

50 Years of Geological Cooperation with the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic – the Austrian Point of View

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 5 Text-Figures, 1 Table

*Cross-border cooperation
 Geological correlation
 Geological research
 Geological maps
 Iron Curtain
 DANREG*

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50 Jahre geologischer Kooperation mit der Tschechischen und Slowakischen Republik – Die österreichische Perspektive

Zusammenfassung

Im Zuge des 1960 begründeten bilateralen, später trilateralen Kooperationsvertrages zwischen Österreich und der damaligen Tschechoslowakei auf dem Gebiet der Geologie konnten in den letzten 20 Jahren aus österreichischer Sicht große Fortschritte für die österreichischen Geowissenschaften erzielt werden. Zu nennen sind hier insbesondere die geologische Kartierung und die Grundlagenforschung. Ohne Mithilfe tschechischer und slowakischer GeologInnen hätten in beiden Bereichen viele wichtige Ergebnisse nicht erzielt werden können.

Abstract

Due to the bilateral and later trilateral cooperation act between Austria and former Czechoslovakia in the fields of geology, which dates back to 1960, from the Austrian point of view great advances were achieved within the last two decades. This concerns especially geological mapping and basic research. Without the help of Czech and Slovak geologists many scientific results in both fields would never have been achieved.

Introduction

The geological cooperation between Austria, the Czech and the Slovak Republic (former Czechoslovakia) goes back to 1960. On January 23rd, 1960 an “*Agreement between the Federal Government of Austria and the Government of Czechoslovakia Republic in the principles of cooperation in the field of geology between the Republic Austria and the Czechoslovakia Republic*” was signed (MINAŘIKOVÁ &

LOBITZER, 1990a, p. 8) between Austria and Czechoslovakia to stimulate and to regulate the exchange of geological information between both countries. The agreement covered all fields in geosciences; an additional agreement – which was signed the same day – concerned the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons in the border area. Based on this agreement annual meetings alternating between both countries were arranged to discuss geological questions. Plans for the following year

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were worked out including a detailed program for the exchange of persons. Especially during the first three decades, when the Iron Curtain separated both countries, this exchange was the fundamental basis for geological cooperation and correlation. Based on this cooperation Austria supported Czechoslovakia in 1968, when the 23rd International Geological Congress (IGC) was held in Prague. Two excursions (32 C, 33 C) were organized by Austrian teams (FRASL et al., 1968; GRILL et al., 1968), the excursion guides were published by the Geological Survey of Austria.

This contribution shows the Austrian point of view and focuses on the last 20 years of cooperation, the period from 1990 to 2010. Thus the results are outlined, especially in the fields of geological mapping and basic research (e.g. stratigraphy) which were achieved by the help of Czech and Slovak geoscientists.

Milestones in the Period 1990 to 2010

The first period (1960–1990) is documented in the festival volume “Thirty Years of Geological Cooperation between Austria and Czechoslovakia” edited by Dagmar MINAŘÍKOVÁ & Harald LOBITZER in 1990. This volume comprises 42 original papers and three informative reports in six thematic sections (MINAŘÍKOVÁ & LOBITZER, 1990b).

At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s many states in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) had a more or less turbulent change in the political regimes. The Iron Curtain separating Austria from Czechoslovakia since the end of World War II was cut through in December 1989 in an official act by the Austrian and the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministers in Laa an der Thaya, an old town in northern Lower Austria close to the border to Southern Moravia. Moreover, on January 1st, 1993, Czechoslovakia was divided into the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. The “*Agreement between the Federal Government of Austria and the Government of Czechoslovak Republic in the principles of cooperation in the field of geology between the Republic Austria and the Czechoslovak Republic*” was formally transformed into two identical agreements with the two countries with the same content as the previous one.

From Formal Bilateral Meetings to Multilateral Talks

The 34th meeting, which was held on July 30th, 1993, in Vienna was the first meeting of the new bilateral agreement with geoscientists of the Czech Republic, as well as the first meeting of the bilateral agreement with the Slovak Republic.

