



Snezhanka Cave  
Rhodope Mountain  
South Bulgaria

Photo by:  
Valery Peltekov



***This Newsletter is issued  
by the Bureau of the  
European Speleological  
Federation (FSE)***

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## New FSE Newsletter

It is with great pleasure that the European Speleological Federation (FSE) renews its efforts to publish a Newsletter. This Newsletter will be exclusively available in electronic form and it will be distributed through the FSE mailing lists. It will be edited by the FSE Bureau and will inform member countries and individual speleologists about important events nationally and internationally; new developments and

the initiatives of the FSE and its member countries.

This Newsletter will be released on an occasional basis. As the official FSE languages are English and French, news in both languages can be published.

With cordial speleological regards  
The FSE Bureau, November 2015

## Nature Alert Campaign was a success

The online petition in order to maintain and even enforce the European Habitat Directive (NATURA 2000) ended on Sunday 26th of July 2015. 520.325 citizens have contributed their signatures and demonstrated their desire to save nature.

We have to thank all those who took actions after having been made aware of the petition via the FSE - ECPC sites and the distribution e-mails.

The initiators of this campaign, EEB, FeEE, Birdlife and WWF will all do their best to make sure that our voices as EU citizens are heard.

Possibly as a reaction after the public consultation, 9 EU Ministers told Commissioner Vella via a joint statement in October, that Nature Directives should retain their current form: "The Directives should retain their current form. We believe that amending or merging the Directives is not expedient."



***FSE becomes the first  
Associated Speleological  
Organisation in the UIS***

The Bureau of the Union Internationale de Spéléologie (UIS) has decided to accept FSE as an Associated Speleological Organisation at its meeting in Sydney (Australia) on 31. October – 1. November 2014.



The Austrian Speleological Association is deeply saddened by the death of our dearest friend and inspiring colleague Sabine Zimmerebner.

In July 2015 she was hit by falling rocks during cave exploration near Salzburg. The cave rescue operation, initiated immediately, could not save her life.

Sabine was a very experienced and highly distinguished caver.

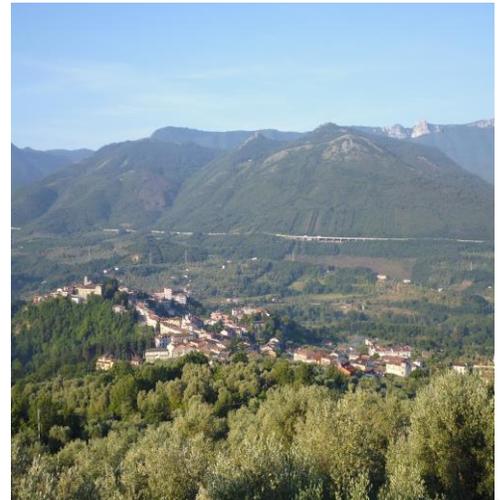
Her vigour and infectious cheerfulness will never be forgotten.

## EuroSpeleo Forum 2015 in Italy (Pertosa-Auletta)

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Italian Congresso Nazionale di Speleologia, the 10<sup>th</sup> EuroSpeleo Forum, open to all European speleologists, was organized between 30<sup>th</sup> May to 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2015 by the Società Speleologica Italiana, Federazione Speleologica Campana, and Gruppo Speleo Alpinistico Vallo di Diano. It took place both in the scenic villages of Pertosa and Auletta about 120 km southeast of Naples. The congress motto was "Data Sharing", in all its aspects, to enable a fruitful dialogue between scientists, cavers and institutions as data is the backbone for decision-making in territorial planning and environmental management.

More than 350 speleologists and karst researchers from 11 European countries and from China joined the event.

The FSE General Assembly Meeting (GAM) was held on 30<sup>th</sup> May in Auletta.



