



## **VARIABILITY OF BASIC GEOTHERMAL WATER PARAMETERS IN CHOCHOŁÓW PIG-1 BOREHOLE IN THE WESTERN PART OF THE PODHALE BASIN**

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### ***Abstract***

Geothermal waters under national conditions have the status of minerals, which means that their exploitation is carried out in accordance with the provisions of Geological and Mining Law. In the area of the Podhale Basin, one of the boreholes that extracts water of elevated temperature is the Chochołów PIG-1 borehole which constitutes the basis for the functioning of the Chochołowskie Termy recreation complex. The main feature of the waters intake due to the correct functioning of the complex is the stability of temperature and physicochemical parameters. The variability of most important hydrogeological parameters (temperature, SEC, SO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup>, Cl<sup>-</sup>, HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>, Ca<sup>2+</sup>, Mg<sup>2+</sup>, Na<sup>+</sup>) with available data base were chosen for the analyzes. These parameters determine economic viability and proper conditions for the technical exploitation of geothermal borehole Chochołów PIG-1. Water chemistry has been studied in the area of ionic index markings determining the type of exploiting geothermal water. This paper presents the results of analyzes of selected parameters in the years 2016-2017 and indicates trends in their contents in the given period. The general conclusion is that under operating conditions in accordance with the approved performance, physicochemical parameters are characterized by relative stability. The appropriate exploitation of water from the Chochołów PIG-1 borehole allows for maintaining

the proper temperature, which is the underpinning for the functioning of the recreation and balneology complex of the Chochołowskie Termy.

**Keywords:** geothermal waters, groundwater temperature, common groundwater ions, Podhale Basin

## INTRODUCTION

Geothermal waters according to National Geological and Mining Law (Journal of Laws 2011 No. 163, item 981, as amended) are defined as ground waters whose temperature measured at the outflow from natural sources or boreholes reaches at least 20°C. This value is a conventional limit used for many years in balneology and is based on the relationship to the temperature of the human body. In Poland, geothermal waters are considered a mineral and are therefore subject to all the provisions of the Geological and Mining Law. In the Małopolska Province, geothermal waters were regionally detected in the area of the Podhale Basin (the Internal Carpathians). The Podhale Basin is one of the most important prospective areas in Poland in terms of the occurrence of geothermal waters (Kępińska 2015, Bujakowski and Barbacki 2004, Bujakowski *et al.* 2016) which strongly affect the tourism development of the area (Bugajski *et al.* 2017). These waters are characterized by temperatures reaching almost 90°C and by low mineralization values of up to 3 g·dm<sup>-3</sup>. These parameters determine economic viability and relatively good conditions for the technical exploitation of geothermal waters (Huculak *et al.* 2015, Operacz and Chowaniec 2018). The main feature of the waters intake due to the correct functioning of the complex is the stability of temperature and main physicochemical parameters (SEC, SO<sub>4</sub><sup>2-</sup>, Cl<sup>-</sup>, HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>, Ca<sup>2+</sup>, Mg<sup>2+</sup>, Na<sup>+</sup>). The scope of the investigation was to find and indicates trends in their contents in the available period 2016-2017. The general conclusion of the analyzes is that under operating conditions in accordance with the approved performance, physicochemical parameters are characterized by relative stability. The achieved results could determine the optimistic scenario for further functioning of the recreation and balneology complex Chochołowskie Termy.

## HISTORY OF THE BOREHOLE

The Chochołów PIG-1 borehole was drilled in the years 1989-1990 within the framework of the previous project „Geological research project determining resources and conditions for the exploitation of energy resources in the Podhale Basin” (Sokołowski *et al.* 1987). The project provided for nine deep drillings. Only six of them were completed, including the „Chochołów PIG-1” borehole.

