

Minutes of the General Assembly for the European Society of Arachnology, Brno, 27th August 2015.

1. President's report

The president, Wolfgang Nentwig, reflected on the activities of the Society over the past year and how the Society continues to successfully fulfil its objectives. The Society continues to support the annual congress and the 'Spiders of Europe' website (€1000 in 2015). It continues to prioritise support for students and European Arachnological Society projects. Wolfgang offered thanks to the council for their efforts over the last year.

A minute's silence was held to remember two deceased members of the Society, who were friends and colleagues to many: Peter 'Otto' Horak and Wojciech Starega.

Council membership elections were held. Jason Dunlop, Sara Goodacre, Marco Isaia, Christian Kropf and Wolfgang Nentwig were all re-elected. Gabriele Uhl was elected as a new member.

The council for the coming year thus comprises:

- Wolfgang Nentwig - President
- Jason Dunlop – vice President
- Christian Kropf - Treasurer
- Ferenc Samu – vice Treasurer and Facebook
- Maria Chatzaki – News Secretary
- Efrat Gavish-Regev – Membership Secretary
- Holger Frick - webmaster
- Marco Isaia - Newsletter
- Sara Goodacre - Newsletter
- Gabriele Uhl
- Stanislav Pekár (former congress organizer)

2. Membership

Efrat Gavish-Regev reported that membership numbers are fairly similar to last year. There are currently 17 honorary members and the total membership is approximately 180. There are now established methods for paying membership fees (e.g. through paypal). Membership will be discontinued where fees are not paid for three consecutive years. No fees will be payable through any other societies.

A request was made to members to let Efrat know personally when payment has been made by paypal, in order that up to date records can be maintained.

3. Treasurer's report

The report was presented to the council by Christian Kropf. As of 31/7/2015 the balance stands at 4517.94 Swiss francs. This figure is larger than would normally be expected and is due to a 'one off' payment in arrears of membership fees through the BAS of SFr 2671.60.

The issue of bank charges that occur during the process of membership payment was raised. Members were reminded that these remain the responsibility of the paying member and not the Society.

The Society thanked Christian for his work and accepted the report.

4. Auditor's report

The treasurer's report was accepted by on behalf of the auditors by Christoph Muster and Jakob Walter. The auditor made a specific comment regarding finances, namely that the income of the Society may become insufficient in future years to sustain the activities that it currently supports.

5. President's announcements

It was announced that applications for the 2016/17 "European Year of Spider Biodiversity Research" are now welcome (deadline 31st October 2015). Suggestions for other initiatives that the Society could support are very welcome.

It was also announced that there is a reciprocal arrangement with AAS to provide memberships and waivers for meeting registration costs. Currently the AAS offers 8 one-year-memberships and 4 waivers of AAS meeting registration costs. ESA offers reciprocally 4 memberships and 2 waivers.

There was a discussion about membership fees and a vote was held on whether to maintain current fees, or to raise them to 30 Euros or to 40 Euros for regular members. The vote was held on the basis of wanting to maintain current ESA activities against projected lack of income, whilst also recognising that increased fees may make it difficult for some members to remain part of the Society.

The decision to raise the fees to 30 Euros (15 Euros for students) was accepted by a majority.

The new bye laws (which had previously been circulated) were also accepted by the majority of members present.

6. Website

The new website design was presented by Holger Frick, who thanked Samuel Zschokke, Søren Toft and others for their significant contribution thus far. The website will become fully functional over the coming months.

7. Newsletter & Proceedings

Marco Isaia informed members that a newsletter will be produced after the congress and that all contributions from members are welcome. Theo Blick confirmed that 'Arachnologische Mitteilungen' continues to be the vehicle for conference proceedings. It will have an English subtitle 'Arachnology Letters' for the coming issue. The deadline for submission of congress publications is September 30th 2015.

8. Next conferences

2016: The ISA 20th International Congress will be held in Golden, Denver, USA (organiser Paula Cushing)

2017: The ESA 30th European Congress was proposed by Sara Goodacre to be held in Nottingham, United Kingdom. This was accepted by members.

2020: The ESA 32nd European Congress has been proposed to be held in Greifswald, Germany, organised by Gabriele Uhl and Peter Michalik. This was also accepted by members.

Congress locations for 2018 and 2019 remain open.

9. Closing ceremony

A vote of thanks was given to Stanislav Pekár and the other members of the Brno conference organising team for making the meeting such a success and the president hoped to see all members once again at the next congress.