



European Geosciences Union General Assembly

<http://www.egu.eu/meetings/general-assembly/>

First Timers' Guide to the EGU General Assembly



Entrance to the Austria Center Vienna during the EGU 2014 General Assembly (Credit: EGU/Foto Pfluegl)

Contents

- The European Geosciences Union (EGU) – 2
- The General Assembly – 2
- Before arriving: abstracts, travel support, registration – 3
- Timetabling – 5
- Presenting – 6
- Union-wide and disciplinary sessions – 7
- Competitions – 9
- Travel and Accommodation – 9
- Appendix: Past participants' impressions – 13

The European Geosciences Union (EGU)



As part of a long-term effort to modernise EGU's overall look, the Union introduced a new logo (the one seen above) in late October 2015. This will be the logo participants will see at the EGU 2016 General Assembly.

The European Geosciences Union (www.egu.eu) is Europe's premier geosciences union, dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in the Earth, planetary and space sciences for the benefit of humanity, worldwide. It is a non-profit interdisciplinary learned association of scientists founded in 2002. The EGU has a current portfolio of 17 diverse [scientific journals](#), which use an innovative open access format, and organises a number of meetings, including the annual EGU General Assembly, and [education](#) and [outreach](#) activities. These activities include [Geosciences Information For Teachers \(GIFT\)](#) workshops, the support of [early career researchers](#), media services (including [press releases](#)), the [EGU blogs](#), and a monthly [email newsletter](#), together with an [awards and medals](#) programme for outstanding scientists.

The General Assembly

The EGU General Assembly is the largest and most prominent European geosciences event, attracting over 12,000 scientists from all over the world. The meeting's sessions cover a wide range of topics, including volcanology, planetary exploration, the Earth's internal structure and atmosphere, climate, energy and resources. The [2016 EGU General Assembly](#) is taking place in Vienna, Austria from 17 to 22 April 2016.

A brief history

The first General Assembly of the European Geosciences Union was held in Nice, France, in 2004 and subsequent General Assemblies have been held at the Austria Center Vienna (ACV) in Vienna, Austria. Each EGU annual meeting regularly convenes participants from close to 100 countries, giving presentations in multiple fields across the Earth, planetary and space sciences.

Communication and online resources

The main source of information is the [General Assembly website](#). Details of previous meetings can be found [on the EGU website](#). You can submit abstracts, register for the event and browse the session programme on the Assembly website.

The European Geosciences Union's official blog (geolog.egu.eu), [Facebook page](#) and [Twitter account](#) (@EuroGeosciences, conference hashtag: #EGU16) are also good sources of information and news, both in the run up to, and during the General Assembly. They are frequently updated during the meeting, and are an excellent way of following what's going on at the conference online.

The EGU 2016 mobile app will be available a few days prior to the General Assembly. You will be able to download it by scanning the QR code available at the [General Assembly website](#) or by going directly to app.egu2016.eu on your mobile device. You will be directed to the version of the EGU 2016 app for your particular smartphone, which you can download for free. The General Assembly app can be used to browse and search the meeting programme, select presentations to be added to your own personal programme, and find out more about the General Assembly on Twitter. More information about the app, and how to use it, can be found on the [EGU blog](#) (an updated post for the 2016 app will be available nearer the time of the conference).

Another good source of information at the General Assembly is the daily 2-page newsletter EGU Today, which highlights sessions and events at the meeting and is distributed to participants each day of the week. Pick up a copy on your way into the ACV, or check the latest issue, which will be [available online closer to the Assembly](#).

Before arriving: abstracts, travel support, registration

Submitting an abstract

Abstracts should be short (100–500 words), clear, concise and written in English. They should not include any figures or tables. When writing an abstract, any mathematical symbols and equations you wish to include must be typed in, and you should make sure you use metric units. Before submission, we recommend that you carefully compile and thoroughly check your abstract, particularly with regards to the list of authors, to avoid any last-minute changes. Abstracts can be presented either as a poster, oral, or during a [PICO \(Presenting Interactive Content\)](#) session, by the author or one of the co-authors. Upon submission, you must designate a specific session for each abstract. Online guidelines are available on the [EGU 2016 website](#). This year, the deadline for the receipt of abstracts is **13 January, 13:00 CET**.

