

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING

03.JULY 1994

Berghotel Krippenstein, Obertraun (Austria)

present delegates: Andy Eavis (GB), Ed Hick (IRL), Arrigo Da Cigna (I),
Bernhard Krauthausen (D), Jean-Claude Thies (L),
Jose Luis Membrado Julian (E)

excused delegates: Bernard Urbain (B), Gerard Duclaux (F), Hermann de Swart (NL)

non-excused delegates: Conrad Aub-Robinson (DK), George Theodorou (GR),
Orlando Cordeiro (P)

official language during the GAM "English"

1) opening

B.K. opens this year's General Assembly Meeting and thanks the Austrian Speleologic Society for the invitation to hold our meeting during their "Speläowoche '94" and explains that the fact that Austria will join the EC next january they have asked to join the FSCE too. Originally the GAM should have been held in Orthez during the French national symposium in may. But the general secretary missed to send the convocation by time.

B.K. reads a few letters from absent members:

A) Herman de Swart (NL) wrote a letter to tell that he would resign from his charge and that he would not attempt this meeting. He also wrote that Speleo Nederland has decided to stop their active participation in the FSCE and will stop to send any annual fee. B.K. informs the assembly that himself asked Herman to get his moral report about his work during the last two years. But no report has yet arrived.

B) Bernard Urbain (B) posted a letter to B.K. that due to professional reasons he would not be able to come to the GAM. The Belgian Federation decided not to send anyone else, they decided to give a pro-curation to Jean-Claude Thies (L) to represent Belgium during the assembly.

C) Gérard Duclaux (F) informed B.K. that he would resign from his charge as Vice-president because of private reasons, but the French federation has already chosen a new delegate, Roger Boislaigue who candidates for the new Vice-president and wishes the assembly a good work.

B.K. distributes a new address list and rectifications are done right away.

No news has been recorded from Greece, Denmark and Portugal.
There has not been any bureau-meeting during the last two years.

A.d.C.says it is important to take care of the statutes whenever needed. For the meeting in Athens there was not enough time to discuss all problems with the national federation and therefore he opposed to join the meeting. But for this assembly every important item is included in the agenda and it was sent by time, he agrees with the proposed agenda.

Everybody agrees with the agenda which B.K. proposed.

2) Approval of the official report of the assembly of Athens

B.K. posted a copie of the report from the meeting in Athens.
In A.d.C.'s opinion, Athens can not be regarded as a General Assembly due to the non-confirmation

with our statutes the document should be renamed to "report of the meeting in Athens" only.

And the point No.7 can not be accepted either.

A.E. agrees with this points but it was a shame that it turned into this direction because George Theodorou did so much effort for this meeting. He hopes too that George will come back to work.

J.L. in Athens it was said that the General Assembly had been announced in April '93 so everybody should have known the date, and as people already where in Athens, it would have been a pity not to work at all for the federation. He for himself will regard that meeting as a General Assembly Meeting.

Vote: 5 against 1 (E) agreed to change the title of that report and to delete point 7.

J.C.T. did not use the Belgian procuration for this vote.

3) Moral reports

3a) General Secretary "Herman De Swart"

There is no official report from Herman De Swart that reached the assembly, so B.K. will inform us about his work. Herman has not done his work either for the 1993 meeting in Athens, nor for this year's proposed meeting in Orthez, he missed to work all this out.

B.K. is very disappointed about him, his resignation came two month later than the statutes say/ actually it came two weeks ago. B.K. sent a FAX to him to ask for a moral report and that he should come to this meeting to explain. B.K. thinks that we can not liberate him from his responsibilities and his work of the last two years.

3b) President "Bernhard Krauthausen"

He was in charge to get into contact with the department of sports of the EC. The efforts have been numerous, with faxes, calls, letters and visits. The only return letter came from the bureau of "Jacques Delors", with congratulations for our work, and that we would get a financial aid for the "Rescon '92" conference in Britain, but we haven't got any money yet.

