

SEH News

Minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting of SEH, held in Oristano, Sardinia Italy, 4th October 2008

14 SEH members, including the the following council members assisted to the meeting: M. Vences (vice-President); M.A.L. Zuffi (General Secretary); M.A. Carretero (vice-Secretary); J. Hallermann (Treasurer); D.J. Harris (First Co-Editor); M. Denoël (Third Co-Editor) Y. Chiari (in the name of Chair-Conservation Committee); E. Razzetti (SEH-web master).

The Meeting opens at 19 h in Oristano.

- 1. Welcome by the President.** The president is absent.
- 2. Welcome by the General Secretary and short introduction to the assembly.** In the name of the council Marco Zuffi welcome the members present and asks everybody to be brief due to the short schedule. Some votations are very important and other issues will be dealt with in the next OGM to be held in Turkey.
- 3. Report of the Editor of *Amphibia-Reptilia*.** Mathieu Denoël informs about three recent good news for *Amphibia-Reptilia*: 1) The on-line submission procedure, Editorial Manager, was launched instead of the e-mail submissions. It is working well in integrating efficiently communications between authors, reviewers, editors and publisher. 2) Brill has posted all old issues on-line available to SEH members and subscribing institutions on IngentaConnect website. 3) The impact factor of the *Journal* has continued to increase from 0.417 to 0.929 in five years, indicating a higher interest in *Amphibia-Reptilia* in the scientific community.
- 4. The on-line bulletin.** Miguel Vences informs about the new bulletin, *Herpetology Notes*, which is on-line only and includes descriptive and distribution notes. A pilot volume is ready. It has been moved to the SEH web site at <http://www.seh-herpetology.org/herpetologynotes/index.html>. There are now four managing editors A. Crottini (Milano), S. Nieto (Madrid), S. Steinfartz (Bielefeld) and M. Vences (Braunschweig). Full articles and reviews are also admitted. The format is that of *Amphibia-Reptilia*. Because it is on-line only, there are no page limitations and colour pictures are published free of charge. Notes should be submitted together with a pre-review by a qualified colleague, and full articles go to the Editorial board. Motivated coeditors are welcome.
- 5. Report of the Conservation Committee.** In the name of the CC, Ylenia Chiari informs that 14 people attended to a meeting in Slovenia. The report will be sent to A-R.
- 6. "The New European Atlas Project".** The Chairman of Mapping Committee is absent due to field work and will send the information later.
- 7. Call for new candidates for renewal of positions into the SEH Council.** The General Secretary informs that four members of the Council will have finished their mandates at the time of the next meeting (2009). New candidates will be proposed for: President, Vice-Secretary, Treasurer, and one co-editor of *Amphibia-Reptilia*. Candidates are welcome.
- 8. Report by the Treasurer: increase of fee rate for membership.** Jakob Hallermann reports that current member fees are insufficient to cover increasing costs and must be increased. The plan to vote an increase of fees had been previously announced to members by email, and in A-R as well. In the name of the Council, J. Hallermann proposes that ordinary member fee should increase from 60 to 75; new student membership fees are not raised. This proposal is opened for voting with 14 SEH members present. Results are: against (0), for (14) and abstention (0). A discussion on the state of corporate member is opened. There are 14 corporate members paying to SEH, but the number of corporates paying directly to Brill is unknown.
- 9. Varia.** Aaron Bauer asks if the articles published in on-line Bulletin will appear all together in a volume or in parts? M. Vences answers that they will be immediately published and that a printed version will be produced at the end of the year for Libraries. A. Bauer also informs that the next World Congress of Herpetology will be held in Vancouver 8-15 August 2012.
- 10. Closing.** The meeting is closed at 19:25.

Prepared by Miguel A. Carretero, amended by Marco A.L. Zuffi, Mathieu Denoël and Miguel Vences.

Report of the Mapping Committee

Submitted to the Council after the Extraordinary General Meeting in Oristano.

Alterations of Mapping Committee (MC) members: Raymond Creemers from RAVON Foundation was included as new member. Sergé Bogaerts decided to leave the MC for

personal reasons. The MC would like to thank publicly his great job with us.

Current state of the project: The project's structure is the same as presented in the Porto meeting the last year: a network of distributed online national databases. The Atlas of Europe will be a virtual database in a website connected to all the distributed databases. 2. On 2008 13th of March, the MC members Nefalí Sillero and Sergé Bogaerts met with members of the RAVON Foundation: Rob van Westrienen, Jeroen van Delft and Raymond Creemes in Nijmegen (The Netherlands). The main conclusions of the meeting were:

1. The RAVON Foundation is going to find out the best way to store databases in each country, using the Telmee site (<http://www.telmee.nl>) as common platform, as Telmee site is not a distributed database and the national databases should be stored in their own countries.
2. The Telmee site may be the site for introducing data from those countries that do not have official databases yet. When possible, the MC are going to use existing technology, avoiding to use money and time in creating other alternative systems. The MC and RAVON Foundation are going to contact some countries for putting the published data in Telmee site as an experience. It is very difficult to implement the Telmee site separately in the SEH website, and only with the amphibian and reptile species. The best solution is to establish a protocol in which the SEH support the RAVON initiative. The SEH logo would be placed in the RAVON website.
3. The RAVON Foundation agrees on helping the MC to look for funds. The MC is going to write a project application with the help of RAVON Foundation.
4. However, Telmee software currently is not fully operative. The validation process is not working and all the data is stored in a unique server located in The Netherlands. Telmee software is not based in a distributed database structure. For this reason, MC is looking for other solutions. We suggest to use the DIGIR protocol (Distributed Generic Information Retrieval), that allows setting up a network of distributed databases which can be accessed independently of by a general portal. This system would easily allow to create the network of distributed databases from each country, with one portal controlled by the SEH. This is an open source project, so the software is freely available. David Vieites is learning the process for implementing this system.
5. The White Paper of the project is going to be published very soon in the website of the SEH.
6. Pierre-André Crochet proposed to the Council to create a Taxonomical Committee proposal that discusses and decides a species reference list.
7. Future tasks: The meeting of the Mapping Committee and national collaborators is postponed until the DIGIR system or the Telmee software will be completely available and operative. The MC needs a server where the DIGIR software could be implemented and a person with high skills on computers.

It is to be noted that the on-line platform for SEH data bases has not been attributed yet as it needs to remain in the control of SEH.

Report of the Conservation Committee

Submitted to the Council after the Extraordinary General Meeting in Oristano.

One week before the Oristano council meeting, the SEH Conservation Committee (CC) met for two days in Škocjan (Slovenia). This was its first full meeting since nine years after a period of comparatively little joint activity. The catalyst for this renewed activity was the session on herpetofaunal conservation at the SEH congress in Porto (Portugal, September 2007), where great interest in the work of the CC was shown and many attendants pleaded for the continuation and extension of its activities. Since then, additional members were sought and new candidates for the committee attended the meeting in Slovenia. Their membership was agreed there and a reformed CC, consisting of 15 members from 14 countries, started building up a new programme. Although certain activities had been continued, such as involvements in the Bern Convention work (see further reports at O.G.M.s), the role of the renewed CC had to be redefined, new activities and tasks planned, and the international network updated. Members no longer only represented countries as they did before, but they also brought different expertise with respect to various aspects of herpetofaunal conservation now. The CC aims at meeting twice a year somewhere in Europe, for which funds are needed. Priority shall be given at renewing the webpage of the CC for providing up-to-date information to the wider public. Next to that, the CC intends to give more publicity to its work in the future. Since its renewal, the CC members already attended some European meetings, designed a new webpage, and exchanged knowledge and experiences among themselves as well as with other SEH members.

Prepared by Ylenia Chiari and Anton Stumpel.

Statute changes proposed for the Ordinary General Meeting of SEH, to be held at the 15th SEH congress at Kusadasi, Turkey, 28th September – 2nd October 2009

Current SEH statutes are inflexible as they do not allow under any circumstances to re-elect herpetologists who have served for two terms in the SEH council. However, experience have shown that the number of available colleagues with motivation and capacity to help running SEH is limited. We therefore propose to change the statutes to allow re-election of council members after they have not been in council for at least 4 years, and into a different council position.

Furthermore, after the current statutes, council members are elected invariably for a terms of four years, with no provision to terminate their position earlier. We propose to include the possibility of OGM and EGM to replace council members before the end of their term if deemed necessary for a good functioning of the Society.

In particular, we propose to amend §5, sections 2 and 6 of the statutes by adding the following statements (underlined):

German version

5.2. Die Mitglieder des Vorstandes werden für 4 Jahre mit einfacher Mehrheit der Anwesenden von der Mitgliederversammlung einzeln, schriftlich und geheim gewählt und zwar bei aufeinanderfolgenden Mitgliederversammlungen alternierend 2. Vorsitzender, Generalsekretär, Vizeschatzmeister, 1. und 3. Schriftleiter, bzw. 1. Vorsitzender, Vizesekretär, Schatzmeister und 2. Schriftleiter. Wiederwahl in das selbe Amt ist nur für eine Folgeperiode möglich. Ausnahmen in der Begrenzung der Amtszeit sind nur gemäss §5, Absatz 5.6. möglich.

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5.6. In ausserordentlichen Fällen kann die Mitgliederversammlung die Amtszeit von Vorstandsmitgliedern um 1 Jahr auf ein Maximum von 5 Jahren verlängern, oder sie vorzeitig beenden. Die Dauer einer eventuellen Folgeperiode bei Wiederwahl bleibt davon unbeeinflusst. Nach einer Vakanzzeit von 4 Jahren ist die Wiederwahl ehemaliger Vorstandsmitgliedern ein anderes Vorstandsamt möglich.

English version

5.2. The members of the Council will be elected for a period of four years, or re-elected for a period of no more than a further four years for the same council position, with exceptions only as stated in §5.6. Election will be by secret ballot, in writing, and separately for each office, and will be carried out by a simple majority of the members present at a General Meeting. Members of the Council will be elected for staggered terms, viz., Vice-President, General Secretary, Vice-Treasurer and First and Third Co-Editor during one meeting, President, Vice-Secretary, Treasurer and Second Co-Editor during the next.