- Use a text editor of your choice to compile your abstract: title, author(s), affiliation(s) of author(s), and abstract text. Your abstract text should have 100–500 words;
- Browse through the [session programme](#) (called 'Call-for-abstracts' prior to the abstract deadline) and select the session of your interest;
- Use the Abstract Submission link at the respective session. Please keep in mind that submission of the same abstract to more than one session is not allowed. Duplicates will be rejected;
- You will be asked to log in to the Copernicus Office Meeting Organizer. Use your account data or create a new account;
- Fill in the submittal information about title, author(s), and affiliation(s) of author(s);
- Choose between plain text, LaTeX or Word content with regard to the abstract text;
- Copy-and-paste your information into the form or download and use the Word template;
- Select your preference for poster presentation or for oral presentation (see the [first author rule](#))*. However, there is no guarantee that an oral preference can be realised. If a session is identified as a PICO session, the oral/poster preference cannot be selected;
- Accept the [licence & copyright agreement](#) and proceed to the abstract preview;
- Check the generated PDF file of your edited and formatted abstract;
- If the conversion of your abstract fails, please specify your problems and Copernicus (egu2016@copernicus.org) will then take care of them;

* First Author Rule: regarding the oral preference, you are allowed as first author to submit either one regular abstract plus **one** abstract solicited by a convener, or two solicited abstracts. Further abstracts have to be submitted as a poster. If you submit to a session belonging to the programme group EOS, you are allowed as first author to submit one more abstract with an oral preference (three in total).



Poster Hall at the EGU 2015 General Assembly at the Austria Center Vienna (Credit: EGU/Foto Pfluegl)

- In any case, please indicate your invoice details for the Abstract Processing Charge (APC) as well as your payment method (credit card or PayPal);
- Submit your abstract. You will receive a confirmation email providing your abstract number.

Please note that an Abstract Processing Charge (APC) of €40 must be paid for each abstract submission. Abstracts are only processed and available for the session organisation by conveners after the payment is complete. Please note that this is a processing charge and not a publishing fee. Therefore, APCs are non-refundable in case of abstract withdrawal, rejection or double submission, and the charges collected cover the cost of processing the abstracts, whether or not one attends the meeting. Further, the APC does not register you for the General Assembly so you must register separately to attend the meeting and pay the appropriate registration fee. Solicited speakers do not receive discounted APCs, registration fees or travel reimbursement. Additional information about why the EGU introduced APCs is [available online](#).

Financial support

The EGU is committed to promoting the participation of both early career scientists and established researchers from low and middle income countries who wish to present their work at the EGU General Assembly. In order to encourage participation of scientists from both these groups, a limited amount of the overall budget of the EGU General Assembly is reserved to provide financial support to those who wish to attend the meeting. The financial support may include waiving of the registration fee and a refund of the APC related to the abstract for which support was requested. Additionally, the grant may include support for travel expenditures.

You fulfil the EGU's [criteria](#) as an early career scientist (ECS) if:

- You are an undergraduate or postgraduate (Masters/PhD) student or a scientist who has received his or her highest degree (BSc, MSc, or PhD) within the past seven years.
- Provided parental leave fell into that 7-year period, up to one year of parental leave time may be added per child, where appropriate.

Each support award is granted to the contact author for a particular abstract. Should this abstract be withdrawn before the meeting or not be presented when the awarded author is present, the award has to be returned, i.e. the author in question will be asked to register and, if necessary, to pay back the money received. Awards cannot be transferred.

There are currently two different [financial support schemes](#) run by the European Geosciences Union:

- **Early Career Scientist's Travel Award (ECSTA):** this award includes a free registration together with a refund of the APC related to the abstract for which support was requested. Depending on the decision of the Support Committee, additional financial support for the travel expenditures with a maximum of €300 could be granted as well.
- **Established Scientist's Travel Award (ESTA):** this award includes a free registration together with a refund of the APC related to the abstract for which support was requested. Depending on the decision of the Support Committee, additional financial support for the travel expenditures with a maximum of €300 could be granted as well.

Scientists who wish to apply for financial support must be the principal author of their contribution and they must submit an abstract by an earlier deadline than that for all abstracts (typically, by the end of November of the year preceding the Assembly). Results of the application process are announced by early February.

Registration

Discounts for registration are given for EGU members, students and senior scientists. Pre-registration is possible at a lower rate and on-site registration is also available. Further information, including registration fees, can be found on the EGU General Assembly ['Registration' page](#). Registration generally includes a name badge, the programme book (if you select to receive one at the time as you complete your on-line registration for the conference) and a free travel pass for Vienna for Monday–Friday of the General Assembly. Registration desks are open on Sunday afternoon before the opening reception to allow participants to register and pick up conference materials.

Timetabling

The General Assembly timetable is divided into five main time blocks (TBs):

- TB1 08:30–10:00
- TB2 10:30–12:00
- TB3 13:30–15:00
- TB4 15:30–17:00
- TB5 17:30–19:00

During breaks between TB1 & TB2 and TB3 & TB4, free tea and coffee is available in the poster halls. Wine, beer and soft drinks are also available daily from 18:00 in the poster halls. Townhall

Meetings take place at the end of the day, after TB5, usually 19:00–20:00. Sessions are designed to run concurrently, and rooms for sessions associated with the same programme group tend to be clustered together. With the exception of the Medal Lectures and other selected talks, each presentation is to be no longer than 15 minutes (including 3 minutes of questions). Posters are organised by session and posters for one Programme Group will be adjacent to each other.