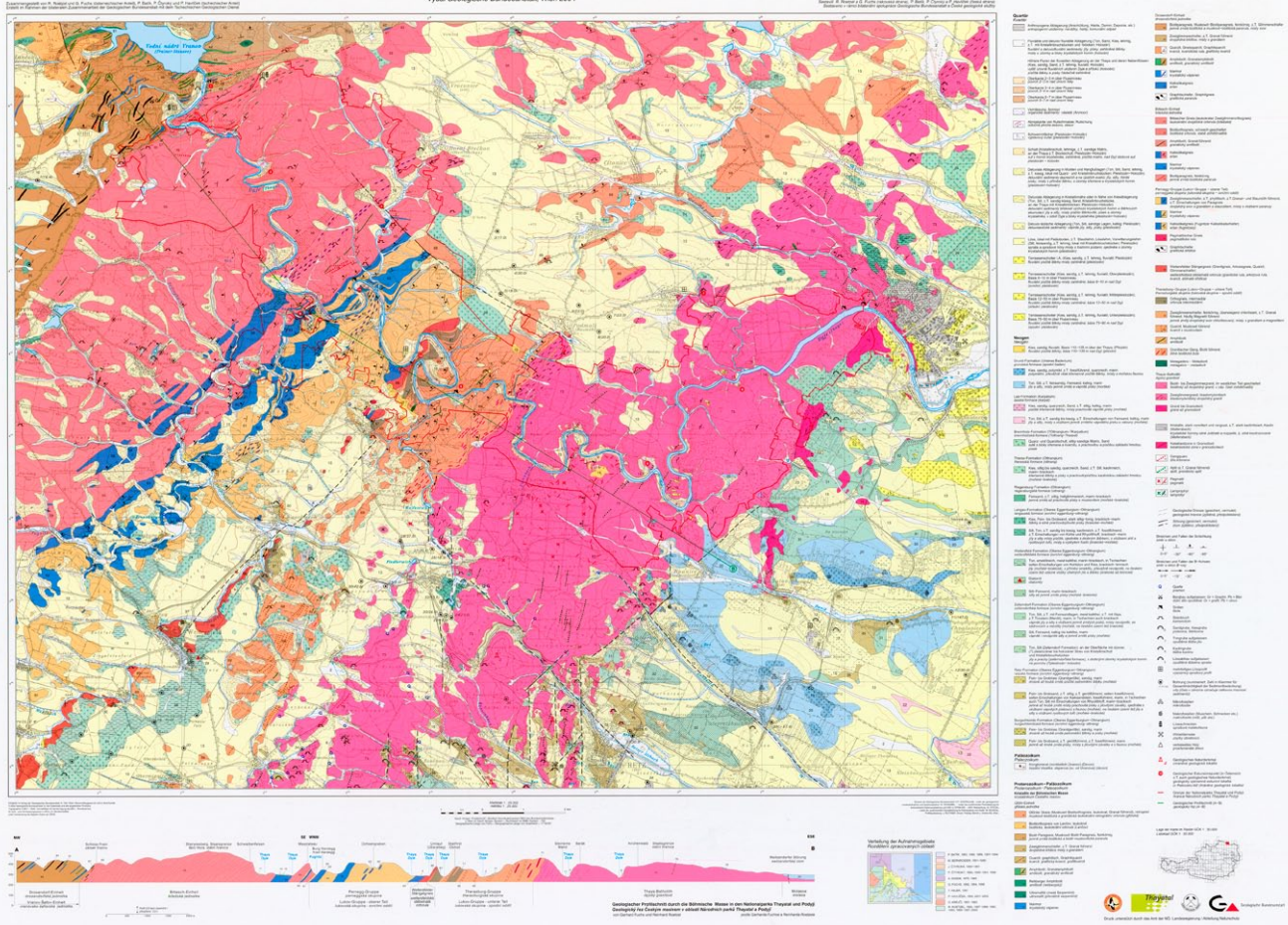
From then to the 45th meeting (2004) the directors met alternatively in one of the countries to discuss the working program, which has got two strong focuses: geological mapping and basic research on special topics. Meanwhile (1992) Czechoslovakia and Hungary became members in the Forum of WEGS (Western European Geological Surveys). This was initiated and strongly supported in 1990 by Traugott E. Gattinger (1930–2006), director (1983–1992) of the Geological Survey of Austria and member of WEGS. As a consequence of the entry of “eastern” countries into WEGS the Dutch and Austrian Directors suggested to rename WEGS into FOREGS (Forum of European Geological Surveys). This informal group ceased its activities in September 2005 and since then EuroGeoSurveys took over its tasks and responsibilities (EGS-Website, 2010).

