

# GEOETHICS NEWS

DECEMBER 2012



## PF 2013

May the New Year bring you all happiness and success in your life as well as in your work!

With the hope to see you and with best personal regards,

**Václav Němec and Lidmila Němcová,**  
Convenors of the First International Conference on GEOETHICS 2013

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Lot of information could be covered in this issue, some of this not too pleasant. Let us postpone the latter so as to avoid confusion pending more expected news and decisions regarding the latter – probably a further issue of GEOETHICS NEWS will be issued already in early February. Peace on the Earth to everybody!

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# European Geosciences Union General Assembly 2013

Vienna | Austria | 07 – 12 April 2013

## EOS7 Geoethics and Geoeducation

Convener: Vaclav NEMEC 

Co-Conveners: Jesús Martínez-Frías , Lidmila Nemcova 

### [Abstract Submission](#)

Geoethics is an interdisciplinary field between Geosciences and Ethics which involves Earth and Planetary Sciences as well as applied ethics. It deals with the way of human thinking and acting in relation to the significance of the Earth as a system and as a model. Scientific, technological, methodological and social-cultural aspects are included (e.g. sustainability, development, geodiversity and geoheritage, prudent consumption of mineral resources, appropriate measures for predictability and mitigation of natural hazards, geosciences communication, museology, etc.), their liaison with concepts of geoeducation is evident. Also the necessity of considering appropriate protocols, scientific integrity issues and a code of good practice - regarding the study of the abiotic world - is covered by this discipline developed by the conveners (V. Nemec and L. Nemcova) since 1991. Studies on planetary geology (*sensu lato*) and astrobiology also require a geoethical approach (as suggested by the co-convenor J. Martínez-Frías). It is necessary to incorporate geoethical principles in the optimal way into the consciousness and the daily life of the global society. All efforts of not only Earth and Planetary scientists, ecologists and pedagogues but also of other professions including managers, leaders, politicians and statesmen at any level should respect – in the sense of geoethics – their own responsibility for the fate of our planet and of all its inhabitants including the future generations. Geological factors need to be reflected and respected in any concept of environmental sustainability. Thanks to the interdisciplinary approach a need arises to seek new priorities emphasizing more and more the solidarity of human kind – defined by the International Declaration of Geoethics.

### **Attention:**

**Deadline for Receipt of Abstracts: 9 January 2013**

**Abstract submissions to the programme group EOS are free of charge for authors**

**First Author Rule:** Regarding the oral preference, you are allowed as first author to submit either ONE regular abstract plus ONE abstract solicited by a convener, or TWO [solicited abstracts](#). Each further abstract has to be submitted with a poster preference.

**If you submit to a session belonging to the programme group EOS, you are allowed as first author to submit ONE more abstract with an oral preference (THREE in total).**

### **Contacts:**

- 1) <http://meetingorganizer.copernicus.org/EGU2013/sessionprogramme>
- 2) convenors (see the Questionnaire – page 9)
- 3) [egu2013@copernicus.org](mailto:egu2013@copernicus.org) (organizers)

## THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GEOETHICS 2013

Accordingly to the decision of the final Declaration from the international section on GEOETHICS hosted by the Mining Pribram Symposium in 2011 the following meeting is planned as the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Geoethics for the period

**October 14 (Monday) to 18 (Friday) 2013  
at Pribram (Czech Republic).**



Pribram is a town about 60 km SW from Prague, with a long mining history (famous School of Mines until 1945). Details about the Mining Pribram Symposium history (since 1962) etc. have been frequently described in previous issues of GEOETHICS NEWS. Many visitors know the specific character of geoethical sessions at these Symposia (organized since 1992) with allocated times for listening to presentations as well as for discussions in the course of coffee breaks and elsewhere. The time table makes it possible to use a tailor made plan of an individual sojourn. Some visitors limit their stay for the most important 2 – 3 days of lectures, some extend their stay for weekend visit(s) to beautiful Prague or other interesting localities more distant from Pribram. A festive evening remembering old mining traditions as well as the planned excursion in spectacular countryside with beautiful Autumn colours usually bring unforgettable impressions. Very modest registration fees. The possibility to organize a training workshop (at Pribram or in Prague).

