

Matej Varga, univ. bacc. ing. geod. et geoinf.
Jakov Maganić, univ. bacc. ing. geod. et geoinf.

► Graduate studies, Faculty of Geodesy, University of Zagreb, Kačićeva 26, 10000 Zagreb, mvarga@geof.hr
► Graduate studies, Faculty of Geodesy, University of Zagreb, Kačićeva 26, 10000 Zagreb, jmaganic@geof.hr

INTERVIEW:

HRVOJE MAHOVIĆ THE PRESIDENT OF THE ORGANIZATION BOARD OF IGSM 2010.



Hrvoje, before we start I would like to congratulate you and the whole organization board in the name of the Ekscentar editorial board on the exceptional organization and realization of the IGSM 2010. How do you feel, have the impressions settled down three months after the meeting and do you even realize how important thing you have managed to make?

» Thank you for your congratulations! Firstly, I have to thank you for being our media partner who informed about IGSM regularly during the organization as well as now when we are making this special edition of Ekscentar.

Even though three months have passed, I still have this feeling that IGSM ended yesterday and taking into consideration the amount of work after the meeting, a

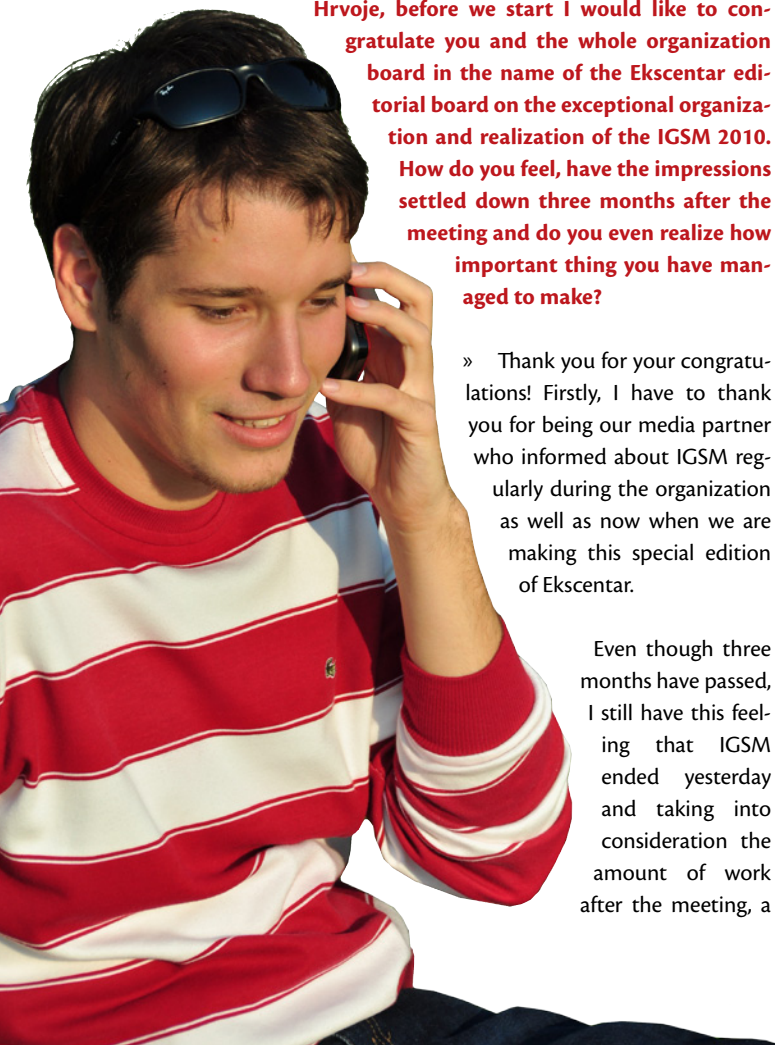
lot of time had passed before I managed to stop thinking about the IGSM. :)

I can't tell that we are completely aware how much we managed to do, I know that we gave our best – some things turned out to be great and some should have been a bit better, but we were really glad to see that our participants and our teachers were satisfied with the whole organization.

I would like to go back to the beginning, could you tell me something about your experiences regarding the meetings of geodesy students (how many of them did you participate in) and when did the idea of organizing such meeting in Zagreb, began to emerge?

» IGSM 2008 in Valencia was the first time I ever experienced something like that. I was overwhelmed with the concept of the whole meeting, participants and the atmosphere itself. After that I participated in IGSM Switzerland and if you asked me to compare those two, I wouldn't know which was better because each of them was good in its own way.

