



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

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ISSN 2418-4500

## Editorial

As most of you already know, the International Congress of Speleology, planned for this year, had to be postponed to 2022 (see page 5 of this Newsletter). FSE considers this a wise decision due to the continuing pandemic.

Due to this postponement information on the FSE General Assembly 2021 and the 2022 EuroSpeleo Forum in Burgos will be made available soon.

Please forward this Newsletter as widely as possible to caving clubs and individual cavers. **The FSE Bureau**

## The International Year of Caves and Karst 2021

On 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021 UIS officially inaugurated the International Year of Caves and Karst (IYCK) through a virtual Opening Ceremony on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzSiErlj5x6viNbvAdehDvA>).

The IYCK is designed to teach people around the world about caves and karst and their importance to mankind. It is a unique chance to make a global impact with improving knowledge, appreciation, funding, and protection for caves and karst.

Join the IYCK with your event! All info is available on the IYCK website, the UIS Facebook page, as well as the UIS Twitter

and Instagram pages:

[www.iyck2021.org](http://www.iyck2021.org)

<https://www.facebook.com/uisspeleo>

<https://twitter.com/uisspeleo>

<https://www.instagram.com/uisspeleo/>

A list of all events contributed so far to the IYCK can be found at

<http://iyck2021.org/index.php/events/>

UIS is planning to compile all the IYCK results into a document that anyone can use to demonstrate the global interest, value, and support for caves and karst.

A well-illustrated book to support the IYCK has recently been published in English and will be translated into Hungarian and German (see page 2).



The UIS is glad to share with you volume 62-2 of the UIS Bulletin. This 69 pages issue is a special edition for the International Year of Karst and Caves (IYCK) 2021.

The PDF interactive format can be downloaded by clicking on the link:

<http://www.uis-speleo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/uisb622.pdf>

## FSE Partners



## Cave and Karst related events

Only limited information for 2021 is provided below, as most of the conferences and speleological camps planned for spring/summer 2021 have been cancelled or postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. 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%2010-03-2021.pdf>

No reliable information on events outside Europe can currently be provided.

**23 April 2021**

**14<sup>th</sup> Int. Symposium on Pseudokarst** - Świętokrzyskie Mts, Poland - now entirely virtual: <https://14pseudokarst.wonders4you.com/>

**14-18 June 2021**

**28<sup>th</sup> Int. Karstological School: Regional Karstology-Local and General Aspects** - Postojna, Slovenia - <https://iks.zrc-sazu.si/en/>

**24 July - 1 August 2021 - POSTPONED to 24-31 July 2022**

**18<sup>th</sup> Int. Congress of Speleology** - Le Bourget-du-Lac, France - <http://uis2021.speleos.fr/>

**28 August - 3 September 2021**

**19<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Vulcanospeleology** - Catania, Sicily, Italy - <http://www.19isvetna.com/>

**30 September - 2 October 2021**

**Annual Meeting of the Austrian Cavers** - Trattnerhof, Semriach, Austria - <http://www.voetagung2021.com>

**30 September - 3 October 2021**

**26<sup>th</sup> Int. Cave Bear Symposium** - Reiss-Engelhorn-Museum, Mannheim, Germany - [http://www.eiszeit-safari.de/fileadmin/redakteure/Bilder/ICBS\\_2020\\_1st\\_Circular.pdf](http://www.eiszeit-safari.de/fileadmin/redakteure/Bilder/ICBS_2020_1st_Circular.pdf)

**8-10 October 2021**

**Diving Talks 2021: The Cave Diving Congress** – Aqualuz Tróia Event Centre, Alamedo do Zambujeiro, Tróia, Portugal  
<https://www.divingtalks.com/>

**26-30 October 2021**

**6<sup>th</sup> EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium "Assessing, monitoring and protecting cave biotopes and geotopes through Natura 2000 or similar programs in Europe"** - Vilm Island/Baltic Sea, Germany - info at <https://www.facebook.com/events/438983103449721/>