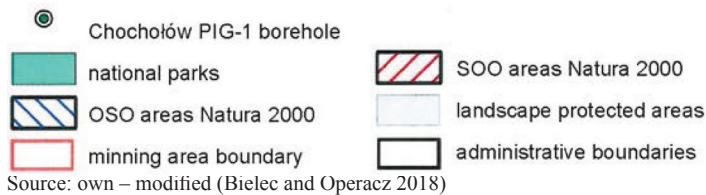
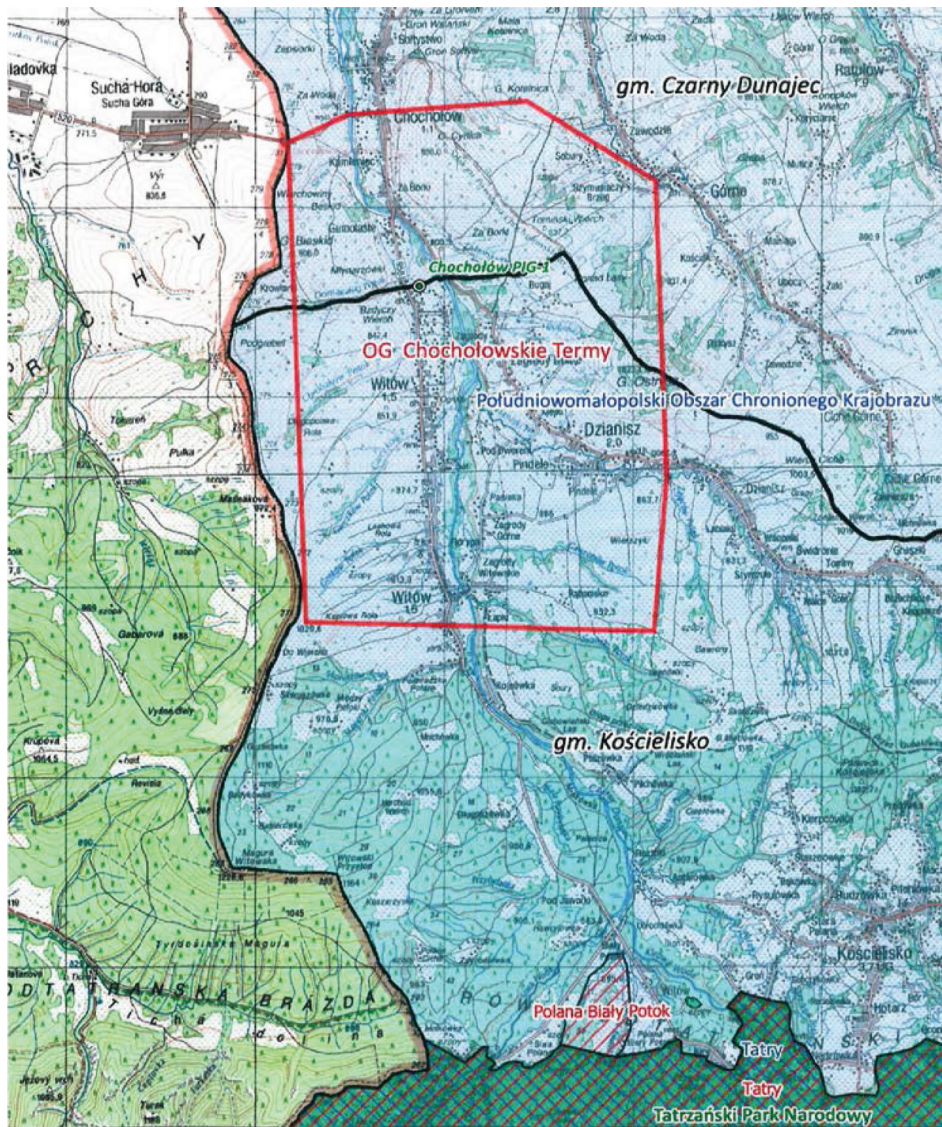


Figure 1. Location of Chochół PIG-1 borehole

The „Chochółów PIG-1” borehole was executed in the northern part of Witów, Kościelisko commune, Tatra County in Zakopane (Figure 1).

The results of geological and hydrogeological surveys of the Chochółów PIG-1 borehole were presented in the hydrogeological documentation developed in November 1992 (Chowaniec *et al.* 1992). The inflow of water in the borehole was found below the depth of 3218.0 m from the Middle Triassic dolomites. At the final borehole depth of 3572 m, hydrogeological studies showed that the self-flow rate amounted to  $36.0 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$ . The pressure on the head oscillated around the value of 16 atm. At the outflow, the tested water had a temperature of  $70^\circ\text{C}$  and mineralization of  $1.65 \text{ g} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$  as well as the prevalence of sulfate-chloride-sodium-calcium ions.

