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After many years of neglect in Poland in the area of broadly defined maritime policy, with a great deal of hope we are noticing the first signs of revival in the maritime construction field, and in the geotechnical engineering in particular. It coincides with the enlargement of the Department of Geotechnics under the expanded name of the Department of Geotechnics, Geology and Maritime Engineering (GGME) in the Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering of the Gdansk University of Technology.

At the request of the Board of Directors of the Polish Geotechnics Committee (PKG) and thanks to the special efforts of its President, Prof. Zbigniew Młynarek, and of its Honorary President, Prof. Eugeniusz Dembicki, decision to grant the organization of the 11th Baltic Sea Geotechnical Conference was made by the Presidents of the International Society of Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering (ISSMGE), its President Prof. Pedro Seco e Pinto and the vice President for Europe Prof. Roger Frank. This prestigious choice of GGME as the organizer of the conference, under the leadership of Prof. Zbigniew Sikora, its chair, was justified not only from a formal point of view, but also from historical considerations, because the first Conference of Soil Mechanics and Foundations of the Baltic Countries was organized in Gdańsk in 1975 from the inspiration of Prof. E. Dembicki, chairman of the Geotechnical Department at that time.

The 11th Baltic Sea Geotechnical Conference on the topic „Geotechnics in Maritime Engineering” was held on the 15-18 of September 2008 in Gdansk under the auspices of ISSMGE, PKG and the Gdansk University of Technology.



Photo. 1. The Southern Courtyard of the Gdansk Technical University with the conference participants, see also www.11bc.pg.gda.pl. Photo Dr. R. Ossowski

The proceedings were held at the university in the historical Aula lecture hall and the adjacent modern teaching rooms together with the Southern Courtyard (see photo 1), and the New Auditorium lecture hall (photo 3).

Almost 280 participants from 30 countries participated in the conference, including from Poland (138), Germany (33), Estonia (13), the Netherlands (10). There were participants from the USA, Japan, Brazil, and many other countries, not only from the Baltic countries. This worldwide interest was dictated mainly by the aptly selected subject matter for the conference. The lead theme of the proceedings was applying geotechnical solutions in the maritime construction. World-class experts in the fields of geotechnical and maritime building engineering, representing both the theoretical, as well as the practical fields, were present at the conference. There were scientists dealing with geotechnical problems of ports, offshore and onshore structures, young scientists - doctoral students, as well as practising engineers, dealing with the design and the execution of objects of the maritime infrastructure.

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Phot. 2. The opening speeches of the Conference on the Southern Courtyard of the Gdansk University of Technology, see also www.11bc.pg.gda.pl. Photo Dr. R. Ossowski

The ceremonial opening of the conference was attended by officials of the Tricity agglomeration - President of Gdansk - P. Adamowicz and President of Sopot - J. Karnowski and a large number of invited representatives of the Marshal's Office, the Province Office, and directors of many leading firms from throughout Poland.

The organizing committee consisted of a team of the academic faculty from GGME together with the former and present presidents of PKG, i.e.

- Zbigniew Sikora, the chairperson and the current chair of GGME,
- Zbigniew Mlynarek, the vice chairperson and the immediate past President of PKG,
- Zbigniew Lechowicz, current President of PKG,
- Kazimierz Gwizdala, PKG secretary,
- Bohdan Zadroga, professor at the Gdansk University of Technology and the immediate past chair of GGME

and scientific secretaries:

- Lech Balachowski,
- Tadeusz Brzozowski,
- Marcin Cudny,
- Andrzej Danilewicz,
- Angelika Duszynska,
- Grzegorz Horodecki,
- Adam Krasinski,
- Arkadiusz Kryczallo,
- Krzysztof Malesinski,
- Rafal Ossowski,
- Mariusz Wyrosiak.

Interest in the subject matter of the conference surpassed expectations of the organizers. Altogether 124 papers were submitted, which after 2 peer-reviews were published in bound form in printed conference materials, and in the electronic form enclosed on compact disk of the Proceedings (see: www.11bc.pg.gda.pl). Reviews were done by members of the International Scientific Committee and selected experts from Poland.

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The International Scientific Committee included:

- Eugeniusz Dembicki - as chairperson,
- Anne Braaten,
- Hainz Brandl,
- Valters Celmiņš,
- Liudas Furmonavičius,
- Hakan Garin,
- Georg Heerten,
- Vyacheslav Ilyichev,
- Michele Jamiołkowski,
- Suzanne Lacasse,
- Tom Lunne,
- Silvano Marchetti,
- Rainer Massarsch,
- Manfred Nußbaumer,
- Antonia Soriano,
- Jørgen Steinfeld,
- Tarmo Tarkkio,
- Hardi Torn,
- William Van Impe,
- Wojciech Wolski.