It is easy to get 'conference burnout' at the General Assembly so please take the time to visit posters and other events such as the GeoCinema and photo competition. Medal Lectures can be very interesting, even if they are not in your field. You can also take time out to explore the beautiful park behind the conference centre.

Presenting

Oral presentations

Full [guidelines for oral presentations](#) are available on the General Assembly website. Oral presentations are organised by session, as indicated in the programme. They are scheduled in specific lecture rooms together with the time of presentation. The 15-minute-long oral sessions are scheduled in four time blocks per day, each of which is 90 minutes long. Please note that the duration of an oral presentation includes 3 minutes for questions and discussion, i.e. a 15 minute talk should comprise of a 12 minutes presentation and 3 minutes of discussion and questions.

Since the oral presentations are not organised centrally, authors are kindly asked to upload their presentations in the relevant lecture room at least 30 minutes before the start of the session's time block. A lecture room assistant will be available to help with this. Each room has a laptop, projector, microphone and laser pointer. Laptops provided have PowerPoint installed. It is strictly prohibited to take photos and/or copies from notebooks of any scientific material without permission from the authors.

Poster presentations

Full [guidelines for poster presentations](#) are available on the General Assembly website. The poster boards at the General Assembly are landscape and 197 cm wide x 100 cm high (e.g. landscape A0 posters as an often-used format fit perfectly). Posters should be put up between 08:00 and 08:30 in the morning: all the material necessary for attaching the poster to the poster board is available at the facility desks in the respective poster area. In addition, there are assistants to help authors in putting up or in taking down their posters. For each poster board, there is a desk for placing the private notebook/MacBook for additional PowerPoint or video presentations. European-type power sockets are available. You will be sent your poster location (e.g. XY0439) via email prior to the General Assembly and it will also be listed online in the session programme. You can find the exact location of your poster using the online floor plans (check the [relevant section on the General Assembly website](#)). The attendance time should be sent to you prior to the event. Please retrieve your poster at the end of the day as those that are not collected will be disposed of.

PICO Presentations

Full [guidelines for PICO \(Presenting Interactive Content\) presentations](#) are available on the General Assembly website. PICO presentations can be a PowerPoint, movie, animation, or simply a PDF showing your research on a display. These presentations combine the advantages of both oral and poster presentations, together with the opportunity to be interactive. They will be organised



Reviewing the day's PICO presentations. (Credit: EGU/Foto Pfluegl)

at designated PICO spots, which combine touch screen displays with a presentation screen. PICO sessions start with “2 minutes of madness” in which all authors present the essence of their work with 2 slides in 2 minutes. Afterwards, the audience uses the touch screens to view again their PICO presentation(s) of interest. Find out more about PICO on the [General Assembly web-site](#).

Union-wide and disciplinary sessions

Special Scientific Events (SSC)

The SSC programme group includes science-related Union-wide sessions of particular interest to all conference participants. It includes:

- **Union Symposia (US):** Union Symposia are Union-wide events of general appeal that generally last for one time block (90 minutes).
- **Great Debates (GDB):** Great Debates, which last for one time block, feature a panel of experts and stakeholders (ranging from academia to industry and interest groups) on a specific topic. The debates are often moderated by a journalist. They start with short statements from the panellists, which are then debated. Questions from the audience are an integral part of the debates.
- **Medal Lectures (ML):** During the General Assembly scientists awarded Union and division medals and awards give Medal Lectures. These may take place during scientific sessions (for division medals) or during lunchtimes (Union medals) or at another time (such as after TB5).

In some years, there may be other events classified under SSC, such as Keynote Lectures (KL) or lectures related to the theme of the conference.

Outreach, Education and Media (OEM)

The OEM programme group features Union-wide sessions and events with an outreach or education component. It includes:

- **Education and Outreach Symposia (EOS):** Sessions in the EOS have a strong focus on educational initiatives and the successful communication of science to the public. In addition, sessions allow participants to learn how best to engage the public with their research and new ways of assessing the effectiveness of engagement techniques.
- **GeoCinema (GC):** GeoCinema presents a variety of films in the Earth, planetary and space sciences, all of which are either narrated in English or have English subtitles. Films range from short clips (several minutes long) to feature-length films and documentaries.
- **Press conferences (PC):** Press conferences highlight selected research presented at scientific session. These are special sessions organised for the press and media participants at the EGU General Assembly. Limited spots may be available upon request for scientists who are bloggers or science writers who may wish to attend press conferences. All press conferences are streamed live and can be watched remotely by non-media conference participants and those not in Vienna.