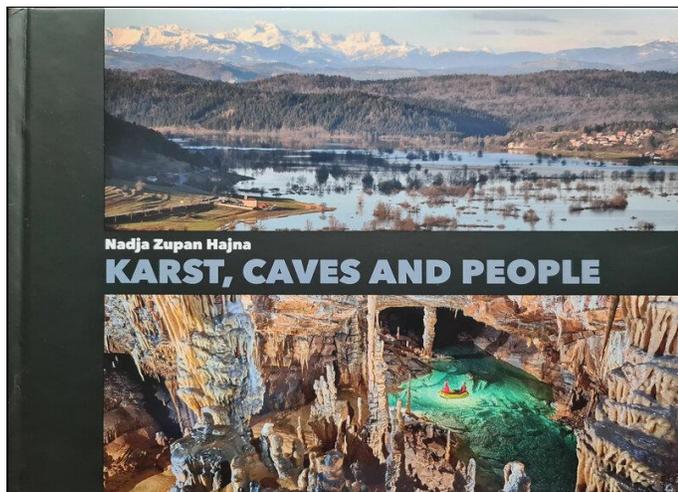
**29 October - 1 November 2021**

**Speleo Kamaraton 2021. International Meeting** - Marina di Camerota, Salerno, Italy - <http://www.speleokamaraton.eu/>

**11 - 14 November 2021**

**European Cave Rescue Meeting 2021** – Ramales de la Victoria, Cantabria, Spain - <https://caverescue.eu/european-cave-rescue-meeting-2021-first-circular/>

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a member  
of the



## News related to Show Caves

The International Show Caves Association (ISCA), based at Frasassi Caves in Genga, Italy, recently established an electronic newsletter in English language. The first issues of this Newsletter are available for download at the ISCA website [www.I-S-C-A.org](http://www.I-S-C-A.org)

The U.S. National Cave and Karst Research Institute (NCKRI) has recently published a study on the effect of LED lights on lampenflora in show caves. The report was funded by Carlsbad Caverns National Park. The paper, called "Lighting effects on the development and diversity of photosynthetic biofilm communities in Carlsbad Cavern, New Mexico", can be downloaded from: <https://aem.asm.org/content/87/6/e02695-20>

## Karst, Caves and People - a book to support the International Year of Caves and Karst 2021

Author: Nadja Zupan Hajna. Publisher: Karst Research Institute, Postojna, Slovenia, 2021. 172 pp., 28 x 21 cm, hardcover. ISBN: 978-961-05-0491-7, Price: EUR 29.00 (regular); EUR 25.00 (clubs). Orders: <https://izr.krc-sazu.si/en/publikacije/karst-caves-and-people>

The purpose of the book is to present karst phenomena in a popular way and, at the same time, emphasize their importance and their extreme vulnerability to people. Through numerous photographs and schematic diagrams, the book tries to explain the karst processes, formation of different karst surface forms and cave types, as well as the problems which occur to the karst environment by the way people live. Images from 62 photographers represent different types of karst and caves from almost all over the world. Karst functions the same way everywhere. People have negatively affected the environment for thousands of years, but the sheer size of today's human population leads to more conspicuous and inevitable negative environmental consequences. Pollution affects not only water quality but also caves and their fragile ecosystems. The basis for all karst protection is knowledge and understanding. Karst and caves are part of our environment. Even if one does not live in a karst area or has never visited a cave, all people on Earth benefit from the water which caves and karst provide, from their ecosystems, and from their economic values linked to tourism.

The book was published with the help of the Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO.

## The European Youth Congress – connecting young cavers across borders

Despite the unfortunate ongoing global situation, some projects are starting that should provide some hope for the future. One such is the European Youth Congress. This project was first envisioned due to the lack of young adults in the caving scene compared to other outdoor pursuits such as climbing. This issue is recognised by some countries, which may have initiatives for young people, but there is a wide variation. As caving generally requires support from other cavers to participate, we believe that these initiatives are very important.

Started by UK cavers who began caving with university caving clubs, the congress aims to bring together youth initiatives from across Europe to encourage a new generation of cavers. Our current definition of youth is young adults in the range of 18-30 years old. The project is still in very early stages, and currently we are still making connections with the local youth initiatives in each country. Currently, we have made contact through the FSE list with 15 countries: Armenia, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. We are establishing communication via an email list and Slack group.

