

FÉDÉRATION SPÉLÉOLOGIQUE DE L' UNION EUROPÉENNE



FSCE/FSUE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING

ORDINARY SESSION

Sunday the 8th of June, 2003, afternoon, 2:30pm

At the "Maison des anciens", Ollioules, France

Reported by Claude Mouret

The FSCE General Assembly meeting was held in Ollioules, Var, France, during the Twenty Fifth Congress of the French Federation of Speleology (FFS). Claude Mouret, President, chaired the meeting.

1. Participants

Voting country delegates :

Bureau members : Claude Mouret (President, France), Juan-Carlos Lopez (Vice-President, Spain), Christos Petreas (elected Secretary General during the meeting, Greece), Jean-Claude Thies (Treasurer, Luxembourg).

Other delegates: Jean-Marc Mattlet (Belgique), Michele Sivelli (Italy), Joao Paulo Rocha-Martins (representative of Portugal for this meeting).

Apologies from : Jan-Paul Van der Pas (Netherlands), Nick Williams (United Kingdom).

Observers : Gilles Colin, Marc Faverjon, Olivier Vidal (France), Stefanos Nicolaidis, Nicolas Tazarles (Greece), Massimo Goldoni, Enzo Pascali (Italie), Claude Boes (Luxembourg), Antonio Gutierrez-Gamero, Francisco Martinez Garcia (Spain).

2. Appreciation

The FSCE/ FSUE Bureau members, the country delegates and observers wish to thank the French federation of Speleology and its President Joël Possich to have received them during the annual FFS Congress, as well as the Organising Committee chaired by Mr Gilles Collin, who has made a wonderful job.

Mr the mayor of the city of Ollioules and his colleagues received and nicely welcomed us, specially at the wonderful party in the town hall, during which every country delegate received a magnificent olive tree, and where the Hymn to Joy was played with solemnity. This occurred during our meeting, but the report is placed here for commodity.
To all, we express our full appreciation.

3. President's opening speech and report

FSCE President Claude Mouret welcomed all participants and he thanked the municipality of Ollioules and the congress organisers for the excellent preparation of the meeting and for the nice welcome. He presented the importance of this General Assembly for the life and evolution of FSCE. The corresponding topics are developed in the report below.

The quorum was reached, with 7 voting delegates.

4. Treasurer's report

FSCE Treasurer Jean-Claude Thies first presents the situation of the payments of annual fees by the member countries. Some countries still have to pay for a part of their fees regarding past years. A few countries have sent no recent news (Ireland, Denmark, Finland) has no caving structure. The situation with Portugal (which has two caving organisations) is not clear.

The balance of incomes and expenses was then presented; see the attached table. The main expenses have been Eurospeleo n°1 (500 Euros) and the 5th Symposium of Exploration speleology in Santander (500 Euros). Post mail is another expense. Taxes had to be paid, for instance when 500 Euros were transferred from Luxembourg to Spain for the event in Santander. 500 Euros will also be devoted to the next issue (n° 2) of Eurospeleo, when it will be published.

5. Approval of Corchia 2001 General Assembly report

The report of the 2001 General Assembly in Corchia (Italie) was approved by 6 votes yes and 1 abstention.

6. Proposal for 2 delegates per member country

In order to increase the number of active persons working within FSCE, it was proposed in the agenda to decide to have a vice-delegate for every member country, in addition to the delegate in charge. A vice-delegate may be elected to the Bureau.

In this way, we wish to increase dynamism within FSCE, a necessity with a paramount importance to develop FSCE, at a time when speleology is getting better and better organised throughout the world. We must have in Europe a Federation able to represent all of us and to help us achieving our common goals.

By 7 votes yes, delegates agreed to have one delegate, one vice-delegate and one vote only per member country of FSCE.

7. Contact person

The Bureau will select a contact person in every member country, who will be either the delegate or the vice-delegate (7 votes yes).

