Precise measurement of natural and anthropogenic radioactive pollutants and establishing accurate chronologies for the fast-changing climate of the last centuries

Begy Robert-Csaba is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Environmental Science and Engineering and the Head of the Nuclear Spectrometry Laboratory within the Environmental Radioactivity and Nuclear Dating Centre at Babeş-Bolyai University (BBU) in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. He earned his Ph.D. in physics in 2009 and later achieved his Habilitation in environmental science in 2022. Begy Robert-Csaba has been at the forefront of pioneering the applications of ²¹⁰Pb dating methods for constructing lake sediment chronologies in Romania. His contributions led to the establishment of the Nuclear Spectrometry Laboratory at his home institution, encompassing gamma, alpha, and beta spectrometric techniques. Furthermore, the associated research activities focus on the development of the radiochemical separation protocols required for the application of spectrometric methods in environmental monitoring and dose assessment studies. The aforementioned endeavors serve as the pillars upon which Begy Robert-Csaba's research career has been built.

Begy Robert-Csaba earned his PhD in 2009 by submitting his thesis entitled "Environmental Studies using ²¹⁰Pb radioisotope". The overriding objective of the thesis was to implement the ²¹⁰Pb dating method at Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca and apply this technique to lakes of great importance in Romania. At the same time, he was awarded his first research grant (grant for PhD students in Romania - CNCS/UEFISCDI- TD-397). During his PhD studies, Begy Robert-Csaba investigated a topic that is of current and future importance as the study of the past, by unraveling earlier natural processes, has the potential of predicting future environmental trends. After graduating from his PhD program, Begy Robert-Csaba's scientific activity was focused on the research of radon in residential buildings, a topic with profound social implications for public health safety. During this period, he developed a system for monitoring and controlling residential radon concentrations, which led to the grant of the 129264/G01T patent "Automated system for monitoring and controlling residential radon concentrations". This four-year period of research resulted in the publication of numerous scientific papers, addressing the challenges of remediation techniques for residential radon. From 2012 to 2015, Begy Robert-Csaba was the PI of PNI-II-RU-TE-2012-3-0351 Research projects for stimulating young independent teams (TE) "Radionuclides as tracers of the anthropic influence on the Danube Delta sedimentary processes". The main purpose of the project was the study of the effects of building the hydroelectric power plants Iron Gate I and II on the sediment accumulation in the Danube Delta. The findings highlighted that from the large number of investigated lakes, only a fraction preserved the sedimentary footprints associated with the large-scale construction of the power plants. These observations on the sedimentation rates, which have increased

by four-fold in the last 34 years, made a significant contribution to shaping a new research trajectory. As a result, from 2018 to 2021, Begy Robert-Csaba was the PI of a second Research project for stimulating young independent teams (TE), PN-III-P1-1.1-TE-2016-0814, "Studies on the effects of land use change on soil erosion and high sedimentation rates using radionuclides". The project tackles the recent changes in sedimentation rates in important glacial and low-land lakes, aiming to identify and quantify the anthropic causes that triggered these effects. The results allowed for the disentangling of the impact of different anthropic activities on lacustrine ecosystems, further highlighting the negative consequences of intensive agriculture. The main challenge associated with isolating the anthropic component was the subtraction of the natural (climatic) baseline from the obtained data. This difficulty was addressed by the use of peatlands, which provided the climatic footprint for constructing such a reference level. Further understanding the valuable climatic records in peat bogs, amplified by their pivotal role in the global carbon cycle, Begy Robert-Csaba developed a novel research proposal, which materialized into a third Research project for young independent teams (TE) PN-III-P1-1.1-TE2021- 0213 "Reservoir or source of C: assessing the impact of climate change and anthropogenic influences on SE-European peatlands over the last 150 years", ongoing since 2021, of which Begy Robert-Csaba is PI. The project aims to determine the mechanisms and factors controlling the carbon dynamics within peat ecosystems, and the extent to which peat degradation and the subsequent carbon loss may contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change intensification. The project covers an extended area, encompassing seven European countries, that allows for a broad latitudinal comparison of the ecosystem productivity, as well as its potential in reconstructing micro- and macro-climatic variations. The results identified increased apparent carbon storage capacities of peatlands, while the net balance remains to be established.

Alongside the fundamental research conducted by Begy Robert-Csaba, he strongly emphasized applicative research, leading numerous radiological and dose assessments in different environments. Included among these are: multiple analyses of the radioactive contamination at a regional scale that were performed following the Fukushima and Chernobyl accidents; radionuclide transfer from mine tailings into stream river sediments; as well as dose assessment studies of over 100 spring and geothermal water sources, with extended applicabilities in the public health safety sector.

