



Well-decorated passage in Optimisticeskaya (Ukraine).

Photo: Viktor Lyagushkin (with kind mediation of Alexander Chrapko from CaveLighting).



This Newsletter is issued by the Bureau of the European Speleological Federation (FSE)

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Editorial

When the COVID-19 pandemic befell us, we thought that things couldn't get any worse - but they did as we all witnessed Russia's brutal military invasion of Ukraine three months ago. Russia is not a member of the FSE and never has been. The FSE bureau has condemned this violation of a sovereign nation and asked member countries to do whatever they can to support the Ukrainian people. Russia is however a member of the UIS and the UIS has, after considerable soul searching, frozen all their cooperation with caving organizations and speleological institutions in the Russian Federation until further notice.

Despite these developments, we are all eagerly looking forward to important up and coming speleological events this summer, especially the 18th International Congress of Speleology (ICS) in Savoie (France) and the 14th EuroSpeleo Forum in Burgos (Spain) with its pre-congress in Cantabria. To encourage young cavers/scientists to attend the ICS, the FSE has introduced a scholarship award scheme to provide financial support. These promise to be great events. After two years of virtual General Assembly Meetings (GAMs) forced upon us by the pandemic,

the FSE bureau is delighted to be able to hold a face to face GAM at the ICS. Invites have sent out in April. We look forward to seeing you there.

Please forward this Newsletter as widely as possible to caving clubs and individual cavers.

The FSE Bureau

A plea from Ukraine: Speleologists of the World !

The Ukrainian Speleological Association expresses its decisive protest against the actions of Russian occupational forces on the Ukrainian soil. Civilians are dying under fire, including children. Our peaceful towns and cities are being demolished, and our cultural heritage is being destroyed.

We call upon our foreign colleagues to sever ties with Russia and Belarus, exclude participants from these countries from international speleological events, to ban operation of Russian expeditions in their territories, and to terminate Russian and Belarusian membership in international organizations.

In the current 2022, thirteen Russian citizens are accredited as member of the Ukrainian Speleological Association. Each of them must

within three days publicly voice their position on the war in Ukraine via a letter, video address, a post in social media or in any other way. We are not going to tolerate any manipulative assertion by you as "speleology is outside politics". With your silent agreement innocent people are dying.

The international community - we call on you to help stop the criminal action against our country. We believe in your solidarity!

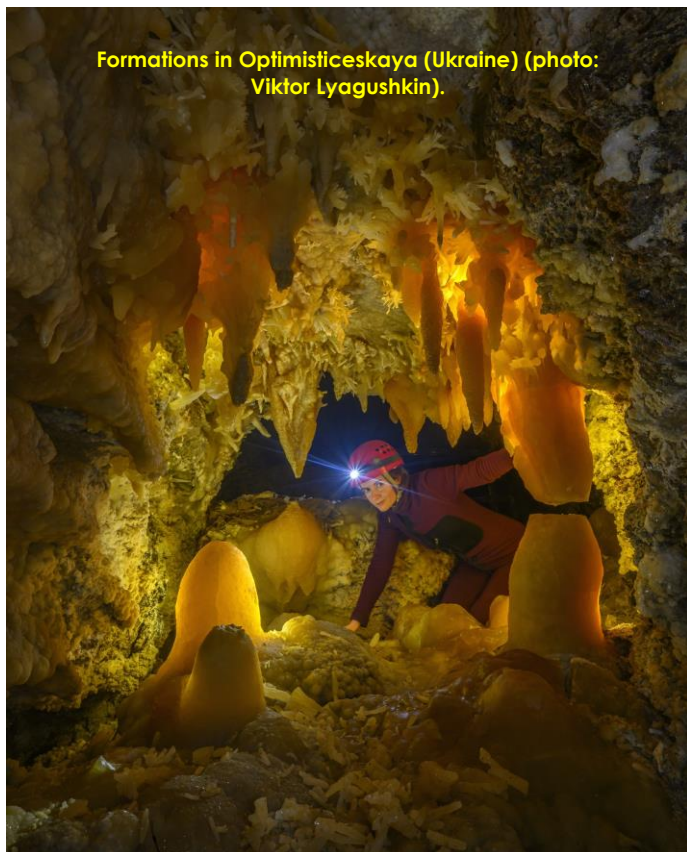
To further support the defense of Ukraine, the National Bank of Ukraine has established a card account for donations of funds:

<https://bank.gov.ua/ua/about/support-the-armed-forces>

Ukrainian Speleological Association

FSE Partners





FSE Scholarships for the 18th ICS in Savoie Mont-Blanc in France, July 24-31, 2022

The FSE supports the attendance of young speleologists to the International Congress of Speleology in France with scholarships of a total of EUR 2,500. Several applications have been received and were thoroughly reviewed. We are pleased to announce scholarships to five promising young cavers and karst scientists from Croatia, Italy, and Romania.

OUTSTANDING NEWS: EuroSpeleo Protection Label winner 2021 also received the EU Natura 2000 Award

It is with great pleasure to announce that the German "Cave Life App" has now also won the EU Natura 2000 Award in the category "Crossborder Cooperation". The prize was handed over to Christian and Stefan Zaenker during a ceremony on 18th May, 2022 in Brussels by the EU Commission for Environment.

FSE and ECPC congratulates the German Speleological Federation (VdHK) for this superb achievement, which is a great step forward for the cave protection in Europe.

However, getting such an important award should only be seen as a further motivation for our struggle to raise awareness of the public for cave and karst protection. Consequently, VdHK and ECPC used this opportunity to present a joint open letter to the EU Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, Mr. Virginijus Sinkevičius, the text of which is reproduced on page 7 of this Newsletter. It concerns the inclusion of geodiversity beside biodiversity in future protection measures. We also had a discussion with Mrs. Florika Fink-Hooijer, Director-General of the DG Environment of the EU-Commission about the same subject.



6th EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium 2021

Our Commission member Alex Weigand together with a lot of co-authors has finalized the synopsis of the 6th EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium 2021. The work has been published in RIO Journal and you can find the full article at: <https://riojournal.com/article/85859/>

Abstract (extract from the Rio Journal, article/85859/)

This abstract summarizes the outcomes of the 6th EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium. Special emphasis was made on presenting and discussing monitoring activities under the umbrella of the Habitats Directive (EU Council Directive 92/43/EEC) for habitat type 8310 "Caves not open to the public" and the Emerald Network.

The discussions revealed a high level of variation in the currently conducted underground monitoring activities: there is no uniform definition of what kind of underground environments the "cave" habitat should cover, how often a specific cave has to be monitored, and what parameters should be measured to evaluate the conservation status.

The variation in spatial dimensions in national definitions of caves further affects the number of catalogued caves in a country and the number of caves to be monitored. Not always are participants aware of the complete national monitoring process and that data sets should be freely available or easily accessible.

The discussions further showed an inherent dilemma between an anticipated uniform monitoring approach with a coherent assessment methodology and, on the contrary, the uniqueness of caves and subterranean biota to be assessed - combined with profound knowledge gaps and a lack of resources.

Nevertheless, some good practices for future cave monitoring activities have been identified by the participants: (1) Cave monitoring should focus on bio- and geodiversity elements alike; (2) Local communities should be involved, and formal agreements envisaged; (3) Caves must be understood as windows into the subterranean realm; (4) Touristic caves should not be excluded ad-hoc from regular monitoring; (5) New digital tools and open FAIR data infrastructures should be implemented; (6) Cave biomonitoring should focus on a large(r) biological diversity; and 7) DNA-based tools should be integrated.

Finally, the importance of the 'forgotten' Recommendation No. 36 from the Bern Convention as a guiding legal European document was highlighted.



