

REPORTS

International Cooperation of the Department of Geography, Palacký University: History and Present

The Department of Geography at the Faculty of Sciences, Palacký University in Olomouc was established in 1959. Already from the beginning its members were active in international relations, despite limited possibilities during the communist regime. The 1960s saw quite a favourable time for establishing and maintaining international relationships which took the forms of visiting international scientific congresses, long term research stays and international student stays, exchanges and excursions. From that time it is necessary to mention at least two names, professors Mrs. Stanislava Šprincová, who focused on tourism geography, France and the French speaking countries, and Mr. Vladimír Panoš, who was occupied mainly with karst phenomena research and did systematic research of karst areas in Cuba. It was thanks to his excellent position in the International Speleological Union that its 1973 congress was held in Olomouc. Until then the congress had the largest number of participants in the history of the International Speleological Union – there were over 1,000 persons from 41 countries present.

The department had a large network of contacts with many other institutions - teacher training colleges, research and economic institutions (departments of geography of other Czech and Slovak universities, the Institute for Education of Teachers at the Charles University in Prague, the National Institute for Education of Jan Ámos Komenský at the

Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in Prague, the Research Institute of Geodesy, Topography and Cartography, and last but not least the Regional Museum in Olomouc). There was a long-term contract on cooperation with the Geographical Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in Brno, and the members of the department took part in many of the national research programmes of the Institute. Also, many members of the department went to work abroad (for example L. Zapletal went to Bulgaria and Kazakhstan, S. Šprincová to the university of Aix-Marseille in France, I. Lepka to the university of Irkutsk in the former Soviet Union) and were in contact with a large number of geographical institutions (in the former German Democratic Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, the Soviet Union, the United States of America, Canada, Japan, Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland). Some of these institutions were even visited by students of the department. Apart from this, there was a long-term cooperation with geographical research institutes in Greifswald, Marseille, Eixen-Provence, Göttingen, Lublin or Budapest. After the year of 1969 there was a dramatic decrease in the number of foreign visits, especially to the west, and student exchanges were on regular basis only with students from the former republics of the Soviet Union, mainly from Azerbaijan.

In 1998 a branch of the European Geographical Association (EGEA) (society of young geographers) was created as part of the department at Palacký University, the only university to have the branch in the Czech

Republic. At present the most significant foreign partners of the department are both research institutes and universities in most European countries. The department cooperates mainly with the Institute for the research of cities and regions of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna, the Karl-Franzes University in Graz, the M. C. Skłodowska University in Lublin, A. Mickiewicz University of Poznan, the University of Lublan, the University of Maribor, the J. A. Komenský University in Bratislava, the University of Prešov, the University of Paisley, the Technical University in Chemnitz in Germany, and the Geographical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava. The relationships with these institutions are based on long-lasting personal and professional contacts.

Since 2004 many international activities have been carried out within the framework of Socrates/Erasmus program which enables exchanges of students and professors of the EU and its associate countries. Our department belongs to the most active within the Faculty of Sciences and also within the whole University. Every year fifteen students from our department can spend one term at a foreign university. A long-term bilateral agreement on students and teachers exchange programmes has been signed with eight universities in five countries, namely Poznan in Poland, Ljubljana and Maribor in Slovenia, Graz and Klagenfurt in Austria, Bratislava and Prešov in Slovakia and Bucharest in Romania. Next year we are going to enlarge the network of collaborating universities to Germany (Chemnitz) and to the United Kingdom (Paisley). The Central European Exchange Program for University Students (CEEPUS) enables exchanges among

14 countries of Central and South Eastern Europe. Our department takes an active part in two networks. The network with the acronym of "Georegnet" was established in 2005 and focuses on economic geography student exchanges. Currently we have students of geography from 13 universities from 9 countries of this region studying at our university (namely from Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia). Apart from students and teachers exchange programmes it is the first summer school in economic geography that is also part of the network. It will take place in Maribor, Slovenia, in the second half of September with active participation of students from all universities.