In this period many more geoscientists from the Czech and Slovak Republic came to Austria to support Austrian geologists in their work with their know-how, than Austrians went abroad. The bilateral exchange became more and more a kind of a one way system. Harald Lobitzer was the central person in Austria managing all the exchange and cooperation between the Geological Survey of Austria and the Geological Surveys of the CEE-States like Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia.

It was the idea of Hans P. Schönlaub, director of the Survey from 1993 to 2007, to bring together the directors of the neighboring countries at one table for common discussions. On May 27th, 2005, one day after the official opening ceremony of the new building of the Geological Survey of Austria at Neulinggasse 38 the directors of the Geological Surveys of Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia met to share their experiences and to sign their bilateral agreements. In traditional counting it was the 46th meeting of the

Number of meeting / partners	Date	Location
47 th / 14 th Meeting A – CZ and A – SK	May 30 th –31 st , 2006	Prague (CZ)
Common meeting of the Geological Surveys of Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary and Poland.		
48 th / 15 th meeting A – CZ and A – SK	June 5 th – 6 th , 2007	Krakow (PL)
Common meeting of the Geological Surveys of Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Poland and Croatia.		
49 th / 16 th meeting A – CZ and A – SK	June 10 th –11 th , 2008	Banská Stiaavnica (SK)
Common meeting of the Geological Surveys of Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Poland and Croatia.		
50 th / 17 th meeting A – CZ and A – SK	May 21 st –22 nd , 2009	Krajnska Gora (SL)
Common meeting of the Geological Surveys of Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Poland and Croatia.		
51 st / 18 th meeting A – CZ and A – SK	June 30 th , 2010	Budapest (H)
Common meeting of the Geological Surveys of Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary and Poland.		

Table 1:
Meetings of CEE Geological Surveys in the last five years.



Text-Fig. 2. The geological map of Thayatal National Park and Podyjí National Park is an outstanding example of transboundary bilateral cooperation. Both languages are used equally for the title and the legend.

Mautern (37), Krems an der Donau (38), Stockerau (40), Marchegg (43), Obergrafendorf (55), St. Pölten (56), Neulengbach (57), Aflenz (102), Kindberg (103), Mürrzusschlag (104), Mattersburg (107), Winklern (180), Obervellach (181) and Jennersdorf (193) – most of them not yet published – some areas were worked out in detail (mostly mapping) by Czech and Slovak geoscientists. The reports of the mapping activities are regularly published in the “Jahrbuch der Geologischen Bundesanstalt” which can be found at the website (www.geologie.ac.at) as free download in PDF format. The manuscripts of all maps, published or not published yet, are stored in the archive of the Geological Survey of Austria.

