

SOCIETAS EUROPAEA HERPETOLOGICA



Prot. n. O-2011/01, Date: 7 November 2011

Minutes of the 16 ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING of SEH, Luxembourg, 27th September 2011

Venue: Luxembourg, Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg, Neumünster Abbey cultural centre

Date: 27th September 2011, **Time:** 16:45-19:00

Council members:

Present: C. Corti, M. Vences, M. A.L. Zuffi, J. Crnobrnja-Isailović, S. Hauswaldt, P. Lymberakis, M. Denoël, S. Ursenbacher, A. Stumpel, N. Sillero

Absent: D.J. Harris, E. Razzetti, P.-A. Crochet

SEH members present at OGM: 50

1. Report by the President. C. Corti presents her first activity report covering Autumn 2009-Summer 2011: "First of all she acknowledges all SEH Council Members, who actively operated together to improve and promote all the activities of our Society, as well as the Conservation and the Mapping Committee for their precious work.

On an administrative level, production of the *guidelines for the SEH conference organization*, which can now be downloaded by the website, has been definitely a major achievement, allowing an easier fulfilling of our requirements and supporting the organizing committees. Thanks are expressed to all Council Members for their collaboration, and in particular to a senior SEH Member, Josef Schmidler, for his qualified suggestions.

The production of updated maps for the European Atlas, to become downloadable from the SEH website, will be a first step of a wider project aimed to the development of a punctual distribution database. This initial achievement was put into action by the mapping committee together with Miguel Vences who started to collect all the necessary data from a number of colleagues. Thereafter Neftalí Sillero begun an intense work of producing the updated distribution maps whose drafts are already available at the present meeting. Both are acknowledged for their enthusiastic contribution, and thanks expressed to those who sent their contribution to this project from all over Europe".

2. Report by the vice-President

M. Vences, SEH vice president from 2003-2011, gives a brief report on his activities during this period. As German representative in the Council, he has over the time dealt with numerous legal issues given that the society is registered in Germany; this mainly concerned changes and updates of statutes and by-laws in 2005, 2007, and 2009, which had the main purpose of making the Society and the Council more flexible in their activities. A further main activity was setting up the second journal of the Society, Herpetology Notes. This online-only bulletin was started in 2008 with M. Vences as senior editor and the editorial team is now carrying out their work largely independent from the Council.

3. Report by the General Secretary

M.A.L. Zuffi reports on his main activities since 2009, ranging from giving the patronage to herpetological associations to communicate with congress organizers, maintaining very intense correspondence (more than 800 e-mail messages). Specific activities included preparation of minutes of post-congress in Kusadasi (Turkey); agenda and minutes of the extraordinary Council Meeting in Florence (December 2010); agenda of the pre-congress Council Meeting and of the Ordinary General Meeting in Luxembourg; writing supporting letters (patronage) to i) the Skua Nature company, ii) the Aranzadi Zientzia Elkarte Herpetologia-Behatokia, Spain, and iii) the Second Mediterranean Herpetological Congress in Morocco.

4. Report by the Treasurer

S. Hauswaldt thanks former treasurer J. Hallermann for his committed engagement in the Society over the last 10 years. She points out that membership decreased from 295 to 277, between 2009 and 2011, including a 20% decrease of ordinary members (from 222 to 178). Interest in receiving AMRE also has decreased. She thanks A. Bauer for managing the North American payments. There are currently 24 full US members (68 members are on list). She presents the financial reports of 2009 and 2010. At the end of 2010 the accounts closed with a positive balance of € **35,313.93** an increase of about **902 €**. A summary of the accounts (all in EUR) is given in the table below.

Starting in October 2011 credit card payments will no longer be accepted by the treasurer. They will be handled by Zen Scientist (<http://www.zenscientist.com>). Payments have to be made in US\$ and include a 10% for this service that is handled by Breck Bartholomew, who also manages subscriptions for many other herpetological societies worldwide.

