

FEDERATION SPELEOLOGIQUE EUROPEENNE



ELECTRONIC GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING

Video Conference:

Thursday 24th September 2020, 20:00 CET

Reported by Alena Gessert

The Electronic General Assembly Meeting (eGAM) was held on 24th September 2020 via Video conference at 20:00 CET due to the complicated COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Ged Campion (FSE President) chaired the eGAM.

Participants present at the eGAM

Ged Campion (FSE President, UK), Michel Isnard (FSE Vice-President, FR), Alena Gessert (FSE General Secretary, SK), Jörg Dreybrodt (FSE Vice-Secretary, DE), Ernest Geyer (FSE Vice-Treasurer, AT), Henk Goutier (NL, FSE Treasurer), Guido De Keyzer (BE), Antoniya Vlaykova (BG), Michael Laumanns (DE), Sergio Barbosa (PT), Csaba Egri (HU), Manuel Gonzáles Morales (ES), Neven Šuica (HR), Maks Merela (SI), Ivan Nastić (RS), Ferdinando Didonna (IT), Bülent Genç (TR), Paul Cadas (GR), Margarita Kanellidou (GR).

Voting delegates (via online formular in Googles Forms): Ricardo Corazzi (IT), Silvia Goutier (NL), Sérgio Barbosa (PT), Spencer Coca (RO), Ivan Nastic (RS), Maks Merela (SI), Hilario Ubiedo de Oñate (ES), Emre Can Güzel (TR), Connor Winchcombe (IR), Csaba Egri (HU), Ged Campion (GB), Michael Laumanns (DE), Michel Isnard (FR), Elina Saarinen (FIN), Neven Šuica (HR), Angel Ivanov (BG), Guido De Keyzer (BE), Ernest Geyer (AT).

Countries that did not attend the eGAM and did not vote through the voting form: Armenia, Denmark, Georgia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Moldova, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland and Ukraine

1. Opening of the eGAM:

In the name of the FSE Bureau the FSE President Ged Campion welcomed all participants. The agenda has been proposed by the Bureau and was distributed in time to member organizations. The GAM commenced at 8PM (CET). Ged Campion thanked at the beginning for organizing this atypical GAM and introduced all participants. Antoniya Vlaykova briefly explained the operation and possibilities of the ZOOM platform.

4, 5. Short introduction of the Agenda

The agenda was briefly presented and allowed delegates to ask questions on individual points during the eGAM. The vote will then take place by 11th October 2020 via Google Forms. The last 2019 General Assembly Meeting report and FSE Bureau Report 2019/2020 were briefly presented by Ged.

6. Financial report 2019

Henk Goutier presented the current balance on the FSE account (to the end of 2019).

7. Report of the FSE Treasury Auditor 2019

The auditor, Jean-Claude Thies (not present on the eGAM) sent a Financial Audit Confirmation Letter. He informed, that the accounting records of the FSE have been audited, are true and accurate. He proposed to the GAM to vote in favour on it and to discharge the FSE Treasurer.

8. Annual report of the Protection Commission and its Workgroups 2019-20 and Report on FSE membership in the European Environmental Bureau

ECPC chairman Jean-Claude Thies was not presented on the eGAM, but Ged Campion presented shortly these reports. Michael Laumanns asked about the ESPL submission deadline and the potential winner of this award. Unfortunately, no one from the FSE Bureau had this information, Jean-Claude Thies will be asked on this matter.

9. Report of the European Cave Rescue Committee (ECRC)

ECRC chairwoman Antoniya Vlaykova presented the report of the commission and stated, that one of the main goals of the ECRC, to have a good working Commission, was achieved. There are talks with Spéléo Secours Français (SSF) to have a meeting / round table during the UIS congress next year in France between SSF, UIS and FSE cave rescue commissions, ECRA and other cave rescue organizations in order to discuss important topics on cave rescue.

10. Report of the Speleo-TV FSE Workgroup

The Workgroup chair, Elina Saarinen was not present on the eGAM. Henk Goutier suggested that the video upload approach should be more visible. Last year there was a software update of the Speleo-TV application, functionality has therefore improved significantly.

11. Report from the Contact Group on Show Caves

The report was briefly introduced by Ernest Geyer.

