

## Opening Speech

JOÃO AGRIA TORRES<sup>1</sup>

President of the IAG Sub-commission for Europe (EUREF)

Dear Eng. Hudcovska, President of the Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Authority of the Slovak Republic

Dear Eng. Majovska, Director of the Geodetic and Cartographic Institute Bratislava

Dear Dr. Zuheir Altamimi, President of the Regional Reference Frames Sub-commission of the International Association of Geodesy

Dear Guests

Dear colleagues and friends

Welcome to the 2004 Symposium of the IAG Reference Frame Sub-commission for Europe in Bratislava, a beautiful city with a long history, and allow me to salute Slovakia for being a new member of the European Union. From the relatively recent experience of my country, I'm sure this will bring you new perspectives, and I'm happy that EUREF convenes here in this very special occasion, also because our group of geodesists was one of the first engaged in a European wide cooperation.

Let me recall the structure change of the International Association of Geodesy, that became effective at the last IUGG General Assembly in 2003. According to the new IAG statutes and by-laws, EUREF is integrated in Commission 1: Reference Frames as part of the new created Regional Reference Frames Sub-commission, chaired by Zuheir Altamimi, who is already very intensively engaged in EUREF activities. This situation allows us to continue our work in order to achieve the objectives that are expressed in our new Terms of Reference.

Our symposium has a very interesting programme, from my point of view. We will have not only the opportunity to appreciate the developments that have been taken place in the meantime after our Toledo Symposium, but also, I hope, to discuss and evaluate new projects. This is a result of all your work, especially the members of the Technical Working Group, chaired by Zuheir Altamimi, who will report later on the activities carried out since the last symposium. On behalf of EUREF, I would like to thank the TWG members for all they are doing in benefit for our Sub-commission.

The number of presentations, forty two oral and sixteen poster, besides the national reports and the special Euro-

Geographics session, is increasing each year; this fact reflects the growing interest of the geodetic community in our work. If you compare the topics of the programme with the previous ones, you will recognize that our action goes into a very sustainable direction. First, we take care for the long term maintenance of the infrastructure that we created related to the reference systems in Europe. Secondly, we are permanently seeking to increase its performance, making use of the best possible technologies and scientific developments. And third, we are concerned with the applicational aspects of our activities, which must be user-oriented if we expect a full recognition of our work by the people and organizations involved in geo-referencing.

To accomplish this last vector, we are very lucky in having the partnership of EuroGeographics (EG) and the preceding organizations since the very beginning. In fact, EG, as a consortium of the national Mapping Agencies in Europe, contributes not only to the spread out of our results, by establishing and maintaining geodetic information centers, but also with the financial help that allows the participation of some countries representatives in our symposia, which is really appreciated.

On behalf of EUREF I thank EuroGeographics in the person of Nick Land, its Executive Director, who had the intention to attend this event, but unfortunately couldn't do it due to very personal reasons. From my point of view, this represents also the clear engagement of EG into our activities. From the EUREF side, I would like to express our will in the enforced continuation of this partnership, especially now, when there are many projects requiring geo infrastructures for interoperability at European level, such as Galileo and the initiative on the creation of a European Spatial Data Infrastructure. These activities will force our community to face new challenges and will certainly give us more responsibilities, and EuroGeographics is our natural partner in this adventure.

I thank the Bundesamt für Kartographie und Geodäsie (BKG) for supporting the publication of the symposia proceedings. Besides this medium for information dissemination, the Internet is an inevitable tool considering the information and mobility society where we stand now. As you know, we changed the web portal address, but it is still maintained by the Instituto Geográfico Português (IGP), and I express my thanks also for this important support.

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When I started this address, I mentioned the fact that joining the European Union will have positive consequences in the development of Slovakia. Nevertheless, this way is paved not only with smooth tapestry but also with some hard rocks. I believe that if there is a real will in being a participant in the creation of the future, there is no other choice but to proceed in the way of the open cooperation, a natural way for us for many years.

It is a great pleasure and honour for EUREF to convene at Bratislava, a city with all the conditions to provide for us

the necessary environment to successfully accomplish our task, given its sympathy and hospitality.

On behalf of EUREFI I thank the Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Authority of the Slovak Republic as well as the Geodetic and Cartographic Institute Bratislava and the Local Organizing Committee chaired by Matej Klobusiak and Dusan Ferianc, who made all the efforts to enable an efficient work and a pleasant stay.

I wish us all a successful symposium.