

Change Habitats 2

Newsletter April 2013

News from the European Natura
2000 front
International IAPP cooperation

Dear Colleagues, Friends and Readers!

Welcome to our Easter Newsletter. Since our last Newsletter we successfully submitted the Periodic Report.

We have had our General Assembly on February 14/15th in Horn and were cordially welcomed by Riegl Research Forschungsgesellschaft. We had the opportunity to visit this impressive enterprise and two of our recruited fellows even had the chance to take a flight with the aircraft taking LIDAR data near Krems. Thanks again to our partner Riegl for this great hospitality!

Evaluation of field and aerial data from the last two years and planning the field and aerial data acquisition campaigns during this year are currently under way.

In this newsletter we will introduce our three recruited young scientific fellows, all from Hungary: **Agnes Vári**, **Balázs Déak** and **András Zlinszky**.

Agnes is currently working in Berlin with YGGDRASILDiemer, Germany.

Balázs is working with TU Bergakademie Freiberg, Germany.

András is working with the Research Groups Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing, Department of Geodesy and Geoinformation, Vienna University of Technology, Vienna, Austria.

Events in autumn 2012 and spring 2013

Secondments completed in 2013

WHO	OBJECTIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ From YGG2 to TUW-IPF▪ From TUBAF to RIEGL▪ From ATMO to TUW-IPF	extraction of habitat features, habitat interpretation keys
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ From YGG2 to TU BAF	interpretation keys, data quality, error analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ From TUW-IPF to RIEGL	generation of models, extraction of habitat Features, map overlap, provision of data to Field workers
	Field work in Germany (Uckermark), Evaluation of Data, database input, report on Field work results, map preparation
	calibration flight preparation and collaboration, ASL data point classification
	Full Waveform Analysis (data formats and standards)

Dissemination at Conferences:

Mücke, W, Hollaus, M, Pfeifer, M: Detection of downed logs in small footprint full-waveform ALS data. Talk: RIEGL LiDAR 2013, 2013-06-25 - 2013-06-27, Vienna, Austria

Mücke, W., Schroiff, A., Hollaus, M. Pfeifer, M.: Erkennen von liegendem Totholz in full-waveform Airborne Laserscanning Daten. Talk: 3 Ländertagung - DGPF Jahrestagung, Feb 27-March 1, 2013, Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany, 10 pages

Zlinszky, A., Vári, A., Deák, B., Mücke, W., Székely, B.: Airborne Laser Scanning – based vegetation classification in grasslands: A feasibility study. Poster/Talk EGU 2013, Session ESS/1.5 “3D Spatial Data, Analysis, Visualization and Infrastructures in Geosciences-From 3D Clouds to Information, 12th April 2013 Geophysical Research Abstracts 15, EGU2013-10048-2

Deák et al.: Detecting microtopography and vegetation zonation in an alkaline steppe by ALS. EDGG (European Dry Grassland Group) conference in Zamosc (Poland), May 24-31st, 2013 (presentation)

Deák et al.: Habitat modelling based on soil microformations on vegetation patterns in an alkaline steppe. 56th IAVS Symposium, Tartu (Estonia) 26–30th June, 2013

Vári A., Deák B., Schroiff A., Zlinszky A., Eysn L: Predicting emergent and floating-leaved lake vegetation by Airborne Laser Scanning in relation to lake and catchment features at 32nd Congress of the International Society of Limnology 4th – 9th August 2013 in Budapest, submitted

Rahner, S.: How many Project Management do we really need? The example of an IAPP Project. 19th EARMA Conference 1st – 4th July 2013 Vienna

Announcement: EARMA Conference in Vienna, 1st - 4th of July 2013

The 19th Annual Conference of the European Association of Research Managers and Administrators (Stairways to Excellence in Research Management and Administration) will take place from the 1st – 4th of July 2013 at Vienna University of Technology, Austria.

The Conference takes place against the backdrop of the completion of the final arrangements for the Horizon 2020 programme. The Conference will focus on how research officers and administrators can adapt to the new programme and how they can help manage sustainable research activities. As a research management professional, the EARMA 2013 Annual Conference Organising Committee cordially invites you to take part in this conference.

