



## Looking back at the EGU 2013 General Assembly

This year's General Assembly, which took place from 7-12 April in Vienna, was rich in scientific achievements, international discussions and interesting new features. The [numbers](#) of presentations, over 13,300, and of participants, over 11,100 from [95 countries](#), were similar to last year, but this year's novelties made the difference and greatly contributed to the success of the meeting, the most interactive to date.

[PICO](#) (short for Presenting Interactive Content), an innovative type of presentation introduced at this year's Assembly, brought together the advantages of oral and poster presentations and allowed scientific discussions to be as rich and interactive as ever. Other novelties included the launch of the new EGU/Copernicus open access journal, [ESurf](#), and the participation of the Austrian Federal Minister for Science and Technology at the [EGU Award Ceremony](#).

The extremely popular Union Symposium on the Curiosity Mars mission and Great Debate on shale gas and fracking, which generated thousands of hits on their respective [webstreams](#), also helped make the Assembly a success. The same can be said of the scientific sessions, medal lectures, poster summaries & discussions, and the many side events, which were of high scientific quality and interest.

It was also revealed at the meeting last week that the EGU has extended its contract with the Austria Center Vienna (ACV) to keep the General Assembly in the Viennese congress centre until 2019: "Vienna is a top international conference destination which stands out for its excellent transport links, good value for money and excellent mix of cultural attractions," said EGU President, Günther Blöschl, in an [ACV press release](#).

### The Assembly online

"One of the most impressive features of the EGU this year was the prevalence of social media usage," EGU 2013 participant Will Morgan [wrote in his blog](#) after the meeting. Indeed, the Assembly's online presence, particularly on Twitter, Facebook and the blogosphere, was more active than ever, thanks to the EGU Communications Officer Sara Mynott, the EGU network bloggers and the very interactive and social-media savvy participants.

Over 3,800 tweets featured the conference Twitter hashtag (#EGU2013) during the meeting and many used this and other session-specific hashtags, as well as the updates on the official EGU Twitter account ([@EuroGeosciences](#)), to follow the goings on at the Assembly. @EuroGeosciences gained over 170 new followers that week and some 130 new people 'liked' the [EGU's page on Facebook](#).

The EGU official blog, [GeoLog](#), and the [EGU network blogs](#) also saw a flurry of activity with over 25 posts published during the conference, thousands of views and many new subscribers. Most importantly, we received very positive feedback from young scientists about the EGU blogs. EGU 2013 participant Sam Illingworth said: "EGU blogs are one of the best things the EGU does for young scientists as it gives them a venue to share their research through guest posts."

### Press activities

In addition to its scientific achievements and active online presence, the conference also saw keen media participation and reporting.



EGU flags outside the Austria Center Vienna during this year's General Assembly. (Credit: Sue Voice)

The Press Centre, run by the EGU Media and Communications Manager Bárbara Ferreira and four press assistants, welcomed over 40 media participants, including journalists, press officers, science writers and EGU bloggers. The ten press conferences hosted at the centre were well attended by the journalists at the Assembly and had over 10,000 views through their [webstreaming links](#) in the week of the Assembly.

The EGU conference has [featured](#) in over 250 online, print and radio articles published by the BBC, Nature, Discovery News, El País, among many others. News agencies such as Austria Presse Agentur, Russia's RIA Novosti and the Spanish Agencia EFE also extensively covered research presented at the General Assembly.

The Press Centre team was also in charge of producing and distributing the daily newsletter at the Assembly, [EGU Today](#), of which over 12,000 copies were given away to participants.

## Thank you and see you next year!

The Union is especially grateful to those who worked behind the scenes at the Assembly. We thank the ACV staff, all the conference assistants and our conference organiser Copernicus, particularly Katja Gänger, Mario Ebel, Katrin Krüger and Martin Rasmussen, for all their hard work before and at the meeting and for creating the excellent [EGU 2013 app](#). Special thanks go out to the members of the Programme Committee, chaired by Gert-Jan Reichart, who worked tirelessly in coordinating the full scientific programme for the General Assembly.

