

# The newsletter of the European Society of Arachnology

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## From the President

By Gabriele Uhl

Dear members of the European Society of Arachnology,  
it was a pleasure to have the 34th European Congress of Arachnology in Rennes, organized by Julien Pétilion and his wonderful group. I would also like to extend my thanks to the organizing committee, the award jury and to whoever else was involved (I bet there were many!). It was especially important for the ESA that the conference was held in France again, as the society has developed from its French roots into a European organization. Until the 1980s the congresses were called “*Colloques d’Arachnologie d’Expression Française*” basically meaning “French Arachnology Colloquium”. These meetings were organized by the French Arachnologists who had founded the Union of the French Arachnologists “*Union des Arachnologistes de la Langue Française*”, which later became “*Société Européenne d’Arachnologie*”, whose first president was Pierre Bonnet. The last conferences in France were held in Rennes in 1987 and in Paris in 1990. It was therefore particularly good to return to France after many decades. Way back, when the conferences started to take place outside France, it was still the rule that French researchers gave their presentations in French, Germans in German and e.g. Swedish, Danish and British arachnologists in English (surprise!). This multilingual aspect was a challenge for some (who left the audience for a coffee break) and a pleasure for others who spoke several languages. But ideally, a conference should be a place for all to interact with no major language barriers. For the last Congress in a French-speaking region in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, in 1991, the conference language had been declared as English by the organizer. However, only about 70 % of the participants adhered to it. After this meeting English as a conference language became the rule. It was intended to facilitate communication, but it was also a hard transition for some. Sadly, the Society lost

some of the very committed French researchers as a result of this change. In the 1990s, as Eastern Europe opened up and numerous congresses, “the colloquia”, were held in Czech Republic, Poland, Slovenia, Bulgaria and then also in Scotland, Denmark and Spain, English as a common language became even more important. In 2008, with the meeting in Bern, the Colloques were renamed to “European Congresses of Arachnology”. Greece, Italy, Hungary, Germany, the UK and even Israel followed as congress locations. The meetings have often attracted more than 200 researchers from over 30 countries, including many from outside Europe and overseas. The congress in Rennes also attracted over 200 participants and it was a great pleasure for the society to be back in Rennes after 37 years. All the more so as many French arachnologists attended and (re-) connected to the Society. I am sure that the strengthened ties with the French arachnid community will be felt at future meetings.

In Rennes, we revived the French Arachnologists Song, created by the first president, Pierre Bonnet. Until the 1990s, it was always sung during the social event or general assembly. The refrain is as follows:

*Halte lá, halte lá, halte lá, les Arachnos, les Arachnos,  
Halte lá, halte lá, halet lá, les Arachnos sont lá  
Les Arachnos! Les Arachnos sont lá!*

Something like: “Beware, beware, the arachnos are here!” At the social dinner we actually sang the French song again, supported by many French arachnologists. And on top of that, we sang the “It’s an Arachnology Day” song, which was created during the conference in Greifswald in 2022. It was a lovely experience - and yes, singing brings heartbeats in sync!

For next year, we are looking forward to a great meeting in Zadar, Croatia, organized by Martina Pavlek and her group. See you then!

*Gabriele Uhl, President of the European Society of Arachnology, on behalf of the Council*



## Congress Report

By Marco Isaia

The 34th European Congress of Arachnology was organized by Julien Pétilion and his collaborators. The arachnological community came together again in Rennes (France). Everyone was happy to rejoin the arachnological community after two years. Indeed, the last European meeting was held in Greifswald (Germany) in 2022.



Three Lycosids spinning a Triskel (the symbol of Earth, Fire and Water in the Breton culture), was the logo of the 34<sup>th</sup> European Conference of Arachnology, held in Rennes, Brittany (France).

