

FEDERATION SPELEOLOGIQUE DE L'UNION EUROPEENNE



FSUE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING ORDINARY SESSION Tuesday 14th of August 2007 in Visby, Sweden

Reported by Olivier Vidal

The FSUE General Assembly meeting was held in Visby on Gotland Island, Sweden, in the Blatic Sea, during the Baltic Speleological Congress, 2nd EuroSpeleo Forum, organised by the Swedish Speleological Society (SSF). Juan Carlos Lopez, FSUE president chaired the meeting.

The FSUE Bureau members, the country delegates and observers wish to thank the SSF and its president, Thomaz Gustafsson to have received them during the Baltic Speleological Congress, as well as the organizing committee.

The meeting starts at 9h00.

Present participants of the GA meeting

Voting country delegates :

Bureau members : Juan Carlos Lopez (President, Spain), Ged Campion (Vice-President, UK), Jean-Claude Thies (Treasurer, Luxembourg), Olivier Vidal (Secretary General)

Other delegates : Fannis Ellinas (Greece), Thomas Gustafsson & Christel Grehn (Sweden), Michael Laumanns (Germany), Antonio Guierrez-Gamero (Spain), Csaba Egri (Hungary), Viorel Lascu (Roumania)

Opening speech

In the name of the Bureau, the FSUE secretary general, Olivier Vidal, welcomes all participants for this GA meeting. The agenda of the meeting has been established by the Bureau and sent to the delegates. The corresponding topics are developed in the report below.

1. Quorum - Presentation of voting delegates and observing countries

The FSUE counts 13 full members + 2 members to be confirmed at point 2 (Belgium and Denmark). So the quorum of a minimum of 7 voting delegates is reached with 12 countries present or represented (presence of 9 delegates and 3 proxies). Only Ireland is not represented in spite of having paid their fee. Portugal has not paid it's annual fee and is not represented. The additional points included in the meeting Agenda since the version sent by registered mail 3 months before are accepted by the GA.

2. Approval of reduced membership fees

2005-2006 & 2006-2007 + Belgian request since 2003-2004

After a long debate, the Belgian request to pay half membership fees since the year 2003-2004 up to the year 2006-2007 is approved at unanimity.

The Denmark request to pay zero euro for 2005-2006 & 2006-2007 is not approved (8 against, 4 pro). So their proxy to Sweden is not receivable.

Belgium full membership is confirmed and their proxy to UK delegate is accepted. The number of voting countries is now of 13 including Belgium.

3. Approval of last General Assembly Meeting report

Last GAM report of Kalamos is approved at unanimity.

4. Situation of the 27 EU countries

The 27 EU countries situation is the following :

Full Members :	Present Delegates or Proxy at Visby GAM 2007
BELGIUM	Proxy to UK
BULGARIA	Proxy to FR
FRANCE	Olivier Vidal
GERMANY	Michael Laumans
GREAT BRITAIN	Ged Campion
GREECE	Fanis Hellinas
HUNGARIA	Csaba Egri
IRELAND	Not present the GAM
ITALY	Proxy to ES
LITHUANIA	Proxy to LU
LUXEMBOURG	Jean-Claude Thies
ROMANIA	Viorel Lascu / Costache Roman
SPAIN	Juan Carlos Lopez
SWEDEN	Thomaz Gustafsson / Christel Grehn
Fee not paid this year :	
PORTUGAL	
DENMARK	Request refused
Not Yet Members :	
AUSTRIA	Will decide in November 2007
POLAND	Will decide in November 2007
SLOVAKIA	Waiting for answer
SLOVENIA	Waiting for answer
THE NETHERLANDS	Will decide in September 2007
CZECH REPUBLIC	Decided not to be a member early 2007

No Speleological Organisation :	
CYPRUS	
ESTONIA	
FINLAND	
LATIVA	
MALTA	

5. General report of the Bureau 2005-2007

The general report of the FSUE for 2005-2007 is read by the 4 Bureau members. Here it is:

"1st Part : General Activities

(read by OV)

We are glad to present you the General Report of the FSUE for the period since last GAM in Greece. Two years have passed since Kalamos and it seems it was yesterday. Two years, and a lot of things have happened in the European Speleological Community and the European Federation. The world depth record on the Caucasian borders of Europe have been extended to 2170 meters, and more and more multinational expeditions are being organised by the European cavers in Europe and all over the world. Of course these two years have seen its share of accidents and loses. We would like to have here a thought for our friend André Slagmolen who accompanied us for all these years.

