

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the European Society of Arachnology  
held at the Alexander Beach Hotel & Convention Center,  
Alexandroupoli, Greece, 21<sup>st</sup> August, 2009**

The President (Ferenc Samu) opened the meeting at 16.40; proposing himself as chair and Jason Dunlop as the acting secretary. There was no opposition to these suggestions and the President proceeded to outline the agenda of the meeting.

### **President's report**

The President stated his belief that the European Society of Arachnology (ESA) functions well. He reminded the meeting that the former colloquia are now referred to as congresses, that proceedings volumes from these meetings are published to help share and disseminate knowledge – one of the main functions of the society. The President noted a continual increase in membership, the fact that we are financially stable, and the possibility to pay membership fees more regularly through mutual agreements with other societies.

The President reminded the meeting of the previous decision to offer increased financial help and guidelines to congress organisers; e.g. the organiser-in-chief also now receives a place on the ESA council. He noted that discrepancies in the previous statutes have been corrected and that from 2009 a more flexible voting system for council members has been introduced allowing a wider choice of candidates on the voting form. He also mentioned the fact that ESA now sponsors student prizes during congresses and improvements to the society's website had been implemented.

### *Next conference*

The President announced that there had been no formal offers for the next congress in 2011, but that provisional interest had been shown from colleagues in Israel, Egypt, Slovenia and Germany. Since it would be inappropriate for the AGM to decide between provisional offers – and since there is no 2010 European meeting – the President proposed that council should invite formal offers by a deadline of November 2009, and that council should be given the authority to choose the venue of the next congress on behalf of the membership based on these applications. There was no opposition to this proposal and the President concluded by welcoming further proposals for future congress venues.

### *European Arachnology*

The President stated his aim that the series *European Arachnology* be used for the present and future congress proceedings, with issues following a standard format, and pdf versions freely available online without password protection for all issues after two years.

### *Website*

The President stated his belief that the website is stable and effective, with regular updates from the webmaster (Samuel Zschokke) and links to other arachnological societies and relevant organisations. He added that hosting of the pdf files of *European Arachnology* also helps our role of disseminating knowledge.

### *Discussion of the President's report*

The President invited discussion of his report and Peter Michalik (Greifswald) asked about new ideas relating to the proceedings and the continuing question of whether a conference proceedings volume is relevant at all? The President answered that the topic remains under discussion, that he felt that most members would like to continue the proceedings in some form or other, but there may be developments in the format over time. The President added that he didn't want to go into depth about these issues at the present, as discussions with national societies are pending, along with the possibility of moving towards a proper European arachnology journal. The President stated that things are moving in the background and hoped to be able to present something formally at the next annual general meeting of the society.

The congress organiser-in-chief, Maria Chatzaki (Alexandroupoli), then asked the President if she could announce the results of a discussion held by the Scientific Committee of the present meeting regarding the congress proceedings. This was permitted, and Maria noted that there were both traditionalist and modernist viewpoints; with the Scientific Committee favouring a more updated version of proceedings volume. Maria added that the Scientific Committee had noted the problem of authors wishing to present their best data in high-profile publications and that it was important to find ways of encouraging submissions to proceedings volumes.

Maria Chatzaki stated that a final decision about the publisher of the present proceedings volumes had yet to be taken, but that a Greek journal seemed unlikely. Maria mentioned an offer from *ZooKeys*, but that a decision should be based on receiving the best value for money. A deadline for manuscripts deriving from the present meeting of 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2009 was also given. Maria noted that earlier proceedings tended to publish more papers than recent proceedings, and that in order to encourage submission, online access to the eventual volume could be promised. She also mentioned the possibility of ordering print versions of the publication.

Vladimir Ovtcharenko (New York) raised the issue of a comparative case involving international congress proceedings published in *Journal of Arachnology* whereby manuscripts on certain subjects – in this case faunistics – were rejected by the editors for not fitting into the overall scope of the journal. Maria Chatzaki stated this should not be a problem as the proceedings of the present meeting should form a special volume with the editing and review process carried out by the congress organisers

themselves. Peter Jäger (Frankfurt) added that if ESA members are, for example, the guest editors, then we should be able to make the final decisions ourselves.