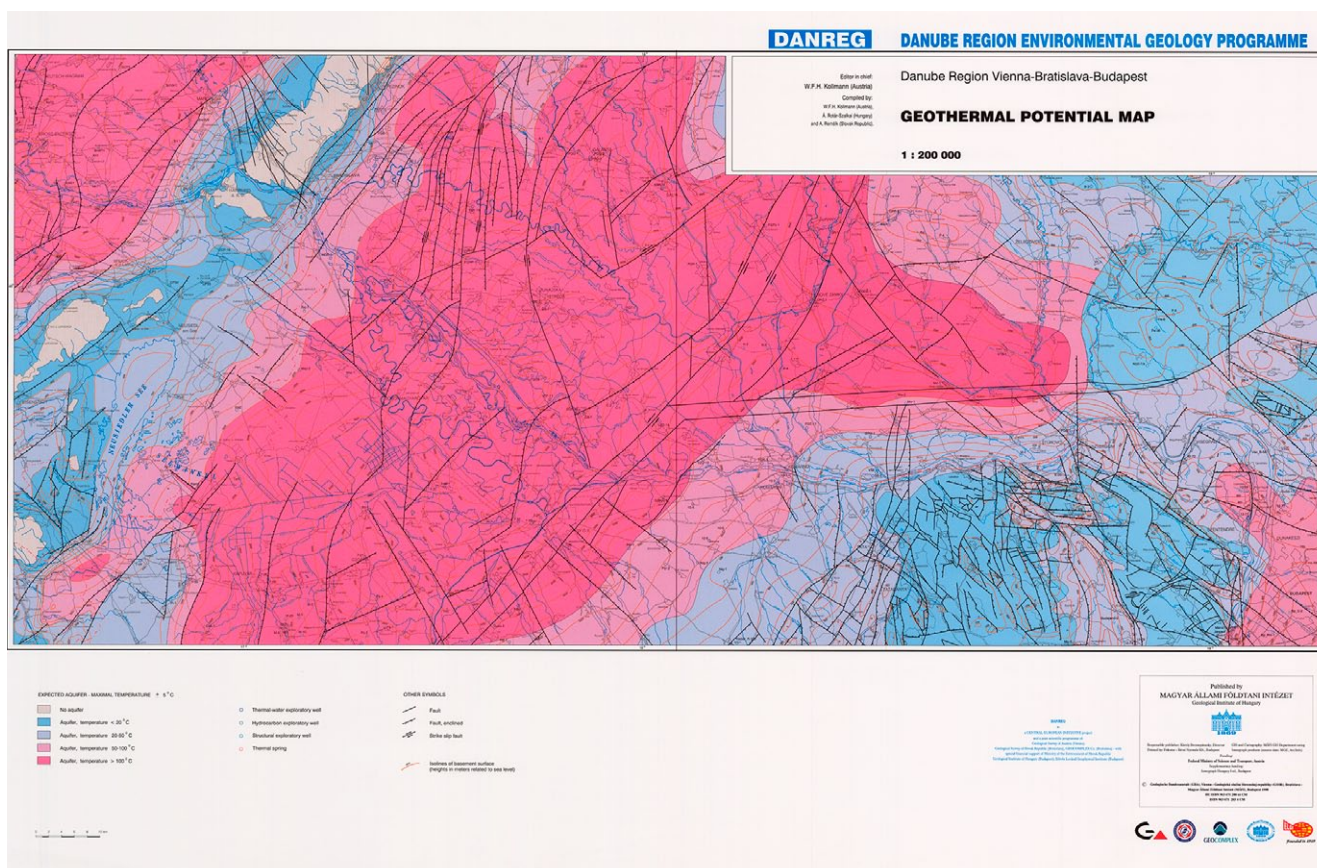
Basic Geological Research

In addition to mapping activities a lot of work has been made (and is still carried out) focusing on the fields of biostratigraphy, taxonomy, (micro)paleontology, micromorphology, microfacies, geophysics and petrology. Since the early 1980s Harald Lobitzer has been leading a working group of Czech, Slovak, Hungarian, and Austrian specialists in the Salzkammergut Region (Upper Austria, Styria) to work out details in the Mesozoic of the Northern Calcareous Alps, especially in the Gosau Group. The program is called “Studium mesozoischer Stratotypen/Studies of Mesozoic stratotypes”.

Experts like Miloš Siblík (brachiopods), Lenka Hradecká (foraminifera), Jiří and Zlatko Kvaček (plant remains), Marcela Svobodová (pollen), Lilian Švábenická (nannofossils), Miloslav Rakús (cephalopoda), Jan Mello (cephalopoda), Slavomír Nehyba (sedimentology), Libuše Smolíková (micromorphology of loess), Miroslav Bubík (foraminifera), Karel Breiter (petrology), Ivan Gnojek (ground geophysics), Antonín Přichystal (ground geophysics), Zdeněk Vašíček (cephalopoda), Rostislav Brzobohatý (otoliths), Jiří Kovanča (molluscs), Anna Ondrejčíková (radiolarians), Bohumila Bezdová (mineralogy, geochemistry), Ždeňka Řeháková (diatoms) and some others (only Czech and Slovak experts are listed here) largely contributed to solving a number of geoscientific questions. The results – so far a lot of published reports – are a fundamental basis for the explanatory notes of geological maps which are published after the issue of the maps, sometimes years later.

