



## **Invitation**

We are pleased to invite you to participate in the IGU 2014 Regional Conference to be held in Kraków, Poland, on August 18-22, 2014. The conference will be an excellent occasion to discover the beauty and diversity of the natural environment and culture of Central and Eastern Europe.

The conference aims to create a forum for raising the issues of changes, challenges and responsibility in the modern geography. It is open to all geographers across the full spectrum of the Earth sciences, environmental sciences, geoinformation as well as regional, economic and social sciences.

Kraków, the medieval capital of Poland and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is the home of the Jagiellonian University, the second oldest university in Central Europe, established in 1364. At the university, the first Polish chair of geography was set up in 1849.

We believe the IGU 2014 Regional Conference will be an important and meaningful event, bringing together geographers from all over the world and contributing to a better understanding of changes and challenges faced by the modern world and our discipline, as well as the global responsibility we all share.

We look forward to welcoming you to Kraków in August 2014!

## Conference theme

*Changes, Challenges, Responsibility* is the theme of our conference.

The world entered the second decade of the 21st century confronted with serious environmental, social and economical problems. We can observe numerous **CHANGES** in both natural and human systems, significantly influencing the present and future well-being of the societies. Apart from well-known links and interactions between the two system types, new ones emerge, e.g. unbalanced economic development enhances acidification of the environment or the global warming problem, but it also contributes to global distribution of workplaces.

Modern geography faces significant research **CHALLENGES** as its aim is to support the citizens in better understanding the world we live in. Interdisciplinary research gains increasing importance as the best tool to combine holistic approach with very advanced knowledge and techniques from particular branches of geography. Additionally, the scientific activity results are a subject of public debate at the local, regional and global level., involved in a process of shaping societies awareness concerning environmental issues at local, regional and global level.

One of the key tasks for the modern geography seems to be helping the citizens in realizing their **RESPONSIBILITY** for the future of our world. Achieving that goal is connected e.g. with making the research results better accessible for non-specialists. A life-long education is especially needed in case of environmental sciences. However, it is still not sufficiently organized, even in the most developed countries.

We do hope the presentations of advanced knowledge and techniques by geographers from all over the world and the debates at the IGU 2014 Regional Conference held in Kraków will contribute to the development of better environmental, economic and social solutions for the future of different regions of our planet.