Statement of SEH finances (EUR)	2009	2010
Balance brought forward from 2008	35,622.84	34,441.55
Membership fees	17,612.50	16,727.50
Members' contribution to Conservation Committee	710.00	607.50
Members' contribution to the cost of disagio + VAT (credit card)	246.28	217.60
Bank interests	0.00	0.00
Donation	425.00	150.00
Sales of SEH publications	15.00	0.00
Profit by currency exchange	0.00	0.00
OGM payment	19.84	0.00
<u>Total income</u>	<u>54,651.46€</u>	<u>52,114.15€</u>
Printing cost (Brill)	-15,282.00	-13909.00
B&S: disagio + VAT (credit card)	-569.57	-498.83
Postal bank charges: account, cheques, postage	-94.33	-86.11
Loss by currency exchange	-327.83	-10.32
Office materials, fax, stamps, phone	-9.49	-5.50
Transfer to OGM, SEH	0.00	0.00
Notary costs	0.00	0.00
Conservation grant	-2,000.00	-2,000.00
IUCN	-284.77	-290.46
Travel cost, diverse	-47.00	0.00
Conservation Committee	-1,624.92	0.00
<u>Total expenses</u>	<u>-20,239.91€</u>	<u>-16,800.00€</u>
Saldo per 31.12.2009	€ 34,411.55	
Saldo per 31.12.2010		€ 35,313.93
The balance of EUR is covered by the following account assets:		
Bank saving account	17,761.89	17,761.89
Postal giro account	16,059.75	16,767.63

Cash	589.91	784.41
Total	€ 34,411.55	€ 35,313.93

5. Report by the Auditors

The report of the Auditors S. Steinfartz and B. Schmidt is delivered by M.A.L. Zuffi. The Auditors approve the Treasurer report, and confirm that the total *saldo* is 35,313.93 €.

6. Reports of the Editor of *Amphibia-Reptilia* and *Herpetology Notes*.

Report of the editor of *Amphibia-Reptilia*. M. Denoël presents the main changes and development of the journal during his 8 years on board as Editor-in-Chief. In 2003, the publication process was sped up, and services to authors, readers, and reviewers improved, resulting in an increased international coverage. In 2004, *Amphibia-Reptilia* introduced electronic submission to become cheaper, faster and safer. In 2005, the journal increased to \pm 600 pages/year and the format changed to a two-column layout. The backlog was reduced from about 6 to 2 issues, with faster publication service and better indexing. Detailed instructions to authors were provided and updated yearly. In 2007, a board of Associate editors was added. In 2008, a professional online submission platform was launched, with this Editorial Manager platform providing all data in only one system. Since 2009, all issues of *Amphibia-Reptilia* are posted on-line. Papers are indexed on Web of Science / Web of Knowledge and listed by ISI soon after online publication. Since 2010, accepted papers are posted online before final publication in a issue through the FastTrack service available on IngentaConnect. Submission to online publication takes less than 6 months on average. Since 2011, free color option in pdfs is available. Open access policy was detailed: authors can post published final pdf on their website and archive post-refereed preprints in official open-access repositories. Brill is a green RoMEO publisher. Alternatively, the option Brill Open allows authors to pay for immediate open-access on IngentaConnect platform.

Report of the Editor of *Herpetology Notes* (HN). M. Vences, as former Managing Editor, gives a short overview on the activity for HN. On behalf of the HN editorial team, Z. Nagy presents a short update on the status of the journal. After starting in September 2008, HN has published 45 papers in 2009 (on 248 pages), 85 papers in 2010 (362 pages), and as of September, 75 papers in 2011 (274 pages). The editorial team has been restructured in 2011. It currently includes W. Beukema, A. Crottini, Z.T. Nagy, S. Nieto, P. de Pous, and A. Strugariu, plus numerous Associate Editors. This restructuring has led to slow-down of the initially very fast manuscript turnaround time, but it is likely that by the end of 2011 the journal will again be able to ensure a fast turnaround time. A large influx of manuscripts from South America has been recorded, which will in the near future require to include one or two managing editors from this part of the world. Several additional reforms of the structure of the journal have been discussed at a meeting of editors during the Luxembourg congress and will be announced on the journal's website.

