

[\[IGU-WPM Home\]](#)

International Geographical Union Commission on Political Geography

NEWSLETTER 3 (June 2004)
Ed. by Vladimir Kolossov

IGU Commission on Political Geography, 2000-2004

Chair: Professor Vladimir Kolossov, Institute of Geography, Russian Academy of Sciences, Staromonetny per. 29, 109017 Moscow, Russia. Email: vladk@online.ru

Vice-Chair: Professor André-Louis Sanguin, Institute of Geography, University of Paris-Sorbonne, 191 rue Saint-Jacques, 75005 Paris, France. Email: alsanguin@wanadoo.fr

Webmaster : Asst. Prof. Carl T.Dahlman, Department of Geography, University of South Carolina, Columbia SC 29208, USA. E-mail : dahlman@sc.edu

Steering Committee:

- Anthony Christopher, Department of Geography, University of Port Elizabeth, P.O.Box 1600, 6000 Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Email: ggaajc@upe.ac.za
 - Gertjan Dijkink, Institute of Social Geography, University of Amsterdam, Nieuwe Prinsengracht 130, 1018 VZ Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Email: G.J.W..Dijkink@frw.uva.nl
 - Anton Gosar, Dean, Faculty of Humanities, University of Primorska, Glagoljaska 8, 6000 Koper, Slovenia. Email: Anton.Gosar@guest.arnes.si
 - Swarnjit Mehta, Department of Geography, Panjab University, RESI, F-11 P.U.C. Sector 14, 160014 Chandigarh, India. Email: mehtas@pu.ac.in
 - David Newman, Department of Geography and Department of Politics and Government, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, P.O.Box 653, 84105 Beer Sheva, Israel. Email: newman@bgumail.bgu.ac.il
 - Marc-Louis Ropivia, Department of Geography, Omar-Bongo University, Libreville, Gabon. Email: mropivia@yahoo.fr
 - Dennis Rumley, School of Social and Cultural Studies, Department of Geography, University of Western Australia, Nedlands WA 6907, Australia. Email: drum@arts.uwa.edu.au
 - Lynn Staeheli, Institute of Behavioral Science, University of Colorado, P.O. Box 0487, Boulder CO 80309, USA. Email: lynner@colorado.edu
-

I – Chairman's Column

Dear friends and colleagues,

The fifth four-years mandate of our Commission is close to its end. Though the first political-geographical unit (a study group) was created in IGU on the initiative of a group of British and American geographers as early as in 1984, under the present name the Commission exists since 2000. Since the 29th IGC in Korea, the Commission organized 11 meetings, including the conference scheduled in early June 2004 in Slovenia and the workshop before the 30th IGC planned in Durham (UK) and a number of sessions at the main Congress. Most of them result in publication of a monograph, proceedings or special issues of academic journals.

All forms of regionalism and borders remain in the focus of social sciences, and political

geography can serve a good link not only between geography and political science, but also with sociology, psychology, international relations, etc. In all these disciplines there are branches which are close to political geography. At the same time, political geography seems to have already proved that it is a separate discipline having its own field and object – geographical place. Geopolitical narratives and discourses of power being developed under the influence of geopolitical culture play a key role. The gap between the content and methods of analysis of the international and the domestic situation is narrowing. World “macro-regions” (such as “North”, “Mediterranean”, and many others) are social constructs built by political elites. They consist of territories whose borders do not match boundaries of existing political units but serve a sign that new units are being shaped under the impact of certain factors. The creation of such regions result from globalization of economy and culture. Representations about them are related with popular images of neighbors and, therefore, important for “internal” territorial identities because they.

This issue is related with the explanation of the “true” world political map showing also existing *de facto* non-recognized and ephemeral states. Some states which failed on one era have been subject to resurrection in another, suggesting a high degree of stability in the state system. The formation of new spaces does not mean, however, that the states are not deeply implicated in processes of globalisation: the world’s mosaic is being created by interaction between old and new actors.

The Commission would like to extend its mandate for 2004-2008. Political geography is now a separate important geographical discipline, relevant for the development of geographical science as a whole and approaching academic studies to social practice. Political geography is taught in a lot of universities throughout the world, and their number is increasing each year, in particular, in East-Central Europe and in Asia. There exist at least three specialized international academic journals in this field. Though most (and the strongest) political geographers are concentrated in English-speaking countries, political-geographical studies are presently conducted, as the membership in the Commission proves, at least, in 51 countries. The Commission has 183 active members (except those who participated in 2001-2003 in only one or two meetings), including 8 from Africa, 8 from Latin America, 35 from North America, 20 from Asia, 4 from Australia and 109 from Europe. The leading countries are USA (30 members), France and UK (15 members from each), Poland (11) and Italy (10).