Anna Groeninx van Zoelen (Chair of the Conference Committee)

Jan Andersen (EARMA Chair)

Siegfried Huemer (Vienna University of Technology)

www.earma-vienna-2013.com



Agnes Vári

2000-2005 **Agnes Vári** completed her University Biology studies at the Technische Universität München (majoring Applied Ecology with Plant Ecology and Limnology)

2006 – 2011 Junior research fellow at the Macrophyte Research Group of the Balaton Limnological Institute. In parallel post-graduate studies at the Eötvös University Budapest

2011 – 2012 Parental Leave

2012 joined Changehabitats Project in June 2012 with YGGDRASIL Diemer, Berlin

December 2012 PhD in Biology/Ecology

Agnes works on statistical topics of complex remote sensing data sets, evaluation and GIS application in the Natura2000 sites of the ChangeHabitats Project.

Personnel Questionnaire for Recruited ChangeHabitats2-Fellows

1. Please give us a brief overview of your professional career and how you ended up on your current position?

During my studies in Biology at the Technische Universität München, the two major aspects of my interest were on plant ecology and limnology. When I moved to Hungary after finishing my diploma, the job I found in the Macrophyte Research Group at the Balaton Limnological Institute (Ecological Research Centre, Hungarian Academy of Sciences) fitted just perfectly with my interests. During this time I came in touch with remote sensing methods and took part in some data collection for remote sensing validation purposes. Parallely, I conducted my post-graduate studies at the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, where focus was mainly on conservation biology. When I heard about the position within the ChangeHabitats2 project, I was very enthusiastic.

2. What are your current responsibilities and what are the most challenging and/ or most rewarding aspect(s) of your current position?

- assisting in planning field work, compiling relevant habitat features to be mapped
- mappings mainly on German sites
- complementing office team at YGGDRASILDiemer, especially during secondments of office members
- the most challenging and most rewarding aspect involves statistical data analysis: assessing relationships between ALS data and ground mapped features.

3. What are the key qualifications required in/for your position?

A good background of ecological knowledge, experience in field work, familiarity with conservation biology as well as some experience with remote sensing ground-truthing are certainly important. I am sure that the proficient knowledge of the three main project languages (English, German and Hungarian) also helps a lot to organize work and communicate with the involved parties.

4. How did you learn about the open position in ChangeHabitats2?

A former colleague of mine who is also presently working in the project draw my attention to the job announcement.

5. Have you heard of Marie Curie actions before you applied for the ChangeHabitats2 position?

Certainly, Marie Curie actions is very well-known.

6. Why did you choose to apply for your current position within the ChangeHabitats2- Project?

Actually, I first applied to a different position (to the one at TUBAF) – I saw both announcements, and had the feeling, that the description of the TUBAF-job fits much better with my knowledge and expertise. However, I got “redirected”, so I applied to my present position at YGG-2. Now I am glad it turned out this way.

7. What are your goals to achieve in this position?

This is rather hard to define, as my position ends much before the project ends. However, there are some parts of the whole that I am closer connected to, and feel more responsible for. That's the case for a lot of statistical data analysis issues. I especially would like to try the new methodology on our aquatic and wetland test site, which would also connect to my previous work in aquatic environment.

8. How would you plan to proceed your career after this position?

I actually planned to go back to Hungary, however the job situation there doesn't look too promising at the moment, and research jobs are very restricted in a small country like Hungary. Therefore, at the moment I am applying to different jobs related to my field of research, all around Europe.

9. Which type of knowledge/techniques in the project are new to you?

I was already familiar with Airborne Laser Scanning to a certain extent, however, taking part in the project deepened my understanding of this technique. I learned also some new statistical methods (in order to be able to conduct even more appropriate data analysis).

10. What are the aspects of your international experience that colleagues in domestic places/in your host institution can learn from?

Research teams in Hungary might learn closer cooperation and more open communication from international experience – something that I often felt somewhat missing in Hungary.

11. What are general advantages of international cooperations on the different professions (ecology, engineering etc.) and sectors (industry – academia)?

Generally, interdisciplinary experience widens the horizon, whereas intersectorial exchange gives insight into a completely different world. Making new contacts, especially international ones is a further positive aspect of such cooperations.

