

Fifty years of regional science congresses in Europe: plenty to celebrate

Peter Batey

**Lever Professor of Town and Regional Planning
University of Liverpool**

1909

2009

My approach

- Europeans have made major contributions to regional science, laying the foundations for location theory and the analysis of regional development; however, a detailed survey of these contributions is beyond the scope of this presentation.
- Instead, the focus will be upon the European regional science congress, the institution created fifty years ago to enable us to present our own research, learn from that of others, and initiate collaboration with fellow regional scientists

Structure of presentation

- The first European Congress, in The Hague, 1961
- Isard's 1960 European tour to promote regional science
- Fifty years of congresses 1: 1960s and 1970s
- The setting up of ERSA and the EOC in 1982
- Fifty years of congresses 2: 1980s, 1990s and 2000s
- Some personal reflections on European Congresses

The first European Congress

- Held at the **Institute of Social Studies in The Hague**; twelve months earlier the Institute had hosted a 'pilot' regional science conference
- Programme **arranged by Walter Isard** in association with Jacques Thijsse at the Institute
- **122 delegates** (3 women) attended, from 29 countries: nobody currently at the Jonkoping Congress was there: but Walter Christaller, Stan Czamanski,, Per Holm, Roland Artle, Tom Reiner, Antoni Kuklinski (and others) were

*Program Regional Science Association
Institute of Social Studies, 27 Molenstraat, Hague, Holland,
September 4-7, 1961*

*(Sessions on September 7 are joint with the Commission on Methods of
Economic Regionalization, International Geographical Union)*

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1961

9:00 A.M. Registration

10:30 A.M. Subject: *Comprehensive Regional and Economic Planning*

Chairman: *E. de Vries*, Institute of Social Studies, Hague

Paper: 1. Planning and Regional Science Techniques
W. Isard and T. Reiner, University of Pennsylvania, USA

Discussants: *P. Bernard*, Paris; *A. Kuklinski*, Institute of Geography, Warsaw

2:30 P.M. Subject: *Studies of Metropolitan Regions*

Chairman: *F. Rosenfeld*, Society of Applied Mathematics, Paris

Papers: 1. The Use of Interchange Models in the Study of Metropolitan
Economies
R. Artle, University of California, USA
2. Concept of a Planning Atlas for a Metropolitan Region
A. Kühn, Akademie für Raumforschung und Landesplanung,
Germany

Discussants: *J. Piperoglou*, Doxiadis Associates, Athens; *R. Trias Fargas*,
University of Barcelona, Spain

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1961

9:30 A.M. Subject: *Industrial Location Studies for a System of Regions*

Chairman: *S. Lombardini*, Instituto Ricerche Economico-Sociali, Torino

Papers: 1. Spatial Distribution of Industry
J. Tinbergen and H. C. Bos, Netherlands Institute of Economics
2. Statistical Explanations of the Relative Shift of Manufacturing
Employment among Regions of the United States
V. Fuchs, Ford Foundation, USA

3. The Model of Optimization of Foreign Trade Policy in a
Planned Economy
W. Trzeciakowski, Committee on Space-Economy and
Regional Planning, Warsaw

Discussants: *P. Holm*, Stockholm; *M. Verhulst*, Paris

2:30 P.M. Subject: *Social Accounting and Income Analysis for Regions*

Chairman: To be announced

Papers: 1. Regional Distribution of National Wealth in Yugoslavia
I. Vinski, Institute of Economics, Zagreb, Yugoslavia
2. Regional Income Distribution in Spain, by Region of Origin
and Destination
J. R. Lasuen, University of Barcelona, Spain

Communication: Problems in Constructing an Interregional Input-Output
Table for Greece
S. Geronimakis, Ministry of Coordination, Athens

Discussant: *W. Hochwald*, Washington University, USA

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1961

9:30 A.M. Subject: *Programming Economic Development in Regions*

Chairman: *J. Thijssen*, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague

Papers: 1. Development Policies for Southern Italy
H. Chenery, Stanford University, USA
2. The Propulsive Industry and the Propulsive Region
F. Perroux, Institute of Applied Economic Science, Paris

Discussants: *J. Boudeville*, University of Lyons, France; *C. Doussis*,
Ministry of Coordination, Athens

2:30 P.M. Subject: *Spatial Impact of Transport Improvement*

Chairman: *V. Whitney*, University of Pennsylvania, USA

Papers: 1. The Analog of Comparative Method in Economic Geography:
Two Models for Predicting Future Use
E. L. Ullman, University of Washington, Seattle, USA

2. Regional Input-Output Model of Shikoku Area and Economic Effect of the Proposed Seto Great Bridge
F. Uyemura, Kagawa University, Japan

Discussion from the floor

5:00 P.M. Meeting of the members of the European sections of the Regional Science Association

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1961

(Meetings joint with the Commission on Methods of Economic Regionalization, International Geographical Union)

9:30 A.M. Subject: *Concepts of Region and Regional Structure*

Chairman: *S. Leszczycki*, Institute of Geography, Warsaw, Poland

- Papers: 1. Theoretical Problems in the Development of Economic Region
K. Dziewonski, Institute of Geography, Warsaw, Poland
2. Regional Analysis and the Geographic Concept of Region
A. Wrobel, Institute of Geography, Warsaw, Poland

Communication: Regional Input-Output Analysis and Development Programming for Italy
V. Cao-Pinna, Bank of Sicily, Rome

Discussants: *E. Panas*, Ministry of Coordination, Athens; Members of the Commission on Methods of Economic Regionalization of the I.G.U.

