



Sofia, Bulgaria

The success of previous FIG Young Surveyors events, such as 1st and 2nd FIG Young Surveyors European Meeting (YSEM), have paved the way to yet another collaboration of Young Professionals and Surveying students. The 3rd YSEM was held in Sofia, Bulgaria on the 16 of May 2015. Approximately 50 keen young professionals from 20 countries gathered together to share and explore new ideas, address pressing issues, discuss how we can best meet the challenges ahead and move forward the European YS Network further.



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The meeting started with an opening ceremony and a photo session. The ceremony entailed short welcome speeches by the representatives of the organizations. FIG President and the guest-of-honor, Ms Chryssy Potsiou, shared her thoughts on how essential is FIG's close collaboration with the YS Network. Ms Eva-Maria Unger, Chair of the YS Network and Ms Paula Dijkstra, the Vice-Chair of administration gave an overview of the YS Network work plan. Mr Angel Anakiev, Chairman of the Chamber of Bulgarian Engineers in Surveying, on behalf of its President – Mr Maurice Barbieri, highlighted the recent projects and activities of CLGE and was followed by Borislav Marinov, the Dean of the University where the meeting was held. Both encouraged YS to broaden their horizons and to get involved in various kindred organizations. The ceremony was concluded by Mr John

Hohol, FIG Foundation President, whose support and dedication to helping and promoting YS knows no bounds, and a round of applause for all the speakers. During the one day event there was a variety of topics covered, the first being astronomy and the close relation it has with surveying. The inspiring presentation was giving by Vladimir Bozhilov. After the coffee break, during which the participants were given an opportunity to get to know each other, the stage was given to keynote speakers: Rahmi Nurhan Celik, John Brock and John Hohol. Each speaker took the audience on a journey through our unique surveying history.

"A Better Future Can be Built on Past Experiences"

Next on the itinerary was an interactive working session, themed "Wisdom through Trial and

Error", a stirring illustration of a spirited team work.

The afternoon session was dedicated to "Challenges of the Modern World, Innovations and Land Management". The goals and missions of the UN-Habitat Global Land Tool Network as well as the essence of the "Fit for Purpose" concept, were highlighted by Cyprian Selebalo. Followed by Nyncke Emmens presentation on the potential of land consolidation as a tool for land administration and development. The session continued with Artemis Valanis, who shared her ideas and experience regarding international job opportunities:

"Think Globally, Act Locally"

Prof. Borislav Marinov explained the fundamentals of modern photogrammetry, whereas the innovation part of the session was demonstrated by Dr. Khaled el Nabbout.

The concluding session of the day offered an opportunity for an open debate by inviting the participants to the speakers' corner. Diverse ideas were brought up, various topics discussed. The session rounded up with a taste of what's to come – the upcoming events.

At the closing ceremony our appreciation and gratitude to our esteemed supporters: CLGE, FIG as well as Trimble was expressed, including a special thank you to FIG Foundation which made it possible for 12 lucky YS to attend the meeting.

Furthermore, the unprecedented teamwork of the organizing committee was praised. Nineteen enthusiastic YS guided by Paula Dijkstra and Eva-Maria Unger, came together to participate in this important event.

"Alone We Can Do so Little; Together We Can Do so Much", Helen Keller

Those simple, yet brilliant words best capture the outcome of this amazing meeting.



GeoSkillsPlus meets in Vilnius

From 5th to 8th May, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University hosted the third workshop of the GeoSkills Plus project. The main aim of this workshop was to inform Baltic and especially Lithuanian stakeholders about the opportunities the GeoSkills Plus project is creating and to discuss the preliminary results of the work packages.

Paula Dijkstra and Marius Matache



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Vaidotas Sankalas, a local Surveyor, and CLGE Delegate addressing the seminar about the situation in Lithuania

With 33 participants from 10 countries the workshop provided a strong platform for discussions on the mismatches between the market needs and the state of ge-education. On the first day the participants were informed by the partners about the latest results of the project activities. On the second day the focus was on the challenges in Lithuania and neighbouring countries.