In the years 1996-1997, based on the „Hydrogeological research project of geothermal waters in the Podhale Basin” (Chowaniec *et al.* 1995), hydrogeological investigations were carried out in the Podhale Basin. The results were presented in the „Hydrogeological documentation of the geothermal water resources of the Podhale Basin” (Chowaniec *et al.* 1997). As part of the research, exploitation resources of some boreholes were determined. At that time, the exploitation resources of the Chochółów PIG-1 borehole at the level of  $160 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$  were estimated. The resources were approved by the Minister of Environmental Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry. The decision was issued for a period of 10 years i.e. until the end of 2007.

In 2009, a hydrogeological documentation was prepared (Józefko and Bielec 2009), in which the exploitation resources of the Chochółów PIG-1 geothermal water extraction were verified. The analysis of static head pressure, recorded from 2006 until May 2009, consisted in the basis for the verification of resources. The exploitation resources were set at  $120 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$  at a low-pressure area of 95 m. At this level of resources, the outflow water temperature amounted to  $82^\circ\text{C}$ . In 2018, an addition to the hydrogeological documentation was prepared (Bielec and Operacz 2018). In the addition, new exploitation resources were established for the extraction of geothermal water of the Chochółów PIG-1. Currently, they amount to  $160 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$  at a low-pressure area of 145.5 m. Water type:  $\text{SO}_4$ -Ca-Mg-Na. Water mineralization:  $1050\text{-}1300 \text{ mg} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$ . The outflow water temperature is  $89.8^\circ\text{C}$ .

## GEOLOGICAL AND HYDROGEOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

There are two main geological units in the studied area: the Paleogene Podhale Basin and the Tatra massif located in the south of it. The Tatra Massif consists of crystalline metamorphic series as older formations and the Pre-Permian granitoid intrusions younger than them as well as Mesozoic sedimentary series, among which, in addition to dolomites, limestones and marls, there are



also sandstones, shales and siltstones. The massif is divided into two tectonic zones: the southern one, called the peak (wierchy), which has a large spread and the northern one, called the regle, stretching as a narrow strip along the northern edge of the Tatra Mountains. The formations of the Tatra Massif are submerged towards the north under the Paleogene formations, i.e. the formations of the Podhale Basin. The Podhale Basin is built of sandstone-slate formations lying on the Mesozoic Tatra units (Górecki *et al.* 2015). The formations that fill the Podhale Basin consist of two different sedimentary cells. The bottom cell – carbonate, called the Tatra or Numulite eocene, is represented by organodetrital limestones, conglomerates containing crumbs of carbonate rocks and dolomites. The upper cell – flysch, called the Podhale flysch, is represented by shale-mud-and-sandstone formations.

The supply area of sub-flysch aquifers with rainwater is located in the Tatra Mountains. Rainwater infiltrating this area moves through a system of karstic slots and cavities towards the north, in accordance with the direction of collapse of the Tatra series. Part of the waters has a fairly short circulation because it appears on the surface in the form of springs or is drained in the valleys. The remaining part of the waters penetrates into the depths, heats up and is extracted as the thermal waters. These waters migrate towards the north in accordance with the direction of collapse of water-bearing series, and then as a result of the tight barrier of the Pieniny rock belt, they flow out in a fan-shaped way towards the east and west beyond the state borders.