Feedback and networking (FAN)

The FAN programme group features public events related to the running of the EGU, its divisions and its activities. These are public sessions the EGU membership is encouraged to attend to provide feedback to those who run the EGU. It also features networking events such as journal or ECS receptions. Of highlight are:

- **Plenary:** A key Union Meeting, to which all are encouraged to attend, is the Plenary (normally at lunchtime on Monday). This is an annual event open to all EGU members where the past and future development of the EGU is discussed. The whole EGU Council attends and it is the main meeting for putting new ideas forward to the organisation. A free lunch buffet (sandwiches and soft drinks) is normally served.
- **Division Meetings (DM):** Division Meetings are where division-level items are discussed before being reported to the Council, with line with EGU's bottom-up structure. All are welcome to contribute to these meetings, where sandwiches are often available.
- **Meet EGU (EGU):** This is your opportunity to meet those involved in the running of the EGU. For up to one and half hours you'll have a chance to meet, chat with, and provide feedback to EGU Division Presidents, EGU Executive members and also EGU journal editors and the Union-wide ECS Representative.

Short courses and topical meetings (STM)

- **Short Courses (SC):** Short Courses are workshop-type sessions that provide participants with the opportunity to learn about a new subject or further their knowledge in a particular area. These run for one or two time blocks. Some courses require contact with the convenors in advance, whereas others can be attended without prior notice.
- **Townhall Meetings (TM):** Townhall Meetings are meetings open for all participants in the conference that take place from 19:00 to 20:00, typically on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday of the General Assembly. During these meetings new initiatives or decisions are announced to a larger audience following an open discussion on the matter.
- **Splinter Meetings (SM):** Splinter Meetings are side meetings (either public or by invitation only) that can be organised by participants during the course of the conference. The EGU reserves a number of extra rooms free of charge for Splinter Meeting organisers.

Disciplinary sessions and interdisciplinary events

The vast majority of sessions at the EGU General Assembly are disciplinary sessions that give participants the opportunity to present and discuss their research with their peers. They cover the full spectrum of the geosciences and the space and planetary science and include oral, PICO and/or poster presentations.

Interdisciplinary events (IEs) highlight sessions that tackle a common theme through an interdisciplinary combination of approaches, aiming to foster cross-division links and collaborations. IEs are launched for the first time at the 2016 General Assembly with four themes: 'Across scales in the geosciences', 'Volcanic gas, aerosol and ash emissions', 'From mountain to basin', and 'Interplay of Arctic climate and ice'.

Competitions

Photo Contest

Since 2010 there has been a photo competition open to all those pre-registered to the General Assembly. A call for entries goes out in February, with images being submitted to [Imaggeo](#) throughout the month. Photos can be on any broad theme related to the Earth and space sciences. Each pre-registered participant can submit up to three photos and one moving image. If you submit your images to the yearly EGU Photo Contest, you also are submitting the photos to the EGU's open access image repository, Imaggeo. Being open access (see the [copyright information online](#)), it can



One of the EGU 2014 Photo Competition winning photos: 'Erosion spider' by John Clemens, distributed via [imaggeo.egu.eu](#).

be used by scientists for their presentations or publications, and more, provided the photographer is credited. You retain full rights of use as your uploaded image is licensed and distributed by EGU [under a Creative Commons licence](#). Shortlisted photos are exhibited at the EGU General Assembly, where participants vote for their favourites. The winners are announced on the Friday of the General Assembly. [Further information](#) and [previous winners](#) can be viewed online at Imaggeo. The top three images are turned into postcards that are distributed at the next General Assembly.

Communicate your Science Video Competition

Early career scientists pre-registered for the EGU General Assembly are able to take part in the EGU's Communicate Your Science Video Competition where the aim is to produce a video (up-to-three-minutes long) to share your research with the general public. The winning entry receives a free registration to the General Assembly the following year.

The video can include scenes of you out in the field and explaining an outcrop, or at the lab bench showing how to work out water chemistry; entries can also include cartoons, animations (including stop motion), or music videos – you name it! As long as you're explaining concepts in the Earth, planetary and space sciences in a language suitable for a general audience, you can be as creative as you like.

The competition opened in early December and with submissions being accepted until 4 March. For further information and previous winners, please see [this blog post](#).

Travel and Accommodation

Food and drink

In addition to the complimentary refreshments provided during the breaks, there are various food and drink outlets within the conference venue, including the Student's Corner, serving low-cost meals. There are also bakeries, cafes, restaurants and a supermarket in close vicinity to the meeting venue.

