

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,

A great conference in Zadar lies behind us. Originally planned to take place in Serbia, organized by Gordana Grbic and colleagues, the 35th European Congress of Arachnology had to be relocated due to the prevailing political situation in the country, which made it impossible to proceed as initially intended. In light of these circumstances, we are profoundly grateful to our colleagues Martina Pavlek and Dora Hlebec and their team who graciously stepped in to organize and host the conference in the beautiful city of Zadar. Their enthusiasm, dedication, and meticulous effort were instrumental in making this conference a remarkable success, attracting friends of arachnids from many countries to share their latest work, exchange ideas, foster meaningful collaborations and having an immensely good time. This gathering not only highlighted the high quality of research within our community but also demonstrated the strong spirit of cooperation that define our society. You will find the congress report in this newsletter, which is proof of the great time we had, scientifically and socially.

Sparked by the discussions we had during the Conference in Zadar, the ESA council has developed a statement of principles and concerns, which has also been sent to all members through the email list and is available on the website.

The statement is as follows:

"We are a Society whose remit is to promote constructive international scientific collaboration among all of its members, regardless of their political or personal beliefs, in line with the ethical principles outlined in our bylaws. In this spirit, we reiterate that we stand with all those affected by conflicts - whether

past or present. We include particularly in our thoughts today the magnitude of the current humanitarian disaster in Gaza, and we join those from all communities, including academic institutions across the globe, who are unified in the continued call for peace."

We hope that members in need of support will contact the Council, and we will explore means to provide support.

Looking ahead, we are pleased to announce that the next European Congress will be held in 2027 in Wrocław, a historical university city in southwestern Poland. The congress will be organized by Izabela Jędrzejowska and her team. We are confident that this upcoming event will offer another valuable opportunity for knowledge exchange, networking, and advancement in our field, and we look forward to an inspiring gathering in a vibrant city.

The efforts of the Organizing Committees of the last conferences have set a high standard for future events, which might be a bit intimidating for anyone who has ever contemplated on organizing an ECA. However, naturally, every conference is different, and how it is managed depends on many aspects, including available venues, funding possibilities, local support by the university, and the size of the organizing team. Thus, we encourage future congress organizers to embrace this challenge in their own way and with their own means. The call for venues for 2028 and 2030 is hereby declared open!

On behalf of the Council, I would like to express my sincere thanks to everyone who contributes to making this community so special.

With my very best wishes,

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



Congress Report

By Marco Isaia, Dora Hlebec, Martina Pavlek and Matjaž Gregorič

The 35th European Congress of Arachnology was organized by Martina Pavlek (Ruđer Bošković Institute, Zagreb) and Dora Hlebec (University of Zagreb, Zagreb) and their collaborators at the University of Zadar (Croatia). Once again, the European arachnological community reunited for an inspiring week of science, collaboration, and friendship — this time surrounded by the sea breeze and ancient beauty of the Adriatic coast.



The congress logo was designed by Iva Čupić. It features an undescribed cave-dwelling Leptonetid species of the genus *Sulcia*, hanging from its web spun over the symbols of Zadar, the Church of St. Donat and the bell tower of Saint Anastasia Cathedral.

The congress took place from August 31st to September 5th 2025 in the historical building of the University of Zadar, an exceptional venue ideally located along the seaside promenade and only a few minutes' walk from the city's historic centre. The venue offered excellent lecture halls and open spaces for discussions and poster sessions while the organizing team ensured that every aspect ran flawlessly, from the welcoming reception to the closing ceremony.

Representatives from 41 countries across 5 continents (175 participants in total), attended the meeting, making ECA Zadar 2025 one of the most internationally diverse ESA gatherings to date. The scientific programme included four plenary lectures, two thematic symposia, and 150 oral and poster presentations covering all fields of arachnology — from molecular systematics to ecology, behaviour and conservation.



The 35th European Congress of Arachnology was organized by Martina Pavlek (Ruđer Bošković Institute, Zagreb) and Dora Hlebec (University of Zagreb, Zagreb) and their collaborators at the University of Zadar (Croatia).

Arachnological Science

The opening plenary, delivered by Miquel Arnedo (Spain), entitled “Fast & Curious: how high-throughput sequencing redefines spider biodiversity research”, set an exciting tone for the week. Arnedo illustrated how modern genomic tools have transformed the study of spider diversity and evolutionary relationships, offering new perspectives on long-standing taxonomic challenges.



The Welcome Reception was held under palm trees at the very entrance of the historic and monumental building of the University of Zadar.

The second plenary, by Mark Harvey (Australia), “The wonderful world of pseudoscorpions and the quest for the ultimate phylogeny”, guided the audience through the remarkable hidden diversity of pseudoscorpions. Harvey's passion and encyclopaedic knowledge made the lecture both informative and entertaining, highlighting the advances and obstacles in building a robust phylogeny for this fascinating order.