There is no echo coming at all from the department in Brussels, so efforts have been made to contact other departments, like environment, science, tourisme. The answers were clear: we should get in contact with the department of sports because we are affected to that department.

As a result, B.K. said that his efforts were in vain and all this would last on his own shoulders.

Except for A.E. as treasurer all the other paperwork was done by B.K.. After the meeting in Athens, B.K. had a lot of phonecalls with the general secretary to coordinate the next meetings, but in vain: no response. B.K. went to Orthez to meet with H.d.S. but he had left already due to private reasons.

The FSCE got a silver medal from the "Comité olympique de France" to thank us for our work inside the federation. B.K. accepted this honour in the name of the FSCE.

Some critics reached the president during the last two years:

1/ "poorly managed" Italy

2/ "une fédération plus statique que l'UIS" Belgium

3/ "no motivation...lack of effectiveness...elect a new secretary or liquidate the FSCE" Netherlands

4/ "change the function of the FSCE" Luxembourg

B.K. has joined a lot of meetings all over Europe and took always the opportunity to talk about the FSCE and the confidence of the cavers. B.K. thinks that the FSCE might be useful in the future to guarantee contacts with the EC. The FSCE is an institution ready to deal with the officials.

B.K. spent about 10.000 DEM during the last years for the efforts of the FSCE. His personal investments were a good investment, to meet people and have a good time.

A new directive of the EC says that they will only finance projects up to 50% of the global cost. That means that every project has to find financial aid somewhere else.

B.K. proposes that each delegate should contact his national commission members to achieve a result.

B.K. likes to see the federation continued as an important institution, maybe with less costs.

Conclusion: After all his work and no response, B.K. takes all the responsibility onto himself for all the problems inside the FSCE.

4) financial report and budget

4a) treasurer Andy Eavis

A.E. distributes copies of his report. At the beginning of 1994 we had 2,314.59GBP, the additions over the year 1993 were interests of 25.77GBP and 15GBP subscription (Luxembourg and Netherlands) this gave a final balance of 2,347.86GBP.

200GBP were needed for stationary and postage. For the moment we have 2,147.86GBP on the account. The budget for next Year is impossible to prepare at present as there are too many variables in the FSCE. The outstanding subscriptions (655GBP) should be collected without too much difficulty.

Spain paid their subscription today during the meeting after having a lot of problems getting a cheque sent to A.E.

Belgium, Netherlands and Italy sad they would stop to pay their contributions to the federation.

As a financial aid from the EC we got 5000ECU 1990 for the meeting in Grimbergen (B)
2500ECU 1992 for Rescon (B)

J.C.T. asks what has happened with the promised 2500ECU for the Hélécine (B) conference.

Nobody got an information about that money.

4b) comparison actual costs and benefits of the FSCE

A.d.C. doesn't agree that B.K. is responsible for the problems inside the FSCE, because he worked much more than possible. Yes, in a legal view the president is responsible but not in our point of view, he didn't failed at all. It is just due to the work of B.K. and A.E. of the bureau, that we are on the point where we are now.

When we decided to form the FSCE as a result of former discussions in Budapest, the reason behind was to get money from the EC to finance caving projects.

The FSCE has not been setting up for contacts between cavers, but just to collect money, and when we analyse this achievement, the FSCE was a failure. In the future, to get money from the EC will be a very hard job, because the EC has set up new rules in distributing money for projects.

A.d.C. Italy did efforts to promote and to have the FSCE founded in Udine and now they share the idea of stopping it because there is no look forward to get results. Will it not be more useful to improve contacts inside the UIS and stop the FSCE. He asks if it would be important to have a federation when there is no point of any result.

B.K. agrees that we had not reached our target to get money, but we are engaged in many projects, as European insurance, educational work, and aim for some new projects, as the "karst de Wallonie".

5) discussion and approval of the reports

For the report of the president by Bernhard Krauthausen: 6 approvals, 5 present, 1 by procuration (B.K. didn't vote for himself)

For the report of the treasurer by Andy Eavis: 7 approvals, 6 present, 1 by procuration

No report was made by the general secretary Herman de Swart: no approvals

The General Assembly regrets that H.d.S. has not presented any report.

