the nearest years, and discussed the involvement of the world geographical community in the international *Future Earth* programme, began to monitor the participation of young scholars and their organizations in the events organized by IGU and its Commissions. IGU Summer Schools for post-graduate students and early carrier scholars are planned. The Executive Committee cooperated with the French organizers in preparing the celebrations of the Union's centennial in 2022. This date should to contribute to the Union's larger international visibility and marked by the extraordinary Congress in Paris and a number of publications documenting IGU history. Having considered three applications, the EC selected Quebec City as the venue of the 2018 IGU Regional Conference. The Commission of gender and Geography was recognized the Union's Commission excellence and will receive an award.

In August 2014 the composition of the Executive Committee has changed: its three members stepped down and as a result of elections were replaced by Professors Elena dell'Agnese (Italy), Iain Hay (Australia) and Zhou Chenghu (China, Beijing). Professor Michael Meadows (South Africa) was reelected as IGU Secretary General and Treasurer and Professor Yukio Himiyama (Japan) – as Vice-President.

Vladimir Kolosov

International Year of Global Understanding (IYGU)



IGU continues to strongly support the transdisciplinary project of the *International Year on Global Understanding (IYGU)* which was created on the IGU initiative and is coordinated by Professor Benno Werlen, Chair of IGU Commission on Cultural Geography. The IYGU aims to bridge the gap in awareness between local actions and global effects, to encourage everyone to make daily decisions in light of global challenges and to contribute to bottom-up initiatives that connect individual, local action to global sustainability. The IYGU intends to strengthen collaboration between natural, social, and cultural sciences, to identify how local actions yield

results on a global scale, and to empower individuals to manifest local-scale change with global effects. More information about IYGU is available at: <http://global-understanding.info/>.

In late 2013 the initiative was unanimously adopted by the UNESCO Executive Board and then by the UNESCO General Assembly. It is now officially on the agenda of the UN General Assembly and an announcement is anticipated early in 2015. The “Group of 77” has already approved it, while a number of developed countries still keep a more reserved attitude to this ten centres have already been set up, with about another 15 being negotiated. Together with the ICSU offices and the Future Earth Centers, it will be possible to have about 50 ‘hubs’ of action and communication. *Springer* has made an offer to publish the six main IYGU brochures and a textbook summarizing the content of the six brochures and making it accessible to students, the general public, and policymakers. There is significant progress in outreach and fund raising although it strongly depends on the project’s adoption by the UN.

IGU – EUGEO – EUROGEO Joint Project on Education

This new project started in late 2013 and concerns the improvement of geography’s place in school curricula. The objective of this project is to compile and to promote the minimum of geographical knowledge for each citizen in our century, to find new evidence and arguments for a large audience and decision makers showing the importance of geography, and to disseminate the best practice of teaching geography at secondary schools, universities and other institutions, including schools of management and technical universities. First documents worked out by the participants and endorsed by all three organisations should be signed in August 2014 at the IGU Regional Conference in Moscow.

The project should be associated to the implementation of IYGU initiative. Geographical education for global understanding is critical for addressing global challenges - for providing sustainable sources of clean water, food and energy, and for maintaining an intact environment for the well-being of all people. The Regional Conference in Kraków provided a significant boost regarding the use of the expected declaration regarding the positioning of geographical teaching at different levels and the integration of the IYGU into the GeoOlympiad.

Vladimir Kolosov

The IGU Journals Project



The journals database project remains ongoing. There are many journals globally that deal with the broad church that is the discipline of Geography. In recent years the domination of major publishing houses in the scientific journal market has become much stronger and it is clear that many geographical journals are published that have a much lower profile and yet could provide a very valuable resource for geographers – researchers and teachers alike - in particular national or regional contexts. It was for this reason that the IGU embarked some years ago on

a project to establish a searchable global database of geographical periodicals. Information, including contact details, impact factor (where appropriate) and website addresses of more than 1000 journals from more than 80 countries worldwide are available online (follow the link from the IGU homepage at: www.igu-online.org Ton Dietz, Christian Vandermotten and Mike Meadows have recently submitted a manuscript (to the new online geographical journal *Geo: Geography and Environment*) entitled: 'The status of geographical journals: issues of ranking, publishing houses and open access' that considers the journals project database in the wider context of publications in academic geography globally.

