

THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PLANET EARTH: SUMMARY OF THE CZECH PROGRAMME AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2007-2009

The Czech Republic joined the International Year of Planet Earth (IYPE) initiative in 2006 and officially launched the national geo-scientific IYPE programme on the January 11, 2008. Following the original national programme outline from early 2006, we proceeded with two pilot projects and numerous regional events during all the three years of the worldwide initiative triennium carrying "Earth Sciences for Society" as a flag title.

The first pre-installation of the rowing exhibition "Planet Earth Powerful and Vulnerable" was opened together with official Czech part of IYPE in the Czech Academy of Science, Prague, and next wider versions were prepared within the country afterwards. The exhibition was installed at Ústí nad Labem, Hořice, Mariánské Lázně, Cheb, the Czech Parliament, Turnov, Liberec, Jindřichův Hradec and Brno as the first pilot programme. Each installation was adjusted to local traditions and carried a specific regional imprint. An important part of it is the series of ten topical posters corresponding to the ten IYPE topics created by Czech experts and the designer Jáchym Šerých. These posters are available on request now for universal purposes of IYPE-CZ and promotion of Earth sciences in the Czech Republic (e.g., rowing exhibition, web page, educational outputs, regional thematic presentations and regional events).

The second pilot project "Geoscientists for Prague" has been prepared in a co-operation with the Municipality of Prague - Troja, ZOO and PBZ. A part of the proposal was undertaken by the Prague - Troja municipality and incorporated into its strategic planning and environmental policy.

Since 2007, the active web page www.rokplanetyzeme.cz has been serving to the outreach IYPE purposes. It provides all the information on IYPE-CZ events and promotions. The web is linked to the geological server of the Czech Geological Survey www.geology.cz. One of most successful events of each year of IYPE triennium was a painting contest for school kids "My piece of land" inspired by the Planet Earth/Gaia. Best drawings were used for a postcard and calendar series by the CGS. Regional popular exhibitions follow the concept of IYPE, as well as local activities promoting geo-tourism. In 2008, the Czech Geographical Society and the National Museum joined the IYPE-CZ programme.

An animated 40'' TV spot for IYPE was funded by Czech Ministry of Environments and created by the artist Pavel Koutský who also contributed to IYPE-CZ brochures and posters. Student winners of the Czech IYPE contest participated in the Global Launch Event in Paris in February 2008 and took a documentary video, available for IYPE-CZ.

Regular series of documents and debates were prepared for the Czech TV24 and the Czech Radio Leonardo. The awards for the weekly TV series "The Planet Science" of the Czech TV24 consisted of 42 "Stones with a story" - the unique mineral and rocks specimens with exciting history related to their formation, finding or usage. A new 60' TV document inspired by geosciences, landforms and local traditions was prepared. Number of popular geological books published or in preparation was ascribed to IYPE. Geoparks and local groups followed the IYPE through geo-tourism and exhibitions. The famous Ecofilm Festival had a section dedicated to IYPE ideas and sustainability on the Earth as a pilot topic for 2008. Fifty Czech UNESCO schools also accepted IYPE as a pivotal programme for 2008. A regular Week of Science organized by the Czech Academy of Science accepted IYPE as a leading programme for 2008 and 2009.

The national round of the students IYPE geo-scientific contest was organized by the IYPE-CZ national committee in 2007. Two student winners took part in the Paris IYPE GLE at the UNESCO palace, and took a fresh video document of this top world Paris event. This document is available at the Czech National Committee on IYPE together with the DVD "Geological Heritage" produced by the Geological Society of America.

The IYPE triennium will be highlighted by an exhibition "Story of the Planet Earth" prepared in cooperation of the National Museum in Prague and the IYPE-CZ National Committee for autumn 2009.

There was a clear crucial message to our politicians from the French Minister of State responsible for European Affairs Jean-Pierre Jouyet during the IYPE Global Launch Event in 2008: "There are many good reasons to pay attention to the geosciences in order to follow the European politics towards sustainability, especially when the Czech Republic is going to chair EU after France, in 2009."

Most IYPE activities are voluntary based or supported by the means of "staff time" by geo-scientific organizations, namely by the Czech Geological Survey, Czech Academy of Science and universities. The only appreciated sponsor of IYPE in our country 2007 was the coal-mining company "Severočeské doly", Ltd. A lack of the political will to support such a global initiative in the Czech Republic is striking, as well as our passive attitude to the endangered Earth components around us like soil, water, rocks, minerals and country.

The IYPE book I. summarizing the main issues, targets and tools of geoscientists was distributed to the Czech scientific and related state organizations.

New trends in the European policy were included in the programme of a Prague Conference on Raw Minerals for Europe held in April 2009. The IYPE topical posters could have been presented here thanks to the synergy between IYPE targets and progressive new approaches of the Mining Union in the Czech Republic. We believe that the IYPE programme in our country will have a long-termed impact on the level of our understanding natural processes and global changes of the planet Earth around us.