

8th IAG International Conference on Geomorphology – feedback report

My participation to the 8th IAG International Conference on Geomorphology (Paris, August 27th – 31st 2013) was possible thanks to a grant; thus, I would like to express my gratitude to the IAG, in general, and to Mauro Soldati, in particular, for giving me the opportunity to be a part of this famous scientific event. It was certainly the biggest geomorphology conference that I attended and I expected both a scientific and human experience.

As a participant, my main goal was to present my work and to acquire knowledge in my field of interest. Consequently, I listed and read mostly presentations and posters on river dynamics. I was pleased to find out that a lot of geomorphologists were and still are attracted by this sphere of study. I realised also that the debate between human and natural factors impacting on river dynamics continues, due to their synchronous actions and to the complexity of fluvial processes. I saw also case studies from the entire world, under different climate conditions and with dissimilar management background; I learned from other national strategies on river management about good practices in this domain, which I could communicate to my students. Besides, I found out about new, ingenious methods to study rivers, which I could use in my further researches. Actually, at the congress, I put the basis of new cooperation projects with young colleagues from France. Despite my main goal, it was difficult to focus my attention on rivers' session, because other interesting presentations were taking place in parallel; thus, I rediscovered that geomorphology is a generous scientific discipline.

In addition to the scientific goal, it is important during conferences to know each other personally in order to better work together. I would characterise the human experience by three keywords: respect, internationality and French conviviality. I felt a real connection between young and experienced researchers – some with questions, others with answers; despite the level of experience, every contribution was valued. Furthermore, I admired organisers' opening towards, both, young participants and experienced ones (by grants, awards, honorary fellows or dedicated journal numbers); it is a sort of recognition of our small or great contributions. I was glad to get acquaintances from five continents and talk about our cultures; for example, it is always amusing to find out Africans', Americans', Asians' and Australians' preconceived ideas about Europe, which were debunked during the conference. I perceived a friendly, peaceful general ambiance, without frontiers. I appreciated also the French convivial moments, like "Wine and cheese" and field trips; the organisers created the right context to easily talk to the others, while discovering French culture, traditionally and innovating, and Paris history.

As a conclusion, I felt that IAG welcomed every one of us in a world-wide community, with common preoccupations and vocabulary. The 8th IAG International Conference on Geomorphology was the occasion to rethink our research projects in geomorphology (concepts, methods, retroactions, partnerships) and to enrich our spirit (by meeting new people and learn about other cultures). For young researchers, the congress was like an intense geomorphology course, but without pressure and in amiable surroundings; moreover, they gained self-confidence by exchanging with more experienced geomorphologists. Besides, I am glad to have joined geomorphologists' spirit: "Breathe deeply; tread softly; think outrageously; be unconstrained; be free" (from keynote lecture by Denis Brunsten).

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