Sustainable Cities: The IGU 'OurSus' Project



The project "Our Sustainable Cities" ('OurSus') is being implemented by Chinese and Dutch experts who try to connect academic geography with municipal authorities and business communities, and to disseminate good practice of sustainability in the cities of different size all over the world (www.oursus.org and zh.oursus.org). *Oursus* is planned to reach full maturity in time for the 2016 Beijing Congress having a wide and internationally balanced representation of both cities and users. Between 2014 and 2016 it is anticipated that up to 70 Chinese cities will be on the website but the challenge now is to get cities from outside China represented. It is decided to establish an international steering committee for the project.

IGU and the International Science and Social Science Communities: ICSU and ISSC

One of the most important tasks of the IGU is to act as the connection between the international community of geographers and the major global scientific organisations. IGU is formally recognised as a voting member Union of both the International Council for Science (ICSU) and the International Social Science Council (ISSC). The ICSU General Assembly was held in Auckland, New Zealand and, as a full member, IGU was represented by the President, Vladimir Kolosov, Secretary-General Mike Meadows and Past-President, Ron Abler. The Geounions cluster, with a focus on the broader earth and related sciences, convened prior to the ICSU General Assembly, as did the social sciences hub. IGU actively contributed to both meetings. Much of the deliberation at the General Assembly centred on the Future Earth initiative and IGU remains committed to promoting its aims and objectives through the work of its commissions. Professor Ron Abler was nominated as chair of ICSU's Committee on Scientific Planning and Review and only just missed out on election following a run-off vote.



Former IGU Secretary-General, Professor Eckardt Ehlers and IGU Past-President Professor Ron Abler seen together at the ICSU General Assembly opening ceremony.

Communication and Outreach

The main communication tools of the IGU are its quarterly newsletter, compiled by Vice-President Giuliano Bellezza and its website, maintained by Secretary-General Mike Meadows. Four issues of the new series of the e-Newsletter were published in 2014 and can be downloaded from the website by following the newsletter link from www.igu-online.org. IGU now has a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/International-Geographical-Union/282917935136850>) - now with more than 1200 'likes' and the redesigned website continues to attract many visitors. IGU also updated the handbook for its members.

Financial

A summary Profit and Loss statement and Balance Sheet (amounts given in US\$) for 2014 are attached to this report and indicate that the overall financial position of the IGU remains stable. The revenue generated by its member countries continues to ensure that IGU is able to remain active in the international geographical community and is able to strive towards fulfilling its major objectives (see www.igu-online.org).

Forthcoming IGU Conferences

17th to 21th August 2015, Moscow, Russia Regional Conference



<http://www.igu2015.ru/>



Members of the IGU Regional Conference Moscow 2015 signing the conference memorandum of agreement with IGU President Vladimir Kolosiov and Secretary-General Mike Meadows during the Krakow Regional Conference.

33rd International Geographical Congress 21-25 August 2016, Beijing

More details at: <http://igc2016.csp.escience.cn/dct/page/1>

First circular now available for download

International Geographical Union
Profit & Loss
January through December 2014

	<u>Jan - Dec 14</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Direct Public Grants	7,321.97
Investments	
Interest-Savings, Short-term CD	4,467.49
Total Investments	<u>4,467.49</u>
Program Income	
Membership Dues	139,642.55
Publications	471.85
Total Program Income	<u>140,114.40</u>
Total Income	<u>151,903.86</u>
Gross Profit	151,903.86
Expense	
Awards and Grants	22,747.27
Contract Services	1,816.61
Operations	
Banking Fees	2,739.36
Commissions	29,902.89
Internet and Web Site	4,842.48
Memberships and Dues	7,203.43
Postage, Mailing Service	3,899.37
Printing and Copying	1,660.56
Projects	14,059.63
Supplies	1,265.16
Total Operations	<u>65,572.88</u>
Travel and Meetings	
Conference, Convention, Meet...	8,006.61
Executive Committee Meetings	25,136.54
Travel	7,916.48
Total Travel and Meetings	<u>41,059.63</u>
Total Expense	<u>131,196.39</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>20,707.47</u>
Net Income	<u><u>20,707.47</u></u>

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Cash Basis

International Geographical Union
Balance Sheet
As of January 25, 2015

	<u>Jan 25, 15</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Johnson Bank IGU Endowment	59,198.14
Johnson Bank Operating Acco...	5,412.24
Petty Cash	590.95
SBCT Market Link	757.36
SBCT Money Market	117,349.99
SBCT Operating Account	24,357.74
Total Checking/Savings	<u>207,666.42</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>207,666.42</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>207,666.42</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Equity	
Opening Balance Equity	151,339.52
Unrestricted Net Assets	56,325.71
Net Income	1.19
Total Equity	<u>207,666.42</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>207,666.42</u>