Its main objective for next four years will be to continue the study of main theoretical issues of political geography as a fundamental geographical discipline (scale, place, post-modernity, etc.), the relationships between the new geopolitical world order and other formal and informal levels of the political-territorial organization of society, including:

- 1/ post-modern geopolitics and political geography: the main notions and methods, common and particular trends;
 - 2/ spatial methods in political geography;
 - 3/ the dynamic of the relationships in the triade “identity-territory-boundaries” under the influence of globalization;
 - 4/ new tendencies in the crisis of the Westphalian system;
 - 5/ networking and the appearance of new global actors;
 - 6/ cross-border cooperation as a condition of sustainable development: environmental, economic, social, cultural and political factors;
 - 7/ revisiting electoral geography and developing comparative approaches;
- regional political geography and geopolitics (large urban agglomerations and world cities, coastal areas, regions of ethnic tensions and of international crisis, etc.).

Vladimir Kolossov, Chair

II - Future Events Sponsored by the Commission

1. International Conference “Globalized Europe”. Koper - Capodistria, Slovenia, June 3-5, 2003. Organizer: Anton Gosar. Preliminary programme:

June 2, 2004. Koper - Capodistria (University of Primorska)
 10:30 - 14:30 Workshops A and B. Europe Globalized, Globalized Europe
 15:00 – 18:30 Workshop C: Migration, Ethnicity and Demography

June 3, 2004. Koper - Capodistria
 9:00 - 12:30 Workshop D: European Borders, Cross-Border Co-operation
 15:00 – 18:30 Workshop E: European Challenges
 15:00 – 18:30 Workshop F: European Challenges: Romania

June 4, 2004
 8:00 – 20:00 Excursion: Crossing the Schengen Border (Anton Gosar, Mladen Klemencic). *Koper-Capodistria – Brioni Islands – Pula-Pola – Koper-Capodistria* (with the assistance of the Croatian Geographical Society)

June 5, 2004
 9:00 - 12:00 Workshop G: European Democracy: South-East Europe
 12:00 – 13:00 Plenary Session: Concluding Remarks, Proceedings, Press Conference.

2. XXX International Geographical Congress “ One Earth - Many Worlds ”, Glasgow, UK, 15-22 August 2004.

A - *Pre-Congress Workshop* of the Commission at the University of Durham: **“Ordering the World: Political Geographies of War and Peace”**. 12-15 August, 2004. Organizer: Luiza Bialasiewicz, Department of Geography, University of Durham, South Road, Durham, DH1 3LE, UK. E-mail: IGU-durham@dur.ac.uk. Preliminary Programme:

August 13th
 9:00 – 10:30 Session 1: Ordering the world: new/ old territorialisations
 11:00 – 12:30 Session 2: The political geography of war and peace I
 14:00 – 15:30 Session 3: Panel discussion: Feminist perspectives on political geography (session co-sponsored with the IGU Commission on Gender and Geography). Chair and moderator: Lynn Staeheli (University of Colorado, Boulder)
 16:00 – 17:30 Plenary lecture: Ray Hudson (University of Durham)

August 14th
 9:00 – 10:30 Session 4: Border security in a changing world.
 11:00 – 12:30 Session 5: Trans-national/ trans-boundary spaces
 (Session co-sponsored with the IGU Commission on Gender and Geography).
 14:00 – 15:30 Session 6: Geographies of surveillance and control in the ‘borderless’ world.
 16:00 – 17:30 Closing panel debate: The political geography of war and peace II. Chair and moderator: Colin Flint (Pennsylvania State University)

August 15th
 9:00 - Departure for Glasgow. En-route field visit co-organized with the IGU Commission on Gender and Geography

B- *At the main Congress in Glasgow*: three joint sessions (12 time units of 80 minutes each) co-sponsored with the Commissions on Geography and Public Policy and on Evolving Issues of Geographical Marginality. The Commission on Political Geography is responsible for the sessions:

- ° States in a Stateless World
- ° Borders in a Borderless World
- ° Territory in a Deterritorialized World

Organizers: Vladimir Kolossov (vladk@online.ru) and David Newman (newman@bgumail.bgu.ac.il)