During his 15-year teaching experience at the Faculty of Environmental Science and Engineering, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Begy Robert-Csaba has coordinated over 30 BSc and MSc thesis, as well as 3 Special Scholarship for Scientific Activity awarded by Babeş-Bolyai University. The courses taught by Begy Robert-Csaba incorporated multiple elements of his research, to facilitate a seamless knowledge transfer process. This approach aims to help students not only become familiar with but also actively embrace science, fostering a dynamic and practical learning experience.

Annex- Career timeline and listed achievements

Personal Information

Family name, First name: Begy Robert-Csaba

Date of birth: 10 June 1980

Researcher unique identifier(s) Scopus ID: 26647449700,

Google Scholar https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=mSeyWZgAAAAJ&hl=en

INDEX h (Hirsch) (Scopus) = 14 - excluding auto citations

INDEX h (Hirsch) (Google Scholar) = 16/12 (since 2019)

Education

2023: Habilitation in Environmental Science Babeș-Bolyai University (BBU), Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

2005 - 2009: PhD student in Physics, Nuclear Physics at the Faculty of Environmental Science and Engineering, Babeş-Bolyai University, under the supervision of Prof. PhD. Constantin Cosma. Title: "Environmental studies using the Pb-210 radionuclide"

2005-2006: Doctoral school "Evolution of terrestrial systems and the environment" - Faculty of Environmental Science, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca

2004-2005: MSc student "Atomic and nuclear methods in the study of the environment" – Faculty of Environmental Science, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca. The title of the MSc thesis "Measurement of Ra-226 in commercially available mineral waters in Romania", scientific coordinator Prof. PhD. Constantin Cosma, Faculty of Environmental Science, Babes-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, Romania and Prof. PhD. Somlai Janos and PhD. Tibor Kovacs, Institute of Radiochemistry and Radioecology, Pannonia University of Veszprem, Hungary.

1999-2004: Bachelor's degree in Physics, Faculty of Physics, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca. Bachelor thesis: "*Construction and testing of an experimental device for measuring Radon*"

Current positions

2021 to present - Associate Professor, Department of Environmental Science, Faculty of Environmental Science and Engineering, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
2017 to present - Grade I Scientific Researcher, Interdisciplinary Research Institute in Bio-Nano-Sciences, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Previous positions:

2009 -2021 - Lecturer Department of Environmental Science, Faculty of Environmental Science and Engineering, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Supervision of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows

2009 – present: Over 40 master's and bachelor students enrolled at Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania; Three Special Scholarship for Scientific Activity (with a duration of one year each)

Teaching activities

Faculty of Environmental Science and Engineering, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Courses and practical exercises in: Basics of environmental physics, Environmental Radioactivity, Environmental Informatics, Unconventional Energies, Biophysics, Atmospheric Physics, Meteorology and Climatology, Radioecology

Institutional responsibilities

Head of Nuclear Spectrometry laboratory in the Center for Environmental Radioactivity and Nuclear Dating within the Interdisciplinary Research Institute in Bio-Nano-Sciences, of Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca

Reviewing activities

Review board of the following journals: Geochronometria (**IF=1.243**), J. Environ. Radioact (**IF=2.047**), Appl. Radiat. Isot. (**IF=1.136**), Radioanal. Nucl. Chem. (**IF=0.983**), Sci. Total Environ. (**IF=3.976**), Estuarine, Coastal and Shelf Science (**IF=2.335**), Environ. Scie. and Pollut. Res. (**IF=2.76**), Quat. Geochronol. (**IF=3.142**), Scientific Reports (**IF=3.998**)

<u>Evaluator for PhD thesis at foreign universities</u>: University of Pannonia, Veszprem, Hungary, 2023, 2022 and 2021

Memberships of scientific societies

Member of the Hungarian Radiochemistry Society (Hungarian Chemical Society); Member of the scientific committee of RAD conferences (4,5,6,7,8,9,10); Member of the scientific committee of the VIII conference. TREICEP

Invited talks

VIII. Terrestrial Radioisotopes in Environment International Conference on Environmental Protection, 4-7 October **2022** Vonyarcvashegy, Hungary, "210Pb dating as a tool for the investigation of environmental processes: From anthropic effects to climate changes"

Scientific research grants (selection)

