

FEDERATION SPELEOLOGIQUE EUROPEENNE



GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING 2023

Breitscheid, Germany

Saturday, 10th May 2023 – 9:00 AM (CET)

Fritz Philippi School

Reported by Alena Gessert

Participants present at the GAM

- FSE Bureau (with voting rights)

Ged Campion (FSE President, UK); Alena Gessert (FSE Secretary-General, SK); Joerg Dreybrodt (FSE Vice-Secretary, DE); Henk Goutier (FSE Treasurer, NL); Ernest Geyer (FSE Vice-Treasurer, AT)

- FSE Commissions (with voting rights)

Jean-Claude Thies (ECPC)

Antonia Vlaykova (ECRC) (BG)

- Delegates with voting rights

Silvia Goutier (NL); Phillip Häuselmann (CH); Hilario Ubiedo de Oñate (ES); Michael Laumanns (DE); Neven Šuica (HR); Claude Boes (LU)

- Present by Proxy

Fedele Messina (IT)

- Proxy Forms

DK to Michael Laumanns; BE to Claude Boes; HU to Ernest Geyer; IE to Ged Campion; PT to Alena Gessert; RS to Neven Šuica; SE to Alena Gessert; TR to Antonia Vlaykova

- Observers without voting rights

Christiane Meyer (CH); Amparo Perez (ES); Taraneh Khaleghi (AT); Dominik Fröhlich (DE); Encho Enchev (BG); Alexey Zhalov (BG)

- Excused

Elina Saarinen (FI) (Speleo-TV)

AGENDA

1	GC	Opening of the General Assembly Meeting	Ouverture de l'Assemblée Générale
2	AG	Quorum - Presentation of voting delegates and observing countries	Quorum - Présentation des délégués votants et pays observateurs
3	HG/EG	Approval of membership fees payments for 2022 & 2023	Approbation des paiements des cotisations pour 2022 & 2023
4	AG	Approval of the 2022 General Assembly Meeting report	Approbation du compte-rendu de l'Assemblée Générale 2022
5	GC	Report of the Bureau 2022-2023	Rapport Moral du Bureau 2022-2023
6	HG/EG	Financial report 2022	Rapport financier 2022
7	JCT	Report of the FSE Financial Auditor, exercise 2022	Rapport de l'auditeur financier de la FSE, exercice 2022
8	JCT	Annual report of the European Cave Protection Commission (ECPC) 2022-2023	Rapport annuel de la Commission Européenne de Protection des Grottes (ECPC) 2022-2023
9	JCT	Report on our partnership with the	Rapport sur notre partenariat avec le

		European Environmental Bureau (www.eeb.org)	Bureau Européen de Environnement (www.eeb.org)
10	AV	Annual report of the European Cave Rescue Commission (ECRC) 2022-2023	Rapport annuel de la Commission Européenne de Spéléo-Secours (ECRC) 2022-2023
11	JD	Report about the EuroSpeleo Projects 2022-2023	Rapport sur les EuroSpeleo Projects 2022-2023
12	ES	Report from Speleo-TV workgroup	Rapport du groupe de travail de Speleo-TV
13	EG	Report from the Contact Group on showcaves	Rapport du groupe de contact sur les grottes touristiques
14	HG	Information on the cooperation with Wikicaves Organisation	Information sur la coopération avec l'Organisation Wikicaves
15	GC	Report on our partnership with the International Union of Speleology UIS	Rapport sur notre partenariat avec l'Union Internationale de Spéléologie UIS
16	GC	Election of President, Vice-President, Vice-Secretary and Treasurer	Election du Président, Vice-Président, Vice-Secrétaire et Trésorier
17	AG	Election of the President of the European Cave Protection Commission (ECPC)	Election du poste du Président de la Commission Européenne de Protection des Grottes (ECPC)
18	President	Election of the Financial Auditor for 2023	Election de l'Auditeur financier 2023
19	President	Proposal of establishing a working group for children and young cavers (ECYC)	Proposition d'établir un groupe de travail pour enfants et jeunes spéléologues (ECYC)
20	Treasurer	Annual fees 2024 Provisional Budgets 2023 & 2024	Cotisations annuelles 2024 Budgets prévisionnels 2023 & 2024
21	President	Organisation of EuroSpeleo Forums 2024, 2025 & 2026	Organisation des EuroSpeleo Forums 2024, 2025 & 2026
22	President	Miscellaneous	Questions diverses

GC = Ged Campion

AG = Alena Gessert

JD = Joerg Dreybrodt

HG = Henk Goutier

EG = Ernest Geyer

JCT = Jean Claude Thies

AV = Antonia Vlaykova

ES = Elina Saarinen

1. Opening of the General Assembly Meeting:

The GAM commenced at 9:00 AM (CET). In the name of the FSE Bureau the FSE President Ged Campion welcomed all voting delegates and observers. The agenda has been proposed by the Bureau and was distributed in time to member organisations. The president presented the current FSE Bureau.

