

Senior adviser László Bassa is 65 years old

This March our colleague and friend László BASSA, managing editor of Hungarian Geographical Bulletin celebrated his 65th birthday. On this remarkable occasion we'd like to thank with a few words for his permanent contributions to the cartographic activities of the Geographical Research Institute of Hungarian Academy of Sciences, for translating, editing and revising a huge number of books, attractive atlases and series of thematic maps demonstrating achievements of physical, economic and human geography in Hungary.

László BASSA was born on 29th March 1946 in Budapest. He attended the Moscow State University of Geodesy, Aerial Photography and Cartography from 1964 and graduated as a cartographer (engineer in cartography) in 1969. Returning to Budapest he worked at the state-owned company (Cartographia) as a junior cartographer. Parallely he translated geographical studies into Russian and also edited cartographical publications. In 1971 he made a state exam in English and soon became a skilled translator of geography and cartography in both languages.

In 1977 he changed his workplace and joined the staff of the Geographical Research Institute of HAS. Owing to his excellent Russian and English and organizing talent, he became responsible for international relations of the institute. He held an administrative but important position supervised by the director of the institute. For the first years of his activity he prepared and co-ordinated numerous international conferences in geography held in Budapest and other Hungarian venues.

László BASSA was a stable member of delegations which travelled abroad to take part at international geographical meetings (conferences, symposia, workshops etc.) mainly organized in socialist countries. He prepared regular reports on the outcomes of these meetings, which were published on the columns of Hungarian Geographical Bulletin. Moreover, deriving from his open personality and positive attitude to life László BASSA was able to build and maintain friendly personal contacts with all kinds of geographers from all corners of the world, enabling to promote mutual and fruitful contacts between our institute and foreign academic bodies (institutes of geography, geographical departments of universities etc.).

In the early 1980s he began a postgraduate course at the Faculty of Civil Engineering of the Budapest University of Technology, from where he received his second university degree (consulting engineer of natural resources) in 1983.

From the early 1980s László BASSA became a member of the Department of Cartography of the Institute, engaged in methodological and empirical problems of the-matic cartography. He developed skills in map editing, engineering geomorphology and environmental management. During his active 34 years in the institute he was the author of several book chapters, prepared dozens of reviews about books written by Hungarian



and foreign geographers and cartographers in Hungarian, English or Russian. He compiled a range of guidelines and supervised hundreds of map legends in foreign languages. In addition, he translated, revised and edited thousands of pages into English and Russian in different geographical and cartographical topics (eg. for the books in the series *Studies in Geography in Hungary*; *Recent Developments in Spatial Information, Modelling and Processing*; *Ethnic Geography of the Hungarian Minorities in the Carpathian Basin* etc.)

László BASSA was among most active members of the editorial board of the *National Atlas of Hungary* (published in 1989), and in 1990 his work was rewarded with the Széchenyi Prize handed over by the President of the Republic of Hungary. In the 1990s he was the person who translated one the most essential geographical publications on the European Union into Hungarian (Garrett Nagle and Kris Spencer: *Geography of the European Union - Regional and Economic Approach* published in 1999).

Since 2009 he is retired but it does not mean that he has ceased to be active. He keeps on working with the editorial board of the *Hungarian Geographical Bulletin* as a managing editor, helps with his advise the younger cartographer colleagues, revise English and Russian manuscripts prepared for publications and checks the texts of the series of atlases published by our institute (*South Eastern Europe in Maps*, 2007; *Ukraine in Maps*, 2008; *Hungary in Maps*, 2009)

And I close my words with a private but essential remark: "Laci" is a really good friend, whose modest and open personal character makes him very popular with the staff of our institute and among geographers both home and abroad.

On the occasion of László Bassa's recent 65th birthday, we would like to express personal greetings from all our colleagues for all his life-long activity promoting the progress of cartography and geography in Hungary. We wish him many more years full of success, with remarkable achievements in academic and personal life, spent in good health and inner satisfaction.

Tibor TINER