

## SIX DECADES OF ACADEMIC GEOGRAPHIC EDUCATION AND RESEARCH IN PREŠOV

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**Abstract:** *The admission of the Slovak Geographical Society into the EUGEO in 2007 was in particular important events that influenced the life of the Slovak geographical community in the last years. The forthcoming 2<sup>th</sup> congress of the EUGEO, which will be held in Bratislava in this year is very good opportunity to reflect the history and the present stay of the geographic education and research at the University of Prešov. Thereat we have an ambition to present a brief profile of the Prešov's geographical community with emphasis on its institutional development, legislative position, and problems of geographical research and education.*

**Key words:** *geographical institutions, geography, geographical education, geographical research, Prešov, University of Prešov.*

### INTRODUCTION

Tradition of geographic education at the university level in Prešov has traced as far back to 1667, when the first lectures from geography were introduced at the Evangelic college by Michal Pancratius. In the following period there were many famous people in the roles of students and professors that participated in the field of geographic research, education and propagation. The most famous students studying at the college were e.g. Ján Adam Rayman, Ján Matej Korabinský, Pavol Rebery, Samuel Augustíni ab Hortis, Ján Hunfalvy, Ján Pettko, Jozef Jekelfalussy, Alfréd Grósz a Juraj Janoška. From the college professors we can mention Fridrich Hazslinszký, Ján Csinka, Jozef Koreň, Ladislav Urbánek and Mirko Trnovský. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century some geographically oriented figures acted also at the Roman Catholic royal grammar school. One of the famous and very active people in publishing was Jan Nepomuk Woldřich. In 1918 the Evangelic college lost its character of university and in 1945 the last institute of Prešov college – The college grammar school – was closed, too. However, in the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century some new educational institutions were established. They continued in rich traditions of Prešov education and they brought the development of university geographic education and research in eastern Slovakia.

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## **INSTITUTIONAL INCORPORATION OF GEOGRAPHIC EDUCATION AND RESEARCH IN PREŠOV**

Permanent lack of teachers in eastern Slovakia caused establishing of tutorial centres for the distance studies of teachers in Košice (1946) and in Prešov (1947). In 1949 Faculty of Education of Slovak University in Košice started to continue in their activities, establishing The Institute of Geography. It became the first Slovak academic place situated outside Bratislava. In 1952 the institution moved to Prešov. The Institute of Geography was the part of department of natural sciences that merged also the institutions of botany, zoology, chemistry and geology. One year later an organizational reform of teachers' education took place in Slovakia. On the basis of one of the pedagogic faculty branches, The Higher pedagogic school for teachers from 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grades of elementary schools was established in Prešov. In 1954 first 20 teachers of geography left the school. They continued in spatial and personal development of the institute, which was located in the building of former Evangelic college grammar school situated at Námestie legionárov (Legionar square). In 1959 the system of academic preparation of teachers was reorganized again. New pedagogic institutes were formed in Prešov and Košice. Year 1961 was an important milestone in institutional development of the department. The Institute of Geography was detached from the Department of Natural Environment, declaring an autonomous Department of geography. In 1964 Education Institute in Prešov changed to Faculty of Education, which was incorporated into University of Pavol Jozef Šafárik (UPJŠ) located in Košice as its fourth faculty. The tuition of Geography as a field of study then moved to the university level increasing prestige and quality of the department and its academicians. At that time there were 8 pedagogic- research workers employed at the department. On the basis of scientific college of geology and geography of Slovak Academy of Sciences' recommendations we established a research station called The Cabinet for research of Nature Environment, later renamed as The Cabinet for Landscape Research. Its function was to intensify the research activity in the field of geography in the region of eastern Slovakia. It was the only research workplace acting at Faculty of Education, University of P. J. Šafárik in Prešov. In its beginnings the Cabinet consisted of three researchers and two technical workers.

At the beginnings of seventies the department was unfavourably influenced by communist normalization under soviet pressure. Ján Karniš, who was managing the department to become one of the prominent workplaces in Slovakia, was deprived of his supervision, furthermore he was compelled to leave the department. However, a very well cooperative team of the department successfully continued in accomplishing its educational and research activities henceforward. In 1977 the department started to cooperate with detached workplace of Geography Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Košice. In seventies another significant change took place in organization of university preparation of teachers. Since 1977 Faculty of Education UPJŠ started to prepare the teachers of geography not only for the second degree of elementary schools, but also for high schools. The study was lengthened from four to five years. Due to the new law about the universities The Cabinet for Landscape Research was closed in 1981 and his workers became the research workers of The Department of Geography. Material and spatial conditions of education and research work changed significantly, too. In 1984 the department moved to new university campus that was built on 17, November

Street. Except for the offices, the department received also some auditoriums, a geology laboratory, a library and a study hall.

