

BGS congress gives a major boost to geoscience in Albania

The 7th Congress of the Balkan Geophysical Society was held in Albania for the first time and it is hoped that holding such a prestigious event will do much to promote the importance of geophysics to the economic development of the country.

The congress in Tirana from 7 to 9 October was the first scientific event of its kind to be held in Albania and welcomed 270 participants, including 137 from the Balkans with the remainder coming from 18 other countries.

A list of guests that included the chairman of the Albanian Academy of Sciences, Prof Dr Muzafer Korkuti, the deputy minister of energy and industry, Ilir Bejtja, members of the Albanian parliament and many representatives of higher education and research institutions, demonstrated the rising awareness of the importance of geophysics to Albania's economic and scientific development. And in encouraging news for the country, a quarter of the papers at the congress were produced by Albanian geophysicists and geologists, demonstrating the development of geophysics in the country which is vital for its exploration of oil, gas and other useful minerals like copper and chrome, construction materials, urban and spatial planning, and the preservation of the geo-environment. Many papers focused on civil engineering, land use, civil and environmental emergencies, which shows the weight of geophysical studies to urban and land planning in Albania as well as the necessity of geophysical development in these areas.

The Congress comprised four sessions on: seismicity, seismic interpretation applied to oil and gas exploration; gravity, magnetic and electrical methods applied to the exploration of solid minerals; seismology and lithosphere applied to complex regional geological studies, to natural and artificial earthquakes; as well as shallow-depth geophysics: civil engineering geophysics, environmental and cultural heritage geophysics, exploration and water geophysics.

There were 116 papers including 59 oral presentations and 57 posters. The papers were prepared by 367 engineers and scientists from the Albanian Geophysical Society, the Bulgarian Geophysical Society, the Hellenic Geophysical Union, the Romanian Geophysical Society, the Association of Hungarian Geophysicists, the Association of Geophysicists and Environmentalists of Serbia and the Chamber of Geophysical Engineers of Turkey.

Moreover, institutions from Algeria, Austria, Italy, Denmark, Netherlands, India, Iran, Indonesia, Canada, Kosovo, Macedonia, Australia, Great Britain, Slovakia and Portugal played a key role in the Congress. There were 32 papers from Albania, 32 from Turkey, 20 from Bulgaria, 7 from Hungary, 5 from Iran, 4 from Greece, 4 from Italy, 3 from Romania and one each from Algeria, Austria, India, Canada, Kosovo, Macedonia and Portugal.

Meanwhile, the Technical Exhibition enabled well-known companies operating in the exploration of oil, gas and solid minerals in Albania and the world to expose their innovative geophysical research technologies.

Besides the foreign companies such as Sercel (France), Prospectiuni (Romania), Geofyzika Torun (Poland), Tensi Congress (Netherlands), IRIS Instrument (France), Advances Geosciences Europe SL (Spain), United Oilfield Services (Poland), Patromanas (Canada), Beralb (Turkey), Deco-Geophysical (Russia), Matrix Geotechnologies, Z-Terra and Moser Geophysical Services (Netherlands), state institutions involved in earth science and universities, such as Albanian Geological Survey, Faculty of Geology and Mining, were also exhibiting. Interesting presentations were provided in this exhibition by the Balkan Geophysical Society and the EAGE.

All the member societies of the BGS are committed to enhancing geophysics and education in the region, investing in future scientific leaders, in innovation, giving policymakers the best scientific

advice and invigorating geophysics and education in the area, increasing access to the best scientific solutions for the benefit of their respective countries and the Balkan region.

To that end an application to join the BGS from Professor Dimitriu Ioane on behalf of the Romanian Society of Applied Geophysics, of which he is the president, was accepted. The two Romanian societies have the right of one vote. It was also agreed that the Albanian Geophysical Society (AGS) will assist in the building up of the AGS in Kosovo. In addition, it was asked to the Geological Agency of Kosovo to apply to get recognized by state bodies.

The Congress was organised under the auspices of the Prime Minister of Albania, Edi Rama, and was sponsored by Petromanas, Beralb Sh.A., Alumil, Bankers, Stream Oil & Gas, Petroleum Albania LTD, Tirex, Stela Resort.

Published in First Break December 2013