



Descent of
"Eye of Sauron" in
Homecoming Cave,
Lofer Plateau,
Austria
(EuroSpeleo
Project
ESP 2024-02).

Photo:
Adam Erskine-Jones



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Dear all,

It was only a few weeks ago that the 16th EuroSpeleo Forum took place in Caselle in Pittari (Italy).

The goal of such a major event is to gather cavers and people interested in caves & karst from all over Europe and beyond, in order to exchange knowledge, to present activities, to share common interests and much more. The social contacts are very important to build-up connections and friendships and to arrange common projects or joint expeditions.

The General Assembly Meeting (GAM) of the FSE, which is usually held during a EuroSpeleo Forum, is as well a place where the country's delegates to FSE are able to exchange views and information with other delegates and with the FSE Bureau.

Unfortunately, a lot of FSE member organisations or their delegates don't regard a General Assembly as important enough and forget that being a delegate means: representing a large number of cavers from a national organisation. It is therefore desirable that delegates take their mission seriously and fulfil their tasks appropriately.

The recent FSE GAM could only take place because our Secretary-General contacted many delegates individually and pled for a procuration in order to reach the quorum needed for the GAM. This cannot be the rule.

We were happy that the GAM could take place, and we thank those delegates who mobilised themselves to be present in person, even those who did not have a vote were present. Furthermore, we could welcome some special guests, starting with the host:

Mr. Sergio Orsini, president of the Società Speleologica Italiana;
Mrs. Silvia Goutier, president of Speleo Nederland;
Mr. Claude Boes, president of the Luxembourg Speleological Association;
Mr. Neven Šuica, president of the Croatian Speleological Federation;
Mr. Ernest Geyer, Vice-President of the Austrian Speleological Association.

The fact, that some presidents and vice-presidents have made it possible to assist the FSE GAM shows that there are still member organisations out there who appreciate the importance of the FSE, and they show this with being present at an FSE GAM.

Unfortunately, many FSE members were not present by their delegate or by a

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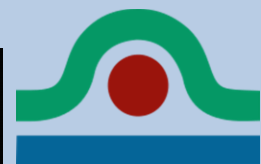
proxy, neither at the latest GAM nor at the EuroSpeleo Forum, partly with very dubious reasons.

Even FSE member organisations with 5,000, 8,000 or even over 10,000 cavers were not able to send one single caver as an official representative.

This is simply a shame.

Jean-Claude Thies,
FSE President

FSE Partners





Handover of the EuroSpeleo Protection Label Award 2024

During the 16th EuroSpeleo Forum in Caselle in Pittari (Italy) the EuroSpeleo Cave Protection Label prize was handed over to the winning project "Wonderful Aragonite: protect, study and carefully show Balbonne Cave". The project was presented in detail in the previous edition of the FSE Newsletter.

Christophe Bes from the "Comité Départemental de Spéléologie de l'Aude" has received the ESPL certificate and official FSE sponsor Korda's donated 200 m of rope to the awarded project.

After the handover of the prize the audience was able to admire wonderful pictures from Balbonne Cave, which is a major site for protection in Southern France.

Link to the EuroSpeleo Protection website:

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

Jean-Claude Thies, ECPC president & Christophe Bes

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/>

15 March 2025

Speleology in Authoritarian Regimes - Online Zoom and Youtube symposium - German Speleol. Federation & UIS:
https://www.vdhk.de/fileadmin/pdf/veranstaltung/2024/1_Symposium_Speleology_in_Authoritarian_Regimes_First_Circular.pdf

19 - 22 June 2025

Annual Meeting of the German Cavers - Waischenfeld, Bavaria: <https://www.vdhk.de/jahrestagung> (in German).

20 - 27 July 2025

19th International Congress of Speleology (ICS) - Minascentro Convention Center, Belo Horizonte, Brazil
<https://speleo2025.org/>

11 - 14 September 2025

Annual Meeting of the Austrian Cavers - Lunz am See, Niederösterreich:
<https://www.cave.at/de/termine?id=1130> (in German).

26 - 28 September 2025

Hidden Earth - Langollen Pavillion, Langollen, UK:
<https://hidden.earth/tickets/>

FSE is
a member
of the



Call-up for applications: EuroSpeleo Protection Label 2025

The EuroSpeleo Protection Label is a European Speleological award managed by the European Cave Protection Commission (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.

It is with great pleasure that the FSE announces the call for Cave Protection projects to receive the "EuroSpeleo Protection Label 2025" from the European Cave Protection Commission of the FSE (ECPC).

For what kind of projects can you apply?

The EuroSpeleo Protection Label will be awarded every year to one unique Cave Protection project. 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 be the subject of an application.