8. Proposal for a delegate to contacts with Brussels

A country-delegate or vice-delegate in –or near- Brussels will be selected, in order to ensure easier contacts with the administration of the European Union and to follow up contacts.

9. Technical commissions

Upon a proposal by Claude Mouret, FSCE General Assembly has decided by 7 votes yes that technical commissions will be created and need to be implemented as soon as possible. This will allow FSCE :

- to increase synergy between member countries,
- to manage more numerous common actions,
- to involve together several member countries thanks to common actions.

It will also result in an easier management (in co-ordination with the Bureau) of projects which may be proposed by countries, and to have more numerous active persons working for FSCE projects.

We wish to remind here that any person interested in creating a technical commission may propose to do so to the FSCE Bureau, provided it is in co-operation with two persons at least from two different countries at least belonging to the European Union.

Detailed information may be obtained from the Bureau. We encourage an evolution towards a variety of commissions.

A commission needs to be comprised of persons from several member countries (several = 3 at least) : adopted by 7 votes yes.

The FSCE Bureau may, if necessary, appoint or revoke the person responsible for any commission, until the next ordinary session of the General Assembly. At this next ordinary session, the responsible for the commission will need to be formally elected. The responsible for each commission will be elected for a four-year period (7 votes yes to the three sentences of this paragraph).

10. Annual report of commissions

When FSUE technical commissions shall be set up, they will have to report regularly to the Bureau :

- One short report of outstanding facts and results on an every three-month basis,
- One longer report every year.

6 votes yes (6 voting delegates present).

11. Supervision of ongoing processes

The Bureau is in charge of following up the different ongoing processes in FSCE evolution (commissions, contact persons, projects, etc.).

12. Projects

For any project for which we want to look for finances from the European Union, it is strongly advised to involve three countries at least, five being much better.

With an adequate preparation of the projects, it is possible to obtain money from the European Union in Brussels.

Up to now, the follow up of projects was the mission of the Secretary General, for the Bureau. It will probably be necessary to impulse an evolution of this functioning when more people will be available in the FSCE.

13. How to deal with UE widening ?

The future member countries of the European Union will be politically included in 2004. Representatives from all of them have been invited as observers to the General Assembly in Ollioules.

The statutes say that FSCE is composed of delegates of each EEC (EU) member country, so newly included countries will be automatically members of FSCE, if they wish so.

14. How to boost FSCE functioning ?

This question by Claude Mouret is put in practice by the creation of technical commissions, by the decision to have vice-delegates and by the nomination of a contact person in Brussels.

15. Sixth European Symposium of Exploration Speleology (2004)

Several countries are candidate to organise the Symposium. Portugal already had expressed their will to host the symposium a year ago, at the FSCE Bureau meeting in Santander (Spain). France (Marc Faverjon's proposal) proposed to host the Symposium in France.

A proposal for Romania was also made by Marc Faverjon (Romanians did not declare themselves to be candidates). It was rejected by 6 votes against, and 1 abstention, because the country is not a member of FSCE.

The final vote (with Romania not included) in Ollioules have given the following results :

Portugal : 4 votes yes
France : 2 votes yes
1 abstention

The 6th Symposium shall take place in Alviela, near Alcanena, Portugal, in May 2004. We should go all together to this symposium, in order to support our Portuguese friends.

16. Annual subscription rates

The rate of subscription for member countries has remained unchanged since FSCE foundation in 1990 : currently 10, 80 and 150 Euros, depending on the number of cavers per member country. A new rate is proposed and it will take into account the size of cavers population in each member country.

The new rates proposed are 50, 100 and 200 Euros, for respectively 1 to 100, 100 to 1000 and more than 1000 registered members in the country. The new rates are adopted by 5 votes yes and 1 abstention (Belgium representative is missing at the vote).