In the nineties of 20<sup>th</sup> century, the department was suddenly in new social-economical conditions. From the point of view of technical equipment we started to build our laboratory of geographical information systems. Abolition of detached workplace of Geography Institute Slovak Academy of Sciences in Košice in 1991 supported the personal basis of the department by moving most of its employees to Prešov. New tendencies in geographic education with the emphasis on protection and creation of environment were reflected by means of changes in a study program and enhancement of research study on the department. As a result of these changes in 1996 the department was renamed to Department of Geography and Geoecology. In 1997 there was a significant change in the institutional incorporation of the department. Separate Prešov University was formed out of the original Prešov faculties of P. J. Šafárik University. Faculty of Education also split up and The Department of Geography and Geoecology became the part of Faculty of Humanities and Natural Sciences, Prešov University. In 2004 it was renamed into The Department of Geography and Regional development. Traditionally it is one of the best geography departments in Slovakia furthermore most of its workers' activities gained international appreciation. This status was reached mainly due to the merit of people that were in its managing positions and since 1961 as the leaders of the department: Matej Papík (1949-1952), Ján Karniš (1952-1970), Ján Šišák (1971-1981), Martin Mihály (1981-1986), Rudolf Novodomec (1986-1994), Ján Harčár (1994-1997) a Eva Michaeli (since 1997).

#### **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OF GEOGRAPHIC EDUCATION AND RESEARCH IN PREŠOV**

Personal occupancy of geographic education and research was very scarce in its beginnings. The first external employee of The Institute of Geography was Matej Papík in 1949. Since 1951 he became an internal employee. In the fifties of 20<sup>th</sup> century the department employed another three creative workers (table 1). In sixties the personal development continued and in 1963 four new employees moved from the abolished Institute of Education to Prešov. The newly found Cabinet for Landscape Research proposed three workplaces. By the end of sixties there were 3 associated professors, 1 assistant professors with PhD. degree, 3 assistants professor without PhD. degree, 2 research workers, 5 technical workers and 1 secretary working on the department and in the cabinet.

**Tab. 1:** *Development of the number of employees at the department according to qualification categories in 1949-2009*

year	Full professors	Associated professors	Assistants professors with PhD. degree	Assistants professors without PhD. degree	Full time PhD. students
1949	0	0	0	1	0
1958	0	0	0	4	0
1964	0	2	0	6	0
1970	0	3	1	5	0

1975	0	3	1	5	0
1981	1	3	2	6	0
1984	1	5	2	4	0
1989	0	3	2	6	0
1995	1	4	0	7	0
2000	2	2	4	4	2
2009	4	2	7	1	8

In the seventies of 20<sup>th</sup> century there were 3 new employees employed and another person came from the attenuating Department of Geology, Biology and bases of agricultural production. In 1978 Ján Harčár left the place, becoming a leader of newly formed detached workplace of The Institute of Geography Slovak Academy of Sciences in Košice. In the first half of eighties the department had really favourable qualification structure. There was 1 full professor, 5 associated professors, 2 assistants professor with PhD. Degree, 4. researchers and 4 assistants professor without PhD. degree.

Personal development was highly influenced by the abolition of detached workplace of The Institute of Geography Slovak Academy of Sciences in Košice in 1991. Most of its former employees moved to our department. On the other side, some of the long-term employees left for the retirement (table 1 and 2).

The arrival of one of the most significant representatives of Slovak geography – prof. Ján Drdoš, who became a guarantee of the development of geocology, environmental research and education, meant a considerable reinforcement of the department. As a result of qualification promotions of our employees, we were authorized to provide PhD. studies for our students, habilitations and nomination procedures of professors. Since 2000 there were 19 internal PhD. students at the department (table 3). It has the best qualification structure in its history. At present there are 4 full professors, 2 associated professors, 7 assistant professors with PhD. degree, 1 assistant professor without PhD. degree, 8 full time PhD. students and 3 members of the administrative-technical staff.

**Tab. 2:** *List of academic staff working at the department in 1949-2009*

Surname and name	Period of the stay at the department	Prof.	DrSc.	Doc.	PhD.	RNDr./ PaedDr	Mgr./ Ing.
Čech Vladimír	2003-				2004	2006	2000
Čuka Peter	2008-			2007	1998	1989	1989
Čurný Ján	1963-1965						X
Danko Jozef	1961-1963						X
Drdoš Ján	1998-2005	1994	1981	1993	1967	1967	1958
Dzurovčin Ladislav	1997-2003				1991	1984	1982
Gašpar Gregor	1962-1966						1956
Harčár Ján	1967-1978, 1991-2005	1999		1994	1976	1968	1958
Hochmuth Zdenko	1974-1999			1989	1984	1975	1974
Hofierka Jaroslav	2001-			2004	1998		1992
Hrinda Ján	1978-1984			1975	1972	1969	1960

