



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

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ISSN 2418-4500

Editorial

FSE is looking forward to the 15th EuroSpeleo Forum, which will be held in conjunction with the 2023 meeting of the German Speleological Federation in Breitscheid (Hessen) between 17-21 May. Several changes in the FSE

Bureau will be necessary at our General Assembly 2023 (see the announcement on page 3 of this Newsletter).

Please forward this Newsletter as widely as possible to caving clubs and individual cavers.

The FSE Bureau

International Year of Caves and Karst (IYCK) 2021+22: Conclusions and Future

The IYCK is organized by the International Union of Speleology (UIS) to teach the world about the importance of caves and karst, as well as the exploration and protection by the theme "Explore, Understand, Protect". The IYCK was extended through 2022 due to the pandemic.

Almost 900 events around the world were presented on the IYCK website (www.iyck2021.org). That incredible achievement built interest and support for caves and karst in many countries



reaching millions of people. Now we must continue to remind those partners and engage them with caves and karst. UIS is planning to compile all the IYCK projects into a comprehensive report in order to make the efforts of all stakeholders of the International Year

even more visible and reach even more interested circles. All partners who have not yet done so are strongly encouraged to send a report on their event made for the IYCK to the UIS webmaster (webmaster@uis-speleo.org). So keep watching the IYCK website.

To strengthen the success achieved by the IYCK the UIS proposes to all participating speleological organizations to connect especially with the non-caving partners of their projects, so that future cooperation will create sustainability and persistent awareness for caves and karst, their exploration and protection.

FSE Partners





FSE President Ged Campion at the 18th Int. Congress of Speleology in Le-Bourget-du-Lac (France) in 2022 (photograph: Ernest Geyer).

FSE President Address

In the past it hasn't been customary for the president to do a separate piece for the newsletter, however, given my imminent departure from the bureau this May we felt it only right that I should pencil a very short piece. For my own part, I had planned to hand over the reins to a new incumbent back in 2020 at the end of my second, four-year tenure as president. However, no one could have foreseen the shadow of the emerging pandemic and how it would have quite devastating effects on all our lives and the organisations we serve. Encouraged by colleagues both in and outside of the bureau I agreed to soldier on until we could have some semblance of normality back again and here we at the beginning of 2023, at the close of the international Year of Caves and Karst, and for the most part, with the pandemic behind us, moving forward again. The challenges of the pandemic meant we had to find more creative ways of working and one of these was increased reliance on online meetings and generally improving our efficiency and of course our connectivity.

I can say with confidence that the FSE continues to be a growing organisation both in size and expectation, designed to serve and foster European speleology on many levels. Since I joined the bureau back in 2005 in Kalamos, Greece, as vice president I have had the

privilege of seeing many new initiatives emerge and flourish. A few examples of these have been our EuroSpeleo Projects (ESPs) established back in 2008 enabling the FSE to offer financial assistance and equipment to expeditions and projects, the development of the European Cave Protection Commission (ECPC) which has made significant inroads in raising the profile of cave and karst protection both in Europe and further afield and of course a regular professional looking newsletter providing feedback from our projects. In addition to this, the cave rescue commission continues to encourage collaborative working around training and safety and our contact group on show caves brings a positive voice to the value show caves have in areas of conservation work. The work to drive these types of developments, do however, come at a cost and that is the investment of personal time colleagues inside and outside of the bureau are prepared to sacrifice. Nevertheless, giving something back to speleology can also be very satisfying, after all it's the interest and activity that many of us have treasured throughout our lives.

The FSE continues to evolve with new ideas and initiatives being proposed. This year will represent quite a significant change of personnel within the bureau with four posts up for election. Please have a look at the item below itemising the posts and if you think you can make a difference send in your applications. There isn't really room here to mention or thank all the many individuals, especially bureau and commission members who have added so much value to the FSE over the years but as I depart, I'd like to think that as president our federation will continue to blossom for many years to come as we face the inevitable challenges the future will undoubtedly bring.

Ged Campion

11th Balkan Photo Contest

We are happy to share, that after 2-year hiatus The Balkan Photo Contest "We and Caves" returns with a new edition and full of hope to be able to present once more the hard-to-reach beauty of the caves to the people outside our caver's community. As usually, the opening of the exhibition will take place during the upcoming Balkan Cavers Camp 2023 (29 June - 3 July, Serbia). Following that the photographs in the form of a traveling exhibition will begin their journey throughout Bulgaria and the Balkans.

