

**Minutes of the General Assembly of the European Society of Arachnology,
held on Thursday 8th September 2011 during the 26th European Congress at the
Ben Gurion University of the Negev, on the Sede Boqer Campus, Israel**

The President (FERENC SAMU, Budapest) opened the meeting at 17.45 with a vote of thanks to YAEL LUBIN, EFRAT GAVISH-REGEV and the rest of the organisation team for the 26th European Congress. This was accepted to general acclaim. The President then outlined the agenda of the meeting; proposing himself as chairman. The agenda was accepted and JASON DUNLOP (Berlin) took the minutes.

President's report

The President reminded the meeting that the principal aims of the *European Society of Arachnology* (ESA) are (a) hosting congresses, (b) publishing their proceedings and (c) promoting general cooperation among arachnologists. The President drew attention to the fact that the 2012 meeting will be held in Ljubljana (Slovenia) and that discussions are already taking place with respect to possible hosts for 2014 and 2015. The President repeated a general call for people to consider hosting future meetings.

Homepage

The President informed the meeting that the society maintains a stable homepage with regular updates, including (a) pdf copies of all previous European Colloquium/Congress proceedings, (b) the *European Spider of the Year* and (c) updates relevant for the European fauna from the most recent version of Norman Platnick's *World Spider Catalog*. Improvements to the homepage in the future could be expected.

Other developments

The President stated that he had been in discussion with WOLFGANG NENTWIG (Bern) about whether ESA could be involved with – and make a financial commitment towards – the *araneae Spiders of Europe* project <<http://www.araneae.unibe.ch/>>. ESA also now has a revised membership database; which is important for the effective management of the society, tracking who has paid, etc. Finally, ESA will also contribute financially towards student prizes at this (and future) European Congresses.

Proceedings format

The President then reminded those present that, following discussions at the 2009 general assembly in Greece, a survey was sent out to gauge the views of the membership about the format and nature of future congress proceedings. Fifty people voted and the results were summarised as follows.

On the question how complete should the proceedings be, three people voted for no proceedings, three for extended abstracts and 44 for a published proceedings of some sort. On the question of the proceedings format, 13 people favoured online only and 35 preferred an online *and* print version. On the question of how and whether the proceedings should be associated with the society 15 people asked for the continuation of *European Arachnology*, 23 wanted an association with a formal journal (perhaps eventually a European journal) and 15 thought local organisers should choose their own means of publishing; irrespective of ESA. On the question of stability and continuity, 28 people preferred the idea of a long-term and stable commitment to a specific journal and 20 thought that local organisers should be free to choose. Finally, on the question of encouraging highly-citable papers, 12 people believed it was better to push for quality and a journal with an impact factor – albeit with a risk excluding some subjects and/or contributions – and 37 supported a more liberal attitude towards less ‘impact-driven’ manuscripts.

The President then informed the meeting that – partly based on the results of this survey – an arrangement had been reached with German speaking society (Arachnologische Gesellschaft) to publish both the Greece and the Israel volumes as dedicated issues of their standard journal, the *Arachnologische Mitteilungen*. The President hoped that this can arrangement could continue for the foreseeable future.

Discussion

The President then opened his report for discussion. STANO PEKAR (Brno) raised the point that the number of submitted manuscripts is decreasing, presumably because researchers feel obliged to publish instead in high-impact journals wherever possible. He asked whether the society would be better investing in things which pay off in the long-term, e.g. the website, and asked in general why don't people submit to congress proceedings? THEO BLICK (Frankfurt/Main) replied that the last three or four proceedings consistently received about 16 submissions. For the last proceedings (Greece), eleven of these could be accepted as the authors of other manuscripts had not replied after peer-review. STANO PEKAR asked if the *Arachnologische Mitteilungen* is indexed?

The President conceded that earlier proceedings were not in impact-factor journals, but cautioned against re-opening the same debate from the previous general meeting. He added that specifically in response to the discussions in Greece he initiated the survey of members' preferences, and that the present arrangement with the *Arachnologische Mitteilungen* [i.e. published proceedings, print & pdf, formal journal, commitment to a specific journal, and some leeway towards low-impact contributions] essentially matches the wishes of the members who responded. He added that the ESA executive council should respect the views of the membership and encouraged the society to give the new arrangement a chance.