Our first mission is to discover what each country is doing for youth cavers. Some countries have specific youth initiatives, such as the FFS's Commission Jeune, whereas other countries have no organised structure yet but are interested in forming one. This represents a wide variation in approaches, and it will be interesting to see how these work. Our short-term goal is to organise an open forum at the 2021 UIS Congress this summer, to allow representatives from different countries to meet, and to decide the future direction. There is of course some uncertainty surrounding the UIS Congress, so alternatives may have to be found, such as an online forum.

Our long-term goal is to create an event where young cavers from across Europe can meet, socialise, and go caving together. This would hopefully strengthen international ties and encourage the passion for caving among young cavers. Our hope is that this event will be able to be planned for summer 2022.

If you are involved with youth caving in your country and would like to get involved, please contact us via the FSE secretary. We're happy to hear from you (though we can only speak English and French!).

**David Botcherby**



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



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 Speleological 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](mailto:protection@eurospeleo.org) before 30th of June 2021, 23:59 (Central European Time) in English language. The project must receive the approval from its national speleological organisation, i.e. a letter of support from its national organisation, member of the FSE.

The reward for the label 2021 is EUR 800.00 plus one item of caving gear from our sponsors AV Equipment, Korda's Ropes 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>

## Morca Düdeni Mağara Sistemi (Turkey) - pushed by an international expedition to -1,276 m of depth and to 5,192 m in length

Morca Cave has been explored to a depth of -919 m and a length of over 3 km until 2018. In summer 2019, 31 cavers from Turkey, Bulgaria, Lebanon and the USA spent 30 days to continue the exploration of Morca Cave and finally reached a depth of -1,210 m (for a location map and the full report see:

<https://www.eurospeleo.eu/images/stories/docs/eurospeleo-projects/2020/Morca%20Cave%20Exploration%202020.%20Turkey%20ESP%202020-03.pdf>).

In summer 2020 exploration was continued by a small team from Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, and Ukraine - cavers from Iran, Israel and Lebanon could not join the expedition as the Turkish borders were closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Eight days were needed to reach the "Ümit"(Hope) Camp at -1,040 m. The next day a pioneer team continued exploration and reached a sump at -1,256 m. Many crabs were noted in the water. A cave diving attempt proved that the sump (♀) is a deep serious one.

Other team members targeted side leads previously unexplored in Morca. One of these side leads, starting at -1,210 m of depth, led to a large lake at -1,276 m, with Morca still ranking 3rd deepest cave of Turkey.

Future exploration will focus on upper side passages.

The expedition received EuroSpeleo Project status and was supported by equipment donations of FSE partners Adventure Verticale, Korda's Ropes, and Scurion, as well as a financial support of FSE.

## Karstlink news

Karstlink is a project which organizes the sharing of information on the karst environment with the tools of the semantic web. Karstlink is carried by the UIS and supported by the FSE.

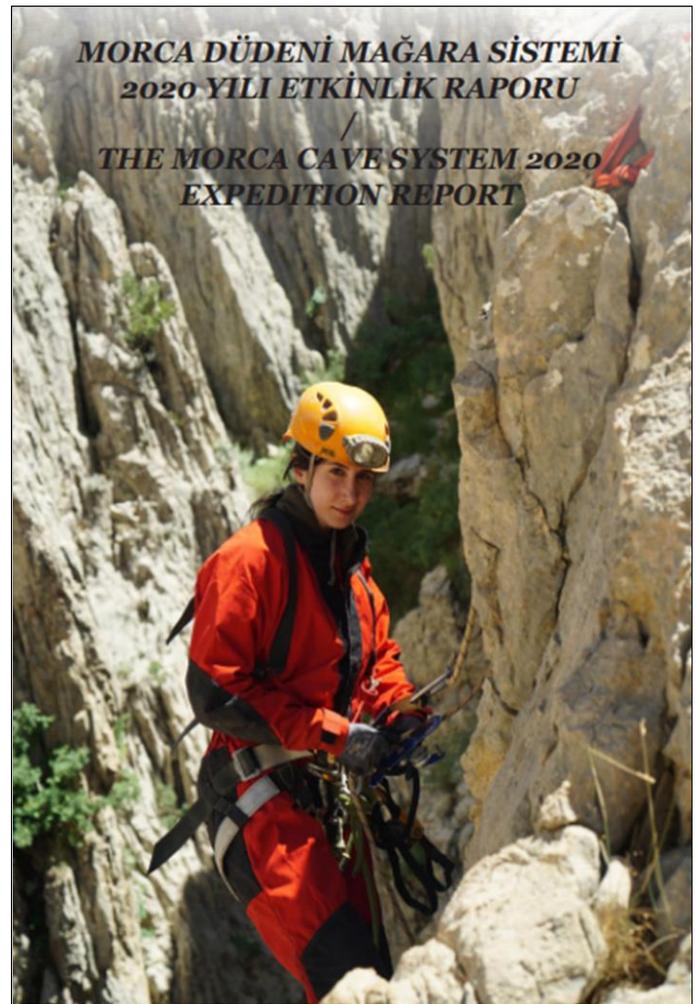
A common vocabulary was voted on and set up on a dedicated site <https://ontology.uis-speleo.org/>