Our department is also very active in international scientific collaboration. It is essential to point out namely the AKTION, a common Czech-Austrian program, bilateral collaboration within the framework of the KONTAKT program with Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia, and last but not least the cooperation with Maribor University in Slovenia and with the Centre for Regional Studies at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Pécs, Hungary. Apart from our current collaboration, which is focused on Central Europe, we would like to establish new relations in other destinations in Europe (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France). To sum up, we would like to start new collaboration based on new contacts and deepen our current collaboration within the framework of the EU programmes.

Pavel Ptáček, Zdeněk Szczyrba

Participation of the Department of Geography, Palacký University in Carpathian Project (INTERREG IIIB – CADSES)

The Department of Geography at the Palacký University in Olomouc has taken part in the INTERREG III B project called "Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians in a Transnational Framework", which was one of the important activities within the framework of the Carpathian convention, signed in 2003. The Carpathian Project has been developed by the UNEP - Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention and RTI Polska together with the Carpathian Convention Signatories and the broad project consortium. The Project has originated from a fusion of the Carpathian Convention process and the conclusions of the INTERREG IIC Vision PlaNet Project. The project has been carried out within the EU Community Initiative INTERREG III B CADSES Neighbourhood Programme. The project duration is from September 2005 to August 2008.

The objective of the Carpathian Project is to enhance sustainable development of the Carpathian region based on its rich natural and cultural heritage. The aim of the project is to integrate European spatial development policies with the management of the Carpathians' fragile mountain ecosystems in a transnational context. The historically marginalized mountain regions which are partly situated in remote border areas should in the future become powerful unifiers between nations and peoples in one of the most dynamically developing regions of Europe. Experiences from the Alpine space and other such spaces

prove that mountains can offer considerable potentials for development with respect to their rich natural and cultural heritage values and their preservation for the future.

The project draws upon the transnational framework established by the Carpathian Convention whose aim is to apply EU policies in the Carpathian region. The Carpathian Project is carried out by 19 Project Partners from 10 countries (Austria, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Italy, Greece, the Czech Republic, Germany, Romania and the Ukraine).

The project analyses and consolidates the information base, develops strategies and policy instruments, and implements pilot activities, all this in continuous cooperation with local, regional and national stakeholders. The project will generate a comprehensive data platform in the forms of the Carpathian Atlas and a collection of environmental information, which will be consolidated in databases and made publicly accessible through the project GeoPortal website. A general strategic process will produce multisectoral strategic environmental assessments which, supported by detailed analysis of the key socio-economic sectors, will result in a Carpathian Spatial Development Vision and a Carpathian Environmental Outlook.

The main contribution of the Department of Geography is the compilation of the Atlas of the Carpathian Macroregion together with the Institute of Regional Development and Location Management at the European Academy in Bozen/Bolzano (EURAC) in Italy. All the main environmental, social and economic issues, together with differences on the territory of eight countries are depicted in the atlas. Some of the most important issues

and findings are discussed. The main contribution of the atlas is that it has put together a territory which has been for a long time divided by state boundaries but which has been facing many similar problems. The atlas consists of eighteen topics describing physical geography, the environment and socio-economic differentiation of the Carpathian Macroregion. The introductory part starts with the description of the area of the Carpathian Macroregion. The main part is made up by the following topics: Natural and Anthropogenic Risks and Hazards, Nature Conservation, Land Use, Cultural Landscapes, population structural characteristics such as Population Development, Age Structure, Employment Structure, Ethnic Structure, Common Linguistic Features, Religious Structure, Educational Structure followed by economic activity and socio-economic topics such as Cultural Heritage, Tourism Infrastructure, Tenure in Agriculture, Small and Medium Enterprises, Density of Network and Accessibility, and Transborder Cooperation. The printed version of the atlas is available on request at the Department of Geography, Palacký University in Olomouc. Apart from the cooperation on the elaboration of the atlas our institution has also contributed to the socioeconomic analysis of the Carpathian area (VASICA) which was carried out mainly by the Centre for Regional Studies at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Pavel Ptáček

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Václav Toušek has turned 60

Václav Toušek, a prominent Czech geographer, was born on April 24, 1949 in Zlín. Assessing his professional career we have to mention that it is connected with the city of Brno, first with the Geographical Institute of Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, then with Institute of Geography of the Faculty of Science of the Masaryk University. Since 2004 he has also been employed at the Department of Geography of the Faculty of Science of the Palacký University Olomouc. His professional and personal life is divided between Brno and Olomouc, in both of which he left indelible impression.