**All suggestions with topics related to geoethics and Earth sciences will be accepted either for a regular oral presentation or for a short communication, rarely as a poster.**

**Your replies in the questionnaire (p. 9) prior to January 12, 2013 will be appreciated in order to prepare the optimum version of the program.**

**Abstracts to be received before February 20.**

Convenors: **Vaclav Nemec** and **Lidmila Nemcova** [LIDMILA.NEMCOVA@QUICK.CZ](mailto:LIDMILA.NEMCOVA@QUICK.CZ);

Secretary of the Conference: **Pavla Dolezalova** [DOLEZALOVA@DIAMO.CZ](mailto:DOLEZALOVA@DIAMO.CZ)

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## THE 35<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL GEOLOGICAL CONGRESS

**August 27 – September 4, 2016 - Cape Town, South Africa**  
<http://www.35igc.org/>

**SYMPOSIUM: Geoethics in Theory and Practice**

Details including the exchange of messages with the responsible IGC organizer presented in Geoethics News - September 2012.



## **AGID**

### **ASSOCIATION OF GEOSCIENTISTS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The complete set of **GEOETHICS NEWS** (published since 2007) is available at the **AGID** National Chapter in **Spain**: [http://tierra.rediris.es/Geoethics\\_Planetary\\_Protection/](http://tierra.rediris.es/Geoethics_Planetary_Protection/). Besides the pages hosted by the Spanish National Chapter also the web site of the **AGID** National Chapter in **Russia** may be of interest: <http://www.geoethics.ru/> - primarily for people understanding the Russian language.

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## **IAGETH**

### **INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR GEOETHICS**

Much interesting news and information about various events in the field of **GEOETHICS** all over the world are available at the web page <http://tierra.rediris.es/IAGETH>.

**Much very good news concerning current and future events and progress (Argentina, Austria, Czech Republic, Japan, Mozambique, Portugal, Russia, Spain, etc).**

Let me remember as an example the following **news from Japan**:

The new session on Geoethics was successfully held within in the 22nd Symposium on Geo-Environments and Geo-Technics (Dec. 7 - 8, 2012, Tsukuba) organized by Japanese Society of Geo-Pollution Science, Medical Science and Urban Geology (PMUG). The full program of the symposium is available from the following URL (though in Japanese only): [http://www.jspmug.org/envgeo\\_sympto/22nd\\_sympto/22nd\\_sympto\\_program.pdf](http://www.jspmug.org/envgeo_sympto/22nd_sympto/22nd_sympto_program.pdf) .

### **Some recent activities of the National Group in the Czech Republic:**

**Lidmila Nemcova** - present at the Castle of Prague to a State dinner for the President of Iceland - had an opportunity for a private talk with the President of the Czech Republic Professor Vaclav Klaus (also about geoethics); the Czech President is in contact with the former Czech geologist (and colleague of Vaclav Nemec) Prof. George Kukla (USA) discussing geologically interested problems (incl. global warming).

**Lidmila Nemcova** presented at Visegrad (Hungary) at an international conference *Spirituality and Sustainability* her lecture *Art as a means to increase sensibility for spirituality and sustainability*. -

In her capacity of the President of the Czech Society for Ethics in Economics Lidmila Nemcova organized a special block at the seminar of the Czech Management Association where **Vaclav Nemec** presented his lecture *Geoethical view of sustainability (remarks to Rio+ 20 conference)*. He discussed to the same topic in a special meeting of the Society for Ethics in Economics organized in the Czech Parliament.

**Vaclav Nemec** was also invited as the only guest to the Annual meeting of the Czech National Geological Committee to refer about recent activities of AGID, IAGETH and IAMG as well as to comment the I'Aquila case.

The Scientific Council of the Mining Příbram Symposium has approved suggestions of Vaclav Nemec re preparation of the International Conference on Geoethics (October 2013).

# NEWS ABOUT THE L'AQUILA PROCESS

Much interested news and comment is presented at:

<http://www.nature.com/news/2011/110914/full/477264a.html>

The following remark can be discovered there:

*"In fact, a false translation into English of the charges mentioned in the indictment act was circulated abroad by colleagues of some of these members. Based on this "translation", which stated that the charges were "to have failed to predict the earthquake" almost 4,000 researchers from 100 different countries signed a letter to the Italy's president, blaming the prosecutors. Even Nature believed this misleading information..."*

A divisive character of the civic society in various states has been evident for anybody when reactions to the sentence in the process started without attending the real motivation (expected for January 2013).



