

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the European Society of Arachnology

Meeting held on Saturday August 9th 2003 in the St Petersburg State University, as part of the 21st European Colloquium of Arachnology

ca. 40 members were in attendance

The President (SØREN TOFT) opened the meeting at 14.40 by proposing himself as chairman and JASON DUNLOP as acting secretary. This was met with general approval. The President then began by calling for a minute's silence in memory of JUTTA BARTHEL who died last year.

President's report

After presenting the agenda of the meeting, the President reminded members of the council's agreement at last year's Colloquium to create a society homepage <www.european-arachnology.org>. The President demonstrated the current status of the homepage and the items available on it. These include general information about the society, a list of the current council, the statutes and the most recent Bulletin. The President noted that the French text of the statutes would be added soon. In addition, the homepage includes lists of previous colloquia, proceedings volumes, their contents lists and, where known, where remaining copies of proceedings can be purchased from. The President noted that the details of previous colloquia remain incomplete, but that this is being worked on. He further described a plan to link contents lists to downloadable portable document files (pdfs) of papers. This may take time, but at least some recent colloquia proceedings are already held in an electronic format.

The President discussed further aspects of the homepage including adverts for future colloquia and the possibility of introducing a forum page where members could make announcements, requests for material, etc. Entries on working groups (of which only one on nomenclature is currently active) could also be added and pages for other working groups as and when they evolve. The President raised the possibility that the homepage could be used to inform people about new synonyms and other taxonomic changes. Photos could also be added. The President was cautious about including a complete membership list as this would expose members' email addresses to direct mail, etc. Colloquia proceedings could also be published online and in general the President concluded that the homepage should act as a means of information exchange for the society.

The President invited comments. PETER JÄGER asked if there was an online key, to which the President replied only via links to other sites. FRIEDRICH WALLENSTEIN noted the German-speaking society's key for example. The President also mentioned that links could be grouped under headings for easier access. PETER VAN HELSDINGEN asked who the long term webmaster would be. The President replied that he himself could only remain in his post for a maximum of 6 years to which PETER VAN HELSDINGEN asked if the server hosting the homepage would go with the presidency. The

President raised the possibility that other council members could host the homepage, that it was now on an Århus server, but could easily be moved elsewhere. AESHITA MUKHERJEE asked if academic positions or studentships could be advertised on the homepage. The President replied that this was certainly possible and encouraged members to submit further suggestions in future. There were no further questions and the President's report was accepted to general applause.

Treasurer's report

The Treasurer (LÉON BAERT) stated that at the start of 2002 we had [all figures rounded up by the author] € 1161 in the account and € 296 in cash to give a grand total of € 1457. For the year 2002 the income from subscriptions was € 1390 and the expenditures were € 307 for printing Bulletins twelve and thirteen, € 318 for postage, € 1017 for the 20th Colloquium in Hungary and € 4 for taxes. This gave a total expenditure of € 1647 and a deficit over the year 2002 of € -257. The total at the end of 2002 was thus € 1200 of which € 881 was in the account and € 319 in cash.

As of July 1st 2003 the money in the account was € 1330 and in cash € 648, giving a current total of € 1978. The expected expenses for 2003 are ca. € 750 for the 21st Colloquium in St. Petersburg, € 300 for publishing Bulletin fourteen and € 300 for postage.

The Treasurer noted that we have 144 registered members of whom only 99 have paid regularly since 2000. Some 49 are currently up to date, others are overdue by one or more years. Removing the persistent non-payers from the list leaves the 99 current members. The Treasurer's report was accepted to general applause without further comment.

Auditor's report

VOLKER MAHNERT and YAEL LUBIN had previously agreed to act as auditors from outside the council for the 2002 accounts and VOLKER informed the meeting that in their opinion the accounts were in order. This was accepted by the meeting without further comment.

New members

The Secretary (CHRISTINE ROLLARD) announced seven new members: CHRISTA DEELMAN-REINHOLD (Netherlands), MARYA FEDORYAK (Ukraine), STÉPHANIE LE GLEUT (France), DAVID MAYNTZ (Denmark), NINA POLCHANINOVA (Ukraine), RIMMA SEYFULINA (Russia) and MARIJA VUGDELIC (UK). All were accepted by the meeting to general applause.