Cave and Karst related events

For more detailed information please consult the list of European caving events at the FSE website:

<https://www.eurospeleo.eu/images/stories/docs/bureau/European%20agenda%20of%20speleological%20events%2029-05-2022.pdf>

13 - 17 June 2022

29th International Karstological School - Postojna, Slovenia - <http://iks.zrc-sazu.si>

13 - 17 June 2022

NSS Convention - Rapid City, S.Dakota, USA - <http://www.nss2022.caves.org/>

16 - 19 June 2022

German annual caver's meeting - Truckenthal/Thuringia - <https://www.vdhk.de/jahrestagung>

22 - 25 June 2022

EuroKarst 2022 - Malaga, Spain - <http://www.eurokarst.org/>

17 - 20 July 2022

Climate Change, The Karst Record (KR9) - University of Innsbruck, Austria - <https://www.uibk.ac.at/congress/kr9/>

18 - 22 July 2022

25th International Conference on Subterranean Biospeleology - Cluj-Napoca, Romania - <https://www.25icsb.com/>

24 - 31 July 2022

18th International Congress of Speleology - Savoie Technolac, Le-Bourget-du-Lac, Savoie, France - <http://uis2021.speleos.fr/>

31 August - 4 September 2022

20th Panhellenic Speleological Meeting - Sami/Kefallonia, Greece - https://20psm.speleo.gr/index_en.html

1 - 4 September 2022

27th Cave Bear Symposium - Golling, Österreich - <https://www.museumgolling.at/forschung/icbs2022/>

5 - 11 September 2022

14th EuroSpeleo Forum - Burgos, Castilla y Leon, Spain - <https://cec-espeleo.com/14-eurospeleo-forum-2022/>

16 - 18. September 2022

Speleological Days - Ferrières, Belgium - <https://www.speleovvs.be> - info@speleovvs.be

12 - 16 September 2022

Int. Conference on Geomorphology Karst Session - Coimbra, Portugal - <https://meetingorganizer.copernicus.org/ICG2022/session/44352>

12 - 17 September 2022

International Scientific Conference Man and Karst 2022 - Trapani, Sicily, Italy - <https://cirs-ragusa.org/blog/man-and-karst-2022>

21 September - 1 October 2022

Congress of the International Showcaves Association (ISCA) and National Caves Association (NCA) - San Antonio, Texas, USA - <https://caves.swoogo.com/congress22>

29 September - 2 October 2022

15th European Cave Rescue Meeting - Rudice, Czech Republic - <https://caverescue.eu/european-cave-rescue-meeting-2022-first-circular/>

21 - 22 October 2022

Importance, State of the Art, and Prospective of Utilization and Protection of Resources in Karst - Belgrade, Serbia - <http://www.karst.edu.rs/en/index.html>

22 - 26 November 2022

20th International Symposium on Vulcanospeleology - Dak Nong Province, Vietnam - <https://20isvdaknong.com/>

New UIS Guidelines for Cave and Karst Protection available

In recognition of the International Year of Caves and Karst, the UIS has released a second edition, in cooperation with the IUCN, where 16 leading experts updated and expanded the guidelines to include new knowledge gained over the past 25 years.

The new guidelines are available for free download at the UIS website at:

<https://uis-speleo.org/index.php/2022/04/13/the-uis-guidelines-for-cave-and-karst-protection-are-now-available/>

France HABE Prize for Cave and Karst Protection of the UIS

The Cave and Karst Protection Commission of the UIS has extended the application deadline for the France HABE Prize to 10th of June 2022.

The prize includes EUR 250. All information about the award can be found at <http://uis-speleo.org/index.php/karst-and-cave-protection-commission>

Recent ISCA Newsletters

The March/April and May/June Newsletters of the Int. Showcaves Association are available at

<https://www.i-s-c-a.org/clanok/268-isca-newsletter-march-april-2022>

<https://www.i-s-c-a.org/clanok/270-isca-newsletter-may-june-2022>

EuroSpeleo Projects recently accepted by FSE

ESP 2022-04: Exploration and Documentation of Locoli Cave (Italy)

ESP 2022-05: Gouffre Berger Clean-up 2022 (France)

ESP 2022-06: Balkan Cavers Camp 2022 (Bulgaria)

ESP 2022-07: Speleologische Dagen 2022 (Belgium)

ESP 2022-08: European International Camp, Lignin 2022 (France)

18th INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS SPELEOLOGY

SAVOIE
MONT BLANC
FRANCE
2022



Only a few weeks to go
until THE main speleo
event in 2022.
Order your printed
conference proceedings
now on congress website.

