

## SEH News

### Minutes of the 14<sup>th</sup> Ordinary General Meeting of SEH, Porto, Portugal, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2007

*Venue:* Auditorium of the Dr. Cupertino Miranda Foundation, Porto, Portugal.

The attendance sheet was signed by 40 people.

Members of the Council present:

N. Ananjeva (President), M. Vences (Vice-President), M.A.L. Zuffi (Secretary), M.A. Carretero (Vice-Secretary), J. Hallermann (Treasurer), D.J. Harris (First Co-Editor), M. Denoël (Third Co-Editor), A. Sumpel (Conservation Committee) and N. Sillero (Mapping Committee).

Apologies for absence:

J. Perälä (Vice-Treasurer), L. Luiselli (Second Co-Editor), E. Razzetti (Web-Master).

Numbering of agenda items follow those in the Agenda available in the web-site of the 14<sup>th</sup> European Congress of Herpetology, September 2007.

1. Report by the President.
2. Report by the General Secretary.
3. Report by the Treasurer.
4. Report by the Chair of the Conservation Committee.
5. Reports of the Editor of *Amphibia-Reptilia*.
6. Reports by the Web Master.
7. Report of the Chair of the Mapping Committee.
8. Proposal for a stable name of SEH Proceedings.
9. Communication between Brill and the Council.
10. Statutes and by-Laws.
11. Proposal of special student membership rate.
12. Conservation funds for SEH grants.
13. Venue of next SEH Congress, scheduled for 2009.
14. Council members election.
15. Varia.

Numbering of agenda items follow those printed in the Agenda of the 13<sup>th</sup> OGM of the SEH Meeting, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2005.

Opening of the meeting by the President Natalia Ananjeva at 16:40.

- 1. Report by the President.** The president, Natália Ananjeva, delivers the following report of the period 2005-2007:

“We participated Global Reptiles Assessment in the geographic region of the Caucasian Ecoregion we well as cooperate with WWF Critical Ecosystem Foundation on behalf of European Herpetological Society to prepare Reassessment of the IUCN Red List for amphibians and reptiles of the Caucasian Ecoregion in accordance with IUCN categories and criteria.

In 2006 I was elected as president of Nikolsky’s Herpetological Society. I do as much as possible to make

more easy and fruitful cooperation and contacts between European Herpetological Society and Nikolsky, society both between societies and their members.

I am glad to know that more and more members apply for SEH grants.

The new activity is international cooperation in study of wide distributed species with participation of Nikolsky Society members; I see it as a positive tendency.”

- 2. Report by the General Secretary.** Marco A.L. Zuffi, general secretary of SEH, exposes his activity in the period 2005-2007:

Preparation of Minutes of the past OGM in Bonn 2005. Frequent e-mail exchange with 75 applying members.

Preparation of Agenda of Oporto Council Meeting and the Agenda of Oporto Ordinary General Meeting.

2006-2007: Proof correction for *Yearbook of International Organizations*, [www.uia.org](http://www.uia.org).

More than one-hundred e-mails to possible applicant members.

- 3. Report by the Treasurer.** Jakob Hallermann, treasurer, make an exposition of the economical activities and balance of SEH between 01/01/2005 and 31/12/2006. The present balance in the society’s accounts is 35 646.10 euros. In comparison with the balance of end of 2004 of 38 620.25 euros there is degree due to our activities in providing the SEH conservation grant and increasing printing costs. The report can be downloaded at <http://www.gli.cas.cz/SEH/structure/financial.htm>.

Membership have remained around 400 throughout this period but 25% of members are not paying. 260-280 are subscribing to the print or online journal *Amphibia-Reptilia*.

- 3b. Report of the auditors.** The general secretary, exposes the report of the auditors (Steinfartz and B. Schmidt) who indicate that all documents and bookings have been found correct and in best order.

- 4. Report by the Chair of the Conservation Committee.** The following report corresponding to the period 2005-2007 is delivered Anton Stumpel as chair of the CC:

“A comprehensive report about the activities of the SEH Conservation Committee (CC) was given at the previous SEH congress in Bonn and has been published in *Amphibia-Reptilia* 27(1): 155-156 (2006). This message is a short supplement to update on the work done since then.