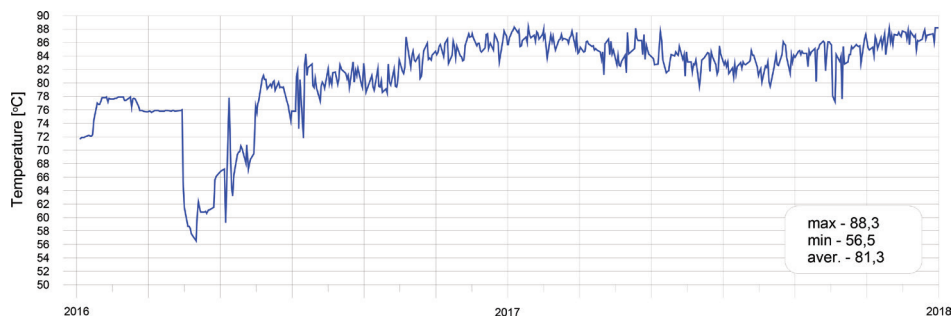
In the Chochołów PIG-1 borehole, geothermal water is found within dolomites and highly dolomitic limestone (Middle Triassic), and is extracted in the depth zone from 3191 – 3547 m below the surface area. The borehole extracts the perched aquifer under artesian pressure. Due to favorable hydrodynamic conditions, the exploitation of the Chochołów PIG-1 borehole is carried out in the conditions of self-flow without the use of any mechanical devices.

## **FINDINGS**

The Chochołowskie Tęmy is one of the largest geothermal complexes in Podhale. The pools are filled with geothermal water extracted from the Chochołów PIG-1 borehole. The complex was opened in June 2016. Permanent supervision over the exploitation of the borehole is exercised by employees of the Thermal Mining Plant „Chochołowskie Tęmy”. Since the moment of commencement of the continuous exploitation of the borehole, monthly analyses of the chemical composition of water have been performed. Water chemistry has been studied in the area of ionic index markings determining the type of geothermal water. Observations of other hydrodynamic parameters have continuously been carried out.

### Temperature of extracted waters

The diagrams show graphically recorded temperature variability of extracted water (Fig. 2) in the period January 2016 – December 2017. The Chochołów PIG-1 borehole was exploited in this period with a capacity not exceeding the accepted exploitation resources, amounting to  $120 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$  in this period.



**Figure 2.** The graph of temperature variability of water from the Chochołów PIG-1 borehole in the period 2016-2017 (Source: own – based on data from Chochołowskie Tërmy)

During the operation of the borehole, a slight increase in temperature is observed. Bearing in mind the relatively short period of observations, it cannot be unequivocally stated that such an upward trend is permanent. Temperature changes depend on the consumption volume. In periods of less intensive use, a drop in water temperature is observed. Similarly, the increase in extraction results in a rise in temperature. The known dependence of the water temperature on the amount of water collected was confirmed (the smaller the amount of water flowing out, the lower its temperature).

### Chemism of extracted waters

On the basis of a physical and chemical examination of water (large analysis) carried out on November 28, 2017, it was found that the thermal water extracted from the Chochołów PIG-1 borehole had a mineralization of  $1078,1 \text{ mg} \cdot \text{dm}^{-3}$  and outflow temperature of  $89,7^\circ\text{C}$ . It was weakly alkaline water of  $\text{pH} = 7,33$ . Sulphate ion dominated (78.7% mval) among the anions. The content of bicarbonates did not exceed 17.9% mval, and chlorides 3.5% mval. Calcium ions (56.3% mval), magnesium ions (20.2% mval) and sodium ions (20.1% mval) were predominant among the cations. According to the Altowski-Szwiec record, it was thermal water of the  $\text{SO}_4\text{-Ca-Mg-Na}$  type. In the tested water, there was neither  $\text{H}_2\text{S}$  nor other components which would have qualified the water as the

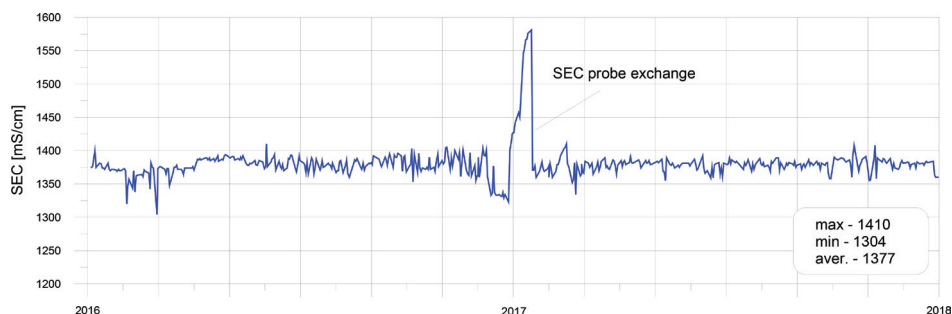
specific water. The characteristic of the extracted water according to the Kurlów formula employs the formula:

$$M^{1,08} \frac{SO_4^{78} HCO_3^{18} Cl^3}{Ca^{56} Mg^{20} Na^{20} K^2} T^{90} \quad (28 \text{ November } 2017) \quad (1)$$