2:30 P.M. Subject: *Industrial Complex Analysis*

Chairman: To be discussed

- Papers: 1. Large Areal Complexes of Forces in the Soviet Union
J. G. Shaushkin, Moscow University, USSR

Discussants: *M. Verburg*, Economic Technological Institute, Holland; Members of the Commission on Methods of Economic Regionalization of the IGU

Summary Paper: Regional Analysis: Retrospect and Prospect
W. Isard and T. Reimer, University of Pennsylvania, USA

The first European Congress

- Held at the **Institute of Social Studies in The Hague**; twelve months earlier the Institute had hosted a 'pilot' regional science conference
- Programme **arranged by Walter Isard** in association with Jacques Thijssse at the Institute
- **122 delegates** (3 women) attended, from 29 countries: nobody currently at the Jonkoping Congress was there: but Walter Christaller, Stan Czamanski,, Per Holm, Roland Artle, Tom Reiner, Antoni Kuklinski (and others) were
- Format is interesting: just **15 papers**, all of them invited by Isard, great emphasis on in-depth discussion; all sessions were plenary sessions, increasing the opportunities for trans-disciplinary dialogue and discussion
- Mix of **American and European speakers**, chairs and discussants
- **Summary paper** presented by Isard and Tom Reiner, later to become a tradition at European Congresses, until they became too large
- **No social programme**: Isard believed that time was valuable and that scientific discussion should be given precedence

Isard's 1960 Tour to Promote Regional Science



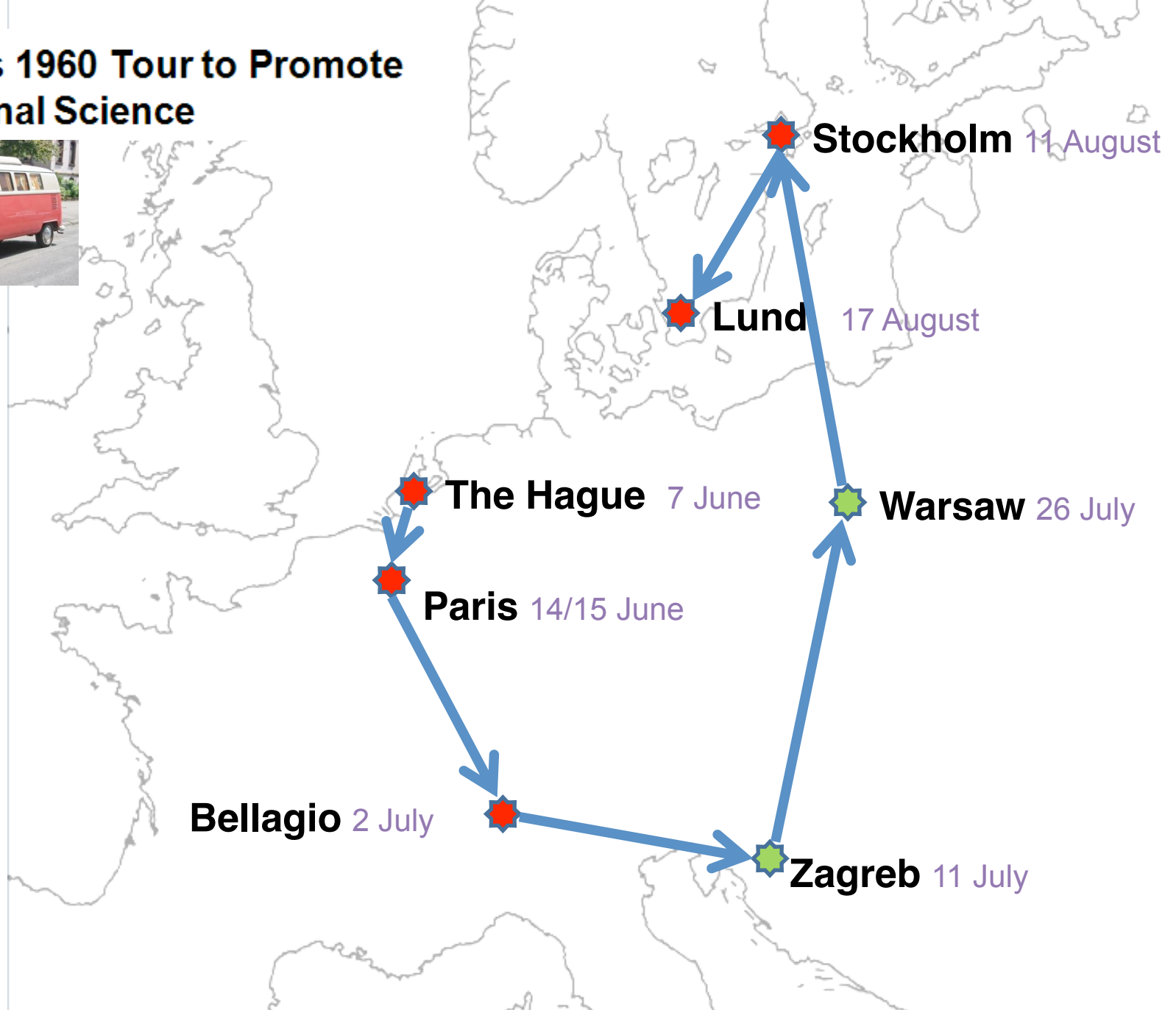
An ideal time to promote regional science and the Regional Science Association:

- Isard's *Methods in Regional Science* published
- North American base was by now well established
- RSA constitution now allowed for the formation of sections



During the summer of 1960, Isard brought his large family to Europe and toured the continent in a VW microbus, stopping off for conferences along the way.

Isard's 1960 Tour to Promote Regional Science



Isard's 1960 tour to promote regional science

Small gatherings, often piggy-backed on to larger conferences, emphasis on open-minded, in-depth discussion and interaction between Americans and Europeans

- *Institute of Social Studies, The Hague*: analytical techniques for regional development policy
- *Institute of Applied Economics, Paris*: regional economic analysis
- *Bellagio*: regional social accounting and other techniques for regional analysis
- *Institute of Economics, Zagreb*: regional science techniques in planned economies
- *Institute of Geography, Warsaw*
- *International Geographical Congress, Stockholm*: inter-regional linear programming
- *Royal University, Lund*: problems of urban theory and analysis; symposium on problems in urban geography

Bellagio Conference 1960

- Arguably the most significant of the many conferences Isard attended
- Organised by the Division for Areas in the Process of Economic Development, in the European Productivity Agency as a response to requests for study and action from Greece, Italy, Spain, Turkey and Yugoslavia
- Led to widely-circulated book: *Regional Economic Planning: Techniques for Analysis of Less Developed Areas* (Isard and Cumberland)

Fifty years of congresses 1: 1960s and 1970s

1960s

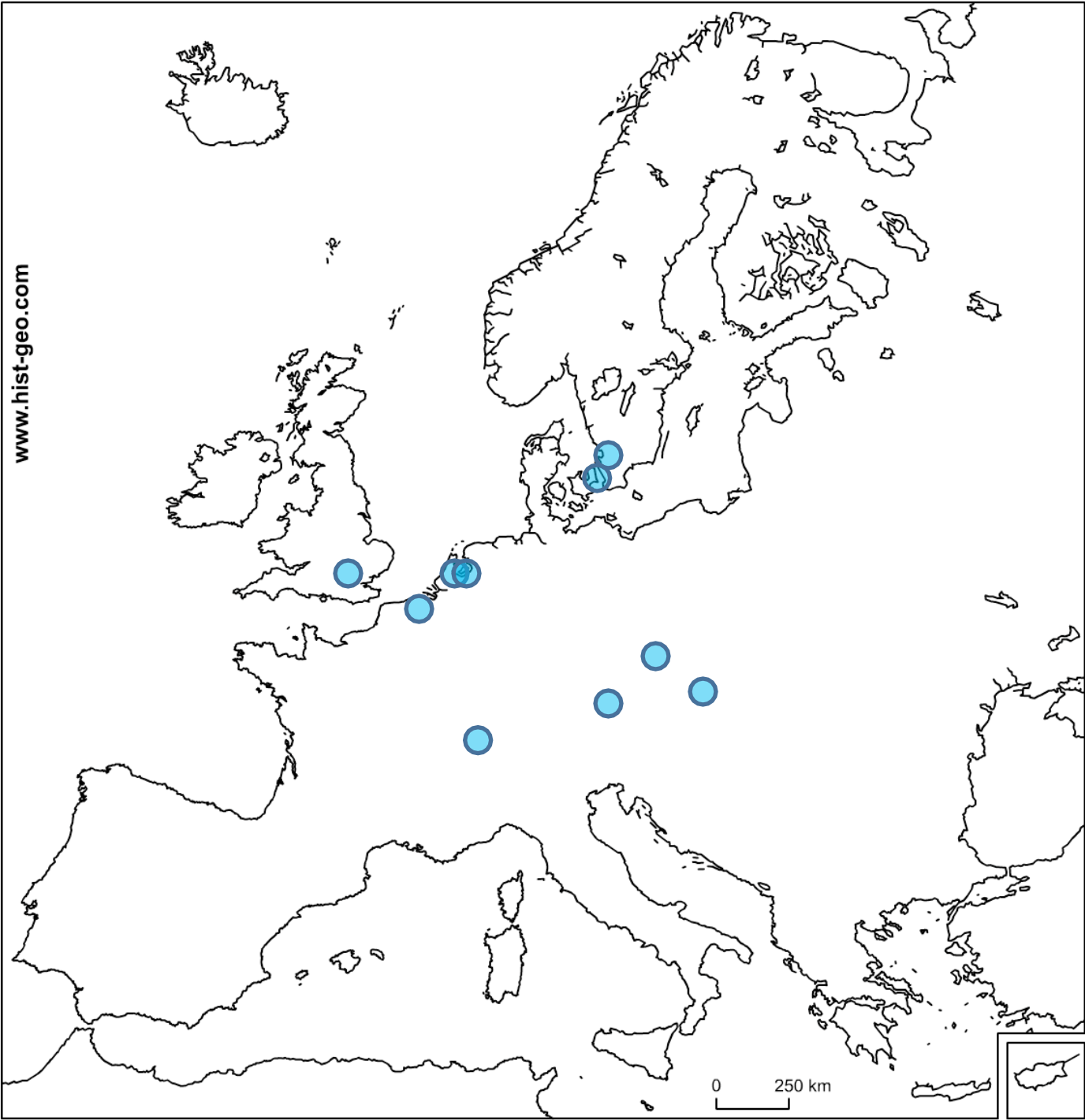
Isard's work in laying the foundations for the European Congress pays off: gradually research networks begin to develop and strengthen

