



Wet passage with an abundance of scallops in Racha Cave (Georgia) (EuroSpeleo Project ESP 2021-06).

Photo:
Rainer Straub



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

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Editorial

As the never-ending pandemic again forces governments to lockdowns and all the positive achievements in recent months appear to have vanished, we sincerely hope that the major speleological events scheduled for summer 2022 won't be affected by COVID-19.

Consequently, this Newsletter has information on an FSE scholarship for five young cavers who wish to attend the 18th ICS in July in France, the latest European Cave Protection Symposium conducted on the island of Vilm/Germany, and a recent EuroSpeleo Project to Georgia etc. Please forward this Newsletter as widely as possible to caving clubs and individual cavers.

The FSE Bureau

FSE scholarships to encourage young cavers to attend the 18th ICS in France 24-31 July 2022

The FSE grants five scholarships to young speleologists for attending the 18th ICS Congress in Le-Bourget-du-Lac (see <http://uis2021.speleos.fr>).

The requirements are:

- Applicants must be affiliated to an organisation being member of FSE.
- Applicants must be 26 years of age or younger.

- Applicants are required to send an application form and a letter of recommendation to FSE.

Each scholarship is up to a maximum of EUR 500.

Details, including the deadline, will be specified on the application form.

To receive the form, please send your inquiry by e-mail as soon as possible to contact@eurospeleo.org.

Reminder: the early booking fee for a reduced full access ticket on the ICS's website has been extended to 27th March 2022.



FSE Partners



Cave and Karst related events

Although the pandemic is still not over and some events have recently been cancelled or postponed, we will start again to add international events with this issue of the EuroSpeleo Newsletter as the travelling situation slowly returns to normal for vaccinated individuals. 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%2006-04-2021.pdf>

Postponed to Spring 2022

14th International Pseudokarst Conference - Swietokrzyskie Mountains, Poland. -

<https://14pseudokarst.wonders4you.com/>

3 - 6 June 2022

36th Brazilian Congress of Speleology - Brasilia, Brazil -

<http://36cbe.org.br/>

16 - 19 June 2022

German annual caver's meeting - Truckenthal/Thuringia -

https://www.vdhk.de/termine?tx_news_pi1%5Bnews%5D=526&cHash=5f94cc912580ccde55db11b973f1ccf8

22 - 25 June 2022

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

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/>

5 - 11 September 2022

14th EuroSpeleo Forum - Burgos, Castilla y Leon, Spain -

Website will be announced shortly

NCKRI website revised

The US National Cave & Karst Institute (NCKRI), located in Carlsbad (New Mexico), has completely revised its website. Only the address www.nckri.org is still the same, but the look, navigation, and content are entirely new or updated. Check out their available reports for free download.



Please send info on all your international events (expeditions, congresses, symposia etc.) to
contact@eurospeleo.org



New Book: Symphonie en Sous-Sol / Underground Symphony

Master cave photographers Philippe Crochet and Annie Guiraud have produced an exceptional coffee table book featuring photos of outstanding caves in France and around the world. It is accompanied by texts in French and English. Size: 30 x 30 cm. 336 pages.

The book can be ordered directly from Philippe Crochet at contact@philippe-crochet.com for EUR 65 plus shipping costs.



Cave entrance in Georgia, see the article on page 7 of this Newsletter (photo: R. Straub).