Physicochemical analyses of water samples collected in 2016-2018 showed that the content of main components showed little variability and varied within the limits of:

$SO_4^{2-}$	71.5 – 79.3 % mval
$HCO_3^-$	17.5 – 25.3 % mval
$Cl^-$	3.20 – 4.35 % mval
$Ca^{2+}$	53.9 – 57.2 % mval
$Mg^{2+}$	19.4 – 27.5 % mval
$Na^+$	16.6 – 21.0 % mval

The above shows that mutual relations between individual components (% mval) fluctuated slightly. The chemical type of water determined according to the classification of Szczukariw-Prikłowski, where the type of water includes ions, the content of which exceeds 20% mval is primarily sulphate-calcium water. The  $SO_4^{2-}$  anion and  $Ca^{2+}$  cation play a dominant role in the chemical composition of water from the Chochółów PIG-1 borehole. The contents of the remaining main ions:  $HCO_3^-$ ,  $Na^+$  and  $Mg^{2+}$  are similar in all tests and oscillate around the value of  $\pm 20\%$  mval, which leads to a frequent change in the chemical type of water.

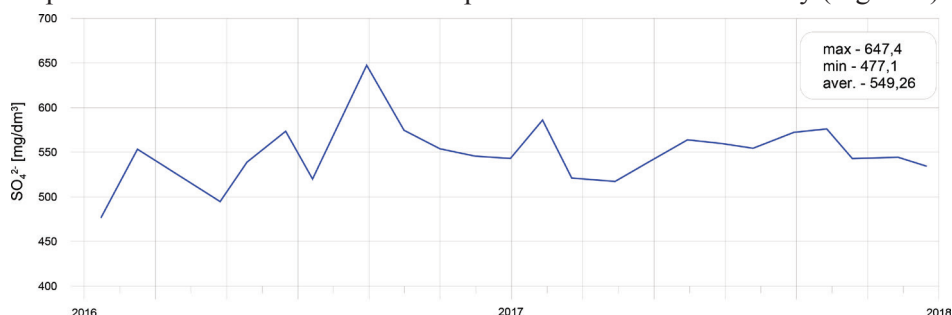


**Figure 3.** The graph of the variability of SEC from the Chochółów PIG-1 borehole in period 2016-2017 (Source: own – based on data from Chochółowskie Tęrmę)

The specific electrolytic conductivity of water (SEC) provides indicative information on fluctuations and changes in water mineralization. The SEC tests were conducted directly at the borehole on the days of performing other mea-

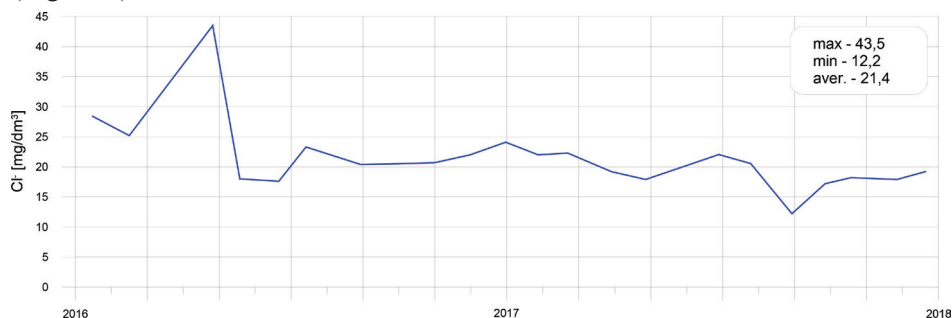
surements with an accuracy of  $1 \mu\text{S}\cdot\text{cm}^{-1}$ . The SEC of water in the period 2016-2017 reached the minimum value of  $1304 \mu\text{S}\cdot\text{cm}^{-1}$ , and the maximum value of  $1410 \mu\text{S}\cdot\text{cm}^{-1}$ . The amplitude of fluctuations was small and amounted to  $106 \mu\text{S}\cdot\text{cm}^{-1}$ . The annual variability is shown in Figure 3.