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

The application should be a quality project easily reproducible in other European regions and countries. The application should be sent to protection@eurospeleo.eu before **30th of April 2025**, in English language.

The approval of the national speleological organisation, member of the FSE is mandatory.

The reward for the label 2025 is **EUR 800** plus a lamp set from our FSE-sponsor **Scurion**.

Please refer to the ESPL2025 Guidelines and Application Form published on the FSE site at:

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

Best Speleo Wishes

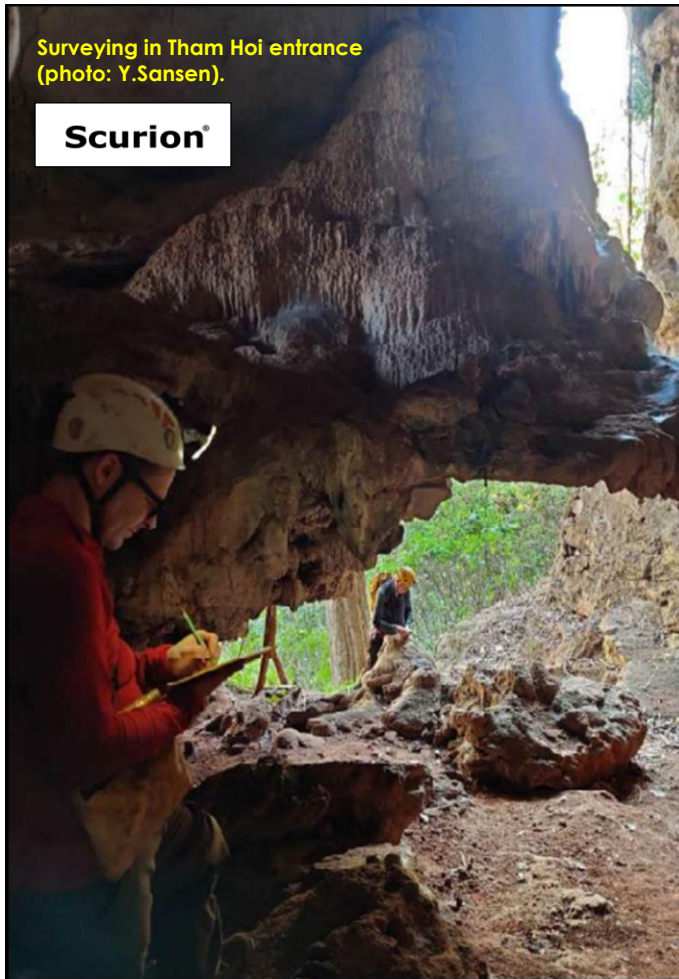
The ECPC team

FSE General Assembly increased benefits for EuroSpeleo Forums (ESF)

Each year the European Speleological Federation (FSE) strives to make a speleo event of one of its member organisations to an opportunity to meet cavers from all over Europe, to enable exchanges and to hold FSE's General Assembly Meeting (GAM). Such a meeting will become a "Euro Speleo Forum (ESF)".

The 2024 GAM in Caselle in Pittari (Italy) has decided to increase the amount of FSE support for such an ESF from EUR 750 to EUR 1,000. This will enter into force for the EuroSpeleo Forum 2025 already.

Beside a financial subsidy an ESF can also receive sponsoring items from FSE's official partners AV Equipment, Korda's ropes, and Scurion.



Surveying in Tham Hoi entrance
(photo: Y.Sansen).

Scurion®

Euro Speleo Project ESP-2024-01: Thailand – NEUA 2024

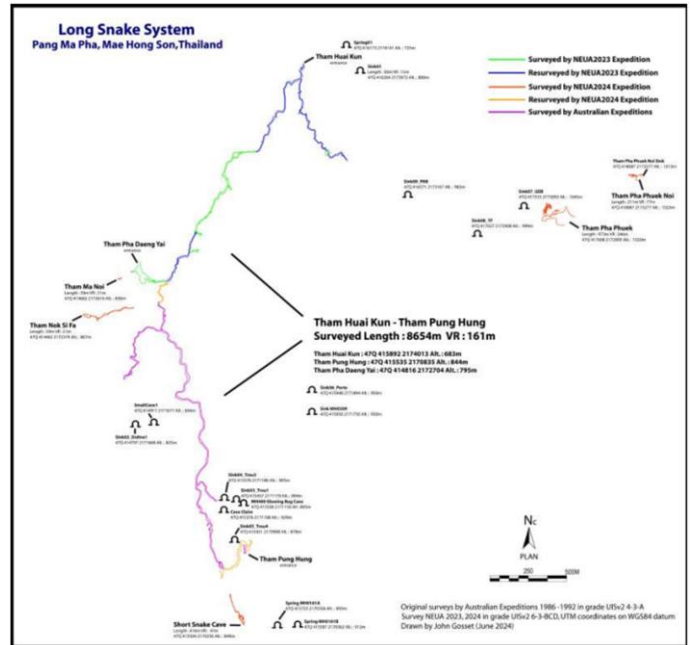
Between 26th of February and 10th of March 2024 the Belgian "Neua"-Project again targeted the karst in Mae Hong Son province (Pang Mapha district) in northern Thailand. The major objective was to continue the exploration of the "Long Snake System". This was successfully achieved by connecting nearby Tham Huai Kun, Tham Pung Hung and Tham Pha Daeng to the system, creating a cave 8,654 m in length and 161 m deep, which makes it the new 7th longest cave of Thailand.

