

Societas Europaea Herpetologica

SEH

Rules & regulations for organising the SEH congresses

The following rules and regulations are a summary of the decisions reached by the SEH Council regarding the SEH congresses. They are intended to provide a standard structure for future meetings and are aimed at sustaining high scientific quality, as well as ensuring that the needs of SEH members are met.

The Council will review the rules and regulations on a biannual or triennial basis shortly following the congress, based on an evaluation of the event. The Council reserves the right to update the rules and regulations, in order to reflect future needs.

SEH organises congresses for scientific exchange among herpetologists. At these congresses, also the assembly of SEH members (Ordinary General Meeting, OGM) and the SEH council meeting take place.

In summary the congresses will be held:

Frequency	Biennial (with exceptionally triennial)
Time of year	preferably early autumn
Venue	European City (except when otherwise decided by the OGM)
Selection of venue	by OGM, but proposals should be sent to Council in advance
Official language	English
Duration	3-4 days + 1 for excursion
Council meeting	1st time before Assembly and 2 nd close to the end or after the congress (extraordinary Council meeting when necessary)
Ordinary general meetings (OGM)	2 nd or 3 rd day of the congress

Selection of venues: SEH congresses are hosted at localities with the requisite infrastructure to fulfil the meeting requirements. University, Museums etc. are preferred to reduce costs.

Venues are currently selected 2-4 years in advance by the OGM. Host candidates are strongly advised to contact the Council sufficiently in advance (at least 3 months) so that an appropriate discussion between Council and hosts can take place before the OGM. Potential hosts will be requested to present their application at the OGM.

Organisation: a *Local Organising Committee (LOC)* is responsible for organising the congress on behalf of the SEH. The number and role of participants of the *LOC* is at the discretion of *LOC* itself. The *LOC* also designates a Scientific Committee composed of at least 10 international scientists. It must be approved by the SEH council. Collaboration between *LOC* and SEH Council is fundamental in order to organise the congress in the proper way.

The scientific and social programmes are overseen by the SEH Council. For that, it must be sent to the SEH Council at least 1 year before the beginning of the congress. If the *LOC* plans to carry out the SEH congress together with another congress (e.g., merged with a congress of a national herpetological society), approval of the SEH council is necessary and should be requested at least one year in advance.

Abstract selection process: the call for abstracts and the abstract submission deadline, as well as managing the review of abstracts are part of the responsibilities of the *LOC* which is also in charge for proper submission and review timing. If abstract reviewing is required it should be blind and the criteria for abstract selection should be qualitative. Abstract reviewing must be conducted by the Scientific

Committee. The authors choose between oral or poster presentation, but the scientific committee can change a communication from oral to poster status. A template for abstract should be presented for the sake of homogeneity (background, methods, results, discussion). The abstract book needs to have an index of authors at the end and a list of congress participants with their email addresses. The selection should be as fast as possible to inform authors of the acceptance (before the deadline for early bird registration). An official acceptance, indicating the name of the communication and the type (talk or poster), needs to be provided at that time.

Session chairs: each person should as a general rule chair only one session (eventual satellite symposia or workshops excluded). Chairpersons need to be appointed before the congress. Their names must be published in the programme.

Plenary lectures: a plenary lecture should be presented every day. Speakers should be invited, i.e. they should at least not pay the registration fees and possibly be provided with a comfortable lodging. The *LOC* should look for potential speakers well in advance of the congress. They should advertise these plenary lectures with their call for registration.

Awards: final awards (*e.g.* poster prize) should be agreed on by the SEH Council

Room requirements:

- Registration area.
- One auditorium and lecture hall/s (when necessary and simultaneously available depending on the announced presentations) + meeting room.
- Coffee break area (twice a day).
- Poster exhibition hall must be available simultaneously and located close to the meeting halls.
- Lunch facilities (ideally low budget) must be located within walking distance of the venue.
- During the congress, easy access to the Internet should be provided (providing a room with an adequate number of computers and/or open wireless network, and/or an adequate number of mobile (GPRS/3G) modems with flat rate rented for a low fee).

General set-up & technical requirement of Lecture Rooms

- Table for chairperson/s + 1 table microphone.
- Computer & beamer for single data projection (with the latest MS office software installed, otherwise the required format need to be detailed to participants before the congress).
- Portable microphone for audience (when needed).
- Screen for single projection.
- Lighting & audio.
- Assistance for projection, sound, lights.
- Additional material needed in case of failure of one of the installed equipment (particularly microphone and beamers).
- Bottles of water for the authors of talks and chairmen.

Registration fees

The congress fees should be kept as low as possible to allow a large number of participants to attend the congress (as a general guideline, congress fees should not be much higher than regular SEH membership fees). Contacting appropriate sponsors is encouraged to help reducing congress fees. It should be possible to make payments by bank transfer (provide both IBAN and SWIFT-BIC code) and by VISA/Mastercard.

Final fees should be approved in advance by the SEH Council. We suggest the following categories:

	Until <i>.day/month/year</i>	Full rate
SEH-Member	... €	... €
Non SEH-Member	... €	... €
Student *	... €	... €
Accompanying Person	... €	... €

The difference between the fees of the SEH-member and non-member must be higher than the annual SEH membership fees.