12. What have been your greatest success and challenges in your current position?

It is a good feeling to be able to provide statistical advice for such complex datasets.

It is a great challenge to keep in touch, keep each other informed about the different tasks within the project. It requires often lengthy e-mailing and intense skype-usage, when it would be so much easier to come together and talk about it, if we were not distributed so far from each other.

13. What are the similarities and differences of working in a domestic project team and an international project team?

For one, I think one can generally assume that an international project brings people together who are good at something in international comparison. Domestic teams come together more often based on connections evolved during long years at university, for example.

14. In your opinion, what are the emerging issues in international research in your field over the next 5-10 years?

I agree with what András outlined – I don't think I can put it any better.

15. How do you cope with the life in the new country (Language, friends, habits, culture, food, administration, weather, any more?)

Having already lived in Germany for 17 years (before I moved to Hungary), much of it was already familiar to me. What I had to adjust to, was that multi-culti Berlin is not posh Munich, actually, in certain terms it is somewhat more like Hungary. And of course, it is easy to get used to the full of sun-shine Hungarian whether, which I really miss here.

16. Which parts in your current position will give you – in your view – advantages in your future career?

Having worked in an international and interdisciplinary project, especially within the Marie Curie funding scheme, is probably in itself of some advantage. More concrete skills I acquired and developed, that might be useful for my future career include working with remote sensed data, database management, GIS applications, advanced statistical methods as well as experience in practice-oriented research and applied issues of nature conservation and Natura2000 mapping.

17. Which parts of training/learning would you like to have included, but is not in yet? Any Ideas?

I like the idea that was already formulated at the mid-term review to get some training in project management. I think that would be something useful indeed.

18. Which specific trainings would you like to take within the IAPP recruitment or project Lifetime?

A course on GIS for conservation measures.

19. Do you have any final comments or observations for young scientists or for the “old guys” in the IAPP Consortium? Or for any other people?

Just a general observation (for the next time...): I have the feeling, that project work would be even more effective, if secondments were planned for longer time periods.

20. Why would you recommend a MC fellowship to your friends?

I think going abroad, working in different countries is in itself a good thing, worth to check out if one has the possibility to do so. Among all possibilities, Marie Curie is one of the best, as it is very prestigious, and gives you also good financial support.





Balázs Deák

Balázs Deák received his MSc Degree as biologist-ecologist at the University of Debrecen, Department of Ecology

2007 - 2012 worked as ecologist and project manager at the Hortobágy National Park Directorate

As of May 2012 he is working for the ChangeHabitats2 Project at TU Bergakademie Freiberg, Germany

His tasks in Hungary were: development of low diversity seed mixtures in the restoration of Natura2000 habitats i.e. Pannonic salt steppes and marshes 1530 and Pannonic loess steppic grasslands 6250, coordination and evaluation restoration projects and monitoring of protected and Natura2000 habitats.

Balázs has participated in many EU Projects in the LIFE funding and in other national nature conservation projects. He has gained wide experience in bringing together different stakeholders from authorities, consultancy enterprises, NGOs, National Parks and external contractors, researchers and governmental bodies.

Personnel Questionnaire for Recruited ChangeHabitats2-Fellows

1. Please give us a brief overview of your professional career and how you ended up on your current position?

After finishing the University I was applied by the Hortobágy National Park Directorate as an ecologist and project manager. I was responsible for Natura 2000 monitoring, authority tasks connected with Natura 2000, I participated in developing and applying new grassland restoration techniques. Beside these I participated (mostly as a project coordinator or responsible professional person) in several projects (LIFE nature, other projects supported by the EU) which were about nature conservation issues. As a researcher I am a member of the research group of the University of Debrecen (Ecology Department). I am mainly interested in researches connected with grassland restoration, nature conservation management and plant traits. When I have heard about this position I thought that my skills fits to the requirements of the project, and I assumed that having the opportunity to participate in a Marie Curie project would be a great opportunity for working in an international team and enlarge my knowledge.

2. What are your current responsibilities and what are the most challenging and/ or most rewarding aspect(s) of your current position?