CHRISTIAN KOMPOSCH (Graz) again stated that the members have voted on this issue already. STANO PEKAR noted that the *Mitteilungen* option would become more attractive if the overall quality of

manuscripts increases and the President added that the journal of choice is indeed peer-reviewed. THEO BLICK conceded that a more rigorous editorial/review process would exclude some topics, hence the views of the members were sought on whether to allow some less 'impact-driven' manuscripts to be accepted.

The President then invited the audience to vote to accept the President's report, and this was duly done to general acclaim.

Treasurer's report

The Treasurer (CHRISTIAN KROPP, Bern) began by reminding the meeting that the last financial report was presented in 2006, that an update is only now possible and that this time period included a change of treasurer from LÉON BAERT (Brussels). The Treasurer explained that he would therefore present reports for 2007–2009, followed by report for the time under his own tenure as treasurer.

2007–2009

On 01.01.2007 there was € 2,227.23 on the account. Incomes from membership dues – both paid into the account and in cash – were € 1,016.26, [plus \$ 76.00]. Expenses consisted of € 35.25 in taxes. Income minus expenditure was thus a positive balance of + € 981.01. Thus on 31.12.2007 there was € 3,018.24 on the account plus € 190.00 in cash, for a grand total of **€ 3,208.24** [plus \$ 76.00].

On 01.01.2008 there was € 3,018.24 on the account plus € 190.00 in cash, for a total of € 3,208.24. Incomes from membership dues – both paid into the account and in cash – were € 2,651.10 [plus \$ 76.00, CHF 300.00]. Expenses consisted of € 1,500.00 to support the Sitges meeting and € 1,500.00 to support the Bern meeting, as well as € 41.55 in taxes. Total expenditure was thus € 3,041.55 and income minus expenditure was a negative balance of - € 390.45. Thus on 31.12.2008 there was € 2,517.79 on the account plus € 110.00 is cash, for a grand total of **€ 2,627.79** [plus \$ 76.00, CHF 300.00].

On 01.01.2009 there was € 2,517.79 on the account plus € 110.00 is cash, for a total of € 2,627.79. Incomes from membership dues (until 30.06.2009) were € 822.80 [plus CHF 300.00]. Expenses consisted of € 4 in taxes. Income minus expenditure was thus a positive balance of + € 818.80. Thus on 30.06.2009 there was **€ 3,446.59** on the account [plus CHF 300.00].

With the change of treasurer from LÉON to CHRISTIAN, on 01.7.2009 there was € 3,446.59 on the account. Incomes from membership dues (until 31.08.2009) were € 70.00, and expenses were € 2,000.00 to support the Alexandroupolis meeting and € 5.20 in taxes. Thus on 31.08.2009 there was a balance of **€ 1,511.39** [plus CHF 300.00] on the old Paris account.

Paris account

As of 01.09.2009, the ESA account was formally transferred to the DC Bank in Bern, Switzerland. However, the Treasurer drew attention to a potential problem – namely that the old account based at La Banque Postale in Paris cannot be formally closed at present, because the people currently there did not actually open it. This account costs the society € 4 a year and some people still pay their dues here. The Treasurer urged members *not* to pay into this old account in future, and to pay their dues only into the new DC Bank Swiss account. Members will be contacted and reminded of this.

2009–2010

On 01.09.2009 there was € 1,511.39 on the Paris account and € 0.00 on the Bern account. Incomes across both accounts from membership dues were € 2,106.93 and expenses including taxes were € 1,513.39 (NB: these figures include the transfer of money between the two accounts). Income minus expenditure was thus overall a positive balance of + € 593.54. Thus on 31.12.2009 there was € 87.80 on the Paris account and € 1,996.93 on the Bern account for a grand total of **€ 2,084.73** [+ CHF 300].

As of 01.01.2010 there was € 87.80 on the Paris account and € 1,996.93 on the Bern account for a total of € 2,084.73. Incomes across both accounts from membership dues were € 1,241.20 and expenditure was € 8.00 in taxes on the Paris account only. Income minus expenditure was thus a positive balance of + € 1,233.20. Thus on 31.12.2010 there was € 239.80 on the Paris account and 3,138.13 on the Bern account for a grand total of **€ 3,377.93** [+ CHF 300].

For the present year, the Treasurer added that € 1,500 has already been given so far during 2011 to support the Israel meeting. As of the beginning of September 2011 we thus have **€ 2,438** on account, of which at least € 1,500 needs to be provisionally set aside next year for supporting the Ljubljana meeting.