Photographs should be submitted no later than 15 May by sending an e-mail to we.and.caves@gmail.com. An entry form (<https://form.jotform.com/230203018861041>) have been filled out and attached. The photographs must have been taken in 2022 and need to have a title, the author's name and the location (cave). Recommended size of digital files: 2.5-10 MB, JPEG format and size on the long side min. 3000 pixels. By sending the photographs, their authors agree that they may be used by organizers to promote Speleology through exhibitions, posters, calendars, promotional materials, etc.

For more information: e-mail we.and.caves@gmail.com



Cave and Karst related events

For more detailed information please consult the list of European caving events at the FSE website:

<https://www.eurospeleo.eu/events/>

18 - 21 March 2023

Congrès Maghrébien de Spéléologie - Borj Cedria, Tunisia
- <https://www.cm-speleo.com>

27 - 31 March 2023

17th Multidisciplinary Conference on Sinkholes and the Engineering and Environmental Impacts of Karst -
Tampa, Florida, USA - <http://www.sinkholeconference.com/>

4 - 7 May 2023

4th Int. Planetary Caves Conference - Hara, Lanzarote, Spain - <http://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/4thcaves2023/>

17 - 21 May 2023

15th EuroSpeleo Forum & Annual meeting of the German cavers - Breitscheid, Hessen, Germany -
<https://www.vdhk.de/en/events/translate-to-english-jahrestagung>

21 - 26 May 2023

Australasian Cave & Karst Management Biennial Conference. - Nelson, New Zealand -
<https://ackma.org/conf2023/index.html>

22 - 26 May 2023

14th International Symposium on Pseudokarst - Sudetes, Poland - <https://14pseudokarst.wonders4you.com/>

26 - 30 June 2023

NSS Convention - Elkins, WV, USA - <https://nss2023.caves.org>

29 June - 3rd July 2023

Balkan Cavers Camp 2023 - Serbia, Website t.b.d.

26 - 29 July 2023

37th Brazilian Congress of Speleology - Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil - <https://www.cavernas.org.br/37-congresso-brasileiro-de-espeleologia/>

20 - 24 September 2023

5th Int. Meeting of Cavers in the Moravian Karst, 2nd Specialized Conference "Karst, Caves and People 2023"
Sloup, Czech Republic - <https://www.speleo.cz/karst2023>

21 - 24 September 2023

Cave Bear Symposium - Urwelt-Museum, Bayreuth, Bavaria, Germany - nadja.kavcik@univie.ac.at

19 - 22 October 2023

3rd Balkan Speleological Conference - Sofia, Bulgaria -
<https://u.pcloud.link/publink/show?code=XZf7aWVZCtRnYgXeaSu7txp9IbWcB5vIRsKk> (1st circular)

10 - 15 October 2023

Cave Rescue Meeting - Mira de Aire, municipality of Porto de Mós, Portugal - Website t.b.d.

26 - 29 October 2023

Speleo-Austria 2023 - Bad Mitterndorf/Tauplitz, Austria - Website t.b.d.

1 - 5 November 2023

Italian Speleo Meeting - Costacciaro, Umbria, Italy

2 - 5 November 2023

3rd Int. Congress of Karst, Speleology and Enhancement of Natural Heritage - Rabat, Morocco -
<https://speleorabat23.scienceconf.org/>

Call for FSE Bureau Positions

The current FSE Bureau would like to invite you all to read carefully the following call. At the GAM this year, on the 20th of May 2023 in Breitscheid (Germany), some positions of the FSE Bureau will be newly elected or re-elected:

To be newly elected

As the following positions on the FSE Bureau will become vacant we would like you to consider a member of your organization to apply for these positions.

President - As already announced at the GAM 2022 the position of President is vacant starting this year for two years. Tasks of the President (art 15 of the current FSE statutes): *The President manages the FSE and represents it legally. He/She presides over the meetings of the Bureau and of the General Assembly and co-ordinates the good execution of decisions taken during these meetings.*

Vice-President - Tasks of the Vice-President (art 16 of the current FSE statutes): *The Vice President assists the President in his work. He/She must be able to replace any of the other members of the Bureau in case of resignation.*

Vice-Secretary - Tasks of the Vice-Secretary (art 17b of the current FSE statutes): *The Vice-Secretary assists the General Secretary in his work. He/She is responsible for the follow-up of the European projects.*

Managing the follow-up of the EuroSpeleo Projects is an important task for the Vice-Secretary and will require administrative work and contacts with the organisers of the projects regarding the applications and the reports submitted.