2. Quorum – Presentation of voting delegates

In 2023 the FSE has 31 member countries. One country without voting rights (GR).

We need 16 voting countries to be present or by proxy to have the right quorum. This GAM has 19 voting countries present or by proxy. We can therefore legally hold the General Assembly.

Delegates introduced themselves briefly.

Countries not represented at this GAM:

Armenia, France; Finland, Georgia, Greece, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Ukraine.

3. Approval of membership fees payments for 2023

Treasurer Henk Goutier presented the actual situation. There is one country that did not pay the membership fee for 2023: Lithuania. LT has no voting right in the current GAM.

The membership fee of Ukraine has been suspended for 3 years (2022-2023-2024) because of the war in their country, but without losing their right to vote. (GAM decision 2022)

4. Approval of the last 2022 General Assembly Meeting report (Annex

The last 2022 General Assembly Meeting report has briefly been presented.

>> The GAM voted in favour of the GAM 2022 Report with 19 votes.

5. Report on the FSE Bureau 2022 – 2023 (Annex

Ged Campion briefly presented the report of the FSE Bureau starting at the previous GAM which took place during the ICS in France. Key moments for the FSE were the 30th anniversary party which was a great success and the FSE Art Contest with a lot of smiley winners.

Ged as well highlighted the IYCK - International Year of Caves and Karst, with more than 1600 events under this umbrella. Not an event with hundreds of participants, but a very successful event was the EuroSpeleo Forum in Burgos (ES). The President also honoured the FSE commissions and working groups for their work. With said words he also reminded the great loss of well-known cavers that have followed the FSE for many years, Professor Dr. Yavor Shopov, chairman of the Bulgarian Federation of Speleology and René Scherrer, honorary president of the Swiss Speleological Society

The full report may be found in the annex to this report.

>> The GAM voted in favour for the annual report with 19 votes.

6. Financial report 2022 (Annex)

Henk Goutier presented the financial report of the FSE accounts for the accounting year 2022.

To be highlighted is that the balance was negative of nearly 4000.-€ which is due to the extra expenditures as the special grant to Wikicaves, the scholarship funding for young ICS attendees, the FSE Art Contest and the FSE 30th Anniversary exhibition and celebration.

On the account in the bank in Luxembourg were 28.781.-€. on the 31st of December 2022.

The details of the financial report may be found in the Annex to this report.

7. Report of the FSE Treasury Auditor, exercise 2022(Annex)

The auditor, Jean-Claude Thies from Luxembourg reported that the accounting records of the FSE for the year 2022 have been audited, are true and accurate. He proposed to the GAM to vote in favour on it.

>> The GAM voted in favour of the FSE accounts with 19 votes.

8, 9. Annual report of the Protection Commission and Report on FSE membership in the European Environmental Bureau (Annex)

ECPC president Jean-Claude Thies highlighted the main activities of the commission for the period 2022-2023. The full report is annexed to the report.

The report of the FSE-EEB activities have also been presented by the ECPC president Jean-Claude Thies.

>> The GAM with 19 votes voted in favour of the ECPC Report and the EEB Report.

10. Report of the European Cave Rescue Commission (ECRC) (Annex)

The president of the commission Antonia Vlaykova (BG) made a presentation of the most important points. She expressed the very good cooperation with ECRA and also with the UIS commission Please read the full report of the commission in the annex to this report.

>> The GAM voted in favour for the ECRC Report with 19 votes.

11. Report about the EuroSpeleo Projects 2022-2023 (Annex)

After a few years with less activity the application level resumes to normal with the regular applications. In the period from June 2022 to March 2023 ESP status was awarded to 5 caver meetings and 6 expeditions. In total 6300 Euro were granted and nine sponsor items. The full report can be found in the annex to this report.

>> The GAM voted in favour for the ESPs Report with 19 votes.