The Congress venue was the University of Rennes, one of the biggest universities in Western France, originally founded in 1460. The city of Rennes is a lively city of North-Western France, with an important medieval and classical heritage within its nice historical centre. The student community is very active within the city, being home to nearly 70,000 students. We all enjoyed the sunny weather (unusual for the general oceanic character of the climate of Brittany!) during the conference, and the mid-conference excursion. During his introductory speech, Julien reminded us, between one joke and another, that despite the Society was originally founded in France, the conference had been absent in France since more than 30 years. Indeed, in 1987 the *10th Colloque Européen d'Arachnologie* was held in Rennes, organized by Alain Canard. Moreover, as the President of the Society reminded in her opening talk, France (Strasbourg) was also the home of the very first meeting of the Society in May 1972! Yes, "*Les arachnos sont là*" as the French arachnologist Pierre Bonnet sang together with his fellows arachnologists in the old times..!

The conference venue was a newly built lecture hall complex located outside the city centre of Rennes. The organizing team made sure that everything was working properly in the Conference halls and in the spaces dedicated to coffee breaks and meals.

The Congress was attended by 203 participants in person, from 36 countries. Germany (50), France (30) and Czech Republic (22) were the main represented countries, followed by Poland (13) and Italy (11). Four keynote talks, 76 oral contributions and 63 posters

were presented, most of which were authored or co-authored by students. The scientific program itself was split into 13 Sessions and 3 Symposia, over four days of talks held in the mornings and the afternoons, from Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> to Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August.



The lecture hall complex of Campus Beaulieu of Rennes University was the main venue of this year's Congress

The traditional mid-congress excursion brought the group to the island of Mont Saint-Michel, one of the most iconic places in Brittany.

## Arachnological Science

Each day of the conference contained a keynote presentation and a wide range of contributed talks. Three Symposia were also organized, the first one on Arachnid Genomics (by Vladislav Ivanov and Yannis Schöneberg) was held on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>, thus on the eve of the conference. The other two, "Spiders in agriculture" by Klaus Birkhofer, Martin Entling and Radek Michalko and "Publishing strategies and publishing options" by Gabriele Uhl were held on Tuesday and Friday, respectively.

The talks were divided into session for Ecophysiology and Behaviour, Ecology, Zoology, Biogeography and Conservation and Systematics, encompassing all groups of Arachnids.



Julien Pétilion and his team were the Organizers of the ECA 2024

Stano Pekár (Czech Republic) was the first plenary speaker. His talk focused on the poorly studied topic



of defenses in arachnids. We learnt that there are 15 main defense strategies and that anachoresis is the most used across all orders and only in Acari, Araneae, Opiliones, and Solifugae; it is rivalled by background matching, and Batesian mimicry. Stano identified major gaps in knowledge and proposed several interesting and as yet little studied research directions.

The first day of talks of the congress was entirely focusing on Ecophysiology and Behaviour. The morning session was chaired by Simona Kralj-Fišer and opened with M. Jani (Germany), with a talk on the behavioral utilization of spider silk glands. Five more talks by J. Dresler from Germany (spider venom enzymes), A. Quattrocolo from Czech Republic (venom efficacy in euryphagous and ant-eating spiders), J. Krämer from Germany (venom Profile of *Euscorpilus italicus*) and Z. Vehovar from Slovenia (mating system and sexual cannibalism in a raft spider) completed the session.



Stanek Pekar was one of the plenarists at ECAZ024, here in a picture with Julien Pétillon, the Congress host.

After a nice lunch we returned in the *Amphitheatre* for the second session on Ecophysiology and behaviour chaired by Ferenc Samu. M. Bartos (Poland) started out with a talk on the role of inexperience in attacking prey in *Yllenus arenarius*. The member of the organization committee N. Viel (France) followed, with a talk about the range-expanding spider *Zodarion rubidum* (Araneae, Zodariidae). Successively, C. Ortiz Movliav (Germany) presented the physiological mechanisms and gene expression in overwintering *Argiope bruennichi*, J. Wolff (Germany) talked about

the unique power-amplified silk trap in the tropical Theridiid *Propostira* sp. and, finally, L. Sentenska (Czech Republic) unravelled the function of self-sacrificial behaviour in the brown widow spider.