Many other caves are located very close to the Long Snake System, and there is still a great potential to further extend the cave system. Tham Huay Kun in the southeast may be a candidate for future connection, which would create a cave over 12 km long and 350 m deep.

In total 25 caves and karst sites and 3.5 km of new underground galleries were surveyed by the NEUE 2024 expedition. This also included vertical caves above the northern tributary of 12.7 km long Tham Mae Lana, explored by Australian teams in the 1990s.

The 2024 team had participants from Belgium, France, the UK, and Poland.

The expedition received EuroSpeleo Project status and was supported by a financial grant of FSE as well as equipment sponsoring from FSE's official partner SCURION (Switzerland).



Overview of the Long Snake System (Thailand) (ESP 2024-01).

A call for the European Cave Rescue Commission (ECRC)

The FSE has two commissions and a working group: The "European Cave Protection Commission (EPC)", the "European Cave Rescue Commission (ECRC)" and the "European Children and Young Cavers (ECYC)" working group. Currently, we are looking to strengthen ECRC. Whenever you feel interested to work in an international team, we can offer you the platform to do so. Anyone from an FSE Member Organisation can join ECRC, however knowledge on cave rescue and/or active involvement in a rescue organisation in your home country is expected.

Besides many enthusiastic members, **ECRC needs a new president** as the current president would like someone to take over the lead. This position would be for a term of 3 years, up to 2028. In case of interest, we would like you to inform us at contact@eurospeleo.eu. For more information, please see our website or the ECRC Internal Regulations at <https://www.eurospeleo.eu/european-cave-rescue-commission-ecrc/>.

Changes in the EuroSpeleo Project guidelines: country criteria amended

The 2024 General Assembly of FSE has decided to slightly change the country criteria for EuroSpeleo Projects (ESP):

"... the activity ... must include cavers with a minimum of either: 4 FSE members or 2 FSE members plus cavers from FEALC and/or AUS or 3 FSE members plus cavers from at least one non-FSE caving organisation which is a UIS member."

You can find information on the UIS members at <https://uis-speleo.org/index.php/member-countries/> and on the FEALC membership at <https://fealc.org/miembros.php> Members of the Asian Union of Speleology (AUS) currently are: PR China, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

A big "thank you" !



*The European Speleological Federation as well as all foreign participants would like to express their deep gratitude to the organizers of the 16th EuroSpeleo Forum in Caselle in Pittari. A well-chosen location with great karst and excellent hospitality!
Caselle in Pittari (SA, Italy), as seen from the south during sunset (photo: M.Laumanns).*

FSE shop and sales stands

At each EuroSpeleo Forum (ESF) the FSE usually sets up a sales stand with "supporting items", such as T-Shirts, hoodies, bandanas and other gadgets. Income from the sales helps to finance FSE projects.

At the 16th ESF in Caselle in Pittari (Italy) we were provided with a very good location for the stand. The FSE sales items were well-requested but apart from the business, the FSE stand is also a meeting place for small-talk and discussions. These social contacts are very important and also a part of the FSE Bureau's mission.

Of course, this is only possible because we have helping hands at the stands for the Bureau members by a number of volunteers, whom we wish to thank very much for their active