Honorary members

The President then proposed two new honorary members, JADWIGA ŁUCZAK and ANNA OSTRIHANSKA-KAJAK (both Poland) for their outstanding work on spider ecology. The proposal was accepted to general applause.

Changes to the Statutes

The President then proposed some minor changes to the statutes requiring the approval of the meeting. The President proposed an official English name (European Society of Arachnology) in addition to the French original (Société Européenne d'Arachnologie). PETER JÄGER asked about the name abbreviation and the President replied that both E.S.A. and S.E.A. can be used. GERNOT BERGTHALER noted that by adopting the name 'Society of European Arachnology' the same S.E.A. abbreviation could be retained, but the President replied that in all other contexts the name 'European Society of Arachnology' had already become established. FRIEDERICH WALLENSTEIN was happy to retain the French version and MARK JUDSON clarified the issue to state that the French name is only required in a legal context for the registration of the society in France.

The President noted that the statutes mention working groups which no longer exist and proposed to make only a general mention of the possibility of working groups without specifically naming them.

The President proposed limiting the number of honorary members to ten. FRIEDERICH WALLENSTEIN asked how many we currently have and CHRISTINE ROLLARD replied that it was six.

The President invited MARK JUDSON to propose a simplification of the somewhat complex ethical rules within the statutes and to require only that members follow normal scientific etiquette in their work.

No objections were raised to these proposed changes to the statutes.

Format of the Bulletin

The President asked the meeting whether they would prefer a Bulletin in a printed or an electronic form, given the expense of mailing printed copy. YAEL LUBIN noted that some people lack internet access and suggested compiling a list of who wants what in which format. SAMUEL ZSCHOKKE preferred the electronic option and suggested that members could be informed by email when a new issue was available. The President promised to compile a list of email addresses. JAKOB WALTER suggested asking members if they want an electronic version and SAMUEL ZSCHOKKE reminded the meeting that not everyone is reachable by email. The President then asked the meeting if they were happy with a scheme in which people opt into a printed version and this was met with general approval. YAEL LUBIN added that emailing people offered an opportunity to send payment reminders.

Planning of Colloquia

The President proposed that the annual general meeting should be allowed to plan colloquia in advance. He noted that there are usually either one or two proposals for future colloquia and that previously only the next meeting was decided. The President proposed that we should be able to plan up to two colloquia in advance, to which YAEL LUBIN asked what happens if a new proposal is received in the meantime. The President stated that a single meeting has only one year to prepare while a second proposal would have two years. He noted that a single year is quite a tight deadline and that it would be good for the council to know in advance where future meetings will be held. On a number of occasions there was only a single proposal and the council wants to avoid a situation in which there are no meetings planned. MARK JUDSON suggested that we are essentially asking to be able to accept two proposals and SAMUEL ZSCHOKKE suggested we should be flexible, but that there is no sense in planning more than two meetings in advance. When there is only one proposal there are no difficulties and the proposal for more flexibility in planning colloquia was generally accepted.

Price differential on colloquia

The President reminded the meeting that the price difference between members and non-members for attending colloquia is currently € 20 and proposed that this differential should be raised to € 40. This ensures that it does not pay to be a non-member at a meeting. GERNOT BERGTHALER commented that it is too easy to be a non-paying member and attend the meetings and the President commented that the organisers at St. Petersburg were provided with a list of paid-up members. The proposal to raise the colloquium fee for non-members was met with general acceptance.

European Journal

The President reminded the meeting of the extensive discussions at the 20th Colloquium in Hungary about creating a book series or journal with a standard layout and a stable editorial board which primarily published colloquium proceedings. The advantages of the proposal were that old proceedings are often hard to find and that future proceedings will be more easily accessible in a fixed publication. Council had promised to look into the costing of a regular journal and the results were given in a recent Bulletin. Essentially it would require some 200 extra members and a fee increase to about € 30 to make the journal proposal financially viable.

