

TOP NEWS

IEC's global priorities



In the framework of its global activities, IEC emphasizes the importance of its request to be recognized as a Participating Organization to the “Group on Earth Observations” (GEO/UN), which will be discussed in the next plenary meeting of GEO. The initiative to establish a European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) entitled “INEU-Innovative Europe” is also considered of great importance. Furthermore, two other international partnerships with the “World Water Fund” and the “Social Network for Green Energy” are under discussion.

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Digital convergence in Balkans



The need for a holistic view of the Earth's system was pointed by Ms Barbara Ryan, Secretarial Director of the Intergovernmental Group on Earth Observations (GEO/UN) during the international conference organized by IEC on 22 October, in Athens. GEO globally collects geo-referenced data in order to be used towards a solution to social problems such as climate change or natural disasters.

These data are important to be communicated to the general public for scientific observations to be taken into account when formulating policies in tackling social problems of local communities. Whatever happens at international, regional and local level should be incorporated into an integrated whole with cooperation of governments, agencies and private sector. In this framework, the IEC's contribution on the digital convergence in the Balkans along the lines of GEO is a valuable regional initiative that should be encouraged. It is worth noting that IEC is already a **Forest Fire Monitoring Center for the Balkan region**, under the auspices of the United Nations and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. (click [here](#) to visit the video gallery)

International Board in action



The purpose and mode of action of IEC's **International Board** were presented by its Chairman, Prof. Crisman, during a press conference which was held before the inaugural meeting of the Board on 21 October in Athens. The reciprocal relationship that should exist between scientific knowledge and the needs of the local community was particularly noted. In this respect, the role of IEC as a catalyst contributes to the transfer of knowledge from the research community - in particular, cooperating universities and institutions in Greece and internationally- to the end user, with a single recipient: the citizen. The recommendation of the Board, with members from the Balkan region, Europe and the U.S.A., contributes to this target enabling activity from local, to national, inter-regional and ultimately international level. Through innovative interdisciplinary approaches the International Board will seek solutions to the needs of users. Prof. Crisman also noted that IEC's main role is to create, propose and apply innovative management approaches and not exercise any authority already exercised and belongs to others.

International Conference "Governance and Innovation: supporting sustainable development, management and protection of natural resources"



Commonplace in the International Conference "Governance and innovation: supporting sustainable development, management and protection of natural resources", which was organized by the IEC on 22 October, at Eugenides Foundation in Athens, was the need for convergence and synergy between public and private sector at national and international level in order to achieve the sustainable development and a better life quality for the citizens. Greek and foreign speakers agreed that the global crisis should be a challenge for a cross-sectoral and inter-regional cooperation through innovative approaches and technologies and integrated solutions, harmonized with European and global policies to achieve both rational management and protection of natural resources, and economic recovery. Successful examples of the application of this new governance model were presented by distinguished scientists and representatives of institutions and organizations from Greece, the Balkan region, the Europe and the U.S., who cooperate with the Interbalkan Environment Center as part of this joint effort.

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Meetings-Events

- A conference entitled "Common support structures for the quality monitoring of water resources and the protection of public health" will be held in Ohrid on December, 13. The conference aims at promoting the "SafeWet" project (IPA Cross-border programme "Greece-The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2007-2013").
- The Scientific Coordinator of IEC, Prof. George Zalidis, visited last week the Italian Region of Piemonte to discuss particular thematic priorities in the framework of the establishment of the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC).
- Silver environmental award will be given to IEC for the RiverAlert programme in the context of the Environmental Awards 2014 for best practices, procedures or initiatives to environmental protection and sustainability. The awards will be given in a special ceremony which will be held on December 18, in Athens. After IEC's proposal, an honorary award will be also given to Prof. Stella Thomas recognizing her international actions regarding sustainable water management.
- Preparations continue for the GEO-X Plenary and the 2014 GEO Ministerial Summit to be held 12-17 January in Geneva, Switzerland. The GEO-X Plenary will be held on Wednesday 15 January and Thursday 16 January and the Ministerial Summit will occur on Friday 17 January. The main objective of the Ministerial Summit will be to approve a renewed mandate for GEO through 2025 and to endorse a number of high-level recommendations - in a Ministerial Declaration - that will guide the development of a detailed Implementation Plan.
- The 5th GEOBIA Conference will be held in Thessaloniki, Greece 21-24 May, 2014. The Conference is organized by the Laboratory of Forest Management and Remote Sensing-Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), in collaboration with the Interbalkan Environment Centre, the Laboratory of Remote Sensing and GIS-AUTH, the Laboratory of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing- and the Laboratory of Forest Aerial Photography Remote Sensing, Democritus University of Thrace.