Since 2005, the CC has continued its activities along the same lines with emphasis working through the Bern Convention and as a member of the European

Habitats Forum. Five draft Species Action Plans for three threatened reptiles (the sand lizard, the Aesculapian snake and the meadow viper) and two amphibians (the crested newt species complex and the Italian agile frog) have been approved by the Council of Europe and will be published by them.

The majority of the original CC members have now resigned and we are searching for new and younger members to make a restart with a full committee. Some SEH members have registered their interest through the new webpage of the CC. A special meeting was organized at the Porto congress for discussing the future of the CC. About 40 people attended, expressing both interest and support for the work that the committee has been doing and were keen to see new developments in collaboration to further conservation work in Europe. The importance of taking forward a range of approaches, including exchanging information, promoting best practice, proactively developing projects and influencing policy and implementation, was recognised by the group. A proposal to create a new webpage, connected to the website of the SEH Conservation Committee that should act as an open forum for exchanging ideas and opinions was approved. Information about the state of affairs will be made available there as well as a list with e-mail addresses. The discussions will be evaluated after some months and the respondents may form a group of potential candidates for membership of the new committee. Members of the existing Conservation Committee agreed to look at options and to make suggestions for taking forward conservation work in Europe, noting the need to ensure good representation at the level of the different countries in Europe. A new CC could consist of a small group of active people carrying out projects, with a larger group of corresponding members, representing the relevant interests and the different geographical areas in Europe."

**5. Reports of the Editor of *Amphibia-Reptilia*.** In the name of the editors, Mathieu Denoël, exposes the current situation of the Journal. After a summary of the report for the period 2003-2005, he presents all the recent changes and improvements. All the efforts have been done to increase the quality of published papers and to improve the services to authors and readers in order to get *Amphibia-Reptilia* among the top choice list of ranked herp journals. He showed that the number of submitted manuscripts increased in 2006 (152 instead of 123 in 2005) and remained stable until this OGM. The rejection rate was over 65%. The scope has been slightly readjusted to keep with international standards of ranked journals but also to welcome new topics. He also uses regular email communications to promote *Amphibia-Reptilia* and inform the herpetological community about the recent updates. He also introduces the new board of Associate Editors and the broadening of the Advisory Editorial board who help the co-editors in the editorial process. To facilitate the publication process, new instructions to authors and

procedures have been installed. Time from submission to publication has been considerably decreased to less than one year. The quarterly printing of issues has also been advanced to offer the journal at earlier dates. All the changes in quality have been associated with the largest increase in impact factor among herp journals in 2006. *Amphibia-Reptilia* is now at 0.795 (0.547 in 2005) and is expected to get a higher one next June. Finally, Mathieu Denoël introduces the new web platform for submission that is currently in construction as well as other future changes planned for the journal such as the access to all issues on-line and the early online publication of manuscripts just after acceptance.

In the name of Brill, publisher of the Journal, Michiel S. Thijssen is allowed to expose the novelties on the publication process, namely, the increase in the pages by volume, the new layout, the extra features of Ingenta Connect and the downloads of PDF articles. He also introduces the new on-line platform of submission, revision and edition of the manuscripts. This facility will be launched in January 2008.

**6. Reports by the Web Master.** The web master, Edoardo Razzetti, apologises his absence in the 14th OGM, due to personal reasons. He has however sent us a short report, just a few days after the OGM.

In the past twelve months the website of the *Societas Europaea Herpetologica* just had minor updates in the contents of few sections: *Amphibia-Reptilia*, European and world links, Books, Member list, Conservation Committee, Structure of the Society and, of course, the News and the Home page.

Since the website is regularly updated, the daily number of visitor is quite high as 15 902 unique visitors and 39 168 page loads between September 2006 and September 2007 have been reported.

Most of the visitors are from Europe but many of them are also from the USA, India, Brasil, Argentina and Australia as can be seen in the image below.

The most popular pages are: the home page (of course), *Amphibia-Reptilia*, About SEH, Atlas of amphibians and reptiles in Europe, Links to European Herpetological Societies and the Books section.

