

NASLOVNICI POD ROB

BOOMING

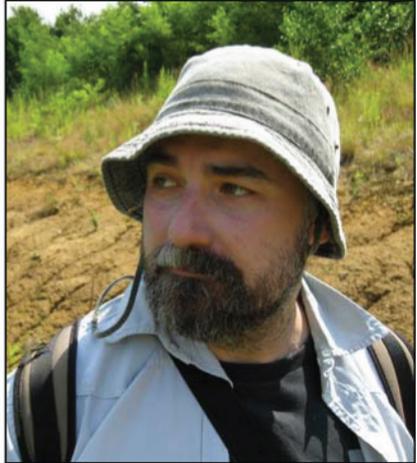
by Miloš Jović

The people of Balkan Peninsula who are in love with dragonflies said BOOM (but also KABOOM) in July, 2011, but didn't blow up. On the contrary, they united. This cheerful sound represents the expression of the latest attempt to unite forces and interests in the south-east of Europe, in order to find out more about our four-winged friends and protect them more efficiently.

The initiative was founded in a strange and not too fancy restaurant in Porto (Portugal) in June, 2010. Tired and hungry (after a day in the field and some time in a wine cellar), The First European Congress of Odonatology

participants coming from the countries of the highland Balkans, awaiting food, manifested their ideas and willingness for cooperation in researches. Despite the fact that some of them (e.g. Damjan and Miloš) had to wait twice as long as others for their hamburgers, the mood was getting better and better. After a few introductory remarks, there was a really live discussion in the Balkan languages, but also in English because of Dule Šacha's constant complaints that he couldn't understand a word. David Muranyi, another participant who couldn't understand a word, mostly wisely ate in silence. After the translation of conclusions, he would only nod and smile. There was this wonderful and harmonious agreement followed by optimism and hope that this positive energy won't just disappear during months that were yet to come.

The optimists were right. A year later, we had another opportunity to gather around one table and one idea – cooperation. One of the main ideas related to BOOM is Odonata research promotion. There are several ways of accomplishing this aim: publishing the data noted during researches we've done together (so it can be accessible to a greater number of people), education of young odonatologists (who can learn more about life and dragonflies by watching mistakes made by those not that young), presenting Odonata to local communities



sometimes completely unaware of presence of these insects around them (when you see a group of geeks in your town wearing hats, rubber boots and nets, you will probably have to ask them what on earth they are doing), ...

We have been doing all that and even more in the Vipava River valley, on the Pohorje Mts. and on the banks of the Mura River, all thanks to the hospitality and good will of our Slovenian colleagues. The young Damjan Vinko is mostly guilty for the good time we've had and successful work we've done. Back in Porto, Damjan said that maybe he could help organize a camp, which was enough for us to cheerfully accept him as the organizer of the first student camp in the initiative for cooperation on the Balkans. Damjan and the fellows from Slovene Odonatological Society (SOD) turned the original idea of organizing a camp into the **BOOM** - First **Balkan OdonatOlogical Meeting**.

As one of the oldest BOOMing participants, I have felt the need for telling the story of its beginnings. As any further narration would be bound to bore the reader, just as I, one of the oldest, could forget what I wanted to say, I conclude it with a big THANK YOU to all the fellows from the SOD and as just as big WELCOME to the second BOOM.