After the coffee break 6 more talks chaired by Lenka Sentenská ended the first day. F. Samu (Hungary) started, with a talk on agrobiont adaptation in the wolf spider *Pardosa agrestis*. Then, S. Kralj-Fišer (Slovenia) talked about maternal feeding in *Nephilingis cruentata*, O. Michálek (Czech Republic) about the composition of venom in two prey-specialised spiders, N. Beydzada (Czech Republic) about personality in *Pisaura*, Y. Zvik (Israel) on the first case of phoresy in pseudoscorpions on a scorpion host and V. Cabon (France) concluded the session with a talk on temperature-size relationships in spiders in urbanized areas.

“Posters and drinks” ended the first day of the congress and many of us spent the evening in the city downtown, chatting about spiders and their kins in the local pubs of Rennes.

Reiner Foelix (Switzerland), the famous author of the fundamental book on Spider Biology that we all know, was the plenary speaker of Day#2. Reiner illustrated several “blind spots” in spider biology, pointing out areas in arachnology that deserve to be studied in more depth in the future. His focus was on the occurrence and function of various gland systems (dermal, cheliceral, maxillary glands), on the structure and composition of the spider cuticle, on extra-oral digestion, on the handling of silk threads by the different tarsal claws, on structural colours and UV-fluorescence in spiders and scorpions and on highly unusual behaviours. There is so much to do!

The morning session after the plenary was split in two parallel sessions, focusing on Ecology and Zoology.

Yael Lubin presented the Ecology session, with talks by M. Isaia (Italy) on the conservation ecology of the endangered wolf spider *Vesubia jugorum*, G. Kmira (Tunisia) on the ecological drivers of riparian spider communities, T. Hamřík (Czech Republic) on the effect of clear-cutting and retention forestry on ground-dwelling spiders in commercial floodplain forests, L. Černecká (Czech Republic) on the effect of the nutritional quality in the quadri-trophic food web interaction and, finally, Z. Ganem (Israel) on food-webs in Levantine caves.

In parallel, Gabriele Uhl chaired the session on Zoology with talks by E. Crepet (Italy) on comparative analysis of metals in spiders' mouthparts), A. Derdak (Poland) on ovary structure in *Parasitengona* mites, Y. Simone





(Portugal) on scorpion chela diversity, P. Michalik (Germany) on genital asymmetry and copulatory mechanics in the spider *Mecicobothrium thorelli*, A. Rivera (the Netherlands) on eye-brain system coevolution and by V. Mackevicius (Israel) on molecular identification and symbiont insights in *Mermessus* spiders.

The afternoon session of Day#2 had the same structure, with two parallel sessions chaired by M. Isaia (Italy) and P. Michalik (Germany).

M. Isaia chaired a session of six talks in Ecology, starting with a talk on the evolution of highly toxic venoms in spiders (F. Cortés-Fossati, Spain), followed by a talk on a new method for summit and climate monitoring by C. Komposch (Austria), a talk on ground spiders of an urban green space in the city of Roma (T. Fusco, Italy), one on diversity and structure of forest spider communities (M. Marquerie, Spain) and one on the parasitoids of *Latrodectus geometricus* (M. Segoli, Israel). Finally, A. Melcher (Germany) concluded the session of ecology with a talk on the land use effects on the functional role of spiders in German grasslands. Peter Michalik chaired the parallel session in Zoology, with talks by I. Jędrzejowska (Poland) on matrotrophy in Pseudoscorpions, E. Propistsova (Israel) on retinal determination gene network dynamics in *Teegenaria pagana*, M. Belal Talukder (Germany) on the olfactory sensilla in male wasp spiders, C. Müller (Germany) on the ultrastructural diversity of chemosensory sensilla in spiders, S. Karikó (USA) on eggsac construction and silk in *Castianeira* spiders and finally, L. Dersch (Germany) on wolf spider venom peptides.

