

Minutes - ESEB Membership Meeting 2022

Location: Prague Conference Centre, Congress hall

Date: Friday, 19 August 2022

Time: 13.45 - 14.25 CEST

Attendees:

Officers: Astrid Groot (President, Chair), Ophélie Ronce (Past President), Andrea Betancourt (Vice-President), Koen Verhoeven (Executive Vice-President), Max Reuter (*JEB* Editor-in-Chief), Mike Ritchie (*EL* Officer), Ellen Decaestecker (Secretary), Lukas Kratochvil (outgoing Congress organizer), Toni Gabaldón (incoming Congress Organizer)

Excused: Tracey Chapman (President-elect)

Invited: Nicola Cook (*JEB* Managing Editor), Ute Friedrich (ESEB Office Manager)

Members: 235 members signed the lists attached.

A. Groot opened the meeting at 13.45 CEST.

1. Minutes of the last members meeting in 2021

The minutes have been approved online by the Steering Committee and signed by the President and the Secretary.

A. Groot introduced the officers present and thanked Lukáš Kratochvil for the excellent organisation of this year's ESEB congress.

2. Secretary's Report

2.1. Membership status

E. Decaestecker reported that the ESEB Membership remained stable compared to 2019 with some ups and downs due to the unexpected non-congress year in 2021. Only about 26% of the members are students, hence this should be improved. Possible measurements are currently discussed within Council including also the two ESEB student representatives, Viktor Kovalov and Falk Nagies. Members are always welcome to send ideas or suggestions to the ESEB office (office@eseb.org) and/or the student representatives (egsr@eseb.org).

2.2. Initiatives

E. Decaestecker briefly presented the Initiatives of the Society. Further information on all Initiatives is available at the ESEB website.

➤ ESEB Conference Travel Awards

These awards are available to visit the ESEB congress, the Evolution meeting of the American Societies, the joint meeting of ESEB and the American societies in 2024, and the European Meeting of PhD Students in Evolutionary Biology

(EMPSEB). Scientists based in high-income countries are not eligible. The next call will be announced in autumn 2022.

➤ Environmental Impact Committee

A proposal by the Environmental Impact committee about measurements to reduce the environmental impact of the society's activities is currently discussed in Council. The Environmental Impact committee welcomes volunteers with and without experience in this field to join the committee. Interested persons should contact the ESEB office (office@eseb.org).

➤ Equal Opportunities (EO) Initiative

The EO Initiative offers congress attendance aid grants, funds to support activities that will improve equal opportunities, and, since this year, the ESEB Under-represented ECR Achievement (EUEA) award. Anne Charmantier, chair of the EO initiative, explained that the prize will be awarded each year to two young researchers who have experienced difficult circumstances while still successfully conducting their work. Demanding circumstances are primarily, but not solely, disabilities, single parenting, and caring responsibilities that have created unequal opportunities. The winner of the EUEA award in 2022 are Kelley Leung (University of Groningen, NL), and Öncü Maracı (University of Bielefeld, DE). The prizes were formally awarded during the meeting. Both winners summarised briefly their challenges and pointed out the importance of senior researchers using their power to support equal opportunities and diversity in evolutionary biology.

➤ Global Evolutionary Biology Initiative

The newly established Global Evolutionary Biology Initiative announced a new call for proposals recently and welcomes proposals to support emerging communities worldwide. The deadline of the current call will close on November 25th, 2022.

➤ Godfrey Hewitt mobility award

The award supports fieldwork or a period of research at a laboratory for young researchers. The next call will be announced in the autumn.

➤ John Maynard Smith Prize

The JMS Prize is awarded annually to an outstanding young scientist in the field of evolutionary biology. E. Decaestecker mentioned that the prize winners of the last three years will give their presentations later this afternoon.

➤ Outreach Initiative

One of the most successful initiatives of ESEB, supporting projects worldwide that aim to increase the public knowledge of evolutionary biology.

➤ Policy Committee

The Policy Committee aims to raise awareness of potential policy impact of evolutionary biology research within ESEB and will produce briefing notes on key topics to be disseminated to policy makers. The policy committee includes a representative from EvoKE.

➤ **Progress Meetings in Evolutionary Biology**

The initiative supports small meetings on a focussed topic. The meetings should lead to a Special Issue or Invited Review published in the *Journal of Evolutionary Biology*.

➤ **Special Topic Network**

The initiative supports networks up to six years. E. Decaestecker pointed out that an anonymous panel, not the STN committee, evaluates the submitted proposals each year. The STN committee decided to fund up to four STNs with reduced budget in 2023. The next call will be announced in the autumn.