Even though during this time I've been working in Colombia for almost a year, the modern communication tools enabled us to run smoothly the FSUE tasks and build our new projects. The team work we have done wouldn't have been the same without the active contribution of Bernard Thomachot, our webmaster, that we would like here to thank for his work on the FSUE and Vercors 2008 websites, for his patience and good mood, his capacity for analysis and his initiatives that have enable the European federation and its next congress in Vercors to take off gradually and surely.

A big thanks also to all those that, in Europe and elsewhere, by their confidence, their contribution, their punctual or regular support, have enable to make progress our European speleological projects. Thank you also to our Treasurer for his active work and to have kept safe the FSUE financial balance.

(read by JCT)

To give you a short summary of all the meetings that the members of the FSUE Bureau have made, here are the main meetings (about 20 meetings for these 2 years) we have done, together or separately :

1/ 4 Bureau meetings : Namur on June 2006, Sevilla on Sept 2006, Lemathe on May 2006 plus Visby yesterday.

2/ 2 Meetings at the European Commission in Brussels : Jun 2006 and Sept 2006

3/ 1 EU fundings trainings : Paris on May 2007.

4/ 7 Meetings with national boards and FSUE stands : Casola (IT) on Nov 2006, Han-sur-Lesse (BE) on Nov 2006, Portugal on Sept. 2006 and April 2007, Lemathe (DE) on May 2007, Poligny (FR) on May 2007 and Visby (SE) this week.

5/ 3 FSUE-UIS Meetings : Sevilla on Sept 2006, Lyon on Apr 2007 and Lemathe on May 2007

6/ 3 FSUE-FEALC Meetings : Argentina on May 2006, Sevilla on Sept 2006 and Puerto Rico on July 2007.

7/ 2 European Congress organisation meetings in Lans-en-Vercors : Jun 2006 and Jan 2007

(read by GC)

Now we would like to give some news since Kalamos, concerning the new « EuroSpeleo Projects ». These projects, for the moment financed by the own FSUE budget only, involve at least 5 European countries, with financial grants from 100 to 500 euros. Up to now we have received 7 projects applications that have been approved :

- 1/ The European expedition in Papua-New-Guinea « Sumps under the jungle » that have gathered 6 European countries
- 2/ The 3rd International Cave Diving Congress in France that have gathered 7 European countries
- 3/ A Scientific project about Brown Bears remains in Caves presented by the Germans, that have gathered 5 countries
- 4/ A survey camp in Romania that have gathered 8 European countries
- 5/ And the first European training in Serbia that is gathering 6 European countries.
- 6/ The big European wide event of the Italian meeting end of October that gather every year more than 10 European countries
- 7/ The new symposium "Alpine Underground" about Natural Parks & Cave protection gathering 5 European countries

In total there close to 500 cavers from 18 European countries (12 EU + 6 non-EU) that have participated or will participate to these 7 FSUE EuroSpeleo Projects since the beginning of the year.

2nd Part : President Goals 2005-2009

(read by OV)

In this second part of our general report we would like to give you the general report about the goals that our president, Juan Carlos Lopez, had proposed during our last General Assembly Meeting for period 2005-2009.

Here are the progress that have been made on these subjects.

* Promoting the relation between FSUE and the EU & Increasing the budget of FSUE obtaining official incomes from EU.

The relationships with the EU have been reinforced by regular meetings and telephone conversations with the European Commission in Brussels. We have also followed a special training financed by the French Federation about European Union funding. It will help us to get more finances for our European projects in the coming months and years. We are starting with the European Congress Vercors 2008, and we hope that a part of the European Congress budget will be able to be allocated for our FSUE European projects. Soon, with the help of several persons (Thomaz Gustafsson from Sweden and Marcin Gala from Poland) we would like to extend our request to the EU for other caving projects.

* Improving the relations among the members of the FSUE & Improving the relationship among the national delegates of the FSUE.

Since 2005, it has been a constant concern to inform on a regular basis (on average every second month) all the FSUE delegates and national federations in Europe, with the now called « FSUE'mail ». We hope that this FSUE newsletter have been useful for you and your federation.

Something that has also been helping the delegates or federations wanting to contact other delegates is the new European Speleological Directory that our webmaster has created on our website on October 2005. It gathers the updated address details of the Speleological federations in more than 40 countries over Europe and in the Mediterranean countries. For example in Cyprus where there are no caving clubs, we have been able to find caving contacts through the activation of our European network.