- **2024 Member** of European Research Council (ERC) Consolidator Grant 101043356, HORIZON EUROPE, "PROGRESS- *Reading provenance from ubiquitous quartz: understanding the changes occurring in its lattice defects in its journey in time and space by physical methods", 2023-2027*
- **2022 PI** of CNFIS/UEFISCDI human resources project TE grant: **PN-III-P1-1.1-TE2021- 0213**, with the title "Reservoir or source of C: assessing the impact of climate change and anthropogenic influences on SE-European peatlands over the last 150 years"
- **2020 Member** of "INTERTRAP- *Integrated dating approach for terrestrial records of past climate using trapped charge methods*", 2016-2021, European Research Council (ERC) Starting Grant 678106, HORIZON 2020
- **2018 PI** of CNFIS/UEFISCDI human resources project TE grant: **PN-III-P1-1.1-TE- 2016-0814**, with the title "Studies on the effects of land use change on soil erosion and high sedimentation rates using radionuclides"
- **2012 PI** of CNFIS/UEFISCDI human resources project grant **TE: PNI-II-RU-TE-2012-3-0351**, with the title "Radionuclides as tracers of the anthropic influence on the Danube Delta sedimentary processes"

List of Publications

- 1. <u>Begy, RC</u>., Savin, CF., Korponai, J. et al., 2024 Investigation of the last two centuries sedimentation dynamics in high-altitude lakes of Southern Carpathians, Romania. Sci Rep 14, 1391 https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-51812-2
- Kelemen, S., Savin, CF., Timar-Gabor, A. <u>Begy, R-C.</u>, 2023 A comparative study on digestion methods for ²¹⁰Po determinations by alpha spectrometry on peat bog samples. J Radioanal Nucl Chem https://doi.org/10.1007/s10967-023-09157-z
- 3. <u>R-Cs. Begy</u>, C-F. Savin, A. Ruskál, 2023 Recent carbon sequestration dynamics in four temperate SE European peatlands using ²¹⁰Pb dating, **Journal of Environmental**Radioactivity, Volume 264,107-208, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvrad.2023.107208
- 4. CF Savin, FL Forray, C Tănăselia, <u>RC Begy</u> 2023, Radiological assessment of carbonated spring waters in regard to the lithological characteristics of Harghita county, Romania **The**

- **European Physical Journal Special Topics**, 1-19, https://doi.org/10.1140/epjs/s11734-023-00879-5
- Begy R.-C., Savin C.-F., Süle D.-K., Nuhanovic M., Giagias E., Kovács T. 2022 Radiological investigation of natural carbonated spring waters from Eastern Carpathians, Romania.
 Journal of Radioanalytical and Nuclear Chemistry 331 (3), pp. 1439 1450.
 https://doi.org/10.1007/s10967-022-08195-3
- Begy R.-C., Savin C.-F., Timar-Gabor A. 2022 Correction of the effects of carbon dioxide and hydrogen sulfide on electrostatic cell monitors measurements of radon in water. Journal of Environmental Chemical Engineering, 10 (1), art. no. 107040. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jece.2021.107040
- 7. Begy R-C, Savin CF, Kelemen S, Veres D, Muntean O-L, Malos CV, et al. 2021 Investigation of the effect of anthropogenic land use on the Pănăzii Lake (Romania) catchment area using Cs-137 and Pb-210 radionuclides. PLoS ONE 16(6): e0251603.
 https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0251603
- Begy, R.-C., Kelemen, S., Simon, H., Tănăselia, C. 2018 The history of the sedimentation processes and heavy metal pollution in the Central Danube Delta (Romania).
 Geochronometria 45(1), pp. 97-106. https://doi.org/10.1515/geochr-2015-0090
- Begy, R.-C., Simon, H., Kelemen, S., Preoteasa, L. 2018 Investigation of sedimentation rates and sediment dynamics in Danube Delta lake system (Romania) by 210Pb dating method.
 Journal of Environmental Radioactivity 192, pp. 95-104.
 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvrad.2018.06.010
- 10. <u>Begy, R.C.</u>., Simon, H., Vasilache, D., Kelemen, S., Cosma, C. 2017 ¹³⁷Cs contamination over Transylvania region (Romania) after Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant Accident. Science of the Total Environment 599-600, pp. 627-636 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2017.05.019
- 11. <u>Begy, R.C.</u>, Kovacs, T., Veres, D., Simon, H., 2016. *Atmospheric flux, transport and mass balance of* ²¹⁰*Pb and* ¹³⁷*Cs radiotracers in different regions of Romania*. **Appl. Radiat. Isot.** 111, 31-39. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apradiso.2016.02.008
- 12. <u>Begy, R.-C</u>., Preoteasa, L., Timar-Gabor, A., Mihaiescu, R., Tanaselia, C., Kelemen, S., Simon, H., 2016. *Sediment dynamics and heavy metal pollution history of the Cruhlig Lake (Danube Delta, Romania)*. **J. Environ. Radioact** 153, 167-175. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvrad.2015.12.020
- Begy, R.C., Dumitru, O.A., Simon, H., Steopoaie, I., 2015. An improved procedure for the determination of ²¹⁰Po by alpha spectrometry in sediments samples from Danube Delta. J. Radioanal. Nucl. Chem. 303 (3), 2553-2557. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10967-014-3703-z