EuroSpeleo Projects recently accepted by FSE

ESP 2021-05: Biodiversity in Rwanda Lava Caves (Switzerland)

ESP 2021-06: Biodiversity in Georgian Caves and Karst Areas (Slovakia)



EuroSpeleo Projects Easy Guideline



Step	What	When
Application preparation	Download the application form from FSE webpage (http://eurospeleo.eu/en/eurospeleo-projects-fundings.html). Minimum requirements are 4 FSE countries or 3 countries with one eligible FSE partner country from Africa, Middle East, Asia or America. Please read the explanatory notes!	4 month before activity
Submission to the National Speleological Organisation	Submit the application to your national FSE delegate. It will be reviewed for national support and forwarded by the delegate to the FSE (contact@eurospeleo.org).	3-4 month prior activity, 2 month if grant only
Review by the FSE	The FSE bureau reviews the application and votes by majority. An attestation letter is issued upon approval.	3 weeks after application
Shipment of equipment sponsoring items	The sponsoring items are shipped, only within the EU to avoid customs issues.	1-2 month prior activity
Expedition/Congress/Activity	The FSE logo has to be used on webpages and reports. Please mention the support of the FSE. The use of sponsor items is documented by photos. Do not forget group pictures.	During the activity
Equipment Sponsor Report	A half page report with 8 separate high resolution pictures, 2 of them showing the equipment provided, for sponsor's use.	3 weeks after activity
Final Report	The final report of the activity is send to the FSE. It contains objective, results, participant list, group photos and the financial budget . It must include FSE and sponsor logos.	3 month after activity
FSE review of final report	The final report is reviewed and compared to the initial application. It must contain FSE's and sponsor's logos. The FSE bureau votes by majority on the report. If applicable, the financial grant is transferred after approval.	4 month after activity
Publication of expedition report	The final report is published on the FSE Webpage and mentioned in the EuroSpeleo Newsletter.	During regular updates.

Please note for fair play:

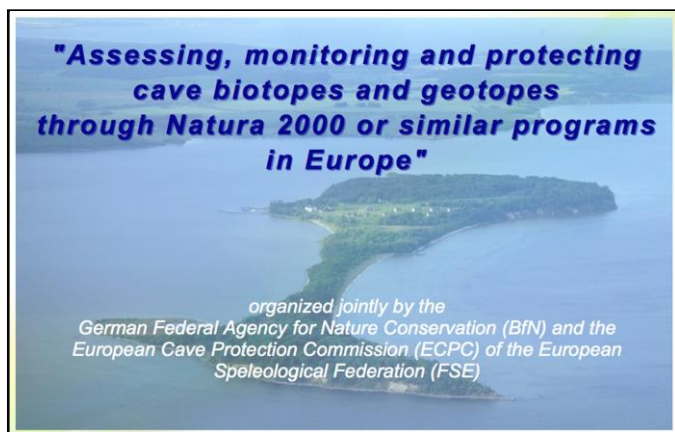
- Changes related to expedition members must be reported immediately.
- The FSE reserves the right to audit activities for compliance to the regulations. Please keep proof of participation.
- Sponsor's requirements and final report have to be delivered within the timelines. A severe delay can result in the reduction of the grant amount or excluding projects or associations from future sponsoring.

We are looking forward receiving your application for international speleological expedition, congresses and events. It is an important contribution to European speleology!

The FSE Bureau

Contact us at contact@eurospeleo.org





Above: field trip on the island of Rügen (photo: St. Zaenker).
Below: the symposium's lecture room (photo: I. Vukovic).

Report of the 6th EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium

The symposium was held from 26-30 October 2021 at the International Academy for Nature Conservation (INA) on the Isle of Vilm (Germany), located south of the island of Rügen in the Baltic Sea.

The German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) and the European Cave Protection Commission (ECPC) of the European Speleological Federation (FSE) jointly organized this 6th edition of the EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium.

The pandemic situation in 2020 forced us to postpone the symposium to the following year. Furthermore, the situation allowed only half of the participants to be present on the Island of Vilm. Thus, together with the BfN, we decided to opt for a hybrid event. Forty-five participants registered in total, 19 were physically present in the room, whereas 26 joined the symposium online. Participants originated from EU Member States (35), non-EU Europe (7) as well as from the USA (2) and Australia (1). To guarantee reliable operations, the BfN contracted a technician to assist the symposium.