7. Report by the Chair of Mapping Committee plus the SEH data base use.

Delivered by Neftalí Sillero. In 1983, SEH first embarked on the project of an atlas of the distribution of European amphibians and reptiles by creation of its first mapping committee. This atlas in 50 x 50 km resolution was prepared by numerous herpetologists across Europe, on the basis over 85,000 locality data, under the coordination of the Paris museum, and published in 1997. Since then, major efforts have been made in many European countries to complete national and regional atlases at higher resolution. Furthermore, the taxonomy in many groups has changed substantially. For this reason, at the OGM in Porto (2005), a new mapping committee was formed, to set up a distributed database of amphibian and reptile point locality data in Europe. By now, the 1997 maps have been scanned and made freely available on the SEH website, but no digital GIS files are yet available, although these would be important for many conservation studies and actions.

Since 2010, the Mapping Committee and the Council of the SEH have therefore worked on the preparation of a "map of maps" (a compilation of published data) which merges grid data from

national atlases into updated European-scale maps in 50×50 km resolution. Numerous data were kindly provided by many national mapping committees, societies, and individuals, and a first version of these maps is currently under revision. The goals of this project are as follows: (i) to freely provide to the community updated maps as graphic files and GIS shapefiles for conservation research and conservation planning; (ii) to identify gaps of knowledge in terms of the range boundary in particular species complexes and insufficiently known geographic regions; (iii) to use this effort as an initial step for a distributional database and eventually a new, updated atlas. It is planned to produce and publish these maps, together with some basic spatial analyses, in 2012. Subsequently, work will begin on the new atlas of Europe which will be made into a *virtual database* on a website, as a lasting and permanent, though permanently updated, product. For this, national databases will constitute a network of distributed databases, and the control of national databases will remain in each country. Currently, a first prototype of a distributed database has been built by two students from the Instituto Superior da Maia (ISMAI, a Portuguese private university). They used several open source softwares for this purpose (GeoServer, MapServer, and gvSIG) and two national databases (from Portugal and Spain).

8. Report by the Chair of Conservation Committee (CC).

Delivered by A.H.P. Stumpel. He points out that the global economical crisis has significantly slowed down the Committee's capacity for conservation work in the last two years. Until the Committee will employ a paid secretary, its ambitions should stay modest. Projected changes, both on board and in membership structure, could initiate increase of activity. After Kusadasi, Committee meetings were held in Frankfurt in 2010 and in Luxemburg in 2011. Apart from meetings, a good and intense email network has been established. The members were involved in various issues, from expert advice in national case files, even from outside Europe, general conservation issues such as pet trade and diseases, contribution to international meetings such as for the Bern Convention (Council of Europe) and the European Habitat Forum (European Union) to joint work with national Herpetological Societies. The CC is actively seeking ways to be an umbrella committee for national Herpetological Societies, providing services as advisory work, expert support and a forum for broad audience, but the matters of European-level importance stay as main priorities. A particular focus was on the conservation of *Emys orbicularis*, where population size data in Europe were compiled (a poster on this is presented in Luxemburg). Much effort was put into organizing a Herpetofauna Monitoring Course at the SEH meeting, this had to be cancelled due to lack of interest but a Monitoring Workshop was held instead. The Committee continues to provide input to the European Habitat Forum, an NGO advising the European Commission. The CC's representative is acting as coordinator for their Monitoring & Reporting working group, on behalf of SEH. This opens the door for contacting people in the Commission and stay informed about European Action Plans. The interest of the Committee will be to find out what role SEH-CC might have in producing, implementing and commenting to such plans. A significant step forward in publicising the Committee's actions was setting up their own website (www.seh-cc.org) with a blog page for topical matters and general information, which is updated regularly. The goal for the next two years is to find a stable basis for the Conservation Committee, allowing members to better organize and structure its work and to acquire paid projects.