- The congress programme is organised from Philadelphia, by Isard himself, later assisted by David Boyce; it is a system of patronage
- Eastern Europe is consciously included despite difficulties of politics, communication and finance: 1965 Krakow and 1968 Budapest when Russian participation increases markedly
- Choice of congress venues is influenced by a combination of accessibility and by Isard's efforts to encourage the formation of new RSA sections

Congress
Venues

1961-
1970

● 1960s



1970s

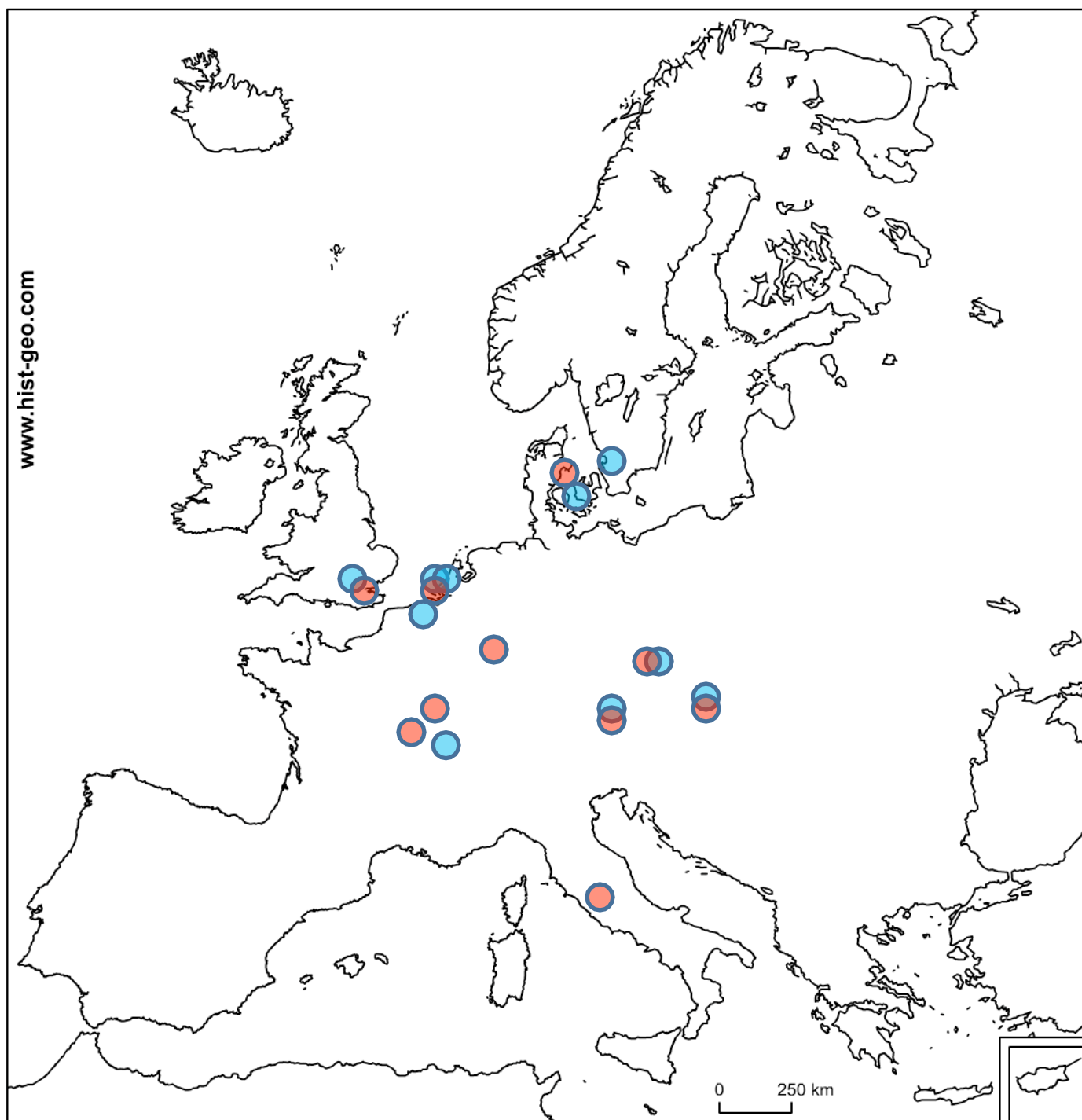
European Congresses continue to be organised by Isard and Boyce, up until the London Congress of 1979, which was the first to be wholly organised by Europeans