There is a new Web server that is made available by the Wikicaves association, usable by everyone, available here: <https://data.grottocenter.org>. It runs with Open Source software semantic\_forms (SF), developed and deployed by Jean Marc Vanel. It is able to collect data, provide it but also provides other services.

The SF software has the potential of a CMS, that offers non-admin users to create their own content. But it is currently restricted while waiting to move forward on the GDPR regulations. However, you can see another site powered by SF, where the GDPR compliance is in progress, populated by all types of data: person, projects, organizations, etc, and where you can actually enter new data: <http://semantic-forms.cc:1952/>

Data are directly available on the server:

- Grottocenter made available its data on Underground cavities, Areas and Documents (massifs soon).
- Alain provided data on the French departments of Ain and Rhone.



- Graziano made available his work on Martel.
  - Data on the caves of Thailand provided by Martin Ellis.
- But this is just the beginning! If you have data to share ( cf <https://ontology.uis-speleo.org/howto/>) please contact us at [KarstLinkMgt@uis-speleo.org](mailto:KarstLinkMgt@uis-speleo.org)

**Peter Matthews, Eric Madelaine, Frédéric Urien & Jean-Marc Vanel**

## Support the project Speleomedit

In the International Year of Caves and Karst, TETIDE in collaboration with Italian Speleology Society, is working on a fundamental contribution to create a common awareness and strengthen the links between speleological groups and research institutions in the Mediterranean by supporting the protection of karst and caves. The project includes:

- Website <http://www.speleokamaraton.eu/speleomedit/>
- Photographic exhibition consisting of 2 panels for each Mediterranean country.
- Publication "Speleology of the Mediterranean" with general contributions from all Mediterranean countries.

For a donation of at least € 20 in addition to contributing to the realization of the project, you will receive a copy of the publication "Speleology of the Mediterranean " directly to your desk. You can donate at:

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/speleomedit>

## Grottocenter V3 is on its way!

The Wikicaves association has been a partner of the FSE since 2013. Its goal is to promote the sharing of information related to the underground environment, in particular through the grottocenter.org website.

At the end of 2020, thanks to funding from the SSS and the FFS, developments were made to make it possible to contribute online to the "BBS - Speleo Abstracts" from Grottocenter V3 (beta.grottocenter.org). This feature is operational as from today.

At the beginning of 2021, Wikicaves made a successful campaign on a French collaborative crowd-funding platform. We want to thank all those who have contributed around the world, individual cavers, clubs, associations and federations.

From now on, new functionalities are being developed by contracted programming specialists and in a few months you will be able to share data related to organizations, karst massifs, caves or networks.

Other features are also being developed by several groups of engineer students. Arnaud and Raphaël are building a module using artificial intelligence tools to detect duplicates, Nicolas and Gabriel will be working until June on a function to allow the bulk import of data through csv files. We also expect a new team to develop tools to use Grottocenter in the field with smartphones.

Volunteer developers work on functions that are less visible but just as essential: the management of data history, the evolution of development tools and programming languages, testing of functionalities, etc.

Why don't you join our enthusiastic and motivated team? All skills are welcome, contact us: <https://fr.wikicaves.org/contact> **The Wikicaves team**

## International Congress of Speleology postponed to 2022

The continuing Covid-19 pandemic requires that the 18th International Congress of Speleology, which was scheduled for July this year in France, be postponed to 24-31 July 2022. The Congress will be organized at the same location in Le Bourget-du-Lac, France.

