



## Georesources and public policy (continued)



The previous number of the *Estonian Journal of Earth Sciences* was a special issue which published some results of the 15th Meeting of the Association of European Geological Societies (MAEGS-15), held in Tallinn, Estonia, 16–20 September 2007. The topic of the meeting was “Georesources and public policy: research, management, environment”, covering various important or even acute subjects concerning useful minerals, environment, and human society. No doubt the topic is one of the cornerstones of the International Year of Planet Earth, which is revealed also in its subtitle “Earth sciences for society”. Therefore it is no surprise that the meeting attracted more than 80 participants from 17 countries. The scientific sessions included more than 50 presentations. The indoor meeting was followed by a 2-day geological excursion to northern and western Estonia.

The special issue accommodated only a fraction of conference papers (7 papers), but the main trends of ideology, common thinking about the problems, and ways of decision-making revealed on the conference were discussed. Several papers that could not be included in it are published in this issue of the journal.

The paper by Sabrina Bonetto, Adriano Fiorucci, Mauro Fornaro, and Bartolomeo Vigna (University of Torino and Politecnico di Torino, Italy) continues discussion about different hazards connected with the exploitation of deposits of useful minerals. The authors show how geological, structural, and hydrogeological features affect quarrying and its interaction with natural phenomena and human activities. In the study area, in Monferrato, gypsum karst has a considerable influence on mining operations; the latter in turn can produce strong impact on gypsum karst.

Paavo Härmä and Olavi Selonen (Geological Survey of Finland and Åbo Akademi University) studied implications of surface weathering of rapakivi granite for natural stone evaluation. In the weathered parts of the outcrops the impact may be rather significant. The authors recommend the development of subsurface methods in order to make them more applicable in the evaluation of natural stone.

The paper by Hannu Luodes (Geological Survey of Finland) is some kind of answer to the previous authors' request. Studying the ability of ground penetrating radar (GPR) in estimating the soundness of the material, physical defects of the stone, and the possible size of the extracted blocks in different rock types, he concluded that GPR is suitable for large-scale quality assessment of natural stone deposits and quarries. The quality of results depends on how well the geological structure, electromagnetic properties and other characteristics of the stone have been considered beforehand.

The Tallinn meeting of the AEGS and the papers published in the *Estonian Journal of Earth Sciences* clearly show that the discussed topic “Georesources and public policy: research, management, environment” is a complex one, needing besides excellency in Earth and engineering sciences also interdisciplinary cooperation with other fields of knowledge. The latter should be considered in a wide sense, including social sciences, environmental policy-making, wise public relations and all related aspects. Many of the corresponding key words were mentioned above, and the context where these appear convince that implementation of the sustainable mineral paradigm needs steady work for a longer period of time, not only a short campaign. On the other hand, an action like the International Year of Planet Earth is a superb possibility of raising public awareness of local and global trends in the evolution of the ecosystem (human society included) of our home planet.

Dimitri Kaljo  
Editor-in-chief