

Minutes of the General Assembly of the European Society of Arachnology Rennes, 30th August 2024

The General Assembly was held at the end of the 34th Congress of Arachnology in Rennes on the 30th of August. The beginning of the Assembly was delayed due to the collapse of the server of Uni Rennes that made streaming impossible. A zoom link was generated and sent to the members via the email list. About 60 members attended in person and 8 online.

1. Presidents report

The president, Gabriele Uhl, presented the current council members

President	Gabriele Uhl	(Greifswald)
Vice-president	Sara Goodacre	(Nottingham)
Treasurer	Christian Kropf	(Basel)
Vice treasurer	Holger Frick	(Liechtenstein)
Membership secretary	Jason Dunlop	(Berlin)
Communication secretary	Maria Chatzaki	(Alexandroupolis)
Newsletter	Marco Isaia	(Turin)
Newsletter	Elena Piano	(Turin)
Webmaster	Matjaž Gregorič	(Ljubljana)
Social media	Vladislav Ivanov	(Trier)
+ the congress organizer	Julien Pétilion	(Rennes)

Holger Frick had given notice that he wanted to step back. All other members of the council stand for re-election. The president thanked Holger Frick for his engagement over many years as a webmaster and vice-treasurer.

The call for new council members in summer 2024 did not lead to the submission of applications. Therefore, the president asked the members if they prefer one of two options: A. that the remaining current council members would be re-elected by acclamation or B. to perform an anonymous election (approval/disapproval of the remaining team council members). The assembly opted for A and the remaining council was re-elected by acclamation.

The current council consists of these members

President	Gabriele Uhl	(Greifswald)
Vice-president	Sara Goodacre	(Nottingham)
Treasurer	Christian Kropf	(Basel)
<i>Vice treasurer</i>	<i>vacant</i>	
Membership secretary	Jason Dunlop	(Berlin)
Communication secretary	Maria Chatzaki	(Alexandroupolis)
Newsletter	Marco Isaia	(Turin)
Newsletter	Elena Piano	(Turin)
Webmaster	Matjaž Gregorič	(Ljubljana)
Social media	Vladislav Ivanov	(Trier)
+ next congress organizer	Martina Pavlek	(Zagreb)

The presidents asked the members to consider getting engaged in the ESA council and it was agreed upon that a **new call for council applications** would be launched beginning of 2025. Apart from a healthy mix of senior and younger arachnologists as council members, the society needs a person

who will take over the vice-treasurer and eventually the treasurer duties, since Christian Kropf already announced that he will withdraw from this position within a few years from now. For the treasurer's position, a person with a permanent position is desirable.

The next election will take place at the General Assembly in Croatia 2025.

2. New honorary members

Following a call for proposals for new honorary members, several proposals were received and the council decided for two new members.

Christin Rollard (Paris) for her outstanding work in spider taxonomy and faunistics as well her remarkable engagement in public outreach that resulted in several popular books and exhibitions on spiders that introduce the public to the world of these wonderful creatures.

Jochen Martens (Mainz) for his outstanding and influential contributions to taxonomy and systematics of Opilionids and Araneids and his in-depth study of arachnids in the Himalaya region.

The laudatios were given by Gabriele Uhl (see pdf attachment).

3. Membership report (prepared by Jason Dunlop and presented by Gabriele Uhl)

Back in 2021 the society had about 300 members. As of August 2024 the society has 404 members from 60 countries. Many students joined recently, which might be a conference effect. There are numerous non-European members, especially from Asia and the US. 62% of the members are male and 38% female. The society also has 3 IT support accounts.

4. Deceased members

Ole BOEGGILD
Marcel Raymond CRUVEILLIER
Hieronymus DASTYCH
Miroslav KRUMPEL
André LEETZ
Manfred MORITZ
David NELLIST
Rainar NITZSCHE
Franz RENNER
Juan Antonio ZARAGOZA

A minute's silence was held to remember our deceased members.

5. Treasurer's report

Due to sudden illness of the treasurer during the conference the report was postponed to 2025. Members were asked to pay their dues by the president since the society needs the income of the annual fees to support arachnological meetings and projects.

Payment can currently be done via **PayPal to Christian Kropf (email Christian.kroph@bs.ch)**.

Due to the transition of Christian Kropf from Bern to Basel, the former account at Bern Museum is not valid anymore. A new account will be established asap and put on the website.

6. World Spider Catalog

Wolfgang Nentwig reported on the World Spider Catalog Version 25.5. with now over 52.000 species and about 19.000 pdfs. There are 1150 sessions per day, demonstrating the importance of the WSC in the field. The World Arachnid Catalog is expanding. The Scorpiones Catalog is coming soon.