- Congresses attract upwards of 150 delegates, only a relatively small proportion of whom present papers; at London in 1979 there are just two parallel sessions and 48 papers
- The Rome Congress of 1971 is the first congress held in southern Europe; there is a tendency to re-visit venues that have been used previously, such as Krakow, Budapest, London and Vienna
- Summer institutes introduced (in 1970) as a second major RSA activity in Europe

1961-1980

www.hist-geo.com

- 1960s
- 1970s



The setting up of ERSA and the EOC in 1982

Formation of the European Organising Committee

- A new organisation was needed to make arrangements for European Congresses, now that responsibility had passed to Europeans
- A **core group** was formed, with Peter Nijkamp as chair and Paul van Rompuy as secretary
- The core group developed a **constitution** for a European Organising Committee (providing general strategic guidance) and transformed itself into an Executive Group, responsible for detailed planning of congresses and summer institutes
- The **European Organising Committee** met for the first time at the Groningen Congress in 1982
- Subsequently the **Executive Group** was renamed the **EOC** and **EOC** became known as **ERSAC**

First draft of the European Organising Committee Constitution, 1980

FIRST DRAFT

CONSTITUTION OF THE EUROPEAN ORGANISING COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

Article I Name

The name of the body shall be the European Organising
Committee of the Regional Science Association

Article II Objectives and Scope

The Regional Science Association is an international association for the advancement of regional analysis and areal studies. Within this international association, the European Organising Committee shall operate as an objective, scientific body without political, social, financial or nationalistic bias. Its main objective shall be to foster exchange of ideas at the European level and to promote studies focusing on the region, and the utilisation of tools, methods and theoretical frameworks specifically designed for regional analysis, as well as

Proposal

CONSTITUTION OF THE EUROPEAN ORGANISING COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

Article I - Name

The name of the body shall be the European Organising Committee of the Regional Science Association.

Article II - Objectives and Scope

The Regional Science Association is an international association for the advancement of regional analysis and areal studies. Within this international association, the European Organising Committee shall operate as an objective, scientific body without political, social, financial or nationalistic bias. Its main objectives shall be to foster exchange of ideas at the European level and to promote studies focusing in the region, and the utilisation of tools, methods and theoretical frameworks specifically designed for regional analysis, as well as concepts, procedures and analytical techniques of the various social and other sciences. The European Organising Committee shall support these objectives by promoting acquaintance and discussion among members of the Regional Science Association and with scholars in related fields, by encouraging the publication of scholarly studies, and by performing services to aid the advancement of the Association and the field of regional science.

The role of the EOC was defined

The following points were agreed concerning the role of the EOC - some of which are reproduced in the minutes:

- The role of the EOC is to share responsibility for the organisation of the annual RSA European Congress and Summer Institutes and to serve as a network for the communication of information about RSA activities in Europe.
- The EOC is to consist of an Executive Committee (sometimes referred to formerly as the 'core group') and Section Representatives (dropping the former distinction between Advisory Board and National Section Representatives).
- The Executive Committee should serve as an active executive working group responsible for ensuring the efficient organisation of European Congresses and Summer Institutes. It should be small in size, and have a stable membership. Membership should rotate and members withdraw after a reasonable period of time. A reasonable geographical representation of European RSA sections should be achieved, in part, through co-option of local organisers of the annual congress.
- Section Representatives should ensure that information about congress dates, themes, arrangements etc. is communicated to section members as swiftly as possible.
- Section Representatives should serve as a means of channelling the views of sections to the Executive Committee about possible Congress themes or topics and should encourage suggestions for papers or related contributions, perhaps on a particular theme which might constitute a coherent congress session. Similarly, they might draw attention to new work which would benefit from exposure at a European meeting.

SECRET

REGIONAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION
EUROPEAN ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the First Meeting of the European Organising Committee held at the University of Groningen on Friday, 27th August, 1982.

Present: Seppo Aho, David Boyce, Peter Brown (Secretary), Edwin von Böventer, Riccardo Cappellin, George Chiotis, Vedia Dokmeci, Jan van Est, Peter Friedrich, Geoffrey Hewings, Walter Isard, Andrew Isserman, Peter Klekner, Piotr Korcelli, Peter Nijkamp (Chairman), Jan Oosterhaven, Karin Paschel, Michael Sonis.