All registrations already made and papers sent for 2021 will be accepted for 2022 and can be cancelled or adjusted, if needed.

Please check out the congress website for further information: <https://uis2021.speleos.fr/>

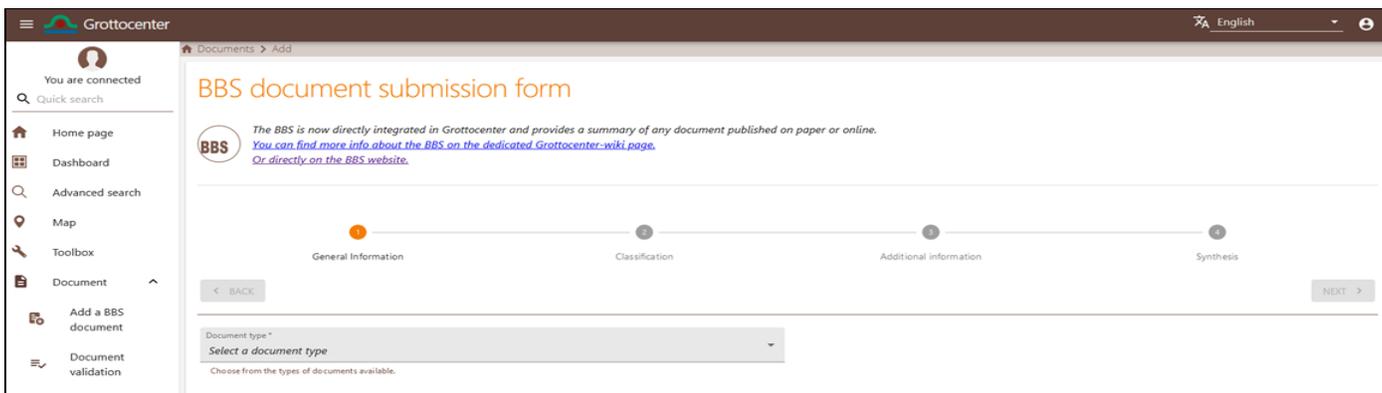
## News on the EuroSpeleo Projects

Expeditions, congresses and other speleological activities can apply for EuroSpeleo Project status and funding. The minimum requirement is the participation of **4 European FSE member countries or 3 eligible countries** with the participation of a **partner** country from Asia (members of the Asian Union of Speleology AUS), Africa, America (members of FEALC), or the Middle East.

An easy-application guideline is currently drafted for release in April to make the application process, already simple by now, even more transparent.

FSE encourages the application of regional speleological activities, which are likely to resume first as soon as the current travel restrictions will be lifted.

For detailed information and the eligible countries pls. visit <https://www.eurospeleo.eu/en/eurospeleo-projects-fundings.html>



## Ces Héroïnes des Cavernes

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### Heroines of the Caverns

To celebrate the International Year of Caves and Karst and the great role of women in speleology, Bernard Chirol, president of the UIS Commission on History, published the book *Ces Héroïnes des Cavernes - Histoire méconnue des femmes dans les grottes du monde / Heroines of the Caverns - Little known history of women in the caves of the World*.

The French version of the book is already available. An English translation is on its way and will be available soon.

The cover of the book has been created by Taraneh Khaleghi.

Author: Bernard Chirol (with a preface by Julia James).

