

UIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT THE 18TH ICS

JULY 23-31, 2022

Savoie Technolac – FRANCE

First Session, July 24, 2022

The First Session of the General Assembly of the 18th International Congress of Speleology started at 10:39 on Sunday July 24th, 2022. It took place in the Amphitheatre Vanoise at Technolac campus of Savoie-Mont Blanc University in FRANCE.

Dr. George VENI welcomed the participants to the General Assembly of the 18th International Congress of Speleology. He briefly reminded the Assembly about the procedures to be followed during the two sessions of General Assembly at the ICS. Dr. Veni introduced each member of the (2017–2022) UIS Bureau present and explained that two Adjunct Secretaries, Tim MOULDS and Satoshi GOTO, were absent for health reasons. Soon after, he declared the General Assembly open and invited Yves CONTET (head of the 18th ICS Organizing Committee) to address the Assembly. Mr. CONTET welcomed the delegates of the member countries and other attendees.

Dr. VENI asked the participants to observe a moment of silence for all cavers and scientists who contributed to the UIS and left the international community in between congresses, among them: Alain Mangin – France; Giovanni Badino – Italy; Gordon William Kirk MacGregor – Canada; Jeanne Marie Gurnee – USA; John Robert Holsinger – USA; Rane Curl – USA ; Grzegorz Klassek – Poland; Trifon Daaliev – Bulgaria; Anthony Hitchcock – South Africa; Nils-Axel Mörner – Sweden; István Eszterhás – Hungary; Jean Nicod – France; Christian Dodelin – France; Adolfo Eraso Romero – Spain; Peter Ernest Spargo – South Africa; Robby Ko King Tjoen – Indonesia; Avirmed Erdenedalai – Mongolia; Herbert W. Franke – Germany; Joël Fontenelle – Belgium.

Thirty (32) of the 52 UIS member countries were registered at the first session of the General Assembly, out of which twenty-eight (28) had voting rights according to UIS Statutes: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece*, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Philippines, Poland, Portugal*, Puerto Rico, Romania*, Russian Federation*, Serbia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America (* designs non-voting member countries).

The General Assembly elected unanimously two financial auditors (Friedhart KNOLLE, Germany; and Mario PARISE, Italy); and two general auditors principally for counting votes (Arjan VAN WAARDENBURG, the Netherlands; and Andy EAVIS, UK)

The convened General Assembly unanimously approved the minutes of the last sessions of the General Assembly that took place at the 17th ICS in Sydney, Australia, in July 2017. The General Assembly also approved the proposed agenda for the 2022 sessions.

The President of the UIS, Dr. George VENI presented the major updates regarding the UIS covering the UIS Bulletin, UIS support for international expeditions and the International Year of Caves and Karst (IYCK 2021) which he explained will continue until the end of 2022. Dr. VENI emphasized that the UIS succeeded in gathering 262 partner organizations worldwide for the IYCK initiative with a historic celebration event at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (13 September 2021). He highlighted the published book by Dr. Nadja ZUPAN HAJNA for the IYCK, and the *Guidelines for Caves and Karst Protection*, jointly published by UIS with IUCN. The Secretary General of the UIS, Dr. Fadi NADER, presented his report illustrating the major achievements of the Union and its Bureau since the 17th ICS. He also briefly introduced the major achievements recorded by the international speleological community. He especially highlighted progress in terms of supporting international expeditions, the UIS Bulletin, website, and social media as well as the

IYCK. Dr. Nadja ZUPAN HAJNA, UIS Treasurer, presented the financial status of the Union, which can be summarized by a healthy input/output and healthy financial status (UIS accounts on the 30th of June, 2022 consisted of 37,542.93 euros and 50,882.33 USD). All (President, Secretary General, and Treasurer) reports will be published in the UIS Bulletin (Vol. 64-2).

Representatives of following UIS Commissions presented verbal reports and information about their activities for the period of 2017-2022: Artificial Caves – Mario Parise; Bibliography – Philipp Haeuselmann; Informatics – Philipp Haeuselmann; Physical Chemistry and Hydrogeology of Karst; Yavor Shopov; Karst and Cave Protection – Jean-Pierre Bartholeyns; Pseudokarst - Jan Urban; Volcanic Caves – Gregg Middleton; Glacier, Firn, and Ice Caves – Bulat Mavlyudov; History – Bernard Chirol; Largest, Longest and Deepest caves – Andy Eavis; Biology – Barbel Vogel. Some submitted their reports and arranged for UIS Vice President of Administration Mr. Zdeněk MOTYČKA to read them.

