



See you all between  
31st Oct. and  
3rd Nov. 2024 in  
Caselle in Pittari  
(Salerno, Italy)

International  
Meeting on  
Speleology

16<sup>th</sup> EuroSpeleo  
Forum

10<sup>th</sup> European  
Expedition  
Symposium



16<sup>o</sup> EURO SPELEO FORUM

10th European Expeditions Symposium



Fédération Spéléologique Européenne a.s.b.l.  
European Speleological Federation (F.S.E.)

Headquarter: 2, Rue du Fort Olisy, L-2261 Luxembourg

Postal address: B.P. 3067, L-1030 Luxembourg

R.C.S. Luxembourg F7846

Web: [www.eurospeleo.eu](http://www.eurospeleo.eu)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/eurospeleo>

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/eurospeleo\\_fse/](https://www.instagram.com/eurospeleo_fse/)

e-mail: [contact@eurospeleo.eu](mailto:contact@eurospeleo.eu)

ISSN 2418-4500

## Communication within the European Caving Community is essential

This newsletter informs you about the activities undertaken by the FSE and its member organisations. Also other channels like the FSE website, the ECPC website and the Facebook pages of the FSE and ECPC keep you informed. The FSE even has an Instagram account. This is to give you the best possible information on what is going on at a European level.

**Unfortunately this communication is mainly a one way traffic** and sometimes even with a dead end! A small group of people in the FSE communication team does its best to gather as much information as possible, browsing websites and Facebook pages of national organisations and clubs to find relevant information. Despite frequent requests not all national organisations and their delegates provide us with information that can be shared throughout the European caving community. This is not only a lot of work for the few people that edit the newsletter and maintain the website and social media, but is also a missed

opportunity. All information in whatever language is welcome, translation can be done by us.

Another great concern is that information given by the FSE through its channels is rarely shared by national organisations within their country. **This is the dead end of our communication.** We notice that cavers in countries often do not know what the FSE stands for and that they can benefit for instance from the EuroSpeleo Projects funding. Information is simply not shared. Some national organisation don't even mention on their website that they represent the cavers of their country in the FSE and have a link to us. Is this ignorance, negligence or disinterest? Sharing this newsletter on a national level can be very helpful! The newsletter is in English and French and modern translation tools make understanding of the content easy.

Delegates have the role to provide and share information to and from the FSE. We see that not all delegates are picking up this role which is crucial for the functioning of the FSE. Also the secretaries of the national organisations can help in providing us with information on projects and events that are also interesting for cavers outside their country.

*If you wish to subscribe (free of charge) to the EuroSpeleo Newsletter please send an e-mail to [subscribe@eurospeleo.eu](mailto:subscribe@eurospeleo.eu) and you will be added to the mailing list for future issues. If you want to unsubscribe please send an e-mail to [unsubscribe@eurospeleo.eu](mailto:unsubscribe@eurospeleo.eu)*

One of the aims of the FSE is: to promote speleological activities at international level, including education, sport, science, training, cave rescue, protection and conservation, karst and water protection, and information.

Help us to achieve this goal in the best possible way and communicate with us!

**Henk Goutier**  
FSE Treasurer and FSE content manager for the website and social media

### FSE Partners



## Cave and Karst related events

For more detailed information please consult the list of European caving events at the FSE website:

<https://www.eurospeleo.eu/events/>

**9 - 14 September 2024**

**26<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Subterranean Biology and 6<sup>th</sup> Int. Symposium on Anhaline Ecosystems** - Univ. of Cagliari, Sardinia, Italy

<https://www.abcdarkworld.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Third-call-ICSB-2024.pdf>

**12 - 14 September 2024**

**Frontiers Unbound: Exploring Extreme Environments Symposium** - Cluj-Napoca, Romania

<https://institutulracovita.ro/extremenv/>

**13 - 15 September 2024**

**Austrian Cavers Meeting and 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** - Spital a.d. Pyrh, Austria <https://www.hoehlenforschung.at/tagung2024/>