Ištok Robert	1981-	2008		2001	1997	1983	1981
Ivanová Monika	2006-				2007	2006	2003
Kancír Ján	1984-2003			2002	1998	1985	1980
Kandráčová Viktória	1979-2005					1981	1978
Karniš Ján	1952-1972			1962	1961	1952	1950
Klamár Radoslav	2001-				2005	2001	1998
Košťálik Ján	1966-1995	1993	1992	1966	1961	1966	1953
Krenický Sergej	1962-1965						X
Lehotský Karol	1963-1964						X
Leššová Oľga	1978-1982					1981	1978
Lukáčová Alena	2007-				2007	2006	2004
Madziková Alena	1986-				2003	1986	1986
Matlovič René	1990-	2007		2000	1997	1990	1990
Matlovičová Kvetoslava	2008-				2008	2007	1994
Mihalčín Juraj	1981-1984						X
Mihály Martin	1954-1991			1977	1972	1968	1952
Michaeli Eva	1966 -	2002		1992	1979	1976	1965
Mintálová Tatiana	2004 -2008				2006	2006	2001
Mitříková Jana	2005-				2007	2006	2002
Nižnanský Branislav	1988-2001				1998	1983	1980
Novodomec Rudolf	1967-1998			1982	1977	1975	1965
Olejár František	1987-1987			1974	1964		X
Papík Matej	1951-1959, 1963-1986			1960		1968	1946
Popjaková Dagmar	1992-2001				2001	1987	1987
Rosič Martin	2005-					2001	1998
Sabol Anton	1967-1968						X
Šišák Ján	1963-1986	1981		1973	1969	1971	1961
Štecová Ľudmila	1958-1991					1981	1958
Vilček Jozef	2005-	2005		2003	1998		1981
Zverková Martina	1998-				2007		1996
Zlacká Adriana	2003 -2005						1998

X - nondetected

**Tab. 3:** List of internal PhD. students at the department in 1949-2009

	Period of the stay at the department
Bucher Slavomír	2008-
Čech Vladimír	2000-2003
Dolná Zuzana	2007-

Ivanová, rod. Škrabuláková Monika	2003-2006
Kaňuk Ján	2006-
Koco Štefan	2006-
Kozáková Katarína	2005-2008
Krokusová, rod. Francová Juliana	2003-2006
Kunáková Lucia	2008-
Lovacká Stela	2004-2007
Lukáčová, rod. Sedláková Alena	2004-2007
Matlovičová Kvetoslava	2005-2008
Mintálová Tatiana	2001-2004
Mitriková, rod. Fertal'ová Jana	2002-2005
Némethyová Barbora	2008-
Potocký Peter	2004-2007
Pustá Beáta	2008-
Solár Vladimír	2008-
Zlacká Adriana	2000-2003

### EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

In the first period of its development (1949 – 1977) The Institute of Geography and then since 1961 The Department of Geography provided education of teachers for the II. degree of elementary schools. In that time the study was realized in double major and triple major fields of study. In the sixties of 20<sup>th</sup> century it was possible to combine the study of Geography with the study of the I. degree of elementary schools. Totally 873 teachers of Geography gained their qualification for the II. degree of elementary schools at Prešov department in internal as well as external form of study in the period between 1954 – 1980.

In 1977 department started to prepare teachers in the field of study 76-12-8 Teaching of academic subjects with the qualification for the II. degree of elementary schools as well as high schools. The study was extended to 5 years and it was realized in combinations with Mathematics, Russian language, Pedagogy and Physical Education. Department also provided the education for students of supplementary study and post-gradual study with the aim to extend the qualification of the teachers that accomplished their studies before 1982 to be able to teach at grammar schools and high schools. They also tried to provide the basis for partial specialization of some of the geographical disciplines.

Except for internal and external studies of teachers of Geography, the department ensured the education of new aspirants. In the eighties of 20<sup>th</sup> century it was the educational institute in the field theory and methodology of geography teaching. Special form of pedagogic work, especially with the talented students, was the Course of student scientific and research activity, established in 1974. Students' works were one of the best in the nationwide competitions of students (SVOČ) out of the students from Prague, Brno and Bratislava.

Formation of new social-economical conditions in the nineties of 20<sup>th</sup> century was accompanied with higher initiative of the department workers in pedagogic field. They started to participate in teaching of geographic disciplines on other faculties, mainly at their

new educational fields. The department started to provide the education of Geography with methodology for the students of the field of study: teaching of the I. degree of elementary schools. Most of its academicians are teaching at Faculty of Arts (Political geography, Historic geography and Demography), Faculty of Management (geographic disciplines) and Faculty of Mining, Ecology, Process control and Geotechnology, Technical University in Košice (geographic disciplines). The department took part at the development and realization of the new field of study "Management of public administration and regional development" that started to develop at Faculty of humanities and natural sciences, University of Prešov since 1998.