6) discussion and decisions

6a) the future of the FSCE

B.K. we should continue the federation at a different level, just to help all cavers.

A.d.C. there is no need to dissolve the FSCE today, but we may consider this for the future.

The cave-rescue problem is an other important point which should be discussed on a legal base.

A.d.C. proposes to change the function of the FSCE, so that it would be used as a contact for all legislations.

6b) relation FSCE >>> Brussels

A.E. thinks that the FSCE should work closer with the UIS as a European Commission inside the UIS. To stop the actual federation would not be a good idea, because some people had put a lot of time in it. He agrees with the possibility of a change of functions of the FSCE. Some money from the EC went to France for a semi-professional speleologic research project. It is probable to get much more money from Brussels when we try harder to achieve that point.

E.H. Ireland got some money for a French-Irish exchange where only 2-3 cavers came from another country. Such little projects should be more promoted.
B.K. we as FSCE cannot go to Brussels to get money from the EC until small local groups have not set up budgets for their projects.
A.E. proposes a European congress every 4 years, 2 years after the UIS congress.

6c) the proposals of J.C. Thies (Luxembourg)

J.C.T. the statutes could be changed, so that the General Assembly has to be held only every 4 years. It gives the bureau time to organise itself first. And we are not involved in the problem of electing new members and with repeating the same story to new bureau members every year. For this General Assembly every 4 years, the president of the national federation should be invited. Then we could choose a project coordinator (who could be, but must not be a bureau member). He collects all project ideas of the year and proposes them to the bureau. Annually or every two years we could come together, all 12 or the involved countries only, to discuss the projects and possibilities to encourage different countries to work together for some interesting ideas.

E.H. thinks that 4 years in between will be a too long time.
A.E. One bureau meeting and one General Assembly each year and every 4 years a big congress.
A.d.C. every national delegate should try to get small amounts of money from the EC so we can keep the bureau work on a smaller scale and don't need a lot of meetings.

B.K. it could be possible to meet every year in a caving area, so we may use this bonus of caving between meetings.
A.d.C. the flow of information should work well, so everybody gets all needed papers and must not attempt a meeting if it is difficult for him to get off.
B.K. suggests an annual meeting say "bureau open meeting" to be held and everybody could attempt.

A.d.C. and every 4 years a General Assembly.
But this needs a change of the statutes.
J.L.M.J. we have too much bureaucratic problems: like the little time that the federation exists and the little results that we have reached. It is probable that the 2 EC commission members "Fontana Rava" and "Mr. Andreu" have the same way of life than everybody else in Spain, where the Spanish Speleological Federation is included in the national olympic committee and the ministry of sports. The federation has to work out different musts each year, like competition, rescue, also to be accepted as a federation. Maybe with smaller projects it would be possible to get some money.

J.L.M.J. agrees with the idea of a General Assembly every 4 years and a bureau meeting annually for project coordination. But we should also have an effective General Secretary who will inform all members permanently of the work of the bureau.

END OF THE MORNING MEETING.

6d) modifications of the statutes

B.K. As we are not able to change the statutes today, due to the fact that we are not 2/3 of the members present, will it not be possible to ask all members by letter to change the statutes. Or for the next General Assembly we will also held an Extraordinary General Assembly for the same occasion.

A.d.C. Could we not set up new byelaws, because the federation has problems with its function. Than we should inform our other colleagues of the decission of today's meeting. We could also form a small group of people working out, to change more than one point in the statutes, we could perhaps change also the scoop of the federation.

J.C.T. we should inform each national federation that their delegate has not done his work properly and that the federation failed in some points, and ask them if they still want the federation to continue. A.d.C. for 1995 we should plan the General Assembly and the Extraordinary General Assembly taking place on the same site.

6e) change of the name FSCE

There is no need in changing the name because the " FSCE > Fédération Spéléologique de la Communauté Européenne" is conform with the new structure of the EC.