Maria Chatzaki noted that the organisers have to consider the costs of producing and/or posting a ca. 300 page volume and wondered whether simply purchasing open access would be a more cost-effective solution? She agreed that some sort of European arachnological journal would be preferable. The President accepted that there was potential conflict between the goal of the society in building a long-term, stable publication and the desire of individual congresses to get their own proceedings out quickly and effectively. The President stated that he personally favoured a journal as the long-term goal and his desire that congress issues help move towards this. He added that continual changes in format do not help and reminded that meeting that printed versions must be made available – at least from the present meeting – as a copy of the proceedings to all paid-up members remains one of the current benefits of ESA membership.

Miquel Arnedo (Barcelona) felt that ESA could better focus its money on supporting meetings, e.g. through providing grants for congress attendance, rather than engaging in publishing activities. He was not in favour of producing, say, a European Journal of Arachnology as yet another available journal. The president conceded that abandoning the journal would be one (extreme) possibility. Marco Isaia (Turin) noted a possible alternative model of publishing a volume of extended abstracts, which should be less expensive, and then selecting the strongest papers for a proper special issue of invited papers.

The meeting was asked generally about the number of contributions to recent congress proceedings, whereby Sitges yielded ten published manuscript and Bern has received sixteen. Maria Chatzaki then asked how many people were intending to submit a manuscript to the present congress proceedings and a show of hands yielded seventeen potential offers.

The President summarised the possibilities for a proceedings as follows: (a) no proceedings, (b) extended abstracts, (c) the present model of a published volume, also available as pdfs and (d) an online (open access) volume only.

Peter Jäger noted the general trend towards online publication and print-on-demand and mentioned possible proceedings forums such as *Zoosymposia* (from Magnolia Press) and *ZooKeys* (Pensoft) For *ZooKeys* the open access fee of € 9 per page had to be considered – and this was a special conference price, normally it is € 15 per page or about € 150 for a typical ten-page article – and Peter noted that *Zoosymposia* is specifically designed for things like congress proceedings.

The President agreed that online access is essential these days but cautioned that the *ZooKeys* price might be too high for the society, such that a fully printed version might end up costing about the same. Maria Chatzaki stated that final data was not available, but estimated that printing a proceedings volume could cost about € 2000 with another € 2000 on top of this for postage. She

added that costs depend partly on the eventual number of pages and that she understood that impact factors are an issue for people working in university departments in particular.

Maria Chatzaki suggested that the meeting could vote on what proceedings option would be preferable, and the President noted that since this involves society money the membership should certainly be involved in the decision. The President initially suggested a vote on both the favoured form of proceedings, and a further vote to empower council, together with the present meeting's Scientific Committee, to make a final decision.

Peter van Helsdingen (Leiden) stated, however, that this was a complex issue and that not all the members of the society are present to take part in the discussion. He suggested compiling the options and circulating these by e-mail to the wider membership – effectively encouraging a referendum among the members which can be used as the basis for a final decision. Peter cautioned that the consequences of a decision taken now may not be obvious: for example whether nomenclature published in on online journals is really valid.

Maria Chatzaki stated that all the options under consideration should be able to take taxonomic papers. Peter Jäger added that the meeting should be clear that we are voting on the format of *future* proceedings, since members were promised something in a print form for 2009. The President asked that the meeting if they accept the idea of a referendum on the future of the proceedings and this was accepted with overwhelming support. Maria reiterated the December deadline for manuscripts for the present meeting, and again asked those attending to support the proceedings.

The President then asked if the meeting accepted the President's report and this was carried to general acclaim.

### **Treasurer's Report**

The Vice-Treasurer (Christian Kropf) presented the Treasurer's final report for 2008. As of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 there was € 3018.24 on account and € 190.00 cash giving a total of € 3208.24. During 2008 incomes from membership fees were € 2541.10 on account and € 110.00 in cash for a total of € 2651.10. In addition to this \$ 76.00 and 300 CHF in cash were received. Expenses in 2008 were € 41.55 in taxes and two payments of € 1500.00 to support both the Sitges and Bern meetings respectively, yielding a total for the expenses of € 3041.55. Income minus expenses thus yielded a deficit of € 390.45 and on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2008 there was € 2517.79 on account and € 110 in cash for a total of € 2627.79; plus the dollars and Swiss francs in cash noted above.

