

INTEGRATED RESEARCH IN THE DANUBE REGION SYMPOSIUM
FEBRUARY 24, 2014, BUCHAREST, ROMANIA

The third edition of this Symposium, held by the Romanian Academy and organized by the National Council for the Danube Region (SUERD), the National Committee for Global Environmental Change and the Romanian Academy's Institute of Geography, was attended by specialists from various Romanian and foreign research institutes and universities.

Within the context of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, Symposium themes focused on the following problems: evaluation of the Danube future in a global change context (W. Mauser, Ludwig Maximilians University, Munich); presentation of a new integrated center for researches of the Black Sea – Danube Region (N. Panin, Geocomar Institute, Bucharest); global water consumption in agriculture with perspectives for the Lower Danube Basin (Hong Yang, EAWAG Zürich); a multi-perspective research of the forests of Romania (I. Abrudan, Transilvania University, Braşov); assesment of water quality in the Lower Danube Basin (L. Georgescu et al., University of Galaţi); climate change and variability effects on Danube discharge (I. Sandu, E. Mateescu, National Meteorological Administration, Bucharest); presentation of the Danube Atlas - hazard and risk maps (M. J. Adler, National Institute of Hydrology and Water Management, Bucharest); interdisciplinary researches of sturgeon conservation in the Danube River Basin (C. Sandu, Institute of Biology, Bucharest) and cross-border co-operation for natural hazard management in the Lower Basin.

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

Dan Bălteanu

THE 28th SESSION OF THE UN GROUP OF EXPERTS
ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
NEW YORK, APRIL 28 – MAY 2, 2014

Proceedings of the 28th Session of the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names were held in New York, USA, between April 28 and May 2, 2014. The event was attended by 160 delegates from 50 UN member-states and 6 international profile organisations who presented a number of 90 documents. The Session opened on April 28, 2014 with a plenary meeting that adopted the Session's agenda, continued with activity reports on behalf of the Chair of the Group of Experts, of the Secretariat and the 17 UNGEGN divisions. Session proceedings developed in plenary meetings, divisions or working groups. Romania is an active participant in the Romano-Hellenic and French-speaking Divisions, Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers, Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy, Working Group on Country Names and Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage.

Discussions held within the Working Group on Exonyms took up again the issue of changing the definitions of endonyms and exonyms formulated by Prof. Peter Jordan – Austria, the Working Group co-convenor, as it emerged from the activity discharged since the previous Session, New York, August 2012, and the Meeting of the Working Group on Exonyms held in Corfu on May 23–25, 2013. Alongside Germany, Greece, Canada, and New Zealand, Romania argued against new definitions, basically because ***geographical names in the official language of member states being excluded, the resulting exponential numerical increase of exonyms*** was in contradiction with the UN resolution adopted at previous conferences. Creating exonyms and endonyms within one and the same country means an upsurge of exonyms, which contravenes the idea of standardizing geographical names, which is the very purpose of this UN Working Group.

Discussions on the new definitions continued at the 16th meeting of the Hermagor Working Group, Austria (June 5–7, 2014), but eventually modifying them was given up.

Monica Dumitraşcu

LAND USE-LAND COVER CHANGES AND LAND DEGRADATION (LUCC&LD)
SYMPOSIUM
JUNE 23–26, 2014, BUCHAREST, ROMANIA

The 2014 IGU LUCC Regional Meeting “*LAND USE-LAND COVER CHANGES AND LAND DEGRADATION (LUCC&LD)*” was held in Bucharest, Romania on June 23-26. The event was organized by the Romanian Academy’s Institute of Geography, the Romanian Space Agency – ROSA, and the University of Agronomic Science and Veterinary Medicine Bucharest. The Symposium focused on land use and land degradation related to soil erosion, landslides, desertification and climate change. The topics also included land-use transformations connected with economic, social and political changes.

The Symposium gathered nearly 40 researchers from the European countries (the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania, Austria, Italy, and Russia) and Australia and the following institutions: *Al. I. Cuza* University of Iași, Department of Geography, Romania; *Charles* University, Faculty of Science, Czech Republic; Danube Delta National Institute for Research & Development, Romania; Esri Romania, Bucharest; Help Service Remote Sensing, Czech Republic; National Agricultural Research and Development Institute, Romania; the Romanian’s Academy Institute of Geography, Romania; International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), Austria; Moscow State University, Faculty of Geography, Russia; National Institute of Geophysics, Geodesy and Geography, Bulgaria; Remote Sensing Application Center - ReSAC and Agency for Sustainable Development and Eurointegration – ASDE, Bulgaria; Romanian Space Agency – ROSA, Romania; Transilvania University of Brașov; University of Agronomic Science and Veterinary Medicine Bucharest, Romania; University of Bucharest, Faculty of Geography, Romania; University of New England, Australia.

The participants discussed problems of land use-land cover changes in Czechia, as well as along the Romanian Danube Valley, in the Oltenia Plain, in the Buzău County, in the Subcarpathian Watershed of the Argeșel River, in Regional Australia, and in the steppe region of Russia; agrolandscape methodology of LUCC study; assessment of the agricultural spatial-temporal patterns in the Romanian Flood Plain; land degradation in a salt mining area, the Curvature of the Central Moldavian Plateau, the Curvature of the Subcarpathian region; the dynamics of built-up areas in Bucharest Metropolitan Area.

After the Conference, a field trip was organized on June 23-26. The field trip represented a transect through the Romanian Plain, the Hilly Region of the Subcarpathians and the Carpathian Mountains. In the post-communist period these regions have registered transformations such as land use-land fragmentation, land abandonment, land degradation and deforestation. The field trip followed Land-use changes in the Bucharest Metropolitan Area, Agricultural land use in the Bărăgan Plain, Land use and soil erosion in the outer Subcarpathian area, Land use and cover changes in the Curvature Carpathians and Subcarpathians, Land use in the mountain area and mudflows, impacts on infrastructure, Land use and land degradation in the Buzău mountain area, Land use and deforestation/afforestation in the Brașov Depression.

Bianca Mitrică