

FIG President
O. Univ. Prof. Dr.-Ing. Holger Magel

Surveyors should look after their identity

Address to the 60th anniversary celebrations of the Polish Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography (GUGIK) on 23 June in Warsaw

Honourable Surveyor General J. Albin, Excellencies,
Distinguished guests and colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

“For thousands of years they measure, divide the earth, draw maps – surveyors and cartographers”. (Prof. Z. Adamczewski)

It is my great pleasure to bring you cordial congratulations and welcome greetings on behalf of FIG, the international federation of **surveyors**, whose members recently have met in Egypt, in one of the historic homelands of surveying and mapping. Surveyors can be proud of their unique history, of their indispensable contributions to pharaohs, governments and citizens in order to support farmers, private or public owners to strengthen economy, ecology and finally sustainability, equity and democracy. Surveying and cartography are essential pillars of state and society in each country.

That's the thousands years long lasting success story of our profession which was mentioned in the invitation irrespective of how you call it: Surveying, Geodesy, geoinformation, Geomatics or anything else. Decisive is what one can find behind the name: it's the identity, it's the profile!

“From pharaohs to where?” was the topic of a recent column of me responding to thrilling discussions and questions of Polish and other colleagues at the FIG President's meeting in Cairo: have we changed our identity and profile and is therefore a need to discuss about which (new) scientific community do or should we belong/join to **or** have we only changed our technology, methods and have broadened our range of activities according to changed demands of society and changed environment? Maybe that this wonderful celebration and the impressive pride of Polish surveyors and cartographers (clearly demonstrated today by the patronage, greetings and high awards with cross of merit to some colleagues by the president) – maybe that this afternoon is not the right place to further discuss these important questions of our profession especially concerning the attraction to, recruiting of and the chances for the young/next generation. But I would like to encourage you to start and maintain this discussion in your and our own interest. Poland and its official surveyors' institutions and professional non-profit associations are for FIG an impressive example how geodetic and cartographic work is obviously acknowledged by the leaders of the state and hopefully by society and the youth too. Naturally, this doesn't exclude further discussion about identity, profile and image of the profession **but it provides a safer basis or foundation for all.**

Why do I raise this issue? If you have such a stable and solid self-confidence **you can better** manage and solve changes of and in our profession, challenges and problems like public-private-partnership in the field of surveying, cadastre, land readjustment and consolidation, rural development, mapping or the right balance between central and local organisation and administration structures, **you can better** and more closely cooperate with neighbour

disciplines and experts like geographers, architects, civil engineers, GIS users and producers with urban and spatial planners, **you can better** convince young people to decide for a future oriented study and profession like geodesy without continuous apologies for or even denying of former activities and images like cadastre measurements/establishment or measurement with using the former red white ranging pole. No doctor would deny to say that he is firstly a medical doctor and secondly for example an expert for urology or surgery etc. The modern medicine has changed its methods and instruments as well – but does this rectify the change of the name? I think no, because the identity and role have remained: it is timeless to help humankind.

Identity and role of surveyors and cartographers have remained as well; to serve society and our planet earth with contributions around information and management of land and other resources and around the shape and gravity of the globe. That's the role in Poland, Germany, Czech Republic but also in China or in Ghana etc. That's why it gives much sense to communicate or to work together in different national and international associations. I am happy that we do have this enthusiastic, capable and influential Polish colleagues within FIG, I am happy that Polish experts have organised special and very successful FIG events in Poland and have made a lot of FIG events more vital and technically enriching by many papers. That's not surprising for me, because in the field of land consolidation for example I have been experiencing special cooperations between Polish and Bavarian bodies of participants or between universities, especially with my chair in Munich since decades of years.

Poland and its surveyors as part of European history, culture and geodetic and cartographic identity have a double responsibility for our continent and for "our one world": based on a well balanced survey and mapping institutional and private landscape I would like to ask you to be furthermore very actively committed to building up the new geodetic Europe and to be a reliable and engaged partner for our many FIG member associations in developing countries like Jerzy Albin has promised in his welcome greetings just before. GUGIK therefore should support our Polish member association very strongly! Poland became and becomes more and more international. I am sure that in 10 years at the 70th anniversary celebrations we will listen to welcome addresses of representatives of Africa or of the Fiji Islands.

Happy birthday to GUGIK and to all current and former employees, a prosperous future to Polish surveyors, geodesists and cartographers in a harmonious and integrating Europe embedded in the global family of surveyors FIG!