International Association of Geomorphologists

4th IAG-EGU Intensive Course
"Geomorphic services for environmental change understanding: from field surveying to dynamic and systemic risks evaluation"

Sinaia, Romania, 12–15 September 2025

and

IAG Regional Conference on Geomorphology – Romania 2025
"Geomorphology for society: challenges and opportunities"

Timisoara, Romania, 16–18 September 2025

Report

Wioleta Porębna

Institute of Geography and Regional Development, University of Wrocław, Poland
wioleta.porebna@uwr.edu.pl

I had the great privilege of attending the 4th IAG–EGU Intensive Course in Sinaia and the IAG Regional Conference on Geomorphology in Timișoara as one of the IAG grant holders. It was a distinguished opportunity that allowed me to broaden my scientific horizons, meet leading researchers, and build valuable professional connections with my peers.

4th IAG–EGU Intensive Course in Sinaia

As the intensive course preceded the conference, it served as an excellent introduction to the entire experience. It deserves special emphasis that the Organising Team's efforts were truly outstanding — from the smooth transfer to the venue and the generous meals to the first-class accommodation. Our study area was the Bucegi Mountains (Southern Carpathians), which welcomed us with a veil of fog and mist, and saw us off under warm, golden sunshine. But let's start from the beginning.

Our first impressions were formed at Henri Coandă Airport in Bucharest, where our Lecturers, **Mihai Micu** and **Roxana Ciurean**, greeted us warmly at the pickup point. **Florin Tătui** and **Mirela Vasile** ensured our comfortable transfer to Sinaia. During the drive, we were able to observe the morphological barrier of the Bucegi Mountains and the Prahova Valley cutting through them. After our arrival at the Sinaia Zoological Research Station, we received another warm welcome (Fig. 1) and, once accommodation arrangements were taken care of, we gathered in the seminar room for the official start of the intensive course.

We finally had the opportunity to meet the entire Organising Team in person, including the Organising Committee, Lecturers, and Field Experts. The course programme and the schedule for the coming days were presented, and each of the attendees gave a brief introduction. In the evening, we enjoyed dinner together, which set a relaxed atmosphere for the icebreaker session that followed, helping everyone get to know each other better.

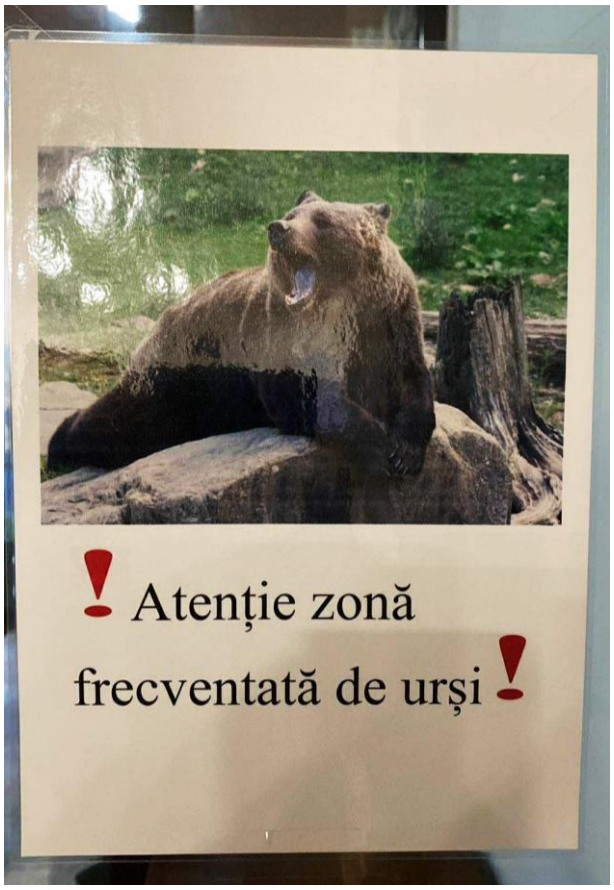

Fig. 1. Warning sign on the door of the facility informing about the presence of bears.