3. The Second International conference “Mountain Countries: Population, Geopolitics, GIS Monitoring”. Organized by the IGU Commission on Political Geography, Stavropol State University, Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Stavropol - Dombai, Russia, 12-17 September 2005. The main objective of the conference is an interdisciplinary analysis of the relationship between demographic shifts, the socio-economic dynamics and political situation in mountain regions. A special attention will be paid to comparative studies of areas of ethnic conflicts and, in particular, to Caucasus, and to the use of GIS methods in monitoring and the analysis of the situation in these territories. The Conference is held, first, in the development of ideas and in continuation of discussions at the first Conference organized under the same name in Stavropol exactly four years before. Respectively, the Second Conference is organized precisely in four years after the events of 9/11, which dramatically changed the geopolitical situation in the world and in many regions, including Caucasus and the Balkans. Second, taking into account that there are very few integral studies of mountain regions separated by political boundaries, the Conference it focuses on international comparative studies. Third, the Conference is destined to stimulate such studies in commemorating the 30th anniversary of the first international project in this field, “Alps – Caucasus” (USSR – France). It is planned to discuss the following questions.

Part 1. Demographic and socio-economic processes and geopolitical shifts in mountain regions.

- 1/ Demographic potential of mountains and plains.
- 2/ Migrations as a system factor of the socio-political development.
- 3/ Town in mountains: population, political role and perspectives. Specific problems of the countryside.
- 4/ Place of mountain regions in national economic and political systems.
- 5/ Adaptation of mountain regions to processes of globalisation.
- 6/ Territorial identities and state building: national and regional levels.
- 7/ Assessment of the risk of ethnic conflicts assessment and ways to avoid them.
- 8/ Political and administrative borders: barriers and connecting lines between mountains and plains.
- 9/ International and regional political problems of environment and natural resources.
- 10/ Tourism: a panacea for mountain regions?
- 11/ GIS monitoring and transition to sustainable development in mountain areas.

Part 2. Comparative studies of Caucasus and other mountain regions under contemporary geopolitical conditions.

- 1/ Mountain regions on the world and the European geopolitical map.
- 2/ Toward the 30th anniversary of the international project “Alps – Caucasus”: evolution of settlement systems, economy and social structures.
- 3/ International and regional consequences of the conflict in Chechnia.
- 4/ Depopulation of mountains, a new ethno-cultural diversity of piedmont and political threats: international comparisons (Caucasus, Balkans and other mountain regions).
- 5/ Economic interaction of mountains and plains.
- 6/ Geopolitical situation in Caucasus in four years after 9/11.

Round table. Balkans – Caucasus: Lessons for the Future.

Participants are invited for a three-days excursion to the Republic of Karachevo-Cherkessia. In its capital, Cherkessk, they will be received by its leadership and discuss its ethno-political and economic problems. On the way, they will visit a Cosack village (stanitsa), a new private farm and an agro-industrial plant created in the post-Soviet time. Then they will go to Dombai – one of the best and most well-known high mountain resorts in the former USSR, which is situated in the Teberda natural reserve. They will go up to a glacier at the altitude of 3000 m and admire a mountain lake. The excursion will end at the airport of Mineralnye Vody (Mineral Waters).

The deadline for applications is 31 January 2005. Abstracts should be submitted to both organizers before 15 April 2005. The fee will include the transfers to and from the airports, the materials of the

conference and the full cost of the excursion; it is estimated in 150-180 dollars. The air fare from Moscow to Stavropol and from Mineralnye Vody to Moscow is about 260 dollars.

Organizers:

- Professor Vitaly Belozerov, vice-rector of Stavropol State University. Puchkin str., 1, Stavropol 355009, Russia. Tel. 7 (8652) 35-85-10 . Fax 7 (8652) 35-40-33. E-mail: vsbelozerov@yandex.ru
- Professor Vladimir Kolossov, Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Staromonetny per., 29, Moscow 119017, Russia. Tel. 7 (095) 959-00-29 . Fax 7 (095) 959-00-33. E-mail: vladk@online.ru

III - Other Future Events

1 – The 9th Lodz Political Geography International Conference “The Role of Borderlands in United Europe”. Wigry (Poland) and Vistitis (Lithuania), September 15-17, 2004. The organizers intend to discuss the following problems:

- 1/ Borderlands as areas stimulating integration processes
- 2/ Role of borderlands in the formation of European Union
- 3/ Eastern borderland of the European Union before and after its extension of May 2004
- 4/ Polish eastern fringe after the extension of the European Union
- 5/ Eastern policy of the European Union
- 6/ Role of inner (ethnic, religious, cultural) borderlands in contemporary integration processes

The theme of the conference is connected with its location as, traditionally, conferences organized by the Department of Political Geography at University of Lodz (Poland). Therefore, the meeting will be held at Wigry and Vistitis on both sides of the Polish-Lithuanian border in a new borderland at the convergence of Polish, Russian and Lithuanian borders.

