

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



2019 Annual Report of the International Geographical Union

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1. Highlights of the IGU Executive Committee meetings of 2019

Two Executive Committee meetings were held in 2019. The first was in Dublin and Galway in May and the second was in Istanbul, Turkey, in September.

The first EC meeting in 2019 was held in Dublin and Galway, Ireland, during 13th-15th May. The meeting in Dublin was at Dublin City University, i.e. the venue for the 2024 IGC. A guided tour of the venue was arranged, following which EC (Executive Committee) members met with the local congress organizers and the staff of the convention company supporting the congress. The main venue is a well-equipped modern building designed to accommodate the major congress events, and there are also many lecture rooms for parallel sessions and other meetings in the adjacent buildings. We expressed our satisfaction in the quality of the venue, and at the same time our



IGU EC members with Irish hosts

concern about the high cost of accommodation in Dublin, in the expectation that reasonably-priced student residences and other more affordable types of accommodation will be available to congress participants.

The latter part of the EC meeting was held at the National University of Ireland in Galway because the 7th EUGEO (Association of Geographical Societies in Europe) Congress was being hosted there and several of the EC members were participating. IGU organized joint sessions with EUGEO and EUROGEO at the EUGEO congress and strengthened the IGU's relationship with EUGEO, as we have many interests in common. In fact mutual understanding and cooperation between IGU and each of the parties has been enhanced as a result.

The IGU EC faces a diverse array of issues, including those relating to cooperation with other organizations, such as the ISC (International Science Council), UN-GGIM, EUGEO, FIG (Festival International de Géographie). Some EC members participate in meetings of these organizations wherever possible, either on behalf of the IGU or in their own capacities, often voluntarily and with no, or very limited, financial support from the IGU. From time to time the EC requests that someone outside the EC represent the IGU in a meeting where EC member participation is impossible (for example, when the cost of attendance is too high, or if the necessary expertise is unavailable within the EC). In order to enhance geographers' contribution to broader society, we need to continue to develop our ability to pursue connections with such bodies.

The second EC meeting was held at the Point Hotel Istanbul, Turkey, during 28th Sept.-1st Oct. The IGC Istanbul 2020 was less than a year away, so the primary aim of gathering there was to check the venue, situation and preparedness for it. Vice President Gönençgil, who is the Chair of the Local Organizing Committee, reported that some 165 sessions have been proposed and more than 30 Commissions have indicated their participation already.

Within five years we also have the Extraordinary Congress in 2022 in Paris to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the IGU, as well as IGC Dublin 2024, and the preparations for



Singh, Himiyama and Lemarchand signing the MoA for Paris 2022

both are well underway. Vice President Nathalie Lemarchand, who is the Co-chair of the Local Organizing Committee of the Paris Congress, submitted a draft MoA and, following discussion and amendments, this was duly signed by the two parties.

Communication and representation issues concerning national committee contacts was discussed at length. The question of what to do with lapsed member countries, in particular whether or not they should remain listed as

'member countries' on the website, was discussed. It is clear that there are a number of countries and contact persons listed on the website (and in the IGU database) with whom there has been no meaningful communication, in some cases for many years. EC members are checking the status of communication. The outcome is to be reported to Singh, who will then consolidate and circulate a membership list indicating this status. The list is to be tabled at the next EC meeting with a view to classifying into national membership as 'active and in good standing' (Full Member), 'active but not in good standing (Observer Member) or 'inactive' (Membership lapsed)'.

The 4th edition of an international 'GeoNight' is scheduled for April 3rd 2020. The aim is to include as many nations as possible, and Lemarchand emailed all National Committees to share information about their proposed initiatives. Information and publicity about the 2020 event should be circulated shortly. Meadows, in consultation with Lemarchand and Lois-González, along with inputs from others, have finalized new pdf versions of IGU brochure in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese, which need to be made available on the website.

The presidential statement below was sent to the Chairs of National Committees for the IGU following discussion in the second EC meeting on *the principle of universality of science*, which faced challenges in relation to the 34th IGC at Istanbul. It indicates the strong commitment of the EC to *the principle of universality of science*, which has been accepted by the world geographic community widely.

