

## “XI International Geography Olympiad (iGeo Kraków)”

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On 12–18 August 2014 the Institute of Geography at the Pedagogical University in Krakow held 11th edition of the International Geographical Olympiad (iGeo) organized under the auspices of the International Geographical Union (IGU). Poland has therefore become the first country to host twice the best young geographers (in 2002 the International Olympiad was held in Gdynia).

The organizers of the 11th International Geographical Olympiad was the Chief Committee of Geographic Olympiad, Polish Geographical Society and the Institute of Geography of the Pedagogical University of Cracow, with the financial support of the Ministry of Education and partners and sponsors. The Olympiad was held under the honorary patronage of the Mayor of the City of Krakow and the Rector of the Pedagogical University.

Each team participating in the International Olympiad consisted of four players aged 16–19 who are selected during the national geographical Olympiads, and two tutors, one of which also served as a jury member of the International Geographical Olympiad.

The Olympiad was attended by a record number of as many as 36 national teams - from Australia, Belgium, Belarus, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, Montenegro, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, the Netherlands, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macau, Mexico, Mongolia, Nigeria, Germany, New Zealand, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, the United States, Taiwan, Turkey, Hungary and the United Kingdom. The Olympiad was also attended by observers from the countries which wish to join the ranks of the competing teams in the future (Argentina, Armenia, Switzerland). In previous years, the young geographers Olympiad competition was held in Cologne (2012) and Kyoto (2013).

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planet and to confront their theoretical geographical knowledge against reality. Olympic competitions consist of three phases: a written response test, fieldwork and multi-media test.

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For example, competition in the fieldwork was based on an independent collection of geographic data in a particular area, then participants aggregated, organized and stored data on a faircopy. Participants worked in national teams (of 4 people) to standardize the information collected together and apply to the individual sheets at the end of the task. Each team had to collect data on the forms of activity of the residents of Krakow spending time in Błonia and Jordan Park. The next step of the fieldwork was to create the map of activity zones of residents of Krakow in Błonia and Jordan Park as well as to draft the project of public buildings in the areas of sports facilities currently closed. Fieldwork participants were prepared a lecture on “Cities ‘public spaces’ associated with the issue of public space in cities around the world. An important part of the lecture was to define public space and examples of its various classifications. In a further step, students could get acquainted with the elements of the planning and evaluation of public spaces and green areas in cities in terms of both historical and current forms of green areas in cities.

However, the activity of the students at the Olympiad is not limited to the competition themselves. Competitors prepare and show the “cultural presentation” of their own country, which was held under the slogan “Let’s experience cultural diversity together”. Main objectives of the cultural evening was to broaden the knowledge of students about cultural diversities of the countries, the impact of cultural heritage on

contemporary picture of socio-economic space in different regions of the world, and also to exchange individual experiences of young people and teachers about cultural varieties and integration of the participants through a common dancing, singing and discussion. An important aspect was to deepen the knowledge of participants in the diversity and richness of Polish cultural heritage.

Olympic teams also prepared a scientific poster on issues related to the Conference of the International Geographical Union, and the competition ran under the slogan "Challenges of Contemporary Urban Areas" and concerned the country of participants. Posters were publicly presented and evaluated by all the participants to the Olympiad.

Completion of the Olympiad and gold medals ceremony was held during the opening ceremony of the International Geographical Union conference at the Collegium Maximum of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow.

One of the goals that put the organizers of the International Geographical Olympiad was, next to the efficient organization of the student competition, to familiarize them with the cultural richness of Malopolska region, with its capital - Kraków, the city - host the Olympiad. During their stay in Krakow, the students together with their teachers and guides visited Krakow Old Town exploring its medieval, as well as more recent history. Moreover, they had the opportunity to visit the old Jewish district - Kazimierz, the Wieliczka Salt Mine, a former concentration camp at Auschwitz, and they also took part in a day-long trip to the Pieniny mountains, combined with the Dunajec River flow, sightseeing of Szczawnica spa as well as riding a bike and taking part in the highlanders' feast.

For example, in a very fashionable nowadays Krakow's Kazimierz, which used to be a separate city, the participants learned the history of the Jewish community in Krakow (visited the old synagogue and cemetery), and were introduced to the important issue of the martyrdom of the Jewish people, whose symbol is a factory of Oscar Schindler. Next to the important and difficult at the same time the history of Kazimierz during the Second World War, the students were also familiar with the local Jewish culture in the culinary aspect. The entire group of

Olympians were invited to one of the largest in Krakow and the most famous Jewish restaurant in Krakow - Ariel restaurants on the Szeroka street. In addition to tasting the traditional Jewish cuisine, a visit to the restaurant was graced by the performances of the traditional Jewish bands, featuring klezmer live music.

Some participants of the Olympiad took part in the coach trip around Poland. On the way Krakow-Czestochowa-Toruń a geodiversity of upland and lowland regions was shown on the example of Polish western part of the Silesian-Cracow Upland, Południowomazowiecka lowland with particular emphasis on brown coal mine in Belchatow and the city of Lodz. The next stage of trip from Torun to Gdansk was full of symbols inscribed on the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site. The historic Torun we experienced a plexus of big science - Copernicus Museum and the Astronomical Observatory of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Basements, the history stored in a magnificent Gothic architecture and Toruń gingerbread tradition. Rounding out the historical subject was a visit to the castle of Teutonic Knights in Malbork.

Gdańsk captivated the Olympians by the magnificence of the buildings of the golden period in the history of the city and the amber street - ulica Mariacka. Sopot will be associated as a seaside resort with a pier, beach and summer recreation, and Gdynia as a city of new opportunities. Varied landscapes of the coastal area have been the subject of much debate of young geographers, as well as natural factors and processes that shaped it: young glacial (land, water, glacial accumulation, erosion), coastal sandbars (sea, accumulation, dunes, monadnocks aeolian, ripple marks - as the effect of different kinds of wind activity); coastal cliffs - abrasion. The last stage led tours from Gdansk to Warsaw. In Warsaw the Olympians got to know the history of the city and its attractions within the historic Old Town - Polish another object on the UNESCO World Heritage.

With extremely rich in additional tours and attractions the program of the Olympiad, Olympic rivalry fortunately did not become the only accent that will leave a lasting memory of young geographers from around the world who participated in this unique trip to the Pedagogical University of Cracow and Krakow city.

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