The content of sulphate ion in the period 2016 – 2017 according to stationary tests, varied from  $477.1 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{dm}^{-3}$  to  $647.4 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{dm}^{-3}$ . The mean of the observation period amounted to  $549.26 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{dm}^{-3}$ . The range of fluctuations in the sulphate ion content did not show an upward or downward tendency (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** The graph of the variability of  $\text{SO}_4^{2-}$  content in water from the Chochołów PIG-1 borehole in period 2016-2017 (Source: own – based on data from Chochołowskie Termy)

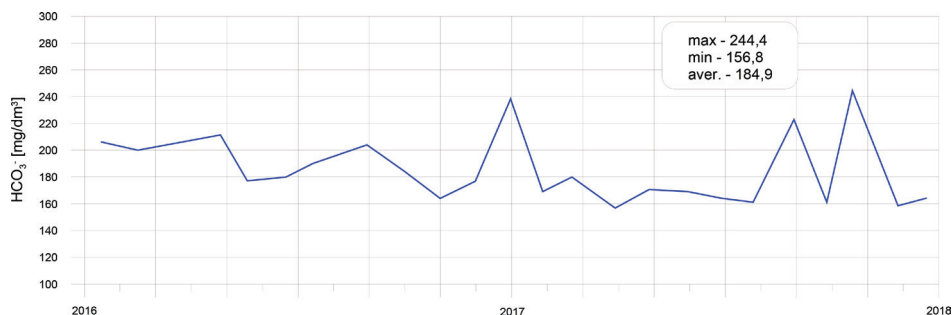
The content of chloride ion in the analyzed period varied from  $12.2 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{dm}^{-3}$  to  $43.5 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{dm}^{-3}$ . The mean amounted to  $21.4 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{dm}^{-3}$ . The analysis of the chloride ion content during the observation period showed a slight downward trend (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** The graph of the variability of  $\text{Cl}^-$  content in water from the Chochołów PIG-1 borehole in period 2016-2017 (Source: own – based on data from Chochołowskie Termy)

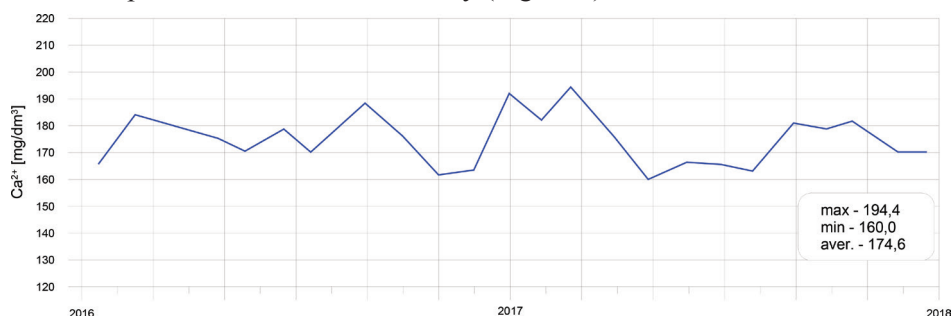


The content of bicarbonate ions in the period 2016-2017 varied from 156.8  $\text{mg}\cdot\text{dm}^{-3}$  to 244.4  $\text{mg}\cdot\text{dm}^{-3}$ . The mean of the observation period amounted to 184.9  $\text{mg}\cdot\text{dm}^{-3}$ . A slight downward tendency can be seen during the observation period in the bicarbonate ion content (Figure 6).



