



## Letter from the 2013 Programme Committee Chair

*Chair of the EGU General Assembly Programme Committee Gert-Jan Reichart reports on this year's conference.*

In my second year as programme chair of the EGU General Assembly, the meeting was still incredibly busy for me, but less hectic than last year. As the number of participants was nearly the same as in 2012, this must be mainly due to me getting used to the great organisational infrastructure that has been developed over the years. The result was a very successful meeting with over 11,000 participants, 4,684 oral presentations and 8,207 posters and, for the very first time, 452 [PICO](#) (Presenting Interactive COntent) presentations. Seeing the newest scientific developments, meeting colleagues from across the world to discuss science, that is what makes the EGU General Assembly the most important meeting of the year for me.

Science itself is constantly changing, and so is the way we communicate it. With this in mind, last year we started a working group to come up with new ideas and concepts for the General Assembly. One of the ideas that emerged was what we have called PICO. In this concept, we try to combine the best of two different ways of presenting science: fast and direct communication with the audience through oral presentations, highlighting the main findings, followed by the opportunity to present research in more depth on large touch screen displays. Reactions were mixed, as some groups easily adapted to the new concept and were able to take full advantage of the possibilities offered, and others still felt somewhat uneasy about presenting their science in a different way. We will use the much appreciated feedback to make organisational and technical changes to optimise next years' PICO sessions, allowing them to grow into a solid new presentation tool, in addition to the other well-established ways to present science.

One of the main challenges of being programme chair is allocating the right-sized rooms to the different programme groups we have within the EGU. This year we sub-divided our largest room into

three rooms, which were better sized to accommodate the audiences that the various sessions generally attract at the General Assembly. This turned out to be a success as we were able to host more oral sessions than ever before. Still, scheduling sessions will remain a challenge because of the large number of parallel sessions we host (more than any other scientific conference in Europe at the moment), but this way we also offer more scientists than ever the opportunity to talk about their science.

At the Union level, we had the highly successful Great Debate 'Shale gas: to frack or not to frack?' this year. The room was completely packed and the large number of wireless devices in the audience, many of which were used for live tweeting and blogging of the debate, caused the only bottleneck of our improved internet setup during the week. The interest in this topical subject clearly showed that European geosciences are highly relevant to society. Although the topic of fracking is much larger than what can be addressed during a great debate, the event showed how the General Assembly can contribute to important issues by taking advantage of the full spectrum of geosciences present at the meeting. This is something to consider when you have similarly broad subjects you would like to see discussed. The General Assembly may very well be the best place to do so.

The organisation of next year's conference is already well underway with our first feedback meeting finished. I will do my best to make the 2014 Assembly a similar success. At the same time, I realise that the success of the meeting mainly depends on you: conveners, participants and audience. Please use the EGU and its Assembly as it is intended: as a platform to present your newest scientific results, to communicate with fellow scientists, and to inform decision makers on the geosciences. I hope to see you all again in Vienna in 2014!

*Gert-Jan Reichart*  
2013 Programme Committee Chair



Participants at this year's General Assembly trying out the innovative presentation concept, PICO.

# Division reports

## News brought to you from two EGU divisions

In each edition of GeoQ division presidents contribute reports updating EGU members with news from their divisions. Issue 6 gives voice to Michael Schmidt (G President) and Christopher Juhlin (ERE President).

### Geodesy

The 2013 General Assembly in Vienna was my first as president of the Geodesy (G) Division. I want to thank my predecessor, Markku Poutanen, for putting together a well-structured session schedule. The 15 Geodesy-related sessions were well attended and, for most of them, the lecture rooms were sufficiently large for the audience. Our programme group had 381 submitted abstracts which is 4% more than in 2012. As in the past, the most popular sessions (by number of abstracts and by number of participants) were related to gravity field research and gravity satellite missions. The session '[Geodesy in Antarctica](#)' was scheduled as a PICO session, and the response was predominantly positive.