Re-election

Treasurer - Tasks of the Treasurer (art 18 of the current FSE statutes): *The Treasurer is in charge of the good financial management of the F.S.E. He/She is in charge of the accounting and he reports to the General Assembly. He/She prepares the financial report of each period and the provisional budget. He/She regularly informs the Bureau, and more specifically the President, of the financial status of the F.S.E. He/She conducts or proposes any appropriate action.*

Interested candidates for all the above positions must submit to the Bureau a written application with short curriculum vitae together with a support letter from their national organisation before the point of the election of the Bureau members at the GAM (20 May 2023). Each member of the Bureau is elected for four years, except the position of the President, on this occasion, which is for a two-year tenure only.

Please note that the working language of the FSE Bureau is English. All candidates should be fluent in both spoken and written English.

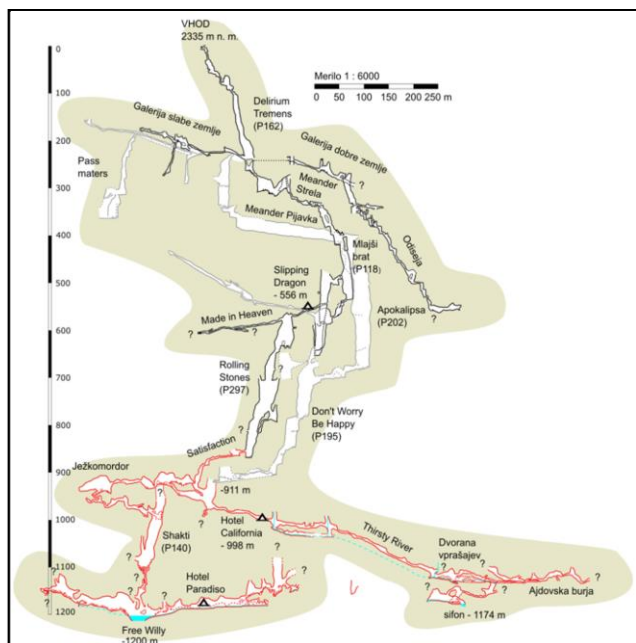
You may find the current statutes and internal regulations at the following links:

Statutes:

https://www.eurospeleo.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/FSE_statutes_2014.pdf

Internal Regulations:

https://www.eurospeleo.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/FSE_IR_2016.pdf



Profile of Skalarjevo brezno (Skalar Abyss). The passages shown in red colour are new discoveries or re-mapped galleries.

15th EuroSpeleo Forum in Breitscheid, Hessen (Germany): 17-21 May 2023

The organizers of the 2023 meeting of the German cavers, the German Speleological Federation as well as the FSE Bureau cordially invite you to join the 15th EuroSpeleo Forum (ESF) in Breitscheid/Hessen, which will take place between 17th and 21st of May 2023. The village of Breitscheid is situated 8 km west the city of Herborn, about 70 km east of Bonn and about 80 km northwest of Frankfurt/Main. The nearest international airports are Cologne/Bonn and Frankfurt. Regional trains from Frankfurt stop in Herborn.

The Breitscheid karst only measures 3 square km. However, it hosts 16 km of currently known cave passages. The largest caves known are the Herbstlabyrinth-Adventhöhle-System (over 13 km long, currently the 4th longest cave in Germany) and the Erdbachhöhlensystem (over 2 km long). The area belongs to the Geopark Westerwald-Lahn-Taunus with a lot of karst features like dolines, sinkholes, dry valleys and karst resurgences. Parts of the Herbstlabyrinth-Adventhöhle-System are accessible for tourists.