The participants were cavers, biospeleologists but also scientists from universities or governmental administrations. Thus our aim to gather all partners involved in monitoring and reporting processes was achieved, which is an obligation by the EU Member States as stated in the EU Habitat Directive.

The program of the symposium consisted of 18 presentations 12 of which were held onsite and 6 were presented online. This involved Natura 2000 specific monitoring topics and data collection on EU level as well as Emerald network monitoring in non-EU countries in Europe. Primarily the national monitoring methods were presented but also DNA-based identification and cooperation between NGOs and governmental services were presented. With that the differences in monitoring became quickly clear, even related to the definition of caves. Therefore, it is not surprising that the European Environment Agency stated that habitat type 8310 has the highest proportion of missing data and is based almost exclusively on estimates by experts.

Of high interest was the topic of habitat evaluation through geotope monitoring. A special app was presented making monitoring even more interesting, easy and comfortable.



The presentation sessions were concluded by a separate topic on IUCN resolutions and geoh heritage in protected areas.

During the Symposium the European Cave Protection Commission also handed over the prize of the EuroSpeleo Protection Label 2021. The winners were the developers of the CaveLife-App. The prize was an official certificate, a financial award of EUR 800, and a SCURION® headlamp from our official FSE sponsor in Switzerland.

To explore the nature of the region, a guided tour of the small island and its protected nature was scheduled and a field trip was organized on the main island of Rügen.

The excursion went to old war bunkers in the north which now serve as bat roosts. The participants tested the CaveLife-App for the monitoring of four shelters. The day ended with a visit to the famous white cliffs of Rügen and we were very lucky as the weather was splendid on this sunny autumn day.

What was different at this 6th symposium?

First of all it was far away from a caving region in a remote island area. Mrs Ute Feit from the BfN did her very best for our accommodation, catering and stay on the island. We were extremely grateful for this.

Second, this symposium was organised in collaboration with the European Cave Protection Commission and an official governmental agency for Nature Conservation.

It was also the first EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium held in a closed community which very positively influenced the follow-up discussions after the presentations.



The participants of the 6th EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium (photo: J.-C. Thies).

Technically, it was also the first symposium in a hybrid format, which worked much better than expected.

Generally, everyone was satisfied with the symposium and those who came to Vilm were happy that they made the journey. There was agreement to continue working on the topic of improving monitoring in Europe.

A final synopsis will be published for all those interested in the content and outcome of the protection symposium.

If you missed the 6th edition: watch out for the 7th EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium!

**The European Cave Protection Commission
November 2021**

EuroSpeleo Protection Label 2021 awarded to Germany

During the 6th EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium on the Island of Vilm in the Baltic Sea, the EuroSpeleo Protection Label 2021 was awarded to the German Speleological Federation (VdHK) for their development of a monitoring app called "CaveLife-App".

The CaveLife web app is a state-of-the-art tool for standardized assessments of the status of a cave and recording the fauna both inside the cave and in the groundwater. With the app, all necessary data on the surveyed objects and the species groups (taxa) can be



Handover of the 2021 EuroSpeleo Protection Label during the 6th EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium (photo C.Egri).

recorded on-site. It consists of four pillars: 1. the general data like length, entrance coordinates and cave type, 2. the taxonomic recording of species and species groups, 3. habitat structures and 4. threats. It is possible to evaluate each cave according to the EU Habitats Directive.

Once downloaded the CaveLife-App can be used on any computer, tablet and smartphone even if the user is offline during the assessment. When GPS is activated CaveLife App provides additional data on the recorded site like protected areas, geological or cave registry information.

Without the expertise of Stefan Zaenker on cave animals, cave protection and Natura 2000 and his son Christian who developed the technical features and input from many users VdHK would not have been able to set up the CaveLife-App and present it to compete for the EuroSpeleo Protection Label 2021.