Omitting – as promised at p. 1 – a divisive character of existing new geoethical communities in this very sensible topic I need to emphasize some basic geoethical problems as recently published in my article

## Geoethics and Sustainability: 3.1.1 Conclusions to the case

Various geoethical problems connected with this case should be solved:

- a) a new legal access to „false alarms“ and reasonable risk and danger levels should be established (up-dating internationally acceptable definitions and protection measures);
- b) any positive prediction whoever made it should be precisely analysed by “competent” institutes avoiding any underestimation of „incompetent“ researchers;
- c) a reciprocal respect between scientists and the population should be based on the use of a reciprocally understandable language;
- d) scientists as well as media are obliged to respect and publish the complete verity about facts with clearly defined words to avoid any misinterpretation of results.

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**A fresh testimony from our National Group on Italy can be added:**

Dear Prof. Nemec,

After reading some comments on the L'Aquila sentence, including one by Dr: Limaye of November 30, 2012, I wish to make a few remarks. Although some people realize that it would be better to wait for the sentence motivations, criticism is still kept alive, and (unfortunately enough) also international organizations joined the chorus of criticism. In face of more or less speculative reasoning, some basic considerations may be useful.

There is general agreement on the fact that earthquakes, even when associated to more or less persistent foreshocks, cannot be foreseen as for exact place, time and magnitude - and that major shocks cannot be excluded to occur in areas such as the Abruzzo (L'Aquila) region. One might resort to "probability", but - in face of possible disaster - emphasizing caution rather than idle lingering turns out to be a mandatory duty. So why should any scientist be available to make predictions of any type, and/or give opinions and "advice" to local or state agencies in charge of civil protection, instead of giving, in a simple and clear way, warnings of absolute unpredictability?

Translating this into L'Aquila case, why should any commission of scientists (no matter how prestigious its members), be established and entrusted the task of expressing opinions and even reassurances? Reassurances were indeed solicited by the Head of the state agency. Ethical behavior or, if you prefer, common sense suggests that any scientist should abstain from joining any such commission, avoiding involvement into a "bad" practice as outlined above. Instead, by accepting the appointment to a consulting service the members of the commission showed both disregard of science and subservience to the state agency in charge of civil protection.

Furthermore, even if you allow for the desire of serving the community in the evaluation of the natural event, no care was taken (by the commission) for ensuring a proper (correct) communication of the situation by the state agency to the local community, to the public and to the mass media. Instead, subservience to the Executive, in its effort to divulge minimization of risks, is exactly what came out during the process. In summary, no commission should have been formed, and individual scientists should have only stated flatly the impossibility of prediction.

May I stress that it would be wise to fully know the available documentation before expressing opinions and comments. As for the role of the Executive, this is really another story (developments about its responsibilities may ensue, and this is indeed what I expect to see).

Regarding the sentence, of course one might regret the harshness of the penalties and the lack of separation of individual responsibilities - or else complain about the difficulties, if not outright impossibility, of assessing precisely the risks of sudden natural events (not only of earthquakes).

But suspecting or even asserting that as a consequence of the verdict in the future no scientist will offer opinions on hazards of any kind for fear of litigation is either a disservice to intelligence or a ridiculous menace from immature geoscientists. The Implications of such complaints scent of dull defense not only of the scientists involved in the L'Aquila case, but also of the geological and geophysical professions. Let us hope that geoscientists will always get rid of temptations recalling policies of medieval guilds!

Best regards,  
Antonio Alberti

December 8, 2012

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## OTHER NEWS:



### THE 34<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL GEOLOGICAL CONGRESS

August 5 – 10, 2012 Brisbane, Australia <http://www.34igc.org>

#### GEOETHICS AT THE 34<sup>TH</sup> IGC

The AGID President Ms. Afia Akhtar has informed me about the idea of **publishing a special volume on Proceedings of the Theme 2** (organized by AGID). I have been invited to serve as member of the Editorial Board and also my suggestion has been accepted by her to include into the volume presentations of two authors who finally missed to attend the Congress and of three authors who were also unable to arrive but because of obstacles arisen already in the process of preparations. The final decision depends on IGS organs.

*Vaclav Nemec*





## Resignation

Leaving any comment to the future I have to announce my resignation from the post of the IAGETH President.