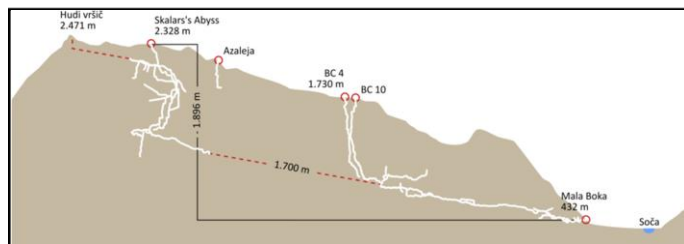
The meeting venue will be the school compound and a nearby multi-purpose communal hall in Breitscheid. There will be a campground as well as places for mobile homes. Dormitories (sleeping bag and mattress necessary) will be provided in classrooms. Hotels and B&Bs are available in the surroundings of Breitscheid; please check out Internet platforms for hotel accommodation.

There will be many field-trips to the local caves as well as surface excursions and presentations. Conference language will be German and English.

For all details on the program and the registration please see the event's website (available on 1st of March 2023) at <https://www.vdhk.de/en/events/translate-to-english-jahrestagung>

Skalarjevo brezno (Skalar Abyss) expedition 2022 (EuroSpeleo Project ESP 2022-09)

Skalar Abyss is a high-altitude karst cave with its entrance opening in the heart of the Kanin plateau at an altitude of 2,335 m. Due to the geological conditions a cave system with a depth of 2,000 meters is suspected, which represents one of the greatest depth potential in Europe! Skalar Abyss, if connected to the Mala Boka (BC 4 cave), would form a system with a depth of 1,896 m. That would make it the deepest cave in Europe and the third in the world (currently, the deepest cave in Europe is Lamprechtsofen in Austria, with a depth of 1,727 m).



Between 10th and 20th August an expedition took place in Skalarjevo brezno. There were 38 cavers, from 7 different countries (Slovenia, Italy, Slovakia, North Macedonia, Sweden, Ukraine and Israel), and from 13 different Slovenian caving clubs. The expedition was led by Novo mesto Caving Club and was partnered by the Speleological Association of Slovenia, the Slovenian Cave Rescue Service, and the FSE.

The main objective of the expedition was to find possible leads towards the resurgences in the Soča River Valley. Cavers have established three underground camps, at the depth of 550 m, 1,000 m and 1,200 m.

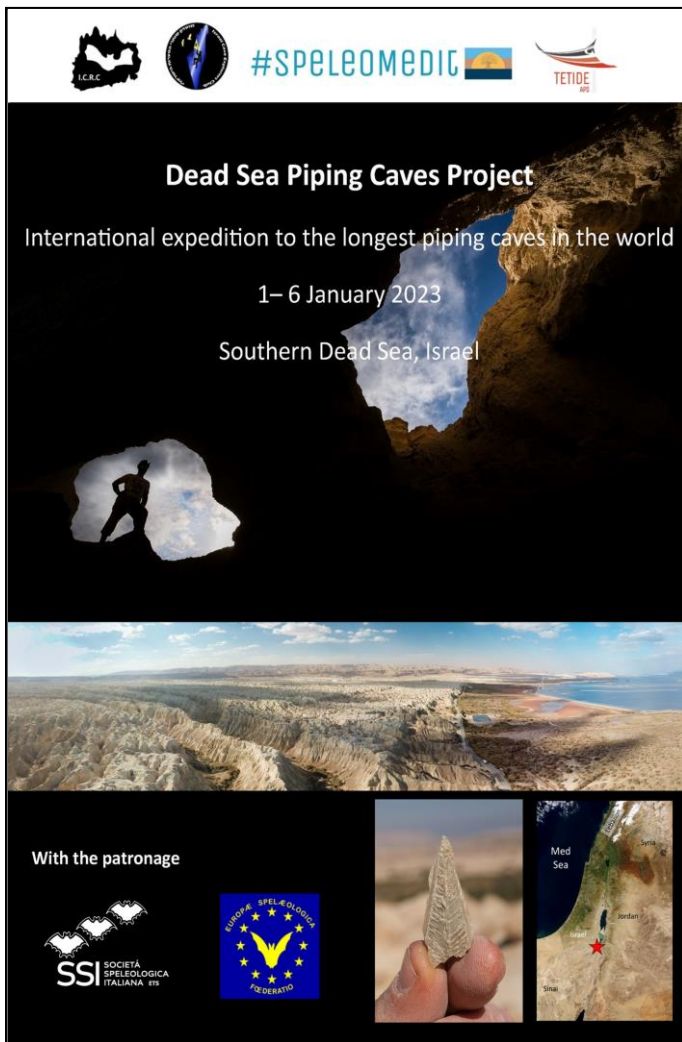
Behind a crawl through a semi-ump named "Sandy Candy", horizontal fossil galleries were found and 350 m of new passages were surveyed (Ajdovska burja). The cave continues here, but the team ran out of time and equipment. Also the affluent of the sump "Free Willy" was explored and another 300 m of new passages were found. The termination is a climb to a window, from where the gallery continues.