**19 - 22 September 2024**

**17<sup>th</sup> European Cave Rescue Meeting** - Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina <https://gss.ba/gssubih-organizator-ecra-e-2024-godine/>

**20 - 22 September 2024**

**Speleologische Dagen, Meeting of the Flemish/Dutch cavers** - Ferrières, Belgium <https://www.speleovvs.be>

**20 - 22 September 2024**

**UK national caving conference "Hidden Earth"** - Llangollen, UK <https://hidden.earth/#>

**27 - 28 September 2024**

**29<sup>th</sup> International Cave Bear Symposium** - Barač Caves, Rakovica, Croatia [https://www.eurospeleo.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/ICBS2024\\_First\\_Circular.pdf](https://www.eurospeleo.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/ICBS2024_First_Circular.pdf)

**28 September - 6 October 2024**

**2024 International Show Cave Association Conference** - Mulu National Park, Malaysia <https://www.i-s-c-a.org/>

**22 - 24 October 2024**

**5<sup>th</sup> Middle-East Speleology Symposium (MESS5)** - Muscat/Oman, Sultan Qaboos University [https://www.speleoliban.org/content/Mess\\_5/MESS5\\_Circular\\_V2.pdf](https://www.speleoliban.org/content/Mess_5/MESS5_Circular_V2.pdf)

**31 October - 3 November 2024**

**Syphonia 2024 - International Meeting of Speleology, 16<sup>th</sup> EuroSpeleo Forum and 10<sup>th</sup> European Expedition Symposium** - Caselle in Pittari, Salerno, Italy <https://www.tetide.org/syphonia2024/>

**15 - 17 November 2024**

**5<sup>th</sup> Iberian Meeting on Underground Biology** - Museo de Nerja, Nerja, Spain <https://cuevadenerja.es/v-encuentro-iberico-de-biologia-subterranea/>

**21 - 25 January 2025**

**85 Anniversary of the Sociedad Espeleológica de Cuba** - Gibara, Holguin, Cuba [presidentesec@ceniai.inf.cu](mailto:presidentesec@ceniai.inf.cu)

**20 - 27 July 2025**

**19<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Speleology (ICS)** - Minascentro Convention Center, Belo Horizonte, Brazil <https://speleo2025.org/>

## Hosting a EuroSpeleo Forum (ESF) or a European Speleological Congress (ESC)

Dear cavers, dear responsables in FSE member organisations. Soon there will be the annual EuroSpeleo Forum in Italy. It will be the 16<sup>th</sup> ESF since the first one was held 2006 in Sevilla, Spain for the "Juegos mundiales".

EuroSpeleo Forums are the largest European or international caving events conducted in Europe under the umbrella of the FSE.

In the past we always were able to plan several years ahead. However, in the recent years it was increasingly difficult to motivate one of our member organisations to conduct a European event.

Remember that when you are planning an anniversary or a remembrance of an important speleological happening you may request that your event becomes a EuroSpeleo Forum (ESF).

There are financial grants available as well as sponsoring items from FSE's official partners AV, Korda's, and Scurion.

Don't be shy and look at your schedule to find a date for a suitable event. This may even be years ahead from now.

I would like to take this occasion and remind everybody that there is also the European Speleological Congress (ESC) which is a rare opportunity to organise a very large event.

There have been 5 ESC's so far and there are several years in between each of them. The last Congress was organised in 2016 in the Yorkshire Dales (UK) by the BCA.

So in case there is an FSE member organisation that wishes to organise a EuroSpeleo Forum or a EuroSpeleo Congress in a few years from now please share your intentions with us.

We count on you !