17. FSCE Website www.fsce.org

The old website needs to be upgraded. The General Assembly kindly requests our webmaster, Nick Williams, to fix the problem as soon as he can.

18. Eurospeleo

Juan-Carlos Lopez-Casas indicates that information should be received by him no later than the 1st of October 2003. In October, a pdf file will be sent to Bureau members, for approval. The printing is expected to be finished by the end of December (Number 2 of the magazine).

1500 to 2000 copies could be printed. So far, 35 European cavers did subscribe. Other copies are distributed among the member countries. A FSCE subside of 500 Euros is planned, in order to pay for the printing and sending.

It is decided that Eurospeleo can include publicity and be published in a pdf format on the website, sent by mail (heavy to do –cf. frequent changes of addresses) and printed on a paper support.

19. Do we need to change FSCE name into FSUE ?

Due to the evolution of the name of European Community ("Communauté européenne") into European Union ("Union européenne"), Claude Mouret proposes to change the name of FSCE into FSUE. Such a proposal was made in the past but it was rejected and, perhaps because of this, not acted. Now, it may be worth to follow the political evolution.

After a thorough discussion, it is decided (5 yes, 1 abstention, 6 voting countries) to use from now the term of FSUE, both in English and in French. FSUE stands for "Fédération spéléologique de l'Union européenne" or "Speleological Federation of the European Union" in English.

20. FSUE logo

As the FSCE logo was written in Latin, it remains fully valid for the FSUE, with twelve stars on it.

21. Official languages of FSUE

After discussion, it is accepted by the voters that the two official working languages of FSUE are the French and the English, which are the two most widely understood languages in the Union.

Adopted by 5 votes yes and 1 abstention.

22. Permanent address in Luxembourg

A permanent PO Box in Luxembourg is proposed by Jean-Claude Thies, free of charge. 6 votes yes for this proposal.

The delegate or the vice-delegate in Luxembourg can easily fix postal mail and the day to day management of the bank account.

23. Documents numbering system

Christos Petreas proposes a numbering system of incoming documents, in order to keep an easy record. Some discussions occurred and led to the following result:

Example: **20030608TR001**

YYYY MM DD followed by mission (TR Treasurer; PR President; SE Secretary; VP Vice-President...) and the last three digits for a continuous document numbering combined by the mission (TR001...TR105....)

The numbering should be indicated as reference on the document itself.

The system is accepted by 6 votes yes.

24. Election of new Bureau members

First, the principle of the eligibility of a country vice-delegate to a position in the FSUE Bureau is voted positively, with 7 votes yes (out of 7).

Two positions need to be renewed : Vice-President and Treasurer. In addition, the position of General Secretary has been vacant since the General Assembly in Corchia, Italy, 2001; this position will last until the next General Assembly in 2005, because of the rate of turnover indicated by FSCE statutes.

The votes have given the following results (7 delegates present) :

- Vice-President : outgoing Vice-President Juan-Carlos Lopez-Casas
is re-elected by 6 votes yes and 1 abstention;
- Secretary : Christos Petreas :
4 votes yes, elected; Stefanos Nicolaidis : 2 votes yes; 1 abstention
- Treasurer : outgoing Treasurer Jean-Claude Thies
is re-elected by 7 votes yes.

The new Bureau is comprised of :

President :	Claude Mouret	(up to 2005)
Vice-President :	Juan-Carlos Lopez-Casas	(up to 2007)
Secretary :	Christos Petreas	(up to 2005)
Treasurer :	Jean-Claude Thies	(up to 2007).

25. Next General Assembly meeting

The next General Assembly will be called in 2005, during a major speleological event to be selected.

26. Modifications of statutes

Claude Mouret and the Bureau will write a revised version of the Statutes (Statuts) and of the Internal Rules (Règlement Intérieur) which will take into account all the changes decided during the General Assembly in Ollioules.

The new version shall be voted at the beginning of the General Assembly in 2005.

27. End of meeting

At 10:00pm