Since 2003 the department realizes the education in two fields of study of the first and second degree: Geography in regional development in the field of study 4.1.35. Geography (guarantee for the bachelor degree is doc. Mgr. Jaroslav Hofierka, PhD., guarantee for the master degree is prof. RNDr. René Matlovič, PhD.), and Geography teaching in the field of study 1.1.1. Academic subjects teaching (guarantee - prof. RNDr. Robert Ištók, PhD.) Within aforesaid study programs, the department proposes wide scale of study program units. Nowadays there are 468 students (including 8 full and 18 part-time PhD. students) studying at The Department of geography and regional development. During their studies they gain several competences and skills that ensure them flexible positions at labor market: teaching competences at elementary schools and high schools (physical-geographical, human-geographical and regional-geographical disciplines, pedagogic-psychological disciplines, methodology of geography, other social sciences); competences of the geographer – analyst for the needs of territorial and regional development, research analyses processing, landscape planning, territorial planning, territorial system of ecological stability, evaluation of influences on environment, statistical and demographical analyses and projections; competences of projects and prognosis creator in terms of the European Union's structural politics; digital competences (the ability to use ICTs- information and communication technology, GIS – geographical information systems and GPS – global position system, the ability to create the maps and other graphical outputs); language competences (the English language by word and writing, possibility to study other languages); manager competences (economic, law studies, project management, territorial marketing, project management of the EU projects and alike). For educational needs, the department is equipped with special classrooms, GIS laboratory and geologic laboratory. Significant part of teaching process is realised in terrain. Department academicians give the lectures of various geographic disciplines on most of the faculties at University of Prešov.

Since 1999 department gained the accreditation for PhD. study in the field of study Physical geography and geocology. It was approved by the Ministry of Education on the basis of Slovak Accreditation commission references. Prof. RNDr. Ján Drdoš, DrSc. became the main guarantee of study program, the other guarantees and tutors were prof. RNDr. Ján Harčár, CSc. and prof. RNDr. Eva Michaeli, PhD., who is also a member of PhD. study commission in the field of study physical geography and geocology. Totally there were three dissertation theses from the field of study physical geography and geocology accomplished in 2000-2008 (V. Čech, M. Zverková, P. Chrastina). In 2000 the department was allowed to realize habilitation and nomination procedures of full professors in the field of study physical geography and geocology. In the period 2001-2005, under the



guidance of commissions led by prof. RNDr. Ján Drdoš, DrSc. and prof. RNDr. Eva Michaeli, PhD., there were 4 inauguration procedures (E. Michaeli, J. Vilček, M. Huba, J. Oťahel') and 5 habilitation procedures (A. Gajdoš, P. Michal, J. Vilček, J. Oťahel', J. Hofierka).

In 2003 the department gained the accreditation for PhD. study in study program Regional geography and regional development in the field of study 4.1.38 Regional geography. At present the main guarantee of the study is prof. RNDr. René Matlovič, PhD. And its co-guarantees are prof. RNDr. Robert Ištók, PhD. and doc. Mgr. Jaroslav Hofierka, PhD. In the period between 2003-2008 there were 12 dissertation theses successfully accomplished in the field of study Regional geography (T. Mintálová, J. Fertal'ová, M. Ivanová, J. Krokusová, A. Sedláková, S. Lovacká, P. Potocký, D. Oremusová, K. Matlovičová, O. Slobodníková, J. Jakubík ). In 2005 the department was the first in Slovakia that was allowed to realize habilitation and nomination procedures of professors in the field of study 4.1.35 Geography. In 2005-2008 there were 4 inauguration procedures (R. Matlovič, R. Ištók, V. Lauko a V. Baar) and 11 habilitation procedures (P. Čuka, J. Marenčáková, Z. Szczyrba, V. Ira, J. Lacika, J. Dokoupil, D. Popjaková, A. Krogman, M. Boltžiar, L. Jeleček, I. Smolová).

### **SCIENTIFIC-RESEARCH ACTIVITIES**

Scientific-research activity was not so intensive at its beginnings. Only some of the members of the department took part in the scholastic activity due to insufficient financial, technical and personal support. This activity was realized by means of individual personal initiatives that were not coordinated. In the fifties and in the first half of the sixties we examined soil issues of the eastern Slovakia territories, issues of work attendance and economic development of the backwoods regions and issues of geography teaching theory.

In the first half of the sixties there was a significant qualitative improvement in the scientific-research activity of the department. The main impulse was the establishment of The Cabinet for Landscape Research in 1966. In 1967 some of the department and cabinet workers participated in the national research task called "Geographical regionalization of Czechoslovakia", coordinated by the Institute of Geography Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS) in Bratislava. Within this task, our workplace solved physical-geographical characteristics of Pieniny, related to the establishment of Pieninský national park.