Besides IGSM I also participated in ISPRS meeting in Poland last year, and that meeting was a bit different than IGSM since they emphasized workshops and lectures. To sum up, all three meetings were an extraordinary opportunity for me to meet new colleges from other faculties, to meet new nations and cultures, to gain new knowledge in the field of geodesy and to improve my English. An atmosphere and socializing on those meetings was really something special and unrepeatable.





The idea of organizing IGSM began to emerge long time ago. The Croatian team was always numerous and noticed and therefore many encouraged us to become the organizers. Our representatives expressed their wish to become IGSM hosts when they participated in the IGSM in Bulgaria in 2007. but after they heard about the Swiss wish to become hosts they decided to let them do the organization. Next year, we decided to candidate and our opposing team was from Belgrade. After they saw our presentation, they decided to let us be the hosts, the rest is history. :)

When and how did the organization board meet and what were the initial ideas and steps in the organization of the meeting?

» Organization of the meeting began as soon as we came back from Spain and the board of fifteen members was officially constituted in November 2008. The first constitution changed when compared to the one that we have now. Working on the organization demanded a lot of time and effort and it was something only a few of us had, so after a while it became obvious who wanted to work and who didn't. In October 2009. we did the thorough reconstruction of the board which has existed in that form since then. With this reform organization became far better and more efficient, and we also included new, ambitious students. I should point out that without my team it would be impossible to do this job and I would like to thank them once again for the effort and time they dedicated to IGSM (which includes nights and nights of hard work and no sleep.)

The first assignment of the board was to introduce IGSM to our professors and students because until then almost nobody knew what

IGSM was. At first, we had few minor problems, but when the faculty leadership realized that we were serious about this, we received a full support from them. We did a few public presentations so that we could familiarize students and professors with the event we were planning and a serious organization began.

Organization and preparation of the whole meeting is a huge and extremely demanding job, so I presume that it was divided into a few parts. Could you describe and explain all those parts shortly along with the problems you encountered, presuming that there were some.

» Of course, the organization was divided into a few major categories – primarily accommodation, food, trips, lectures, workshops and nights out. A special part of organization was search for sponsors. We should not forget the fact that we began our organization in the time of great crisis and recession which came as special challenge in our search for sponsors but I can proudly say that we managed to deal with the situation more than well.

I would like to point out that during the negotiations some institutions lied to us, tried to charge services we didn't even use and we were even blackmailed once! We were strong and managed to obtain, even though it wasn't always easy. :)

How many students from our University of Zagreb, Faculty of geodesy participated in the whole organization? How big was the support from professors and assistants of our faculty regarding the organization or the program and the content of the meeting?

» 25 students, who were organizers, were the main participants in the IGSM. We also invited other students to join us but they mostly participated in trips and parties instead of lectures :). I'm very glad that organizers as well as other students from our faculty had the chance to socialize with colleagues from other universities and that was one of primary goals of the IGSM.

Regarding the support given by our professors I can only give praise. I was surprised with the affability of our professors, assistants and, of course, people from registry and accounting office. We bothered them every day and they always found time to help us and make the whole organization easier. We held meetings once a month with the dean, professor Frangeš and the dean for academic affairs professor Medak. During these meetings we presented new steps in the organization and discussed them in order to know how to solve some of the problems. These meetings were very effective and we often came up with some new ideas and solutions.

How did former meetings and experiences of colleagues who organized them influence you?

» The experiences from former IGSM meetings had a huge influence on us. We carefully observed the organization of Swiss and Spain's meetings and based on them we conceived our IGSM – some things, which were bad, were ejected, some were changed and some novelties were introduced.

Given the fact that besides IGSM I participated in other international and worldwide meetings (ISPRS in Warsaw, NIPP and INSPIRE days in Varaždin) I carefully observed their organization and used some of their successful solutions in the organization.

Regarding your former experiences in meetings, have you introduced any novelties and if so, which would those be?

» I have managed to incorporate a few novelties to this meeting and I am especially proud of that. I think that they raised the quality of the meeting itself. For the first time ever, we had workshops held by our assistants and professors; we increased the number of lectures and engaged professors to hold lectures. This raised the IGSM to a scientific meeting of some sort. We also awarded each participant with one ECTS point and we are especially proud of that.

Besides all of this, we managed to organize private parties in the most famous bars in Zagreb and we even organized two trips. We didn't organize sports meetings as our predecessors did, but we took our participants to the most famous Zagreb museums. I have to admit that we were very skeptical about this but in the end it was a full hit.

One of the biggest novelties was inclusion of media. We were monitored by the radio, the television and the newspapers along with the internet portals.

