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IAIA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN VANCOUVER: "IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: WHOSE BUSINESS IS IT?"

The 24th international conference on environmental impact assessment took place on April 24 to 30, 2004 in the Canadian city of Vancouver. This event has for several years been arranged under the auspices of the "International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA). This spring it was organised in co-operation with its Canadian office.

"Common Interests in the Area of Environmental Impact Assessment" was defined to be the principal topic of the 24th round of the conference in Canada. More than 1000 experts from more than 70 countries took part at the event.

As usually, the first three days were dedicated to training courses in various aspects of environmental impact assessment, e.g. the strategic environmental assessment (SEA), trainings on environmental assessment of impacts of individual projects, issues related to social impact assessment and cumulative impacts.

The above-mentioned training courses were supervised by world-wide recognised professionals with broad experience in the given area. In addition these courses were complemented by several excursions allowing the participants to acquire a more concrete picture about the individual topics.

The remaining days of the global event were dedicated to plenary speeches on nine central topics and to lectures in working groups on 27 topics related to EIA, SEA and sustainable development. There were given about 420 presentations within the individual working groups during the conference. I have presented the paper on "The Use of Principles, Criteria and Indicators in the SEA of Spatial Plans".

The event was concluded by outputs from the individual working groups as well as issues proposed to become central topics for the next round of meetings taking place in June 2005 in Boston, USA as the global meeting and in September 2005 in the neighbouring Prague as the regional meeting.

The hosts of the next annual meetings used the opportunity of having the participants together and introduced their countries and conference venues in video presentations.

Integral part of the annual meetings is the presentation of the IAIA Awards in several categories based on recommendations from the IAIA Award Nomination Committee.