12. Report of the Speleo-TV FSE Workgroup (Annex)

As Elina Saarinen (FI) was unable to attend the GAM, Alena Gessert is presenting the report:

In 2022, Speleo-TV experienced a relatively quiet year with little activity to report on.

It was planned that all the FSE EuroSpeleo projects and competitions that produced or showcase videos would send them to Speleo-TV.

There were however no EuroSpeleo project video submissions for the past 3 years. We should encourage people to do so.

The full report may be found in the annex to this report.

13. Report from the Contact Group on Show Caves

The report was briefly introduced by Ernest Geyer. Fritz Oedl (AT) sends his greetings. As Fritz has recently been elected as new ISCA President he does not want to interfere and steps back as main spokesman of the FSE Contact Group. Currently we are searching for a new contact.

14. Information on the cooperation with Wikicaves Organisation

Henk Goutier once again explained the reason behind the special grant given to the Wikicaves project back in 2022. Together with UIS we spend each 2000.- for the development of special features in the online databank. A request from a delegate to explain more about the reason could be satisfied with sending the report from Philippe Urien, responsible for the project at Wikicaves.

15. Report on the partnership with the UIS

Ged Campion, elected last year into the UIS Bureau as adjunct secretary, which is also the reason why he is stepping back as President of the FSE highlights the good cooperation between UIS and FSE. He also reported about the 1095 events that took place under the umbrella of the International Year of Caves and Karst (IYCK) 2021-2022.

Ged also informed the GAM briefly that the UIS is working on a nomination to get an UNESCO International day for caves and karst.

The GAM took a Coffee Break for 20 Minutes

16. Election of President, Vice-President, Vice-Secretary and Treasurer

- Current president: Ged Campion (UK) steps down after two years because of his appointment as adjunct secretary at the UIS. This position is open for election for 2 years 2023-2025.

- Current vice-president: Michel Isnard (FR), not present at the GAM, ends his regular term of 4 years and is not standing for re-election. The position is open for election for 4 years 2023-2027.

- Current vice-secretary: Joerg Dreybrodt (DE) ends his regular term of 4 years and is not standing for re-election. The position is open for election for 4 years 2023-2027.

- Current treasurer: Heng Goutier (NL) ends his regular term of 4 years and is standing for re-election. This position is open for election for 4 years 2023-2027.

To guarantee a smooth and correct election it was decided that an election committee would be best to count the votes for the Bureau positions.

Dominik Fröhlich (DE) and Encho Enchev (BG) volunteered to do this job.

>> The GAM voted in favour of the election committee with 19 votes.

It was also decided that the elections will be made on one voting ballot showing all positions.

>> The GAM voted in favour of this procedure with 19 votes.

Applications for the different positions which were presented in time before the current agenda point:
for the position of president of the FSE

Jean-Claude Thies (LU) > present documents: application, support letter, 3 supporting delegates
> the application is valid.

for the position of vice-president of the FSE

Christiane Meyer (CH) > present documents: application, support letter, 3 supporting delegates
> the application is valid.

for the position of vice-secretary of the FSE

Fedele Messina (IT) > present documents: application, support letter, 3 supporting delegates
> the application is valid.

Alexey Zhalov (BG) > present documents: application, support letter, supporting delegates only from 2 delegates instead of 3.
> the application is not valid.

for the position of treasurer of the FSE

Henk Goutier (NL) > present documents: application, support letter, 3 supporting delegates
> the application is valid.

All candidates made a brief introduction of themselves and highlight their motivations.

Election:

President	Jean-Claude Thies (LU)	19 votes	for 2 years 2023-2025
Vice-President	Christiane Meyer (CH)	19 votes	for 4 years 2023-2027
Vice-Secretary	Fedele Messina (IT)	19 votes	for 4 years 2023-2027
Treasurer	Henk Goutier (NL)	19 votes	for 4 years 2023-2027

The newly elected President of the FSE is thanking the GAM for the confidence in the new FSE Bureau team. He further thanks the outgoing Bureau members for their work over the years.

As a sign of Thank You to Ged Campion who was a member of the Bureau since 2005 and President for the last 10 years, Alena Gessert handed over a bottle of wine and a new blue "caver" T-Shirt from the FSE.

Joerg Dreybrodt who was in charge of the EuroSpeleo Projects for the past years got a bottle of wine for his work in the bureau.

17. Election of the President of the European Cave Protection Commission (ECPC)

Since every FSE Commission is renewing itself every 4 years, it is the case for the ECPC in the current GAM.