The President thus suggested that the society should not produce an expensive journal, rather require that all future proceedings should be available via the homepage, such that the scientific content is widely accessible. The printed version would be retained as members like to have a printed copy of any proceedings, but in general not enough proceedings are sold after the meeting to justify a large print run. The President asked PAUL SELDEN if many copies of the Edinburgh proceedings were sold, to which PAUL replied that many unsold copies remain.

KIRILL MIKHAILOV promised plenty of copies for the proceedings of the 21st colloquium, and further suggested standardising the cover design and using the society logo. The President said that this

would be acceptable and asked KIRILL if the *Arthropoda Selecta* articles could be placed on the homepage. KIRILL MIKHAILOV said that he preferred the *European Arachnology* format and that the proceedings of the current meeting would probably be done as a supplement to *Arthropoda Selecta*. STANO PEKÁR added that some 20–30% more copies of the Slovakian meeting were sold afterwards. The proposal to require online versions of future proceedings was met with general agreement.

2005 Colloquium

The President invited proposals for the 2005 meeting and CHRISTO DELTSHEV invited members to come to Bulgaria. CHRISTO said that his proposed meeting would not be held in Sofia, rather in the town of Blagoevgrad some 100 km to the south. Some images of Sofia were shown and then of Blagoevgrad and the surrounding countryside with its churches and monasteries and the nearby Pirin mountains. The suggested location is a town of about 40,000 people and contains the proposed venue: the American University in Blagoevgrad. A number of images of the town and the facilities available at the university were shown. Additional highlights nearby include the Rila monastery, the Parangalista Biosphere Reserve with its pine forests and Melnik, the smallest town in Bulgaria, and now a famous wine centre thanks to its Mediterranean climate. From Blagoevgrad it is easy to reach Sofia and the Black Sea coast, etc. The proposal was greeted with general applause.

CHRISTO added that a small town was more convenient and that Blagoevgrad had better facilities than Sofia. CHRISTIAN KROPF asked about accommodation and CHRISTO replied that there was one big hotel which could take up to ca. 100 people and was not too expensive. He also mentioned the possibility of student hostels, with one close to the campus, another a little further out. It may be possible to place all delegates in the hotel, or else use the hostels. PETER JÄGER asked about transport from Sofia. CHRISTO replied that a taxi from Sofia airport costs about € 5 – too which CHRISTOPH MUSTER said € 10 for foreigners – and from either the bus or train station there is transport to Blagoevgrad. The train takes about three hours, the bus two and a half.

ROBERT BOSMANS asked about the date of the meeting. CHRISTO proposed late June – early July, adding that the students leave in mid June and the facilities are available after that. SAMUEL ZSCHOKKE said he would prefer the later date and CHRISTO mentioned that the whole summer tends to be very hot. CHRISTOPH MUSTER said that a later date would be better for people doing fieldwork. GERNOT BERGTHALER asked why there was an American University in Bulgaria. CHRISTO was unsure but felt that the Americans probably helped pay for it. There were no further questions and the President asked if there were any further proposals. None were received and Bulgaria was accepted as the host of the 2005 meeting to general applause.

Future meetings

The President invited members to consider long-term plans for hosting meetings. He mentioned a potential proposal from Portugal, but that no-one from among the organisers was present in St.

Petersburg. Under these circumstances the President suggested that we wait for a formal invitation, hopefully in Bulgaria, and added that he was unaware of any serious plans for future meetings and encouraged members to think about this.

Elections to council

For the six council positions available the results of the vote were: THEO BLICK (34), JASON DUNLOP (36), CHRISTIAN KROPF (35), SØREN TOFT (35), PETER VAN HELSDINGEN (34), SAMUEL ZSCHOKKE (35) and PETER JÄGER (3). Thus THEO, JASON, SØREN and PETER v. H. remain on council and SAMUEL joins as a new member replacing TORBJÖRN KRONESTEDT, who steps down. The President thanked TORBJÖRN for his service and this was met with general applause.

Other business

The President invited any other comments or business. None were received and the meeting was closed at 16.15.

Jason Dunlop, Berlin, 12th August 2003