**Jean-Claude Thies, FSE President**

## New UIS Bulletin and ISCA Newsletter

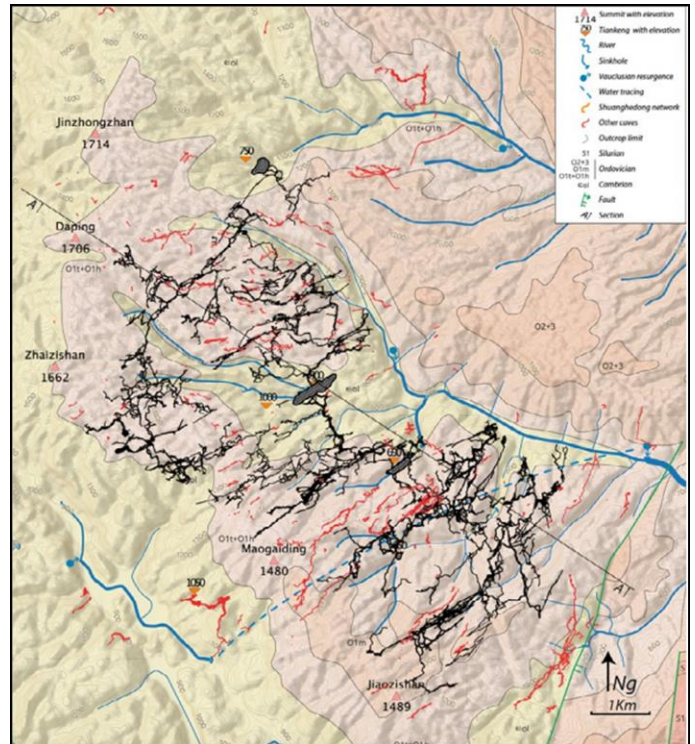
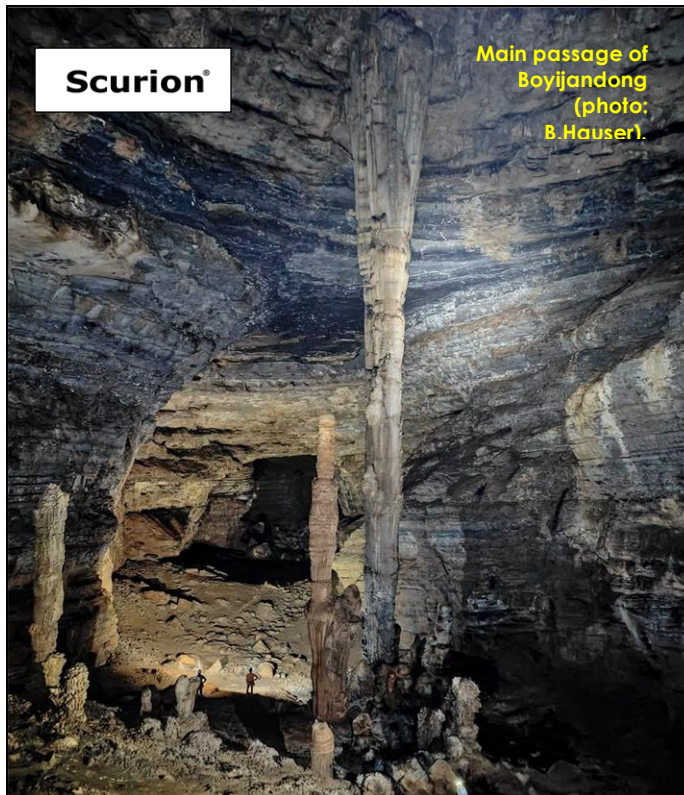
The latest Bulletin of the Union International de Spéléologie (UIS) (volume 66-1, June 2024) can be downloaded at <https://www.uis-speleo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/UIS-Bulletin-Volume-66-1-June-2024.pdf>

<https://www.i-s-c-a.org/clanok/304-isca-newsletter-july-august-2024> features the latest Newsletter of the International Showcaves Association (ISCA).