I am responsible for compiling the list of those items, that should be monitored on the field. These items should represent a high importance in nature conservation and habitat assessment (indicator species objects) and should be detectable by remote sensing. I am organizing and evaluating field work in Hungary. I take part in the interpretation of the biotical data. Take part in publication. And of course as we are working in a team, I evaluate all of my tasks with cooperation with my colleagues.

3. What are the key qualifications required in/for your position?

- expertise in ecology and field work
- practical and theoretical knowledge on the Natura 2000 system
- GIS skills
- expertise in planning research
- skills in international publication

4. How did you learn about the open position in ChangeHabitats2?

Via Euraxess.

5. Have you heard of Marie Curie actions before you applied for the ChangeHabitats2 position?

Yes, I did, as actions of the Marie Curie projects are well known in Hungary as well, just like in any other states of the EU. But this project is the first opportunity for me to participate in a Marie Curie project.

6. Why did you choose to apply for your current position within the ChangeHabitats2- Project?

- in my current position I can use my skills in an interesting new field
- I can learn a lot from our project partners
- our project deals with very interesting topics, which I think has a high importance now and will be very important in the future
- I can work in an international team

7. What are your goals to achieve in this position?

- new scientific results
- new skills to learn (mainly RS)
- to cooperate with expert from all parts of Central- and Western-Europe

8. How would you plan to proceed your career after this position?

Like in the past I would like to work as a field ecologist and/or nature conservational manager in the future. Thanks to the knowledge and experiences gained during the project I am planning to have a position in which I can use the lot of new and modern knowledge, and I would like to introduce these techniques either to the practical nature conservation and to the scientific public in Hungary.

9. Which type of knowledge/techniques in the project are new to you?

Before the project I did not really work with remote sensing techniques (ALS, HS). Of course I have heard about it, but I did not have the opportunity to learn about it or use it in practice. Thanks to our project partners I could learn a lot about the theoretical background of the techniques and possibilities for their application, and probably I could suggest some new fields in a practical nature conservation manager point which widened the scope on application possibilities.

10. What are the aspects of your international experience that colleagues in domestic places/in your host institution can learn from?

- knowledge on RS techniques
- widened knowledge on the Natura 2000 system
- improved biologist skills
- experience in working in an international team

11. What are general advantages of international cooperations on the different professions (ecology, engineering etc.) and sectors (industry – academia)?

In my opinion to have the opportunity to work in an international group consisted by different professions is one of the greatest invention in Marie Curie projects. By working in an international team we can "sum up" our knowledge. I think that e.g. the biologists of different nations can learn a lot from each other (I did) as even we have the same strong scientific bases we sometimes have different point of views on the same problem, which allows us to compare and discuss the diverse ideas and have a new creative solution which has all advantages of the individual ideas. On the other hand it is very useful to have conversations between different professions and sectors as sometimes with just reading journals we cannot understand the requirements of the other part. Working in the same team we can learn the point of view of other professions or sectors and can find those points in which the different professions can work together and even help each others work.

12. What have been your greatest success and challenges in your current position?

Success: the field survey methods developed by us, working and linking the RS and field surveys is a viable idea.

Challenges: learning RS techniques, evaluating the biggest field survey campaign in my LIFE.

13 What are the similarities and differences of working in a domestic project team and an international project team?

I think the main difference is that in an international team there are more potential in inventing new techniques ideas, as due to the different scientific background there are much more available and more diverse knowledge.

14 What are the major issues you see in research in your field in Germany?/Austria? Where-ever?

15 In your opinion, what are the emerging issues in international research in your field over the next 5 - 10 years?

Introducing RS techniques to nature conservation issues, developing and understanding restoration techniques, introduction of plant trait databases to nature conservation.

16 How do you cope with the life in the new country (Language, friends, habits, culture, food, administration, weather, any more?)

It is very interesting to see a foreign country from "inside". It is a big adventure to meet with the German culture, history and habits which is sometimes different from the Hungarian ones. But I think the most important cornerstone of that I can enjoy the life in Freiberg is that I have great colleagues and friends in my present workplace (TU-BAF) and in the whole project as well. :)

17. Which parts in your current position will give you – in your view – advantages in your future career?

Definitely the most important part is the ability to apply RS techniques in nature conservation.

