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OBITUARY

Farewell to Dr. Sci. Saulius Gulbinskas

(January 22, 1961 – June 21, 2016)

The science community in Lithuania has lost a gifted scholar, a member of the BALTICA Scientific Committee, an active and ripe researcher, who carried out investigations in the fields of marine geology, sedimentology, seacoast investigations, marine studies and monitoring, as well as assessment of business projects on the marine environment.

Saulius Gulbinskas was born in Kaunas into the family of intellectuals on January 21, 1961. When Saulius was 3-month old, his father died, and his mother raised all four brothers alone. In 1967, he went to the Secondary School No. 1 (former *Aušra* Gymnasium) in Kaunas. In 1978, he entered the Vilnius University to study geology at the Nature Sciences Faculty. Under the influence of Prof. Algirdas Gaigalas, he was engaged in investigations of sedimentation. In 1982, he prepared his graduation thesis under the title '*Assessment of physico-mechanical properties of recent bottom sediments in Kuršių Marios (lagoon's Lithuanian part)*'. In 1983, he graduated from the University as engineer geologist hydro-geologist. From 1982 he worked at the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences Geography Department (the Geology and Geography Institute from 2002), and worked there until 2012. He married in 1982, and his son Mindaugas was born in 1986.

After the independence of Lithuania was restored in 1991, Gulbinskas organised and performed comprehensive investigations of the Baltic Sea bottom relief, deposits and sedimentation processes in the northern part of the Lithuanian near-shore. In 1994, he defended the doctoral dissertation under the title '*Peculiarities in formation of recent bottom sediments within the system of Nemunas–Kuršių Marios–Baltic Sea*' (Physical Sciences, Geology). These studies enriched experience of Saulius as a scientific expert, which was especially useful in a long-term perspective, when it became necessary to assess the potential of Klaipėda Strait in development of sea navigation in relation to port dredging problems, lithological and geochemical monitoring, as well as potential impact of engineering solutions on the environment.

At the beginning of the Independence period, with a fast growth of the Klaipėda University, an opportu-



Saulius Gulbinskas at his University talks, December 2014

nity appeared to use the Gulbinskas' experience in organisation and development of marine researches in this science centre of Western Lithuania. In 1998, still living in Vilnius, he began working at the Klaipėda University (1998–2014; Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics). Further on, variations of his responsible capacities, simultaneously with increasing scientific organisational load, maybe one of the reasons of his fatal end, reflect the perfection of his leader's role and the expansion of scientific researches in the whole field of geosciences. It is noteworthy to mention the following spheres of his activities: the Coastal Research and Planning Institute (he was one of its founders and active worker in 2001–2013); the Marine Science and Technology Centre (2013–2015); the Baltic Valley Association (2009–2014); and the Open Access Centre for Marine Research, Ma-

rine Engineering and Natural Science Faculty (from 2015). Especially, his contribution to the creation of the Klaipėda Marine Valley, i.e., an integral centre for science, studies and business, should be emphasised. The exceptional organisational capability and ambitious plans for future brought Saulius Gulbinkas to the position of the Vice-Rector for Development at the Klaipėda University. His membership in the Lithuanian Geological Society and the European Union for Coastal Conservation (EUCC) should also be noted.

Saulius Gulbinkas has developed energetic scientific activity in the fields of environmental geology, sedimentology, seacoast and marine researches, as well as environment protection. From 1998 to 2016, he published more than 100 works in Lithuanian and foreign scientific journals, took part and lead scientific research works and studies; he was an example for young scientists, engrafting them love and respect to the nature, the sea, and the people. At the Klaipėda University, he was the initiator of the yearly practical scientific conference ‘*Marine and Coastal Research*’ and represented the University during the formation of the LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas Import Terminal) business and science *cluster*.

Regretfully, while challenging the nature and working at a pace impossible for an ordinary human, the meaningful works and plans are left unfinished, because his way of life has been stopped suddenly and untimely.

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NATO SfP Oil Spill in Baltics NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Program (2012–2014)

Ecodump Interreg South Baltic Programme (2011–2014)

Resource Efficient Maritime Capacity. 7 FP Program Project (2013–2014)

Sediment transport and biogeochemical processes in the Curonian Lagoon (2012–2013)

Geological structure and recent development of the Baltic Sea coastal zone (2012–2014)

Environmental monitoring of the Klaipėda Port (2010–2012)

Environmental monitoring of the Būtingė Oil Terminal (2010–2015)

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