Fig. 2. Wildlife of Bucegi Mountains: a fox following our group.

On the second day of the course, we headed out to the fieldwork site on “Snow Avalanches” and related topics. Taking the cable car up to the southern slope of Furnica Peak (2,103 m), we began our trek down the slopes. The misty atmosphere, combined with surprisingly warm temperatures and almost no wind, created a perfect off-season autumn mood in these wild, rugged mountains (Fig. 2). The overall focus on geohazards allowed us to learn not only about the use of dendrochronology in the study of snow avalanches, but also about soil erosion, issues related to the spatial management of protected areas, and the environmental impact of ski resorts. In the afternoon, the lectures helped us fill gaps in our understanding of soil erosion processes, presented by **Anita Bernatek-Jakiel**, and offered a hands-on introduction to landslide simulation techniques with **Martin Mergili**. With a sense of accomplishment after a day well spent, we gathered for dinner and talked late into the night.

The third day brought a touch of excitement as the clouds lifted, offering us a broader view of our surroundings. Shortly after breakfast, we hopped on a minibus to reach another study site, focused on landslide geohazards (Fig. 3), where we conducted TLS, UAV LiDAR, and ERT measurements.

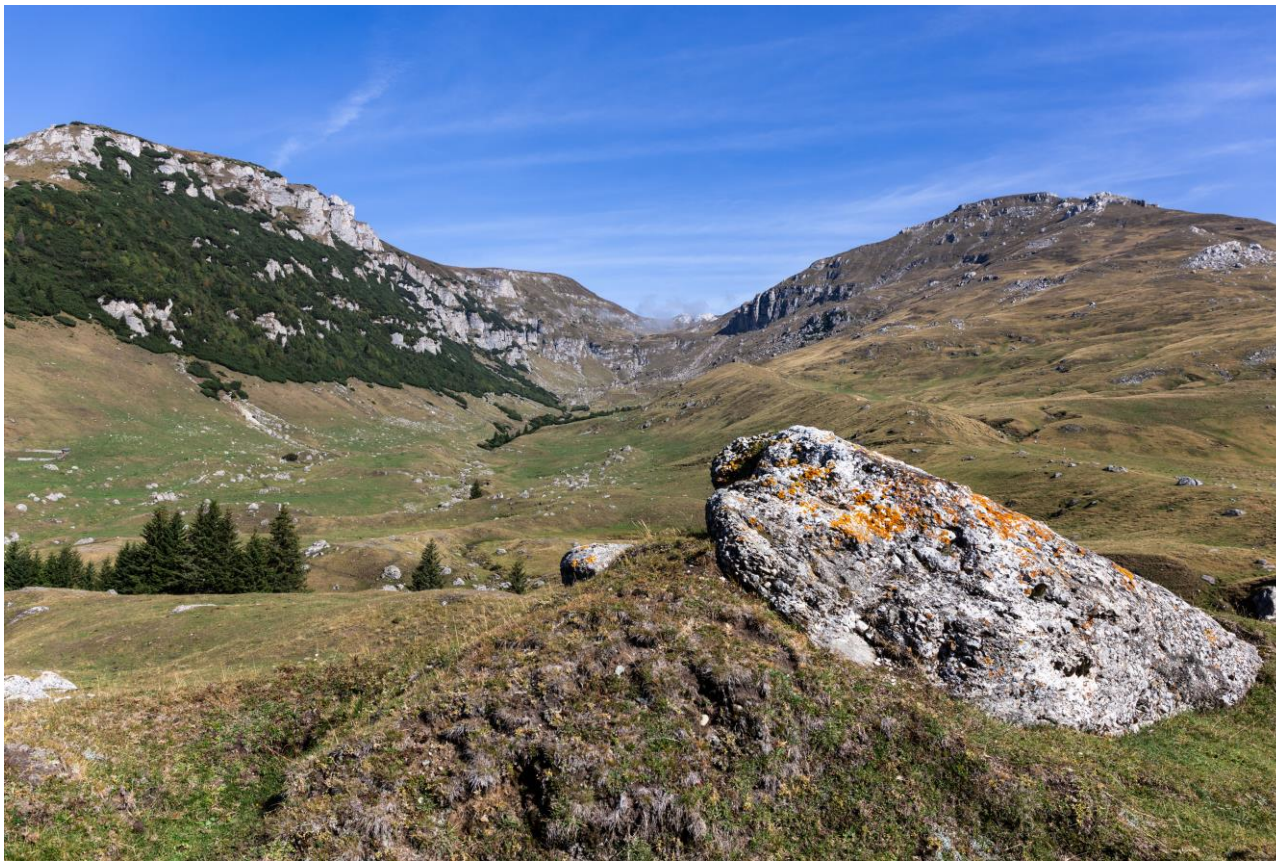

Fig. 3. Study site “Landslides” in the upper part of the Ialomița valley.

In the late afternoon, we returned to the seminar room for lectures on data handling and interpretation. **Kristen Cook** guided us through the processing of point cloud data for detecting geomorphic changes, while **Alexandru Onaca** introduced us to the geomorphological applications of shallow geophysics, making the theme of complex techniques accessible and engaging. The day ended with a wonderful festive dinner, filling us with a sense of nostalgia, knowing that tomorrow would be the last day of our shared adventure.

The next day, the final lecture of the course was given by **Roxana Ciurean**, who shared her valuable insights into multi-risk assessment. Afterwards, **Mihai Micu** led a closing discussion that brought together reflections and impressions from all participants. We felt truly grateful for the opportunity to be part of such an enriching experience. Although some comments were made about the balance between the course's intensity and free time, everyone agreed that the organisation was impeccable — from the facilities to the logistics, everything ran seamlessly. The dedication and effort put into preparing this event were truly beyond imagination.

