

SEH News

Minutes of the 15 Ordinary General Meeting of SEH, held in Kusadasi, Turkey, 30th September 2009

Venue: Kusadasi – SeaLight Resort Hotel; **Date:** 30th September 2009, **Time:** 15:00-18:00.

Council members:

Present: N. Ananjeva, M.A. Carretero, M. Denoël, N. Sillero, A. Stumpel, M. Vences, M.A.L. Zuffi;

Not Present: J. Hallermann (justified), D.J. Harris (justified), L. Luiselli (justified), J. Perälä (not justified), E. Razzetti (justified).

SEH members present at OGM: in total 34.

- 1. Report by the President.** N. Ananjeva makes a general description of her activities during her office period, with a special focus on having promoted the herpetological research in most Russian herpetological meetings and congresses.
- 2. Report by the General Secretary.** M. Zuffi informs about the main activities during the last two years. Basically he has followed most of the procedures in accepting, registering and suggesting formal activities of new and actual members and has regularly updated the International Scientific Organizations Association data base. In 2007 he prepared the minutes of the OGM held in Oporto, in 2008 and 2009 the agendas for the Extraordinary General Meeting held 2008 in Oristano, Sardinia, and the Council meeting and the OGM held 2009 in Kusadasi, Turkey. In 2008-2009 more than 150 e-mails were written to deal with administrative and technical queries of SEH members and of applying members. He underlines that the contract between SEH and Brill was finally signed in Sardinia in October 2008. Regular activity also concerned preparing and supporting the congress in Kusadasi, Turkey.
- 3. Report by the Treasurer.** In absence due to illness at the congress in Turkey, J. Hallermann has sent a written report which is presented by Vice President M. Vences. This report covers the period from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2008, and will be examined together with the books and vouchers by the Auditors in November 2009. The financial situation is stable. Currently, there are 380 members but regularly, 25% are in delay with paying their membership fees. As a novelty, the American members can pay their membership fees in dollars. At 31 December 2007 the accounts closed with a positive balance of €34 251.85. At the end of 2008 the accounts closed with a positive balance of €35 622.84 an increase of about 1371 €. A summary of the accounts (all in EUR) is given in table 1.
- 4. Reports by the Auditors.** Information on the reports of the auditors was not yet available at the time of preparation of these minutes. They will be sent to SEH members through the HerpNet E-mail Newsgroup.
- 5. Reports of the Editors of *Amphibia-Reptilia* and *Herpetology Notes*.** Report of the Editor of *Amphibia-Reptilia*. Mathieu Denoël summarizes some statistics about the journal *Amphibia-Reptilia* and informs about the last developments over the two last years. The new on-line submission procedure, Editorial Manager, is working well and allows an efficient management of the manuscripts, which allows to publish quickly manuscripts. In the same way that manuscripts are submitted by authors from all over the world, reviewers and associate editors are selected from many different countries. Unfortunately, half of the contacted reviewers did not agree to revise manuscript, which complicates the task of editors. Thanks to Brill, all issues of *Amphibia-Reptilia* are now available on Ingenta website with no additional cost to access. Previous delays in indexing issues of *Amphibia-Reptilia* in Web of Science seem to be solved. *Amphibia-Reptilia* should benefit soon from the Advanced Online Publication system, i.e., to have accepted papers published one by one after acceptance as post-print on Ingenta website. These procedures should favor the increase of the impact factor. To favour the citation of our journal, authors are reminded that they are allowed to post the post-print pdf of their paper on their personal website and the post-refereed preprint of their paper on institutional repositories.

M. Vences informs about *Herpetology Notes*, the new on-line journal of SEH. The journal was founded in September 2008 and first introduced at the Extraordinary General Meeting of SEH in Oristano, Sardinia, in 2008. The journal is open access and online-only and available at <http://www.seh-herpetology.org/herpetologynotes>. It publishes all kinds of herpetological contributions except descriptions of new taxa, but focuses on short reports on the distribution, natural history, reproduction and behaviour of amphibian and reptiles. *Herpetology Notes* welcomes in particular those contributions that are too descriptive or of limited novelty to be considered for *Amphibia-Reptilia* which remains the flagship journal of SEH. Most decisive for acceptance of a paper in *Herpetology Notes* is the correctness of the data reported therein and of the scientific methods applied. In the first 12 months, of a total of 62 submitted articles, 38 have been accepted. The journal is growing at a steady pace and will probably publish over 250 pages in 2009. Until now, most contributions deal with non-European amphibians and reptiles, but notes and articles on the European herpetofauna will be particularly welcome.

