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Dear members of the European Society of Arachnology,

I am writing to express my interest in serving on the council of the European Society of Arachnology (ESA), and am herewith applying for the elections of the ESA council that are taking place this year, as informed by the Membership secretary via email to society members. I believe I can be of service to the society as a relatively young researcher from a small European country, former congress organizer, and active science communicator.

I am a mid-career researcher, having defended my biology PhD 8 years ago. I am employed at a research institution in Slovenia, a small Central-European country with one of the smallest relative investments in science among EU countries. My research primarily revolves around spider webs, from studying the functional ecology and evolution of web architectures, web building behaviors, and material properties of silks, to the use of eDNA from spider webs as a novel tool in biodiversity monitoring. I have been a member of ESA since the beginning of my PhD studies in 2008. Since joining, I have attended most of the conferences organized by ESA, and was a member of the core team organizing the 27th European Congress of Arachnology in Ljubljana, Slovenia in 2012.

Beyond my motivation of becoming a council member and serving the society in general, I believe my experience puts me in a position where I can offer to act as the society's webmaster and help in revising the society's media and social-media presence. Namely, for the last 11 years, I am the webmaster of our institution's website (<https://bijh.zrc-sazu.si/en#v>), and have created and manage the website of our research team (<https://www.ezlab.si/>). Additionally, I manage the Facebook accounts of both the institute (@bioloskiinstitut) and the research team (@EZlabSlo), as well as the Twitter (@EZlab_slo) and Youtube (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/Uct67DqnxqwUoydIUdHXP1JA>) accounts of the latter. Last but not least, for the last 6 years I publish a bi-weekly podcast on organismal biology (<https://metinalista.si/category/metamorfoza/>), and regularly appear in local radio and TV shows addressing topics from diverse areas of biology.

While taking over the ESA website can take place at any time and can be handled by a single person, I firmly believe that establishing active accounts on the diverse social-media platforms requires a selected group of motivated and social-media savvy volunteers, only coordinated by council member(s). I am motivated in helping the ESA members and council members on these topics to the best of my abilities.

If I can provide you with any further information on my background and qualifications, please let me know. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Matjaž Gregorič