In the first half of the seventies of 20<sup>th</sup> century we examined "Geomorphologic analysis of flysch territories of eastern Slovakia" as a part of a national research task. It was a remarkably difficult research, realizing geomorphologic mapping of territories on the area of 2869 km<sup>2</sup>. In the second half of the seventies the research activity of Prešov department was widely extended. Within the national task "Landscape as a territorial system and its potential", coordinated by The Institute of Geography SAS, the department solved two partial research tasks: "Geography of Prešov district" and "Flysch areas of eastern Slovakia – physical-geographical analysis and synthesis." In 1978 The Cabinet for the landscape research was involved into a research task within Intercosmos program. It was a study of morphostructures and recent tectonic movements by means of cosmic information in several geomorphologic parts of eastern Slovakia. A kind of different issue was the task of geography teaching theory, where we aimed on the influence of educational content and methods on the personality formation of students at elementary schools.



In the first half of the eighties of 20<sup>th</sup> century the department researchers solved two issues of national plan of basic research. The essential part of the team participated at the task "The structure of landscape in selected flysch areas of eastern Slovakia and possibilities of its economical use". So, the eighties meant significant shift in scientific-research direction of the department. Along with a physical-geographical and geomorphologic research there was a penetration of human-geographical research due to the change in personal constitution of the department. In the field of didactic research the workplace retained its continuity. In the first half of the eighties we solved the resort task "Scholastic organization of educational process at universities", where we aimed at efficiency increase of methodology teaching by means of stimulation of creativity and independence of students. In the second half of the eighties we dealt with the task of "Evaluation of landscape elements and their function in the environment – model area of Vranov nad Topľou district". New orientation of research reflecting the need for solutions of the tasks of environment protection and formation can be observed in this period. Geologically oriented was also a practical expertise suggesting functional structure of landscape in the area of a potential nuclear power station in Kecerovce. Specific orientation of the department in Slovak context was proved by several complex micro-geographic studies of rural regions (Medzany, Šarišské Michaľany, Drienovská Nová Ves), establishing tradition of micro-geographic research and education at the department. In the didactic field the emphasis was on the efficiency of forms, methods and resources in teaching basic knowledge about the earth and space.

The nineties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought a change also into the organization of the research activity. System of national research tasks was replaced by more demanding system, in which research projects apply for financial support of grant agencies. Simultaneously there are research projects supported by various foundations or international projects, too. At the beginning of nineties the department despite the high competition gained a grant on the project "Geomorphologic processes, their manifestation in the surface of selected geomorphologic structures of Western Carpathians and their cartographic interpretation".

The other project was aimed on the study of geographic structure of selected regions from the aspect of their rational exploitation, environmental protection and quality of life. The success of the department continued in the nineties of 20<sup>th</sup> century, too. The following two grant projects were solved: "Transformation of spatial structure of urban landscape in Prešov as a result of social changes in the last decade" (E. Michaeli) and "The influence of endogenous and exogenous processes on the landscape formation and morpho-structural plan of čergov – beskydian flysch" (J. Harčár).

At the break through of centuries and in the first decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century the number and structure of projects was diversified. This diversification included except for the thematic character of projects, also the structure of grant schemes. The most significant change was internationalization of scientific activities. As an example we can mention research activities of J. Harčár in cooperation with polish archeologists and geologists that examined the first farmers and shepherds in Nízke Beskydy Mountains (Low Beskyds) and old-pheasant settlement in Nízke Beskydy Mountains (Low Beskyds). The other international project (lead by R. Matlovič) was aimed on comparative study of intra-urban structures' transformation and their perception in four post-communist cities (Praha, Bratislava, Olomouc, Prešov). Since 2007 the department is participating on

the 6<sup>th</sup> framework program of European Union “*Management and Exploitation of Solar Resource*”, FP6 -2005 – TREN-4 (lead by J. Hofierka). APVV COST project called “Urban landscape in Slovakia – regionalization, protection and planning” (lead by J. Hofierka) has an international dimension, too. Another project COST “Understanding pre-industrial structures in rural and mining landscapes” (lead. J. Hofierka) has interdisciplinary character.

In the field of physical-geographical research we continued in solid traditions of geomorphologic exploration. The study was aimed on the influence of endogenous and exogenous processes on surface formation and morpho-structural plan of dukla-bukovian flysch, analysis of abiotic complexes of Beskydian foothills. In the last period we solved national grant projects (VEGA, APVV) aimed at the potential of renewable energy sources, geoecological evaluation of urban landscape changes in particular mountainous regions of Slovakia, pedogeographic aspects of multi-functional usage of agricultural land, regional specifics of protection and use of soils in agricultural land (lead by Vilček, J., Michaeli E., Hofierka, J.)