Action

1. EOC structure, responsibilities and appointment of members

- 1.1 PN outlined role of EOC as sharing responsibility for organisation of European Congresses and Summer Institutes and serving as network to communicate information about RSA activities in Europe. A representative should be nominated by each section to serve on EOC. Currently not clear that all represented satisfactorily and how representatives nominated: problem as sections organised differently.
- 1.2 Agreed PB to write to current representatives to clarify above and other points raised below. PB
- 1.3 PKo noted problem re role of RSA/section membership as section members not necessarily members of RSA (e.g. Spain 400 section members - 26 members of RSA). RSA members automatically members of section but GC noted section may not wish to accept them as some seek to join simply to further careers. PF suggested political problem if member outside own country. DB confirmed RSA open to all and section constitutions approved by RSA Council.

Executive Committee then = EOC now

REGIONAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION
EUROPEAN ORGANISING COMMITTEE

RECEIVED
SEP 30 1982

Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting held at the University of Groningen on Tuesday, 24th August, 1982.

Present: Peter Batey, David Boyce, Peter Brown (Secretary), Edwin von Elvert, Rolf Funck, Geoffrey Hewings, Walter Isard, Peter Nijkamp (Chairman), Jan Oosterhaven

Apologies: Walter Buhr, Peter Friedrich, Ian Masser, Paul van Rompuy

Action

1. Groningen Congress Arrangements

- 1.1 PN extended warmest thanks of the Executive Committee to JO and his local Organising Committee members for all of their efforts in connection with the Congress.

2. Future Meetings

- 2.1 PN introduced discussion reporting receipt of letters from Courbis and Bailly, Capellin and Kadas offering to accommodate congresses in 1983-Poitiers, 1984-Milano and 1985-Budapest respectively. Discussion focused on 1983 proposal based on Courbis and Bailly responses. Poitiers suggested as already planned as venue for ASRDLF meeting as University celebrating 550th anniversary, Congress to follow French meeting.

1980s

Working with the newly formed EOC, local congress organisers are encouraged to inject their own distinctive flavour; as a result, congresses become more varied and experimental

- The Barcelona Congress (1981) sets new standards for the social programme, but somewhat to the detriment of the scientific programme
- The Groningen Congress (1982) is notable for the introduction of technical excursions
- The Poitiers Congress (1983) is a bold, partially-successful, attempt to combine a European Congress with the annual conference of the French-speaking section
- The Cambridge Congress (1989) is the first to be wholly residential, in the historic setting of St John's College

1961-
1990

- 1960s
- 1970s
- 1980s

Fifty years of congresses 2: 1980s, 1990s and 2000s

1990s

A period of re-structuring and growth

- The RSAI is re-organised as three supra-regional groupings, one of which is ERSA; in Europe there is much debate about how much autonomy each of these groupings should have; some favour a looser federation, cutting historical ties with North America
- Under president Juan Cuadrado Roura, ERSA undergoes rapid growth and many new sections are formed, particularly in southern and eastern Europe
- A much wider geographical range of congress venues emerges, including Lisbon, Moscow and Dublin
- Congress papers are made available to delegates on a CD Rom, from the Zurich Congress (1996) onwards
- From the Vienna Congress (1998) onwards, congress organisation becomes largely electronic, with the use of purpose designed software developed by Gunther Maier

1961-
2000

A map of Europe showing the locations of sampling sites. The sites are marked with colored circles (yellow, red, blue, green) across various countries, including Ireland, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, and the Balkans. A scale bar in the bottom right corner indicates a distance of 250 km. The website address www.hist-geo.com is visible in the top left corner.

