

The Engine Behind FIG Becomes an Honorary Member

It is probably true that more or less everyone within the FIG community – and many more far beyond it – know FIG director Markku Villikka. Unfortunately, his engagement with FIG will soon come to an end as he is due to retire from FIG at the end of July 2013 because of long-term illness. Markku will be very sorely missed as part of FIG and its member organisations, by land surveyors worldwide and especially by the FIG Office. He has always worked very hard and intensively yet with discretion and respect at all times.

Markku Villikka



Markku Villikka, FIG director (second from left), is leaving the Federation.

When Markku started as director of the FIG Office in early 1999, a new era for FIG began. He has built up the permanent office to what it is today. He has worked intensely on developing and refining the global forum that FIG provides to its member associations, stakeholders and partners. Apart from the four-yearly Congress, of which the next will be held in June 2014 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, he has also improved the annual Working Weeks. FIG Regional Conferences have also become a success, attracting and strengthening regional cooperation and professional development.

Markku Villikka's 25 years in FIG have included the chairmanship of FIG Commission 8 – Spatial Planning and Development. Markku has also served as the president of the [Finnish Association of Geodetic and Land Surveyors MIL](#) and as secretary general of the Council of European Geodetic Surveyors (CLGE).

In view of this, the backbone and engine behind FIG has been appointed to the rank of Honorary Member. FIG's 36th General Assembly held in Abuja, Nigeria, May 2013, unanimously endorsed the application by the two Finnish member associations to honour FIG director Markku Villikka's 25 years of outstanding contribution to both the profession and the federation itself. The decision was followed by a standing ovation. Since the FIG director was not able to be present at the Working Week in Abuja, president CheeHai Teo awarded Markku with his honorary membership certificate and pin during his visit to Finland on 13 May 2013.

At the meeting, the director stated: "I highly appreciate this recognition from the FIG members, colleagues and friends who have been essential part of my life for 25 years. It has been a privilege to be part of the process in building FIG into the organisation that it is today. This would have not been possible without the devotion of so many volunteer professionals that have put their heart and soul into FIG, including the many Councils and the office staff."

Markku Villikka emphasised his encouragement for young people to join FIG and gain insight into the international challenges that surveyors have to address, today and in the future. He concluded by saying: "Personally, I gained a lot by being lucky enough to start my work in FIG in my early 30s. Therefore I strongly encourage young surveyors to take an active role in FIG as early as possible. I wish all members and the federation every success for the years to come."

CheeHai Teo, president of FIG

Louise Friis-Hansen, FIG Office manager