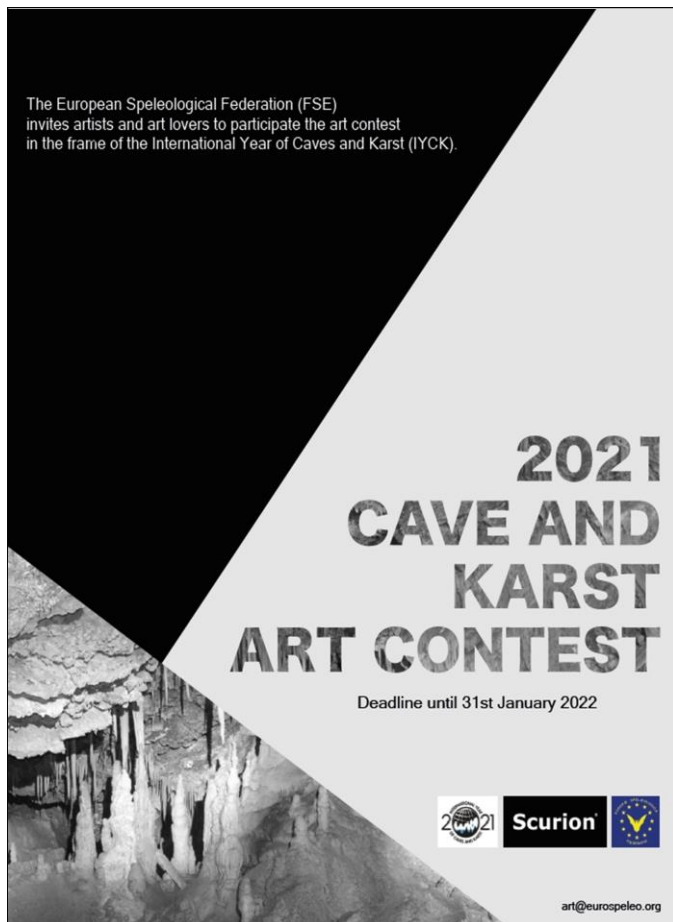
The project received an FSE financial grant of EUR 800 as well as a SCURION® 900 lamp set.

International Show Cave Association: November-December 2021 Newsletter

ISCA has recently released its last Newsletter for 2021. It can be downloaded from the ISCA website at

<https://www.i-s-c-a.org/clanok/264-isca-newsletter-november-december-2021>

The frequency of ICA Newsletters has increased recently with a wealth of information on showcaves and international speleological events. Everybody interested in show caves is recommended to regularly visit the ISCA website.



Update 18th International Congress of Speleology, 24-31 July 2022

The organizers of **the** major world-wide event on caves and karst next year - the 18th ICS in Le-Bourget-du-Lac (Savoie/France) - have recently issued a newsletter with many details on the congress, such as registration (early booking fee still open until 27th March 2022), the conference venue, equipped caves, the campsite, as well as sales stands. Please check out this newsletter at https://depots.ffspeleo.fr/uploads/Newsletter_UIS_4En.pdf

All other information related to the event are available at <https://uis2021.speleos.fr/>

Do not hesitate to register **now**. UIS and FSE are looking forward to meet you all during the last week of July 2022 for a unique gathering, which will also host the 2022 General Assembly of FSE. Many scientific sessions on karst related research and the latest cave explorations in Europe and in the world are on schedule.



FSE's Caves and Karst Art Contest is now open for entries from anywhere in the world until 31st January 2022

As a contribution to IYCK the European Speleological Federation (FSE) would like to invite artists to participate in an international contest in all fields of art.

The contest will be conducted with particular themes in relation to the protection of caves and karst in five categories: A. Painting, Sketching; B. Ceramics and Sculpture; C. Graphic Design, Mixing techniques, Textiles, Prints; D. Art Performance, Art Video, Music, Sound; E. Publications, Poetry.

The top three of each category will be awarded with a certificate and the winner of each category will receive a money prize of EUR 100. A main prize in the form of a Scurion lamp will go to an overall winner. This lamp is kindly provided by FSE sponsor Scurion from Switzerland.