The total number of members of the HerpNet mailing list is slowly increasing year by year and now 569 herpetologists are listed while the average number of messages is about one per day (361 messages in the past twelve months).

**7. Report of the chair of the Mapping Committee.** Neftalí Sillero, as the new chair of the MC, informs to the assembly about the activities of the MC:

Since the nomination of a new Chairman for the Mapping Committee by the Council of *Societas Europaea Herpetologica*, the Mapping Committee has performed several tasks:



- a. A new Mapping Committee has been formed, constituted by very interested people, with a large experience on several fields related with the edition of the new European Atlas of Amphibians and Reptiles.

Currently, the Mapping Committee is formed by six researchers:

- o Nefthalí Sillero (Chair): Centro de Investigação em Ciências Geo-Espaciais (CICGE), Universidade do Porto, Departamento de Matemática Aplicada, Rua do Campo Alegre, 687, 4169-007 Porto, Portugal.
  - o Sergé Bogaerts: Honigbijenhof 3, NL-6533 RW Nijmegen, The Netherlands.
  - o Pierre-André Crochet: CNRS-UMR 5175 Centre d'Ecologie Fonctionnelle et Evolutive, 1919, route de Mende 34293 Montpellier cedex 5, France.
  - o Roberto Sindaco: Istituto per le Piante da Legno e l'Ambiente, corso Casale, 476 I-10132 Torino, Italia.
  - o Bert Toxopeus: International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (ITC), P.O. Box 6 7500 AA Enschede, The Netherlands.
  - o David R. Vieites: Museum of Vertebrate Zoology and Department of Integrative Biology, 3101 Valley Life Sciences Bldg, University of California at Berkeley, CA 94720-3140, USA.
- b. A proposal for editing a new European Atlas of Amphibians and Reptiles has been discussed between Mapping Committee members, and presented as oral communication in the 14th European Congress of Herpetology with the title: "The New European Atlas Project".
- The proposal of the Mapping Committee is a network of on-line national databases. The Atlas of Europe will be a virtual database in a website, performed each time that a user connects to the website and asks for a specific species map. This methodology is easy to actualize the records, as well as the taxonomy and systematics. The duplication of databases is avoided
- and the control of the databases remain in the own country. The virtual database could be built with different levels of data, then, it is independent of data availability. Data can be filtered as owner wants. Data can be collected directly through Internet. The database works controlled by an administrator that receives and filters the data.
- The technology is available nowadays. There are several atlases implemented in Internet. The RAVON project from The Netherlands could be an example to follow, as in the end of this year, the software will be available for free.
- c. Currently, the Mapping Committee is developing a network of collaborators in each country. The 14th European Congress of Herpetology has been used for contacting with people of different countries available for this network. Currently, there is a collaborator from the following countries (18): Austria; Belgium; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; France; Greece; Hungary; Macedonia; Portugal; Romania; Serbia & Montenegro; Slovenia; Spain; Switzerland; Ukraine.
- Collaborators are lacking from: Albania; Andorra; Azerbaijan; Belarus; Bosnia & Herzegovina; Finland; Georgia; Germany; Ireland; Italy; Kazakhstan; Latvia; Liechtenstein; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Malta; Moldova; Monaco; Netherlands; Norway; Poland; Russia; San Marino; Slovakia; Sweden; Turkey; United Kingdom.
- d. During the 14th European Congress of Herpetology, a survey about the chorological knowledge of each country has been performed.
- e. Also, the Mapping Committee is performing a survey about the data availability of national databases. All the possible work that the Mapping Committee could be done, depends totally on the availability of distribution data from national databases.
- It is necessary to decide several items:

1. Which is the study area of the new European Atlas.
2. Which is the taxonomical species list of reference.
3. If fieldwork will be necessary and which countries will be included.

