



European Cave Protection Commission

general information and agenda

The European speleological community includes a vast variety of about 50.000 cavers in all the caving nations from all over Europe. All of them are combined by their common passion to the underground. Since the exploring, the surveying and the scientific work in geology, hydrology, archaeology, palaeontology, climatology, biology and other disciplines are taking place in the dark of the underground, caves and speleology are unfortunately still a minor topic for the public.

But first of all caves are fascinating and worth protecting ecosystems. This speleological and natural heritage is worth to be preserved for the next generations as it combines the natural and historical past with our present:

Caves are important ...

- archives for the knowledge of geological processes, climate conditions and climate change in the past.
- places of discovery for the past fauna of the ice ages and far beyond.
- prehistoric sites, which preserved fundamental archaeological information about the beginning of mankind till the youngest history.
- cultural and religious sites of the past and the present
- habitats for a highly specialised fauna
- parts of the drinking water supply in karst areas, which are endangered due to contamination
- ecosystems, which react very sensitively to rapid changes
- places for the present climate research (incl. monitoring of the microclimate)
- etc.

And for speleologists they are simply one of the last places on earth, one can still discover like a whole new planet. And this spirit of research keeps all of them going caving all the year alongbeing underground in Europe.

But this underground world faces many anthropogenic hazards nowadays - quarries, road / building construction, contamination with pollutants and many more. These are cases, which occur in many countries and require big efforts of the local speleological communities, sometimes far beyond their opportunities.

Recognising that these local cases are an indication of missing knowledge about the worthy of protection for this part of our environment, the idea to work on cave protection at a European level arose.

The European Cave Protection Commission of the Speleological Federation of the European Union (FSUE) was founded.

I. Goals and objectives of European Cave Protection

The aim of the European Cave Protection Commission is to combine the single efforts of local speleologists and national speleological associations to a international active group, which encourage the praxis on cave and karst protection in Europe. In addition, the commission shall be a international partner to support national organisations and associations working on cave protection.

Goals and objectives are:

- establishing the European Cave Protection Workgroup as main contact for cave and karst protection for all countries
- setting up a political lobby for caves and cave protection in Europe
- helping to protect the national speleological and natural heritage at an international level
- helping to propose new directives for cave and karst protection
- providing information about cave and karst protection and its implementation for public authorities, speleological organisations, non-governmental organisations and others
- setting up the "EuroSpeleo Protection Label" for exemplary cave environmental actions

II. Organisation of the European Cave Protection Commission

The most important basis of the European Cave Protection Commission is the experience and knowledge from speleologists from many different countries and karst areas with various kinds of problems/ approaches according to cave protection. Only this creates a real European group, where speleologists from all parts of Europe are integrated. Currently persons from 15 countries participate in the European Cave Protection Commission of the FSUE.

members (date: 4th December 2007)

Austria	Eckart Herrmann
Bulgaria	Vesselin Drobenov,
France	Francis Guichard; Jean-Pierre Holvoet; Viviana Lugo; Olivier Vidal
Germany	Christiane Grebe, Jochen Goetz
Greece	Fanis Ellinas; Christos Petreas
Luxembourg	Jean-Claude Thies
Norway	Anders Westlund
Portugal	Ana Sofia Reboleira
Poland	Jan Urban
Romania	Paul-Erik Damm; Viorel Lascu, Iona Meleg
Slovenia	Franci Gabrovsek
Spain	Javi Moreno Garcia; Marcos Vaqueiro-Rodriguez
Sweden	Thomaz Gustafsson
Switzerland:	Olivier Hitz
UK	Ged Champion

In order to organise and co-ordinate the actions of all commission members and the group itself the following persons were determined for the Commission Board:

*Moderator:	Christiane Grebe, DE	Head of Commission
**Project Manager:	Viviana Lugo, FR	Secretary of the Commission
**Project Manager:	Ioana Meleg, RO	Secretary of the Commission

responsibilities and tasks of the commission board

*Moderator:

- public relations
- organisation of the group/actions/events
- report to the FSUE bureau
- representative of the commission/ contact for public authorities etc.
- correspondence with co-operation partners
- support of the work teams

**Project Manager:

- supporting the commission board action in matters of public relations, organisation of the group/actions/events
- co-ordination of projects from different areas in order to gain a larger public and political interest all over Europe
- direct contact for the operators: official correspondence on behalf of the commission, reports of activity, etc.
- reports to the moderator

associate members of the commission board:

Technical Adviser: These are contact person within the board, who have knowledge about specific topics and issues and support and assist the commission board and any European caver in questions related to this topic.

- European relations / financing / programs: Olivier Vidal, FR

Operator: They organise the activities within the work teams and act as direct contact to the commission board.

- public politics work team: Viorel Lascu, RO

III. European Cave Protection Forum

In order to present the work of the commission and to inform about cave protection in Europe we would like to set up a European Cave Protection Forum. First there will be a site available on the internet.

content:

- news, activities, contact data, links, co-operation partners
- presentations about caves and cave protection
- reports of the work teams
- “cave protection” bibliography / guidelines / directives / paper / official texts / agreements
- description of co-ordinated projects and protection plans

IV. Subjects of work and work teams

The idea behind the work teams is to subdivide the commission's work into 4-5 main subjects: legislation, public politics, publications, public appearance and campaign (and science). The members of the commission decide in which work team or teams they would like to participate and for each work team one operator, who organises the activities within the team and acts as direct contact to the commission board, is determined.