20 November 2019

To the Chairs of National Committees for the IGU
Dear Colleagues,

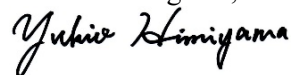
The 34th International Geographical Congress (IGC) at Istanbul, Turkey, is only nine months away. Starting in 1871 at Antwerp, Belgium, the IGC has been the greatest periodic international event for the world geographic community. It is in fact fascinating to see the progress of the preparations for the 34th IGC, as you see below:

1. The abstract submission platform is now open. There are 32 different Commission topics (with 127 sub-topics) and 12 Task Force & Thematic session topics (with 45 sub categories). The deadline for abstract submission is 13 January 2020. For detail, see <https://www.igc2020.org/en/ABSTRACT-SUBMISSION.html>.
2. As of today there are 6 distinguished keynote speakers who give lectures at the Congress. For detail about them, see <https://www.igc2020.org/en/KEYNOTES.html>.
3. The registration system for the Congress is now open, and we can register to the Congress at <https://www.igc2020.org/en/REGISTRATION-AND-ACCOMMODATION.html>.
4. In order to enjoy the cultural sites and history of Istanbul & Turkey, we have a number of daily and pre-post tour options, as you see at <https://www.igc2020.org/en/DAILY-AND-PRE-POST-TOURS.html>.
5. General Assembly, the prime decision-making body of the IGU, is scheduled on 2nd, 3rd and 4th day of the Congress. Not only the delegates appointed by the member countries, but also all the registered Congress participants may attend it and join the discussion.

The 34th IGC will demonstrate itself as an invaluable place of achieving the objectives of the IGU, which we find in the IGU Statutes at <https://igu-online.org/organization/statutes/>. Needless to say, organizing this congress involves enormous work and comes at a substantial cost, but geographers in Turkey dare to do it because they believe it is of great value to the world geographers and even broader society.

As I mentioned in my Remarks in the latest e-Newsletter (No. 33), IGU adheres to the International Science Council (ISC) and its "Committee on Freedom and Responsibility in the Conduct of Science" (CFRS). This committee is the guardian of *the principle of universality of science*, which faces serious challenges in the turbulent world where we live (<https://council.science/topics/cfrs>). Let's work together with our Turkish colleagues to enhance geography through free, responsible and high quality 34th IGC 2020 at Istanbul!

With Best Regards,



Yukio Himiyama, IGU President

2. Report on the IGU Thematic Conference on Transformation of Traditional Cultural Landscapes, 24-26 September 2020¹

From 24th to 26th of September, the IGU Thematic Conference titled Transformation of Traditional Cultural Landscapes was held at the premises of the Faculty of Humanities, University of Primorska in Koper, Slovenia. The Thematic Conference was organized by the Anton Melik Geographical Institute of the Scientific Research Center of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Primorska with cooperation of the Association of Slovenian Geographers. The initiative for the conference came from the Land Use and Land Cover Change Commission, with participation of additional four IGU Commissions: the Biogeography and Biodiversity Commission, the Local and Regional Development Commission, The Mediterranean Basin Commission and the Land Degradation and Desertification Commission. As a result of this cooperation between the five IGU Commissions, the conference topics were the following: Transformation of Traditional Cultural Landscapes; Mediterranean Landscape: Transitions, Prospects and Challenges; The Challenges Regarding the Planning and Organization of the Cultural Landscape; Land Management Practices and Global Changes; Conservation of Biodiversity in Changing Environment; Heritage of Lost Landscapes: Identification, Reconstruction and Presentation; Past and Present Land Degradation in the Mediterranean and Other Environments; The Concepts and Tools in Landscape Transformation; Land Use Data Sources from 19th Century; and Functions of the Cultural Landscape in Local and Regional Development.