For this contest there is a special FSE Art Contest website: <https://eurospeleoart.eu/> where you can find all information on how to participate.

Please attach photos of your art works or links to a performance, video, music or sound and send it with the entry form to art@eurospeleo.org



EuroSpeleo Project 2021-06: Biodiversity of Georgian Caves and Karst Areas

A small-scale biospeleological expedition to Georgia with a focus on snails (Molluscan, family *Clausiliidae*) took place between 10th and 23rd October 2021. The objective was also to establish contacts with the local caving groups.

Georgia recently became a member of the European Speleological Federation. The country is very well known for the deepest caves in the world in the Abkhazia region. The cave potential of the other large karst plateaus is however still neglected.

Contacts with the university of Tiflis were used to plan a route through several karst areas and to obtain an overview by staying a few days in each area only. Good contacts were established to the caving clubs of Okriba and Chkhorostku. During the expedition beautifully decorated caves were visited in the Racha plateau, also prehistoric caves near the Ossetia region and several conglomerate caves and resurgences in Chkhorostku. In total 31 caves and karst resurgences were examined, as well as 13 karst cliffs and limestone forests.

The cave fauna has been investigated in all caves visited and the samples collected were distributed to experts for determination of the taxa.



Approach to Kvedi Big Cave in the Racha-Lechkhumi region (photo: R. Straub).

During the field trip we were able to investigate the geographical distribution of 3 taxa not reported so far from Georgia. Living specimens for anatomical and molecular studies of two species were collected for the very first time. We also confirmed the habitat for one known species and found 3 new *Clausiliidae* species and 3 new Stygobiont gastropod genera with 15 new stygobiont species.

The collected samples will be subject of several scientific papers, which will contribute much to the knowledge of Georgian karst-dwelling Mollusca.



Muradi Cave (photo: R. Straub)

© Rainer Straub

The expedition was supported by FSE's sponsor Korda's Ropes (Barcelona) as well as a money grant from FSE.



Collection of fauna samples in Georgia (photo: R. Straub).



EuroSpeleo Protection Label 2022 European Cave Protection Commission Call for Cave Protection Projects

It is with great pleasure that the FSE announces this year's call for Cave Protection projects to receive the Label "EuroSpeleo Protection" from the ECPC (the European Cave Protection Commission of the FSE).

The EuroSpeleo Protection Label is a European speleolo-



gical award managed by the ECPC, financed by the FSE budget. The EuroSpeleo Protection Label will help to promote, amongst the speleological clubs of Europe, Cave Protection activities that are designed in an integrated ecological way, taking into account EU environmental directives, the principles of administration of the Natura 2000 sites and the IUCN Guidelines on caves and karst protection.

With what kind of projects can you apply?

The EuroSpeleo Protection Label will be awarded every year to one unique Cave Protection project. A European speleological jury established by the ECPC Board will make the selection. Any project aiming at protecting caves developed by a club, a local committee or a national commission from a member country of the FSE can apply.

What are the criteria to receive the FSE EuroSpeleo Protection Label and what is the prize?

There is no need for participation of cavers from different countries, but the application should be a quality project and the broadcasting of the project presentation and results should be made in a spirit that can be reproduced in other European regions and countries. The application should be sent to protection@eurospeleo.org before 1st of June 2022, in English language.

The project must receive the approval from its national speleological organization, i.e. a letter of support from its national organisation, member of the FSE.

The reward for the label 2022 is EUR 800 plus one caving gear from our sponsors AV Equipmenet, Korda's or Scurion depending on availability and choice of the FSE Bureau.

Please refer to the ESPL- Guidelines and Application Form published on the FSE site at:

<https://www.eurospeleo.eu/en/commissions-en/cave-protection/ecpc-activities/eurospeleo-protection-label.html>

Best Speleo Wishes

The ECPC Team

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



Foto: Víctor Ferrer