On the following day Simona Kralj-Fišer (Slovenia) delivered her plenary talk “Unravelling sexual size dimorphism in spiders: current insights and emerging frontiers”. Her lecture combined behavioural ecology, evolution, and physiology to explain the complexity behind sexual size dimorphism, stimulating vibrant discussion among behavioural biologists and evolutionary theorists alike.



The final plenary talk, “A deep dive into Europe’s subterranean spiderverse” by Stefano Mammola (Italy), offered a breathtaking journey into the hidden biodiversity of European caves. Through striking images and innovative analyses, Mammola revealed how subterranean habitats serve as natural laboratories for studying adaptation and diversification.



Miquel Arnedo, Mark Harvey, Simona Kralj-Fiser and Stefano Mammola were the plenary speakers of the 35th European Congress of Arachnology.

Two symposia framed the scientific programme, each offering a concentrated look into rapidly advancing subfields.

The first, “How arachnids experience their world: senses, brain, development and behaviour”, organized by Gabriele Uhl, gathered researchers studying the sensory and cognitive capacities of arachnids. The symposium opened with an impulse talk by Gabriele in which she pointed out the considerable knowledge gaps in arachnid chemosensing. Massimo De Agrò’s gave a great plenary on “Biological point-light displays scanning by the principal eyes of a jumping spider”; which demonstrated how spiders perceive and interpret motion. Talks by Andres Rivera, Antonio Galan Sanchez, and Morgan Oberweiser explored visual evolution, vibratory courtship behaviour and communication. Yoram Zvik presented his elegant

study on chemical minimalism in myrmecophilous spiders, Andreas Fischer examined current knowledge on sex pheromones and Gabriele Uhl and colleagues explored the sensory tool kits used for chemosensing in *Pisaura mirabilis* — culminating in a vibrant discussion on multimodal perception in spiders.

The second symposium, “Science beneath the surface: cave arachnid ecology, diversity and evolution”, was coordinated by Efrat Gavish-Regev, Dora Hlebec and Martina Pavlek. It celebrated the growing community of biospeleologists and the exceptional subterranean fauna of the Dinaric Karst and beyond. Darrell Ubick opened the session with an overview of troglomorphy in Opiliones, followed by talks from Evgenia Propistsova, Nikola Pischiutta, Guilherme Prado, and Dora Hlebec exploring cave-dwelling spiders and pseudoscorpions across continents. Contributions by Marc Domènech, Peter Kozel, and Mert Elverici revealed new insights into hidden diversity, while Adrià Bellvert concluded with a macroecological analysis of range size and adaptation in subterranean spiders.

The scientific sessions unfolded over four days, reflecting the vibrancy and breadth of current arachnological research.



The venue offered excellent lecture halls and open spaces for discussions and poster sessions.

The opening day of the congress was devoted to Systematics, Phylogenetics, Genomics, and Biogeography, featuring three thematic sessions. The morning session on Systematics & Phylogenetics included presentations by Vera Opatova on the phylogenetic relationships and biogeographic origins of the spider family Nemesiidae, Marc Domènech on resampling genomic matrices to evaluate chelicerate relationships, Domagoj Gajski on a cost-effective



protocol integrating long amplicon PCRs and third-generation sequencing, Annui Sanz-LaParra on the phylogeny of the *Savignia* genus group, Markéta Byronová on the role of cytogenetics in delimiting *Euscorpium* species, Hsiang-Yun Lin on the phylogeny of *Nipponogarypus* pseudoscorpions, Krisztián Szabó introducing the “Mitospecies” concept, and János Novák establishing a DNA barcode reference library for Georgian pseudoscorpions. The afternoon session featured Peter Michalik on New Zealand odd-clawed spiders, Tamás Szűts on salticid sclerite homology, Vladislav Ivanov on the genetic basis of complex traits in *Latrodectus*, Alba Enguídanos García on diversification in the *Dysdera erythrina* complex, Sabrina Torres Kalme on karyotype evolution in Solifugae, and Maitry Jani on the evolution of prey-wrapping behavior in spiders. The final session included Tommaso Fusco on ground spiders of the Tolfa Mountains, Gordana Grbić on information and misinformation about Serbian spiders, Yuri Simone on the scorpion fauna of northwestern Saudi Arabia, and Maria Chatzaki on updates to the spider fauna of Greece. The Biogeography section concluded with talks by Laura Montes de Oca on the origins of New Zealand Porrhothelidae, Nathan Viel on the range expansion of *Zodarion rubidum*, and Kyunghoon Jeong on the dispersal history of *Allochthonius* in East Asia. Overall, the day offered a comprehensive overview of current research in arachnid evolution, taxonomy, and biogeography, showcasing a wide range of methodological and conceptual advances.