After the coffee break, we participated in the Symposium organized by Klaus Birkhofer, Martin Entling and R. Michalko on Spiders in Agriculture. The symposium was composed of an introductory talk given by the Chairs and by six talks given M. Edo (Germany), W. Khum (Czech Republic), O. Košulič (Czech Republic), J. M. Reiff (Germany), E. Canard (France), R. Michalko (Czech Republic). The Symposium ended with a lively discussion and the second part of the poster session in the late afternoon.

After the traditional mid-conference excursion break on Wednesday to Mont Saint-Michel, the lectures resumed on Thursday with a plenary talk given by Rosemarie Gillespie (USA) focusing on speciation dynamics, and, in particular, on ecological and geographic speciation in island systems. We went through a marvellous trip to Hawaii and other island

systems to discover the main processes behind the origin of species and the factors that shape diversity. It was such a great talk ending with an invitation to embrace the overall diversity of all living things and their interactions, human included!



The poster session was organized in the main hall, just on front of the Amphitheatres where the sessions were held

After Rosemary's plenary Miquel Arnedo (Spain) chaired the session on Biogeography and Conservation, starting with a talk by R. Tripathi (India) on spider assemblages in the Desert National Park of Rajasthan (India). V. Opatova (Czech Republic) followed, with a talk on the biogeography and species delimitation of the trapdoor spider genus *Amblyocarenum* (Araneae, Nemesiidae). The session continued with C. Vink (New Zealand) and his "unwanted" Australian widow spiders in New Zealand, M. Huszarik (Germany) talked about the effects of stream pollution on the diet of *Tetragnatha montana*, K.-H. Jeong (Korea) spoke about speciation hypothesis of a hypogean genus of Pseudoscorpion, H. Kinga (Germany) on forest spider communities in Ghana, D. Hlebec (Croatia) on convergent evolution in cave pseudoscorpions.

C. Komposch (Austria) closed the session with a talk on arachnological canopy research in the Alps.

After lunch we spent some time outside the conference building trying to take a nice congress photo (and possibly succeeded!), then we went back to the lecture halls for two blocks of parallel sessions on Ecology, chaired by M. Rezáč and A. Zamani, and Systematics, chaired by P. Jäger and T. Szüts.

A. Bellvert (Spain) opened the Ecology session, with a talk on European subterranean spiders, followed by A. Vasiliev (Moldova), talking about spiders of his country. E. Gavish-Regev gave a talk on the



unexplored diversity of Pseudoscorpions in Israel and A. Piquet (Italy) gave a talk on spider diversity in urban environments followed by M. Tolve (Italy) describing the functional diversity of spiders along elevational gradients in the Alps. Y. Alioua (Algeria) followed, with a talk on spiders and scorpions of the Algerian Sahara. The second part of the session started with B. Schnerch (Germany) talking about web-building spiders as biocontrol agents in apple orchards. E. Piano (Italy) talked about the importance of green areas in urban habitat to maintain spider diversity, A. Sozontov (Russia) about digitizing spider biodiversity data, R. Bucher (Switzerland) presented a pan-European synthesis on the role of spiders in the cascade from land use to crop yield, N. Zarikian (Armenia) presented a work on the of urbanization on spiders in Armenia and finally, F. Hosseini (Iran) presented an investigation on arthropod biodiversity in the Hyrcanian Caspian Forest using eDNA metabarcoding of spiders' webs.



The conference rooms faced a nice garden were most of the socializing happened

As for the systematic session, Peter Jäger (Germany) introduced the work of W. Lourenço (France) on scorpions trapped in amber, then K.-P. Yu (Slovenia) gave a talk on the evolution of diverse lifestyles in Pisaurid spiders, K. Wiśniewski (Poland) presented his work on spiders in Madagascar, M. Arnedo (Spain) showed us how deep calibrations overestimate colonization time of the Canary Islands in Dysderids, G. Hormiga (USA) talked about the spider genus *Juanfernandezia* (Linyphiidae) in the south Pacific and finally P. Kontos (Greece) focused on the diversity of Assamiidae in Ethiopia, the largest family of Laniatores harvestmen.