Some older parts of the cave were re-surveyed and about 150 kg of the garbage from decades of past explorations were taken out from the Bivouac 1.

In total 1,015 m of new passages were explored and surveyed and 1,100 m of already known galleries were re-mapped. The current depth of Skalarjevo brezno is still 1,200 m, and the total length is 8,176 m. With that, the explorers came a good step closer of connecting the Skalarjevo brezno and the cave system Mala Boka (BC4).

The Expedition was awarded EuroSpeleo Project status by FSE and was supported by a financial grant as well as equipment provided by FSE's official partner Aventure Verticale.





SpeleoMedit: Piping Caves Project, southern Dead Sea, Israel

Piping is defined as sub-surface erosion in poorly consolidated soils by mechanical grain transport (i.e., with minor or without contribution of karst activity). This erosional mechanism typically creates elongated voids (pipes) with openings allowing for the inlet and the outlet of water. Although piping is a naturally occurring geomorphological phenomenon worldwide, it has been mostly studied in



relation to civil engineering only. Piping erosion in natural conditions and its geo-morphologic impact on landscape evolution has been rarely investigated.

The Dead Sea Piping Caves Project focuses on piping systems that developed in the Lisan Formation outcrops along the Dead Sea shore. In the last few years, most of the western Dead Sea shore was surveyed and many piping caves and sinkholes were found. Piping caves mainly occur on the south side of the Dead Sea, in the Hakikar area. In this area, many long underground streams occur.

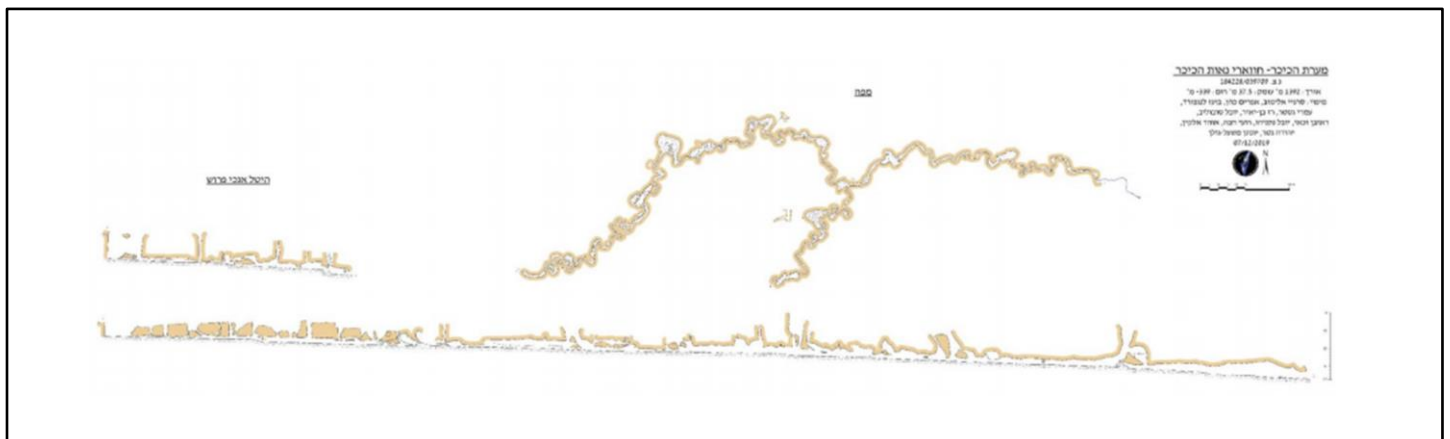
An international expedition to the south of the Dead Sea, organized by the Israel Cave Explorers Club www.icec.club, Israel Cave Research Center and Tetide APS www.tetide.org, and supported by the [Società Speleologica Italiana ETS](http://www.speleoitaliana.it) and the European Speleological Federation (FSE), has been conducted in early January 2023. The expedition targeted the numerous piping caves in this area, formed in poorly consolidated sediments.