The EGU is also thankful to all scientists, in particular abstract authors and session conveners, who participated in the meeting and were instrumental to its success, as well as to the hard-working journalists and exhibitors we had the pleasure to host. We hope to see you all next year in Vienna, Austria, at the **EGU 2014 General Assembly, 27 April – 02 May 2014**.

*An earlier version of this article was published [on the EGU website](#)*

## Austrian Science and Research Minister at the EGU General Assembly

Karlheinz Töchterle, the Austrian Federal Minister for Science and Research, attended the EGU Award Ceremony on 10 April 2013 where he gave a presentation on the future of geosciences in Europe. The full speech is [available from the EGU website](#).

During his visit, Töchterle met with the EGU President Günter Blöschl, who is also the Head of the Department of Hydrology and Water Resources Management at the Vienna University of Technology.

Blöschl said, prior to this meeting: "I am very pleased that Minister Töchterle accepted our invitation to attend the EGU 2013 General Assembly, the largest geosciences meeting in Europe. The topic he is presenting on, the future of European geoscience, is fitting at a conference attended by a large percentage of young scientists."

The EGU has strong connections with Austria having organised its annual General Assembly in Vienna since 2005.

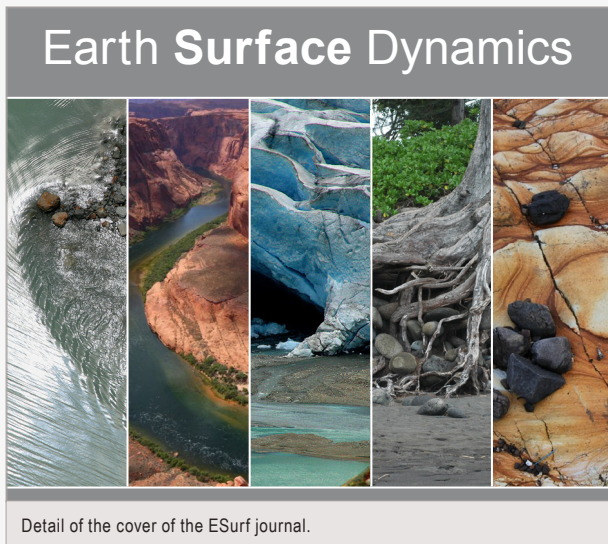
*An earlier version of this article was published [on the EGU website](#)*



Minister Karlheinz Töchterle (left) at the EGU Award Ceremony with the EGU President Günter Blöschl (centre) and Vice-President Don Dingwell (right).

# Launching a new EGU open access journal, ESurf

Earth Surface Dynamics ([ESurf](#)) is the newest international scientific journal of the EGU. It is dedicated to the publication and discussion of high-quality research on the physical, chemical and biological processes shaping Earth's surface and their interactions on all scales. The main subject areas of ESurf comprise field measurements, remote sensing and experimental and numerical modeling of Earth surface processes, and their interactions with the lithosphere, biosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere and pedosphere.



"We're really excited to be launching ESurf, which provides a unique forum for the publication of multi-disciplinary work on the processes shaping the Earth's surface. EGU's two-stage open access and discussion process makes this one of the most dynamic and interactive places to publish research on Earth surface processes and geomorphology," says Managing Editor Tom Coulthard. "We are thankful to Copernicus Publications and the EGU Publications Committee for their support."

With ESurf, the EGU now publishes a suite of [15 peer-reviewed open access journals](#) through Copernicus Publications. Like the majority of these journals, ESurf is an interactive two-stage journal with public peer-review and interactive public discussion. The discussion and peer-review of submitted papers are handled in an open access discussion forum (Earth Surface Dynamics Discussions, ESurfD), while final papers, upon acceptance, appear in ESurf.

The journal was officially launched at the EGU 2013 General Assembly in early April.