IAG Regional Conference on Geomorphology in Timișoara

The opportunity to attend the conference was a great honour. It was my first IAG conference, and it fully lived up to my expectations. The IAG Executive Committee, leading researchers, professionals, and role models — all gathered in one place (Fig. 4). It was truly an amazing experience!

The most moving moment of the event for me was the very first item on the programme — the IAG General Assembly. Attending it in person gave me a genuine sense of belonging to a greater whole — a community of scientists who support one another. The most powerful moment was when we, the IAG grant holders, were invited to come on stage. Without a doubt, those handshakes, the warm applause, and the friendly smiles will remain in my memory for a long time.

I must say that once the scientific presentations began and the event settled into its rhythm, it became hard to distinguish one day from another. The programme was intensive yet highly engaging, and it was easy to follow thanks to the app prepared by the Organising Team on the conference website. Most of my time was spent moving between sessions that matched my research interests — TS14 *Landslides in Climate Change Circumstances*, TS21 *Tectonic Geomorphology*, and TS9 *Geomorphological Hazards and Risk Management*. I also managed to catch a glimpse of TS5 *Connectivity in Geomorphology* and TS20 *Soil Erosion Processes in a Changing Climate:*

Theoretical Advancements and Practical Progress. Each session offered inspiring perspectives and sparked many new ideas for future work.

My contribution to the conference programme was a poster presentation (Fig. 5) in the *Tectonic Geomorphology* session, entitled *TnT – Tectonics and Topography. Geomorphic Markers of Tectonic Deformation in Sandstone Areas, NW Intra-Sudetic Trough, Central Europe* (co-authors: Filip Hartvich, Marek Kasprzak, Kacper Jancewicz). I am happy to say that it was warmly received — the questions raised were answered, and the comments, for which I am very grateful, will be taken into consideration.