Cultural landscapes are multifunctional landscapes which reflect a complex correlation between natural, historical, political, and cultural factors. Traditional cultural landscapes are shaped by traditional land management practices. The loss of these management practices leads to ecosystem change, which successively is likely to lead to the loss of important biological or cultural values. The extent of integration between environmental (ecological) and socio-economic functions of the landscape depends on the patterns and intensities of land use. Traditional land use is disappearing due to the intensification of agricultural production on the one hand and the retreat of agriculture from unfavourable areas on the other hand. Sustainable development and the conservation of biological and landscape diversity depend on the continuation of human intervention. In this way the traditional and highly valued landscapes can be maintained whilst also assisting economic and social sustainable development. Unsuitable management practices could be the cause of increased soil erosion and natural disasters. Appropriate policies should be applied to decrease such negative impacts on cultural landscapes. The role of landscape parks, as areas with high conservation value and high development appeal, is also important. They can be promoted as specific development areas while contributing to the maintenance of the cultural landscapes and biodiversity. The study of the links between landscape features and regional development is relevant for the development of policies related to land use and regional development, such as agricultural policies, regional policies and spatial planning policies. Cultural interpretation and significance of landscape can be also of controversial and object of disputes under circumstances of conflicts and political struggles. Thus issues of fair perception and valorisation of cultural heritage can be of special significance for geographical studies. Due to the location of the conference part of the sessions were devoted to the Mediterranean cultural landscapes.

The conference, which represented this year's largest event of the International Geographic Union, was attended by over 70 participants from 23 countries and five continents. With the financial help of the Commission on Land Degradation and Desertification and the IGU seven young scientists from

¹ This part of the report was originally provided by the Conference Organizing Committee, and edited by Himiyama, Singh and Meadows.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Romania, Japan, Algeria and India could join the conference and present their work.

The conference consisted of two parts: lectures held during the morning and thematic excursions held during the afternoon. At least one plenary lecture was scheduled each day; the remaining lectures were divided into parallel sections. The participants presented a total of 60 oral presentations and 6 poster presentations on the conference topics. The afternoon excursions were related with the central theme of the conference. The first excursion took place in the Sečovelje Saltpans, where the participants learned about the importance of salt production in the past and its current situation. The second excursion was dedicated to exploring the geographical features of the coastal hinterland, partly terraced cultivated landscapes with vineyards and olive groves, and preserved mixed culture or *cultura mista* where orchards and other cultures were on the same land plot. We ended the day with a visit to the Rodica Wine Cellar, where we learned about organic wine production. The last excursion was dedicated to exploring the Slovenian coastal towns. After the conference, a two-day post-conference excursion took place (27th and 28th of September).



Thematic excursion to the Koper hinterland



Participants at the plenary lecture



Post-conference excursion to Bela Krajina, at Krupa karst spring

The first day was dedicated to Kočevje region where we had opportunity to see an abandoned cultural landscape due to German emigration during WWII. The second day was dedicated to Bela Krajina, a cultural landscape in peripheral karst area. With this we concluded an one-week thematic conference and post-conference excursion organized in the frame of the International Geographical

Union.

Selected papers from the Thematic Conference will be published in the special issue that will be prepared under the frame of the Open Geosciences Journal.

<https://www.degruyter.com/view/j/geo>

3. Co-operation with other organizations

ISC: The ISC Action Plan indicates that the organization acknowledges the importance of education. Geography is one of the few disciplines represented in the ISC that has a real focus on education, from primary level through to higher education. The IGU Charter on Geographical Education is a valuable document in this regard. The question as to how the IGU should engage with ISC around the issue of education was discussed by the EC. One possibility is to propose the establishment of an ISC committee with a focus on education. The first opportunity to propose such a committee would be at the next ISC General Assembly scheduled for Oman in 2021.

GeoUnions: The position of IGU within the GeoUnions has been subject of EC discussion; Himiyama has emphasised the importance of IGU engagement with the GeoUnions as the group is a powerful lobby within ISC. The Deep-Time Digital Earth initiative of IUGS/IUGG is supported by IGU.

CIPSH: Kolosov circulated a report about the latest developments in CIPSH. In summary, the report indicates that the CIPSH chairs programme is a success, that the Global History of Humanity project has reached consensus regarding its structure, the World Humanities Report is making progress, and the preparation of a new UNESCO initiative/programme, anchored in the Humanities, is underway.

UN-GGIM: The sixth High Level Forum of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) will be held in Windsor, United Kingdom, in April 2020. Hay agreed to explore the possibility of his participation and sought strategic consideration by EC of ways to enhance IGU's involvement in UN-related meetings such as UN-GGIM

EUROGEO, EUGEO: EUGEO has been offered a session for the Istanbul Congress and a booth at the Exhibition. Hay offered to encourage participants at the Geographical Education Conference in Turkey to propose education-related sessions for Istanbul 2020. EUROGEO met in Slovenia in August and will have its next conference in Madrid, Spain, in April 2020. Lois-González remains in good contact with this group and will attend the conference.

