

Good morning to you all from Dublin.

Whilst it is fantastic to see so many of you joining us online this morning, I think it is fair to say that this is not what any of us had in mind for our 2021 General Assembly.

I know that Zeljko Obradovic and his team at the Federal Administration for Geodetic and Real Property Affairs were very much looking forward to welcoming us to Sarajevo and share our disappointment that we are again having to gather together virtually rather than in person. I am grateful for their patience and understanding, and I am thrilled that they have extended their invitation to host the 2022 event.

As a community, we thrive on personal contact so the General Assembly is not just an opportunity to hear about EuroGeographics activities. For many of us, it is the highlight of our networking calendar offering the chance to catch up, discuss the issues of the day and enjoy time with like-minded people. I know I have missed that personal touch and I hope very much that we will be together again in 2022.

We are also a community that is good at adapting – whether to meet the needs of a fast moving situation such as Covid-19 or providing expertise to tackle other global issues such as climate change. Whatever the challenge, those making difficult decisions can count on us to provide the most accurate and up to date information available.

Our agility is demonstrated not only in our ability to swiftly refocus our operations to meet national needs, but also in the way we have embraced new technologies and ways of working. Indeed the record numbers of you participating in our online webinar programme shows your determination to continue to embrace the spirit of collaboration and cooperation that is at the heart of EuroGeographics. Thank you for your continued contributions, support and commitment.

Joining the Association in the midst of a global pandemic when face-to-face meetings are impossible would be a challenge for many people, so I would also like to take a moment to pay tribute to Léa on the occasion of her first GA as Secretary

General and Executive Director. I know that she is in regular contact with many of you but is really looking forward to meeting you in person before too much longer.

We have much to cover in the next two days, fantastic keynote speakers and some unusual networking opportunities. so without further ado I am handing over Léa who will outline our agenda and what to expect.

Léa the floor is yours.