Václav Toušek commenced his studies in 1967 at the Faculty of Science of the Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Brno, in mathematics and geography. Already as a student he participated in the pedagogical activities of the department. He completed his studies in 1972 defending the thesis of "Settlement geography of Hodonín" and then shortly worked at the department as an assistant.

In 1973 he was accepted as an internal scientific candidate at the Geographical Institute of Czechoslovak academy of sciences (CSAS) in Brno. In 1974 he completed his rigorous thesis on "Functional classification of municipalities of the Southmoravian region". The research activities of Václav Toušek were during his first years at the Geographical Institute related mainly with issues of economic structure of municipalities of the Czech Republic and its changes during 1961-1970.

Since 1976 the Geographical Institute has been paying particular attention to the landscape potential assessment. Václav Toušek as a mem-

ber of the department of economic geography is interested in issues of social and economic spheres of landscape, mainly those concerning population and settlements of the Czech Republic. In 1981 he became a principal investigator of a partial project of "Socio-economic potential of the Czech Socialist Republic", together with the participation of other 20 researchers. Among the most important outcomes of the project are the studies of "Theory and methodology of socio-economic potential of the CSR" (1982) and "Social-economic differentiation and spatial typology of the Southmoravian region" (1983). The results of the project were then summarised in his candidate thesis of "Geographical assessment of selected aspects of settlement development of CSR (on the example of central places)", which he defended in 1988.

During the 1980s Václav Toušek played a key role in creation of the following atlases: "Atlas from the 1980 census" (1983; author of the concept, editor and author of three map sheets), and "Atlas of the population of CSSR" (1987, author of the concept, editor and author of three map sheets). In 1992 the "Atlas of environment and population health" was published jointly by the Geographical Institute CSAS, Geographical Institute of SAS and Federal Committee for the Environment with two map sheets by Václav Toušek.

Since the beginning of the 1980s Václav Toušek has been a head of department of economic geography at the Geographical Institute of CSAS and together with his colleagues contributed to the establishment of one of the most prominent research centres in socio-

economic geography of the time. He was also responsible for foreign cooperation, mainly with Poland, East Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria.

In the beginning of the 1990s he was asked to take part in the teaching process at the Department of Geography of the Masaryk University in Brno, which became his main occupation. He supervised more than 80 bachelor and master theses and 10 doctoral theses. His research interests were oriented at the geography of industry, geographical aspects of labour market, administrative structure and issues related to economic transformation and regional development. He has been responsible for numerous programme documents, particularly at district and local levels, for tens of grant projects, which often represented the first scientific opportunities for his students. He proved to relate academic sphere with the topical needs of labour market and potential role of geographers at this market. With regard to this Václav Toušek could be seen as carrier of progressive methods of practical applications of geographical education and regional development in the Czech geography.

Interests in interdisciplinary approach to regional development from the public sphere were an impulse for the establishment of the Centre for Regional Development of the Masaryk University (2000, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Economics and Administration, and Faculty of Social Studies) with Václav Toušek as its director. The centre mainly cooperates with the city of Brno and the Office of the Southmoravian region (strategies, development programmes, employment surveys, tourism development etc.).

In 2004 Václav Toušek became the head of the Department of Geography of the Faculty of Science of the Palacký University in Olomouc. His arrival marked the beginning of a new dynamic phase in the development of the department, particularly for his ability to integrate and motivate his colleagues both in work and in their leisure time. After some time he was able to enhance significantly the professional level of the department even in comparison at the national level.

It is not for us to assess the work of Václav Toušek without remembering his personality. For many Václav is a sought partner for grant projects due to his erudition and scientific purview, for others he is a personal friend, which can be relied upon and which can provide personal advise. He always shines with positive energy and brings new impulses both in the field of science and everyday life, for which he deserves our thanks.

Zdeněk Sczyrba, Michal Vančura

REVIEWS

Labour market – migration nexus in Slovakia: time to act in a comprehensive way

by *Boris Divinský*.

Bratislava: International Organization for Migration, 2007.

