

## Welcoming and opening speech

Tomáš Bucha

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen

We are delighted and honoured to host the seminar *REMOTE SENSING IN FOREST PROTECTION AND FOREST INVENTORY* organized as a side event of the conference *ACTUAL PROBLEMS IN FOREST PROTECTION* and to welcome you to High Tatras in Slovakia.

The seminar is organized within the Slovak – Hungary cross-boundary cooperation project INMEIN „*Innovative methods of inventory and monitoring of the Danube floodplain forests using 3-D Remote Sensing technology*“ and supported by Slovak Research and Development Agency within the project SK-CN-0008-12 focused on *Forest fire monitoring* as well.

We are pleased that as much as 30 delegates are in attendance - being from the six countries namely Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Germany, China and Slovakia.

I realize that you are fully dedicated to the sessions that will follow but I do hope you will also take time to enjoy fascinating High Tatras with its beautiful nature, comfortable hotels, pleasant people and reliable and modern infrastructure.

The seminar is principally designed to enhance the development of the Remote Sensing partnership within the four Visegrad (V4) countries. However this gathering enables the building of a productive dialogue between V4 countries and EFI (European Forest Institute) and CAF (Chinese Academy of Forestry) as well.

As an organizer, let me inform you that NFC has an excellent positions in RS application in Slovakia. As a responsible body for State Information System in Forestry, NFC ensures forest mapping including regular taking photos and lidar scanning in Slovakia (each year in 1/10<sup>th</sup> of territory) with own technology including ALS70-CM Airborne LIDAR Sensor + RCD30 multispectral camera.

Beside of exchange of the scientific knowledge the important part of the seminar will be discussions about future cooperation. The cross-boundary project INMEIN is an excellent example of Slovak-Hungary partnership and it could background for continuation of cooperation in V4 region.

The important step we did in Nitra in February this year, where we expressed a willingness to go forward from bilateral to multilateral cooperation and we established V4 Lidar Expert Consortium (V4LIC). The presence of EFI and CAF delegates allows us to think about European and Europe-China cooperation.

An excellent possibilities and challenge offers HORIZON 2020. There are already opened several calls. Allow me to point out one of them which I see the most appropriate for us. It is so called **TEAMING** action under pillar **Spreading excellence and widening participation**.

When I check how successful our V4 countries in previous 7th FP were, the result didn't correspond to our ability. Our countries are in down part of raking. I believe we are here to change the situation. It requires to clearly explaining our vision for the establishment of institutional cooperation based on the long-term science and innovation strategy and clear provisions for the good management of the common project between the partners.

Furthermore, we should include a clear analysis of how our ideas (our project) would fit with the relevant Smart Specialization Strategy of the participating low performing region. The solution should contribute to “Enhance economic competitiveness in our region” by establishment of new scientific networks, links with local stakeholders; strengthening of the R & D infrastructure of the project partners; ensuring of the coordinated use of cross-border research infrastructure and common research and sharing of methods for lidar and RS data processing.

Distinguished guests, today’s fast changing world calls for a close partnership between countries. Globalization presents many challenges also to our Region and as such we should cooperate with the aim of achieving mutual benefits. I hope this seminar will highlight possible avenues for cooperation and also come up with beneficial decision, which can positively impact the Remote Sensing forestry sector of our countries.

In closing, I wish to express my gratitude to all participants for their full cooperation and contribution to the scientific seminar.

I take this opportunity to thank the organizers from NFC especially to Mr. Michal Vančo and Mrs. Mirka Slivková for their diligence and thanks also belongs to agencies HU-SK Cross border cooperation program and Slovak Research and Development Agency for providing the necessary funding.

I wish you a very fruitful and productive meeting.

Thank you.