24 AU 31 JUILLET 2022

JULY 24 TO 31, 2022

**CAMPUS
SAVOIE TECHNOLAC**

Informations : uis2021.speleos.fr



Christian Martini / JMS



FSE is looking for enthusiastic cavers to help the federation.

The FSE, with 31 member countries, is governed by 6 members of the Bureau. Most of the Bureau members are delegates from one of the member countries who perform this task on a voluntary basis. Besides the Bureau there is a limited group of people that help out by performing small tasks.

The Bureau is looking for more enthusiastic cavers that can help the FSE organisation on a voluntary basis and keep it running effectively. We need help in the following fields:

- Maintaining and updating the social media of the FSE (Facebook, Instagram). Keeping an agenda on speleological events, publishing FSE and other interesting European and international news by searching other sources of caving organisations that publish interesting topics to be shared.
- Maintaining and updating the FSE website, writing the content to be updated. Transforming the FSE website, now written in Joomla, to a more appealing and modern website. The website can either be transformed in Joomla or be a totally new built in Wordpress.
- Maintaining the FSE domains at our provider OVH, keeping the mailing lists up-to-date and developing more possibilities that the domains have. Configuring the FSE mail functionality for outgoing e-mail through FSE e-mail addresses instead of using the individual e-mail addresses of Bureau members.
- Maintaining and monitoring the FSE cloud archive hosted by pCloud services as written down in the guidelines for FSE archiving.
- Running the FSE shop with items like T-shirts and fleece. Organising the FSE stand/shop at international congresses and EuroSpeleo Forums. Keeping the stock up-to-date and organise the cashbox for sold items.
- In the short term we are looking for cavers that can help at the FSE stand/shop at this year's International Congress of Speleology (ICS) in the Savoie region in France during the last week of July 2022.

It is preferable that cavers speak the English language as communication within the Bureau is done in English. Knowledge of other (native) languages is very welcome.

If you are interested in any of the above and would like to join a very welcoming and enthusiastic team of cavers, please send us an e-mail saying in what field you would like to help. Bureau members will explain and help you to find the way to perform which tasks you are interested in.

Don't hesitate to write to: contact@eurospeleo.eu We will give you a warm welcome to our team.

FSE Art Contest ...and the winners are:

We thank all the artists who sent in an entry for the FSE Art Contest. We received a wide variety of artwork some with surprising quality that pleased us very much.

By clicking on the winner's names you can access their short biography as well as high-resolution files of their

artwork presented for the contest.

The overall winner of the contest is [Olivier Gradot](#) from France in the category Painting and Sketching for his "Exploration Diary". His book of 17 pages is a story of caving friendship, compiling an extract of his memories of the explorations he made with his caving fellows. Olivier will receive the main prize, a Scurion head-lamp, kindly provided by the contest sponsor Scurion from Switzerland.

The next artists are the winners from the other 5 categories and will receive an amount of € 100 granted by the European Speleological Federation FSE.

- Ceramics and Sculpture: [Petru Merinu](#) from Romania for his work "Metamorphoses"
- Graphic Design, Mixing Techniques and Print: [Maya C \(Da Fonséca Castejon\)](#) from France for her work "Animéral"
- Video and Photography: [Melvin Lefèvre](#) from France for his work "Subterranean chaos"
- Music: [Tomaž Nedoh](#) from Slovenia for his work "Proteus Csardas"
- Publication and Poetry: [Silvia Goutier-Juffermans](#) from The Netherlands for her work "Speleo-Haiku"

The winners and the following artists will receive a Certificate of Appreciation:

- [Slavenka Baković](#), Croatia
- [Lorenzo Bax Bassi](#), Italy
- [Emily Davis](#), United States of America
- [Patrycja Kopytko](#), Poland
- [Andrea Long](#), Italy
- [Ludivine Martin](#), France
- [Marco Meneghini](#), Italy
- [Caio César Pires de Paula](#), Czech Republic
- [Lisa Siebenhofer](#), Austria
- [Chuck Sutherland](#), United States of America

The members of the Jury are from different European countries and fields of profession and we sincerely thank them for reviewing and judging 88 pieces of artwork!