- 14. <u>Begy, R.-C.</u>, Simon, H., Kelemen, S., Reizer, E., Preoteasa, L., 2015. *Determination of sedimentation rates of a northern Danube Delta lake by* ²¹⁰Pb method. **Carpath. J. Earth Environ. Sci.** 10 (4), 191-194
- 15. <u>Begy, R.-C.</u>, Simon, H., Reizer, E., 2015. *Efficiency testing of Red Lake protection dam on Rosu stream by* ²¹⁰Pb method. **J. Radioanal. Nucl. Chem.**303 (3), 2539-2545. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10967-014-3684-y
- 16. <u>Begy, R.C.</u>, Timar-Gabor, A., Somlai, J., Cosma, C., 2011. *A sedimentation study of St. Ana Lake (Romania) applying the* ²¹⁰Pb and ¹³⁷Cs dating methods. **Geochronometria** 38 (2), 93-100. https://doi.org/10.2478/s13386-011-0017-6
- 17. **R. Begy**, C. Cosma, Z. Horvath, 2009. *Sediment accumulation rate in the "Red Lake"* (ROMANIA) determined by Pb-210 and Cs-137 radioisotopes **Rom. J. Phys.** 54, 9-10 https://rjp.nipne.ro/2009_54_9-10/0943_0950.pdf
- 18. <u>Begy R.,</u> Cosma C., Timar A., 2009. Recent changes in Red Lake (Romania) sedimentation rate determined from depth profiles of ²¹⁰Pb and ¹³⁷Cs radioisotopes. **Journal of**Environmental Radioactivity, nr. 100, 644-648. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvrad.2009.05.005
- 19. <u>Begy R. CS</u>., Dreve S., Timar-Gabor A., Rusu O.A., Cosma C., 2012. *Measurement of radium content in some spring waters from Romania*. *Environmetal Engineering and Management Journal*, vol 11, nr 2, 1005-1009. https://doi.org/10.30638/eemj.2012.031
- 20. R. Cs. Begy, J. Somlai, T. Kovacs, O. A. Dumitru (Rusu) and C. Cosma 2013 *The activity concentration of* ²¹⁰Po in romanian commercial cigarettes and the radiation exposure estimation derived from their regular consumption. Radiation Protection Dosimetry, pp. 1–5. https://doi.org/10.1093/rpd/nct121
- 21. <u>Begy R.-C.</u>, Simon H., Kelemen S. 2015 ²¹⁰Po inhalation due to smoking: a dose estimation. **Journal of Radioanalytical and Nuclear Chemistry** Vol 306/1.1 257-261p. <u>https://doi.org/10.1007/s10967-015-4073-x</u>
- 22. <u>Begy R.C.</u>, Cosma C., Timar A., Fulea D., 2009. *The Determination of Absolute Intensity of*234mPa's 1001 keV Gamma Emission Using Monte Carlo Simulation. **Journal of Radiation**Research, nr. 50,277-279. https://doi.org/10.1269/jrr.08062
- 23. **R.Cs. Begy**, H. Simon, C. Cosma, 2013 *Radiological Assessment of Stream Sediments between Băiţa-Plai and Beiuş*, Romanian Journal of Physics, Vol. 58, Supplement, P. S22–S28, Bucharest. https://rjp.nipne.ro/2013_58_Suppl/0022_0028.pdf
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- 26. Florică, Ş., Burghele, B.-D., Bican-Brişan, N., <u>Begy, R.,</u> Codrea, V., Cucoş, A., Catalina, T., Dicu, T., Dobrei, G., Istrate, A., Lupulescu, A., Moldovan, M., Niţă, D., Papp, B., Pap, I., Szacsvai, K., Ţenter, A., Sferle, T., Sainz, C.2020. *The path from geology to indoor radon* Environmental Geochemistry and Health, 42 (9), pp. 2655-2665. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10653-019-00496-z
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- 29. Simon, H., Kelemen, S., <u>Begy, R.-C.</u> 2017 Anthropic influences on the sedimentation rates of lakes situated in different geographic areas. **Journal of Environmental Radioactivity** 173, pp. 11-17. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvrad.2016.09.001
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- 32. Dumitru, O.A., <u>Begy, R.C.</u>, Nita, D.C., Bobos, L.D., Cosma, C. 2013 *Uranium* electrodeposition for alpha spectrometric source preparation **Journal of Radioanalytical** and Nuclear Chemistry 298(2) pp. 1335-1339. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10967-013-2584-x
- 33. Iurian AR, Mabit L, <u>Begy R</u>, Cosma C, 2013 Comparative assessment of erosion and deposition rates on cultivated land in the Transylvanian Plain of Romania using 137Cs and 210Pbex, **J Environ Radioactiv** https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvrad.2013.02.009