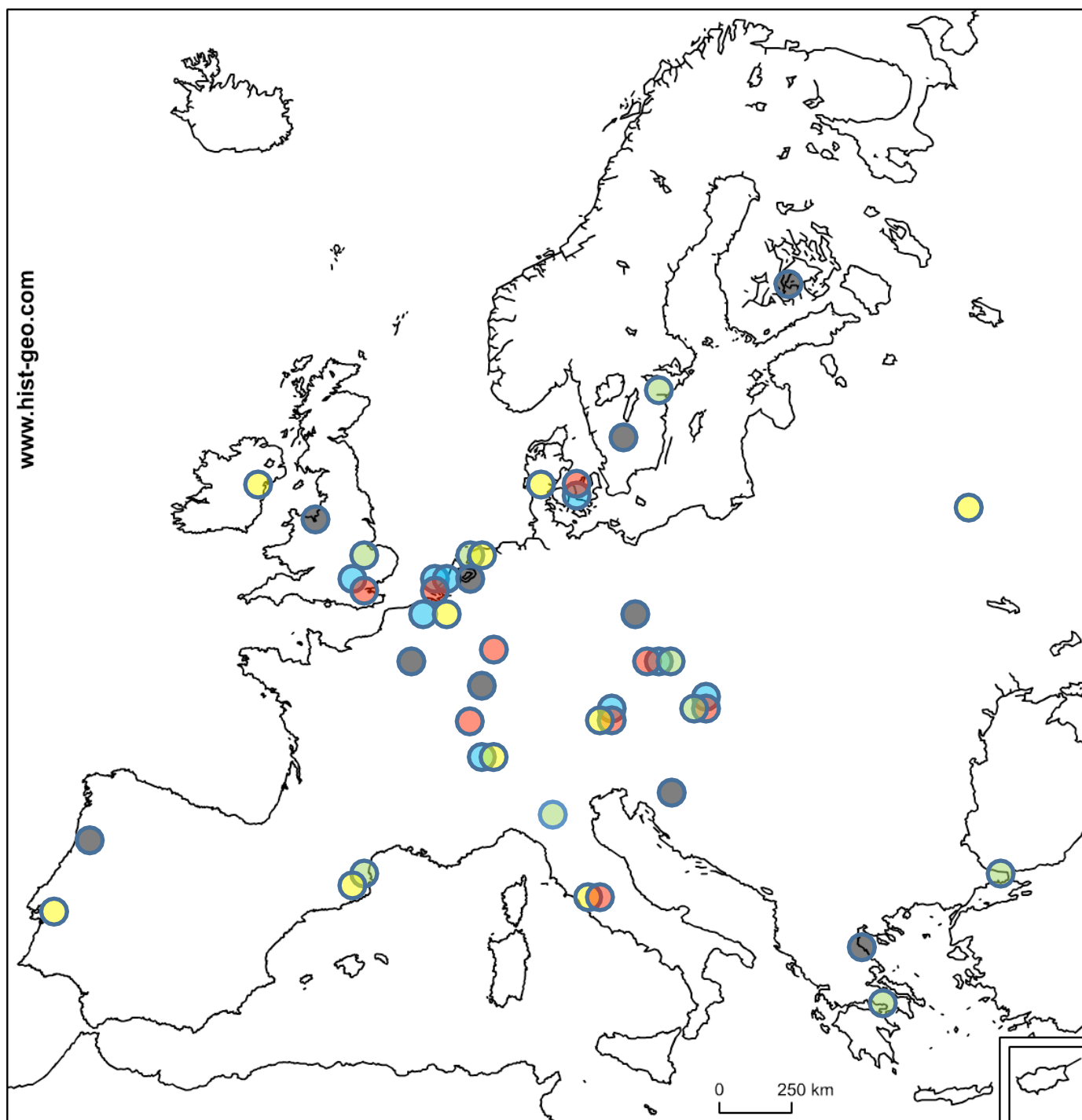
0 250 km

2000s

ERSA makes considerable progress in becoming more professional, responding to an increasing demand for a more modern and efficient organisation with more membership services

- RSAI headquarters moves to Europe and the principle of universal membership is adopted; this means that more people are now within the RSAI fold
- The scale of European Congresses increases substantially, with congresses at Amsterdam (2005), Liverpool (2008) and Jonkoping (2010) breaking all records: 700+ papers, 26+ parallel sessions
- Congress attendance is more balanced in terms of gender and age

1961-
2010



Who attends European Congresses?

Rank	Country	Participations	Percent
1	Spain	423	16,3%
2	The Netherlands	247	9,5%
3	United Kingdom	214	8,3%
4	Italy	210	8,1%
5	Germany	193	7,5%
6	Finland	128	5,0%
7	USA	103	4,0%
8	Austria	100	3,9%
9	Turkey	90	3,5%
10	Russia	78	3,0%

Based on six years of data, 1998-2003, van Dijk and Maier (2004)

Do they come back for more?

Top 12 countries: Participants versus Participation

Country	Participants	Participations	Index of Part.
Austria	62	100	1,61
The Netherlands	154	247	1,60
Finland	80	128	1,60
Russia	51	78	1,53
Switzerland	40	61	1,53
Sweden	51	76	1,49
United Kingdom	144	214	1,49
Italy	143	210	1,47
<i>All countries</i>	<i>1830</i>	<i>2588</i>	<i>1.41</i>
Spain	304	423	1,39
Portugal	54	71	1,31
Turkey	69	90	1,30
USA	81	103	1,27
Germany	155	193	1,25

Source: van Dijk and Maier (2004)

The social programme: London 1979



and



A glass of sherry and a bowl of peanuts: cost less than 3 euro per head

Statement of account for the 1979 London Congress

Gross receipts: £6,364.09

Gross expenses: £4,999.89

Operating surplus: £1,364.20

EUROPAN CONGRESS OF THE REGIONAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION : LONDON 1979

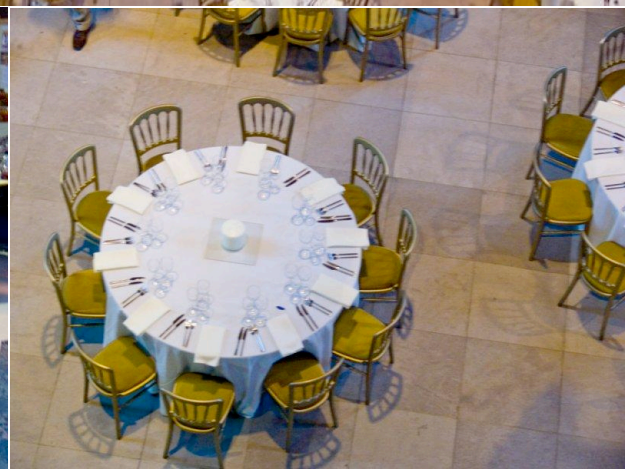
Statement of Account at 1st November 1979

