

Western and Central Europe

Annual report for 2014

The Western and Central European region has the largest IAH membership, consisting of 22 National Chapters. Most of them are very active both at national and at international level, which is shown by the two upcoming IAH congresses (Rome and Dubrovnik) and the numerous international conferences organized by them or where they are co-organizers.

One of my aims for 2014 was to ensure that the organization of the first Central European Groundwater Conference (CEG) would develop into a series of conferences which seems to have succeeded. It was good to see that some chapters volunteered to organize the second conference. The International Conference and Field Seminar “Karst Without Boundaries” organized in Trebinje & Dubrovnik in June 2014 by the DIKTAS partners with special support provided by IAH, UNESCO-IHP and IGRAC, with the University of Belgrade and Hydropower System Trebišnjica as regional co-organisers, was a meeting point for the Central European Chapters to further discuss the organization of this new conference series. A proposal by the Romanian National Chapter to organize the next Central European Groundwater Conference in Romania was strongly supported by all the representatives present from six of IAH’s Central European (Croatian, Hungarian, Italian, Romanian, Serbian and Slovakian) National Chapters. Iulian Popa, secretary of the Romanian Chapter, presented their proposal. The next CEG conference will be organized in the Black Sea region of Romania between 14 and 16 October 2015, with as its main theme ‘Groundwater risk assessments in urban areas’. As a result the first CEG conference, convened by the Hungarian National Chapter, has served to strengthen the links between of these national chapters and initiated some new cooperation.

Strengthening the bridges between the European National Chapters is key to the long term prosperity of IAH, and the meeting with the representatives of the national chapters in Marrakech provided a forum to get a better overview of their activities and needs. In addition I had the opportunity for a short visit to the Netherlands. Although arranged at a short notice, a fruitful meeting was organized with Sophie Vermooten, secretary of the Dutch National Chapter. The main thoughts were to help stimulate the active participation of Dutch scientists within IAH with the presence of a VP at a national meeting, and the organization of a joint meeting with a (or even of several) neighbouring chapter(s).

As part of my work with the members of the Executive and Council I was pleased to attend the IAH Council meeting in Marrakech last September. This meeting provided a good opportunity to directly discuss important topics regarding the future of IAH, including a revision of the IAH membership fees, Annual Report and Financial Statement for 2013, a review of the IAH Commissions and Networks and a proposal for a new commission, review of the IAH Rules and Articles, and enhancing education and academic development, to list just a few of the most relevant topics.

I had the opportunity to represent IAH at the International Conference and Field Seminar “Karst Without Boundaries” organized in Trebinje & Dubrovnik June 2014. IAH was deeply involved in the organization of the conference through its Karst Commission, also chairing many of the sessions. A Karst Commission meeting was held on the 3rd day of the conference, discussing the upcoming karst meetings, publications, and activities. This conference also fostered the cooperation between IAH and UNESCO IHP.

In addition to these international meetings, I also attended the annual meeting of the Hungarian National Chapter of IAH and represented IAH at different national meetings and workshops.

I represented IAH in October 2014 at a meeting organised by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on international tendencies and a national overview of hydrogeological studies, where I gave an introductory presentation about the topic also emphasizing the aims, role and activities of IAH.

I closely follow the work of the Commissions and Network and I wish I could actively join more of them since their work is mostly very forward looking. Since I am scientifically deeply involved and very interested in transboundary groundwater issues, I have joined the new initiative of setting up a Commission on Transboundary Aquifers.

I look forward again to working closely with the different national chapters and to supporting their activities, and I hope I can meet many of our members in the upcoming IAH Congress in Rome and at other IAH meetings.

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