Accommodation

Information on accommodation options can be found on the [accommodation page](#) of the General Assembly website. Please note Mondial Congress and Events cannot guarantee accommodation after a certain date. Other accommodation options are:

- <http://www.jugendherberge.at>
- <http://www.hotelscombined.com>
- <http://viennacityflats.at/en/>
- <http://www.govienna.net>
- <http://www.apartment.at/eng/>
- <https://www.airbnb.com/s/Vienna--Austria>

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list. You can also consider other hotel booking websites such as [hotels.com](#), [kayak.com](#) and [expedia.com](#). When booking accommodation bear in mind that you will have a Vienna travel card for Monday–Friday, which covers the city area public transport.

Getting to Vienna

Vienna's International [Airport](#) is served by many of the major European airlines and is 19 kilometres from the city centre. You can go from the Airport to the city using the [City Airport Train \(CAT\)](#), [suburban railway](#), [buses](#), or a [taxi](#). The CAT takes 16 minutes from Airport to Wien Mitte and fares start at €12. Trains leave every 30 minutes. The S-bahn (S7) takes 25 minutes from the Airport to various stations in Vienna centre: Rennweg (change for Sudbahnhof), Mitte, Praterstern, Traisengasse, Handelskai and Floridsdorf. A timetable is available online with trains leaving approximately every 30 minutes and fares are from €4.40. There are various bus connections from the airport to the city, that take 20 minutes. Buses go through the night and cost from €8 for a single ticket. Taxis are also available at the airport.

If you would like to consider overland transport (e.g. train, car), see below.

Overland travel

For those of you who are interested in car-pooling, the e-carpool site (www.e-carpool.eu) is useful and available in multiple languages, as is bla bla car (<https://www.blablacar.com/>).

Travel from the UK

- Train or Train + Ferry: [The Man in Seat 61 website](#) is comprehensive and up-to-date, listing four different major paths one can take from London to Vienna by train, and one for train plus ferry (via Harwich & Hoek van Holland). Fares start at £61 (or 88€) for a single.
 - Coach: [National Express](#) offers coach services from London to Vienna, taking about 23 hours one-way, starting at £79 return, less for students. [Eurolines](#): This is a group of 32 independent coach companies operating together, and is Europe's largest regular coach network. When buying a ticket originating in the UK, you are effectively booking a ticket with National Express.
 - Car: The distance by road from London to Vienna is approximately 1600 km (1000 miles). One can drive this in one very long day (e.g. 14-15 hours) depending on ferry/tunnel crossing, and any car-rental switches UK vs. mainland Europe. There are many combinations of Train + Car, Ferry + Car, etc. For instance, some people find that taking a train from the UK to The Netherlands, and then renting a car from there, is an easier alternative than going via Dover/Calais.
-

Travel from Germany

From Cologne, Bonn, and Frankfurt there is a night train that arrives at 9:00 in the morning. All information on train travel from Germany to Vienna is available from www.bahn.de. There are regular trains between Munich and Vienna, each taking around 4 hours.