## EuroSpeleo 2016

### 5th European Speleological Congress in the United Kingdom

In August 2016., the UK will be hosting the 5<sup>th</sup> European Speleological Congress in the beautiful karst region of the Yorkshire Dales national Park in Northern England. The venue for this event will be the Dalesbridge Centre a large open site situated near the pretty villages of Austwick and Clapham. The Yorkshire Dales is one of the UK's primary caving areas with spectacular caves and potholes only a few kilometres from the event. There are also two show caves in the locality and the opportunity to climb the famous 'Three Peaks' of the Yorkshire Dales.

There will be varied and interesting lecture programme, workshops and training sessions. In the large trade hall numerous competitions will be held and entertainment will be provided each evening. Full catering will be available throughout the week, a banquet and a well stocked bar serving some of the area's most famous mouth watering beers. Camping will be available at the event as well as bunkhouses, youth hostels and guest houses all providing accommodation locally.

For those wanting more than a full week, there will be pre and post congress gatherings in South Wales, the Mendips, the Peak District and Ireland where spectacular caving is on offer. There will also be opportunities to visit mines in the north of England for those interested in mine history and archaeology.

All the major caves close to the venue will be pre-rigged including Gaping Gill Britain's deepest day light shaft that can be easily descended on a specially constructed mechanical winch. The caving trips are varied and cover many different grades of difficulty. Therefore there is something for everyone. Visit the events web site [www.eurospeleo.uk](http://www.eurospeleo.uk) for more information.



### Some upcoming events

- **6-12 February 2016**  
17<sup>th</sup> Symposium of  
Vulcanospeleology, Big  
Island, Hawaii, United  
States
- **30 May-6 June 2016**  
Rupt du Puits 50 years,  
Robert Espagne, Meuse,  
France
- **13-20 August 2016**  
5<sup>th</sup> European  
Speleological Congress:  
EuroSpeleo 2016,  
Austwick, Yorkshire,  
United Kingdom
- **15-16 August 2016**  
4<sup>th</sup> European Protection  
Symposium, Austwick,  
Yorkshire, United  
Kingdom
- **4-11 September 2016**  
International Speleo  
Photo Meeting ESPM  
2016, Suncillo, Burgos,  
Spain
- **5-9 September 2016**  
Eurokarst 2016  
Conference, Neuchâtel,  
Switzerland
- **6-10 March 2017**  
Congress Hypogea 2017,  
Nevşehir, Cappadocia,  
Turkey
- **23-30 July 2017**  
17<sup>th</sup> International  
Congress of Speleology,  
Sidney, Australia

**All events, along with  
detailed information, can  
be found on:**

<https://www.facebook.com/eurospeleo/events?key=events>

**Please send all your  
international events  
(expedition, congress,  
symposium etc.) to  
[contact@eurospeleo.eu](mailto:contact@eurospeleo.eu)**

## The newly elected FSE Bureau, Pertosa-Auletta, Italy



From left to right: Henk Goutier (Treasurer, NL), Ged Campion (President, UK), Martina Dršková (new elected General-Secretary, SK), Michael Laumanns (Vice-President, DE), Ernest Geyer (Vice-Treasurer, AT), and Jean-Claude Thies (new elected Chairman of the European Cave Protection Commission ECPC, LU).

## FSE becomes a board member of the European Environmental Bureau (EEB)

On 22<sup>nd</sup> October Bärbel Vogel, member of FSE's ECPC and President of the German Speleological Federation, as well as member of the IUCN/WCPA Caves and Karst Specialist and Geo-heritage Specialist Groups, was unanimously elected as a member of the Board of the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) in Brussels. This unprecedented success is the result of the long term efforts of ECPC to contribute to European environmental legislation and decision-making. It will allow FSE to increase its efforts to ensure karst and cave protection at European level.

Created in 1974, EEB ([www.eeb.org](http://www.eeb.org)) is Europe's largest association of environmental organisations with 140+ member federations who gain their membership from the general public thus representing 15 million European citizen. It acts as the ears and voice of its members towards the EU decision makers and beyond.

