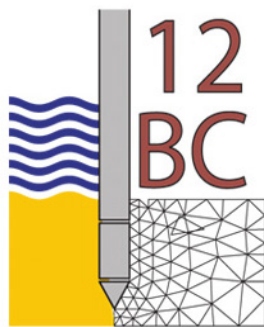


NEWS ON RECENT CONFERENCE



12th Baltic Sea Geotechnical Conference Infrastructure in the Baltic Sea Region

Rostock, Germany | 31 May – 2 June 2012



Reported by

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Between May 31 and June 2, 2012, the 12th Baltic Sea Geotechnical Conference was held at the Stadthalle in Rostock, Germany. The conference was organized by the German Geotechnical Society (DGGT) in cooperation with the University of Rostock under the auspices of the International Society for Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering (ISSMGE).

This series of conferences is the most important geotechnical event for the Baltic Sea Region. In former times the conference was a regional Baltic conference to bring knowledge within soil mechanics, geotechnical engineering and related areas to northeastern countries. It was a long way after the fall of the iron curtain before the eastern and western countries really came together.

In 2008 the conference was for the first time developed to be a platform for the whole Baltic Sea Region with the main purpose to provide a forum where researchers and practitioners can report and discuss their ideas and experiences with other engineering and research groups on an international level. After the 11th Baltic Sea Geotechnical Conference the decision was made to bring the next conference to Germany. Thus, following the success of the previous 11th Baltic Sea Geotechnical Conference held in Gdansk in 2008, the 12th Baltic Sea Geotechnical Conference had to fulfill great expectations.

The main theme of the 12th Baltic Sea Conference was “Infrastructure in the Baltic Sea Region”.

In the forefront a total of 145 papers were submitted, and two reviews were necessary to bring together 47 papers of a high level dealing with maritime engineering, geotechnical problems of ports, offshore and onshore structures and wind energy.

The Organizing Committee carried out a thorough work in preparing a highly interesting program. This committee consisted of:

Fokke Saathoff (Chairman)
Martin Achmus
Jürgen Grabe
Georg Heerten
Michael Heibaum
Kirsten Laackmann
Werner Möbius
Werner Richwien
Joachim Stahlmann
Hans-Heinrich Witte

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The conference would not have been so successful without the International Scientific Committee that consisted of the following members:

Georg Heerten (*Chairman*), *Germany*
Fokke Saathoff, *Germany*
Zbigniew Lechowicz, *Poland*
Zbigniew Sikora, *Chairman of the 11th Baltic Sea Geotechnical Conference, Poland*
Anders T. Andersen, *Denmark*
Vidar Gjelsvik, *Norway*
Stefan Aronsson, *Sweden*
Jouko Viitala, *Finland*
Vyacheslav Ilyichev, *Russia*
Peeter Talviste, *Estonia*
Valters Celmins, *Latvia*
Liudas Furmonavicius, *Lithuania*
Meindert Van, *Chairman of TC "Dykes and Levees", Netherlands*
Vladimir Ulitsky, *Chairman of TC "Soil-Structure", Russia*
Michael Heibaum, *Chairman of TC "Scour and Erosion", Germany*
Mario Manassero, *Chairman of TC "Environmental Geotechnics", Italy*

The conference was supplemented by the International Advisory Committee consisting of:

Jean-Louis Briaud, *ISSMGE President*
Ivan Vanicek, *ISSMGE Vice President Europe*
Neil R. Taylor, *ISSMGE Secretary General*
Suzanne Lacasse, *ISSMGE Technical Oversight Committee*
Manfred Nußbaumer, *Past Chairman of DGGT*
Zbigniew Mlynarek, *Past President of the Polish Committee on Geotechnics*
Hans-Heinrich Witte, *President of Federal Waterways Directorate North, Germany*
Hans Peter Dücker, *Chairman of HTG (German Port Technology Association)*
Oliver Schild, *EnBW Erneuerbare Energien GmbH, Offshore Windenergie, Germany*
Manfred Zeiler, *BSH Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency of Germany*

The conference attracted more than 210 researchers, practitioners and students, and most of them were from countries in the Baltic Sea Region (Photo 1). However, the conference attracted some participants from many other countries like Japan, the USA and Brazil.

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It was a special honor for the conference that Professor Jean-Louis Briaud, President of the ISSMGE, and Professor Ivan Vanicek, Vice President Europe of ISSMGE, attended the conference.



Photo 1 Attentive listeners of one of the technical presentations

In addition to the conference, an exhibition covered an area of 170 m² in the foyer of the Stadthalle Rostock and displayed some of the geotechnical equipments and services available for researchers and professional engineers. Twenty three exhibitors presented their latest products and developments.

Before the official start, the event began in the evening of Wednesday, May 30, with a special kind of highlight. To encourage the young geotechnical students and engineers to develop a broader scope in geotechnical engineering, a meeting between the ISSMGE President Professor Jean-Louis Briaud and geotechnical students and young participants took place (Photo 2).



Photo 2 Professor Briaud among the young participants and students from Poland during the “Meeting with the President”

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Altogether 46 students took the opportunity to come to Rostock; 29 from German universities of Darmstadt, Berlin, Weimar, Hannover and Rostock and even 17 from Polish universities of Szczecin and Gdansk. For about one and a half hour Professor Briaud talked with the young participants about the ISSMGE, heard about what they had to say, shared his view with them and the students were able to ask questions and exchange ideas (Photo 3).