18. Which parts of training/learning would you like to have included, but is not in yet? Any ideas?

Project writing and Intellectual Property rights.

19. Which specific trainings would you like to take within the IAPP recruitment or project Lifetime?

Project writing and Intellectual Property rights.

20. Do you have any final comments or observations for young scientists or for the "old guys" in the IAPP Consortium? Or for any other people?

21. Why would you recommend a MC fellowship to your friends?

It is a perfect opportunity to work in an international team, improve your skills in every terms (scientific, language, working in team), have a chance to create something new and important in cooperation with the other experts of the project and last but not least widens the scope even in a scientific way even in one's everyday life.





András Zlinszky

András Zlinszky studied at the Eötvös Loránd University from 2002-2007, specialized in ecology, evolution and systematic, MSc in Biology 2007

2009-2011: Budapest University of Technology: Faculty of Civil Engineering and Geoinformation Expert, MSc as Geoinformation Expert 2011

PhD Programme for Ecology, Conservation Biology and Systematics, thesis is submitted
András has spent many trainings on Conservation Biology, Remote Sensing and Airborne Laser Scanning for vegetation analysis and has attended numerous summer schools in Austria, Germany, Croatia and Finland

András has worked in the Balaton Limnological Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in the summers 2003, 2004, 2006.

Personnel Questionnaire for Recruited ChangeHabitats2-Fellows

1. Please give us a brief overview of your professional career and how you ended up on your current position?

I studied Biology at the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, but I was also interested in Physical Geography. After working for a month as an undergraduate summer intern at the Balaton Limnological Institute, I was offered an MSc thesis topic that involved GIS processing of archive aerial images. I was very interested and started attending to GIS courses in the curriculum for Cartography. My Biology studies focused to ecology and conservation, while my interests broadened to include photogrammetry, satellite navigation, surface evolution and more. Working in cooperation with scientists of the Dept. of Geophysics and Space Science, I successfully finished the MSc and started work at the Balaton Limnological Institute. My research area was wetland vegetation and ecological history, and while organizing an airborne sensor campaign and a summer school, I also came in contact with Airborne Laser Scanning (ALS) and Hyperspectral Imaging. I started a second MSc as a GIS engineer, and processed the (ALS) data from the Lake Balaton flight campaign during a short scholarship to the Institute of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing here at the Technical University of Vienna. I was not expecting to return to IPF half a year later, but I was highly interested to participate in a conservation oriented project involving airborne laser scanning, so when I saw the announcement for my current position, I applied right away.

2. What are your current responsibilities and what are the most challenging and/ or most rewarding aspect(s) of your current position?

My main responsibility is the processing of Airborne Laser Scanning data to provide maps relevant for Natura 2000 reporting. Since I have this double background in both ecology and remote sensing, I also play a role in the internal communication of the project, connecting the different worlds of natural scientists and engineers. As a recruited fellow, I try to help distribute data processing steps among seconded and recruited colleagues. This has many challenging aspects, since I have to try to understand their scientific backgrounds and research interests, and bring these together in a way that benefits the project. However, I very much like working in a team, hacking new methods and evaluating the products together.

3. What are the key qualifications required in/for your position?

I believe the most important qualification in my case is experience with the processing of Laser Scanning data. There is more to this than handling a specific software package: I have to be familiar with flight planning, the sensor process, image classification and statistics to a certain level, and knowledge of scientific literature and the process of publication is also necessary.

My original field of research as a conservation biologist is a secondary qualification, but it is very useful. I have to be able to recognize ecologically relevant features in the point cloud, to gain a good understanding of the study sites during the relatively short field visits, and to know the main questions of conservation biology.

4. How did you learn about the open position in ChangeHabitats2?

I visited the web site of IPF by chance, searching for something completely different, and I only read the job announcements for curiosity. It was five days before the deadline, so I decided to submit the application as fast as I could.

5. Have you heard of Marie Curie actions before you applied for the ChangeHabitats2 position?

Yes, I was closely involved in a Marie Curie Initial Training Network, being the local contact person at the Limnological Institute for the GIONET Marie Curie ITN project. Luckily, I could pass this responsibility on to a colleague, and I still keep in touch with them.