Araneae, spiders of Europe counts 450 sessions per day. Wolfgang Nentwig also reports on “Who does What” and where financial support comes from. The costs for infrastructure and salaries amount to 45.000 CHF per year which is guaranteed by the Museum in Bern (NMBE) until 2031. Royalties from the two books “All you need to know about spiders” and “House Spiders- Worldwide” are funneled into the Association for the Promotion of Spider Research that supports the WSC as well. The slides of the presentation can be found in the pdf attachment. The members gave a big round of applause for Wolfgang Nentwig’s and Christian Kropf’s efforts that have led to the World Arachnid Catalog being financially secured for several years to come!

7. European Arachnid Biodiversity Research

The last project that was supported was the Kosovo-project by Donard Geci (2022/2023). His report can be found on the homepage. There was a call for new proposals and the council decided for the proposal of Nina Polchaninva et al. on “Spiders and harvestmen diversity of the Steppe Ecosystem of Ukraine”. Details can be found in the pdfs of the president’s presentation.

8. Other financial support by the ESA

Financial support for the local organizers of the congress in Rennes (2000 Euro)

Student prizes for the ECA in Rennes: 3 talks and 3 posters (600 Euro)

9. Website and social media report

Matjaz Gregoric reported on the traffic on our website. Top pages are Proceedings, Conferences, new members. He acknowledges help from Alex Strauss with the website management and by other members who provide information for the website. He calls for more information on the early history of the society and asked for updates on national species lists.

Vladislav Ivanov reported on the number of visits and the demographics of our facebook site. Since Twitter has only 515 followers and Facebook 1500 the council decided to focus on Facebook from now on.

10. Newsletter of the ESA

On behalf of Marco Isaia and Elena Piano, the president reported on the Newsletter of the society, the last one of which was published in November 2022 and reported on the congress in Greifswald 2022. Other comments and contributions to the newsletter are welcome.

11. Early Career Newsletter (EarlCNews).

On behalf of Elena Piano, the president reported on the concept behind this Newsletter that is meant to make early career arachnologists more visible. Abstracts of recent thesis are published in this special newsletter. The next call will be made at the beginning of December 2024.

12. Proceedings of the congress.

The proceedings will be published with the journal Arachnology Letters. Julien Pétillon will be guest editor. The submission deadline is November 1, 2024. More information will follow by email.

13. Next congress.

The next congress will be held from August 30 until September 5 2025 in Zadar, Croatia. It will be organized by Martina Pavlek. Co-organizer will be Dora Hlebec. Martina invites with an enticing presentation during the general assembly on the location at the coast, the venue and the surroundings (see pdf of slides).

14. Ideas and Suggestions:

The president asks for topics that should be discussed in the society and called for ideas for the next congress and general assembly. Email to gabriele.uhl@uni-greifswald.de

15. Student travel grants for the ECA Rennes were awarded to:

Awarded from the **ESA** to

- Marco Tolve (Italy)
- Ziva Vehovar (Slovenia)
- Zeana Ganem (Israel)

Awarded from the **Czech Arachnological Society** to

- Ondrej Vanek (Czech Republic)
- Helena Rothova (Czech Republic)
- Viktos Strestik (Czech Republic)

Awarded from the **Arachnologische Gesellschaft** to

- Panagiotis Kontos (Germany)

Funded with a donation from the **American Arachnological Society** to

- Hsiang-Yun Li (Taiwan)
- Rishikesh Tripathi (India)

We thank all societies that made it possible of these students to attend.

16. Talks and poster Prizes:

The jury consisted of the scientific committee and the invited speakers.

Poster prizes were sponsored by the **ESA** and were accompanied by a voucher from **Pensoft**

1. Leo Laborieux (Cambridge, USA)
2. Mattes Linde (Greifswald, Germany)
3. Aleksandra Rozumko (Bialystok, Poland)

Prizes for oral contributions sponsored by the **ESA** and were accompanied by spider book from **BritArachnol Soc**

1. Hsiang-Yun Lin (Taipei, Taiwan)
2. Yuri Simone (Porto, Portugal)
3. Carolina Ortiz-Movliav (Greifswald, Germany)

17. Photo contest

There were two categories: General and Microscopy and a public vote and jury vote for each.

Public vote: General: Tomas Hamrik, Microscopy: Sarah Karikó

Jury votes: General: Léo Laborieux, Microscopy: Fatemeh Hosseini

18. The president thanks the Organizing team around Julien Pétillon for a fantastic meeting. Standing ovations follow !