

Borna Fuerst-Bjeliš, environmental historian and geographer

1. Short CV

She is senior scientist and full professor at the University of Zagreb. She graduated Geography from the Faculty of Science in 1983 at the University of Zagreb, completed her MSc in 1990 and the PhD in 1996. Since 1989 she is the member of the Faculty of Science, University of Zagreb. For many years, she participated in the leadership (e.g. vice-dean for international cooperation, head of the Doctoral programme of Geography and a head/member of numerous bodies).

Her field of expertise is environmental history and landscape change, spatially focused mainly on Mediterranean karst area, including the development of methodologies of research (historical cartography, GIS technology), borderlands areas, spatial perceptions and spatial (regional) identities. She was a project leader on environmental change, cultural landscapes and regional identities, financed by the Ministry of Science and the University of Zagreb (2007-14).

Since the beginning of her academic career, she has taught (and created) more than 20 courses from the bachelor to doctoral level at the University of Zagreb at the study programmes of Geography and Environmental Science, as well as at doctoral programmes of the Universities of Zadar and Mostar (B&H).

In 2005, she created and introduced the course of *Environmental history* and *Historical GIS in landscape change research* in the study programmes of Geography and Environmental sciences at the Faculty of Science, University of Zagreb, and that was for the first time that *Environmental history* was a part of university study programme in Croatia. She also edited the Croatian editions of two books on environmental history: *What is Environmental History?* by D. Hughes (2011) and *The Global Environmental History* by I. G. Simmons (2010). Within this project, she conducted research on environmental history research in Croatia and co-authored a chapter *What is environmental history in Croatia?* (together with the bibliography) within the Croatian edition of Hughes' book (2011).

Currently she teaches *Environmental history*, *Mediterranean* and *Regionalization Principles* at bachelor and master programmes, as well as *The Adriatic in the Euro-Mediterranean Context*, *Scientific work* and the *Methodology of research* in the module of Environmental Studies of the Doctoral programme. She has been mentor in more than seventy master and ten doctoral theses so far.

She also co-authored the university textbook on *Historical geography of Croatia* (University of Split). Currently, for InTech (STEM Open Access publisher), she is editing a book on Mediterranean region. She is the member of editorial and scientific board of the leading Croatian geographic scientific journals as well as Croatian journal for environmental and economic history (*Ekonomska i ekohistorija*).

She is the member of a number of international and national scientific organizations: ESEH; International Geographic Union (IGU); Association for Croatian Studies; Association of American Geographers/ Specialty group Environment and Perception; Croatian Geographical Society; Croatian Cartographical Association; Croatian Geomorphological Society. Currently she is the member of the Steering committee of the Commission on Marginalization, Globalization and Local and regional response of the International Geographic Union.

Since 2016, she is coordinating the Regional action centre for Croatia of the 2016 International Year of Global understanding (IYGU), an initiative of the IGU.

In the year 2012, she was awarded by *Federico Grisogono award* for the scientific achievement and outstanding contribution to the development of geography in Croatia.

2. Statement about the plans and visions for the future of ESEH

2.1. Stronger inclusion of SE European countries

If looking at European regions, there is a clear gap in the inclusion of the southeast of Europe in the environmental history research, education and activities within the ESEH so far. This was in fact one of the reasons for candidacy of Zagreb and Croatia for the 2017 ESEH conference – to achieve stronger inclusion of those countries and colleagues in European environmental history network and activities.

This is an area where there is a lot of possibilities for improvement. This could be achieved through

1. More active support to smaller thematic annual conferences (perhaps through a small funding programme dedicated to the development of such underdeveloped regions in terms of environmental history activities)
2. Mobility of teaching staff and students within those countries (encourage more strongly already existing Erasmus and CEEPUS mobility programs, as well as other visiting professor programs/possibilities from other European countries)
3. Introducing the environmental history in study programmes at the universities of SE European countries (based on established relations and cooperation; this is the goal to achieve in more distant future)
4. Linkage at the level of research; to establish topics and research problems of mutual interest in those countries.
5. Mobility of doctoral students of SE European region; informational and every other possible support in applying (as well as for funding) for PhD programme in Environmental history in European countries which have such programmes.

2.2. Environmental histories of karst

As karst is environment that is common to a great deal of the SE European space, the environmental histories of karst could be promoted as common research area through e.g. regular summer schools, run each year in another country with different leading topic (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro; all these countries, except Croatia, are still not in the ESEH network of regions). This could be opportunity for strengthening the connections and collaboration of individuals as well as institutions in the region of SE Europe in environmental research and education, but also with other countries in Europe and Mediterranean.

2.3. Publications

2.3.1.

Related to the above, there is a possibility of editing a publication on *Environmental histories of karst* that would explore more thoroughly the already existing body of environmental-historical research of karst within Europe. The publication could also have a comparative perspective as well (with non-European regions if found more appropriate).