An earlier version of this article was published [on the EGU website](#)

## Links

Journal website: <http://www.earth-surface-dynamics.net/>

Follow ESurf on Twitter, @EGU\_ESurf: [https://twitter.com/EGU\\_ESurf](https://twitter.com/EGU_ESurf)

## Tweeting at a conference: the magic of a hashtag

*Following the General Assembly, EGU Communications Officer Sara Mynott, in charge of running the Union's social media channels, found herself wondering about how useful social media, particularly Twitter, has become at conferences. This year's General Assembly was known on Twitter as #EGU2013, a hashtag used by Sara, as well as by conference participants, to mark Twitter updates (tweets) related to the meeting.*

While having a hashtag for a conference with 4,684 oral, 8,207 poster, and 452 PICO presentations (#EGU2013) won't give you an insight into what's going on in all the sessions – there's simply too much science – it provides a guide to what's happening next (as speakers share their sessions) and is a real-time indicator of the 'hot topics' as multiple media-savvy participants share their experience of particular sessions. More importantly though, it gives people attending the conference an opportunity to interact and extend their discussion online.

When there's over 3,800 tweets on the #EGU2013 hashtag during the General Assembly, curating a scintillating story that also falls

into the category of 'short and sweet' no longer seems achievable. But do we need it? Perhaps it's better to preserve the discussion that surrounds topical sessions such as the Great Debate on fracking and shale gas and short courses that can be used as a resource for hints and tips later.

Making something public via Twitter can bring up the subject of potentially being 'scooped' on science before it's published. But at a conference you are already communicating your work externally, so this is not an issue. Instead, it presents an opportunity to communicate your research with the wider public and scientific community. Here are some of the benefits.

### Enriched discussions

Twitter provides opportunities for a much richer discussion during a conference – not only are you listening to the speaker's insights on a topic, but you can tune in to the knowledge and experience of others in the audience. The knowledge gathered in a scientific



A sample from the list of tweets marked with #EGU2013.

conference is phenomenal and, in the case of the EGU General Assembly, with over 11,000 brilliant scientific minds at your fingertips, why wouldn't you ask a question?! Okay, so they aren't all on Twitter, but the chance of a well-informed reply is high, so it's still worth asking!

### Remote participation

To add to the already enriched discussion, when something is being broadcast on Twitter, anyone can follow the goings on – be it the colleagues you left back in the lab, the geologist whose fieldwork

clashed with the event, or the interested twitterer, who happens upon the hashtag! If a talk is being live tweeted (someone is tweeting updates about the speaker's presentation) then it's even easier for others to participate in the conference online and ask their own questions of the audience and the speaker.

### Leaving a legacy

So we have a rich discussion, that involves members of the audience and connects with the wider public, potentially sharing the science with individuals across the globe – is there more to gain from a conference Twitter feed? Yes. The online discussion can be condensed and curated using a tool called Storify, which leaves a legacy of the discussion that people can return to later. Take the #EGUjobs session for example, Sarah Blackford and Helen Goulding gave an excellent talk on how to apply for jobs both in and out of academia last week and you can return to their recommendations on the respective [Storify available online](#).

*What did you gain from the conference Twitter feed? Fancy more of the same next year? Less? Or an even bigger online presence in 2014? [Email Sara](#) with your comments and we'll do our best to make it a reality.*

*An earlier version of this article was published [on the EGU blog](#)*

## Winners of the 2013 Imaggeo Photo Competition

Congratulations to Philipp Stadler, Yiming Wang and Eva van Gorsel, winners of this year's EGU Imaggeo Photo Competition! Stadler's photo 'Frost', showing night frost on a street lamp in Vienna, was the most voted photograph. Wang got second place with 'Icebear rising', a picture of glacial ice resembling a polar bear, and van Gorsel came third with 'Regrowth after fires', showing trees in fire-affected Canberra, Australia.

The selection committee received close to 200 photos for this year's EGU Photo Competition, in most areas covered by EGU activities. The 11 finalist photos were exhibited at the General Assembly, where participants voted on their three favourites. The Special Moving Image Prize went to [Pavlo Kochkin](#).

*An earlier version of this article was published [on the EGU blog](#)*



Winners of this year's Imaggeo photo competition by Philipp Stadler (left, 1<sup>st</sup> place), Yiming Wang (centre, 2<sup>nd</sup> place) and Eva von Gorsel (right, 3<sup>rd</sup> place). All photos are distributed by EGU under a Creative Commons licence via [imaggeo.net](#).