Nivaldo COLZATO and Zdeněk MOTYČKA presented briefly their reports concerning respectively the UIS Bulletin and UIS Archives.

A lunch break was proposed and approved.

A short but comprehensive presentation of the status of the preparation and future planning of the approved candidate country, Brazil, to organize the 19th International Congress of Speleology (2025) was delivered by Nivaldo COLZATO. The lack of suitable audio equipment in the hall did not allow the projection of the movie prepared by the 19th ICS organizers (it was projected in the week at the Banquet). All information about the 19th ICS is provided on the congress website that was launched during the 18th ICS in France (<https://speleo2025.org/>)

The Secretary General Dr. Fadi NADER introduced official requests from India, Malaysia, Libya and Morocco to join the UIS. Representatives of India and Malaysia were invited to introduce their requests, while the requests of Libya and Morocco were delivered through recorded video presentations (none of their representatives could travel to France due to visa issues). Then voting took place approving the four new member countries with 27 Yes-votes.

Proposals and motions from the UIS Bureau and the floor were heard. First, the UIS Bureau proposed to amend the Internal Regulations (Clause #6) pertaining to member country categories and fees (the UIS Delegates were given a separate paper with the amended text), which stated:

Proposed Amendment of Internal regulation Clause #6

The annual fees each Member Country must pay to the UIS are determined by the country's membership category, which are:

- a. **Category A:** the Member Country has 2,000 speleologists or more in the national organization or organizations that represent the country to the UIS;
- b. **Category B:** the Member Country has at least 1,000 but fewer than 2,000 speleologists in the national organization or organizations that represent the country to the UIS;

- c. **Category C:** the Member Country has at least 500 but fewer than 1,000 speleologists in the national organization or organizations that represent the country to the UIS;
- d. **Category D:** the Member Country has at least 100 but fewer than 500 speleologists in the national organization or organizations that represent the country to the UIS;
- e. **Category E:** the Member Country has less than 100 speleologists in the national organization or organizations that represent the country to the UIS.

The UIS Bureau will propose the annual fees and list them in the UIS Bulletin and website after approval by the General Assembly.

The annual fees for:

- Category A stays 480 €
- Category B stays 360 €
- Category C stays 240 €
- Category D will be 120 €
- Category E will be 60 €

The proposal for this amendment was then voted and approved by all 28 present voting delegates (the number of voting delegates changed as some arrived late and others had to leave early).

Other motions from the floor were heard:

Dr. Philipp HÄUSELMANN (Switzerland) asked the General Assembly to recognize René Scherrer for his 70 years of dedication to speleology (René is now 89 years old). The General Assembly approved.

Bärbel VOGEL (Germany) thanked the Delegates for their support with the International Cave Animal of the Year initiative and proposed a motion concerning the need to publish an annual report on the status of caves and karst worldwide.

Ferdinando DIDONNA (Costa Rica) proposed the UIS to have a contact/liaison officer at/for UNESCO.

Both, VOGEL and DIDONNA agreed to better develop their motions during the week and present them again during the second session of the General Assembly for voting.

Dr. Miha ČEKADA (Slovenia) asked the Assembly to recognize the work and dedication to speleology of Andrej Mihevc. The General Assembly approved.

Efrain MERCADO (Puerto Rico) addressed the General Assembly concerning the call to action for the proposed Colombia Speleological heritage law, asking the delegates to follow up on this subject and continue to support the initiative until the Colombian presidents signs the law.

Dr. Jelena ČALIĆ (Serbia) asked the UIS Bureau if they had any comments or replies on the reactions made by individuals and national caving communities concerning the published UIS Bureau Statement on the Ukrainian war, which voiced misgivings on the reasons for UIS became involved in geopolitical conflicts and wars. The UIS Bureau confirmed it was not aware of the letters mentioned. Zdeněk MOTYČKA (Czech Republic), explained the context of the UIS Statement, including its proposal for the UIS General Assembly to “suspend Russia from membership of the UIS until Ukraine’s sovereignty and internationally recognized borders, including Crimea, are restored and that the Russian language be excluded as an official UIS

language.”