The second day of the congress featured a diverse and engaging scientific program held in parallel sessions, covering topics from Behavior and Taxonomy to Physiology and Applied arachnology. In Parallel Session 1 the focus was on Behavioral Biology. Presentations included Filip Solar on parasitoids of sheet web spiders, Vincent Jackel on the biomechanics of reverse jumping in *Clubiona corticalis*, and YiChi Li on predatory aggressiveness and neurophysiological mechanisms in spiders. Further talks by Sammi Huang, Rok Golobinek, Ren-Chung Cheng, Ming-yu Lee, and Jonas Wolff explored web architecture, coloration, and biomechanical adaptations, highlighting the complexity and diversity of spider behavior. Parallel Session 2 brought together studies in Taxonomy, Morphology & Anatomy, and Applied Arachnology. The taxonomy section featured Kaina Privet on Paris’ spider collections, Armine Kosyan on Armenian ground spiders, Peter Jäger revising *Heteropoda* in

Laos, and Yuri Marusik discussing araneoid-nicodamoid relationships. The morphology and anatomy section included Josefine Kreuz on the spinning apparatus of spiders and Anna Derdak on the ultrastructure of mite egg envelopes. The applied arachnology segment featured Anděla Šimečková on pesticide effects on spider foraging and Nicola Sullivan on prey capture under vibrational disturbance. Valeria Arabesky gave a talk on egg sac construction in widows and Tzu-Chi Yuan on orb-web adjustments along elevation gradients. The day ended with a session on Physiology & Adaptations, Applied Arachnology, featuring Weronika Porc on electromagnetic stress in *Parasteatoda tepidariorum*, Izabela Jędrzejowska on matrotrophy in *Chelifer cancroides*, Eran Gefen on gas exchange and metabolism in scorpions, and Carolina Ortiz Movliav on the effects of winter warming on spider mortality. The final talk, by Andreea Rebecka Zsigmond, addressed habitat influence on mineral composition in the wasp spider *Argiope bruennichi*. Overall, the day showcased an impressive breadth of research into arachnid behavior, physiology, evolution, and applied ecology, emphasizing the integrative and multidisciplinary nature of modern arachnology.

On Thursday Biodiversity & Community Ecology featured presentations by Andrea Baldissari on optimizing spider community monitoring, Emanuele Crepet on niche segregation in crab spiders, Christian Komposch on the potential and limitations of BioBlitzes, and Jeremy Miller on Wallacean jumping spiders. After a group photo we continued with talks by Nuria Macías-Hernández on community assembly and biodiversity drivers, Manuel Marquerie-Córdoba on microhabitat preferences in Iberian spiders, Christoph Muster on pitfall trap time series, Anna Piquet on spiders as urban ecological indicators, and Marco Tagliabue on tundra spider communities. In the Biodiversity & Community Ecology session, Alexandr Vasiliev presented on spiders of Duruitoarea Canyon, Raphaël Grellety on boreal forest conservation strategies, and Alireza Zamani on Iranian spider diversity and distribution. In Ecology & Ecosystem Roles, Julia Lamprecht discussed canopy research in the Eastern Alps. The Conservation & Management presentations included Anna Maka on Diamond-backed spider conservation in England, Miguel Sousa on small-scale spider biodiversity assessments, and Caroline Fukushima on tarantula trade dynamics. The final session featured Harriet Kinga on restored forests



in Ghana, Marco Tolve on climate-driven trait variation in *Vesubia jugorum*, Eva Liznarova on wetland restoration, and Cor Vink on developing a pheromone tool for *Latrodectus hasseltii* eradication. The day concluded with a poster session with refreshments, including local beer, wine, and caviar (Thanks, Yuri!).

The last day of the congress began with the second symposium, “*Science beneath the surface: Cave Arachnid Ecology, Diversity and Evolution*,” which was followed by a series of presentations on ecological roles and related topics. Talks included predictive ecological niche modeling and niche segregation in two harvestman species in Slovenia by Peter Kozel, the benefits of floods on riparian spider biodiversity and physiology by Stephane Mutel, ecosystem services provided by spiders by Pedro Cardoso, the distribution of Argyrodine kleptoparasites among host webs by Matjaž Gregorič, and the visibility of spiders, webs, and other elements in ecological studies by Walter Schuit. The session concluded with reflections on the design and interpretation of ecological research projects by Henning Clausen.

Mid-Congress Excursion and Social Events

Participants could choose among a walk in Krka National Park, a hike in Paklenica National Park, or a boat trip in Kornati National Park.



Arachnologists ready for hiking in Paklenica National Park.