There was no awardee for the Outstanding Young Scientist Award this year, unfortunately. But Eszter Szücs and Grace Nield were presented with the Outstanding Student Poster Award for their 2012 contributions entitled 'Effect of the difference between surface and terrain models on gravity field related quantities' and 'The effect of recent accumulation changes in the Antarctic Peninsula upon glacial isostatic adjustment', respectively.

The 2013 Geodesy Division Vening Meinesz Medal was awarded to [Zuheir Altamimi](#) for his invaluable research in the development and improvement of the International Terrestrial Reference Frame and for his important contribution to space geodetic research.

During the Division Business Meeting, the two nominated candidates, Johannes Böhm (Vienna University of Technology, Austria) and Johannes Bouman (DGFI, Munich, Germany), were approved as the two vice-presidents.

The meeting also saw the approval of the various committees of the Geodesy Division. The Vening Meinesz Medal Committee, chaired by last-year's winner [Che-Kwan Shum](#), consists of the four past medalists, as well as the ex officio Geodesy Division president and the EGU Award Committee chair (both non-voting). For 2014, Zuheir Altamimi, Che-Kwan Shum, Harald Schuh, Philip Woodworth, and non-voting members Michael Schmidt and Alberto Montanari make up the Committee.

The Outstanding Young Scientist Award Committee consists of the division president, the vice-presidents and the latest medalist (Xavier Collilieux), while the Outstanding Student Poster Award Committee has the division president and vice-presidents as members.

Finally, the Programme Committee for the 2014 General Assembly consists of the division president, vice-presidents, as well as one or two officers to cover the whole field of geodesy.

The preparation of the next EGU General Assembly within the Geodesy Division will start soon: the skeleton programme will be based on the successful sessions of the 2013 meeting, but might also include new sessions. Among other issues, the implementation of the oral slots depending on the number of submitted abstracts will be a point of discussion.

*Michael Schmidt*  
G Division President

### Energy, Resources and the Environment

The Energy, Resources and the Environment (ERE) Division is concerned with one of humankind's greatest challenges: providing sustainable, reliable and adequate supplies of affordable energy and other resources. The importance of these challenges within the EGU were highlighted at the recent General Assembly, where contributions included topics such as wind and solar power, carbon capture and storage, geothermal energy, sustainable biomass utilisation, natural resources and socio-ecologic considerations. We had 398 contributions with our programme group in the lead and 90 additional ones that we co-organised with other programme groups. The 398 lead contributions are roughly equivalent to the 418 ones for the EGU 2012 General Assembly. The ERE also was involved in the organisation of the well-attended Great Debate 'Shale gas: to frack or not to frack?'

At the ERE Division Business Meeting, Tija Sile was presented with the Outstanding Student Poster Award for her 2012 contribution entitled 'Estimation of wind regime from combination of RCM and NWP data in the Gulf of Riga (Baltic Sea)'. Further, several new officers were approved during the meeting. These were Tim Tambach for 'Sub-surface', Viktor Bruckman for 'Above ground', Maria Ask for 'Outreach & education' and Hermann Held for 'Economics & integration'. The 'Economics & integration' position is a new one and is aimed at bringing a broader spectrum of activities into the division and ensuring that the original goals are not lost. Michael Kühn, the former president, is now vice-president of ERE. An informal poll was taken during the Division Business Meeting concerning PICO (Presenting Interactive COntent) presentations and the general response was that this new type of presentation is worthwhile to continue with and that most attendees had a positive experience at the PICO sessions.

In the months to come work will focus on preparing for the next EGU General Assembly by building a skeleton program and identifying new potential conveners. We will encourage younger researchers to take an active role in the EGU. Our aim is to have a similar number of contributions to the General Assembly as we have had in recent years. We will also initiate some new sessions that we hope will attract a wide interest, such as the role of fractures in reservoirs.

*Christopher Juhlin*  
ERE Division President