## FSE shop items

As advertised in the EuroSpeleo Newsletter of February 2024 and at [https://www.eurospeleo.eu/supporting\\_items/](https://www.eurospeleo.eu/supporting_items/) there are FSE hoodies, T-shirts and other accessories available. You will support FSE projects by purchasing these items. You are kindly asked to send all your inquiries to the following e-mail: [shop@eurospeleo.eu](mailto:shop@eurospeleo.eu)





The Shuanghedong Network in 2024.

## EuroSpeleo Project ESP 2023-10: Expedition to Shuanghedong, PR China

"Shuanghe 400", the 22nd international scientific expedition to the Shuanghedong cave system was organized between 16<sup>th</sup> September and 8<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

The network of Shuanghedong develops under the Shuanghe massif, which is located in the Suiyang district, Zunyi, Guizhou province in China. Shuanghe 400 did not benefit from the best weather conditions.

Sampling of rocks in parts of the system such as Pixiaodong, Bojiyan, Shanlingdong, Hejiaodong, Liucaoguxiadong, Mawangdong and Datutianjiaodafengdong are expected to shed light on the question of the genesis of the enormous cave network.

The main purpose of the 2023 expedition was to explore the possibilities of an extension of Shuanghedong beyond the neighboring Zheng'an karst, located northeast where no caves are known yet. It was found that such an extension will be very difficult to establish. Further caves to the south may also prove difficult to be connected to the network in the future. However, a "blank spot" in the northwest beyond the Shuanghe massif, appears to have the potential to still host further large passage that awaits discovery.

10.1 km of new passages has been surveyed during the 2023 expedition, 7.4 km of which were mapped in Shuanghedong itself. The new total length of the Shuanghedong System is almost 415 km with an unchanged depth of -912 m.

The expedition received EuroSpeleo Project status and was supported by a financial grant of FSE as well as equipment sponsoring from FSE's official partner SCURION (Switzerland).

## Application deadline for EuroSpeleo Projects between January-June 2025

Please note that applications for EuroSpeleo Projects, which will take place from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025, need to be sent to the FSE Bureau until the **31<sup>st</sup> of October 2024** (to [projects@eurospeleo.eu](mailto:projects@eurospeleo.eu)). FSE will decide on the projects after that deadline. The application guidelines and the application form can be downloaded at <https://www.eurospeleo.eu/eurospeleo-projects>.

## A call for the European Cave Rescue Commission (ECRC)

The FSE has two commissions and a working group: The "European Cave Protection Commission (ECPC)", the "European Cave Rescue Commission (ECRC)" and the "European Children and Young Cavers (ECYC)" working group. Currently, we are looking to strengthen ECRC. Whenever you feel interested to work in an international team, we can offer you the platform to do so. Anyone from an FSE Member Organisation can join ECRC, however knowledge on cave rescue and/or active involvement in a rescue organisation in your home country is expected.

Besides many enthusiastic members, **ECRC needs a new president** as the current president would like someone to take over the lead. This position would be for a term of 4 years (2024-2028). In case of interest, we would like you to inform us at [contact@eurospeleo.eu](mailto:contact@eurospeleo.eu). For more information, please see our website or the ECRC Internal Regulations at <https://www.eurospeleo.eu/european-cave-rescue-commission-ecrc/>.

We will vote on that during the 2024 General Assembly Meeting on 2nd November this year; so **please get into contact with the FSE Bureau in due course**.

## Euro Speleo Protection Label 2024: “Balbonne Cave” - Wonderful aragonite: protect, study and carefully show Balbonne Cave (France)

Balbonne Cave, discovered in 2022, is a new jewel of the Montagne Noire, a mountain located at the southern end of the Massif Central, in France. The cave offers varied subterranean landscapes and zones extremely rich in concretions. We observe many types of aragonite concretions (fir-shaped, needle-shaped, coral-shaped, massive, floors, streams, tubes) and some of them are unique.