The afternoon session on Systematics started with R. Shida (Japan) working on *Ariadna* spiders (Segestriidae), then it was the turn of J. Miller (The Netherlands) illustrating global patterns in spider occurrence data. P. Jäger (Germany) contributed with a talk on Sparassids in limestone caves of Laos, R.

Minjares (Spain) illustrated patterns of morphological diversification in Harpacteinae spiders (Dysderids), J. Korba (Czech Republic) talked about the biogeography of *Ischnocolus* (Araneae, Theraphosidae), and finally A. Henrard (Belgium) took us to a trip in the Vanilla islands with his talk on radiation of Cryptothelinae (Zodariids).

The final day was opened by the plenary of Nadine Duperré (Germany), renowned for her amazing work as spider illustrator. Nadine changed the announced topic of his plenary (Picturing Science in Arachnids) and introduced us to her research on spider diversity, taxonomy and systematics in South America and, in particular, on the genus *Linothele*, a group of highly diverse mygalomorph (Dipluridae) in the Ecuadorian Andes. Secondly, Nadine delved into the sustentaculum, a specific morphological trait related to Araneidae its possible role in enhancing our understanding of the group's evolution and interrelationships. Nadine's plenary was followed by an interesting symposium on publishing strategies and publishing options organized by Gabriele Uhl. Several editors of Arachnology journals introduced us to the inner runnings of the journal and the ethics behind their work as publishers. The Editors of Peer Community In (PCI), a non-profit organization of researchers offering peer review, recommendation and publication of scientific articles in open access for free, showed the benefits of joining their community. Following submission by authors, the thematic PCIs evaluate preprints in their scientific fields based on rigorous peer review. After evaluation, the PCIs may recommend those preprints, to make them complete, reliable and citable articles, without the need for publication in 'traditional' journals. Authors who need to publish their article in a journal can publish it for free in Peer Community Journal or submit it to a PCI-friendly or other journal.

The very last session of the conference was chaired by Vera Opatova (Czech Republic), focusing on Systematics. Vera presented talks by T. Szűts (Hungary) on *Eresus* spiders, D. Harms (Germany) on the deadly arachnid icon *Atrax robustus*, S. Shafaie (Czech Republic) on Iberian *Zodarion* species, A. M. Sanz-LaParra (Norway) on Hawaiian linyphiids, T. Blick (Germany) on our golden online resources of the World Spider Catalog and Spiders of Europe, J. Novák (Hungary) gave us an overview on the diversity of the Carpathian *Neobisium* pseudoscorpions, H.-Y. Lin (Taiwan) on species delimitation in *Allochthonius* Pseudoscorpions and finally, Y. Marusik (Russia)



showed us the striking spider diversity of the tundra zone in Northeastern Siberia.

### Arachnologists touring around Brittany

The pre-congress excursion took place on the weekend before the conference. It was joined by a small number of fellow arachnologists with their accompanying persons who made a tour in the extraordinary nature of Brittany.



Arachnologists on their way to Mont Saint-Michel

The traditional mid-congress excursion took place on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September. The Organizers offered one single program: a visit to the extraordinary tidal island of Mont Saint-Michel and its wonderful abbey, a UNESCO World Heritage site visited by more than three million people each year. The fellow arachnologists were left free to walk to the abbey and collect spiders in the salt marshes. The Organizer warned all participants to be aware that the site is particularly renowned for great tidal variation - roughly 14 m between highest and lowest water marks. Despite this could be risky, many of us enjoyed a walk on the tidal marsh, and some of us also collected spiders there!



Some of the fellow arachnologists enjoying collecting spiders on the salt marsh of Mont Saint-Michel



The tidal island of Mont Saint-Michel and its wonderful abbey were chosen by the Organizers for the mid-conference excursion

### Award Ceremony, social odds and ends

Several scientific societies supported the conference by offering Student Travel Grants for all research fields: the British Arachnological Society, the Czech Arachnological Society, the American Arachnological Society, the Arachnologische Gesellschaft, Pensoft, and the European Society of Arachnology itself. The recipients for the Travel Grants were chosen by the scientific committee and were given to Ondrej Vanek (Czech Republic), Helena Rothova (Czech Republic), Viktos Strestik (Czech Republic), Panagiotis Kontos (Germany), Marco Tolve (Italy), Živa Vehovar (Slovenia), Zeana Ganem (Israel), Hsiang-Yun Lin (Taiwan) and Rishikesh Tripathi (India).