EGAL/UGAL: There is a conference of the Departments of Geography of Argentina Universities in October 2019. Lois- González attended and used the opportunity to continue his efforts to liaise with Latin American geographers.

4. Forthcoming events

1-3 April 2020: IGU EC meeting in Rome. Arrivals on 31st March 2020, meeting on 1st and 2nd April, excursion on 3rd April, participation in 'Night of Geography' on evening of 3rd April, departures 4th April 2020.

15-16 August 2020: EC meeting in Istanbul in association with the 34th IGU Congress. Arrivals on 14th August, EC meeting on 15th and 16th; participation in the Congress opening ceremony on 17th August 2020.

November 2020: An EC meeting may be held at Santiago de Compostela (Spain); dates and details to be confirmed following the outcome of EC elections at the Istanbul General Assembly.

17-21 August 2020: 34th IGU International Geographical Congress (IGC), Istanbul, Turkey.

5. Communication and outreach

The main communication tools of the IGU are its website, maintained by Secretary-General R.B. Singh and Assistant Secretary-General Mike Meadows, and its quarterly newsletter, compiled by former Vice-President Giuliano Bellezza. As usual, four issues of the Newsletter were published in 2018 and can be downloaded from the website by following the newsletter link from www.igu-online.org or from www.homeofgeography.org. The IGU Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/International-Geographical-Union/282917935136850>) continues to attract 'likes' and the IGU website also attracts many visitors.

IGU Series on Contemporary Geographies: The IGU's new book series with Edward Elgar Publishers (edited by Hay and Meadows) is attracting strong submissions. Three books in the series are nearing completion.

6. Financials

In 2019, IGU had a financial surplus of US\$49,612. The major reason for this was a reduction in expenditure due to: a) The Koper Thematic Conference was the only IGU conference for which travel grants were required; b) the IGU Executive Committee met only twice (because there was no major IGU event); c) there was no meeting of the International Science Council that required attendance by the IGU President and Secretary-General. Expenditure was, therefore, down by almost US\$40,000 compared to 2018, while income (based almost entirely on membership fees) remained reasonably steady. National Committee membership rates therefore can remain unchanged (they were last adjusted in 2008). The Promotion and Solidarity Fund represents the IGU's reserve and has recently been relocated to an account in Japan and will accordingly accrue a modest amount of interest from now on. It is hoped that a successful Istanbul Congress in August will see this fund supplemented further.

International Geographical Union			
Balance Sheet			
As of December 31, 2019			
			Dec 31 2019
Assets			\$
	Current Assets		
	Checking/Savings		
		Johnson Bank IGU Endowm	100 968,32
		Johnson Bank Operating Acc	1 565,91
		Petty Cash	590,95
		SBCT Market Link	139,04
		SBCT Money Market	70087,44
		SBCT Operating Account	86213,99
		Total Checking/Savings	259 565,65
		Total Current Assets	259 565,65
TOTAL ASSETS			259 565,65
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY			
	Equity		
		Opening Balance Equity	151 339,52
		Unrestricted Net Assets	58 613,25
		Net Income	49 612,88
		Total Equity	259 565,65
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES			259 565,65

International Geographical Union			
Profit & Loss			
January through December 2019			
			\$
			Jan - Dec 19
Ordinary Income/Expenses			
Income			
	Investments		
		Banking Accounts Interest	4 155,53
	Program Income		
		Country Member Dues	1 333 883,63
Total Income			1 375 539,16
Gross Profit			1 375 539,16
Expenses			
		IGU Travel Grants	4 824,26
		IGU Commission grants	44 448,18
		Membership Dues	7 024,36
		EC Travel and Subsistence	20 912,70
		IGU Brochure Design	488,78
		Sundry Expenses	927,32
		Secretarial Assistance	1 824,03
		IGU Website	4 566,03
		Internet access charges	1 327,08
		Bank Fees	1 583,56
Total Expenditure			87 926,29
Net Income			49 612,88