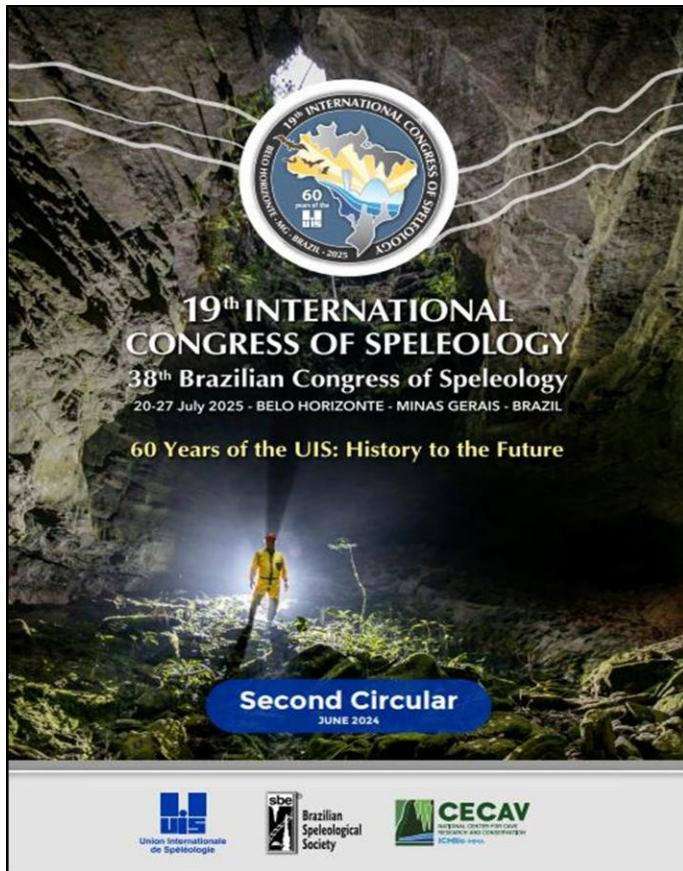
support. The photograph below shows the FSE shop team in Caselle in Pittari on November 2nd 2024.



Photo: Marketa Jakovenko.

FSE shop items are also available online by email to shop@eurospeleo.eu

*For the available items please visit the FSE website
<https://www.eurospeleo.eu/supporting-items/>*



Join the International Congress of Speleology (ICS)

The 19th ICS in Belo Horizonte and the great karst and caves of Brazil and neighbouring countries awaits your attendance! The reduced early registration fee is still available until end of January 2025. All details on this important event and its field-trips are available at:

<https://speleo2025.org/downloads/circular>

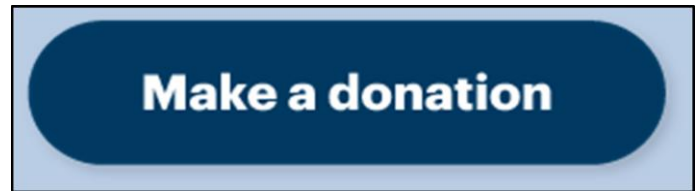
Support Speleo-TV with your karst- and cave-related videos

Speleo-TV is a working group of the European Speleological Federation and its mission is to offer cavers a platform for sharing their creative work with the caving community around the world.

Videos for Speleo-TV can be of any karst- and cave-related content, like exploration, cave diving, biospeleology, archaeology, cave protection, showcaves, or regional documentaries etc. Also, the language doesn't matter, although English or French videos will surely reach the widest audience.

If you wish to share your video please get in touch with the Speleo-TV co-ordinator Elina Saarinen: speleo-tv@eurospeleo.eu.

On the website of Speleo-TV (<https://speleo-tv.eu>) you will find a button to submit your video in electronic form. The video does not need to be exclusively published at Speleo-TV: in case the video is already available on any other common public video platform Elina will be happy to create a link from Speleo-TV to the existing upload.



With a donation you will support projects and initiatives to explore and protect caves and karst. The new FSE donation button can be found on the starting page of the FSE website when you scroll a little bit down:

<https://www.eurospeleo.eu>

or directly at: <https://www.eurospeleo.eu/donations/>

ESP 2024-02:

Losser Plateau Expedition, Austria

The 2024 Cambridge University Caving Club CUCC Losser Plateau expedition brought together 39 cavers from 7 different countries to continue the ambitious goal of expanding the Schwarzmooskogel-Höhlensystem (SMK) and working towards a potential connection with the Schönberg Höhlensystem, which could ultimately create one of the largest cave systems in the world.

This year's efforts were concentrated on two primary cave systems: Homecoming (Heimkommenhöhle) and Balcony (Balkonhöhle). Both caves presented significant opportunities. Homecoming, located on the western edge of the plateau, remains a promising lead in the effort to connect the SMK to Schönberg. The cave was extended from 3,442 meters to 4,653 meters in length and increased in depth from 373 meters to 450 meters. Balcony Cave, already substantial in size, expanded from 18,265 meters to 19,277 meters in length, while maintaining its depth of 581 meters. Deep within Balcony, the team discovered a large, previously unknown chamber, along with intriguing hydrological shifts in the cave's geology.

The progress made in both Homecoming and Balcony caves, combined with the logistical upgrades and technological innovations, have paved the way for even more exciting discoveries in the coming years.

The project was supported with a financial grant o FSE as well as rope from FSE's official partner Korda's.