9. Report of the SEH web master.

M.A.L. Zuffi delivers E. Razzetti's report. In 2011, there were 10,946 unique visitors (on average 41 per day), and 21930 page loads (on average 82 per day). During the period from 12 Jan 2010 to 2 Aug 2011, the site had 10,773 visits. The top five countries were Germany (1,204 visits), Italy (956), France (804), United States (634), and Spain (558).

The HerpNet mailing list was founded on 16th April, 2000. In 2011, the list includes 679 members (updated on 26th September 2011). A total of 4372 messages have been posted since 2000 (on average 364 per year).

10. Council members' election

Before the start of the Council elections, M. Vences briefly summarizes how the proposed new Council candidates relate to the regulations of statutes and by-laws. The Council proposes to elect U. Fritz as vice president and S. Steinfartz as Co-Editor of *Amphibia-Reptilia*. Together with S. Hauswaldt (Treasurer) this implies having three members of German nationality in the Council, which violates § 5.2.6 of the By-laws (not more than two Council members of the same nationality). Furthermore, the Council proposes to leave one Co-editor position vacant for two years, in order to identify a highly suitable candidate for this crucial task, despite violating the statutes (§ 5.1) (3 Co-editors required). M. Vences explains that according to German laws, and in agreement with advice kindly provided by SEH member Josef Schmidtler by email, on one hand the OGM is empowered to exceptionally overrule the regulations of the By-laws if needed. And, on the other hand, a vacant position in the Council does not challenge the legal position of the Society as long as the remaining Council members are able to manage all of the activities of the Society. In this view, two editors with skills in both genetics and general biology, with the help of the Associate Editorial Board can efficiently deal with all the submitted manuscripts.

As one further point and besides voting on new candidates for Council positions, the OGM is also invited to confirm the election of Petros Lymberakis as Vice Treasurer. The original election took place at the 2009 OGM in Kusadasi with the aim to replace Jarmo Perälä whose term was ended by a vote of the OGM in 2009. The short CV of Petros Lymberakis was only subsequently published in *Amphibia-Reptilia* in 2010. This election as well was not in full accordance with the Statutes who state that Treasurer and Vice Treasurer need to be elected for staggered terms, which is why a official repetition of the election was announced in Kusadasi and took now place in Luxembourg. As a result, the OGM confirms unanimously (1 abstention, no vote against) the election of Petros Lymberakis as Vice Treasurer.

The Assembly does not suggest additional proposals for the vacant Council positions, and elects Kurt Grossenbacher to chair the elections. Total members present are 50. The results of Council members' election (in secret and separate ballots) are as follow:

Vice-President: Uwe Fritz 44 in favor, 4 against, 1 abstention, 1 not valid.

General Secretary: Anna Rita Di Cerbo 41 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstention, 8 not valid.

First Co-Editor: Sebastian Steinfartz 47 in favor, 1 against, 1 abstention, 1 not valid.

11. Varia.

M.A.L. Zuffi, as former General Secretary, is invited by the Council to continue chairing the last part of the General Meeting. He invites J. Vorös to speak about the schedule of the next SEH Congress to be held in Hungary (17th to 23rd August, 2013). She presents the venue at the University of Pannonia, in Veszprém, 110 km from Budapest. C. Corti takes some words to close the General Meeting and is looking forward to seeing everybody in Hungary.

12. Closing. The 16 Ordinary General Meeting is closed at 18:50 h.

C. Corti, M. Vences, M. A.L. Zuffi, J. Crnobrnja-Isailović, S. Hauswaldt,
P. Lymberakis, M. Denoël, S. Ursenbacher, A. Stumpel, N. Sillero

*On behalf of SEH
Anna Rita Di Cerbo
SEH General Secretary*

(Signature)