12. Report about the EuroSpeleo Projects (ESP's) 2019-2020

FSE Vice-Secretary Jörg Dreybrodt briefly summarized the situation. Ten projects were received and supported with 5400 Euro and sponsor items. More projects were cancelled, delayed or shifted to 2021 because of the COVID-19 situation. Paul Cadas asked about the potential reduction in funding for ESP's and the number of participants on it. Jörg answered that this has not been the case and is also not planned. Michael Laumanns pointed out the situation regarding the Korda's sponsor. The agreement contract will expire this year or next year. The Bureau will check out how the cooperation is developing and contact Korda's on this. Then it is likely to decide whether and how to proceed with the sponsorship.

16. Provisional Budget 2020 and 2021 and Annual Fees 2021

The originally proposed budget for 2020 was amended in view of the situation around COVID-19 pandemic. Only 2400 Euro was spent for ESP's and no EuroSpeleo Forum was financial supported (the ESF in Spain was cancelled). The 2021 proposed budget is higher because of promotional expenses for the congress in France, the 30th Anniversary of FSE and the International Year of Caves and Karst. Guido De Keyzer asked if any special event was planned for the International Year of Karst and Caves. Henk Goutier explained that the FSE will promote the event on all its channels and will ask member countries to organise activities for a wide public to bring caves and karst to the attention. The UIS will hopefully have a kick-off meeting in Paris at the UNESCO Headquarters in 2021. In that case, the FSE and its commissions will be present with a stand and presentations. Henk Goutier asked on behalf of the UIS Congress organisers all delegates and their organisations to promote the UIS congress in France and informed them about the extended deadline for sending in abstracts and presentations.

17. Organization of EuroSpeleo Forums 2021, 2022 and 2023

Manuel González Morales informed us about the preparation on the EuroSpeleo Forum in 2022. The venue will be in Burgos and the date has still to be confirmed. Ferdinando Didonna informed the GAM about organization of the ESP in 2023 in Italy (Sicily).

18. Miscellaneous

Henk informed the delegates about the voting procedure via Google Forms and link that they got via email from Alena Gessert. Delegates should follow the given instructions in the form.

Ferdinando Didonna pointed out a persistent problem with spam emails. The FSE bureau is taking action in resolving this issue in the near future, possibly by changing the mail provider. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic many speleological activities and meetings are cancelled or shifted to the next year.

Manuel Gonzáles Morales asked about organisation of the ECRA meeting in Cantabria, Spain this year as the Federation of Cantabria was not informed about this meeting. Antoniya Vlaykova explained that the organisation was between the ECRA board and the [Cantabrian Cave Rescue Foundation \(ESOCAN – member of ECRA\)](#) but due to the COVID-19 situation the meeting has been postponed to next year.

Henk asked Ferdinando about two planned events this year in Italy. The Alcadi History meeting will be postponed to next year and the meeting in San Marino has been cancelled.

The GAM closed at 9:05 PM (CET)

Questions and answers from the eGAM and the voting forms

1. Financial report 2019

Q: Guido de Keyzer remarked that there is a considerable amount on the bank account. That money yields almost nothing. There may be an opportunity to spend some of the money for the benefit of the members. Worth considering?

A: To the opinion of the FSE Bureau and its Auditor we think that 32.000 euros is not a considerable amount. For the benefit of the member countries the yearly contribution for the FSE has not been raised since 2017. The grant for the EuroSpeleo Projects has been raised from 400 to 600 euros per project over the last years and also the grant for the EuroSpeleo Forum has gone up. A reserve should always be present.

2. Annual report of the EuroSpeleo Cave Protection Commission (ECPC) and Report on FSE membership in the European Environmental Bureau

Q: Michael Laumanns asked about the ESPL submission deadline and the potential winner of this award. Unfortunately, no one from the FSE Bureau had this information, Jean-Claude Thies will be asked on this matter.

A: Jean-Claude Thies: For the ESPL 2020, and due to the problems of caving clubs doing activities during lockdown times in many countries, the deadline had been extended up to July 31st 2020 which was a plus of 6 weeks. The winner was not defined by the time of the eGAM as there was an email problem with one of the evaluators and so only 2 of 3 applications arrived. A solution was found and the evaluation process was finished after the eGAM of the FSE. The winner will be announced in November 2020.

Q : Ricardo Corazzi : Can there be more coordination between other speleological members of the EEB ?

A : Jean-Claude Thies : There is a total transparency between the Verband der deutscher Höhlen- und Karstforscher (VdHK), Bärbel Vogel and the FSE/ECPC, me since 2011 ! We share information and we represent each other in biodiversity and water working groups and have assisted together in multiple workshops on SDG.