Based on the European Speleological Charta for cave protection the protection needs are as follows: installation of a robust door fitted with bars to let the bats in and to avoid unwelcome intrusions; mandatory guided visits and, in vulnerable areas, marked paths; research activities to better understand and protect the cave. During the visits the guide ensures both the safety of visitors, the integrity of the geological heritage and an aesthetic and scientific discovery. By the end of 2024, the first steps of implementation of this overall protection, scientific and educational strategy will be completed.

The long term integrated ecological sustainability is based on three pillars: a robust physical protection and access regulations; an evidence-based scientific strategy to refine protection methods; a recognition of the project by nature protection policies and organizations.

To address this latter issue several activities are in progress. A detailed agreement will be signed by the stakeholders, landowners, cavers, municipality where the cave is located. The French Federation of Speleology is currently recognising the Balbonne Cave as belonging to its conservatory of the underground milieu. The departmental speleological committee of Aude will also be recognised as an operational delegation of this conservatory. This will enable it to develop a protection strategy for all the remarkable caves in the department. Efforts are also in progress to have the Balbonne Cave recognised as a protected area with regulatory protection status by the General Council of the Aude and the French State. Therefore numerous stakeholders are involved. To raise public and media awareness we use various channels both at local and national levels.

Balbonne Cave is an experimental cave where we are continuously reviewing our activities to learn from this experience. The wider challenge is to implement a broader strategy for the protection of all the outstanding caves in the department of Aude. This will begin in early 2025.

In recognition of this important European cave conservation project Balbonne Cave was awarded the EuroSpeleo Protection Label 2024, which consists a financial grant of EUR 800 and equipment support from FSE's Official Partner Korda's.



Photos: Christophe Bes.





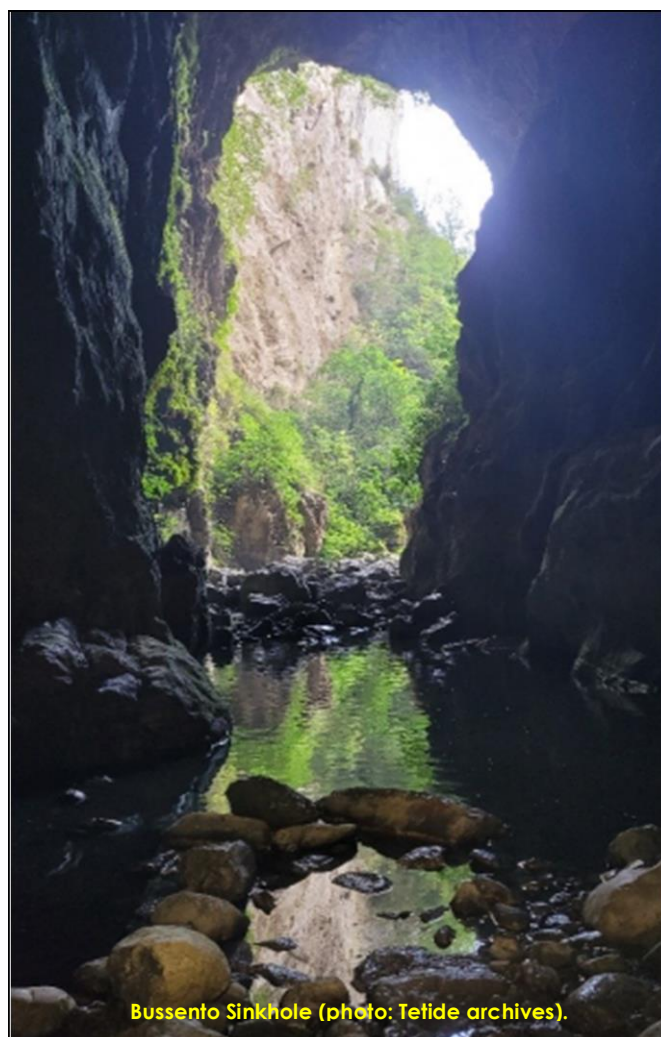
## “Syphonia 2024”, an unmissable journey into the depths of the earth chasing the water

Tetide APS Association and the Italian Speleological Society are warming up the engines to welcome covers and researchers from all over Europe to “**Syphonia 2024**”, the **International Meeting of Speleology** that this year will take place from October 31st to November 3rd, and will be held in the charming town of Caselle in Pittari, Salerno, southern Italy. The town has been selected to host the prestigious 4-days event because of its stunning karst landscapes and an intriguing karst phenomenon, the sinkhole of the Bussento river, with its ‘mysterious’ and fascinating path into the depths of the earth.