Table 1.

| | 2007 | 2008 |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| Balance brought forward from 2006 | 35 646.10 | 34 251.85 |
| Membership fees | 17 952.36 | 18 800.36 |
| Members' contribution to Conservation Committee | 842.42 | 782.50 |
| Members' contribution to the cost of disagio + VAT (credit card) | 427.83 | 462.93 |
| Bank interests | 1338.74 | 227.05 |
| Donation | 90.00 | 125.00 |
| Sales of SEH publications | 858.00 | 79.00 |
| Income from WWF Caucasus, transfer from savings account to giro account | 9715.21 | 0.00 |
| Total income | 66 870.66 € | 54 728.69 € |
| Transfer from savings account to giro account (1309.05 + 133.58 booked interest) | -1442.63 | 0.00 |
| Printing cost (Brill) | -16 127.00 | -15 491.00 |
| B&S: disagio + VaT (credit card) | -629.59 | -705.93 |
| Postal bank charges: account, cheques, postage | -122.06 | -82.03 |
| Loss by currency exchange | -410.63 | -230.15 |
| Office materials, fax, stamps, phone | -342.56 | -64.20 |
| Transfer to OGM, SEH | -200.00 | 0.00 |
| Conservation grant | -2780.00 | -2000.00 |
| IUCN | 0.00 | -256.24 |
| Diverse costs: travel costs, diverse transfers WWF Caucasus, and others | -10 564.34 | -276.30 |
| Total expenses | -32 618.81 € | -19 105.85 € |
| Saldo per 31.12.2007 | €34 251.85 | |
| Saldo per 31.12.2008 | | €35 622.84 |
| The balance of EUR is covered by the following account assets: | | |
| Bank savings account | 17 534.84 | 17 761.89 |
| Postal giro account | 16 341.91 | 17 479.55 |
| Cash | 375.10 | 381.40 |
| Total | €34 251.85 | €35 622.84 |

6. Report by the Chair of Mapping Committee. Delivered by N. Sillero. The project of the European Atlas has been in stand-by due to the lack of persons with computer skills. Hence, the MC decided to talk with Prof. Michel Ferreira from the University of Porto and he accepted to supervise an academic work to develop the system. This academic work can be a MSc thesis or a final course project and can be separated in two works (the atlas website and the distributed database structure) and therefore two students would be necessary. The intention is to build the website and a prototype of distributed database, ready to be installed in any European country. If all goes well, the academic work will begin the next course and will last one year.

Raimond Creemers and Neftalí Sillero assisted this year to the 2nd Congress on Conservation Biology, held in Prague (Czech Republic). R. Creemers presented an oral communication in the Workshop "Joint European Censuses for Conservation" with the title "The new atlas of European amphibians and reptiles". The aim was to discuss the European collaboration in other species groups as well as the possibilities for enhancing practical and strategic contacts. Funds might be asked through LifeWatch.

7. Report by the Chair of the Conservation Committee. Delivered by A. Stumpel. The Conservation Committee is going to prepare another web-site linked to the SEH main web page. All info regarding the Conservation Committee and reports are linked within. After the 14th OGM the CC has completely reorganised itself including new members.

8. Report by the Web Master. In absence, E. Razzetti delivers the report through M. Zuffi. In the past five years the number of first time visitors has been stable while the number of returning visitors decreased of about 10% and the number of page loads decreased of about 20% in the past two years. This probably is due to the fact that the returning visitors are not getting enough fresh news or data to visit the website again or explore it.

The HerpNet mailing list is very appreciated and the number of members is slowly increasing year by year (422 members in 2005, 569 in 2007 and 633 in September 2009). Also the number of messages is increasing and the mailing list has become a useful tool for the herpetological community.

9. Statute changes [as proposed in *Amphibia-Reptilia* 30 (2009): 299-302]. M. Vences presents the change proposals as previously made available to members in

SEH news (*Amphibia-Reptilia* 30: 299-302). The main goal of these changes is to allow candidates for the SEH Council to be re-elected to Council positions even after having occupied positions in the council for two election periods (i.e., 8 years). However, after an 8-year period there needs to be a 4-years break without occupying a Council position, and subsequently the candidate can be elected only into a different position than occupied before. Furthermore, according to the proposed statute changes, the GM can terminate the office period of a council member before the 4 years for which he/she was initially elected.