In the field of human-geographic research there is traditionally strong orientation on the issues of cities and rural areas, regional development and political-geographical research. Thematic topics of projects (VEGA, KEGA, AV) are continuously penetrating also into other spheres of geography. In the last periods the department dealt with the issue of development tendencies of regional complexes in eastern Slovakia in the period of globalization and transformation of Slovak society and their potential for the next development, the issue of quality of life as a suitable frame of complex geographic interpretation of intra-urban structures, the issue of transformation of political-spatial systems and systems of democracy in the context of globalization, the study of ethnic specifics of gypsies from demographic and urban-social view, theoretic bases and educational applications of geopolitics issues, globalization and international politics. Actually we participate on the solution of theoretical-methodological frame and applications of place concept in regional geography and territorial marketing, questions of specific position of eastern Slovakia region in the context of regional disparities in Slovakia and potential of tourism of central Slovakia in geographic models (lead by R. Matlovič, R. Klamár, R. Ištók, P. Čuka). P. Čuka is participating on the solution of institutional grant at Lodž University in Poland, aimed at the research of functions of spa cities in Slovakia and Poland.

The department is still improving research in the field of geography didactics and methodology. In the last period we solved the issue of geographic education innovation with the aim on local region in the context of further education of teachers on elementary schools and high schools (lead by Madziková, A.).

### EDITORIAL ACTIVITY

Results of research activity were published in the Proceedings of Higher pedagogic school in Prešov in 1959 and in the Proceedings of The Institute of Education in Prešov and in Košice I. and II. in 1962 and 1963. These publications started the edition of scientific articles that became known in 1966 – 1991 as “*Zborník Pedagogickej fakulty v Prešove UPJŠ v Košiciach*” (“*Proceedings of Faculty of Education in Prešov, UPJŠ Košice*”), and geographic contributions were published within the series of Natural Sciences in the issues no. 5/1966, 7/1968, 8/1973, 10/1973, 13/1976, 16/1980, 18/1981, 19/1982, 20/1983,

21/1985, 22/1987, 23/1991, 26/1995 and 28/1997. Altogether there were 67 scientific works from geography published in these proceedings. Some contributions from the didactics of geography were published within the series of Social Sciences. In 1995 these scripts were published under the title *Acta Facultatis Paedagogicae Universitatis Šafarikanae*. The last issue (Volume 28) from 1997 reflects institutional changes and was published under the title *Acta Facultatis Studiorum Humanitatis et Naturae Universitatis Prešovensis*. In 1998 separate geographic editorial series of scientific scripts were detached having the title *Folia geographica*. There were 13 volumes published so far. Along with these scientific works, The Cabinet for landscape research started to edit the series of “*Geographic works*”. The edition contains mainly the works of monographic character. In 1970-1978 it provided 6 monographs. Later, after the abolition of the Cabinet, the edition of these volumes was stopped and renewed only in 1996. Since that time, there were 7 monographs published and there are some waiting for the edition, too: *Geomorphologic character of central part of Revúcka highland and adjacent parts of Rimavská fold and Slovak carst* (Z. Hochmuth), *A state on the political map of the world – political-geographical and geopolitical aspects* (R. Ištók), *Geography of spatial structure of Prešov* (R. Matlovič), *Transformation of industry in Šariš region* (D. Popjaková) *The surface of Hornádska fold* (E. Michaeli) and *Strategic planning of Ptava micro-region development* (R. Klamár), *Cultural landscape in Slovakia* (J. Hofierka). These editorial activities contribute to positive presentation of the research activity in Prešov department and at the same time they enable to gain valuable foreign literature on the basis of reciprocal change.

Department participated significantly in edition of Spravodaj Východoslovenskej pobočky Slovenskej geografickej spoločnosti (Report of eastern Slovakia branch of Slovak geographic society). The branch was established at the department in 1959 and the first issue of report was published in 1961. Totally there were 29 volumes of this periodical (some of them were double volumes) edited in the period in 1961-1990.

Except for the periodical publications there were several occasional proceedings from scientific conferences, scripts and other publications. One of the most successful among the geographic community was the proceedings from the theoretical-methodological seminar, organized in 2005 *Development, current state and perspectives of Slovak geography in 21<sup>st</sup> century* (lead. R. Matlovič and V. Ira). Another significant publication was the Proceedings *Urban and Landscape studies No.3*, published at the international conference “Urban development at the turn through of millenniums” in 2000 under the editorial of R. Matlovič.

New aims of the department after 1998 in educational field were demonstrated by several new monographs, university textbooks and educational scripts such as *Geography of religions – issue outline* (R. Matlovič), *Regional geography of Slovak republic* (E. Michaeli), *Political geography and geopolitics* (R. Ištók), *Population Geography of Slovakia with special attention to Roma minority* (R. Matlovič), *Geography of public administration* (R. Ištók, R. Matlovič, E. Michaeli), *Geographic information systems and remote sensing* (J. Hofierka), *Geoecology and environmentalistics I.* (J. Drdoš), *Geoecology and environmentalistics II.* (J. Drdoš, E. Michaeli, T. Hrnčiarová), *Didactics of geography* (J. Kancír, A. Madziková), *Mineral resources of Slovak republic* (E. Michaeli), *Geography for farmers and managers* (E. Michaeli, R. Matlovič, E. Dušecínová). Textbook *Regional development and regional politics for geographers* is in press.