An international group of experts in the field of geotechnical engineering performed the advisory role in the organization of the conference:

- Zbigniew Mlynarek, as the chairperson of the Committee and President of PKG,
- Pedro Seco e Pinto, President of ISSMGE,
- Roger Frank, vice President of ISSMGE for Europe,
- Neil R. Taylor, General Secretary of ISSMGE,
- Mait Mets, Chairperson of the Organizing Committee of the 10th Baltic Sea Geotechnical Conference,
- Meindert Van, Chairperson of Technical Committee 1 (TC-1) ISSMGE,
- Maria Manassero, Chairperson TC-5 ISSMGE,
- Paul Mayne, Chairperson TC-16 ISSMGE,
- Rolf Katzenbach, Chairperson TC-18 ISSMGE,
- Zygmunt Meyer, Full Professor at the Szczecin Technical University.

Thematically the conference was divided into eight problem sessions:

1. aspects of practical applications of geotechnics in maritime engineering,
2. laboratory tests,
3. field tests and methods of soil characterisation,
4. bedding of onshore and offshore structures,
5. influence of climatic changes on the technology of embankments and shoreline protections,
6. theoretical solutions and numerical modeling,
7. geotechnics and the environment,
8. geotechnical standards and recommendations in maritime engineering.

The subject matter of session 5 concerned issues being an object of workshop within the frames of activity of Technical Committee 1 (TC 1), which was a part of debate of the conference.

Two separate sessions constituted presentations of the sponsoring companies and session of the so-called Poster Presentations. Altogether there were 10 sessions, in which 79 papers were presented, selected by the Scientific Committee for the oral presentation.

The structure of the conference ran according to plan established by the advisory group:

- presentation of two panel lectures,
- specially invited lecture, and
- presentations of selected papers (given by authors).

Chairpersons of individual sessions were responsible for the formal order of the session, two designated experts supervised discussion of the subject matter of the session.

Such a form of discussion and presentation proved to be very effective - a majority of participants of the conference expressed this opinion.

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Taking advantage of the participation of many members of Technical Committees of ISSMGE, during the conference the following separate meetings took place:

- of Technical Committee TC-16, under the leadership of the Prof. P. Mayne (USA),
- of Technical Committee TC-1, with the participation of the chairman Dr. M.A. Van (Netherlands).

Under the leadership of the Prof. R. Frank, a meeting of the representatives of the Baltic Countries was held for the purpose of selecting the country for the next, 12th Geotechnical Conference of the Baltic Countries. The unanimous choice was the German Committee for Geotechnics (www.dggt.de; Deutsche Gesellschaft für Geotechnik e.V.) under the leadership of Prof. Manfred Nußbaumer, which the selected accepted with great satisfaction.

In accord with the custom of numerous prestigious conferences, at the end of the first day a vocal-instrumental concerto was presented with the participation of the orchestra of the Chopin Baltic Philharmonic Orchestra under the management of P. Fiugajski. A young mezzo-soprano Karolina Maria Sikora, the winner of many prestigious vocal competitions at home and abroad, presented an interesting vocal program. It seemed that the New Auditorium of the Gdansk University of Technology is a room highly appropriate (acoustics) not only for didactics, but also for a pleasant philharmonic concert, particularly at the end of first, arduous day of the conference.



Photo 3. Vocal-instrumental concerto with the participation of the orchestra of the Chopin Baltic Philharmonic Orchestra, P. Fiugajski (conductor) and K. M. Sikora (mezzo-soprano) at the New Auditorium of the Gdansk University of Technology, see also www.11bc.pg.gda.pl. Photo Dr. R. Ossowski

Beside the scientific program participants had an opportunity to make themselves acquainted with the rich offer of exhibitors, representing different businesses of the building industry. Representatives of construction companies had the opportunity for direct presentation of the newest technologies to the conference participants, which resulted in new contacts and creative ideas for further cooperation and advancement of the technology. Over 200m² of exhibition space was made available to 26 exhibitors. The conference participants showed great interest in the exhibition, which pleased not only the organizers, but above all the exhibitors, because many discussions transformed into agreements about close cooperation.

With great interest were met the next two conference events, the banquet at the restaurant of the Hotel Mercure Hevelius in Gdansk (with the participation of all conference attendees and persons accompanying them at the cost of the organizers), and the technical trip on a “pirate” ship on the closing day of the conference down the Motlawa river to the Bay of Gdansk in the direction of the Deep Water *Container Terminal* (DCT) Gdansk than to the wooden pier in Sopot. Historic and newly created solutions and structures of bedding of harbour installations were shown to participants.

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Photo. 4. Group of the conference participants after leaving the “pirate” ship (in the background) at the pier in Sopot, see also www.11bc.pg.gda.pl. Photo Dr. R. Ossowski

The 11th Geotechnical Conference of the Baltic Countries could not end with such a success, if not for the understanding and generosity of the industry. The Organizing Committee wants to express its gratitude to the companies sponsoring the conference - without their participation the organization of this important for the region scientific event would not be possible.

Interested persons are invited to visit the website: www.11bc.pg.gda.pl, where the unabridged information about the conference is provided, together with information about the sponsoring companies, and information on how to purchase conference materials with the full text of the published papers (versions *.pdf).

Reported by Prof. Z. Sikora