On-going task of the Mapping Committee are:

1. To create a website with the Ravon software. This task will be concluded on February 2008.
  2. To write a White paper with the Mapping Committee proposal and topics associated for being approved by the Council of the SEH. This report will be sent to all the national societies as a guide of the European Atlas project.
  3. To prepare a meeting of the Mapping Committee and national collaborators the next year. In this meeting the European Atlas project will be discussed.
  4. To digitalize all published atlases at  $10 \times 10$  UTM squares. These data will be used to find gaps and prepare the fieldwork.
- 8. Proposal for a stable name of SEH Proceedings.** In the name of the council, Miguel Vences, vice-president, proposes to the assembly the information of the title and layout of the future congress proceedings. This is accepted by the assembly. Several names are discussed informally but only one (*Acta Europea Herpetologica*) is finally accepted (38 votes in favour, 2 against).
- 9. Communication between Brill and the Council.** The general secretary informs that the council have celebrate a meeting with the representative of Brill to discuss a draft of the written agreement between the Society and the Publisher involving all the aspects of the publication of *Amphibia-Reptilia*. As soon as the conversations arrive to a consensus the text of the agreement will be delivered to the assembly for voting.
- 10. Statutes and by-Laws.** Miguel Vences exposes the modifications in the by-Laws proposed and previously published in SEH-new and in the web-site of the congress. The two topics voted were the following:
- Removal of the maximum of 10 associated editors: approved (unanimity in favour).
  - Creation of an on-line bulletin (37 votes in favour, 3 abstentions)
- 11. Proposal of special student membership rate.** Miguel Vences, vice-president proposes a special rate for students in order to encourage membership. This will consist of 50% discount for those more remaining members for more than 2 years.
- 12. Conservation funds for SEH grants.** As in the previous years the SEH grants are open to all the members and will be delivered by the end of the year.

**13. Venue of next SEH Congress, scheduled for 2009.**

The General Secretary informs that currently there is no official proposal for the venue of the 15th ECH. Nevertheless, there is unofficial information that Germany could harbour the congress again and two other countries have also shown some interest. The Council will decide among the proposals as soon as formulated in the following three months.

**14. Council members election.** According to the Statutes, half of the members of the Council must be elected. In this case, all candidates are for re-election. Their candidatures and CVs have been previously published in SEH-news and also on the Congress web-site. The results are the following:

|                                | For | Against | Abstention |
|--------------------------------|-----|---------|------------|
| M. Vences (Vice-President)     | 32  | 0       | 0          |
| M.A.L. Zuffi (Secretary)       | 31  | 1       | 0          |
| M. Denoël (Third Co-Editor)    | 32  | 0       | 0          |
| D. J. Harris (First Co-Editor) | 30  | 1       | 1          |
| J. Perälä (Vice Treasurer)     | 30  | 2       | 0          |

**15. Varia.** No varia were presented.

**16. Closing.** The meeting was closed by the President, N. Ananjeva, at 18:20.

Prepared initially by Miguel Carretero, Vice Secretary, Vairão, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2007, and forwarded to General Secretary on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2007.

Amended, linguistically adjusted, approved and provisionally edited by Marco A.L. Zuffi, General Secretary, Calci (Pisa), 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2008.

## Announcement of Extraordinary General Meeting of SEH in Sardinia

As announced during the 14th Ordinary General Meeting of our Society in Porto, on 22 September 2007, the Council calls for an Extraordinary General Meeting in 2008 in order to discuss and vote upon the necessary adjustments of membership rates.

Membership rates of SEH have last been increased in 1999, and due to increasing production costs of *Amphibia-Reptilia* and our activities to provide every year a conservation grant, it is now necessary to adapt the rates, basically following general inflation. We plan to increase membership rates to 75 € for ordinary members with print and on-line access, 55 € for only on-line access, without journal: no change (15 €), corporate: 110 €, life member 1500 €, and 60 € for student members, and hope to be able to maintain rates stable for an extended period.

The EGM will take place during the congress of the *Societas Herpetologica Italica* SHI in Oristano (Sardinia), from 1-5 October 2008, where we hope a number of SEH members will be able to attend. The precise agenda of the EGM and the precise date and time will be announced within the next months by e-mail to all SEH members, and on the SEH and SHI webpages (<http://www.gli.cas.cz/SEH/> and <http://www.unipv.it/webshi/>).