Bärbel or me, me or Bärbel do represent the FSE since 2011 so there is an absolute coordination. SSI only joined EEB November 2019 as the third speleological organisation. Up to now I have no information which working groups colleagues from SSI are subscribed to.

And writing this in October, it is only a week ago that Ferdinando Didonna, Bärbel and I share information for the coming EEB GAM in November 2020.

Sorry but the comment is not really justified.

3. Annual Report of the European Cave Rescue Commission (ECRC)

Q: Ricardo Corazzi: Please can you inform us on the status of the presence of CNSAS from Italy in the ECRC?

A: Antoniya Vlaykova: I spoke several times with CNSAS representatives during ECRA meetings for a participant to the ECRC. Some people showed an interest, but up till now there is not a CNSAS member in the commission.

4. Report of the Speleo-TV FSE Workgroup

Q: Silvia Goutier: It would be nice if the way to upload films can be made easier.

Q: Guido de Keyzer: Speleo-TV is unknown to most cavers. A promotion of FSE could give Speleo-TV a new boost.

A: The FSE Bureau will get into contact with Elina Saarinen, coordinator of Speleo-TV, and ask her how to improve the uploading and how to promote Speleo-TV in a better way. When a new video on Speleo-TV is published this is announced on the FSE Facebook page, so there is some promotion.

5. Report from the Contact Group on Show Caves

Q: Ricardo Corazzi: Could the contact group be open to more participants?

A: Yes, the EuroSpeleo Contact Group on Show Caves is open for more participants - in the past it organized in the frame of the EuroSpeleo Forums symposiums for the show cave owners and cavers e.g. Ebensee 2018 & Sofia 2019 - with the aim of sharing knowledge, communications and collaboration.

The "EuroSpeleo Contact Group on Show Caves" is jointly represented by Dr. Friedrich Oedl (Eisriesenwelt) and the FSE Bureau in the person of its Vice-Treasurer (currently: Ernest Geyer, Austria).

The "EuroSpeleo Contact Group on Show Caves" works on the basis of the "Recommended International Guidelines for the Development and Management of Show Caves" as jointly published by the International Show Caves Association (ISCA), IUCN, and UIS (published in UIS Bulletin vol. 57, 2015) (annexed hereto).

Tasks of the "EuroSpeleo Contact Group on Show Caves" will be (non-exhaustive list): a) to strengthen the link between show caves in FSE member countries and FSE member organizations; b) to deepen the cooperation between show caves in FSE member countries and its speleological organizations on one side with international and supranational institutions and federations on the other side; c) to organize seminars, workshops and presentations; d) to stimulate educational and environmental programs organized by show caves; e) to encourage show caves for their further exploration and speleological documentation by speleologists; f) to participate in EuroSpeleo Forums and other conventions dealing with show caves or speleology.

6. Miscellaneous

Q: Guido de Keyzer: Next year will be the International Year of Caves and Karst of the UIS. I would like to see an actionplan of what the FSE will do for this activity. At the meeting it was mentioned that an amount has been provided in EuroSpeleo Projects, I would have liked more detail.

What is the interaction between UIS and FSE?

A: The International Year of Caves and Karst is initiative of the UIS that is fully supported by the FSE. The FSE is already promoting this initiative through all its channels (website, newsletter and Facebook). The specific activities have to be undertaken by the member countries of UIS and FSE themselves, i.e. making caving and karst more known to the general public by organising events in

each country. This is supported by a website: <https://iyck2021.org/> . Each country can publish an event in this respect on this website so that the public knows.

The FSE Bureau will think of an actionplan to promote this more prominent to its member countries and urge them to organise a national event for this purpose. The FSE Bureau and its commissions will be present at the kick-off meeting that will hopefully be organised next spring at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. For this meeting additional funding is in the FSE budget to realise this.

Also the ECPC has some ideas, but is still working on it. Promotion for the IYCK will most probably be the 6th ESPS and Cleaning activities.

UIS and FSE have regular contact on all kinds of issues. There is interaction between both organisations mainly by Ged Campion and Henk Goutier from FSE and George Veni and Fadi Nader from UIS. Henk and Fadi met last year to discuss several issues on the International Year of Caves and Karst but also on harmonising statutes and regulations of FSE and UIS and the status of member countries in both organisations. There is exchange of information in the form reports and newsletters and FSE has a non-voting representation in the UIS Bureau and vice-versa.