The Ukrainian Delegate then, read an emotional speech and asked the General Assembly to vote on suspending Russia from UIS and exclude the Russian language following the terms proposed by UIS Bureau. A long discussion and debate followed by delegates in favor and others opposed to the motion. A final consensus was made to split the motion in two. First to vote in suspending Russia and then on excluding the Russian language.

The first motion proposed for voting stated: “The UIS General Assembly suspends Russia from membership of the UIS until Ukraine’s sovereignty and internationally recognized borders, including Crimea are restored.”

Results: YES (13 votes), NO (9 votes), ABSTAIN (4 votes)

The motion was thus approved and passed.

The second motion proposed for voting stated: “The UIS General Assembly excludes the Russian language as an official UIS language.”

Results: YES (7), NO (10), ABSTAIN (9)

The motion was thus not approved and did not pass.

A final request/motion was proposed by José-Ayrton LABEGALINI (Brazil) asking the delegates to support the World Heritage Nomination of the Peruaçu Valley in Brazil.

Dr. George VENI thanked again all the participants and closed the first session of the General Assembly of the 18th ICS, at around 16:25 on Sunday July 24th, 2022.

Second Session, July 31, 2022

At the opening, a total of 39 member countries with voting rights were registered: Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Puerto Rico, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Venezuela.

The UIS President declared the second session of the General Assembly open, at around 10:00. Dr. Fadi NADER (Secretary General) asked the General Assembly to add two items on the Agenda:

First, representatives of Armenia and Cyprus who had met the requirement to be proposed as new member countries of the UIS were invited to address the General Assembly with their requests. Both countries were approved unanimously with 39 yes votes. Henceforth the number of voting delegates at this session became 41.

Then, the motions proposed but not finalized by Bärbel VOGEL and Ferdinando DIDONNA were recalled. For voting.

Bärbel VOGEL (Germany)'s motion: "The UIS Bureau publishes a Karst Report on every ICS on the status of caves and karst and that UIS Member countries will provide data"
Results: YES (35), ABSTAIN (6) – the motion was approved and passed.

Ferdinando Didonna (Costa Rica) withdrew his motion.

The representatives of the UIS Commissions were then invited to present their planned future activities for the period 2022-2025: Artificial Caves – Mario Parise; Biology – Bärbel Vogel; Bibliography – Philipp Häuselmann; Cave Diving – Rodrigo Seveno; Cave Rescue – Gyula Hegedus; History – Friedhart Knolle; Informatics – Philipp Häuselmann; Materials and Techniques – Monica Ponce; Physical Chemistry and Hydrogeology of Karst; Yavor Shopov; Karst and Cave Protection – Jean-Pierre Bartholeyns; Pseudokarst - Jan Urban; Volcanic Caves – Gregg Middleton; Glacier, Firn, and Ice Caves – Bulat Mavlyudov; History – Bernard Chirol; Largest, Longest and Deepest caves – Andy Eavis; All reports were approved and the commissions authorized to continue with 41 Yes-votes. Dr. George VENI noted that normally separate voting would occur for each commission, but since most commissions could not meet or had too few participants at the meetings to conduct meaningful business because the ICS had not publicized the meeting locations and times, all the commissions were approved in one vote so they could better organize and plan their activities during the next three years before the 19th ICS.

Andy Eavis reported on the behalf of the Advisory Committee confirming that proposals, motions and decisions are all in order according to UIS Statutes and Internal Regulations.

Dr. Mario PARISE (Italy) and Dr. Friedhart KNOLLE (Germany) – acting financial auditors – after examining the books and relevant documents provided by the Treasurer, Dr. Nadja ZUPAN HAJNA, Slovenia, presented the audit report and recommendations. Their report will be published separately.

Audit report on the accounts of Union International de Spéléologie (UIS) for the period from August 2017 to July 31st, 2022.

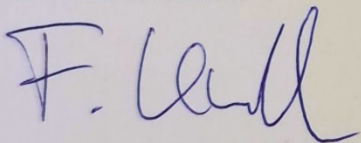
The treasury was reviewed for the last period (2017-2022) by Mr. Friedhart Knolle (Germany) and Mr. Mario Parise (Italy) in Le Bourget du Lac (France). Specifically, we started after the Sydney Congress, from August 2017, until the end of July 2022. The treasurer provided us full and detailed information to all questions, and was always available to clarify some issues. Thus, we thank for the excellent work done by the treasurer, Dr. Nadja Zupan, and recommend her discharge.