Travel from northern Europe

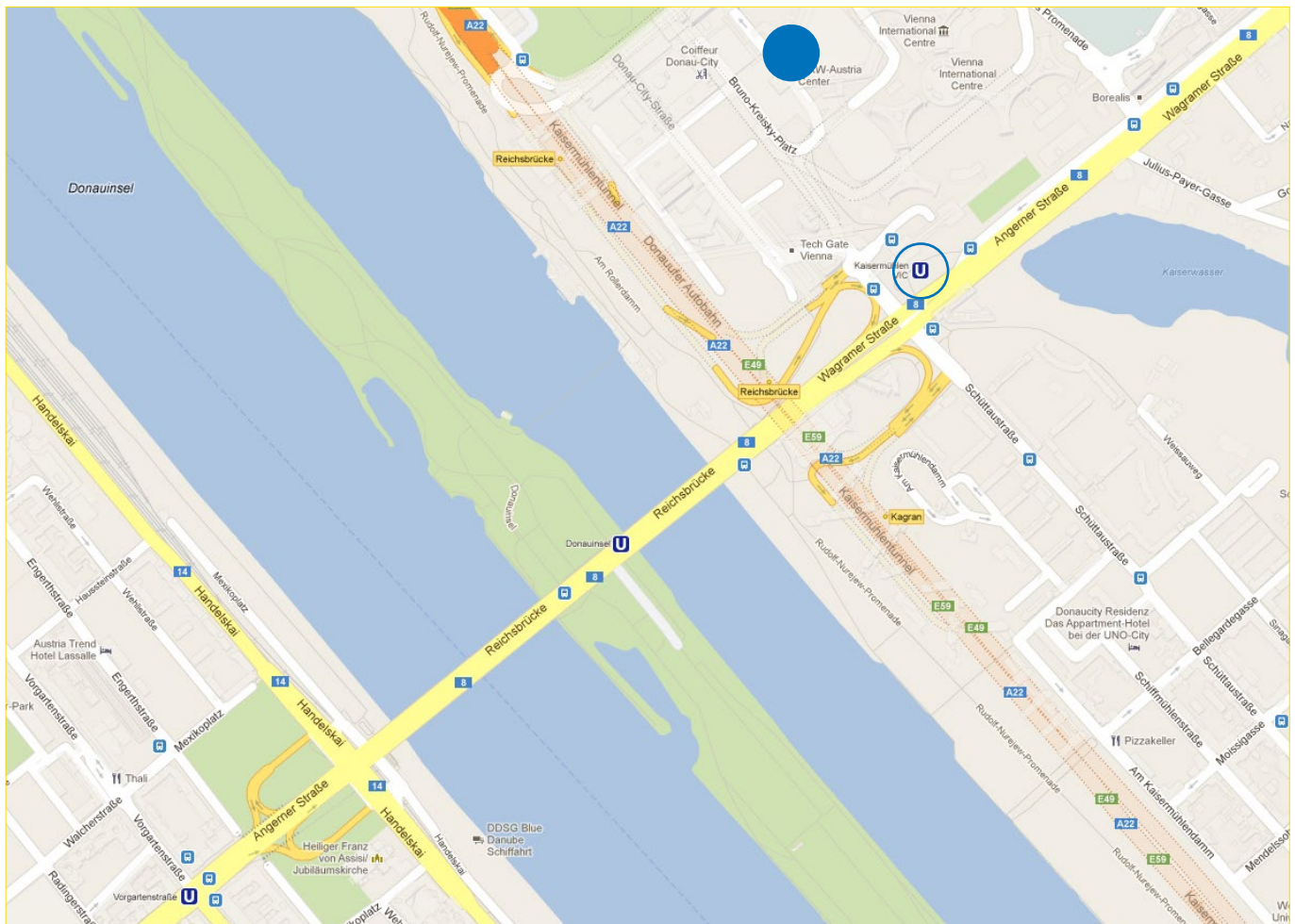
From northern Europe, it takes over a day to reach Vienna. From most of Denmark and the region around Malmö (Sweden), it is possible to travel to Vienna on a very long day. The fastest alternatives include a night train, such as the Austrian night train from [Hamburg to Vienna](#). This overnight train can also take your car (it is an *Autoreisezug*). After booking a car space (giving the model and registration number) you turn up about an hour before departure (check the *Verladezeit*) and drive the car on the train yourself – it is an easy way to avoid driving across Europe while still taking your car and the price is very reasonable. You can also take the German night train from Copenhagen to Nuremberg (and then a day train to Vienna). Trains departing from Oslo and Stockholm in the morning provide connections with night trains going further south.

Travel from anywhere in Europe

For European residents, the most economical alternative is usually an InterRail ticket. On an InterRail [Global Pass](#) (€264, or €192 for people under 26 travelling second class), you can travel on trains unlimited for 5 days within a 10-day period. For more information on InterRail see www.interailnet.com.



Vienna U- and S-bahn map ([see original](#)).



Location of the Austria Center Vienna (top, blue filled circle) and of the closest U-bahn stop, Kaisermühlen-VIC (blue unfilled circle).

Getting to the conference centre

The [Austria Center Vienna \(ACV\)](#) is the event venue and is located next to the 'Kaisermühlen-VIC' station on the subway line U1, which runs from the city centre (Stephansplatz) to Leopoldau. A Vienna metro plan can be found below and a travel planner for Vienna can be accessed on the city's main transport website ([Wiener Linien](#)).

The Austria Center Vienna is also reachable via the [Airport Bus](#) running to the station 'Wien Kaisermühlen/VIC' close to the ACV.

Things to do in Vienna

The Vienna tourist board has information about sightseeing, shows, shopping, dining and other information about Vienna on [its website](#). A fairly comprehensive list of the museums in Vienna can be found on the [Tour My Country website](#). Towards the end of the week of the General Assembly, the EGU Communications Team also prepare [a blog post with things to do in Vienna over the weekend](#), keep an eye on the [EGU blog](#) for the 2016 post.

Tourist information on Vienna can be found in the Arrivals Hall of Vienna International Airport or at the Tourist Information Centre (Vienna 1) at Albertinaplatz/Maysedergasse, behind the Vienna

State Opera (open daily from 09:00–19:00). Brochures can be ordered in advance from your local Austrian Tourist Office.

