

FIG President Univ.-Prof. Dr-Ing. Holger Magel

**Speech at the Opening Ceremony  
Working Week 2003  
Paris, 13 April**

Mr. Presidents André Radier, Michel Kasser and Mr. Bernard Bour, honourable Director General, distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Colleagues

We are celebrating here in Paris the 125<sup>th</sup> birthday of the FIG, in a country with great geodetic history and great influence on other countries, for example on Bavaria. It was the Napoleon survey officers who established the Bavarian cadastre and topographic office. We all know that we naturally cannot rest on our laurels, and that we must look together and with full awareness to the future. There is a saying in Germany, which is often used in speeches on special occasions. It also suits this occasion and it is: “He who is not aware of the past cannot cope with the future”. That is why it is important that, in the next few days, and particularly this afternoon, we should concern ourselves as much with the history of our worldwide organisation as with what we have achieved and with the present situation, and above all with the challenges facing us. In the Jubilee Celebration which follows, we will hear more from the mouths of three well known experts. I do not wish to anticipate anything which these speakers may say. But I should like, at the beginning of this new presidential period, to set out some of the main ideas and principles which guide me and our Council. It may be that they are not all new for you, particularly when you consider the successful work of our previous Councils or if you have read our common FIG Work Plan 2003–2006. What are then our principles and what is our message to the Member Associations and the Surveying Institutes and public authorities behind them?

Let me state a clear principle right at the beginning: as a neutral well-balanced technical-scientific organisation we do not interfere in internal affairs, but we feel an obligation to say what we think to the best of our knowledge and belief.

In this sense our guiding principles and ideas:

1. It is a matter of gratification that our FIG, as a non-governmental organisation active on a worldwide basis, is a notable model for the emerging civil society. We want to play our part in ensuring that its presence will be felt to the greatest possible extent in all regions of the world. In it a small member association has the same choice and the same voice as a big association; the principles of subsidiarity, cultural diversity, free discussion, and the idea of a high public spirited dedication belong in the Association just as much as it demands and encourages the acceptance of responsibility for more justice, sustainability and professionalism.
2. A serious social responsibility rests on us as a well-balanced technical-scientific association. We feel a moral and ethical obligation in the intensified cooperation sought with the institutions of the United Nations (UN). We see special opportunities to make a contribution to more democracy, more good governance, more secure tenure, more decentralisation, more poverty eradication, more sustainability and so

forth. As a body we feel ourselves committed to the UN Millennium Declaration and to the concrete Millennium Development goals.

3. The FIG has, as an unchanged target, the promotion of the profession of surveyors in present and future FIG member countries, and in this context seeks to ensure a fair balance between employment in the public service and private practice.
4. A main aim of the current Council, particularly against its predominantly continental European background, is to assert the necessity of a well-grounded and broad education as surveyor, which is of course the indispensable precondition for high quality and sustainability. But we do not want to leave it at that – we do not only wish to assert the necessity. On the contrary, we offer, with our highly qualified FIG experts, help where it is called for and needed.
5. We acknowledge the need of integrated programmes and plans for the equal and equivalent development of urban and rural areas. We believe in the possibility of a just balance between them, and we do not adhere to any one-sided ideology. We believe, particularly in the light of our west and central European experiences, that we can bring a lot of thought and experience to the subject of urban and rural land management. And I am certain that colleagues from all over the world will be able to give us valuable stimuli on the third main theme, namely marine management.
6. When we pursue an integrated development of urban and rural areas under the aspect of sustainability, the whole spectrum of our professional expertise is brought into play. We must and will make this even clearer and we must and will avoid giving the impression of having only one-sided technical priorities. Each one of us knows that in the case for example of the enormously important themes of Land Management and Land Administration, basic activities in the fields of valuation, photogrammetry, remote sensing, GIS etc. are just as necessary as the observance of necessary professional and technical standards as well as surveying activities. Each commission in the FIG is important to us; each makes an indispensable contribution to the whole!
7. Just as we make clear the full breadth of our activities in and outside the FIG and above all correct the image of surveyors who can only survey, so we must also and more systematically work together with other disciplines and together accomplish more than we could alone. This may be difficult, but herein lies the future not only of the scientific but also of the practical world. In this context we want to establish new points of emphasis, both in the framework of the Habitat Professionals Forum and in our own conferences and commissions.
8. We want to encourage the communication abilities not only of the FIG but also of as many surveyors as possible, and in particular to improve the regular contact with the media as well as with important social opinion makers. When we hold a major FIG event anywhere in the world, we should accordingly seek as a matter of course contact with politicians.

But even within the FIG we want to communicate better with each other, and in particular to maintain and develop personal contacts, as I expressed it in my New Year's letter to all Presidents.

We want to implement this principle in our Council. The Council consists not only of the President, who should be present everywhere, but also of highly motivated and highly competent Vice-Presidents, who are also glad to be present in the Member Associations.

9. In accordance with our motto - we do not interfere, but we say what we think – the FIG takes its advisory role very seriously. It will be concerned to provide differentiated expressions of opinion and advice in the light of the situation in different countries but will also seek to say what is helpful in the substance and

appropriate in the context. In order to put this into practice, our commissions in particular will combine their technical expertise to an even greater extent, and go over increasingly to joint activities in order to help answer the ever increasing and ever more complex challenges in an adequate manner. And this means doing so, not in a sectoral manner, but as comprehensively as possible.

10. Civil Society depends very much on the public spirit and sense of responsibility of each individual; but it depends also on the corporate citizenship of major enterprises and companies. We therefore extend invitations to institutions, which to a greater or lesser extent share common interests with us and our FIG Foundation, to associate themselves with us and our Foundation, whether as corporate members or as sponsors, both in the interest of our common endeavours and to give those who come after us even greater common ground. And I call upon institutes of advanced education which bear a great responsibility, whether as universities or technical colleges, to have greater contact and exchanges with the practitioners of our profession in the form of academic memberships. When this happens, we will have less cause for anxiety about the future of our profession.

In this sense let's start with our work but let's have time for personal contacts and talks too. Many thanks to all who were and still are responsible for having prepared unforgettable days in France. It is said that in this country even God is living here and surely wants to attend French conferences and Working Weeks like ours.

The Working Week 2003 in Paris is opened.