



Letter from the EGU President

Reflections on the 2014 General Assembly

The [2014 General Assembly](#) was an amazing event: it was not only the biggest ever geoscience meeting in Europe with well above 12,000 participants but also, dare I say, it was one of the most exciting too. For instance, it had a very vibrant programme thanks to the commitment of all the session convenors and authors, who were instrumental in making this year's event a true scientific feast. Among the new features this year was a theme: The Face of the Earth – Process and Form. The idea behind introducing a theme was to better connect the individual disciplines within the geosciences, a much needed development given that most of the exciting research questions and societal challenges are at the interfaces between the various areas. As we are no longer only residents but have become co-designers of this planet, the links between all the spheres of the Earth system and the role humans play in them are becoming centre stage. The keynote talks relating to the theme, held every day of the Assembly, were particularly well received as they were addressed to a general geoscientific audience. Following this year's success, next year's General Assembly will once again be themed: A Voyage Through Scales is an invitation to contemplate the Earth's extraordinary variability extending from milliseconds to its age and from microns to the size of the planet.

There have also been important developments in terms of presentation format and logistics. To improve interaction, the number of PICO (Presenting Interactive COntent) sessions, first implemented in 2013, has increased. PICO is a novel presentation method that combines the strengths of oral and poster presentations, giving authors a platform to introduce their research to an audience on large, interactive display panels, followed by group viewing and stimulating discussions. There will be even more PICOs in 2015 with some slight improvements in the position of the display panels. In other developments, the organisers made a major effort in improving the catering – including better coffee! I hope you noticed the difference. Further, the WLAN was recently upgraded in the conference centre and worked smoothly, even with more than 7000 simultaneous users during peak times.

Personally, I was particularly impressed by the impact and number of young scientists. By talking to colleagues on the corridors, I learned that the initiatives specifically addressed to young colleagues were very well received. These included the dedicated Young Scientists' Lounge where early-career researchers gathered their thoughts away from the buzz of the conference, young scientist forums and discussion sessions, an improved job market, and upgraded travel support for young researchers, particularly from economically disadvantaged countries in Europe. Indeed, our biggest resources are the talent and enthusiasm of young scientists. A key philosophy of the EGU is to support an environment that fosters

a free and open exchange of ideas, especially among young people, according to the bottom-up nature of the Union. Indeed, we cannot talk about the future of geosciences without highlighting the role of young researchers!

The annual General Assembly is Europe's leading forum for the Earth, space and planetary sciences but the EGU has much more to offer. Check out the many [topical meetings and conferences](#) on the EGU web page! You could also consider making EGU journals your premier publication outlet: we publish 16 high-quality [open access journals](#) that can be read by anybody on the globe, free of charge. And you can use the EGU as a platform to inform decision makers about the Earth sciences with the help of our [communication](#) and outreach products.

While you are engaging in the diverse EGU activities please make sure to put 12–17 April 2015 into your calendar as the date of the next General Assembly. See you next year in Vienna!

Günter Blöschl
EGU President

