

**Invitation to the
15th EuroSpeleo Forum
and the 61st Annual Meeting of the German Speleological Federation (VdHK)
in Breitscheid / Westerwald (Hessen) 18 - 21 May 2023**

The organizers of the conference are the Speleological Working Group Hessen e.V. (SAH) and the Federal State Association for Cave and Karst Research Hessen e.V.

Preliminary Programme:

Wednesday 17 May 2023	from 16H00	Arrivals, set-up of the conference as well as the stands and exhibitions and get-together
Thursday, 18 May 2023	08H00 - 10H00 09H00 - 18H00 14H00 - 15H00 15H00 - 16H30 16H30 - 18H00 18H30 - 20H00 20H30 - 21H30	Breakfast Field trips to caves and on the surface, Workshops Lunch Presentations Meetings of VdHK - Workgroups Dinner Presentation „The Karst of Breitscheid - Erdbach - Overview and interaction between research, limestone extraction and tourism “ Social evening
Friday, 19 May 2023	08H00 - 10H00 09H00 - 18H00 14H00 - 15H00 15H00 - 18H00 16H00 - 18H00 16H00 - 18H00 18H30 - 20H00 20H30 - 21H30	Breakfast Field trips to caves and on the surface, Workshops Lunch Presentations VdHK Advisory Committee Meeting FSE Bureau Meeting Dinner Presentation „30 Years of Exploration in the Herbstlabyrinth-Adventhöhlensystem - Exciting Discoveries and Scientific Results“ Social evening
Samstag, 20 May 2023	07H00 - 10H00 09H00 - 12H15 09H00 - 12H15 12H30 - 14H00 14H00 - 15H30 14H00 - 16H00 15H30 - 16H00 16H00 - 17H30 16H00 - 17H30 18H00 - 19H00 19H30 - 21H30	Breakfast General Assembly VdHK FSE General Assembly Meeting Lunch Presentations, Workshops FSE Bureau Meeting Coffee break Presentations, Workshops European Cave Protection Commission Meeting Dinner Festive evening: Awarding of the des „EuroSpeleo Protection Label“ of FSE/ECPC and of the „Benno Wolf Award“ of VdHK Social evening
Sunday, 21 May 2023	08H00 - 11H00 after 09H00	Breakfast Field-trips, Workshops Dismantling of exhibitions/stands and departure

The conference:

The 15th EuroSpeleo Forum (ESF) will take place simultaneously with the VdHK meeting. The ESF is the annual meeting of the Fédération Spéléologique Européenne (FSE) where delegates of FSE member States gather for their General Assembly and speleologists from FSE member countries will come together. Also, a meeting of the European Cave Protection Commission (ECPC) will take place. Thus, the conference program also offers presentations and exhibitions in English. So this year everyone can renew contacts to our European neighbors.

Conference venue:

The meeting will take place in the multipurpose hall of the commune of Breitscheid and in the adjacent Fritz-Philippi school compound.

Location of the venue: Am Südhang 2 A, D - 35767 Breitscheid

Registration:

The participation fee is EUR 35 per person. Children and teenagers up to 18 years old are exempt from a fee. Registration, information on field-trips and presentations will be available online on 1 March 2023 at <https://www.vdhk.de/jahrestagung>

Getting there:

The Speleological Working Group Hessen e.V. (SAH) and the Federal State Association for Cave and Karst Research Hessen e.V. suggests some new approaches for a sustainable conference: a special event ticket can be booked in cooperation with Deutsche Bahn. This means that train journeys to the nearest train station (Herborn), no matter from which place in Germany, are offered for a reduced fixed price. Detailed information will be available on 1st of March under the above-mentioned link. From Herborn train station a public bus (line 510) connects to the conference venue in Breitscheid (bus stop "Rathaus"). If required, a shuttle service will be available to the conference venue between Herborn train station or the nearest Intercity train station in Dillenburg. Those who prefer to use a train/bicycle combination will need about 30 minutes by bike from Herborn or Dillenburg to the conference venue. The organizers also encourage making use of carpooling. You are invited to specify a request for a lift or an offer for passengers during the registration procedure and you will be contacted by e-mail if other people wish to travel together in order to allow a subsequent individual communication between interested parties.

Accommodation:

Free parking spaces for mobile homes will be available in the immediate vicinity of the school compound. Sleeping quarters in the school will be provided (mattress and sleeping bag required). Tents can be erected on the adjacent sports field. Showers and sanitary facilities are available in the gym hall of the school. If needed, please book B&B or hotel accommodation individually; further information will be provided at the homepage of the conference.

Meals:

Breakfast, lunch and dinner as well as cold drinks will be offered at moderate prices throughout the event. Coffee/tea is free of charge.

Special attention is paid to regional products, local distribution channels and especially to animal-friendly husbandry when preparing the meals. Vegetarian alternatives will be indicated. However, vegan alternatives are not always available during the conference. For our planning purposes, you will be asked to indicate your preferences during the registration process.

In Breitscheid you can find shops like a bakery, a butcher, and a supermarket. There is also a pizzeria and a restaurant in the facilities of the local rifle club.

Field-trips:

There will be an abundance of caving trips and surface excursions, both around Breitscheid and in other karst areas in the region. You will need an individual insurance to cover salvage costs from caves to participate in caving trips. A complete list of field-trips with detailed descriptions will be provided at the conference website.

Presentations and Workshops:

Various talks and workshops are offered on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The program will be available at the conference website and will be subject of constant updating. Lectures in English and German can be registered until April 15, 2023 at vdhk2023@hoehlenkataster-hessen.de. Lectures should not be longer than 30 or 45 minutes, including time for discussion.

Extras:

A conference T-shirt will be offered for a price of EUR 13 when pre-ordered during the registration process. The on-conference purchase price will be EUR 15.

For the first time there will be a bicycle excursion offered on a German annual caver's meeting.

The Speleological Working Group Hessen e.V. (SAH) and the Federal State Association for Cave and Karst Research Hessen e.V look forward to you all !