

Practical Expression

Last month we presented some of the ways in which Eastern Europe has found itself on the 'cartographic map' during 2009. The range of meetings and events has once more demonstrated the vitality of cartographic activity in this dynamic part of the world.

From an ICA perspective, a number of Commissions and Working Groups are led from Eastern European bases, although of course, as with all Commissions and Working Groups, the remit is completely international. Eleven of the groups listed on the left have chairs resident in this area (if one can be elastic and include Sweden and Greece!)

The ICA Commission on Theoretical Cartography, led by Alexander Wolodtschenko of Dresden, has always been of great significance to the organisation. The current widening gap between cartographic opportunities and theory was a major stimulus for the creation of the ICA Research Agenda (described in *GIM International* July 2009). The major topics under the heading 'Theory' in the research agenda include Conceptual Analysis of Maps and Cartography, Structural Models of Cartography, The Map Artefact as a Concept, Cartographic Design Principles, Cartosemiotics, Map Syntactics, Map Semantics, Geospatial Knowledge, Cartographic Ontology, and Terminology. The current Commission on Theoretical Cartography is particularly active in cartosemiotics, but also addresses other areas of map language, cognitive processes, and toponymy.

In March 2009 the Commission held a joint seminar with the National Aviation University (NAU), Institute of Airports and Environment in Kyiv, Ukraine, entitled 'Cartography, Cartosemiotics and Ecological Safety'. The full-day meeting was organised in conjunction with O. Zaporozhetc, director of the Institute. A few weeks later a workshop entitled 'Cartography at the Cross-roads' was held in Barnaul, Russia, at the Institute for Water and Ecological Problems, Russian Academy of Science, Siberian Branch. Presentations from Austria, Germany and Russia addressed both general cartographic issues and specific cartosemiotic topics. Commission members Irina Rotanova and Alexander Koshkarev joined the chair in organising this event, which was followed by a roundtable session 'Quo vadis modern cartography?' at the 5th International Congress Geo- Siberia 2009 in Novosibirsk in April 2009. Contributors from the Czech Republic, Russia, Israel and Germany gave their views on the conceptual future of cartography.

In co-operation with the Centre for Cartography of Vilnius University and the Lithuanian Cartographic Society, the Commission held its 5th Seminar on Cartosemiotics in May in Vilnius. This event was dedicated to the centenary of the famous Lithuanian cartographer Vaclovas Chomskis (1909-1976) and sponsored by the Lithuanian State Science and Studies Foundation.

Detailed reports on the work of the Commission are available through its own online journal, meta-cartosemiotic (1), an evolving publication, Volume 2 of which is published in 2009. It contains Commission activities, along with titles of presentations at the meetings listed above. Although the focus is on 'theory', the work of this Commission is extensive and tangible.