

## **WOOD SCIENCE EVENT OF 2014 IN ZVOLEN (OR THREE CONFERENCES IN ONE)**

One week in June 2014 (23<sup>rd</sup>–27<sup>th</sup> of June 2014), an extraordinary conference “Sustainable Resources and Technology for Forest Products” was organized at the Technical University in Zvolen, Slovakia. The subject matter of the conference covered a wide range of topics dealing with properties, processing and utilization of one of the most used renewable material in the world – wood. Uniqueness of this gathering of wood scientists was hidden in joining the three worldwide recognized conferences into one event: the 57th SWST International Convention, biyearly organized by the Society of Wood Science and Technology, the 7th Wood Structure and Properties, in quadrennial cycle organized by the Technical University in Zvolen and the 6th European Hardwood Conference biyearly organized by the West Hungarian University in Sopron.

Preparation of the conference started a few years ahead of time. After initial proposals and virtual communication, the executive director of the SWST, Victoria Herian, visited Slovakia in 2012. At that time, we organized the 2012 Annual conference of the IAWS. She came, examined and decided. During a few informal meetings also attended by a representative of the West Hungarian University in Sopron, prof. Robert Nemeth, we presented our common interest to join three significant conferences in Europe and the USA into one. In the fall of 2012 we received a positive decision from the board of the SWST and preparations started. In the spring of 2013, during the second visit of the executive director of the SWST in Slovakia, we visited potential places for pre- and post-conference activities and put together a basic program of the conference. Further preparation was strongly affected by a direct cooperation of prof. Marian Babiak with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic and Ms. Krivosikova and Dr. Sulek from the Office of the International Relations of the TU in Zvolen.

Overall general co-chairs of the conference, prof. Michale Wolcott from Washington State University and prof. Marian Babiak from the Technical University in Zvolen, led qualified teams. They secured that the conference was prepared and organized on a high professional level. Well –known and recognized wood scientists from all over the world were responsible for a selection of the scientific oral presentations for individual conference sections. After all preparations, we were kindly surprised and our expectations were greatly overcome. The conference was attended by 155 active participants from 29 countries, from 5 continents. There was an opportunity to listen to 70 selected speakers in 9 sessions and to discuss their papers. At the poster session 76 posters were presented. Devoted work of volunteers from the Department of Wood Science brought many acknowledgements during the conference and thereafter.

Social activities were a part and parcel of the conference program. They strengthened the social gathering and communication among scientists and helped establish further cooperation. The very beginning of the conference started at Zvolen castle. The Vice-mayor of the town of Zvolen, the Vice-rector of the Technical University in Zvolen and all general co-chairs of the conference opened the official reception and gallery exhibition. Special mention and thanks are due to dr. Hrčka and staff from the Forestry and Wood

Technology Museum who made it possible for all participants to spend one evening in the museum. Special folk music, the best of Slovak cuisine and free dance created a unique feeling to all of us during the official closing in Koliba restaurant. But the final farewell was said after science/history site-seeing tour in Banska Stiavnica - a birthplace of Forestry Education in the Central Europe. With the help of our graduate students, accompanying persons also enjoyed their stay in Zvolen. They saw hidden places of the town of Zvolen and Banska Bystrica, went on a hiking tour to Desolate Castle enjoying their aerial view, walked in a lovely area of the botanic garden of Borova Hora, and spent time in a distinctive Kaskady wellness center.

I would like to thank all the participants and organizers for creating unique atmosphere for such excellent conference. It is difficult to name all the helpers, but I am grateful that each of them contributed to smooth flow of the conference and made our university known in the wood science world. More information and outcomes of the conference can be found at [www.swst.org](http://www.swst.org).

Dr. Rastislav Lagaňa

Co-organizer of the conference