

In memoriam, Vladimir Ivanovici (1952-2005)

The ALADIN project was already saddened in the past years by the death of some of its strong supporters and far more often than we would have hoped, but never was it touched by grief at its heart as much as when we learned the loss of Vladimir Ivanovici, Deputy Director of the Romanian National Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology and ALADINist of the first hour.

I met Vlad (let me call him from now on like everyone always did) for the first time when he stepped out of the train Bucharest-Paris in early March 1991. He was one of the three persons entrusted by colleagues of 'ECO' (Europe Centrale et Orientale) to visit Météo-France under the MICECO programme in order to evaluate the feasibility of a project. The latter, proposed in November of the previous year, was to jointly develop, maintain and (later) use a LAM version of ARPEGE. This idea, which sounds now familiar and natural to everyone, was rather looking like a utopia at the time. But the month of March 91 was one of enthusiastic work, dedication to the evaluation task and endless projections in the future. At the end, we had a summing-up meeting with the Directions of Météo-France and of CNRM in which everyone, from the future partners as well as from the French side, agreed that the adventure was well feasible and even worth trying. I sometimes like to believe that we then had some vague idea of how big an enterprise it would become. But it may also be that we were daring because we underestimated the task ahead of us. Fate wanted that Vlad died exactly fourteen years after that day, which he surely vividly remembered in between as the project grew in size and emphasis.

He had early ambitions for the use of ALADIN at INMH, but he also rightly evaluated that the consolidation of the basic work on the project was the first absolute priority. So he became one of the pillars of the work that it was necessary to accomplish in Toulouse (remote work on the code was a dream at that time). For the next four years he came six times for a total of fifteen months and worked on nearly all aspects of the project (digital filter initialisation, details of the dynamics' implementation, physics of convection, ...). Indeed specialisation was also a luxury we could not afford at the time. His steady approach to any problem, his interest in all the environment of his work and his deep optimism were used to very good ends during that period. On May the 31st 1994, the first quasi-operational version ALADIN-PECO was launched and Vlad was distinguished with a few other already 'ALADIN old-hands', when he was deservedly awarded the 'Médaille Le Verrier' by Météo-France's General Director, André Lebeau.

Another big occasion of pride must have been for Vlad the fact that ALADIN-RO became in August 97 the second fully operational version of ALADIN, after Al-Bachir and a few months ahead of other versions. And this happened despite the big obstacles the local team had to overcome for the access to enough computing power. By that time, he was logically more active in the project from the Bucharest side, but he kept interest in the Toulouse part of the PhD work of Elena, Mihaela and Doina as well as in other INMH contributions to the project, and he still came a few times to GMAP.

Vlad was also aware that these INMH achievements could not be recognised to their full value without visits of the NWP community to his country. He launched the invitations to EWGLAM/SRWNP in Sinaia (1995), the ALADIN Workshop in Bucharest (1999) and the Assembly of ALADIN Partners in Bucharest (2002). All these occasions are now remembered for their successful organisation, an excellent atmosphere and a positive contribution to the various objectives at stake. I also had the pleasure to work with Vlad and Dusan Hrcek in the 'triumvirat' that prepared the second version of the ALADIN MoU around the end of 2000 and in the beginning of 2001. In this occasion, Vlad's capacity to mix solid views about the basic principles and pragmatism when it came to the details was most useful. I also realised how these qualities had always been an asset for the ALADIN project, given its diversity of situations and its necessity to aggregate many types of contributions.

Now he has left us forever. All those who worked with him in our common efforts for an international project that should take care of scientific, technical but also human factors will know how much we owe him and affectionately remember his 'very very' special way to insist when he knew the matter was of importance.

Jean-Francois Geleyn

Vlad in his office



Black Sea International Workshop, Romania, May 2004



120 years anniversary of INMH