➤ **Stearns Graduate Student Prize**

The prize is aimed at recognising outstanding graduate research, hence the publication should arise from a major part of a MSc or PhD thesis.

This year's prize has been awarded to Juliette Aminian Biquet, for her paper "Phenotypic plasticity drives phenological changes in a Mediterranean blue tit population" (doi.org/10.1111/jeb.13950).

2.3. Congresses

The next joint congress of the American Societies and ESEB will take place from July 26-30, 2024, in Montreal, Canada. The organising committee currently looks for one more male volunteer on the committee. Any questions can be directed to Ophélie Ronce. The next ESEB congress will be held from August 18-22, 2025 in Barcelona, Spain, organised by the Spanish Society for Evolutionary Biology and the organising committee is chaired by Toni Gabaldon.

The society welcomes bids for the future ESEB congresses in 2027 and 2029.

3. Executive Vice-President's Report

3.1. Annual report 2021 for approval

K. Verhoeven presented the annual accountant's report and highlighted the following points:

- Assets of the society include profit shares of the journals, tax refunds, cash capital, and income from the investment portfolio. The total assets summed up to about 1.3M EUR at the end of 2021.
- Liabilities comprising commitments to activities as well as emergency funds to cover unexpected losses of ESEB congresses summed up to about 1M EUR in 2021.

- The accounts closed with a slightly positive balance of 38K EUR in 2021 mostly due to the lower expenses for activities due to the pandemic.
- The profit shares from the society's journals remain the main income of the society, but these decreased in 2021 and are expected to decrease further due to a higher proportion of Open Access publishing.
- About 200K of the income of the society was used to support all the different initiatives of the society.
- The largest commitments remain the support of Special Topic Networks and congresses.
- The investment portfolio account closed with a small loss as the income of the portfolio could not offset the managing costs.

One member requested more details on the investment portfolio. K. Verhoeven advised that the portfolio is green and socially sustainable as decided and approved by the membership in 2019.

One member enquired about the plans to compensate the expected loss in income from journals due to the changes in the publishing landscape. K. Verhoeven advised that the society's income will be sufficient for the next 2-3 years and will also depend on the current negotiations of new publishing agreements.

On request of K. Verhoeven, the members approved the presented Annual Financial Report 2021 with no dissenting votes. Three members abstained.

The majority of members present granted discharge to the officers in duty. Six members abstained.

4. *JEB* Editor in Chief's Report [M. Reuter]

M. Reuter pointed out that the Editorial in the July issue of *JEB* summarises the goals of the journal's management. *JEB* is running well, seeing increased submissions, and its impact factor has increased slightly compared to the previous year. M. Reuter encouraged all ESEB members to submit their publications to *JEB*. The journal is now accepting Methods Articles and has established an editor-mediated transfer network with *Methods in Ecology and Evolution*. Luke Holman, *JEB*'s Commissioning Editor, ensured that increased special issues and invited reviews have been commissioned for the journal, particularly from ESEB initiatives (STN, Progress Meetings). The journal has recently taken on a Data Editor and all manuscripts accepted by *JEB* have their data archives checked to ensure compliance with journal policy. The Editorial Board will be restructured from 15 Deciding Editors to 4-5 Handling Editors who will oversee the decision recommendations of 40-50 Associate Editors. The aim is to implement the restructure early in 2023. M. Reuter welcomes applications from interested members.

5. Evolution Letters

Evolution Letters is jointly owned by the Society for the Study of Evolution (SSE) and ESEB. The journal is running well. Submissions are increasing and the journal's impact factor has risen from 5.2 to 6.49 in 2021. The societies decided to hire a Managing Editor and the position will be filled in the next months. M. Ritchie thanked Jon Slate, inaugural Editor-in-Chief of *Evolution Letters*, who will step down this year for his excellent work. The new EiC will be announced by the end of September.

SSE and ESEB jointly decided to accept the offer from a new publisher, Oxford University Press (OUP), starting in 2023. The societies agreed that this not-for-profit publisher seems to be a better fit for a society journal as e.g., the profit that OUP generates will stay within the academic community.

One member asked why MDPI was permitted to sponsor the poster session at the Prague congress as this publisher has values that do not seem to align with ESEB's values. I.e. many see MDPI as a predatory publisher that places pressure on the academic community to peer-review very quickly and has very high Article Processing Charges.....

Mike Ritchie responded that he understood this point and that congress organisers should be mindful of the practices of sponsors in future but this is always balanced by funding the congress.

A. Groot closed the meeting at 14:20.

The minutes have been adopted by the Secretary and the President (Chair).

Date: 14.09.2022



ESEB President Astrid Groot



ESEB Secretary Ellen Decaestecker