As is tradition, there were awards for outstanding oral contributions and posters (three each) given by students. The first place for the Best Student Talk went to Hsiang-Yun Lin from Taiwan. Yuri Simone (Portugal) won the Second Prize and Carolina Ortiz Movliav (Germany) won the Third Prize. Léo Laborieux (USA), Mattes Linde (Germany) and Aleksandra Rozumko (Poland) won the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> prize for their posters, respectively. The publisher Pensoft and the ESA awarded vouchers and monetary awards.

There was also a photo competition this year. The public vote resulted in to Tomáš Hamřík's (Czech Republic) "*Synema globosum* feeding on *Apis mellifera*" winning the prize for the General Photography category and to Sarah Karikó's "Feather field" (USA) in Microscopy Photography category. The jury had different preferences and awarded the prize in General Photography to Léo Laborieux's "*Buthus occitanus* in the heat of a French summer" and in the Microscopy category to Fatemeh Hosseini's "Pinned the Ghostly Runner".







The winners of the photo competition were Tomáš Hamřík (top left), Fatemeh Hosseini (top right), Sarah Karikó (middle right) and Léo Laborieux (bottom).

The two highlights of the social life of the conference were the traditional Peace Party on Wednesday just after the mid-conference excursion and the congress dinner on Thursday.

We particularly enjoyed the renewed version of the semi-organized Peace Party with all sorts of drinks, music, caviar, salmon, vodka and many other beverages. Many of us heard Jeremy Miller and Gabriele Uhl singing the new arachnological song “It’s an Arachnology Day” ...and indeed it was!

The congress dinner was a delicious taste of the Brittany specialties, we all enjoyed the delicious goat cheese, a rich selection of cured meat and several fresh and fragrant regional wines accompanied by traditional music and dances. As Julien said, many arachnologists got trained in Brittany folk dance!

### **Thank you, Rennes!**

Our thanks go to the organizers of the congress – particularly to Julien Pétilion and his team – for having reunited the arachnological community in France after

such a long time. We are all looking forward to meeting again at the next ECA Congress in Croatia in 2025!



The traditional Peace Party took place outside, in the space outside the congress venue: drinks, music and lot of fun!

### **News from ESA General Assembly**

The General Assembly was held just before the closing ceremony, on August 30<sup>th</sup>. About 60 members attended in person and 8 online.

The President introduced the current Council Members, namely Gabriele Uhl (President), Sara Goodacre (Vice-President), Christian Kropf (Treasurer), Holger Frick (Vice-Treasurer), Jason Dunlop (Membership secretary), Maria Chatzaki (Communication), Marco Isaia (Newsletter), Elena Piano (Newsletter and EarICNews), Matjaž Gregorič (Webmaster), Vladislav Ivanov (Social Media), Julien Pétilion (the current conference organizer). The current Council Member, with the exception of Holger Frick, who resigned, will remain in office until the next congress in Croatia and Martina Pavlek will join as next Conference Organizer.

The President asked the members to consider getting involved in the ESA Council and it was agreed to launch a new call for applications for the Council in early 2025. Apart from a healthy mix of senior and younger arachnologists as Council Members, the Society needs



a person to take on the role of vice-treasurer and eventually the Treasurer duties, since Christian Kropf withdraw from this position in a few years' time. The next election will take place at the General Assembly of the Congress in September 2025.

Following a call for proposals for new honorary members, the council decided for Christine Rollard (Paris) for her outstanding work in spider taxonomy and faunistics and for her remarkable engagement in public outreach and for Jochen Martens (Mainz) for his outstanding and influential contributions to taxonomy and systematics of Opilionids and Araneids and his in-depth study of arachnids in the Himalaya region. The laudatios were given by Gabriele Uhl.