Due to a dynamic development and economic changes in countries of Central and Eastern Europe the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has recently been focusing on this particular region. After a couple of publications on migration trends in selected newly admitted countries into the EU (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia) finally the first monograph which deals in detail with foreign job migration has come out in Slovakia. The publication was available to the experts at the end of the year of 2007 and filled a gap in this by Slovak demography and economic experts insufficiently monitored area.

The author has managed to put forth an apt description of the migration behaviour of foreigners coming to work to the Slovak Republic and of the territorial distribution of the Slovaks working abroad. What I consider to be significant is the fact that it is by far the first analysis of this complex issue, which for the future development of the people of integrated Europe seems to be of key importance. Even today some demographers do not admit that to monitor migration only in connection with the changes of permanent address has long been seen as groundless. Much more significant are job migrations connected with tax and financial questions (or possibly with tax residence) since this group of migrants is the most productive and able to make material values, or as the case

may even be, the added innovative (mental) value.

As for the contents the publication can be divided into three thematically different parts. The first part (chapters 2-3) is an introductory analytical evaluation of the demographic and economic development of Slovakia. The emphasis is mostly put on indicators which are directly bound up with the labour market and its developing trends. From the point of view of the demographic analysis a detailed attention is paid to e.g. the development of the age structure and the issue of aging population, from the point of view of the economic analysis it is mainly the issue of employment (and unemployment), the development of the situation at the labour market and its territorial distribution which make up the bulk of the first part of the publication. To evaluate the demographic and economic indicators practically all the available relevant data were used; the author did not only focus on the interpretation of the statistical data but also tried to seek possible reasons and causes of the individual phenomena and relations with the overall political, economic and social development.

The second part (chapters 4-5) may be considered as the focus in the analytical processing of the data. Chapter 4 looks at job migrations to Slovakia, whereas chapter 5 analyses job migrations from the Slovak Republic. Again, it is not just the succinct description of the statistical data. When analysing the immigration trends, the author deals with all forms of stays of foreigners in Slovakia, all possibilities and prospects of their

integration into society, and also the issues of illegal immigration, communities and asylum seekers etc. are discussed. When analysing emigration, the author looks at the structure of emigrants, the causes and motivations for emigration, the issues of brain drain, brain waste and re-emigrants etc.

Since the target of the research was quite broad, it was therefore necessary to use data provided by a large number of institutions and organizations (ŠÚSR, NÚP, MZV SR, MV SR – Migračný úrad (Migration Office), Infostat, Eurostat, and other international and national institutions and organizations and data sources). Finding one's way among so much information can sometimes be complicating (because of double counting, or disparity between data); the author nevertheless showed an excellent knowledge of the issue of migration, including his commentaries which are topical and related to the telling value of the data presented. In the publication he uses international terminology and he even tried to apply it in his research in Slovakia.

The author not only analyses raw statistical details, he also draws upon all so far published studies dealing with the foreign job migrations related to the Slovak Republic and uses information provided by these publications (Baláž, Williams, Kollár; Divinský, Popjaková; Gergelová, Líška, Prušová; Halás; Herzog; Katusčák; Vráblová etc.). The combination and presentation of both ways of conducting the research (i.e. hard vs. soft data, or also the nomothetic vs. idiographic approach to research) are balanced.

All the analytical parts of the publication (chapters 2-5) are supplemented by a large number of neatly organized tables which

clearly exemplify and aptly supplement the text. They show the spatio-temporal connections of the demographic, and/or the economic development of Slovakia and mainly the development of job migrations. To make it even more neatly organized some of the data and developing trends could have been presented in graphs and the major directions of job migrations (which are by the way also very well researched) could have been more clearly seen on maps. The visualization of the spatial (geographical) data should be an automatic part of every such a publication and should thus show the contribution of the geographer to the researched problem. In this case all the acquired data served very well and enabled good opportunities for such contribution. In his analysis the author does not forget to mention alternatives of other possible development, which he mostly takes over from the projections and prognosis of the experts.