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5.6. In extraordinary cases, the General Meeting can decide upon a prolongation of the office period of Council members by no more than one year, to a maximum of five years, or upon an earlier termination of the office period. This has no consequences on the duration of a possible second office period after re-election. After a period of at least 4 years upon end of the second office period, previous council members can be re-elected into council positions different from those they have occupied before.

Prepared by Miguel Vences.

Curricula vitarum of candidates nominated by the Council for election at the 15th OGM, Kusadasi. Turkey, 2009

President: **Claudia Corti** (Firenze, Italy), Italian nationality, born 1956 in Florence, Italy. Degree in Biological Sciences at the Università degli Studi di Firenze. She worked

at the Zoological Section of the Museo di Storia Naturale dell'Università degli Studi di Firenze as affiliate worker (since 1981) and then later, employed (1990) as curator of the herpetological collection. In 1997 she moved to the Department of Animal Biology where she worked as Managing Editor of the journal *Ethology Ecology Evolution* (1998 to 2002). From 1991 to 2003 she was teacher of the practical course of comparative anatomy at the laboratory of experimental biology for Biological Sciences. At present, again employed at the Museo di Storia Naturale. She was member for eight years of the councils of the *Societas Europaea Herpetologica* and the *Societas Herpetologica Italica*. Since 2006 she is honorary fellow of the California Academy of Sciences of San Francisco, USA. Work experiences outside Italy: Africa, Asia, Europe, USA. She published more than 100 research papers, and is author, editor and co-editor of several books.

Vice Secretary: **Jelka Crnobrnja Isailović** (Belgrade, Serbia) was born on August 28, 1962 in Belgrade, former Yugoslavia. She studied general biology at the University of Belgrade, where she obtained her PhD in 1997. She was research assistant and later research associate in Institute for biological research at the University of Belgrade. At present, she is associate professor at University of Niš (Serbia) and senior research associate in Institute for biological research at University of Belgrade. Her research activities were previously focused mainly on amphibian (newts) and reptile (lacertid lizards) population genetics and morphological variability in the Balkans, while at present she is mostly focused on variability of life history traits and population biology of European amphibians and reptiles (mostly vipers) with applications to the conservation biology. She also takes part in other studies on phylogeography, zoogeography, morphology, systematics and conservation of both Balkan and European populations of amphibians and reptiles in collaboration with other members of the herpetological research teams at the University of Belgrade, as well as with the colleagues all around Europe. Her membership of SEH dates back to 1993. She was member of Advisory Editorial Board of "Amphibia Reptilia" 2002-2005. Since 2008 she is member of Conservation Committee of SEH. She is also current president of recently founded Serbian Herpetological Society "Milutin Radovanović". As a member of Editorial board and one of the coauthors she participated in first edition of "Atlas of Reptiles and Amphibians of Europe", published by SEH and MNHN in 1997. She is also a member of IUCN Amphibian Specialist Group.

Treasurer: **Susanne Hauswaldt** (Braunschweig, Germany), German nationality, born 1970 in Göttingen. She studied biology at the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelm-Universität Bonn and continued her studies in the United States after receiving the first diploma. She received her Masters Degree at the University of Kansas, and her PhD at the University of South Carolina. After postdoctoral positions at the Universities of Potsdam and Cologne, she started her current position as an assistant professor at University of Braunschweig in the research group of Miguel Vences in the fall of 2007. Over the last years, her research focus has been

on amphibian population genetics with a special interest in conservation.

Vice Treasurer: **Petros Lymberakis** (Iraklion, Greece) was born in Greece the 30 June 1964. He studied Biology at the University of Athens, where he obtained his PhD on ecology in 2003. From 1995 till today he has been employed at the Natural History Museum of Crete (NHMC) – University of Crete as a curator of the vertebrates' collection. His research interests focus on ecology and systematics of amphibians and reptiles in the Eastern Mediterranean. He has participated in several NHMC scientific expeditions to Greece as well as N Africa and the Near East. He has been a member of SEH since 1999 and one of the founding members of the Greek herpetological society. He is co-author of "The Amphibians and Reptiles of Greece".

Second Co-Editor: **Sylvain Ursenbacher** (Basel, Switzerland) is a Swiss citizen and is born in 1974. Sylvain studied biology at the University of Lausanne and obtained his PhD

in 2005 on the phylogeography, genetic structure, ecology and conservation in European vipers, especially the adder (*Vipera berus*). In 2005-2006, he was a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Wales – Bangor, working on the population genetic and the conservation of Orsini's viper (*Vipera ursinii*). He is currently working as a research assistant (Junior Group Leader) at the Department of Environmental Sciences, section Conservation Biology, University of Basel, Switzerland. His current research projects include ecology, reproductive biology, dispersal, population structure, biogeography, landscape ecology, population dynamics and invasive species. He has produced around 10 articles in peer reviews during the last 5 years, most of them as first author. He has supervised or is currently supervising several PhD and MSc students working on ecology and population structure of amphibians and reptiles. He has acted as a reviewer for several herpetological, molecular and ecological journals. He is a member of the SEH since 2000.