Paying members and taxes

The Treasurer then stated that only 45 people had so far paid their dues for 2011. This is from a total of 237 members, whereby the Treasurer cautioned that many people only paid once – presumably in order to benefit from reduced congress fees at a particular congress – and then never pay again. The society has a core of about 120–140 ‘regular’ members, to which the Treasurer added that more money would be needed in future if we are to support initiatives like the *araneae* internet key. The Treasurer also added that the new Swiss account is tax-free and that we receive interest on the account.

The Treasurer then invited questions on his report, but none were forthcoming.

Auditors

The auditors, PETER HORAK (Graz) and SIMONA KRAL-FIŠER (Ljubljana), were then invited to comment on the accounts. PETER HORAK informed the meeting that they had received and approved the data. They noted that the paperwork was somewhat complex in this case because of the two different accounts and treasurers, but that the bookkeeping was good and recommended that the meeting should accept the Treasurer's report.

The President then invited the meeting to accept the Treasurer's report, which was duly accepted to general acclaim. The Treasurer also added his thanks to the bookkeeper of the Bern Museum [R. Markwalder] who helped with details of the account.

Next meeting

The President then invited MATJAŽ KUNTNER (Ljubljana) to make a short presentation about the 2012 meeting in Ljubljana; Slovenia, which will provisionally be held from 2nd – 7th September. MATJAŽ demonstrated that there is already a website <<http://ezlab.zrc-sazu.si/eca2012>>, where pre-registration is possible, an organising committee and a scientific committee in place. He showed the location of Ljubljana and explained that the meeting will provisionally be held in the Atrium of the *Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts* in the Old Town of Ljubljana.

MATJAŽ encouraged early pre-registration in order to allow the organisers to gauge numbers and arrange appropriate lecture hall facilities, and also pointed out that the venue is in a pedestrian area with limited parking facilities. The Atrium is connected to a cafe/bar area and a library, and there are numerous bars nearby in downtown Ljubljana. Updates will be added via the website. MATJAŽ showed some further highlights of Slovenia and the natural beauty of the countryside, and added that a fieldtrip to the country's famous caves is planned.

The presentation was greeted with general acclaim.

Elections to council

The President reminded the meeting of the current council, some of whom remain on the executive until the next congress. MARIA CHATAKI will be replaced as congress organiser by MATJAŽ KUNTNER, although MARIA also offered to continue by making herself a candidate as an ordinary member. Of the five people rotating off council this year LÉON BAERT (Belgium), MARK JUDSON (France) and CHRISTINE ROLLARD (France) have chosen to step down. FERENC SAMU (Hungary) and CHRISTO DELTSHEV (Bulgaria) have made themselves available for re-election. The votes cast were as follows:

HOLGER FRICK, Lichtenstein (25)

EFRAT GAVISH-REGEV (21)

MARCO ISAIA, Italy (18)

FERENC SAMU, Hungary (18)

MARIA CHATZAKI, Greece (18)

TRINE BILDE, Denmark (14)

YURI MARUSIK, Russia (12)

MILAN REZAC, Czech Republic (11)

CHRISTO DELTSHEV, Bulgaria (9)

CARLES RIBERA, Spain (7)

HOLGER, EFRAT, MARCO, FERENC and MARIA were thus elected to council.

Honorary members

The President presented the current list of honorary members – JAN BUCHAR (Czech Republic), CHRISTA DEELEMEN (The Netherlands), CHRISTO DELTSHEV (Bulgaria), ERIC DUFFEY (France), JOACHIM HAUPT (Germany), BERTRAND KRAFFT (France), OTTO KRAUS (Germany), ANNA OSTRIHANSKA KAJAK (Poland), JERZY PRÓSZYŃSKI (Poland), MARIA RAMBLA (Spain) and PETER VAN HELSDINGEN (The Netherlands) – and proposed two new honorary members: **SEPPO KOPONEN** (Finland) and **SØREN TOFT** (Denmark). Both proposals were accepted to general acclaim.

Any other business?

PETER JÄGER (Frankfurt) posed a general question about why many younger members of the society are not especially interested in council business meetings. The President agreed that this is a difficult question, but that he is optimistic that with a new council with numerous younger members this issue can be addressed, and the society made attractive for younger researchers. He added that participation by younger arachnologists at ESA meetings as a whole remains good.

There was no further business. The President, again thanked YAEL and the organisers for hosting the present congress and closed the assembly at 18.35.

Jason A. Dunlop
Berlin, 12.09.2011