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WELCOME

Dear Colleagues,

I am very pleased to distribute my first newsletter as the new Commission chair. Nevertheless, this newsletter arrives later than usual and I apologize for this delay. I would like to preserve tradition of two newsletters a year for the future (Spring, Autumn).

The Commission underwent wider changes confirmed at IGU Congress in Tunis. The most important has been expressed by our new title. This shift represents new and expanding interests that emerged in our agenda within the last years. It defines new objectives for the Commission's work for next period. It represents new values and innovations needed in better addressing our traditional interests in public life, public administration, or public policy. Manifold concept of governance, with all its peculiarities, provide us challenging field of study.

The commission also had successful sessions with presentations of research results coming from all around the world during the congress.

I also would like to invite you to participate at the forthcoming meeting of the Commission in Bratislava, in August this year. More details you will find in section dealing with future conferences. Our meeting is included into the framework of the 2nd Congress of European geographers. This Commission, as well as some other, uses this opportunity of wider geographical community meeting. Series of separated special sessions is planned for our Commission providing productive forum of exchanges reflecting latest developments in our field of scientific inquiry.

It is also clear that the Commission will have its meeting in Jerusalem (Israel) organised by Eran Razin in 2010. For the future, we should consider a few other meetings within this four year period all around the world. All your proposals are welcomed and will be considered by the Steering Committee.

I am looking forward to see you in Bratislava this summer

Ján Buček
April 2009, Bratislava



Commission on Geography of Governance

CHANGES TO OUR COMMISSION SINCE 2008

IGU Congresses serve as evaluation point concerning IGU Commissions work. Our Commission (yet as Geography and Public Policy) organized numerous activities within the period 2004-2008. Its global coverage had been confirmed by Commission meetings organised all around the world (Switzerland, Slovakia, Nepal, USA) as well as special meetings on IGU regional conference and IGU Congresses (Glasgow, Brisbane, Tunis). The Commission members participated in elaboration of more publications mostly based on Commission meetings. Useful links were developed to some other IGU Commissions, focusing on joint attendance and planning of meetings. As a result of 2004-2008 Commission activities and presentation of clear new vision of its future activities, IGU Executive Committee and Assembly supported continuation of its work under new title.

I would like to express my gratitude to all those involved in managing the Commission activities during previous period. It concerns especially Doris Wastl-Walter, very successfully serving as Commission chair for two consecutive periods until 2008. She substantially shaped the Commission work and provoked its shift to new horizons reflecting development in our societies and scientific discipline as well. The work of the Commission flourished also thank to active involvement of the Steering Committee members, some of them also working with the Commission for a long period. The contribution of Brij Maharaj, Petr Dostal, Carlos Nunes Silva, Richard Welch, Eran Razin, Sungjae Choo, Shannon O'Lear, Willie Smith and Xiaoping Yang to the Commission work, its particular activities and events had been enormous. I believe that they will consider this Commission as "their" also for future and contribute to its further work. I am pleased that some previous Steering Commission members will continue to work for the Commission also in forthcoming period and will guarantee its continuity.

Our Commission has always been opened to new ideas, attempted to contribute to essential societal problems, as expressed in its focusing. At the beginning of the third decade of this Commission functioning (it was set up at the IGU Congress in Sydney in 1988 as Commission on Geography and Public Administration, although existed as study group since 1984), current shift to governance is not surprising. It has been seriously debated for years, but we would like to stress some specific aspects that should be taken into consideration seriously. Issues like citizenship, power distribution and self-governance, the inclusion of various social groups (minorities, women, migrants and others) in public life and administration has to be discussed and developed. The shift towards governance influenced traditional fields of study covered by the Commission members like local government finance, local and regional government organization, provision of public services, sub-state democracy etc. Last months bring us new considerations how all these issues are influenced by financial and economic crises that can substantially challenge established routine in our governance models functioning.

OUR SESSIONS DURING 2008 IGU CONGRESS IN TUNIS

The main Commission event in year 2008 had been our sessions organized within IGU Congress in Tunis. Despite the fact that Congress was not so well attended as usually, there were three sessions with 10 presentations covering interesting set of issues. It was mixture of papers delivered by long term members of the Commission, as well as colleagues that joined us for the first time. There were per two papers from Israel, Hungary, USA and Slovakia, and per one paper presented colleagues from Switzerland and South Africa. We were very pleased by presentations delivered by young geographers, newcomers to our

Commission. We spend very interesting afternoon, since the permanent presence of about 20 to 30 congress participants during each session gave us opportunity for fruitful discussions. I would like to express thanks to all papers' presenters as well as other session participants.

List of papers presented:

R. Kark, and S. J. Frantzman (Israel): Empire, state and the Bedouin of the Middle East: a long term comparative study of land and settlement policies.

D. Aufseeser (USA): Youth in Public Space: The Spread of Zero-Tolerance Policies to Cities in the Global South.

T. Tiner (Hungary): Air travel customs of students at J. Selye University (Slovakia)

J. Bucek (Slovakia): Property taxation decisions of local self-governments in the Slovak Republic.

M. Aufseeser (USA): Conflicting Meanings of Militarization of the U.S. – Mexico Border: National Security, Citizenship and Death.

B. Maharaj (South Africa): Geography and Human Rights: An Emerging Research Agenda in South Africa.

T. Sikos, and A., Kovács (Hungary): Cross-border shopping tourism in South-Slovakian towns – gravity zones, spendings and shopping frequency.