The DANREG Project

In 1989 Hungary and Slovakia started a bilateral project to prepare various geoscientific maps (with environmental focus) in the common Danube area, which was joined by Austria in 1990. Details are available at the Website of the Geological Institute of Hungary (MAFI Website, 2010):



Text-Fig. 3. Geothermal potential map (1:200.000) published 1998 as part of the DANREG project.

“The main objective of the Danube Region Environmental Geological Program (DANREG) was to adjust the geological and geophysical data available in the cross-border region of the three partner countries (Slovakia, Austria and Hungary) in a harmonised framework with particular emphasis on the area along Danube river running across the three capitals. The project facilitated the harmonised interpretation of data providing thus considerable help to decision makers engaged in land management of the area. The Geological Institute of Hungary (MÁFI) and the Geological Survey of the Slovak Republic (Geologický ústav Dionýza Stúra [GÚDS]), later Geologická služba Slovenskej republiky (GSSR) and Státny geologický ústav Dionýza Stúra (SGÚDS) since 2000 signed a mutual agreement in 1989 aimed at compiling in co-operation the geological maps of the cross-border area along the Danube. In 1990 the Geological Survey of Austria (Geologische Bundesanstalt, GBA) also joined to the agreement. Geophysical surveying related to the program was executed by Geocomplex a.s (Bratislava), Eötvös Loránd Geophysical Institute of Hungary (Budapest), as well as the Vienna Meteorological and Geophysical Institute, the Vienna University and the OMV Aktiengesellschaft.”

The DANREG Project was also appreciated by the CEI (Central European Initiative). The official closing ceremony of the DANREG Project was in Budapest from 26th to 30th of May 1997, some maps and the explanatory book (Császár, 2000) were printed later.

Thematic Maps Compiled by the DANREG Project

1 : 100.000 maps

Surface geological map
Map of the environmental geohazards

1 : 200.000 maps

Bouguer anomaly map
Engineering geological map
Geothermal potential map (Text-Fig. 3)
Hydrogeological map
Neotectonic map
Lithofacies & thickness map of the Pannonian
Lithofacies & thickness map of Pontian and the Pliocene
Map of the Pre-Tertiary basement
Map of genetic types & thickness of Quaternary sediments
Tectonic map
Geological cross-sections

1 : 500.000 maps

Stripped gravity anomaly map
Magnetic ΔT anomaly map
Gravity lineament map
Results of the magneto-telluric measurements
Contour map of the Pre-Tertiary basement
Contour map of the Pannonian basement
Thickness of the Quaternary sediments
Apparent resistivity map AB = 200 m

and issued at the beginning of 1991. In the foreword the Directors of both surveys, J. Vacek and T.E. Gattinger, expressed the benefits of cooperation and pointed out some future aspects: “As examples, the increase in understanding of the geological features of the Bohemian Massif or the Tertiary basins may be quoted. The publication in hand is a expression not only of the studious work of the geoscientists of both countries and of the multiplicity of the treated subjects, but it especially reflects the sense and spirit of cooperation in good neighbourly relationship. It can be called an ‘European Challenge’ to preserve and promote this sense and spirit for further decades of fruitful common geological research.” (VACEK & GATTINGER, 1990).

On the occasion of the 150-years anniversary of the Geological Survey of Austria a festival volume was issued in the series of the Abhandlungen der Geologischen Bundesanstalt as volume 56/1+2. The editors Harald LOBITZER (Wien) and Pavol GRECULA (Bratislava) issued volume 56/1 (28 papers, 460 pages) for the celebration act on November 15th, 1999. Volume 56/2 was published one year later (30 papers / 738 pages). Both were printed in Slovakia (Kosice). This volume (LOBITZER & JANDA, 2010) includes a total number of 14 papers dealing with various geological aspects from Austria, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic including also authors from Hungary.

Conclusion

Within the last 50 years the contributions of Czech and Slovak geoscientists for the geology of Austria became more and more important. Many examples from various disciplines in geosciences demonstrate that geology at large in Austria profited a lot from contributions of Czech and Slovak geoscientists. The Austrian-Czech-Slovak tradition of geological cooperation within the last fifty years (1960–2010) also has a greater dimension, showing that different political regimes cannot form a permanent obstacle for scientific work. Thus this example from CEE might encourage countries all over the world to work on common scientific themes, even if it seems impossible at first glance.

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