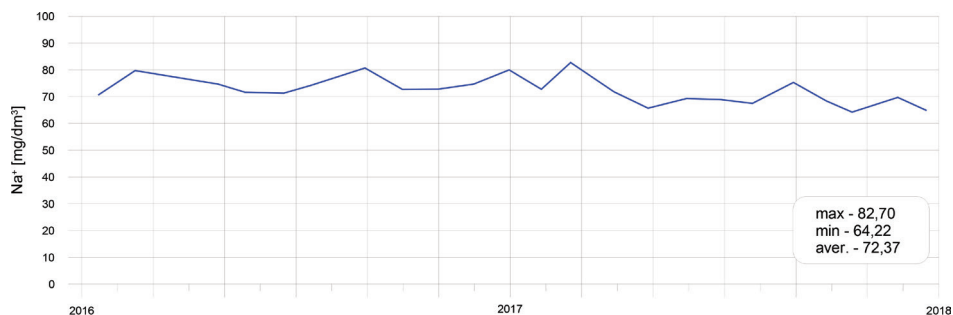
**Figure 6.** The graph of the variability of  $\text{HCO}_3^-$  content in water from the Chochołów PIG-1 borehole in period 2016-2017 (Source: own – based on data from Chochołowskie Tęmy)

The content of calcium ion in the period 2016 – 2017 varied from 160.0  $\text{mg}\cdot\text{dm}^{-3}$  to 194.4  $\text{mg}\cdot\text{dm}^{-3}$ . The mean of the observation period amounted to 174.6  $\text{mg}\cdot\text{dm}^{-3}$ . The range of fluctuations in the bicarbonate ion content showed no clear upward or downward tendency (Figure 7).



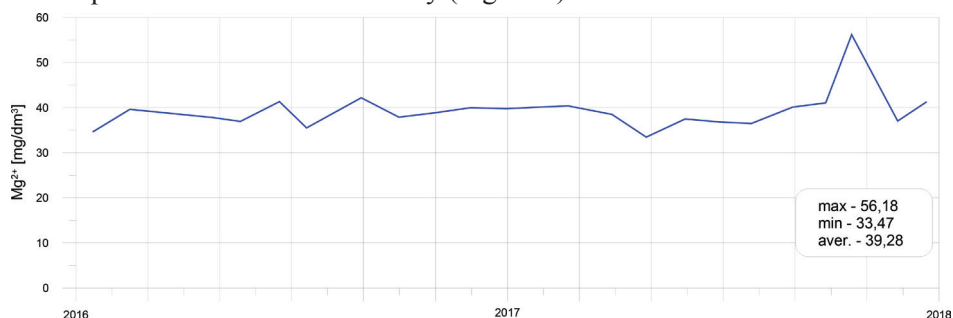
**Figure 7.** The graph of the variability of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  content in water from the Chochołów PIG-1 borehole in period 2016-2017 (Source: own – based on data from Chochołowskie Tęmy)

The content of sodium ion in the analyzed period varied from 64.22  $\text{mg}\cdot\text{dm}^{-3}$  to 82.7  $\text{mg}\cdot\text{dm}^{-3}$  with no downward trend. The mean of the observation period amounted to 72.37  $\text{mg}\cdot\text{dm}^{-3}$ . The range of fluctuations in the sodium ion content was small with a slight downward trend (Figure 8).



**Figure 8.** The graph of the variability of Na<sup>+</sup> content in water from the Chochółów PIG-1 borehole in period 2016-2017 (Source: own – based on data from Chochółowskie Termy)

The content of magnesium ion in the period 2016-2017 varied from 33.47 mg·dm<sup>-3</sup> to 56.18 mg·dm<sup>-3</sup>. The mean of the observation period amounted to 39.28 mg·dm<sup>-3</sup>. The range of fluctuations in the content of bicarbonate ion showed no clear upward or downward tendency (Figure 9).



**Figure 9.** The graph of the variability of Mg<sup>2+</sup> content in water from the Chochółów PIG-1 borehole in period 2016-2017 (Source: own – based on data from Chochółowskie Termy)

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

For the proper functioning of the complex, the stability of the chemical composition of geothermal water is crucial. Under operating conditions in accordance with the approved performance, physicochemical parameters are characterized by relative stability. The observed slight downward trend of some ions was not confirmed by a possible decrease in the value of the electrolytic conductivity. Analyzing the results of the performed water tests, as well as land de-

velopment and the state of the environment in the area of the Chochółów PIG-1 borehole, it should be stated that the extracted water is expected to be characterized by constancy of chemical composition and good bacteriological status. The appropriate exploitation of water from the Chochółów PIG-1 borehole allows for maintaining the proper temperature, which is the underpinning for the functioning of the recreation and balneology complex of the Chochółowskie Termy.

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