6. Why did you choose to apply for your current position within the ChangeHabitats2- Project?

One of the immediate reasons I considered was that I was very keen to work at IPF, having spent four months there before, which I very much enjoyed. On a broader scope, this project fits exactly into my long-term career goals, as it matches my dedication to both nature conservation and remote sensing. I was also glad to become part of an international and intersectoral team, to gain a deeper understanding of science outside academia.

7. What are your goals to achieve in this position?

All the problems of habitat quality remote sensing can not be solved within the lifetime of this project. My goal is to demonstrate that Airborne Laser Scanning can deliver major parameters of habitat quality with accuracy comparable to field mapping. On the practical side, I hope to participate in setting up a system that can automatically map habitat quality from sensor data, and is robust enough to be adapted to different habitats. Another goal is to deliver some publications that help ecologists come closer to accepting remote sensing as part of their toolkit.

8. How would you plan to proceed your career after this position?

I generally plan to return to the Balaton Limnological Institute after my recruitment is over. The Institute is rapidly developing remote sensing and GIS infrastructure, and there is an increasing demand for up-to-date and accurate ecological maps in support of conservation decisions. I hope to establish a project-funded research group working in this field, with colleagues from both Hungary and abroad. I am also open to entering university education in Hungary, teaching either remote sensing to biologists or vegetation laser scanning to engineers.

9. Which type of knowledge/techniques in the project are new to you?

Although I am a biologist, I was not familiar with Natura 2000 before I joined the project. I am learning a lot from biologist colleagues about the field mapping schemes of various countries. As my previous research was in wetlands, I am also learning about forests and grasslands, and generally habitats affected by agriculture and forestry. As a remote sensing scientist, I am learning a lot about the possible applications and processing techniques for Laser Scanning. Perhaps the most important novelty for me is working in a team: during my previous employment, I was the only fellow of the Institute working with Remote Sensing or GIS and worked basically alone.

10. What are the aspects of your international experience that colleagues in domestic places/in your host institution can learn from?

Since some of our study sites are in Hungary, the project has to deal with Hungarian authorities, where my experience can be useful. I also participated in a workshop where we met some of the end users of Natura 2000. This has provided some experience that helps refine the output of our data processing according to their needs. I have also experienced the process of starting up a research project from scratch with a new idea. I have been involved in finding funding, getting the work done and publishing the results, but have also experienced cases where the first tests have not been successful and the idea has been dropped. This means I am always keen to look into previously untouched research fields for the sake of exploration, which is somewhat different from the approach of the engineer colleagues.

11. What are general advantages of international cooperations on the different professions (ecology, engineering etc.) and sectors (industry – academia)?

A project with an intersectoral and interdisciplinary setup has all it needs to take a problem-oriented approach. A good selection of people with many different backgrounds is a prerequisite for a solution that works. One of the most urging needs in multi-cultural Europe is that we need to speak each other's language, and understand each other's way of thinking. However, the results are then less determined by the paradigm of the team, since the problem is approached from several starting points instead of one.

12. What have been your greatest success and challenges in your current position?

Success: Using Airborne Laser Scanning for vegetation mapping is unconventional, and to apply it for non-forest vegetation has often been considered impossible. During the course of the project, we have published a working example for wetland vegetation, and a

feasibility study for meadows is also showing good preliminary results. Slowly, we are convincing colleagues: ecologists in the project are now asking us for more data!

Challenges: Having a project with many different partners has its own difficulties: we are many people in institutes and companies spread all over Europe, and it is very challenging to focus research efforts of all recruited and seconded fellows in an efficient way for the whole project. Some processing steps depend on the products of other steps, and with this amount of data, it is proving difficult to have everything ready on time.

13. What are the similarities and differences of working in a domestic project team and an international project team?

International project teams are usually set up for the duration of a couple of years, a single project. In our case, the actual “team” changes every month as secondments start and end. Domestic teams can last for decades, with young scientists growing up under the guidance of senior colleagues, much like a family. International teams usually have people selected from a larger pool because they are exactly the right people for the project. National teams have to accept more compromise in this field, typically. Somewhere in between are the long-established international scientific cooperations between institutes, as these continue to form the basis of ongoing projects, with new fellows recruited, but the core team constant.

