

GIS BRNO '98 Conference

June 27 - July 1, 1998

Brno, Czech Republic

Between 27th June and 1st July 1998 was held in Brno, Czech Republic, the *GIS '98 Conference on Geographic Information Systems: Information Infrastructures and Interoperability for the 21st Century Information Society*. This conference was the fifth of the Brno conferences to be organized after 1987.

The previous conferences were mainly concerned with problems of spatial information and the elimination of barriers between Central and East European countries (CEEC) and member states of European Commission (EC) and other countries in the world.

Why a conference on Geographic Information?

The reason why is that geographic data are widely used in land and environmental risk assessment, urban planning, land resources management, facility management, cadastre, transport public administration, travel business, surveying, army, geo-sciences and many others. In order to summarize, "*GIS is used as a key technology for decision support in all branches of human activities operating with spatial location of surveyed objects*" (Professor Milan Konecny, Chairman of GIS Brno'98).

For all the above reasons and perceiving a dramatically growing importance of GIS, the Conference proposed and, in my opinion, succeeded to contrast GIS, digital cartography and the main actors involved in the management of GI, in an integrated approach required by the Information Society. "Inclusion of Information Society is a new step from which we hope to overcome still existing barriers in rapid acceptance of applications and ideas of IS as is stated in the closing remarks of the last year's ministerial Global Information Network Conference in Bonn" (Professor Milan Konecny, Chairman of GIS Brno'98).

9 Sections and 3 Workshops focussed on such most important topics as:

- the use and means of access to GIS data in relation to electronic commerce, the convergence

of telecommunications, media and information technology sectors, possibilities and applications of e-mail, data and WWW access over mobile phone networks;

- questions of standardization, open government and legislative questions about data.

The Conference included plenary sessions and technical sessions: Digital Cartography - Methods, GIS Practice, GIS Interoperability, GPS and Photogrammetry, Digital Cartography - Geodatabases, General GIS, Environmental GIS, AM/FM, GIS Theory and 3 Workshops: GIS on Internet, Open GIS and GIS standardization activities in the GI field - European aspects, a concrete experience of GIS methodology for developing countries.

The Conference associated events were:

- European Information Society Forum organized in co-operation with the EC DG III - Industry and the EC DG XIII - Telecommunications, Information Market and Exploitation of Research;
- The EC Meeting on Map Use of ICA;
- Round Table Discussions: Object-oriented GIS and GIS in Czech Republic.

Special sessions discussed the new European projects of:

- **PANEL - GI: Pan European Link for Geographical Information and**
- **ABDS: Administration Boundary Data Services for Central and East European Countries.**

The GIS-centred Technical Exhibition, this time also extended to other related domains, forms part of the Conference and is representative for the telecommunications banking and other connected sectors.

The Conference was attended by more than 200 professionals coming from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, China, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal,

Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, USA.

The Conference was held under the honourable presidency of Professor Dr. Eduard Schmidt, Rector of the Masaryk University of Brno. Co-operating bodies in the organization of the Conference were: Czech Ministry of Agriculture, Czech Ministry of Defence, Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Czech Ministry of Environment, Czech Ministry of Industry and Market, Czech Ministry of Transport and Communications, Czech Telecommunication Office, State Information System Office in Czech Republic, the EC DG III - Industry, the EC DG XIII - Telecommunications, Information Market and Exploitation of Research.

The following were the Conference sponsors: AUTODESK, Prague; DIGITAL EQUIPMENT; EUROTTEL; INTERGRAPH CR, Prague; ORACLE, CZECH; GEOPLAN, Breclav; SPT TELECOM; STAROBRNO BREWERY, Brno.

The Conference Chairman was Dr. Milan Konecny, Head of Laboratory for Geoinformatics and Cartography, Department of Geography, Faculty of Sciences, the Masaryk University in Brno.

The Conference was a real success. The Conference acme was in the GI community realisation of the fact that Europe had a rich media and user base for making it possible to improve system interoperability, and provide adequate means for the dissemination and sharing of geoinformation and applications. Thus the background for building the European GI infrastructure will be laid, to allow the growth of a more democratic citizen oriented society.

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