Cooperation model. During the workshop new results were presented on how to establish a golden pyramid of stakeholders at national and regional level. One of the key elements for success is to create a solid foundation for the pyramid. In most cases this foundation relates to financial means. Sufficient funding enables high quality educational activities to be developed,

which includes similar (if not common) curriculum and available GI-technology (both hardware and software). Another recommendation is to emphasize that cooperation within the pyramid actually means multi-lateral cooperation with all partners at the same time. Most involved stakeholders arrange meetings with other stakeholders, but not with all of them at the same time in the same room.

Practical issues were also highlighted. A stakeholder in the pyramid is in most cases not just one organisations or person, as several professional associations might exist for the same profession. When establishing the pyramid it is important to take time to identify all stakeholders to address the challenges.

EuroGeographics participated in the Vilnius workshop. They are stakeholder in the European

geoskills pyramid. They represent more than 50 National Mapping and Cadastral Agencies. Capacity building and development of education is also strongly on their agenda and they have started to reach out to other stakeholders to discuss the challenges at a European perspective.

In Sweden, where the geoskills cooperation model is working well, an example of cooperation between a university and the Cadastre agency is in place, where they jointly developed and implement a Masters course together. Cooperation at PhD level also exists (e.g. specialists from Lantmäteriet teach certain courses at the university).

Raising awareness. GeoSkills Plus project has produced an overview of the methods that countries might use in their efforts to raise aware-



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The core participants of the GeoSkillsPlus project at the Vilnius Gediminas Technical University

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ness about geoskills (the report is available here). When establishing an awareness raising strategy, organisations should focus on different channels, the examples given included social media, person-2-person communication (meetings, seminars, conferences etc.), but also several other valuable examples were given - comic book (Belgium), radio show (Bulgaria), educational projects with schools (Sweden), promotional video (Netherlands).

Bridging the gap. The debates resulting from defining the gap (read more about it on our blog) revealed an urgent need to modernize the educational and training system, in terms of i) making it more flexible (life long learning experiences rather than long static courses), ii) establish and develop cooperation with industry for the introduction of new technologies and methodologies, iii) the development and marketing of new courses and educational programmes adapted to the needs of the labour market.

At a system scale, it is necessary to train people who can easily adapt to new technological developments, that have the creativity to under-

stand different applications, are creative and entrepreneurial and also to face increasing competition. Moreover, the skills of a GI specialist will also include programming as well as other (broader) skills, like communication and management.

The hierarchy model has been a useful tool for identifying solutions to bridge the gaps in any country, as it covers the most important factors determining the gap. Once the gap is clearly defined solutions must be found to deal with it, taking into account factors that are beyond your control (e.g. transparency of wages).

At the regional level, cooperation between universities can provide solutions to apparently unsolvable situations. The Baltic countries are dealing with narrow curricula, fewer students and consequently decreasing numbers of staff members. This will most likely lead to the closure of those study programmes. The example of Dutch universities sharing courses on GI education is persuasive and a useful example of good practice in the field and a possible solution for Baltic institutions to consider. Each university in the region can bring its own expertise and spe-

cialisation in a joint programme that will be more relevant than the small and disjointed programmes a single institution could provide.

Conclusions

The 3rd workshop of the GeoSkills Plus project emphasised that GeoSkills are required more and more in order to fulfil societal needs. Despite this, the geospatial market is still dysfunctional affected by multiple gaps and difficulties that obstruct its coherent development. The project team received valuable feedback on GeoSkills Plus project activities and outcomes. The perspective of each country was different when compared with others. The exchange of experiences and discussions will support the optimisation of the project but also the institutional development of each participant and organisation.

The final GeoSkills Plus project conference will take place on September 17th in Brussels, Belgium. Further details can be found on the project website.

www.geoskillsplus.eu