

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### ***Percival Allen Medal of the Association of European Geological Societies 2011 Award***



The Association of European Geological Societies (AEGS) connects geological societies all over Europe. In 2006, the AEGS Executive Committee established an award named for Prof. Percival Allen FRS, one of the AEGS's founders. This medal is given biennially to a geoscientist for outstanding achievements in the field of international relations in Earth Sciences. Other than a distinguished record in fostering international relations in geosciences, there are no special eligibility criteria. The Award Committee announces the laureate at the Meetings of AEGS (MAEGS).

Dr. Jens Dieter Becker-Platen from Germany (at MAEGS-15, held in Tallinn 2007) and Dr. Eduardo de Mulder from Netherlands (at MAEGS-16, held in Cluj-Napoca) were the previous recipients of the *Percival Allen* Medal Award. During the 2011 MAEGS-17 meeting held in Belgrade, this prestigious distinction was awarded to Dr. Marcian D. Bleahu from Romania.

Dr. Corina IONESCU (Head of the Percival Allen Award Committee)

Dr. Ted NIELD (Geological Society of London)

Dr. Nenad BANJAC (President of AEGS)

### **Proposal for the 2011 *Percival Allen* Award**

by Tudor BERZA<sup>1</sup>



Prof. Dr. Marcian D. Bleahu was born in 1924 in Braşov (Romania), where he also studied at elementary and high school. He obtained two university degrees (in Geology and Biology, and Geography, respectively) at the University of Bucharest. He received his PhD from the “Babes-Bolyai” University in Cluj (Romania), working on the geology and morphology of karst terrains.

Between 1949 and 1992 he was a geologist, senior researcher, head of several departments, scientific secretary, and deputy director and director of the Geological Institute of Romania. He was the main organizer of the National Museum of Geology in Bucharest. As a field geologist he worked mainly in geological mapping of unknown zones in the Eastern Carpathians and Apuseni Mts. and has made important

contributions in paleontological dating, tectonic setting, and describing geomorphological features of various formations.

In the Eastern Carpathians he mapped northern Maramureş where he outlined a new formation, the “Black Flysch”. Following the work of Uhlig from 1907, Dr. Bleahu demonstrated the existence of a nappe structure in the Eastern Carpathians, the existence of such a structure being previously denied by well-known geologists in Romania. Bleahu supported with sound arguments the existence of four nappes in the central part of the Eastern Carpathians, an idea accepted afterwards by all geoscientists.

From 1952 onwards, Dr. Bleahu created the first geological maps of large parts of the Apuseni Mts. When he began to work here, only a few sketches, petrographic notes, and poor topographic maps were available. He was therefore required to work in a *terra incognita*, starting with the correction of old maps dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He established a stratigraphic scale based on microfossils found in limestone and the palynological content in the detrital deposits. Finally, the nappe structure of the Apuseni Mts. was illustrated.

Dr. Bleahu made fundamental contributions to the Geological map of Romania, being the coauthor of two sheets at 1:200.000 scale, two sheets at 1:100.000, as well as seven sheets at 1:50.000 scale. At the same time, he published in Romania and abroad a high number of papers, guides, and synthesis works. He also co-authored two fundamental books about the geology of the Metalliferous and Apuseni Mts., respectively.

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One of Dr. Bleahu most important and favourite fields of study was plate tectonics. In 1972, he was the first in Romania to present new ideas and theories in public lectures. In the early '70s, he was appointed as a guest professor at the University of Geneva for half a year to give lectures about plate tectonics, little known at that time and not taught in any European university. Unfortunately, the communist regime did not allow him to accept the invitation. By 1973, he had already published in *Journal of Geophysical Research*, together with two Italian colleagues, the first application of this theory, explaining the structure of the Carpathians. The new and revolutionary view of the Carpathians was presented also in lectures given in Vienna, Geneva, Fribourg, and Potsdam. In 1983 and 1989 he published two large volumes of a textbook on global tectonics ("Tectonica globală" in Romanian).

Dr. Bleahu was involved in several technical projects, both as chief geologist for the first half of the Danube-Black Sea Channel (1949-1952) and chief geologist of the Bucharest Metro (1953). He participated in a large project focused on the connection between the geological structures beneath Bucharest and the consequences of the devastating earthquake from March 4, 1977.

Due to his deep interest in the geomorphology of the calcareous areas in the Apuseni Mts., in the 70s and 80s, he wrote several textbooks (all in Romanian), e.g., *Karst Morphology*, *Karst Landscape*, and *Man and Cave*. He soon became the most prominent karst scientist in Romania.

As a lover of nature, Dr. Bleahu always showed his concern regarding environment protection. He published several books about geological monuments and geological reserves in Romania, and about environment protection and ecological education.

Concurrently, with his scientific activities, Dr. Bleahu had an academic carrier, as assistant and lecturer at the Chair of Geology in the University of Bucharest. In 1990 he co-founded the Ecological University of Bucharest and served as Dean of the Ecological Faculty. His outstanding courses in General Geology, Geology of Romania, Physical Geography of Romania, Geological Cartography, and Environmental Protection and Political Ecology, have been all published in various Romanian editions.

Throughout his whole life, Dr. Bleahu established strong contacts with scientists from all over the world. He

participated in geological congresses and meetings (in former Czechoslovakia, Poland, Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, and the former Soviet Union); in karst and speleological congresses (Hungary, Germany, Spain, former Czechoslovakia, USA, Italy, Belgium, and Poland). After 1990, he gave lectures at several meetings focused on ecology and environment protection, e.g. in Italy, Ukraine, Sweden, Slovenia, Turkey, Cyprus, Italy, and former Yugoslavia. He represented Romania in various meetings in Russia, Bulgaria, Italy, Finland, Kenya, Brazil, Cyprus, Philippines, and Poland. He acted as vice-president of the Congress for Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

Dr. Bleahu was also invited to give talks and lectures about his extremely broad field of study and knowledge in well known and prestigious universities such as Oxford, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Paris, Liège, Potsdam, Vienna, Fribourg, Basel, and Geneva.

Everywhere Prof. Dr. Marcian Bleahu travelled, he established contacts with colleagues for future projects in common. As leader of many international meetings and symposiums, he significantly contributed to the strengthening of the co-operation among earth scientists. In this respect it is worth mentioning the inter-academic study of the Carpathian-Balkan geology, for which he organized the Carpathian field trip, or the European Union Conference on the protection of the Danube Delta. As Minister of Environment, he organized the international symposium on the protection of the Black Sea. The main result of this fruitful meeting was the founding of "The Bucharest Convention for the Black Sea". He was an active participant in the EU meeting concerning the protection and development in the mountain regions in Central and Eastern Europe.

For all his scientific achievements in particular in the field of international relations in Earth Sciences, I propose Prof. Dr. Marcian D. Bleahu to be awarded the *Percival Allen* Medal of the AEGS. He has a distinguished record in fostering international relations in several branches of geosciences and at the age of 87 he is still active both in geosciences and political ecology.