Photo 3 Group photo of Professor Briaud and Professor Heerten with some of the students from German universities

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This meeting was followed by another highlight, the Mercer lecture. The Mercer lecture is named after Dr. Frank Brian Mercer, inventor of original geosynthetic products. It is a biennial lecture that is sponsored by Tensor International with the aim to help promote information exchange between the geotechnical engineering profession and the geosynthetics industry. In Rostock, the Mercer lecture for the period 2012/2013 under the title of “Geosynthetics for waterways and flood protection structures - controlling the interaction of water and soil” was presented by Dr.-Ing. Michael Heibaum, BAW (Federal Waterways Engineering and Research Institute), Karlsruhe, Germany (Photo 4).



Photo 4 Mercer Lecture presented by Dr.-Ing. Michael Heibaum, BAW

The German Geotechnical Society supported the young participants by organizing their journey to Rostock and providing free admission to the meeting with the president and the Mercer Lecture on Wednesday.

The welcome reception and the opening of the exhibition in the evening completed the first day.

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The second day started with the official opening ceremony. Welcoming addresses were given by Professor Heerten, Chairman of the DGGT, as well as Professor Wolfgang Schareck, Rector of the University of Rostock, and Roland Methling, Mayor of the City of Rostock, followed by the welcoming speeches of Professor Jean-Louis Briaud, President of the ISSMGE, and Professor Ivan Vanicek, Vice President for Europe of ISSMGE (Photo 5).



Photo 5 Welcoming addresses during the official opening of the Conference

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Classical music, performed by students of the Hochschule für Musik und Theater, Rostock, created a pleasant atmosphere.

Following the opening ceremony, Keynote lectures were presented by Dr. Manfred Zeiler (Germany) about offshore wind energy and Project Manager Jens Kammer (Denmark) who described the geotechnical investigations concerning the Fehmarnbelt Fixed Link.

Forty seven technical presentations were given in the following six sessions on Thursday and Friday:

- Traffic Infrastructure
- Research and development projects
- Constructions in soft subsoil
- Harbour construction
- Coast protection
- Foundations for offshore wind energy plants

Speakers from 13 countries talked about their experiences in the field of geotechnical engineering and presented case studies. The conference provided an opportunity for the exchange of experiences and information on theoretical and practical issues.

Presentations about traffic infrastructure showed that there are similar problems in Poland and Germany and that they can benefit from the other's experiences.

Land reclamation in harbour construction was an important aspect of the conference in the context of the problems associated with settlement, ground water level and creep in sand and also with regards to climatic changes.

One of the other major important topics of the conference was the increase in generating capacity derived from wind energy over the next few years in the Baltic Sea Region. The whole session dealt with gravity based foundations, lab, chemical and mechanical tests, filter layer and geotextile sand filled containers and different versions of wind energy plants.

In several papers the increasing use of Geosynthetics in Geotechnical / Hydraulic and Coastal Engineering were highlighted.

After each presentation the participants were given the opportunity to ask questions to get a more complete picture of the themes. A lively discussion developed about topics like consolidation processes, soil conditions or geotextile layers.

Chair persons for each session were responsible for the formal order of the session.

The scientific program was complemented by two separate TC Meetings which also included oral presentations:

- Meeting of ISSMGE Technical Committee "Dykes and Levees"
- Meeting of ISSMGE Technical Committee "Soil Structure"

In the closing ceremony, Professor Vanicek invited the delegates to various other conferences in the Baltic Sea area and it was revealed that the next Baltic Sea Geotechnical Conference will be held in Lithuania in 2016.

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Apart from the interesting technical program and the exhibition, a well organized social events program was also provided. The welcome reception which took place in the foyer of the Stadthalle Rostock on Wednesday gave the attendees the opportunity to get into contact with other attendees or exhibitors. Furthermore, the participants could enjoy a technical visit to the Seaport of Rostock and had the opportunity to go on a night-watchman walk to visit cultural and historical monuments in Rostock as well as to visit an organ concert in the St. Marien Church in Rostock.

A Conference Dinner was held in the evening of May 31st and offered a tasteful selection of German cuisine with regional accents and a special performance of the Shanty chorus “Breitling” at the beginning and Jazz music during the dinner (Photos 6 and 7).



Photo 6 Shanty chorus “Breitling”



Photo 7 Conference Dinner

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The Conference Dinner took place at the Yachthafenresidenz “Hohe Düne”, a top-class hotel in Warnemünde, a district of Rostock situated in the north of the city, where the river Warnow flows into the Baltic Sea. Located on the roof the restaurant offered a magnificent view of the spectacular cruise terminal with passing cruise ships and yachts.

The technical visit to the Seaport of Rostock on the closing day of the conference, showing the extension by seaside land reclamation for the example of the maritime trade territory III, was the crowning event and the perfect end of this remarkable conference (Photo 8).



Photo 8 Participants of the Technical visit to the Seaport of Rostock

The accepted papers were published on a CD which was distributed at the conference. Further CDs can be ordered. Please visit our website www.12bsgc.de for information.