The participants are kindly requested to send a A4 sized one page's abstract till April 30th, 2004. All papers presented at the conference and accepted by editors will be published in the next volume of *Region and Regionalism* n° 7. The conference fee is €300. Organizers: Prof. Marek Koter and Marek Sobczynski (University of Lodz), prof. Krystian Heffner (Silesian Institute in Opole), prof. Ricardas Baubinas (University of Vilnius). E-mail: geopol@geo.uni.lodz.pl

IV - Past Events Sponsored by the Commission

1. International Conference “Urban Geopolitics” Libreville (Gabon), May 6-10, 2003.

Organizers: Omar Bongo University, Libreville (Gabon) and University of Metz (France) in collaboration with University of Ottawa (Canada) and University Joseph-Fourier, Grenoble (France). The participants discussed, first, the role of geography in theory and practice of urban policy, second, political developments in urban agglomerations in different parts of the world. Third, they considered the following concrete problems: 1) municipal reforms and geopolitical issues in the administrative-territorial division of urban areas; 2) urban environment: geopolitical issues of resources and risks; 3) local governments, actors and citizens: urban conflicts and balance of forces; 4) territorial planning and infrastructure: options and strategies; 5) identity and competitiveness of large cities in the world political play; 6) images and representations: the construction of symbolic space.

It was shown that urban space was a result of numerous political, economic and cultural decisions and of the activity of more or less informed and mobilized citizens. Divergent and conflictual interests most often guide decision-makers. The result of urban conflicts depends on unequal political and economic power of actors. They develop different strategies in order to appropriate, occupy, control and defend the territory and to influence the provision and the localization of services and urban policy.

2. International Conference “Political Geography and Geopolitics: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow”. Moscow, June 1-7, 2003. Organizers: Vladimir Kolossov and Vladimir Gorbanyov. About 100 participants from 17 countries (Belgium, Brazil, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Iran, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, UK and USA) attended the conference. They submitted 57 papers, most of which will be published in the proceedings. Alexei Meshkov, Russia’s Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, offered a lecture. Participants were invited to a scientific excursion in Moscow and to a two-days excursion to Yaroslavl. The conference focused on:

- 1/ post-modernist developments in the theory of political geography and geopolitics;
- 2/ studies of the relationship between “high” and “low” geopolitics with the use of public opinion polls and of political discourse analysis;
- 3/ role of maps and atlases in the shaping of popular geopolitical representations;
- 4/ influence of mass media on geopolitical images;
- 5/ crisis of the Westphalian system and new meanings of center and periphery in geographical analysis under the conditions of globalization;
- 6/ evolution of identity at different territorial levels;
- 7/ dilemma “security – cooperation” in border policy.
- 8/ A round table devoted to geopolitical shifts provoked by the war in Iraq and their place in national geopolitical visions (the cases of the US, Russia and Israel) was organized.

The conference clearly demonstrated the tendency toward further theoretical and methodological rapprochement between political geography geopolitics and other social disciplines (for instance, sociology and political psychology): the dynamic of international relations is to a large extent determined by the domestic situation in each state, and vice versa. It was shown that Central and East European countries were facing challenges of de-securitization in many fields of their external relations and, in particular, border policy. These challenges are closely related with changes in territorial identities. An analysis of the experience of three belts of Euroregions in Europe (between old EU members, old and new members, and between new members and third states) reveals weaknesses of such that have been recently created only recently and the conditions of their success. Combination of geographic and sociological methods with an analysis of political discourse allows evaluating the gap between geopolitical concept developed by politicians and experts, and popular geopolitical representations – between illusions and reality.

3. The Third International Conference on Political Geography "Central and Eastern Europe Before Enlargement of European Union and NATO", Gdansk - Hel, Poland, September 1-3, 2003. Organizers: Jan Wendt (Poland) and Alexandru Ilies (Romania). About 50 participants coming from Central-European countries submitted to the conference 37 papers. They were focused on:

- 1/ concept of territorial-political organization of society as the basis of political geography;
- 2/ place of geopolitics, geostrategy and political geography among social sciences;
- 3/ processes of territorial integration and disintegration in Central and South-Eastern Europe before the EU enlargement;
- 4/ security in Central and South-Eastern Europe after the enlargement of NATO and in the context of the wars against terrorism;
- 5/ favourable factors and obstacles for the diffusion of democracy in the region;

- 6/ cross-border policy and cooperation in Euroregions in Central, South East and East Europe.
 7/ A special session was devoted to the evolution of the geopolitical situation of Kaliningrad region.
-

V - Other Past Events

1. IGU Regional Conference “The interaction of society and environment under the conditions of global and regional changes”. Organized by Russian National Committee of Geographers, Russian Geographical Society, Institute of Geography, Moscow, and Institute of Water and Environmental Problems of Russian Academy of Sciences, Barnaul, Department of Geography, Moscow State University, and Altai State University. Moscow – Barnaul, 18-29 July 2003.

