



VIENNA

A century of excellence

On July 4, 1910, the International Society for Photogrammetry, now the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS) was founded in Vienna, Austria on initiative of Prof. Eduard Dolezal. In July 2010, the Society celebrated the Centenary of its founding and the major contributions of the many professionals who have played a role in its development over the past 100 years, at its birthplace, Vienna University of Technology. A series of events marked the historic occasion.



Book launch

Celebrations kicked off on 2 July with the launch of a booklet produced by the Joint Board of Geospatial Societies titled "Geoinformation for Disaster and Risk Management; Examples and Best Practices." The venue was the United Nations Office of Outer Space Affairs (UN-OOSA) in the Vienna International Centre. The event was attended by a select group of diplomats, administrators and scientists and was followed by a press conference. Orhan Altan, President, ISPRS presided over the function.

In his opening remarks, David Stevens of UN-OOSA welcomed the guests and remarked that this is a landmark booklet as it puts together some very interesting case studies. Marc Cygan, President, JBGIS, briefly

dwelt on the rationale for the booklet and its intended audience. He was of the opinion that it would be useful not only for the present but for the future as well. Sisi Zlatanova, one of the editors, traced the process of the creation of the booklet and the challenges associated with writing for politicians who are the intended audience. Piero Boccardo, another editor, illustrated the approach of the case studies with the example of the Haiti earthquake.

At the press briefing chaired by T Doi of UN-OOSA, chairperson of the press briefing, commented that the booklet was the result of a partnership between UN-OOSA and JBGIS and its success indicated that there is a need to work together in the future as well. Orhan Altan, while responding to questions about



ISPRS President Orhan Altan presents the Karl Kraus medal for the best textbook



The Centenary celebrated the contributions of professionals who have played a role in the Society's development



open data policies, capacity building, integration with national and international disaster mitigation bodies, use of local information, etc indicated that it was still 'work in progress' and the booklet was the first of many such initiatives in the pipeline.

Strategic recommendations

The Elektrotechnisches Institut of the Technical University of Vienna was the venue for an Open Business meeting of the ISPRS in the afternoon of 3 July, 2010. The programme began with congratulatory messages from member societies from the USA, Canada,

France and Hungary as well as from international organisations, namely, IUGG, IAG and ICORSE. Ian Dowman presented the strategic plan which led to a very lively discussion on several recommendations. These include the pros and cons of double blind reviewing, the need for indexing and the different needs of academicians and industry. This was followed by a presentation of the activities of the regional representatives from Africa, Asia and Latin America. After a presentation of the permanent committees of the Society, a presentation on the publications drew considerable responses. The main issues were open access, need



to avail the services of a publishing house for publications and joint publications with other societies. The need for more emphasis on spatial information science instead of just remote sensing was also discussed. John Trinder spoke on the need to restructure the Commissions and this was also followed by a lively discussion on whether to have more or less commissions, renaming commissions and a study on why some commissions are active and others dormant.

The picture that emerges is that ISPRS is essentially driven by academic needs. Therefore the need for high quality papers through a strong review process is needed. The lack of indexing in standard indexes leads to an inability to find suitable papers later on.

The services of a professional technical publishing house are required for the paper and online publications. Similarly there is a need to avail the services of event managers to manage conferences. A large number of conferences are desirable both in terms of visibility and outreach but expensive in terms of resources. The possibility of joint events with other professional societies and with other commissions and working groups of ISPRS is therefore a requirement. Interfaces with industry and state institutions were conspicuous by their absence in all discussions and this is perhaps a weakness ISPRS needs to address. ISPRS could look at IEEE to see how the interests of the industry, government and academe can be balanced.



On 4 July, a gala dinner was arranged for the guests at the Festsaal of the City Hall of Vienna

The D-Day

On the centenary day, 4 July, the invited guests assembled in the Kuppel-Saal of the Vienna University of Technology. Welcoming the delegates, the Rector of the Technical University of Vienna, Professor Peter Skalicky, gave a brief background of the institution and its history. The Kuppel-Saal, he mentioned, was 200 years old and a fitting venue for the celebration of ISPRS's Centenary. The first event was the presentation of the Karl Kraus medal to the best textbook.

“Future areas of work include new sensor technologies, increased automation in modelling, new applications and stronger feedback from sensors and methods”

Karl Kraus was a passionate teacher and an authority on photogrammetry. The prize was instituted by the Austrian Society of Surveying and Geoinformation, the German Society of Photogrammetry Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Science and the Swiss Society of Photogram-

metry and Remote Sensing. There were seven entries out of which the award went to "Close Range Photogrammetry: Principles, Techniques and Applications" by Thomas Luh-

mann, Stuart Robson, Stephen Kyle and Ian Harley. Speaking on the history of ISPRS, Professor Gottfried Konecny gave a wonderful exposition interspersed with historical snippets and humour in his inimitable style. The history is available as a booklet. The second speaker, Lawrie Jordan from ESRI spoke on geoinmagery- a new paradigm and covered the currently available technologies and the increasingly important role of magery in geospatial applications. Dr Norbert Pfeifer elaborated on the core issues facing the geospatial world and the future areas of work. These were new sensor technologies, increased automation in modelling, new applications and feedback from sensors and methods. In between the events, the University string quartet regaled the audience with pieces from Handel, Mozart and Strauss. In the evening, a gala dinner was arranged at the Festsaal of the City Hall of Vienna. The deputy mayor welcomed the audience. The highlight was an address by Prof Franz Josef Radermacher who spoke on global sustainable development. He made a strong case for inclusive growth, avoiding the zero-sum game of the capitalist world. 🌍

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