## **INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

Department cooperates with several geographic departments at the universities abroad, its students can participate on various mobility stays (CEEPUS, Erasmus programs). There are universities from Poland (Jagellonian University in Kraków, University of Łódź, Institute of Geography and Spatial Economy Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw), Czech Republic (Charles University in Prague, Palacky University in Olomouc, University of Ostrava), Great Britain (University of London), Spain (University of Girona), France (Université des Sciences et Technologies de Lille, Université Blaise Pascal in Clermont Ferrand), Slovenia (University of Maribor, Primorska University of Koper, University of Ljubljana), Hungary (University of Pécs, University of Debrecen, Karoly Eszterházy College in Eger), Croatia (University of Zagreb, University of Zadar), Serbia (University of Novi Sad), Austria (Karl Franzens University in Graz). We are also in contact with JRC in Ispra, Italy and Kentucky University in Lexington, USA. The most significant internal cooperation is with The Institute of Geography Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava, Faculty of Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava and with other geographic workplaces. Students, PhD. students and other researchers of the department participate on mobility stays and research stays abroad. The department was presented also by its active members on several top world undertakings – 30<sup>th</sup> Congress of IGU in Glasgow in 2004 (R. Matlovič), 1<sup>st</sup> European geographic Congress EUGEO in Amsterdam in 2007 (R. Matlovič, K. Matlovičová) and 31<sup>st</sup> Congress of IGU in Tunisia in 2008 (R. Matlovič, K. Matlovičová) and on many other famous international conferences (e.g. Colloque franco-polonais-slovaque v Clermont – Ferrand v roku 2008 - E. Michaeli, M. Ivanová, T. Mintálová).

## **OTHER SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES**

The position of the department is reinforced also by some other activities. Since 1959 there is The East Slovak branch of Slovak Geographical Society by the department. Its aim is to popularize Geography among the teachers and students and it contributes to the improvement of education by maintaining the contacts with its academicians in practice. During its existence it organized 10<sup>th</sup> congress of Czechoslovakian geographical society in 1965 and 8<sup>th</sup> congress of Slovak geographical society in 1982. The most significant was the 10<sup>th</sup> congress having the attendance of many famous representatives of geographic science from abroad. Except the others, there were geographers such as prof. dr. H. Hubrich from German Democratic Republic, prof. dr. J. Kostrowicki from Poland, prof. dr. S. Láng from Hungary, prof. I. M. Majergojz from Soviet Union, prof. S. Massip from Cuba, dr. M. M. Sakamoto from Japan, prof. dr. W. Sperling and prof. dr. C. Troll from Federal Republic of Germany and Prof. dr. M. Vasovič from Yugoslavia. In 1998 department organized 12<sup>th</sup> Congress of Slovak Geographical Society. Nowadays the chairperson of the department is E. Michaeli.

The workers of geography department participated very actively on the organization of the university and faculty as a whole. Since 2007 R. Matlovič is a rector of the University of Prešov becoming the first geographer in Slovakia that reached such a high academician position. In the past Ján Karniš (1965-1969), Ján Košťálik (1990-1991), Zdenko Hochmuth (1991-1994) a Rudolf Novodomec (1994-1997) were in the function of dean. The positions of vicedeans in particular periods were represented by Z. Hochmuth (1990-1991, 1994-

1997), J. Karniš (1964-1965), J. Košťálik (1969-1970), R. Matlovič (2000-2007), R. Ištók (2007-2009), R. Novodomec (1991-1994), M. Papík (1964-1969) and J. Šišák (1972-1984). The chairperson of Academic Senate of faculty was Z. Hochmuth (1997-1998) and E. Michaeli (1999-2007). Several workers were the members of main committees of scientific societies, mainly of Slovak Geographic Society. R. Matlovič is the first president of Slovak Geographical Society (since 2006) coming from the region outside Bratislava. As a leader of Slovak delegation on EUGEO Congress in 2007, Amsterdam, he contributed to admission of Slovak Geographical Society to EUGEO – the Association of Geographic Societies of European Union countries and he contributed to the fact that Slovak Geographical Society will organize 2<sup>nd</sup> European Geographic Congress in Bratislava in 2009. Z. Hochmuth was the leader of Slovak speleological society. Some of the department members participated on the solutions of the environmental issues on local level. E. Michaeli was the representative of municipal representation in 1990-1994 and the deputy of the Commission of construction, transport, environment and regional planning in Prešov.

