



Annual report for 2015

National Chapters are a key element of IAH, and individual members are encouraged and supported to set up new chapters and to establish regional collaboration between chapters. *Western and Central Europe* has 22 National Chapters and more than 1700 members, making it the largest of all the regions. Many of these European chapters are very active, organizing national and international conferences, workshops, contributing to education and also reaching out to different stakeholders. This can be attributed to their long tradition of involvement, rather than just their large membership.

The *IAH Congress* in Rome organised by the Italian National Chapter was the largest IAH event of 2015, with 832 participants, including 155 students. The theme of this congress, was “Back to the Future”, and linked previous research results with the technical and scientific tools and needs of the 21st century. I had the opportunity to attend this exciting congress and to contribute to it by giving a presentation, co-authoring another presentation, attending lectures and different meetings, and also by co-chairing the ‘How to link Science and Policy in groundwater governance?’ session.

I attended the *IAH Council meeting* in Rome as part of my work with the members of the Executive and Council, where a number of important issues were discussed. In addition to consideration of the Annual Report and Financial Statement for 2014, and review of the IAH Rules and Articles, the council meetings focussed on important topics regarding the future of IAH, including an update on the IAH Forward Look actions and activities, income diversification for the Association, a review of the IAH Commissions and Networks, and enhancing education and academic development. The status of preparations for IAH’s anniversary celebrations in 2016 were also reported.

The *active involvement of the European National Chapters* is also shown by the organization of two upcoming congresses in Montpellier and Dubrovnik. As a member of the IAH council I have supported both congress nominations. The decision on where to organise the *60th anniversary Congress of IAH* was taken during the Congress in Rome. It has been agreed that it will be organised by the French and the German National Chapters in Montpellier, and is being arranged within a very short timeframe. This initiative is an excellent example of cooperation between National Chapters in Western and Central Europe. As a member of the scientific committee I will do my best to help and support the congress organizers, so that we will have a successful event which will also present an opportunity to showcase the future evolution of IAH, building on the experience from our 60 years of fruitful cooperation.

A selection of meetings from 2015 includes:

- The meeting of the IAH Karst Commission in Birmingham, UK in June 2015.
- The conference on Hard Rock aquifers: up to date concept and practical applications, organized by the French IAH National Chapter in La Roche sur Yon in June 2015 with an excursion to Basse Normandie in October 2015.
- The Polish National Chapter of IAH and the University of Silesia hosted a conference on ‘Groundwater vulnerability: from scientific concept to practical application’ at Ustron in the Carpathian Mountains in June 2015.

- A joint all-day meeting of the British IAH National Chapter and the Hydrogeological Group of the Geological Society on the topic of sustainable groundwater under multi-functional pressures, including both the 2015 Darcy and 2015 Ineson Lectures, in London in October 2015.
- A symposium on the value of groundwater organized by the IAH Netherlands Chapter in cooperation with the Netherlands Hydrological Society (NHV) and VVM, KWR Water, Deltares and IHP Belgium in Nieuwegein in September 2015.

The Hungarian National Chapter has initiated a series of conferences, which started with the organization of the first Central European Groundwater Conference in 2013 in Mórahalom, in keeping with the aims of IAH in stimulating and supporting regional activities. In last year's report I wrote that *one of my aims was to ensure that the first Central European Groundwater Conference (CEG) will develop into a series of conferences*, and this seems to have been successful. Several national chapters showed their willingness to organize a second Central European Groundwater (CEG) Conference. A proposal by the Romanian National Chapter to host the second CEG Conference in Romania was supported by all 6 Central European IAH National Chapter representatives at the international conference 'Karst Without Boundaries' in Trebinje, Serbia in June 2014. I helped and supported the Romanian National Chapter with their organisation, and *a successful second CEG Conference was held in Constanta* in the Black Sea region of Romania in October 2015, with the title 'Groundwater risk assessments in urban areas'. The meeting attracted 65 participants from 10 countries and resulted in new ideas and agreements for cooperation between the Chapters. I had the opportunity to represent IAH at this conference and to chair a meeting with the representatives of the National Chapters present at the conference. There was unanimous support to hold the third CEG conference as a side event of the IAH Congress in Dubrovnik in 2018, and it will be organised by the Croatian National Chapter.

I represented IAH in November 2015 at the *UNESCO-IHP Side Event* "Focus on Groundwater in the 2030 agenda" at the 7th Meeting of the Parties to the UNECE Water Convention. As a member of the panel discussion I summarised the goals of IAH and my experience based on transboundary groundwater projects regarding a potential roadmap to achieving better groundwater governance.

Strengthening the bridges between the European National Chapters is key to the long term prosperity of IAH. The meeting with the representatives of the National Chapters in Rome provided the forum to get a better overview on their activities and needs. The congress provided an excellent opportunity to meet and change ideas not just with the representatives of the National Chapters, but also with lots of IAH members. New proposals regarding education, information exchange, or involvement of unemployed hydrogeologists in the work of IAH have been proposed.

Taking the opportunity of visiting BRGM during the AIG-11 Conference in Orléans I met Laurence Chery, secretary general of French IAH National Chapter. We discussed not only the upcoming 60th anniversary IAH congress, but also considered organising a joint meeting of the European Chapters. Detailed planning of this event will be discussed in Montpellier together with other chapter representatives.

As part of my collaboration with the European National Chapters I was pleased to accept an invitation by the German National Chapter to represent IAH at the FH-DGG 2016 Conference in Karlsruhe in April 2016, and to attend the IWA Specialist Groundwater Conference 2016 in Belgrade thanks to an invitation from the Serbian National Chapter of IAH and the Jaroslav Černi Institute.

As part of my work *to promote cooperation* I met Neno Kukuric, director of IGRAC, during a short visit to IGRAC headquarters in Delft, and also in Budapest.

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 as I have done in previous years.

I closely follow the work of the *IAH Commissions and Network* and aim to become more actively involved with them, since their work is mostly very forward looking. Since I am scientifically deeply involved and very interested in transboundary groundwater issues, I took part in the meeting of the Commission on Transboundary Aquifers at the congress in Rome. As part of my work I always take the opportunity to encourage our colleagues to join the Commissions and Networks of IAH, as this is a beneficial way of being involved in our activities. In particular the role played by the Early Career Hydrogeologists' Network is key in increasing membership and in fostering the participation of young hydrogeologists in IAH activities.

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 60th year anniversary IAH Congress in Montpellier as well as at other IAH meetings.

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