This guide was first compiled by Jennifer Holden (former EGU Postdoctoral Fellow) in 2011, and has since been updated by Sara Mynott (former EGU Communications Officer), Laura Roberts (EGU Communications Officer) and Bárbara Ferreira (EGU Media and Communications Manager).

Last updated in December 2015.

Appendix: Past participants' impressions

“It was the first time for me in EGU, and I was amazed to see how big it is. When I reached the place I thought it would be a complete mess honestly, but it's even more impressive to see how well organised it is.

The thing is, I wasn't really aware of that, and I hadn't so much time before the event to organise it, so I hadn't planned my daily programme and I didn't know what there was to see. So at the beginning I was a bit lost, but by the end of the week I managed to see really interesting talks and posters, and meet interesting people as well.

By the way, I don't know if it's a common thing in geology conferences, but free beer and wine while walking around the poster's session, definitely makes the difference!”

Ben Sautter, PhD Student, ENS – Paris

“The highlight of EGU 2014 for me was getting the opportunity to meet fellow 'young' geomorphologists at the social events, it was great to talk to researchers from different countries and find out about their work and similarities / differences between their experiences and mine in the UK.”

Lucy Clarke, Senior Lecturer, University of Gloucestershire

“I thoroughly enjoyed my time at EGU 2014. The conference was excellently organised and ran very smoothly. The talks and poster sessions provided a great platform to interact with other people in my field, and to also dip into some other subjects that interest me. On top of that, everyone I met was really welcoming and I made plenty of new friends.

My advice to other first time participants is to get down to the posters in the evening and chat with as many people as possible. Don't be afraid to take advantage of the beautiful city and head out to dinner together.”

Mark Hoggard, Research Student, University of Cambridge

Please note that some of the information in the following quote may be outdated, but it was included in the guide nonetheless as it does provide useful advice.

“Welcome to the EGU General Assembly. It will seem massive, certainly I found that when I first attended 7 months into my PhD, quietly following my supervisor and group mates around, not really knowing what was going on, what was happening, and not sure what I

should be doing. The second time around, I felt significantly more confident, and while still doing plenty of things with my group mates, I was also doing things for me and while some of this was because I knew more people, some of it was confidence, feeling I could go my own way at the conference.

So, after mentioning this out loud, at EGU2011, an e-mail appears asking me to write some advice on being a first timer at EGU, so here it is, I hope this is useful in helping you get the most out of the conference, because there is nothing like the EGU conference with the exception of its American colleague, AGU. The lessons I learned at my first EGU made my first AGU that bit easier, so I would hope that what is written here could be used over there also! Good luck and enjoy

Pre-conference

Organise & print out your personal programme. This sounds really obvious, but at my first EGU I didn't do it. The personal programme gives you a chance to work out what sessions you want to be in and when they are. You can then look at it and work out whether you are dashing out of one session to another or are wanting to see all the talks in one session. I'd suggest you add everything you might want to see, you will then make your mind up once you arrive about what you really need to go to.

I would especially recommending that you look out for the Medal Lectures and any Union Master Classes that catch your eye, especially any that are in your field, these are hour long sessions, the medal lectures are given by the EGU Award winner and are a great chance to see one of the top of a field talk on their work over their career and what they find interesting right now. The Union Master Classes, which began last year are an interesting chance for people to put forward suggestions on a topic with some great open floor question and debate. Both session types, especially if relevant to you are a must see event!

Friends

It's always good to find out who of your friends is attending the conference. It's a great opportunity to meet up with them (especially if they are geographically far away from you), and also your friends colleagues are more people for you to meet and get to know and it adds to the experience.

At the conference

Oral Sessions: So, armed with your plan, start working out what you actually will attend out of everything you added to the plan. It's important to remember that the week will be busy, there will be lots going on and you may not get as much sleep as you would like, especially if lots of your sessions start early. So don't expect to attend everything. Focus first on your key sessions, especially if you have a poster in that session, also there will be talks your supervisor will expect you to be in, so be in them! After that go to sessions you think look interesting or useful, and if they are not panning out as you hoped, don't feel you have to stay.

The hardest part for me when I was first at EGU, was people leaving sessions, it seemed so odd to have someone walk out, but it's important that you realise that it is not unexpected, there are parallel sessions you will want to attend and so moving around is important. If you are self-conscious about it, stay near the door, but don't worry about it, everyone is doing it. It's therefore good if you are going to be in the whole session, to sit away from the door, so that people going in and out can do so easily!

Take breaks, and not just in the slots where there are planned breaks. If a couple of talks in the middle of a session are not relevant, but those either side are, then step out, stretch your legs/get some air or check out the posters, you are not required to attend everything, and you'll be less effective if you sit through talks you don't need to rather than take a break.

