



Between Krakow 2014 and Moscow 2015

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Received: November 2014 – Accepted: November 2014

The regional IGU Conference, *Changes, Challenges, Responsibility*, was held in Krakow from 18 to 22 August 2014. The main event for the geographical community at world level was attended by 1,335 colleagues, coming from 64 countries, far beyond the forecasts of the Polish organising Committee. The rich and varied programme included keynotes, sessions organised by the IGU Commissions, thematic sessions led by groups of scholars, poster sessions and coordination meetings. About one hundred young researchers took part in the conferences, thanks to the possibility of financing participants coming from developing countries.

According to the IGU data, Poland the host country had the greatest number of participants (357). Seven other national groups had over 40 people each in them: Germany (about 100), Japan (79), Czech Republic (60), United Kingdom (59), China (50). Forty participants arrived from Russia, United States, France and Hungary. In total there were 1,171 presentations during the sessions and 227 poster presentations.

On the subject of changes the keynotes were given by professors Zbigniew Kundzewicz (Poland) and Julie Winkler (United States), who spoke about climate change and the uncertainties caused by this, and professor Andreas Faludi (Netherlands) on the concept of geographical

place. On the subject of responsibility, professor Gideon Biger (Israel) dealt with the boundaries of the Holy Land as a problem of political geography from a geo-historical and contemporary viewpoint.



Figure 1. Joop van der Schee's speech during the Special session "Looking for an international strategy for geography education", organized by IGU, EUGEO and EUROGEO.

Photo: M. Tabusi (22.08.2014).

It is now tradition to foresee special sessions that are dedicated to IGU projects. In this sense the talk by professor Benno Werlen (Germany) was particularly significant, as he is responsible for the complex initiative that aims at the proclamation of the *International Year of Global Understanding* (IYGU) by the United Nations. This project constitutes an evolution of the original goal proposed by Adalberto Vallega, called *International Year of Cultures and Civilisations*. The IYGU sets out to strengthen the collaboration between natural, social and cultural sciences, in order to make people understand how local actions can give results on a global scale in daily life experiences.

Another current UGI theme was represented by the new stage in the realisation of the common project between IGU, Eugeo (Association of Geographical Societies in Europe).

The 2015 Regional Conference, which will be held in Moscow next summer 17-21 August 2015, will have global change as its general theme and will be an opportunity to reflect on these changes in the light of the evolutions of human civilisation in relation to the socio-environmental pressures.

The motto of the Conference is *Geography, Culture and Society for Our Future Earth*.



Figure 2. IGU President, Valdimir Kolossov, is speaking during the 2014 IGU Regional Conference Closing Ceremony.

Photo: M. Tabusi (22.08.2014).