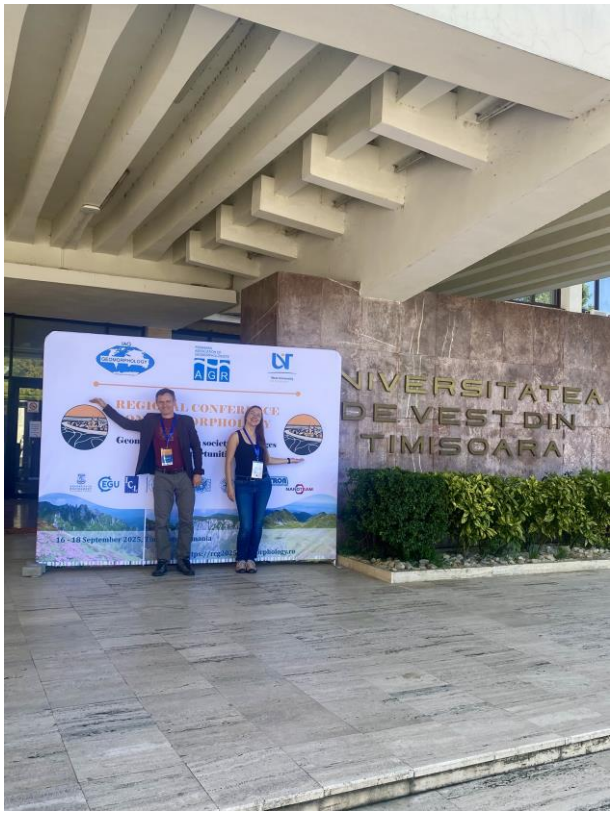

Fig. 4. First day of the conference, with Prof. Marek Kasprzak in front of the conference venue (photo by E. Makopoulou).

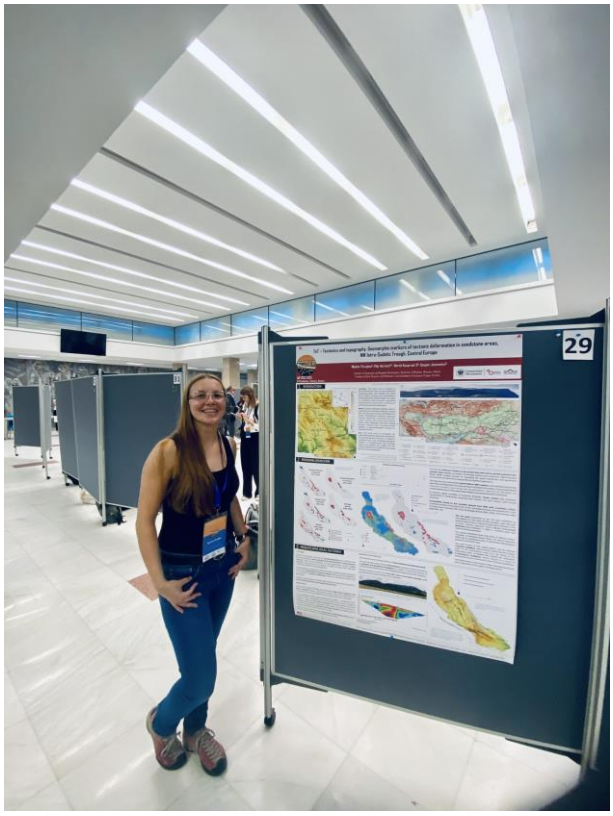

Fig. 5. Happy after fruitful poster session discussions (photo by E. Makopoulou).

Altogether, the undeniable scientific value of the conference, combined with the excellent hospitality provided by the Organizers, created a special, welcoming space to exchange ideas, meet fellow academics, and make new friends. I am deeply grateful to the IAG Executive Committee, and

especially to the Young Geomorphologists Training Programme Coordinators, Anita Bernatek-Jakiel and Efthimios Karymbalis, for their support, encouragement, and for keeping their fingers crossed for my future career. Thank you!

Wioleta Porębna