Another communication tool that have been created in 2006 for the delegates and European cavers are the FSUE discussion forums on our website. For the moment they are more a tool of information to the European caving community. We'll try to develop the exchanges and debates between European cavers through this tool. Of course the language barrier can be a problem for many European cavers, and we are trying to minimize rather at this problem.

(read by JCT)

Also the creation of the EuroSpeleo Forum have been realized with the first event taking place in Spain during the World Games in Sevilla on September 2006, and the second edition with the Baltic Speleological Congress, here in Visby. We hope that these yearly European Forums will gather more and more European cavers in the future.

A final new initiative that has been helping the exchange between European cavers are the FSUE stands on the national congresses. Like in Casola-Italy on last November, in Lemathe-Germany on last May, in Poligny-France the previous May, and now in Visby. For that we would like to extend a special thanks to Marie-France Bernheim, who has been holding the FSUE stand at these 4 locations, and is doing a lot for the European Federation and the European Congress next year in Vercors.

* Improving the Web site of the FSUE, Editing new numbers of EuroSpeleo journal & Redacting and publishing a yearly calendar of activities.”

(read by GC)

The FSUE website is administered by Bernard Thomachot and is our « window » and best communication and action tool. It is now open to all, thanks to its discussion forum. The whole archives of the FSUE are stored on it : reference documents, meetings reports, EuroSpeleo newsletter, Temporary Caving Art exhibitions, European speleological « Links » page, links towards many multilingual dictionaries in Europe, etc ...

And a very useful tool, which is the FSUE Agenda. This Agenda gathers all the speleological events in Europe that have an interest for the European cavers. It is possible for any caver to announce online its own events.

* Studying the viability of a European Speleological Licence with insurance.

In order to balance the present fee calculation system which is not proportional to the number of cavers, it has been decided to present for this GAM a proposal of modification of the calculation of the fee for the national federations that would become proportional to the number of cavers. It is planned to put the fee at 10 cents per cavers the first year + 10 euros of administrative fee per federation.

This new system, if it is adopted, can pre-design a future European Speleological licence. It will be the task of the new Bureau to work about it.

3rd Part : FSUE Functioning

(read by OV)

In this last part of the general report, we want to give you some news about the way that the Bureau is working. In order to follow the rhythm of its activities, the internal FSUE functioning had to be more efficient. Today most of the decisions of the Bureau are taken by email, under a time period of one week. It can eventually include a consultation of the delegates by email. This procedure works now quite well. Two yearly Bureau meetings enables make progress on the most sensitive issues and to progress on more complex general themes.

In order to share the work of administration of the FSUE, and especially to care about the European projects, a proposal of creation of a 5th position inside the Bureau is proposed today to the General Assembly. With now 27 potential countries inside the FSUE, it is important to increase the capacity of the Bureau team.

As it had also been discussed during the Public meeting in Sevilla, it will also be proposed to open the FSUE to non-EU European countries that would make the request to join. We have already received requests from Russia, Monaco and Serbia, and several other countries. Norway and Switzerland may also be interested.

The last issue part of this general report, but not the least, is the very recent news that the FSUE needs to change its headquarters from Brussels. Several possibilities exist inside and outside of Belgium, and we would like that the FSUE find its future headquarters through a relaxed and consensual debate, useful for the European cavers.

To finish this general report we hope to see you all next year, 2008, at the 4th European Speleological Congress in Vercors, and we wish you a good General Assembly Meeting."

The General Report is approved at unanimity.

6. Financial report 2005-2007

The financial report of the FSUE for 2005-2007 is distributed to the delegates and presented by the Treasurer (see annexes).

The financial report is approved at unanimity.

7. English Translation of the Statutes & Internal Regulations (for information only)

As information, it is informed that the English translation of the French original Statutes and Internal Regulations of the FSUE have been reviewed because both versions were not concurring. The work of translation has been done by Tim Stratford and Melanie Alspauch. The FSUE thank them warmly for their help.