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- 35. Cosma, C., Rusu O.A., Cosma, V., Nita, D., <u>Begy, R. Cs.</u>, Timar-Gabor, A., Astilean, A., 2012. Protection of Alpha Spectrometry Detectors Using Thin Formvar Films and Influence on Detection Characteristics, IEEE Transactions on Nuclear Science 59 (4 PART1), art. No.6153411, pp.1175-1179.https://doi.org/10.1109/TNS.2012.2184802
- 36. Cosma, C., Cucoş, A., Papp, B., <u>Begy, R</u>., Dicu, T., Moldovan, M., Truţă, L.A., (...), Sainz, C. 2013 Radon and remediation measures near Băiţa-Ştei old uranium mine (Romania), Acta Geophysica 61 (4) 2013, pp. 859-875 https://doi.org/10.2478/s11600-013-0110-8
- 37. Cosma C., Cucoş A., Papp B., <u>Begy R.</u>, Dicu T., Moldovan M., Niţă D., Burghele B., Fulea D., Cîndea C., Dumitru O., Maloş C., Suciu L. & Sainz C. 2013 *Radon measurements and radon remediation in Băiţa-Ştei uranium mine area.*, Carpathian Journal of Earth and Environmental Science, Volume 8,— Number 2, 191-199

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- 38. Papp B., Cucoş A., Moldovan M., <u>Begy R.</u>, Dicu T., Niţă D., Sainz C. & Cosma C. 2013 *International intercomparison exercise on natural radiation measurements under field conditions (IFC11).* **Romanian Journal of Physics**, Vol. 58, Supplement, P. S210–S220, Bucharest. https://rjp.nipne.ro/2013_58_Suppl/0210_0220.pdf
- 39. Cosma, C., Cucoș-Dinu, A., Papp, B., <u>Begy, R</u>., Sainz, C, 2013 Soil and building material as main sources of indoor radon in Bâiţa-ştei radon prone area (Romania) **Journal of**Environmental Radioactivity 116 pp. 174-179 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvrad.2012.09.006
- 40. Cosma, C., Iurian, A.R., Niţâ, D.C., <u>Begy, R</u>., Cîndea, C., 2012 *Indicators of the Fukushima radioactive release in NW Romania*, **Journal of Environmental Radioactivity** 114, pp. 94-99 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvrad.2011.11.020
- 41. Cucoş Dinu, A, Cosma, C., Dicu, T, <u>Begy, R.</u>, Moldovan, M., Papp, B., Nită, D., Burghele, B., Sainz, C. 2012 *Thorough investigations on indoor radon in Băita radon- prone area* (*Romania*) Science of the Total Environment Volume 431, Pages 78-83. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2012.05.013
- 42. C.Cosma, A.R.Iurian, D.C.Nita, **R. Cs. Begy**, C.Cindea 2011 "Considerations about the presence of FUKUSHIMA radionuclides in the NW part of ROMANIA" **Romanain Journal Of Physiscs** 56 (9-10), pp. 1199-1207. https://rjp.nipne.ro/2011_56_9-10/RomJPhys.56.p1199.pdf

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- 44. Constantin D., <u>Begy R.</u>, Vasiliniuc S., Panaiotu C., Necula C., Codrea V., Timar- Gabor A., 2014, *High resolution OSL dating of the Costinesti section Romania using fine and coarse quartz*. **Quaternary International**, 2014 334-335, pp. 20-29 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.quaint.2013.06.016
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- 47. Dolha M., Timar-Gabor A., Dicu T., <u>Begy R</u>., Anton M., Cosma C. 2014 *A high-resolution map of gamma dose rates in Cluj County, Romania using LiF: Mg,cu,p detectors* **Radiation Protection Dosimetry** Vol:162, 14-19p https://doi.org/10.1093/rpd/ncu209
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