The conference was attended by more than 300 scholars, including about 200 participants from foreign countries. They were greeted by IGU President Ann Buttner and past-President Bruno Messerly, who submitted presentations at plenary sessions. Participants were invited to two three-days field excursions to Teletskoe lake and to a glacier in Altai mountains. An important part of presentations at the section of human geography was devoted to political-geographical problems, especially to political aspects of sustainable development. In particular, L. Korytny (Russia) considered the role of river basins as integral social and political systems and a basis of geographical studies. It allows working out new principles of territorial administration and the management of environmental problems, and contributes to a better understanding of the reasons of a great number of international conflicts. A. Fetisov (Russia) showed how rich natural resources could slow down the socio-economic and political development of a country. P. Baklanov (Russia) studied factors of territorial integration and disintegration in North-East Eurasia. S. Davgun (USA) analyzed the impact of regional and global forces on sustainable development of a typical small town in the north of the US (Bemidji, Minnesota). M. Lawrence, E. Freeman, C. Christofferson from the US and J. Mutuku Kiilu from Kenya showed what an expensive social price the Kenyan society paid for the world leading positions of their country in the share of natural reserves and parks in the total national territory. It was achieved due to the forced ousting of hundreds of thousands of people from new natural reserves to peripheral arid lands settled by other ethnic groups. As a result, a large part of the country suffers from social pathologies which are incompatible with the objectives of sustainable development – increasing poverty and risk of ethnic conflicts, high pressure on environment in the areas of migrations, etc.

VI - New Titles in Political Geography

ANDERSON, Ewan W., *International Boundaries: A Geopolitical Atlas*, London, Routledge, 2003.

BEREZIN, Mabel & Martin SCHAIN (Eds.), *Europe Without Borders: Remapping Territory, Citizenship and Identity in a Transnational Age*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.

BOUGAREL, Xavier & Nathalie CLAYER, *Le Nouvel Islam balkanique. Les Musulmans, acteurs du post-communisme 1990-2000*, Paris, Maisonneuve & Larose, 2001 (in French).

GOSSIAUX, Jean-François, *Pouvoirs ethniques dans les Balkans*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 2002 (in French).

ILIES, Alexandru & Jan WENDT (Eds.), *Europe Between Millenniums. Political-Geographical Studies*, Oradea, Editura Universitatii din Oradea, 2003, 286 pages.

OTOK, Stanislaw, *Geografia Polityczna*, Warsaw, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2003 (in Polish).

PRESTON, Zoë, *The Crystallization of the Iraqi State. Geopolitical Function and Form*, Berne, Peter Lang, 2003, 336 pages.

RICHARD Yann & Andre-Louis SANGUIN (Eds). *L'Europe de l'Est quinze ans après la chute du Mur. Des pays baltes à l'ex-Yougoslavie*, Paris, Editions L'Harmattan, 2004, 332 pages (in French).

SANGUIN, Andre-Louis & GAUNARD-ANDERSON, Marie-France (Eds). *Entre Espace Schengen et élargissement à l'Est : les recompositions territoriales de l'Union Européenne*. Mosella, 2002, vol. 27, n° 3-4, 356 pages (in French).

STAEHELI, Lynn A., DOWLER, Lorrain & Doris WASTL-WALTER (Eds), « Social Transformation, Citizenship, and the Right to the City ». *GeoJournal*, 2002, vol. 58, n) 2-3. pp. 73-223 (special issue).

Forthcoming publications

KOLOSSOV, Vladimir & Vladimir GORBANYOV (Eds), *Political Geography and Geopolitics: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, Moscow, Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), 2004.

HULBERT, François & Daniel LAGAREC (Eds), *Géopolitique urbaine*, Paris, Editions L'Harmattan, 2005 (in French).

This newsletter has been shaped and published at the Sorbonne (Paris) by Prof. André-Louis SANGUIN, Vice-Chair of the Commission.

IGU-CPG Website: www.cas.muohio.edu/igu-cpg

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this page are strictly those of its authors. The contents of the page have not been reviewed or approved by Miami University.

Maintained by Carl Dahlman dahlmac@muohio.edu

updated: May 28, 2004 (Oct 4, 2006)