



Hungarian and Slovak Conference in Vác

The joint project of the Department for Regional Development Research of the Central and North Hungarian Institute (CNHI) (Budapest) of the Centre for Regional Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Pécs) and the Geography Department of the Safárik University of Košice aimed to organise a meeting for sixty Hungarian and Slovak researchers. The two institutions won the tender advertised in the framework of the *Hungarian and Slovak Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013*.

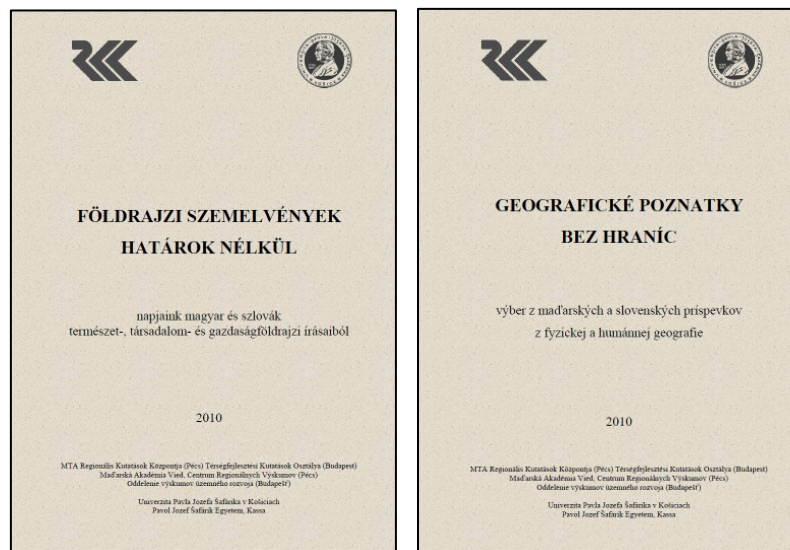
Several years of cooperation are behind us, which involved meetings at conferences in Miskolc and Danisovce (SK), publication of articles in each other's journals, translation of papers of the other party and also the submission of, unfortunately, an unsuccessful joint application. During this time an efficient work team has been formed with such members as Dr. Tamás Hardi of the Győr Institution, Dr. Bálint Koós and Dr. István Mezei of the Budapest Department of the CRS. Our activity is closely connected with the cross-border research of the CRS of the HAS, which has been going on for several years. The leader of the Košice team is Dr. Dušan Barabas and his two colleagues are Dr. Michal Gallay and Dr. Viktoria Kandráčová. The University of Košice has also developed close relations with the University of Miskolc, therefore we thought it would be important to involve at least one leading researcher from that institution, too.



In the first four months of the one-year programme, which started in September 2009, we organised personal meetings for the invited researchers engaged in geography and regional science. We held six meetings in Győr, Esztergom and Tokaj. (While choosing the venues, we took the length of the border into consideration.) When researchers meet to talk about the work they are involved in, their meetings should also have some tangible results, so we asked each of them to offer a fairly long paper for our future anthology. As we do not have profound knowledge of each other's countries or academic results, our aim was to publish a loose collection of selected passages, rather than a thematically compiled anthology. The meetings gradually evolved into meetings of an editorial board where the participants specified the structure and the character of the anthology. To illustrate the process, it is worth mentioning that we first planned to compile two anthologies to introduce the two countries. One of them would have introduced Hungary both in Hungarian and Slovak, and the other one Slovakia in both languages, too. Drawings, schemes and sketches emerged and were turned down during the discussions until the participants, considering the potential readers, could agree on the final structure. One of the books will include passages selected from the work of Hungarian



and Slovak researchers in Hungarian on about 160 pages, and it will be published in Slovak in a book of a similar size. Consequently, the two books will have the same structure. Papers on geology, natural geography, geo-morphology and climate describe the natural environment, and passages from papers on demography and settlement geography describe the social environment. The articles on the economic environment and regional disparities are followed by passages from papers on cross-border relations, mostly by researchers of Debrecen University. Due to the high number of participants, we cannot give a full list here, but, apart from the institutions above, we must mention the lecturers and researchers of the Szeged, Pécs, Budapest and Sopron universities and the geographers in Nyíregyháza and Kalocsa, whose papers are included in the anthology. The conference, the closing stage of the joint project, where the authors of the anthology were introduced, was held at Apor Vilmos Catholic College in Vác, which was illustrative of both cross-border cooperation and cooperation within the borders.



During the joint work, it was translation which turned out to be the weak point of our project. In fact, we could only find experienced, well-trained Slovak-Hungarian translators and interpreters in Slovakia through the Forum Institute of Šamorín. There are good experts in Hungary, too, but, due to the small demand, they are not professional translators. Therefore, our request was unprecedented. If we manage to arouse the academic interest in Slovakia here in Hungary, then a team of Slovak professional translators will be required.

As we have informed the participants of the successful conference, the Slovak anthology is almost ready for print; there are only some minor corrections to be made. There remains some additional editorial work to do on the Hungarian anthology. We are going to send both books to institutions where geography is taught and also to experts involved in regional development. They will also be accessible on the home pages of both institutions.



Dr. Dušan Barabas



Dr. István Mezei

István Mezei
project manager