### CONCLUSION

Department of Geography and Regional Development is a consolidated science-research and educational workplace with significant national reputation and international acceptance. Its position on education and research market is enhanced also by its symbiosis with other departments of faculty, which was according to assessment of Academician ranking and rating agency (2008) selected as the best out of all Faculties of humanities in Slovakia. Specific position of the department among other geographic workplaces is given by the fact that it tries to form a separate geographic school based on integrated version of geography. It includes the search for bridging between binary and idiographic-nomothetic version of geography. One of the possibilities how to overcome this duality can be the development of regional geography based on contextual holism. Geography is therefore understood as an integral, trans-disciplinary platform on one side trying to explain the processes structuring space and on the other side trying to understand the basis and identity of regional units of various taxonomic levels in the context of daily human experience.

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## ŠEŠŤ DECÉNIÍ VYSOKOŠKOLSKÉJ GEOGRAFICKEJ EDUKÁCIE A VÝSKUMU V PREŠOVE

### *Zhrnutie*

Tradícia geografickej edukácie na vysokoškolskej úrovni v Prešove siaha do r. 1667, keď sa na Evanjelickom kolégiu zaviedli prednášky z geografie, ktoré viedol Michal Pancratius. V ďalších obdobiach na kolégiu v úlohe študentov a profesorov pôsobili viaceré osobnosti, ktoré sa výrazne presadili v oblasti geografického bádania, edukácie a propagácie. Evanjelické kolégium v r. 1918 stratilo charakter vysokej školy a v r. 1945 zanikol aj posledný ústav prešovského kolégia - kolegiálne gymnázium. V období 2. pol. 20. storočia však vznikli nové vzdelávacie inštitúcie, ktoré nadviazali na bohaté tradície prešovského školstva a priniesli aj rozvoj vysokoškolskej geografickej edukácie a bádania na východnom Slovensku. V r. 1949 sa začal budovať ústav geografie na novozriadenej pobočke Pedagogickej fakulty Slovenskej univerzity v Košiciach. Ústav sa stal prvým slovenským geografickým akademickým pracoviskom umiestneným mimo Bratislavy. V r. 1952 sa celé pracovisko presťahovalo do Prešova. O rok neskôr došlo k organizačnej reforme vzdelávania učiteľov na Slovensku. Na báze pobočky pedagogickej fakulty vznikla Vyššia pedagogická škola v Prešove, ktorá vychovávala učiteľov pre 6. - 8. ročník základných škôl. V r. 1954 opustilo školu prvých 20 absolventov učiteľstva zemepisu. V r. 1959 sa opäť reorganizoval systém vysokoškolskej prípravy učiteľov. Vznikli dva pedagogické inštitúty, ktorých sídlami sa stali Prešov a Košice. V r. 1961 došlo k výraznému medzníku v inštitucionálnom vývine pracoviska. Ústav geografie sa vyčlenil z katedry prírodného prostredia, čím vznikla samostatná katedra geografie. V r. 1964 sa Pedagogický inštitút v Prešove pretvoril na pedagogickú fakultu, ktorá sa začlenila do zväzku Univerzity Pavla Jozefa Šafárika so sídlom v Košiciach ako jej štvrtá fakulta. Výuka odboru geografia sa takto dostala na univerzitnú pôdu, čím sa zvýšila i prestíž pracoviska a jeho absolventov. V r. 1996 katedra premenovala na katedru geografie a geoekológie. V r. 1997 došlo k významnej zmene v inštitucionálnom začlenení katedry. Pôvodné prešovské fakulty Univerzity P. J. Šafárika vytvorili samostatnú Prešovskú univerzitu. Pedagogická fakulta sa taktiež rozčlenila, pričom katedra geografie a geoekológie sa stala súčasťou Fakulty humanitných a prírodných vied Prešovskej univerzity. V r. 2004 sa katedra premenovala na katedru geografie a regionálneho rozvoja.

Katedra geografie a regionálneho rozvoja svojimi parametrami predstavuje konsolidované vedecko-výskumné a edukačné pracovisko s vysokou národnou reputáciou

a medzinárodnou akceptáciou. Jej pozíciu na trhu vzdelávania a výskumu posilňuje aj symbióza s ostatnými katedrami fakulty, ktorá je podľa hodnotenia Akademickkej rankingovej a ratingovej agentúry z r. 2008 najlepšou fakultou v skupine humanitných fakúlt vysokých škôl v SR. Špecifická pozícia katedry v kontexte ostatných geografických pracovísk spočíva najmä v tom, že sa usiluje o formovanie osobitej geografickej školy založenej na integrovanej podobe geografie. Ide o snahu hľadať premostenie medzi binarizovanou a idiograficko-nomotetickou podobou geografie. Jednou z možností prekonania uvedenej duality môže byť rozvoj regionálnej geografie vychádzajúcej z kontextuálneho holizmu. Geografia je teda chápaná ako integrálna, transdisciplinárna platforma na jednej strane sa usilujúca o explanáciu (vysvetlenie) procesov štrukturujúcich priestor a na druhej strane usilujúca o porozumenie podstaty a identity regionálnych jednotiek rozličných taxonomických úrovní v kontexte každodennej ľudskej skúsenosti.

*Translated by Barbora Némethyová*