Let me publish an **excerpt** from my e-mail sent on December 1, 2012 to all members of the IAGETH Founding Executive Committee:

*Because I insist on my right to try to stop endless invectives and dehonestation of myself by Dr. Limaye (always ONLY when acting in favour of his friends in Italy!) I am informing you about my **decision to step away from my post of IAGETH President on January 1, 2013** - hopefully in favour of Professor Jesus Martinez-Frias (leaving the final choice of the President to you all and continuing in my membership in the IAGETH Founding executive committee). Maybe this will increase the IAGETH chances to become a regular member of the IUGS.*

*I shall continue in keeping my positions in AGID (where my geoethical activities have been many times appreciated by the IUGS and my position officially refreshed and personnaly approved by Dr. Limaye in spite of critical remarks presented by me at the 2012 AGID General Assembly).*

*Of course I am ready to host the Pribram First International Conference on Geoethics based on solid historical and democratic roots of previous international meetings I had the pleasure and privilege to convene in geoethics since 1992 and in mathematical geology since 1969 (merits for VIP audience from abroad already in 1968).*

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With the approval of the Committee Professor Jesús Martinez-Frias will start to serve as the new IAGETH President on January 1, 2013 at noon.

**CONGRATULATIONS to JESUS and THANKS to ALL for a very effective work and co-operation. Altogether 27 national groups and other in negotiation (Poland etc.) – a tremendous success!**

**Vaclav Nemec**

## Definitions of Ethics (incl. Geoethics):

<http://www.answers.com/topic/ethics-legal-term#Geoethics>

See:

[3 Applied ethics](#)

[3.2.2 Geoethics](#)

[10 External links](#)

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## Contacts:

E-mail:

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PHONE (recorders): ++420 274 811 801 ( ++420 281 962 158);

[DOLEZALOVA@DIAMO.CZ](mailto:DOLEZALOVA@DIAMO.CZ) mgr. Pavla Dolezalova

(DIAMO library and guest office of Dr. Nemec at Příbram);

An emergency e-mail address: [MARCINIKOVA@DIAMO.CZ](mailto:MARCINIKOVA@DIAMO.CZ) (the Mining Příbram Symposium Secretary).

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### INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE:

The questionnaire (page 9) is to be sent with your completed data to the addresses: [LIDMILA.NEMCOVA@QUICK.CZ](mailto:LIDMILA.NEMCOVA@QUICK.CZ); [DOLEZALOVA@DIAMO.CZ](mailto:DOLEZALOVA@DIAMO.CZ) .

Special wishes, remarks, suggestions, reports etc. can be added.

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## Editor of the GEOETHICS NEWS:

### Dr. Václav Němec

Vicepresident for Europe, AGID (2004 - 2016);

Head, AGID Working Group for Geoethics;

President (IAGETH) - ONLY until January 1, 2013; continuing as member of the IAGETH Founding Executive Committee;

head of the IAGETH and AGID National Group in the Czech Republic;

member of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences.



# QUESTIONNAIRE

To be sent by the e-mail (preferably) to [LIDMILA.NEMCOVA@QUICK.CZ](mailto:LIDMILA.NEMCOVA@QUICK.CZ) and [DOLEZALOVA@DIAMO.CZ](mailto:DOLEZALOVA@DIAMO.CZ) (*x – inappropriate indications to be deleted*):

## **Personal data:**

Name:

Address:

E-mail:

Phone No. (incl. country and city codes):

**European Geosciences Union General Assembly 2013**  
**(Vienna, Austria, April 07 – 12): EOS7 - Geoethics and Geoeducation**

**x I have decided to attend as (co-)author**

☐ abstract enclosed

☐ abstract will follow in due time (dead-line January 9, 2013)

**The 1st International Conference on GEOETHICS 2013**  
**(Příbram, Czech Republic, October 14-18):**

## **Probability of participation**

☐ high

☐ medium

☐ low

☐ I shall not attend

## **Abstract(s) of suggested paper(s):**

☐ enclosed

☐ will be sent before ..... - preliminary title(s) of the paper(s):

☐ no intention to present a paper

**I am interested to attend the Training Workshop on Geoethics  
(if organized):**

☐ YES

☐ NOT YET DECIDED

☐ NO

**Other special wishes, remarks, suggestions, comments:**