Gross Receipts	:	£6364.09
Gross Expenses	:	£4999.89
Net 'Profit'	:	£1364.20

<u>Breakdown of Expenses</u>	£	£
1. <u>Administration</u>		
Registration Assistance and Receptionists	400.00	
Typing	117.20	
Photocopying and Printing	758.15	
Stationery, lapel badges etc.	33.20	
Postage	129.90	
London Welcome Packs	30.00	
Louvain expenses	102.13	
Paper translation	50.00	
Committee travel	352.00	
Other administrative expenses	25.00	
	<u>1997.48</u>	1997.48
2. <u>Congress Accommodation</u>		
Wates House and New Chemistry Theatre	320.00*	320.00
3. <u>Reception and Refreshments</u>		
Congress Reception	265.58	
Bar Staff	16.45	
Use of Refectory	38.00	
Refreshments	42.46	
	<u>362.49</u>	362.49
4. <u>Residential Accommodation</u>		
Ramsay Hall Bill	2137.85	2137.85
5. <u>Other Expenses</u>		
Refunds of Cancelled Bookings	162.07	
Outstanding debt	20.00	
	<u>182.07</u>	182.07
	Total :	£4999.89

* Estimated : bill not yet received.

Liverpool 2008: Congress Dinner in the Anglican Cathedral



The Epainos Prize

- Part of a conscious effort to increase participation in Congresses by younger scholars; a joint venture by ERSA and RSAI
- Prize first awarded in 1996, at the Zurich Congress
- Later developed into Epainos sessions where young scientists would present papers and receive detailed feedback from 'elders'; given protected time in the congress programme
- Plenty of evidence that prize winners are 'tomorrow's leaders' in regional science

Summer Institutes

- Over the years, summer institutes have proved highly effective in providing advanced training and in creating research networks among young scholars.
- They began in the early 1960s as a collaborative venture between the RSA and University of California, Berkeley; first institute was supported by NSF and lasted 8 weeks.
- **Rolf Funck** brought the idea to Europe in 1970 and organised three highly successful NATO-funded Advanced Summer Institutes in Karlsruhe.



Rolf Funck



Summer Institutes

- The baton was passed to **Peter Friedrich** who organised excellent summer institutes in Siegen, Bamberg and Munich.
- The *Prepare* summer schools organised by **Gunther Maier** and funded by the EU Marie Curie fund are the current example. A successful innovation has been the Prepare sessions at ERSA Congresses where *Prepare* 'alumni' are encouraged to present their research to a wider audience.



Peter Friedrich



Gunther Maier

Which cities produce the best peer-reviewed, published regional science research?

Ranking of European cities in the worldwide top 25 according to author-pages published in Papers in Regional Science

Rank	1955-1964	1965-1974	1975-1984	1985-1994	1995-2003	1955-2003
1	Zagreb	London	Amsterdam	Liverpool	Barcelona	Amsterdam
2	Warsaw	Warsaw	Stockholm	Vienna	Zaragoza	London
3	Athens	Moscow	Rotterdam	Ume?	Amsterdam	Rotterdam
4	Barcelona	Geneva	Vienna	Amsterdam	London	Stockholm
5		Budapest	Laxenburg	Eindhoven	Groningen	Warsaw
6		Paris	Munich	Milan	Helsinki	Vienna
7			Budapest	Stockholm	Glasgow	Budapest
8			Karlsruhe	Athens	Milan	
9			Leeds	Groningen		
10				Laxenburg		
11				Paris		
12				Madrid		
13				Florence		

Source: Florax and Plane (2004), Table 7, p. 20.

Some personal reflections 1

- The increasing importance of plenary sessions, in an era when lots of parallel sessions create conferences within conferences; the first European Congresses didn't have this problem
- The general quality of papers presented is increasing: the Epainos Prize and the summer institutes are an important factor here; organised sessions play a significant role too, as does joint activity with other organisations
- We need a better communications strategy for our congresses
- The idea of having one truly memorable feature of each congress
- The need to exploit fully the world research network that RSAI provides us with; our journals can play a role here

Some personal reflections 2

- My first congress was that at Copenhagen in 1976; since then I have attended 29 of them; for three of them (London, Cambridge and Liverpool) I was the principal organiser; all of them were daunting experiences
- It may seem odd that for the first two decades, the European Congress was organised from Philadelphia, but Walter Isard and David Boyce did an excellent job and exerted a great deal of effort on our behalf; we owe them both a debt of gratitude
- The European Congress has displayed a lot of resilience over the years and has moved with the times; celebrations of anniversaries should look forwards as well as backwards and ERSA, I believe, has a bright future ahead