* The term student applies to undergraduates. They should be asked to provide a copy of a valid student ID as part of the registration process. Exceptionally, MSc students who have submitted presentations may be granted fee reduction or even fee exception depending on criteria as

- Receiving funding
- Quality of presentation
- Offer of “voluntary” work

- The fee for active participants includes unlimited access to all sessions, the welcome reception, coffee breaks, access to poster exhibition, one printed and pdf copy of the final programme and one printed and pdf copy of the abstract book. Additional provisions, e.g. congress excursion, are at the discretion of the *LOC* but should be included in the fee. Additional and/or excursions must be scheduled after the meeting. The banquet should be included in the congress fees.

- The fee for accompanying persons should include the welcome reception, the access to exhibition only (other facilities at the discretion of the *LOC*).

- The extra-fees collected from non SEH members need to be sent to the SEH bank account. The list of all participants and their status need to be sent to SEH treasurer.

- Official receipts and **certificates of congress attendance** should be prepared and signed in advance and provided directly at the registration desk at the arrival of delegates.

- A confirmation of the payment needs to be provided to the payee soon after the payment has been received by the organizers.

- Clear rules must be developed on deadlines for cancellation of registration and refunding, and these rules should be communicated in the congress announcements.

Excursion: the *LOC* should make arrangements for at least one excursion (to possible sites where herps are active at the congress date). In addition to the 1-day excursion which could be proposed during the congress, longer post-congress excursions are welcome. They should remain affordable.

Hotel requirements: the *LOC* offers contacts for a wide-selection of hotel accommodation to meet the various needs well in advance of the congress date; a list of cheaper hotels/hostels and possibly camping sites for economy budgets is also requested. Both budget and more comfortable accommodations should be at close proximity to the congress place. Special deals should be negotiated with a selection of hotels and hostels.

Access: maps and directions from bus, train and airport but also from downtown and congress place need to be provided in advance via the website for the congress.

Social programme: will be proposed by the *LOC*. A welcome party and a banquet should be planned.

Communication: congress venue, dates, deadlines and general information must be communicated in time in order to be announced on the SEH webpage.

First Announcement: at least 1 year in advance mailed electronically to all SEH Members and generally advertised (SEH website, local host website and ideally other herp website, particularly overseas to extend the attraction to the congress).

Successive announcements: at discretion of *LOC* but consistent with abstract submission and programme production.

Final Programme: posted on the SEH Website and distributed electronically to all those registered. At least, the pdf format should be selected for all electronic information

Abstract book: all abstracts, except those rejected by the abstract reviewers, will be published in the abstract book. Abstracts should be made available online (1 single pdf file) at least 2 weeks in advance to enable delegates to prepare for the meeting.

Plenary lectures: no longer than 60 min, including questions (exceptions need to be agreed on by the SEH Council).

Oral communications: no longer than 20 min, including questions. Final number of sessions and content shall be determined based on the quality of abstracts submitted. The number of available rooms may also influence the number of parallel sessions. Computers need to be available before each session to upload the power point presentations. Chairmen need to be informed to follow exactly this time-frame, particularly if parallel sessions are planned.

Poster presentations: posters should be located in appropriate rooms with ample space for presentations and discussion. No other meetings or main meals should be organised overlapping with the poster sessions. Posters will be on display throughout the day and throughout the whole meeting time. Presenting authors will be available during poster sessions to discuss their work and answer any questions. The poster sessions are regarded as a key part of the meeting and are to be assigned sufficient prominence within the programme. The maximum size of posters must be detailed in advance. All necessary furniture and posting material need to be available in the poster room.

Special sessions and workshops can be proposed and be held if general programme allows.

Ordinary General Meeting (OGM, i.e. General Assembly Meeting): Sufficient time (at least 2 hours, with a buffer of 1-2 extra hours at the end), needs to be reserved of this general assembly of SEH members (OGM). Only SEH members can attend the meeting. It is strongly suggested that this meeting is to be held from 15.00 – 17.00 in the 2nd or 3rd day of the meeting and not overlapping with any scientific session.

Similarly, the time should allow for two meetings of the SEH Council. These **SEH Council meetings** will take place (1) before the OGM and (2) close to the end or after the congress. A room for ca. 10 people with a beamer should be made available for this, and the Council meetings (1-2 h) should overlap as little as possible with scientific sessions. The Council meetings are open only to Council members.

Congress travel agency: if a travel agency is involved in the organisations of travel and hotel accommodation, the agency will take charge of the business risks.

SEH does not bear responsibility for wrong financial estimations of meeting costs.

The congress needs to be made clearly recognizable as a congress of the *Societas Europaea Herpetologica*. This includes appropriate mentioning of SEH at opening and closing sessions of the congress and the display of the SEH logo in a prominent fashion on all information and advertising material pertaining to the meeting, including the Abstract book.

Proceedings. The *LOC* should be clear in stating from the beginning whether it is planned to offer participants the opportunity to publish their contributions in a special Proceedings volume, and whether this volume will be published online only or also in print. Such print volumes have traditionally been

produced for SEH congresses and the name *Acta Europea Herpetologica* has been approved by the OGM in Porto for this Proceedings series. However, the interest of participants in such Proceedings has since decreased and the Council does not particularly encourage their publication, except when sufficient funds are available from the beginning. However, the *LOC* should be clear in stating their intention of producing or not a Proceedings volume from the start, and need to ensure a fast and efficient review and publication process in the case they commit themselves to such a publication. The Proceedings needs to be provided freely at least as a pdf file on the SEH website just after production, and to all congress attendees.

Elaborated by the SEH Council at the Council meeting at Florence, the 14th November of 2010