This edition of the Italian Meeting will also host the **16th EuroSpeleo Forum of the European Speleological Federation (FSE)**, promising a rich and unprecedented exchange of knowledge and experiences among participants from across Europe and beyond.

**Syphonia has a 3 words tagline: “Water, Caves, Future”**, to foster debates and the sharing of best practices, data and perspectives on vital topics relevant to speleology and environmental protection. **Workshops, conferences, and panel discussions** will address the theme of water protection, focusing on critical issues such as microplastics, pollution, and resource management. But also, emphasis will be given on sustainable cave exploration and conservation, showcasing new discoveries, international expeditions, and the impact of caving activities on the environment. Everything with a look to the future, trying to implement educational programs for environmental protection and to endorse the promotion and the best use of digital speleology.

A few hints on what awaits all of us: **International Conference: Digital Speleology Thursday, October 31, 2024**: a deep “dive” into digital speleology, highlighting data, technologies, and cadastres as useful tool to protect underground heritage and manage territories. Key topics include the Grotto Center Platform, Wiki Cave Experiences, and innovative cave data management approaches.



**Bussento Sinkhole (photo: Tetide archives).**

**10th European Expedition Symposium Friday, November 1, 2024**: in an era where satellite communication and human expansion seem to leave no corner of nature unexplored, caving expeditions highlight those vast regions that remain largely uncharted. These expeditions aim not only to explore these territories but also to disseminate widely new knowledges and discoveries. With a primary focus on



meticulous documentation, caving expeditions ensure that their findings reach a broad audience, from scientific publications to international media broadcasts. A key element for a true global speleology and cave expedition is a strong holistic approach, a perspective that includes elements like integrating geography, archaeology, history, anthropology, biology, and physical sciences. For this reason, the symposium will offer a comprehensive overview of multinational and multidisciplinary cooperation in speleological expeditions. Organized by the European Speleological Federation (FSE) in collaboration with Tetide and La Venta, the event aims to promote the knowledge of caves through exploration. Topics will include recent expeditions, research results, best practices in expedition preps, local regulations, and environmental issues. Participants from all corners of the globe are invited to share their experiences and contribute to the growth of the international speleology

**Underground Visions - International Image Contest:** Tetide APS encourages the submission of digital images that creatively depict underground environments, promoting environmental education and awareness about the significance of underground ecosystems and conservation efforts worldwide. Categories for submission include digital photographs, paintings, drawings, vector graphics, raster graphics, fractal art, pixel art, generative art, mixed media collage, and AI-generated imagery. Participants are invited to submit up to three educational images highlighting the beauty and importance of caves. Submitted images will be displayed during Syphonia, with winners determined by a public vote. All information on the contest and participation form at: <https://www.tetide.org/syphonia2024/visioni-sotteranee/>

**“Bussento: yesterday, today, tomorrow”:** a round table has been organized in order to discuss the history of cave explorations, the current state, and future prospects of the Bussento River, aiming to highlight its preservation.

... and this is just the beginning! **Join us in Caselle in Pittari to celebrate together the wonders of the underground world and to explore the future of speleology...** God Odin, with traditional magic speleobar nights, will be there too. Don't ask about it, you'll find out! For more information, please visit: <https://www.tetide.org/syphonia2024/>



**Chiesa-di-San-Rocco (photo archive comune di Caselle in Pittari).**