8. Opening of extraordinary session

According to the statutes and the call up sent to delegates mid-may, the president declares open the extraordinary session of the General Assembly Meeting. The Statutes can be changed with a majority of the two thirds of the GA (14 FSUE members), meaning with at least 10 voices. We currently have 13 voices present or represented in the GA

9. Minors changes of the statutes and the internal regulations

a) Use of both feminine and masculine articles for Bureau members
Statutes Art 15,16,17,18,25

The GR delegate proposes as an alternative to simply switch off the article. The RO delegate says that it is not acceptable from a juridical point of view. The GA choose to keep the original proposal.

The use of both feminine and masculine articles for the Bureau members in the Statutes is accepted at unanimity.

The Statutes articles 15,16,17,18,25 are changed accordingly.

b) Replacing “National Federation or Association” by “National Speleological Organisation” - Statut. Art 1,5a,7,8,24 , IR Art1,2

The RO delegate proposes to use “national organisation or federation”. It is answered by the SE vice-delegate that it is wanted a neutral word. The GA decides to keep the original proposal.

The replacement of “national federation or association” by “national speleological organisation” is approved at unanimity.

The Statutes articles 1,5a,7,8,24 and Internal Regulations articles 1,2 are changed accordingly.

c) Call-up to ordinary GAM sent by simple mail - Statut. Art. 20

GR delegate propose to ask a confirmation for the email sent. The SE delegate answer that anyway the information is sent to several email address to the FSUE members, and that it is enough. The GA decides to keep the original proposal.

The sent of the ordinary GAM call-up by simple post mail instead of registered mail is approved at unanimity.

The Statutes article 20 is changed accordingly.

10. Statutes changes

a-Official registration & change of headquarters of the FSUE

The Bureau explains that it had a long debate the previous day between the 3 possibilities of Namur-BE, Luxembourg-LU and Madrid-ES, and that finally it decided to present the solution of Luxembourg to the GAM were the FSUE has already its bank account and postal address. The physical headquarters would be either the new House of Sports preferentially, or the Youth Hostel Federation. It would involve only very low registration cost and we would keep the same postal address. There is no obligation to have LU residents/citizens in the Bureau. May be some minor statutes changes could be necessary, in that case there would be an extraordinary GAM during next European Congress in 2008 to approve them.

RO delegate propose to put in the Statutes the possibility for the FSUE to open local subsidiaries / branches. The GA does not see this necessity for the moment.

The GA approves with 12 voices pro and one abstention the change of the FSUE headquarters to Luxembourg.

The Statutes article 3 is changed accordingly.

b) Creation of the position of Vice-Secretary - Statut. Art. 11,17b

The creation of the position of Vice-Secretary inside the FSUE Bureau is approved at unanimity.

The Vice-secretary will help in the secretary work and care about the management of FSUE projects.

The Statutes article 11 is changed accordingly and the article 17b is created.

c) Mode of applying to the Bureau - IR 11

The mode of applying to the Bureau positions before elections with a written application is approved at unanimity.

The Internal Regulations article 11 is changed accordingly.

11. Vote about the opening to European non-EU countries - Statut. Art 1, 5a,b,c, 7

LT says through is proxy that Russia is a big country that could unbalance FSUE organization.

The secretary general says that potentially about 40 countries have federations in the geographic Europe including the 3 Caucasian European countries. Other delegate informs that Turkey is member of many European Sports Federations.

The opening of the FSUE to European non-EU countries is approved with 10 voices pro, 1 against and 2 abstentions.

An email message will be sent by the FSUE to all European non-EU federations in Europe.

12. Vote about the change to proportional membership fees & system of 1 to 5 voices per country

Steps of the points :

- a) Vote about gathering or separating both issues
(According to the result of the "a." vote, votes b. and c. will be gathered or separated)
- b) Vote about the change to proportional membership fees

- c) Vote about the system of 1 to 5 voices per country
Statut. Art 12,22,23,28,29,32 ; IR 23
d) Cancellation or Art IR8 (if vote b positive)

A 2 hours debate occurs on this subject. Every delegate has the opportunity to give his/her point of view. To summarize, most of the delegates are in favor of the new proportional fee system per caver, but no majority can emerge from this debate about the number of voices per country to know if we keep the 1 voice system per country (which has the advantage of keeping equality between the countries whatever being there size) or if we change to the system of 1 to 5 voices per country (which has the advantage to compensate the difference of the representation of each European caver between countries of few cavers and countries of several thousands cavers).

Since no majority can emerge the SE and DE vice delegate propose to give more time for this issue to the national organizations. The GA approves this solution and it is decided to postpone the vote on this point during an extraordinary GAM during next European Congress in August 2008.