6f) new member countries

As soon as new countries join the EC they are welcome to join the FSCE too. Austria has already asked to be accepted and their delegate is already named.

7) elections

A.d.C. proposes a "comité interim" with all the present members of today and a confirmation of the actual president and treasurer to work as focal points inside the federation.

A.E. proposes Arrigo da Cigna (I) as the new General Secretary >> as he is retired. We should stay in accordance to our statutes until we can change them legally. It would therefore look much better to the EC and other new member countries if we had a completly elected bureau working.

candidates for the bureau:

General Secretary	Arrigo da Cigna (I)
Vice President	Andy Eavis (GB), Roger Boislaigue (F)
Treasurer	Jean-Claude Thies (L)
President	Bernhard Krauthausen (D)

Voting procedure: As for only one mission were two names listed, every present member and the only procuration should write just 4 names according to the list above onto a piece of paper.

Voting results:

General Secretary	Arrigo da Cigna (I)	6 votes
Vice President	Andy Eavis (GB)	6 votes
Tresurer	Jean-Claude Thies (L)	7 votes
President	Bernhard Krauthausen (D)	6 votes

B.K. sends a letter to Roger Boislaigue to thank him for his candidature.

A.d.C. asks all present members to help out with the formation of the new statutes. He will send some proposals of the probable changings that we discussed today to everybody to get overviewed and than it will be proposed to next years General Assembly.

8) projects - L'atlas du karst Wallon

Belgium wants to get money to finance a little project of a topographic study on their caves in the French speaking section "la wallonie"

J.C.T. asks which other countries would be involved in this project? > no other countries!
So we should find other countries to work on the same idea in their own country, so that the FSCE can propose all the little projects as one big document to the EC.
E.H. we should help such little projects to get worked out with a small amount of money, just to push small projects forward.

- The Greek project by George Theodorou

Greece has announced a conference in cooperation with France and Europe. In no way the FSCE is mentioned in this project. At the meeting in Athens last year it was asked to add the FSCE (as a contact to the EC) but we didn't get an answer at all.

J.L.M.J. As they used the term "european" in the title of the conference, they should have contacted the FSCE first.

B.K. will ask again the Greek and the French federations why they didn't contact the FSCE.

- European Insurance

Michel Decobert, the French "courtier" sent some letters throughout Europe. One was for Luxembourg: In fact he wrote, the Luxembourg federation would be too small (70 members) to sign a separate contract with an insurance company (J.C.T. the reason why we couldn't find a local company to get insured! A task we hoped to be fulfilled by the FSCE), so Mr. Decobert offered Luxembourg to be included in the French contract, but the whole 70 members only and without the bonus left each year.

J.C.T. an offer, which is absolutely against all interest of the FSCE largely discussed at the Helecine (B) meeting, and not at all in the interest of the caving comitee in Luxembourg. Why is it still not possible to get one insurance company for all Europe for all the 38,000 cavers within the FSCE?

A second letter went to Germany with the idea that it would be better for the caving clubs to join local insurance companies with less good conditions.

B.K. proposes therefore that the FSCE could rise a "Solidarit ts-Fond" with one payment only, about 50 DEM from each member. All that money would be put together in a bank account and we will get interests on them, to pay for eventual incidents.

- other projects

J.L.M.J. asks what happened with the material that Spain sent to France (G rard Duclaux) to be worked out for an eventual project?

9) future meetings: next General Assembly

B.K. will ask France if they would be so kind to organise the next General Assembly. If this will not be possible, than Spain will try to get the meeting organised.

10) various items > no subjects have been noticed to be discussed.

B.K. thanks everybody for coming to Austria, and for the good work we did on all this difficult problems. The General Assembly specially thanks the Austrian caving federation for the invitation to come to them and for the nice and unusually pleasant stay at 2100m above sea level.

Thanks to: G nter Stummer, Rita Stummer, Mag. Heinz Ilming, president of the Austrian caving federation, Hans Moser of the Berghotel Krippenstein.