Christine Rollard (left) and Jochen Martens (right) were elected as Honorary Members of the European Society of Arachnology.

As to membership development, back in 2021 the Society had about 300 members. As of August 2024, the Society has 404 members from 60 countries. Many students joined recently and there are numerous non-European members, especially from Asia and the USA. Due to sudden illness of the treasurer during the conference the Report was postponed to 2025. Members were asked by the President to pay their dues by the President since the Society needs the income of the (small) annual fees to support arachnological meetings and projects. Payment can currently be made via PayPal to Christian Kropf (email christian.kropf@bs.ch).

Due to the transition of Christian Kropf from Bern to Basel, the former account at Bern Museum is not valid anymore. A new account will be established as soon as possible and put on the website.

Wolfgang Nentwig reported on the *World Spider Catalog* Version 25.5. which now contains over 52,000 species and about 19,000 papers in pdf format. There are 1,150 user sessions per day, demonstrating the importance of this resource for the field of arachnology. *Araneae, Spiders of Europe* counts 450 sessions per day. Wolfgang Nentwig also reported on "Who does What" and where financial support for the WSC and *Araneae* comes from. The costs for infrastructure and salaries amount to 45,000 CHF per year which is guaranteed by the Museum in Bern

(NMBE) until 2031. Royalties from the two books "All you need to know about spiders" and "House Spiders-Worldwide" are funnelled into the Association for the Promotion of Spider Research that supports the WSC as well. The members gave a big round of applause for Wolfgang Nentwig's and Christian Kropf's efforts in securing fundings for these essential online resources for the several years to come.

The last project of *European Arachnid Biodiversity Research* supported by the Society was the Kosovo-project by Donard Geci (2022/2023). There was a call for new proposals and the Council decided for the proposal of Nina Polchaninova on "Spiders and harvestmen diversity of the Steppe Ecosystem of Ukraine".

Matjaž Gregorič reported on the traffic on our website. Top pages are Proceedings, Conferences, new members. He acknowledges help from Alex Strauss with the website management and by other members who provide information for the website. He calls for more information on the early history of the society and asked for updates on national species lists.

Vladislav Ivanov reported on the number of visits and the demographics of our Facebook site. Since Twitter has only 515 followers and Facebook 1,500 the council decided to focus on Facebook from now on.

On behalf of Marco Isaia and Elena Piano, the President informed about the ESA Newsletter, last published in November 2022 on the occasion of the the congress in Greifswald 2022. On behalf of Elena Piano, the President also reported on the concept behind the EarICNews and ESA concept which aims to make early career arachnologists more visible. The next call will take place at the beginning of November 2024. The proceedings of this conference will be published in the journal *Arachnology Letters*. Julien Pétilion will serve as guest editor. The deadline for submissions is November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024. Further information will follow by e-mail.

### **See you soon in Croatia!**

The next ESA congress will be held from August 30<sup>th</sup> until September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025 in Zadar, Croatia. It will be organized by Martina Pavlek and co-organized by Dora Hlebec. Martina invited us during the General Assembly with an enticing presentation on Zadar and the venue located directly at the coast, and the lovely surroundings with many opportunities for great mid-conference excursions.





### Announcements

The Editorial team of the ESA Newsletter is working on the third issue of the **EarlCNews** dedicated to students. EarlCNews aims at collecting the abstracts of all arachnological theses (bachelor, master and PhD) defended in the previous year. It will be edited by the ESA Council and disseminated once a year, in spring. We invite all students and their supervisors to submit abstracts of theses from 2024 at the following link: <https://forms.gle/6NkjKnv41wsLD7gf8>.

- The **35th European Congress of Arachnology** will be held in Zadar (Croatia), hosted by Martina Pavlek and Dora Hlebec from August 30<sup>th</sup> until September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025.
- The **23rd International Congress of Arachnology** will be held in 2026 in Kochi (India), organized by Mathew Joseph).



Congress photo in Rennes, August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024