Could you tell us more about the number of the participants and participants themselves?

» 155 participants arrived to the meeting, among whom were 125 students and 30 seniors from Europe, Australia and Canada, who came for the first time. Until a few years ago, participants came only from Europe but now they come from other continents too.



Did it sometimes seem that you were in a time fix or that things could go in an unpredictable and unexpected direction? What was your biggest problem during the organization?

» Mostly everything was happening as it should have, with no bigger problems. Some things were slowed down because of the slow bureaucracy (waiting for replies from some institutions), but given the fact that we began quite early with our preparations, we were able to resolve everything successfully.

The biggest problem was the accommodation, we worked on this for more than a year, during which we negotiated with every institution which owned sports hall near the faculty and wider (we contacted around 10 elementary and high schools, faculties, Ministry of education, student center, the City of Zagreb, University in Zagreb...). Some of them refused us instantly; some of them promised to help and then refused us. One month before the meeting we managed to arrange one sports hall and we were negotiating for two more and when it seemed like everything was going to be alright, the problems started to emerge. Two weeks before the meeting, instead of having all three gyms we were left with none. I don't even have to tell you how stressful this was because it was only 10 days till the meeting and we had nowhere to place our participants. In the end we finally managed to make an arrangement with professor Lidija Podvalej from the Faculty of food technology and biotechnology to whom I thank once more for here affability because she managed to completely empty the whole gym and give it to us.



Could you tell us what the most memorable and the nicest thing from the whole meeting was?

- » Oh, a very difficult question. The whole IGSM was very memorable, but because I had to take care of the organization during the day, I can say that I preferred the nights out – the time which wasn't stressful because no problems needed to be solved, :). The Saloon party (Tuesday) and the national dinner (Wednesday) were the best parties, the atmosphere reached its peak!

It seems like the participants went back to their homes satisfied. Could you tell us what the impressions and thoughts of the participants after the meeting were?

- » Judging by their facial expressions, and the results of the poll we arranged on the last day, I think that they were satisfied! The biggest objection was regarding delays – to be honest, there were some delays but only because some of the participants were slow and late. In an effort to enable everyone to participate we waited for them and that is why we were late, but there were no other bigger objections. Many praised workshops and night times and they were all thrilled with the trip to the Plitvice lakes.

The purpose of the whole meeting is not just to party and have fun or just to get to know the Faculty, the town or the state. Are you satisfied with the program and amenities, lectures and presentations, trips and nights out?

- » When I put it all together, I have to admit that I am satisfied. I think that we did a good job, and the most important, our guests went back to their homes satisfied! The program was rich, maybe a bit too rich, but there was no other way to show them everything we planned.

When I think about it, there are so many things to be seen and heard that we could organize one more IGSM which would be totally different from this one.

We could say that the IGSM 2010 organization board left rich heritage to future students of our faculty and you probably have something to tell them...

- » Yes, I wish our students continued their trips to such meetings, and I would also like to see our faculty as a host again. Many things are already solved, the faculty is familiar with the IGSM and it would definitely be easier for them than it was for us. If this magazine comes into the hands of an ambitious student who is willing to take on organization of new IGSM, he is welcome to contact me and I will offer my advice.

You are at the end of your studying and how does the studying on our Faculty seem to be in comparison to the description and experience of studying abroad?

- » I have to admit that there are many differences when we compare it to Croatia, The relationship between students and the professors is completely different at other universities, they have a closer relationship. I think that they have more opportunities to talk with their professors and assistants and that they encourage them to participate in scientific work and further training – I experienced this while being on CEEPUS student exchange in Salzburg.

We have a Bologna system and from students' perspective this situation looks chaotic, but while I was talking to colleagues from other faculties they told me that their situation was the same and that they were also trying to get used to this new system. I hope that these problems will be solved one day.

What are your ambitions and plans after you finish your master study and become Master of geodesy and geoinformatics?

- » Honestly, I still have no plans. The first thing I want to do is to take some rest and then I will search for a job. I know that this won't be an easy thing to do and that the times of getting a job soon after you finish your education are over. But I have a feeling that I'll manage. :)

Do you have any hobbies?

- » My main hobby is photography; I have been doing that for more than 8 years. I'm a member of Fotoklub Zagreb where I have taken different courses about photography. I exhibited my photographs on many competition exhibitions in our state and abroad and I have won a few prizes and acknowledgements.

Colleague Hrvoje, thank you very much for this interview and we'll see each other at the bar downstairs in 5 minutes :D

- » Thank you too, I'll see you downstairs. :) **E**