In the first step the members of each work team prepare an agenda with the issues they want to work on and how they organise this work. This proposals should be sent to the project managers (protection@eurospeleo.org). In case of questions, needed support and any others reason, please contact the commission board under protection@eurospeleo.org. But in general each work team is kindly ask to work independently in prior accordance with the commission board. Reports about the state of affairs in case of need are sent to the project managers.

Vercors 2008

All work teams are kindly ask to discuss possible activities / presentations etc. for Vercors 2008, where the 1st EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium will take place. The European Cave Protection Commission organises this session in co-operation with Christophe Tschertter (Commission Environnement FFS) and Damien Delanghe (Conservatoire FFS). Christiane Grebe, Viviana Lugo and Ioana Meleg will take care of the organisation for our group.

Please send your ideas to protection@eurospeleo.org. Thank you!

The objectives listed below for the work teams are proposals, which have been discussed as essential goals of the commission. Furthermore new or modified issues should be discussed in the work teams.

1. legislation work team

operator:

members: Franci Gabrovsek, SI/IUCN
Jochen Goetz, DE
Javi Moreno, ES

subjects of work:

- inventory of the existing legislation/actions (positive and negative) in each country on cave protection
- proposing a new European Law or Directive according to the IUCN Guidelines
- helping to propose new national laws or directives
- etc.

2. public politics work team

operator: Viorel Lascu, RO

members: Christiane Grebe, DE
Olivier Vidal, FR
Viviana Lugo, FR

subjects of work:

- setting up European actions and try to finance them at European level (EU Programs like Life, Natura 2000, etc)
- co-ordinating projects on FSUE level

- setting up a political lobby for cave protection in Europe
- finding organisations and politicians that support our goal and objectives
- helping the countries to protect the national speleological heritage
- gathering all endangered areas in Europe
- work with local/national organisations

3. publications work team

operator:

members: Ioana Meleg, RO
Jochen Goetz, DE

subjects of work:

- translation of the IUCN “Guidelines for Cave and Karst Protection” and making them public and known by all cavers
- FSUE - guidelines: “10 things cavers can do to protect caves” (short but clear)
- translation of the N.S.S. “Guide to responsible Caving” (proposal)
- etc.

4. public appearance and campaign work team

operator:

members: Jean-Claude Thies, LU
Christiane Grebe, DE
Vesselin Drobenov, BG

subjects of work:

- establishing the European Cave Protection Workgroup as main contact for environmental protection in karst and caves areas (for all countries etc.)
- campaign to make us known by all local cavers / brochure (to be discussed)
- campaign in all national caving magazines
- link formula to gain access to the Cave Protection internet site from all national caving sites
- setting up the "EuroSpeleo Protection Label" for exemplary cave environmental actions (recommendations and rules for this label)
- educational projects
- etc.

V. Agenda till Vercors 2008 (part 1)

1) set-up and composition of work teams:

Please mail soon in which work team you would like to participate. Afterwards the work teams are kindly ask to work out work issues send proposals for their work to the commission board and a short description of their planed activities, which we can publish. You are free to organize the work in your teams on your own.

2) set up of the European Cave Protection forum / homepage as part of the FSUE-homepage

proposed content:

news: report of the 1st meeting in Ramsau

activities: general paper, description of the work teams, agenda

contact data: list with all members etc. and countries (without e-mail address)

presentations about caves and cave protection

reports of the work teams:when ready

“cave protection” bibliography: collection of literature about cave protection

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If somebody is willing to contribute something to the forum (literature, presentations, other ideas...) or you would like to help, you are more than welcome. Please mail to protection@eurospeleo.org.

3) memorandum about Ilisu Dam in the Turkish Republic in co-operation with the IUCN

During the meeting in Ramsau we agreed with Franci Gabrovsek from the IUCN that we would like to publish a memorandum about Ilisu Dam in the Turkish Republic in co-operation with the cave and karst task force (Elery Hamilton and Franci Gabrovsek) of the IUCN. At the moment we are trying to contact Turkish cavers about this subject, also with the help of some Turkish cavers living in Austria and some other contacts.

4) resolution to safe the cave and karst areas in the German and Austrian Alps (published soon to the commission members, all national delegates and federations for remarks)

The text of the proposed resolution will be translated into English in the next weeks and will be sent to you, when ready.

5) Vercors 2008

As already mentioned in point IV during Vercors 2008 the 1st EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium will take place, which need to be prepared. Please discuss in your work teams possible actions/presentations etc. for Vercors 2008 and mail them to protection@eurospeleo.org, so that we can help you to realise your ideas.

→ 1st EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium

→ official FSUE Cave Protection Commission meeting/meetings of the work teams

→ Public Round Table concerning cave protection)

VI. News

1. lobbyist trip to Brussels 19th-21st November

Christiane took part in a lobbyist trip to Brussels some German politicians organized, where she could promote the European Cave Protection Commission and the need of cave and karst protection. She could talk with some important people and got to know the lobbyist scene of the Brussels in order to find out future strategies of “cave lobbying”.

2. Meeting in Brussels on the 24th January

We are invited by Basque Member of the European Parliament in Brussels. In the Basque Country was recently discovered a palaeontological cave from the lower Magdalenian period, called PRAILEAITZ. The Parliament would like to help preserving these type of caves and invited to a meeting with to compare and exchange ideas. Viviana, Ioana, Christiane, Marcos and Javi are preparing this. Christiane and maybe Marcos will participate in the meeting.