14. What are the major issues you see in research in your field in Germany?/Austria? Where-ever?

Considering Hungary in general, the scientific community is now undertaking the big step to GIS in the field of conservation ecology. Hungary has always traditionally been in the cutting edge of vegetation mapping, but we have a long way to go in the field of digital processing. I also believe the connection between science and policy is not (even) as close as in the European Union: in most cases, the economy has the last word, regardless of the concerns of science.

In the EU in general, I believe good progress is being made in the field of conservation ecology. There are enthusiastic policymakers who really want to make a difference, and the scientists have to work hard to answer all the questions and to ensure the conservation efforts are well planned. The problem is often that the most well preserved natural areas are in the regions that are economically less well developed, and conservation measures have to be put in place before “development” destroys the habitats.

15. In your opinion, what are the emerging issues in international research in your field over the next 5-10 years?

In laser scanning, I believe the next decade will bring Europe-wide data coverage, and this will be an enormous opportunity for spatial sciences in general. Many countries have already completed their full scan, others have committed to launching such campaigns, and I believe some data will also be collected just for the sake of closing the gaps. Exploiting this dataset will require close cooperation of remote sensing engineers, ecologists, geoscientists and IT experts, and it could bring standardized and reliable knowledge about many issues right on the decisionmaker’s desktop.

In conservation, the great challenge is integrating local economic development with habitat protection. This will require a new direction in agricultural subsidies, an innovative approach to tourism, and more than anything else, a change in consumer mentality, but I believe these things are already under way. If a habitat is to be protected not because somebody in Brussels said so but because the local people see it as a treasure and a resource, then it can be sustained for ever.

16. How do you cope with the life in the new country (Language, friends, habits, culture, food, administration, weather, any more?)

I very much enjoy living in Vienna, it is truly one of the most friendly cities in Europe. I had to touch up my German skills, but everyone is ready to speak English if I need it. I also had to adjust to the way my colleagues manage their work, but this is a great benefit as I think this increases my efficiency as well. Administration requires a lot of time, since I have a family and I also have to get the paperwork done for them, and bureaucracy in Vienna is overloaded with immigrants. I think the difficulty might be more in adjusting back to Hungary once my stay is over.

17. Which parts in your current position will give you – in your view – advantages in your future career?

Having a Marie Curie Fellowship on my CV should be quite prestigious and thus might open up some doors. More importantly, I have gained the experience of working in an interdisciplinary and international team, in one of the most successful remote sensing research groups globally. The conferences and workshops I have been to have broadened my field of view a lot, including now the policy background of conservation in Europe. As a recruited fellow, I was also able to gain insight into some aspects of project management, which should help a lot if I ever get to coordinate a project.

I have seen from the example of my colleagues that it is possible to balance a successful career with a family, to the best benefit of both. I have also gained the experience of mobility, and will continue to keep an eye open for interesting research positions in Europe. I have also learned what my experience is worth on the European job market. I have made many new scientific contacts and am highly motivated to continue working in research.

18. Which parts of training/learning would you like to have included, but is not in yet? Any Ideas?

I think one of the most important problems we all have in research is time management. It is not easy to learn this in a classroom course, but I still believe some sort of training in this field would be beneficial. Communication and negotiation skills are also not part of a typical university curriculum, but are highly necessary in research, especially in such an interdisciplinary field.