E. Razin (Israel): Interlocal Disparities in a neoliberal regime: The Impact of Crisis and Recovery.

I. Antalík (Slovakia): The development of the J. Selye University and the opportunities for its development from the perspective of regionality.

D. Wastl-Walter (Switzerland): „Bernplus” A Region and its Institutionalization.

CONFIRMED AND PLANNED FUTURE CONFERENCES

In brief: **2009 - Bratislava (Slovakia)** - Comenius University, August
2010 - Jerusalem (Israel) - The Hebrew University, July
2012 – Köln (Germany) – next IGU Congress

Urban and Regional Governance – Power, Actors, Interests, Strategies, Rights

IGU Commission on Geography of Governance meeting
organised within the 2nd EUGEO Congress
Location: Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia
Dates: August 13-16th 2009

Governance belongs to the most extensively debated issues by human geographers. It has influenced the nature of managing public life at local and regional level around the world. This meeting offers opportunity for sharing of our diverse knowledge on general and specific features of governance. In our states, regions and cities, we have different power distribution among actors participating in managing various aspects of social life. They prefer different roles, reflect various interests, apply different strategies, they focus on different fields of activities. We can not overlook effects and consequences of governance in practice. Our

traditional interests in public administration structure, services delivery, self-government, are now combined with sensitive issues of power distribution, human and citizens' rights, democracy and accountability. The access and inclusion of various social groups (minorities, women, migrants and others) into the public life and its administration has to be discussed. This meeting of the Commission is opened to scholars from other social sciences, e.g. political sciences, sociology. We will welcome papers dealing with local and regional level of political organisation based on various approaches. We strongly encourage participants from all over the world, although more European focus is expected. For more details concerning participation on this event, please visit web page below. You should register as regular Congress participants and indicate your affiliation to our Commission Special Sessions within the registration procedure. We can enjoy larger scientific community participating at the Congress, but protecting enough time for our separate sessions.

Organizer:

Ján Buček, Associate Professor

Department of Human Geography and Demogeography

Comenius University, Bratislava

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<http://gis.fns.uniba.sk/eugeo2009/>

Local Government in a Changing World: Between hierarchies and networks, between global neoliberalism and welfare state interventionism

A preconference of the IGU Commission on Geography of Governance

Location: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

Dates: 8-9 July 2010

Local government transformation concerns territorial configurations, inter-governmental relations, finance, democratic participation, governance culture, and development strategies, the latter involving inter-municipal collaborations, and inter-sectoral partnerships. The fundamental challenges of local self-government have essentially remained unchanged for decades, perhaps centuries, but rapidly changing economic, political and technological contexts have continuously transformed policy agendas of the local state.

The Jerusalem workshop aims to bring together scholars engaged in the study of local government and local governance: geographers, including those engaged in the activities of the IGU commission on Geography of Governance, as well as scholars from other disciplines, such as political science and public policy. Presentations on any aspect of local government, local governance and their relationship with urban development are welcome. We aim at a particular focus on cross-national perspectives, on assessments of the impact of economic and ideological transformations of the early 21st century on reform discourses, and on the implications of the above for prevailing theories of governance at the local and metropolitan/regional levels.

We may organize field trips in Jerusalem and beyond on July 10-11 (the main IGU congress in Tel Aviv starts July 12). Further details on our preconference will be available on summer 2009.

Organizer:

Professor Eran Razin

Head, Floersheimer Studies, Institute of Urban and Regional Studies
& Department of Geography

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

e-mail: msrazin@mscc.huji.ac.il



COMMISSION PUBLICATION

I would like to turn your attention to the book that has been prepared as an outcome of successful Commission conference hold in Kathmandu (Nepal):

Pushkar K. Pradhan, Doris Wastl-Walter, Steven Folmar (eds). **Public Policy and Local Development: Opportunities and Constraints**. Publication Date: 2008, 1st edition.
Publisher: International Geographical Union Commission on Geography and Public Policy.
ISBN: 9789937202510, Format: Soft cover, xiv+340 pages.

For full content visit www.igu-gog.org

NEW WEB PAGE – WWW.IGU-GOG.ORG

As a result of the changes the Commission underwent previous year, we changed the domain name (respecting current title of the Commission). We also moved web page administration from Berne (Switzerland) to Bratislava (Slovakia). It will be more flexible to the new Commission Chair. He will be responsible for the content of the web page. His younger colleague from Comenius University Department of Human Geography and Demogeography will work as web administrator. We plan to use web page as one of the main information tool serving the Commission, altogether with the Newsletter.

The structure of the web follows patterns of the previous web page. Its layout and design has been changed slightly. We will try to present here new and actual information, as well as information reflecting previous work of the Commission.

All correspondence concerning web page address to Jan Bucek (bucek@fns.uniba.sk).

NEW STEERING COMMITTEE

New Steering Committee approved for next period 2008-2012:

Commission Chair:

Jan Bucek, Comenius University, Bratislava, SLOVAKIA

Full Members:

Eiki Berg, University of Tartu, Tartu, ESTONIA

Christine Bichsel, University of Berne, Bern, SWITZERLAND

Shii Okuno, University of Marketing and Distribution Sciences, Kobe, JAPAN

Shannon O'Lear, University of Kansas, Lawrence, USA

Pushkar K. Pradhan, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, NEPAL

Eran Razin, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, ISRAEL

Andrew Ryder, Portsmouth University, GREAT BRITAIN

Xiaohong Zhang, Fudan University, Shanghai, CHINA