The third part (chapters 6-7) deals more with the legislative side of the problem, with the migration policy and the possibilities of adaptation and integration of the migrants into the new society. The transition to the third part is natural, it is in a way continuation of the previous part (chapter 4.2 was aimed at immigration communities and public opinion of the Slovak people in relation to the migrants). Apart from the major directions of the migration policy of Slovakia, all legislation (bilateral and international contracts and agreements concerning mutual employment and job migrations) and even practical possibilities of integration of the immigrants into the Slovakian society, their prospects for education, employment, health care and participation in social and political life are mentioned in the publication. These topics are

important mainly from the point of view of the future development when the process of globalization will lead to a more diversified population in individual regions as far as its race, national and religious structures will be concerned. In the closing parts the author tried to put forth his recommendations for the migration policy of Slovakia, which ensue from his findings in this publication and from his long-term research of the issue of job migration.

The IOM publication should become an inseparable part of a library of every professional. It provides us with a comprehensive survey of the foreign job migration and should thus serve as a challenge for Slovakia. A challenge to provoke academic discussions as to how liberal, or restrictive (for and against), migration measures to take, as to how adequately set the migration policy, and last but not least as a challenge for the Slovakian society to potential acceptance of adaptable and productive groups of migrants, their cultural, religious and social differences.

Marián Halás

Czech Republic – Portraits of Regions

by Václav Toušek, Irena Smolová, Miloš Fňukal, Martin Jurek and Pavel Klapka.

Praha: MMR, 2005.

In 2005 the Ministry for Regional Development of the Czech Republic in Praha published a concise geography of the Czech Republic which was compiled by a group of research workers of the Palacký University of Olomouc headed by the Associated Professor Dr. Václav Toušek. It is the first textbook of geography of the Czech Republic published in the English language by Czech authors after the formation of the country. The book introduces to readers one of the youngest independent republic in Europe, which was officially established on January the 1, 1993 as the consequence of a breakup of the former Czechoslovakia. Apart from general information on nature, population and economy the publication also gives detailed information about all its fourteen administrative regions. The book is therefore divided into 2 basic parts – the general and the regional one.

It starts with general chapters one to four (pp. 7-47). In the first chapter (Introduction - p. 7 and 8) the authors deal with historical development of the country with respect to its strategic position in the heart of Europe and on the intersection of some of the oldest and most significant land routes in Europe. The second chapter (pp. 9-23) focuses on the Environment. In this chapter the authors describe geological background of the state territory and its development, mineral resources and their use, terrain profiles (with special attention paid to karst and structural landforms), climate, hydrological conditions, soil types and biota. The last part of the chapter looks at environ-

mental and landscape protection incl. the UNESCO biosphere reserves and NATURA 2000 areas. The territory of the country is small, but much diversified. In the third chapter (pp. 24-47) the authors deal with the population, economy and infrastructure of the Czech Republic. The chapter is the most interesting part of the book since the establishment of the independent Czech Republic in 1989 brought about many significant political, economic and social changes. The summary of these changes and their impact on the life of population is presented very clearly and is, of course, supported by statistical data.

The second, regional part (pp. 50-133), introduces the individual regions from different geographic perspectives. The regions were set up as self-governing components of the state by the 129/2000 Act on the Regions, which came into force on January 1, 2001. On that day, 13 regions and one special Prague urban region came into existence. The geographic description of the individual regions follows a unified structure: natural environment, population and settlement patterns, economy and tourist attractions. The description is clear and for foreign readers easy to understand. Especially the subchapters on tourist attractions bring useful information for visitors from abroad. The text is accompanied by a large number of maps, graphs, tables and colour photographs. The statistical data mostly correspond to the year of 2004. The book is closed by a list of references and sources. Unfortunately the cited literature is only in Czech and therefore incomprehensible for foreign readers. Also, a map of the whole country would be useful.

Unfortunately as the publication is available only as paperback the pages can easily come loose after some time.

As a whole, the reviewed book is a very useful publication. The reviewer would once more point out that it is the first geographic textbook written by domestic authors after 1993, in which the authors managed to comprise political, economic and geographic changes in the country after the year of 1989. The book is well written and attractive for foreign readers. It provides not only concise scientific information for students and businessmen, but also basic information for tourists interested in the landscape, historic monuments and the people of the Czech Republic. The reviewer would like to congratulate the authors on their accomplishment and also would like to thank the Ministry for Regional Development of the Czech Republic in Praha for publishing the textbook.

Jaromír Demek