19. Which specific trainings would you like to take within the IAPP recruitment or project Lifetime?

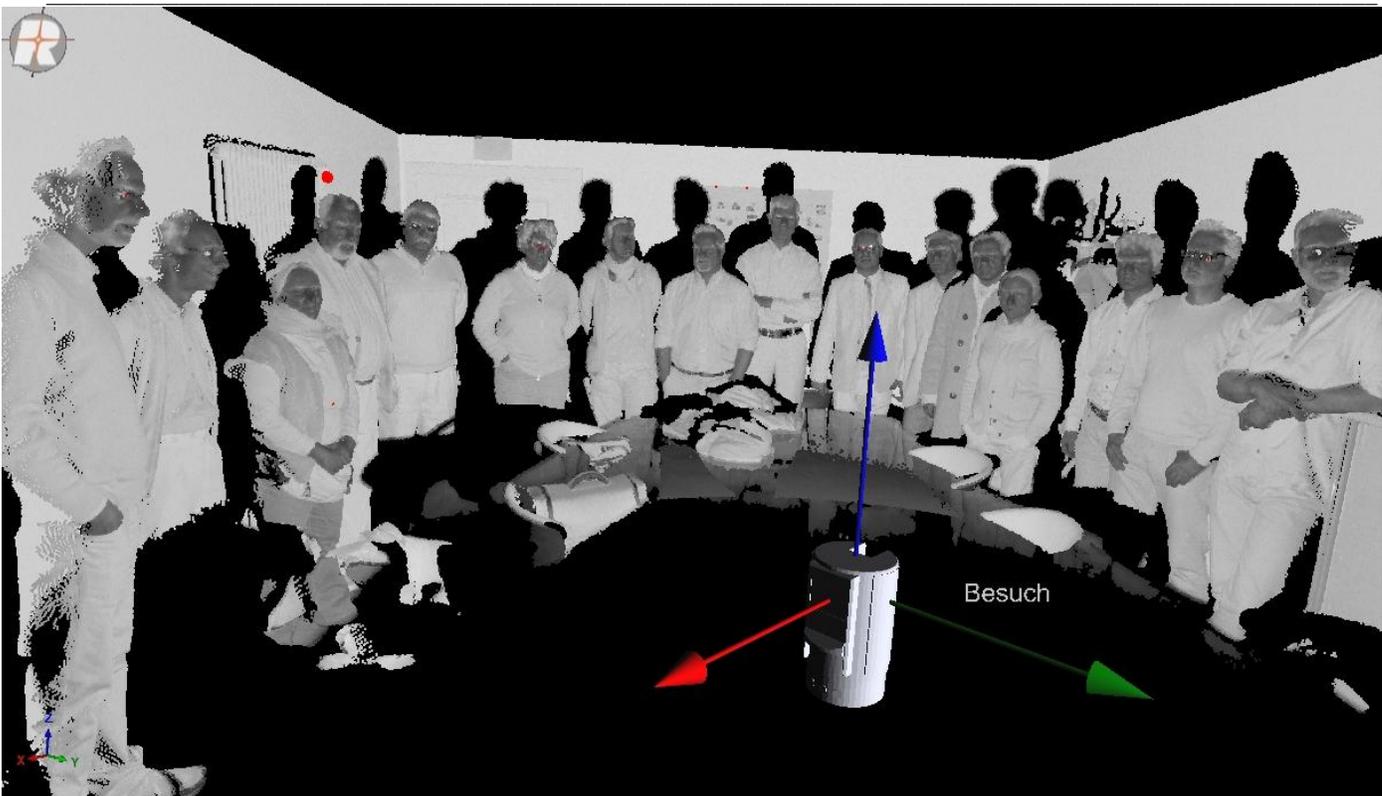
I would be interested to visit some more summer schools in the field of conservation biology, to get more up-to-date with this discipline, and especially the field aspects of it. While remote sensing is a hot topic in science and such workshops are well funded and frequent, conservation biology and ecology are less fashionable and therefore it is more difficult to find the right training

20. Do you have any final comments or observations for young scientists or for the “old guys” in the IAPP Consortium? Or for any other people?

I would like to thank both my young colleagues and the senior project partners for working together in the consortium. I am learning a lot and also very much enjoying the way we continue to open new horizons for each other. I would like to encourage both remote sensing and conservation scientists to take communication in the industry sector as an example: it is very important to move from the technical language and point of view of our scientific fields, and approach our potential “customers” with a message they can understand.

21. Why would you recommend a MC fellowship to your friends?

I think a Marie Curie fellowship is a great way to boost your career and get a motivation that lasts long beyond the project. Experiencing the support of the EU and the excitement of a project team will increase your self-consciousness as a researcher, and open you towards new scientific and career perspectives. Whichever stage of your scientific career and your personal life you may be at, international mobility for a couple of years will benefit you on the long term.



General Assembly February 14/15, 2013 in Horn
Host: RIEGL Research Forschungsgesellschaft
Ing. Katrl-Prokschgasse 4, 3580 Horn, Austria

Thank you very much for your kind hospitality !