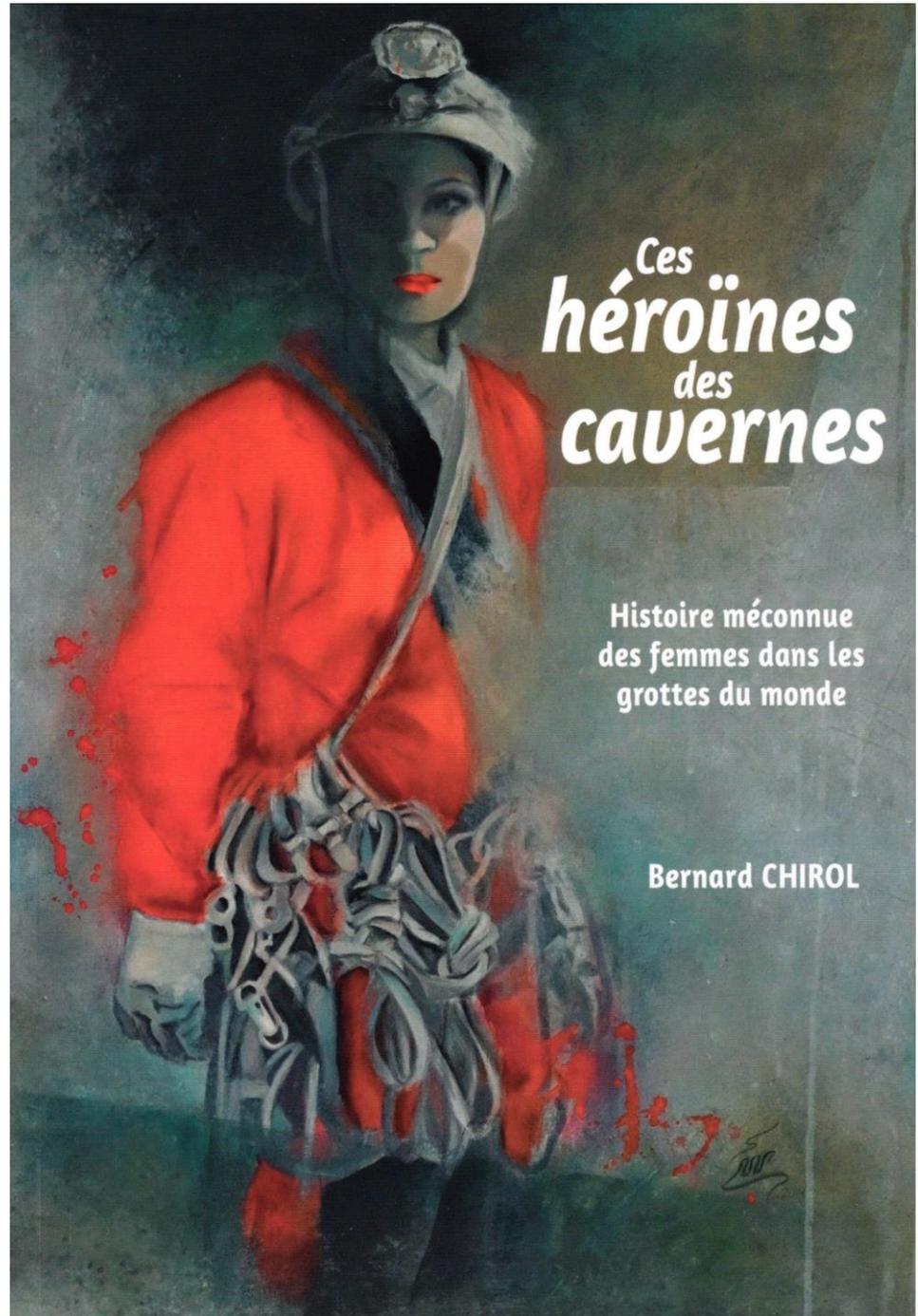
Over 240 pages, many illustrations, 16 x 24 cm format, brochure, 2021.

Price: EUR 20.00 (plus shipment).

Orders at <https://framaforms.org/souscription-ces-heroines-des-cavernes-1600681691>

or

bearchirol( # )orange.fr



## Support German gypsum karst petition

In Germany, the Lower Saxony Regional Planning Programme has particular plans to expand the gypsum quarrying areas in the southern Harz region. These plans damage a landscape of international standing and these wounds in a primary gypsum karst area cannot be healed. The plans also contradict the Natura 2000 Directive of the European Union, because they can have negative impact on individual areas and unacceptably restrict the development possibilities of the areas.

All possible actions should be taken to force the authorities refraining from designating further gypsum quarrying areas and switch to gypsum recycling and the use of artificial gypsum from industry to save the landscape of the South Harz with its famous gypsum karst. The "Friends of the Earth Germany" (BUND) has created a petition page where you can support the campaign to save the unique gypsum karst in Germany.

The website can be accessed at (sorry, in German language only):

<https://www.bund-niedersachsen.de/mitmachen/harzer-gipskarst-retten/>