

EDITORIAL

We have great pleasure in inviting you to read the contents of this special issue of *Geographia Polonica*, as well as the upcoming one (vol. 87, issues 2 and 3 of 2014). The special issues have been prepared to coincide with Krakow's hosting of the 2014 IGU Regional Conference. However, this year also marks a second important occasion for us - the 50th anniversary of the founding of *Geographia Polonica*.

At the same time it is our hope that the two issues will represent that most important voice in geography since the changes in our editorial team at the beginning of 2012, with special attention being paid in many cases to Central and Eastern Europe (including Poland). Our idea in this case has been to compile and present a series of articles written by key persons of the IGU (i.e. Chairs of the IGU Commissions, and Vice-Presidents of the IGU).

My vision was for the Commission Chairs to each prepare and publish an article - theoretical or empirical, or even an essay, concerning the stage that has currently been reached by his/her field of interest (Commission subject/sub-discipline), some of the new trends therein, and future directions of research. It was considered ideal if this could also underline certain suggestions regarding Central Europe and Poland as geographical locations, as well as Polish geography.

In the event, I find myself very grateful for the enthusiastic response my personal invitation has received from the Chairs. I was fully aware how complicated an undertaking it might prove for all the Commission Chairs to prepare articles over a relatively short period of time.

However, in spite of that we are delighted to have received more than 15 contributions to the project, and so are confident in our belief that the celebratory issues in question will come to be regarded as very important items in the field of geography, perhaps even serving as some kind of 'flagships' for years to come. We have added a few articles written by Polish authors (e.g. by the President of the Polish Geographical Society and the Chairman of Steering Committee for the IGU Krakow Regional Conference).

Readers may recall that the main aim of the Krakow conference is to address "Changes, Challenges and Responsibility". And modern geography does indeed face significant challenges centring around the recognition of and response to contemporary changes in the environment, society and the economy. *Geographia Polonica* is to be the journal contributing to the efforts undertaken, within the framework of this main topic. We would thus restate our belief and intention that the 2014 issues of *Geographia Polonica* will constitute an important and meaningful *magnum opus*, bringing together Commission Chairs from many disciplines, and in this way contributing to a better understanding of the changes and challenges faced by the world, and by geography, as well as the responsibility we all share.

The most important matter would seem to be the future for geography. In this, education is of course of particular significance, in order that a next generation of geographers might be established. In this issue we present articles in this field entitled: "Towards an international approach to geography education" by Joop van der Schee, John Lidstone

and Clare Brooks, and “Emerging frontiers, challenges and changing professional avenues for geographers in the contemporary world” by Ram Babu Singh. These articles are followed by very important papers on the Geographical Olympiad, first on general issues as regards the Olympiad Geography (“Changes, challenges and responsibilities in geographical education: The International Geography Olympiad” by Lex Chalmers and Kathryn Berg) and second on the role of Poles in this competition (“Poles in the International Geography Olympiad (iGeo)” by Marek Barwiński, Tomasz Sawicki and Joanna Uroda).

In this first special issue, I have decided to underline the role of geography and its future, and on this occasion to bring together important voices: on applied geography (“The achievements and future potential of applied quantitative geography: A case study” by Mark Birkin, Graham Clarke, Martin Clarke and Alan Wilson), and the contemporary stage that has been reached by biogeography (“Biogeography in the early twenty-first century: A discipline with increasing significance for Earth’s changes and challenges” by Udo Schickhoff, Mark A. Blumler and Andrew C. Millington), as well as to follow that up with a completely new if maybe predictable idea of a world without GIS – an original/surprising voice about “A world without GIS? Post-GIS futures for the New Millennium” by Francis Harvey. Maybe thanks to this article, *Geographia Polonica* will enter into the new discussion on the new role of geography and new adaptations needed for the new post-GIS era. Probably we cannot imagine our world and geography without GIS, but if we compare the beginning of the GIS era with the stage that has now been arrived at, we may consider that now everyone can use and work on using GIS – hence this is not geographical advantage. This article is followed

by the voice (reflections) of the President of the Polish Geographical Society – Antoni Jackowski – in his work entitled “Will geography remain geography? Pondering the state of geography”.

As in all issues of *Geographia Polonica*, we have added new material concerning Poland on maps. Przemysław Śleszyński has prepared his maps and a brief explanation concerning “Delimitation and typology of functional urban regions in Poland based on commuting, 2006”. He has also prepared an interesting interview with Professor Leszek Antoni Kosiński about “*Geographia Polonica*: A window onto the world”, on the occasion of the journal’s 50th anniversary. This material has been prepared to mark the year 2014 as the aforementioned 50th anniversary of *Geographia Polonica*.

On the occasion of the IGU conference to be held in Krakow this year, we would also like to recall the one and only other occasion on which the IGU conference was held in Poland – in Warsaw in 1934. This major event of such great importance for Poland and Polish geography has been described by Jackowski et al. These authors underline the role of Polish geography in that world and the importance of the honorary patronage of the President of the Republic of Poland.

The current issue of *Geographia Polonica* is to be followed by the next one (issue 3 of 2014), with many more interesting and important articles concerning the different sub-disciplines of geography.

To sum up, I must once again express my extreme gratitude to those authors who have taken up our request to collaborate with us all here at *Geographia Polonica*, in the preparation of what we are convinced will be issues of our publication of considerable importance to geography as a whole.

I wish you all a very pleasant read.

Marek Więckowski