Poster Sessions: I really enjoy the poster sessions, they are a rare opportunity to get the scientist to yourself at times and ask the questions you want to. Some people like to read posters then ask questions, or get the poster explained to them, find the way that works for you, but never feel compelled to ask a question, it's better to not ask a question than ask a daft one, in my opinion. Mainly though, remember that the poster presenter expects to be grilled so don't worry about asking questions if you want to.

Networking

A large part of EGU is meeting people, whether they're senior academics, someone you have always wanted to meet or just another PhD student. Use the opportunity to meet people and get talking to them. At the conference it's easiest at a poster session (especially if they have one), but get chatting to people. There is plenty of advice on networking out there, but from my experience, the best form of networking is to be yourself, be natural and not too pushy. With academics it's unlikely that you will be remembered on your first meeting with someone, but think of EGU as the first chance to meet them, after a few meetings they'll start to remember you. With PhD students it's a lot easier, and you'll drift into social groups through friends or group mates, again just be yourself and get to know people, it is amazing how often you bump into these people at future meetings, even if you are only in overlapping fields, they keep appearing and these 'conference friends' become people you get to know and do things with at conferences.

Organisations

Groups such as the YES Network (Young Earth Scientist) or APECS (Association of Polar Early Career Scientists) will have events or stalls organised during the conference. Make sure you find out if the relevant group for you and attend it if possible. It's a fantastic opportunity to meet your fellow PhD and Post-docs in your field and adds to the EGU Experience. These groups usually organise panel sessions with academics in the field followed by a social, in 2011, a joint YES/APECS event was streamed globally followed by a social meal in Vienna, it was great fun and a packed event.

Notes

A day at EGU can be long, frequently sessions will lead to posters to an evening event and then dinner before you get home. For that reason you don't want to be carrying around a lot of bulky kit, and so I'd suggest sticking to the old fashioned notepad and pen for taking notes. While a laptop taken note is less effort to organise post conference, it does require carrying it around all day, so only take it if you are prepared to carry it or have a nice light and small one. Personally, I focus on the key points in talks when taking notes, but everyone has their own style and so long as you know the session and talk/poster number you will be able to work it out afterwards!

Food

Unless someone else is paying, I'd advise you to not buy food or drink in the Vienna Centre. While it is nice food, the value for money isn't great, the same can be said of the drinks in the Vienna Centre. So, especially for those at institutions which provide a 'daily allowance' I would suggest one of two plans. Either 1) Pop down to the supermarket which is near the

Vienna Centre (Come out of the conference centre, turn right and walk past the entrance to the post hall, go down some steps and it is at the bottom) or 2) Jump back onto the U-Baum to Schwedensplatz or Stephansplatz where you can get food from a shop in town or a personal favourite of mine the Wurst stalls, serving hotdogs. Likewise, take a drink with you to ensure that you are not having to buy a drink on site, as again these can get quite costly. I can though, recommend getting a pocket full of the EGU sweets though, they can help keep you going through a session!

In Vienna

Getting Around: The U-Bahn is the way to travel. Your EGU name badge comes with a week ticket for travelling on it and the Vienna Centre is found right off one of the main lines. It runs for all but about 3 hours a day at regular frequency, so makes getting around Vienna that much easier! Make sure you have map with where the lines on it for convenience though!

Food, Drink & Socialising: Explore! Vienna is like any major city, there are some excellent places to eat & drink and those you wish someone had warned you about in advance. I can't offer any advice on this, other than trust your instincts. The advice for this element of EGU is that is one of the most important elements of the conference. If you are going to stick 9000 scientists in one city, you are going to bump into and meet lots of them. It's an amazing opportunity to meet people who might become useful contacts in the future so it is all about networking, and as such you are never really 'off' from working. The networking is not only with senior academics, but with fellow PhD students. PhD students are especially in the short term the most useful contacts and so make the most of the opportunity to chat and get to know them, especially those working close to your project...

Conclusions

Your first EGU will be a bewildering experience and if someone tells you otherwise they are probably lying! It is so easy to get swamped in all the sessions and posters and feel overwhelmed. I hope the advice will help you enjoy the experience. I'd finish by saying to remember that the conference is there for you and you are not required to do anything you don't want to. I will also guarantee that when you return from Vienna, very tired and feeling like you didn't learn a thing, to not panic, because you'll be reading a paper or thinking about an idea a few months later when suddenly that talk you saw at EGU or that poster you read, will come flooding back to your mind and then you will see the learning value of EGU.

Enjoy yourself, be yourself and if you see me, feel free to say hello!👉

James Pope, PhD student, University of Leeds (now Climate Modeller at British Antarctic Survey)