EEB works on a vast array of environmental issues and their policy officers use experts, scientists, their members, and politicians to work towards developing and protecting



environmental policies.

The office in Brussels closely coordinates EU-oriented activities with EEB Members at national level around Europe. EEB also works in coalitions, such as the Green 10 and Spring Alliance, or at a global level through the Global Policies and Sustainability Unit as well as in ad-hoc coalitions.

## Caves & Karst - Protection and Conservation under EU Law



The 4th EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium (ESPS) will be held on the 15th and 16th of August, during the 5th European Speleology Congress 2016 in Great Britain.

As the topic of the Symposium already indicates, there is Conservation and there is Preservation and finally there are laws. How can and should we deal with protection laws? How could we initiate protection measures in our caves and on our karst?

There are a number of best-practices in cave protection all over Europe that show how coordinated work between cavers, scientists, nature protection and especially authorities can be effective in the field and also work to the satisfaction of all parties. These case studies of good practice are often transferrable to other regions in Europe. We can learn a lot from such success stories.

The 4th EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium is dealing with these matters. There is no age limit when it comes to acting for a good cause, so we invite you all to take part in this 2-Day symposium on the 15th -16th of August during the 5th European Caving congress 2016 in Great Britain.

The 1st circular with all relevant information can be found at the FSE/ECPC website <http://eurospeleo.eu/en/commissions-en/cave-protection/ecpc-activities/eurospeleo-protection-symposium.html> or at the congress website <http://www.eurospeleo.uk/about/ecpc-symposium.php>

If you have further requests, please get in contact with us at:  
protection@eurospeleo.org

## Proposal for a EuroSpeleo Rescue Fund

With this proposal, made by FSE Vice-President Michael Laumanns at the last General Assembly in Pertosa-Auletta, FSE intends to follow-up a promise given to our Spanish colleagues, as well as to the whole European community of speleologists, after the recent accident of Cecilio Lopez Sanchez in a 400m deep cave near Chachapoyas, Peru.

More than 100 cavers were involved in the successful rescue of Cecilio. However, most of the Spanish colleagues who joined the cave rescue did so at their own expense and an amount of well over 200.000 EUR was spent from personal resources of the cave rescue team. This was followed by a European-wide crowdfunding call-up supported by FSE, which found a tremendous echo amongst European cavers.

However, this support cannot overcome the fact that a general lack of funds exists for rescue operations in FSE member countries bearing in mind that currently the best special insurance available for cave explorers is not offered outside their respective countries or on a Pan-European level.

Consequently, a voluntary, self-administered Cave Rescue Solidarity Fund, gathering all individual European cavers could be a solution to this apparent funding gap. Each member of the Fund would contribute a one-time payment to the Fund and, only when the Fund was used up, would a new payment then be necessary.

Such Fund has existed since 1995 in Germany and was an unexpected success with currently over € 40,000 being made available.

The proposal was discussed on the basis of a guideline paper presented to the FSE Delegates in Auletta-Pertosa. This paper (in English) was distributed to all FSE member countries and can be requested at any time from the FSE Bureau.

A number of questions were put forward by delegates related to what the Fund might possibly cover, whether it might trigger rescue organisations, so far working for free, to then issue unnecessary bills. There were also queries related to administrative matters. As the management of an additional fund with many potential members will overburden the FSE treasury a different responsible organisation might be needed. The possible abuse of the Fund was also discussed. Contributions to the Fund could be adapted to the different economic situation in member countries.

As a result, the FSE Bureau was tasked to investigate among member organisations whether a EuroSpeleo Rescue Solidarity Fund would be of interest and, if this was the case, to pursue the issue and to present a fine-tuned proposal for further discussion at a later date.

**As a result, all European cavers, as well as speleological organizations representing an FSE country, are invited to send their views, input and suggestions regarding the possible creation of a EuroSpeleo Rescue Fund to the FSE Bureau (contact@eurospeleo.org).**