Meanwhile the GA decides at unanimity that for the year 2007-2008 the 3 slices fees will be 56 / 130 / 350 euros.

The GA decides at unanimity to extend its authorisation for Belgium for reduced membership fee to the year 2007-2008.

13. The extraordinary session of the GAM is declared closed.

A lunch break is made between 13h45 and 14h15.

14. Adaptation of Latin name in the logo

The adaptation of the Latin name of the FSUE in the logo for :
"Europae Unitatis Spelaeologica Foederatio"
is approved at unanimity.

The Secr. General explains the corrections :
Union instead of Community,
Federation instead of Confederation
and a syntax correction of "Speleological".

The GA approves the use of the old envelopes up to extinction of the stock.

15. Final date of payment for membership fees - IR Art 6

The limit date of the 30th of June to pay the membership fee is approved at unanimity.

The Internal Regulations article 6 is changed accordingly.

16. Call for the organization of EuroSpeleo Forum 2009 & 2010

The GA decides that a call for the organisation of the EuroSpeleo Forums 2009 & 2010 should be sent by the end of 2007.

17. Round Table for Orientations 2007-2009

The GR delegate gives the idea to organise a European contest for a motto and may be drawings. He proposes : "Protect our caves".

It is proposed to make a contest of T-shirts at Vercors 2008.

The ES delegate informs that the FEE will make some T-shirts for the European Congress.

It is informed that written remarks for orientations 2007-2009 can be received up to the end of September 2007.

This is accepted by the GAM

18. FSUE Objectives 2007-2009

The GA decides at unanimity to keep on the same objectives as the ones that had been settled in Kalamos on 2005 :

The president presents them:

1. Promoting the relation between FSUE and the EU.
2. Increasing the budget of FSUE obtaining official incomes from EU.
3. Improving the relations among the members of the FSUE.
4. Improving the Web site of the FSUE.
5. Editing new numbers of EuroSpeleo journal.
6. Improving the relationship among the national delegates of the FSUE.
7. Studying the viability of a European Speleological Licence with insurance.
8. Redacting and publishing a yearly calendar of activities."

19. Provisional Budget 2007-2009

Budget Plan 2007 - 2008 pending

EuroSpeleo Forum 2008 (Vercors 2008)	500
EuroSpeleo Projects	2000
Meetings	200
Stamps, Office, Copies	400
EuroSpeleo Newsletter	600
Commercial items (stickers)	500
Internet	100
<u>Total</u>	<u>4300 euros</u>

Budget Plan 2008 - 2009 pending

EuroSpeleo Forum 2009	500
EuroSpeleo Projects	2000
Meetings	200
Stamps, Office, Copies	400
EuroSpeleo Newsletter	600
Commercial items (stickers)	500
Internet	100
15th ICS presence, stand	100
Total	<u>4400 euros</u>

20. Miscellaneous

a) Adoption of FSUE-FEALC Agreement

The GA asks the Bureau to prepare the adoption of the Agreement for adoption at Vercors 2008.

b) Adoption of UIS Code of ethics

The ES delegate proposes to add in the title "UIS-FSUE Code of Ethics".
This proposal is not accepted.

The GA adopt at unanimity the UIS Code of Ethics and a campaign will be made to encourage the FSUE members to do so.

The GA decides at unanimity that this adoption is valid even if future modifications of the text are made by the UIS GA. And the FSUE GA keeps the possibility to cease this adoption in case a case doesn't fit with the FSUE principles.

c) Any other issue

About an eventual presence of a FSUE representatives at the symposium "Speleo 2008" in Agadir - Morocco on april 2008, the GA decides at unanimity that the FSUE doesn't need to have an official position about tourism & speleology.

21. Election of Bureau members 2007-2011 (Vice-President, Treasurer and Vice-secretary)

There is only one candidate per position.

Vice-President : Ged Campion (GB)

Treasurer : Jean-Claude (LU)

Vice-secretary : Thomaz Gustafsson (SE), up to 2008 only as requested by the candidate instead of up to 2011.

All candidates are elected at unanimity.

The new Bureau is comprised of :

President : Juan Carlos Lopes (up to 2009)

Vice-President : Ged Campion (up to 2011)

Secretary : Olivier Vidal (up to 2009)

Treasurer : Jean-Claude Thies (up to 2011)

Vice-Secretary : Thomaz Gustafsson (up to 2008)

The meeting ends at 16.00