For the next term 2023-2027 there is only one application for the position of Commission President. This is the current president Jean-Claude Thies (LU).

>> The Gam voted in favour of his application with 19 votes.

18. Election of the Financial Auditor for 2023

As the former auditor is no longer able to fulfil the task, the Bureau is open for candidates.

There is Michael Laumanns from Germany who candidates as Financial Auditor.

>> The GAM approved the candidature of Michael for the accounting year 2023 with 18 votes for and 1 abstention.

19. Proposal of establishing a working group for children and young cavers (ECYC)

Since the FSE had the idea of setting up a working group for children and young cavers starting during the ICS in France last year several interested persons gathered to work on a framework for such a working group.

Christiane Meyer (CH) who took the lead in the team, presented an overview of the planned working group. She highlighted the potential that FSE has and the importance to work with the next generation of cavers. She further asks all delegates and vice-delegates to promote the idea in their home organisations so that the team can be enlarged with interested cavers.

>> The Gam, with 19 votes, voted in favour for the introduction of this working group.

20. Provisional Budget 2022 and 2023 and Annual Fees 2023

Fees

As the financial situation of the FSE is not at all the best, and we should have a certain amount of funds as reserve, the Treasurer Henk Goutier proposed a new subscription chart. The fees would slightly grow.

This chart had been distributed together with the GAM Documents.

The idea was to raise all fees by 15% but small countries should pay a minimum of 25.-€

Rate 1&2 would be merged.

This would bring a new income of 1000.-€ more than up to now.

The GAM has been asked if another proposal from a member would be valid to be presented:

>> The GAM with 14 votes was for the proposal; 3 voted against it and 2 abstained.

Italy made another proposal with a minimum fee of 100.-€ and an increase of 10% or a minimum fee of 50.-€ and an increase of 15%.

Both Italian proposals will bring roughly the same result as the one proposed by the FSE treasurer.

Major discussions took place inside the GAM arguing for or against one or the other proposal.

The main common point was that the very small countries do pay the bill because some have to pay 20.-€ or 25.-€ per caver against large countries who pay only 0,10.-€ or 0,20.-€ per caver.

It had been difficult to find a common solution, so the FSE Bureau requested a vote on the issue.

For the FSE proposal and against the Italian proposal

>> The GAM voted with 16 votes for the FSE proposal and 2 abstained.

We then asked for the different minimum rates for the very small countries:

Keeping the 2,5.-€ as it is now as a minimum per caver or 25.-€ as a minimum per country:

>> The GAM voted with 14 votes for keeping the current 2,5.-€ per caver against 4 votes for min. 25.-€ and 1 abstained.

A final vote to give the Treasurer the mission to arrange a new chart with 2,5.-€ per caver for the very small countries and a 15% increase for all.

>> The GAM voted with 16 votes for this solution and 3 abstained.

Budget:

The Treasurer presented an amended budget 2023 and asks the GAM to approve the amendments:

Main changes, there is no ESPS -50.-€; EEB subscription will be lower by 60.-€; there is an extra position on shop articles for 1000.-€

>> The GAM voted for the amendments of the 2023 Budget with 19 votes.

For the Budget 2024, apart from the income position on membership fees a request to add a 1000.-€ outgoing for the FSE Shop was made.

>> The GAM with 19 votes voted for the proposed budget 2024 knowing that the membership fee position will change after the newly decided chart.

21. Organization of EuroSpeleo Forums 2023, 2024 and 2025

As there is no EuroSpeleo Forum planned yet for the next years the Bureau is asking all delegates and vice-delegates to encourage their home organisation in order to apply for an ESF. Any National speleological event can easily be transformed into a Forum. FSE is open for all ideas.

22. Miscellaneous

- Dominik Fröhlich (DE) asks why the FSE is working with 2 languages

>> Jean-Claude Thies explained that this has historical reasons and that both languages are the main ones used by the FSE since its start in 1990.

- Michael Laumanns (DE) would like to excuse the German President Bärbel Vogel for not being present at the FSE GAM. This, because she currently hosts the GAM of the German federation VdHK.

- Michael Laumanns (DE) proposed that a possibility should be introduced to get donations from outside or voluntary contributions by members. A "Donation Button" could easily be setup on the homepage of the FSE.

- As a sign of Thank You to all those delegates or vice-delegates that have come in person to the GAM the FSE Bureau is offering a small gift in form of a voucher to get an FSE T-Shirt (any colour, any size) at our stand.

The GAM closed at 12:30 PM (CET)