

From the Editors

Hungarian specialists traditionally address significant events organized by the international community of geographers with the publication of English-language collections of scientific contributions. Most of them were published in the series Studies in Geography in Hungary, such as the one dedicated to the 31st International Geographical Congress held in Tunis in 2008. Our journal welcomed the last but one congress in the row (Glasgow, 2004) similar to the present occasion which is an issue of the renewed Hungarian Geographical Bulletin (HGB) to commemorate the IGU Regional Conference to be organized in Tel Aviv, Israel, July 12–16, 2010 with a central theme *Bridging diversity in a globalizing world*.

Of 20 years of the democratic transition to market economy in Hungary heretofore, 10 were spent by this country as a member of NATO and more than 5 years in the framework of the European Union. During this period geography has experienced a profound transformation. So to say the subject found itself in a new environment, in spatial and temporal, economic and technological, financial and philosophical terms alike.

Geography in Hungary has long been labelled as a “national” academic discipline. It means that most of the topics in a volume of studies (our journal should be considered such a periodical) are related to the geographical aspects of natural trends occurring and socio-economic phenomena and processes taking place in the country and to the resulting issues. Here they will be represented e.g. by migration, viability of enterprises and EU regions, sustainable agriculture. At the same time these circumstances are affected increasingly by major international trends of various scales: globalization, European integration, transboundary cooperation.

The studies abound in facts and figures about Hungary: foreign readers can get acquainted with the territorial distribution of the top 500 industrial enterprises providing 85% of GDP and to learn about their concentration in the central region (more than three hundred of them was found here in 2009) and in the western part of the country as a result of restructuring. Economic potential of NUTS2 regions was examined through the occurrence and profile of, revenues and profit generated by these leading firms (author: Tibor TINER). Spatial mobility was the topic of the contribution by Géza TÓTH and Áron KINCSES who traced regional distribution of immigrants that arrived in the third millennium. The number of foreigners at extended stay has been over 170 thousand recently making up nearly 2% of the resident population of Hungary and having grown by more than 60% over seven years. A general trend has reversed as Hungary turned from a sender country into a target one: about two hundred thousand people left the country after the revolution of 1956 and even more “remained in the West” during the subsequent thirty years of socialist regime. The starting point of an essay by Gábor MICHALKÓ and Tamara RÁTZ was that Hungary owes much of its attraction to thermal waters, a prominent natural treasure. 51 settlements across the country have certified spas; the most important resort is Budapest with seven thermal baths. Hungarian spa destinations also appear on the domestic and international property market as second homes are being purchased by foreign citizens extensively in these resorts. István POMÁZI and Elemér SZABÓ focused on European integration with description of the socio-economic and ecological situation within NUTS3 units that belong to seven countries of the Carpathian Convention, some of whom became EU member states recently, while others entered into partnership relations with the organization. The authors have come to the conclusion that structural change in most cases had brought depopulation, unemployment and poverty to inhabitants of mountain regions and the almost only positive shift was a dramatic drop in air and water pollution due to shrinking economic output by traditional sectors.

Some articles dealt with investigations rooted in physical geography. Ádám KERTÉSZ, Balázs MADARÁSZ, Béla CSEPINSZKY and Szabolcs BENKE reported about an experiment promoting sustainable agriculture, with the application of conservation tillage in winter wheat and maize cultivation on plots in Transdanubia in an area of more than 100 hectares. The SOWAP experiment resulted in reduced soil loss and improved water management on the conservation parcels basically with the same yields as on the conventional ones. Endre DOBOS, Joël DAROUSSIN and Luca MONTANARELLA provided description of the physiography bloc of a global soil and terrain information system (SOTER). Thus an initially analogue procedure of soil mapping has turned into a DEM-based GIS building generated from Shuttle Radar Terrain Model which contains layers of hypsometry, slope conditions, relief intensity, and potential drainage density. Éva KIS and Ferenc SCHWEITZER studied a geological section on the south-eastern part of Tenerife, Canary Islands where loess-like deposits and sediments affected by pedogenesis were investigated using grain size parameters. Based on the parameter values this method is aimed to characterize these deposits and to identify the environmental conditions that prevailed during their formation.

Almost all the essays in the present issue of our bulletin have had expressed methodological connotations. A wide variety of methods were deployed, e.g. indices for revenue differences of enterprises such as range, Hoover-index involved in the regional comparisons (TINER); thematic mapping (MICHALKÓ and RÁTZ); path analysis and potential method (TÓTH and KINCSES) applied. Mathematical-statistical analysis figured in the essay by POMÁZI and SZABÓ, observations and measurements formed the basis of the field experiment conducted by KERTÉSZ *et al.*, as remote sensing applications like interpretation of radar images did in the contribution by DOBOS *et al.* Laboratory analyses of sediment samples led to the conclusions drawn by KIS and SCHWEITZER.

This volume of HGB, however, extended it was conceived could not provide a cross-section of Hungarian geography, but in some way it reflects the major trends in research activities.