The Vice-Treasurer stated that the receipts are unfortunately not available for auditing at the present congress, but asked the meeting if they were willing to accept the 2008 accounts on condition that it is checked and audited by the end of the year. This proposal was overwhelmingly accepted.

For the provisional report for 2009, as of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 there was € 2517.79 on account and € 110.00 in cash for a total of € 2627.79; plus the dollars and Swiss francs in cash noted above. Incomes so far are € 822.80 from membership fees. Expenses so far in 2009 are € 4.00 in taxes, € 2000.00 to support the present Alexandroupoli meeting and € 300.00 for the student prizes, yielding a total for the expenses of € 2304.00. Income minus expenses thus yields a deficit so far of € 1481.20 and at present we have € 1146.59 on account plus the dollars and Swiss francs in cash noted above.

The Vice-Treasurer reminded the meeting that next year is an international congress year which will allow us build up our funds, before inviting further discussion. Peter van Helsdingen asked whether anything needed to be added to the prospective budget of 2009 and the President responded that he didn't think that any further major expenses would be expected. There was no further discussion and the Treasurer's report was accepted to general acclaim.

### **Secretary's report**

The Secretary (Christine Rollard) announced that ESA membership in 2009 stands at 236; an increase from 218 in 2008 and 209 in 2007. A number of non-payers had to be removed and the Secretary reminded the meeting that 77 people still hadn't paid for the current year, 14 members were two years in arrears and 34 members three years. She also reminded the meeting that members more than three years in arrears would be automatically removed.

The Secretary could further announce four additional new members who joined during the present congress: Petr Dolejš (Prague), Matjaž Kuntner (Ljubljana), Maria Naumova (Sofia) and Tatyana Piterkina (Moscow). All were welcomed to general applause.

### **Honorary members**

Before introducing the new honorary members, The President asked the meeting to observe a minute's silence in memory of Jean-Pierre Maelfait and Gershom Levy; both of whom died since the last congress and who were honoured immediately prior to the AGM with presentations about their life and work. The minute's silence was duly observed.

The President then announced that Christa Deeleman (The Netherlands), Christo Deltchev (Bulgaria), Joachim Haupt (Germany) and Peter van Helsdingen (The Netherlands) had all been proposed as new honorary members of the society. All were unanimously accepted by the meeting.

### **Results of voting**

The Secretary announced that under the new voting system there were ten candidates for the five vacant positions on council, 57 votes were cast and that all of them were valid. The five members elected and votes cast were: Jason Dunlop (47), Theo Blick (39), Dmitri Logunov (32), Samuel

Zschokke (29) and Christian Kropf (28). Dmitri Logunov thus joins council as a new member; the other four being re-elected.

### **Any other business?**

There was no further business or points raised from the members. The President then took the opportunity to draw attention to next year's international meeting to be organised in Siedlce in July (11<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup>) by Marek Żabka.

### **Student prizes**

Emma Shaw (Manchester), as chair of the judging panel, was invited to present the student prizes for the best poster and oral presentations. For the posters this was 1<sup>st</sup> Huang Jin-Nan (Taichung), 2<sup>nd</sup> Vera Opatova (Prague) and 3<sup>rd</sup> Hou Chueh (Taichung). For the oral presentations this was 1<sup>st</sup> Holger Frick (Bern), 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel Yu-Lung Hsieh (Würzburg) and 3<sup>rd</sup> Odile Bruggisser (Fribourg).

### **Vote of thanks**

Finally, the President called for a vote of thanks for the organisers and hosts of the Alexandroupoli congress: Maria Chatzaki, Katerina Spiridopoulou and Iasmi Stathi from the organising committee, together with the assistance of Stavros Gogolopoulos, Kyriakos Karakatsanis, Eleni Panayiotou, Aggeliki Paspatis, Emma Shaw and Pavlos Georgiadis. All present responded with a standing ovation and flowers were presented. Maria Chatzaki offered her own thanks to all those who both attended and supported the congress.

With this both the 25<sup>th</sup> congress and the ESA Annual General Meeting ended at ca. 18.00.

Jason A. Dunlop  
Berlin, 24.08.2009