A non-secret voting is unanimously approved by the OGM. The statute changes are thus voted openly. Results are: 32 in favour, 2 abstentions, 0 against. The changes are thus approved.

SEH member J. Schmidler remarks that the statute changes will only become effective after having also been approved by the corresponding authorities in Germany where the society is registered. M. Vences confirms that the modified Statutes will be submitted to the Amtsgericht in Bonn for approval as soon as possible.

10. Conservation funds for SEH grants and received reports from award winners. It is informed the call for SEH grants for 2010 will open in October 2009.

11. Venue of next SEH Congress, scheduled for 2011. Two candidatures are available: Luxembourg-Germany (Trier) and Hungary, represented by Michael Veith and Judith Vörös, respectively. Both present the planned venues and logistics. The Council acknowledges them and informs that the new Council will make a decision soon [in the Council meeting carried out directly after the OGM, the Council has then, M. Veith and J. Vörös being present, accepted and acknowledged the proposal of Luxembourg-Trier for the next Congress in 2011; this decision was mainly taken because this proposal had already been announced to the Council several months before and discussions with the organizers had already started, assuming that no other proposal would emerge. Hungary is likely to be selected for the OGM in 2013 if they maintain their capabilities and interest to hold the congress there].

12. Council members election. The candidates for vacant council positions have been announced in SEH news. Vice-Treasurer J. Perälä has resigned from his former position of vice-Treasurer, so that also this position is available (the resignation was subsequently officially confirmed by him on 2nd November to General Secretary M. Zuffi). On the behalf of past and actual Council, we wish express our gratitude to J. Perälä for his support to the Society.

The General Secretary asks to the Assembly whether votes for Council positions can be summarized in a common ballot. This is accepted unanimously. Total members present are 34. Results are as follow:

President: Claudia Corti 31 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention.

Vice-Secretary: Jelka Crnobrnja-Isailovic 32 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention.

Treasurer: Susanne Hauswaldt 32 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention.

Second Co-Editor: Sylvain Ursenbacher 33 in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

Vice-Treasurer (provisional at the time of voting; confirmed after official receipt of resignation of J. Perälä): Petros Lymberakis 33 in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

13. Varia. In the name of the Council, the General Secretary acknowledges the leaving Council members for the work carried out during their office periods.

14. Closing. The OGM is closed at 17:10 h.

Prepared by
M. Zuffi, C. Corti, J. Crnobrnja-Isailovic,
M. Denoël, S. Hauswaldt, N. Sillero
and M. Vences.

Editorial Report 2008

One hundred and eighteen manuscripts have been submitted to *Amphibia-Reptilia* in 2008, i.e., a similar value than in 2005 but a bit less than the two last years. The manuscripts originated from all the continents with Europe (45%) and North-America (24%) coming first. There is a relative increase of interest for *Amphibia-Reptilia* for authors outside Europe, showing the broad coverage of our journal. Corresponding authors came from 34 countries; the top five being constituted by Argentina, the United States, Spain, Germany, and Portugal. Of these submissions, half the manuscripts were rejected. Manuscripts that were not editorially rejected because they fell outside of the scope of the journal (e.g. because of ethical concerns) went through one to three revisions. 327 review requests were sent, with English speaking countries coming first (U.S. and then U.K.), followed by Germany, Spain and Italy but reviewers from 31 other countries were also contacted. Only one reviewer out of two agreed to send back his comments, which complicated the editorial work. Despite this, the editorial process remained on average fast with respect to international standards: 18 days to give a decision (including editorial rejection) after a submission, but as manuscripts need more than a submission, the whole process lasted more time (30 to 45 days are left to authors to revise each version of their manuscript). As last years, the journal contained 600 pages.

The new on-line submission procedure, Editorial Manager, has proved to be much helpful. It allowed a better coordination between authors, reviewers, associate editors, co-editors and the publisher. Everything is archived in the system, which prevent files lost and delays and allows a fast selection of reviewers and associate editors in taking into account their current workload. Reminders are also set up in the system to shorten the delays. Some improvements have been done during the year to lighten the different steps