At this time (23/7/2022) the balance of the funds held by UIS are 39,336.93 EUR and 50,882.58 USD.

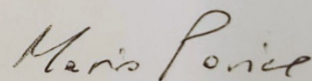
We suggest for the future to add the English translation to the annual business report, for each year, in order to facilitate the work by the financial auditors. With the same goal, we eventually suggest to add to the material to be examined the main charts shown in the powerpoint the treasurer presented at the first General Assembly.

Le Bourget du Lac
July 28, 2022

Mr. Friedhart Knolle



Mr. Mario Parise



Recommendations

- *Translation Slovenian annual reports to English*
- *Add the PPT document of final presentation of the Treasurer to the audited materials.*

At this time the balance of the funds held by the UIS are 50,882.88 USD and 39,336.93 Euros.

UIS President, Dr. George Veni, addressed the Assembly and thanked the members of his Bureau. He distributed Certificates of Appreciation to all of them, with one to Yves CONTET on behalf of the ICS organizers for their work on the 18th ICS.

The election of the new UIS Bureau member was introduced by Dr. Fadi NADER who explained the procedure following the UIS Statutes. In the meantime, the voting delegate for Australia had also joined the General Assembly. Henceforth the number of voting delegates at this session became 42.

Dr. Fadi Nader introduced the candidates:

- UIS President
Nadja Zupan Hajna (Slovenia)
- UIS Vice President of Administration
Zdeněk Motyčka (Czech Republic)
- UIS Vice President of Operations
Nivaldo Colzato (Brazil)
- UIS Secretary General
Johannes Mattes (Austria)
- UIS Treasurer
Mladen Garašić (Croatia)
- UIS Adjunct Secretaries
Bärbel Vogel (Germany)
Bernard Chirol (France)
Gerard Campion (UK)
Gyula Hegedus (Hungary)
Issam Bou Jaoude (Lebanon)
Jean-Pierre Bartholeyns (Belgium)
Johnsy Carrion-Cabrera (Puerto Rico)
José Maria Calaforra (Spain)
Marc Mentens (Philippines)
Mario Parise (Italy)
Nathalia Uasapud (Colombia)
Omar Calva (Mexico)
Patricia Seiser (USA)
Satoshi Goto (Japan)
Yavor Shopov (Bulgaria)

The candidates were then individually invited to introduce themselves in front of the General Assembly before the election took place.

The new UIS President, Dr. Nadja ZUPAN HAJNA, was elected in the first round obtaining 40 votes (2 abstentions). Mr. Zdeněk MOTYČKA was elected UIS Vice President of Administration with 40 votes (2 abstentions). Mr. Nivaldo COLZATO was elected UIS Vice President of Operations, with 42 votes. Dr. Johannes MATTES was elected Secretary General with 41 votes (1 abstention). Dr. Mladen GARAŠIĆ was elected UIS Treasurer with 40 votes (2 abstentions).

The UIS Adjunct Secretaries were elected in two rounds. Five (5) adjunct secretaries were elected from the first round: Dr. José Maria CALAFORRA (Spain); Marc MENTENS (Philippines); Dr. Mario PARISE (Italy);

Dr. Nathalia UASAPUD (Colombia); Dr. Patricia SEISER (USA). The two (2) remaining seats for adjunct secretaries were filled after the second round of elections by Bärbel VOGEL (Germany) and Gerard CAMPION (UK).

The statement of the newly elected UIS President was presented by Dr. Nadja ZUPAN HAJNA, following the elections. She thanked the audience and expressed her will to move forward with the new UIS Bureau and work hard for the Union. She thanked the members of the past Bureau.

Roberto ROJO (Mexico) asked the UIS General Assembly to help in protecting the karst of the Quintana Roo, Yucatan, from a railroad project.

Arrigo CIGNA made an emotional farewell considering that this would be his last attendance to the UIS congresses and General Assemblies.

Dr. Philipp HÄUSELMANN informed that the Swiss Speleological Federation will work on preparing a motion in the future to make the UIS apolitical and for all cavers of the world.

Finally, the UIS Past-President in a short conclusive speech highlighting the historical achievement of the UIS General Assembly by electing four (4) women to stand on the next UIS Bureau. He then declared the Assembly General of the 18th ICS, as closed at 13:05. He invited everybody to join around the UIS Flag to complete the closing ceremony with giving the UIS Flag to the 19th ICS organizers.