Most of the horizontal caves are underground drainages during the rare flooding events in the region and feature many skylights.

Sixty speleologists from Israel, Italy, Germany/Switzerland, Cyprus, Poland, and the Czech Republic participated.

Seventeen caves with a total length of ~3.5 km were mapped, and many others were explored. The new longest piping cave in the world is now Atzmaut Cave at 1,433 m.

Below: map and profile of 1,392 m long Hakikar Cave, previously the longest piping cave in the world.





EuroSpeleo Protection Label (ESPL) Award 2023: Call-up for applications

It is with great pleasure that the FSE announces the next call for Cave Protection projects to receive the Label "EuroSpeleo Protection 2023" 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.eu before 30th of April 2023, in English language.

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

The reward for the label 2023 is 800 EUR plus one caving gear from our FSE-sponsor Adventure Verticale.

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

<https://www.eurospeleo.eu/ECPC/espl/>

Best Speleo Wishes

The ECPC team

In Memoriam Dr. Yavor Shopov

On 11th November 2022, on the way to the Bulgarian National Forum of Speleology in Dryanovo we lost the speleologist, scientist, researcher and friend Associate Professor Dr. Yavor Shopov (1962-2022) in a traffic accident.

Yavor was an active caver since 1980, when he finished a cave training in "Iskar" Speleo Club, Sofia.

Following that he was an active member of the club from 1981 to 1988. Yavor founded and led the University Section of Speleology at Sofia University St. "Kliment Ohridski".

He was an organizer of and speaker at numerous international and national scientific forums on speleology as well as author of valuable scientific publications.

From 2017 to 2022 Yavor was chairman of the Bulgarian Federation of Speleology.

Since 1993 he was president of the Commission on Physical Chemistry and Hydrogeology of Karst of the International Union of Speleology and also led the International Program on "Remote Location of Caves" (RCL) of the UIS.

We have lost an ever-seeking mind that saw the world through the eyes of a knowledgeable researcher.

The Bulgarian Federation of Speleology and the FSE Bureau send their sincere condolences to Dr. Shopov's family and friends.



FEDERATION SPELEOLOGIQUE EUROPEENNE

European Cave Protection Commission



The European Cave Protection Commission (ECPC) is a commission of the European Speleological Federation FSE and exists since 2007.

The team of the European Cave Protection Commission is inviting every caver with cave and karst protection and conservation ambitions, to join the commission to help pushing forward the cave and karst protection goals of the FSE in Europe.

More and more political aspects are influencing our work and keeping caves safe from external pollution and preventing them from destroying or disappearing is a major part of the commissions work.

Protecting cave animals and speleothems are another part of the work, as well as studying biospeleological life in caves. All these points have the same goal - protecting the cave and karst habitat, biotope and geotope.

A new initiative has started to create a Europe-wide network on de-pollution activities and to create a database on the state of pollution or ideally the state of intact caves.

The groundwater which is at risk as well and which must be protected as a large percent of people in Europe depend on it as it might be the only source for life, is another topic that the ECPC is working on.

The Commission does represent the FSE in international environmental bodies and has a board position in one of the major European environmental and civil organisations gathering more than 180 organizations all over Europe and around the Mediterranean Sea.

More team members mean more power and more international presence that again are factors that put the ECPC at a higher level of importance. To get an overview of the commission work please visit our site: www.eurospeleo.eu/ECPC

If you are keen on working in a strong and international team with the aim to protect caves and karst areas, the ECPC is the place for you.

What are the requirements?

Coming from an FSE member Country. (see here: <https://www.eurospeleo.eu/member-countries/>)

Having access to email and word processing applications.

Being ready to work in an international team composed of cavers and scientists.

Please note that the commission communication language is English only.

An application should include a letter of motivation from the applicant.

Please send an email to protection@eurospeleo.eu for any contact and note that you need to apply before March 31, 2023, to give us time for Q&A and eventual additional requests.

The period of engagement in the commission is from 2023 to 2027

We count on you!

Jean-Claude Thies, ECPC president