All winners and artists will be contacted personally by the Head of the Organizing Team. The results are not open to discussion.

Cave, Karst & 3D Summer School, France

On 18-22 July 2023, the week before the International Congress of Speleology, the French federation organises a "Cave, Karst & 3D" Summer School. Cave topographers and students have priority. It will be held parallel with the photo course of the congress in Ardèche, France.

There are only a few places left. If you are interested, please send a short CV and a motivation letter. Information at

<https://www.facebook.com/Summer-school-CK3D-100884342585758>

Contact: jaillet.speleo+CK3D@gmail.com

14TH EUROSPELEO FORUM 2022

XI CONGRESO ESPAÑOL DE ESPELEOLOGÍA

WE EXPLORE
CARE
SPELEO



'22

Cantabria
Castilla y Leon
Spain

Precongress
September 5 to 8.
Comarca del Asón-CANTABRIA

Congress
September 9 to 11. BURGOS



cec
CONFEDERACIÓN DE
ESPELEOLOGÍA Y CAÑONES

Foto: Víctor Ferrer



Open Letter

Natura 2000 is not enough to protect caves, karst and geoh heritage

Dear Commissioner Sinkevičius,

Caves and karst areas are important and vulnerable ecosystems and unique geological sites. Both need protection. Natura 2000 focusses on fauna, flora and habitats including “caves not open to the public”. This is a great achievement for cave protection in Europe which should not be underestimated.

Caves harbour a multitude of species, some even endemic, which require the generally constant environmental conditions caves provide. Even small impacts can have detrimental and irreversible effects on the biodiversity of subterranean habitat.

In karst areas, caves offer natural access to groundwater systems, which is of great importance for the water supply of our civilization. Karst aquifers are the most vulnerable to contamination and transport pollutants like pesticides or microplastics large distances through complex flowpaths with effectively no filtration. Thresholds for groundwater protection need to be much higher than in other areas. The EU Groundwater Directive does not take this important issue into account.

The protection of caves as geological heritage and their contents include speleothems, sediments, fossils, etc., but is not regulated by any EU directive. It is not possible to restore caves or compensate them. They preserve important scientific data, for example on climate change from the past to present or on the evolution of mankind. For geological objects, a treaty similar to CITES is required to prohibit trade.

Caves are the link between biodiversity and geodiversity. Both are equally important. Geological protection has to be raised to the same level as for habitats and species. At the World Conservation Congress 2020, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) acknowledged this with its resolution 074.

Using the example of the gypsum karst in the German Harz, these different aspects can be briefly explained. The green gypsum karst landscape in the southern Harz is unique in the world due to its forestation. Important parts of the area in three federal states are protected by Natura 2000. Nevertheless, there are currently major problems and threats: There are no buffer zones to protected areas. Some gypsum quarries are immediately adjacent to Natura 2000 areas, which thus dry out and are damaged. In Lower Saxony, the state government plans to allow gypsum quarrying outside priority areas for regional planning in the future. In Saxony-Anhalt, there are no quarries so far as it is a biosphere reserve. Nevertheless, the gypsum industry wants to carry out exploratory drilling here, even within Natura 2000 areas.

Although gypsum is a perfect material for recycling, it is still cheaper to establish quarries and destroy landscape which leads to irreversible biodiversity loss and groundwater changes. The same is happening in gypsum areas everywhere.

Every cave is unique with its unique beauty, unique environment, unique scientific contents. **Once destroyed, no cave can be rebuilt.**

We call on you, dear Commissioner, to take action to include geodiversity - include the “hole” world in EU protection policy. We would be happy to work with you and your commission to provide comprehensive protection that is so desperately needed.

Nesselwang, 18th of May 2022

Bärbel Vogel

President, German Speleological Federation VdHK
Secretary, European Cave Protection Commission ECPC
Adjunct Secretary International Union of Speleology UIS
Secretary, IUCN/WCPA Caves and Karst Working Group

Jean Claude Thies

President, European Cave Protection Commission ECPC
of the European Speleological Federation FSE

Links to resolutions and important scientific research are available at

<https://www.vdhk.de/en/cavelife-app>

