



Highlights and impacts of the International Year of Planet Earth in Hungary

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IYPE activities of various geo-science associations, universities, research institutes and private companies in Hungary (www.foldev.hu) have been successfully coordinated by the Hungarian National Committee, which was established by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the UNESCO- and the IUGS National Committees. The National Launch Event (April 17, 2008) was followed with a four-days long “Earth Science Fair” at the Hungarian Natural History Museum in Budapest. The IYPE was even briefly reviewed in the Hungarian Parliament. The Science Festival, organized annually by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, in 2008 had a special IYPE-inspired slogan: “Science for the Habitable Earth”, where lectures were held about the modern content of the Greek Classical Elements (“earth”, “water”, “air” and “fire”, that is energy) and about the Humanity. In 2008/2009 numerous publications (including the Hungarian version of the IYPE booklet series, under the title GEO-FIFIKA, the Természet Világa special issue in February 2009, the IYPE number of Földrajzi Közlemények (Geographical Communications), and the “Geological Map of Hungary for Tourists” were produced. Throughout the country, symposia (e.g. HUNGE 2008, ELGI 100, MÁFI 140, Geotourism Symposium in October 2009), several contests (Hungarian Television “Delta”, Élet és Tudomány on the occasion of the UN year, and the annual contests starting in 2007 at Miskolc University), film shows (e.g., the movie “Another Planet”) and other performances (e.g. End of the Ice Age in Hungarian Natural History Museum) were organized, with modest but increasing media coverage. The worldwide premier of the Planet Earth TV took place in Hungary, on the occasion of the IAGA 11th Scientific Assembly (August 23-30, 2009, www.iaga2009sopron.hu).

One of our conferences (“Earth and Heaven – Geology and Theology”) pointed out that there should be no conflict between science and religion, either in the fields of Earth’s history or evolution. Science (and only science) is able to give reliable knowledge how Nature works, and the investigation of the “ultimate Why” (i.e. the “Primordial Cause”) should be left to religions and philosophy. At the same time, there are antagonistic conflicts between science and pseudo-science, and also between religions and pseudo-religions.

Among the scientific programmes the activity of Geological Institute of Hungary in the OneGeology initiative should be at first mentioned.

In 2007/2008, among the main environmental challenges, it was exclusively the so-called “global warming” in the focal point of public interest in Hungary. By now, the importance of soil, groundwater and energy have been also recognized, largely (or at least partly) due to IYPE. This is perhaps the largest result of the IYPE in Hungary.