In addition to the exceptionally clear waters that impressed the participants on the Krka excursion, they also climbed to the Oziđana pećina cave via approximately 500 steps and were captivated by the fauna along the way. Coffee enjoyed near the waterfalls tasted even better, and some participants took the opportunity to swim in the Krka River.

The hike in the Paklenica National Park provided an excellent insight into the rocky landscapes of the Dinaric Karst. In addition, participants visited Manita peć cave and enjoyed a range of biospeleological activities.



A walk in the Krka National Park was one of the options for the mid-conference excursion.

The Kornati excursion delighted all participants, many of whom took the opportunity to swim. Everyone was especially thrilled by the dolphins swimming around the boat - “organized” for our visit, of course (they really are almost always there!).

Social life and Awards

A social gathering was held at Brlog Brewery, where participants enjoyed local craft beers and informal networking in a relaxed atmosphere.



The Peace Party, held in the open courtyard of the University of Zadar, offered an evening of music, drinks, and laughter under the Adriatic stars. Rakija was the most consumed drink, which likely explains why some people did not remember the events of that day the following morning.



Some of the fellow arachnologists enjoying the boat trip in Kornati National Park.

The Congress Dinner was held in the Arsenal building, a cultural monument of the highest category. Built in the 18th century during Venetian rule, it originally served as a warehouse for the military fleet. The main items on the menu were traditional Croatian dishes, including seafood, prosciutto, and cheeses, accompanied by the indispensable *soparnik* - a savory Swiss chard and olive oil pie that is a specialty of the Dalmatian region. As in Rennes, Gabriele (vocals) and Jeremy (guitar) performed the song "It's an Arachnology Day" that was created during the congress in Greifswald based on the song "It's a lovely day" from Irving Berlin (1950). Singing along united old and new members of the community.



Peace party: From warm-up to dance!

Participants also joined a guided walk through the historic streets of Zadar's Old Town, exploring its architectural landmarks and cultural highlights. The tour concluded at the Monument to the Sun, timed to coincide with sunset.



The Congress Dinner was held in the Arsenal building, built in the 18th century during Venetian rule.

Awards

To support student participation at the ECA in Zadar, ESA awarded a total of twelve ECA Travel Grants to the following recipients: Andrea Baldissari (Italy), Luca Borio (Italy), Alba Enguíanos García (Spain), Zeana Ganem (Israel), Sammi Yen Ting Huang (Taiwan), Hsiang-Yun Lin (Taiwan), Evgenia Propistsova (Israel), Aleksandra Rozumko (Poland), Ádám Sándor Mayer (Hungary), Miguel Sousa (Portugal), Hunor Takács-Vágó (Hungary), and Yuval Zaltz (Israel). The AraGes Grant was awarded to Ruth Neeßen (Germany).

Additionally, organisers' fee waivers were granted to Guilherme Carvalho Prado (Brazil), Alba Enguíanos García (Spain), Chungha Hwang (South Korea), and Jeong Kyung-Hoon (South Korea).

This year's congress hosted 62 students who presented their research, all delivering high-quality presentations that reflected exceptional dedication and scientific potential. The Scientific Committee and plenary speakers faced the challenging task of selecting the best among them, where only the finest nuances made the difference.

The Best Oral Presentation Awards were assigned to Carolina Ortiz-Movliav (Winter warming increases metabolic stress and mortality in an overwintering spider), Morgan Oberweiser (Pre- and post-copulatory consequences of male vibratory courtship performance in the nursery web spider *Pisaura mirabilis*, Manuel Marquerie-Córdoba (A spider on the



fourth corner: how microhabitat preference reshapes functional space and trait–environment relationships in Iberian spiders). The PeerJ award was assigned to Hsiang-Yun Lin (Across islands and coastlines: phylogenetic insights into the East Asian pseudoscorpion genus *Nipponogarypus*).



From left to right: Carolina Ortiz Maviav, Morgan Oberweiser, Manuel Marquerie-Córdoba, Jori Oskari Heykes and Svea Carlotta von Einem.

Best Posters Awards were assigned to Svea Carlotta von Einem (Effect of autumn temperature on development, survival, and cold tolerance in spiderlings of the wasp spider *Argiope bruennichi*), Ondrej Vanek (Overlooked? Spreading? A contribution to the distribution of *Cortestina thaleri* in Central Europe) and Jori Oskari Heykes (Morphology and function of female genital damage in the orb-weaving spider *Larinioides cornutus*).

The two best oral presentations and the best poster were also awarded a copy of the new edition of Spider Biology by Rainer Foelix (published by Springer Cham). Thank you, Dr. Foelix!

On the last evening, we gathered in a bar but quickly moved to the promenade in front of the university building, chatted, swam and sang together and had a good time until late at night.

Thank You Zadar!

The entire community expressed heartfelt thanks to Martina Pavlek, Dora Hlebec, and their dedicated team: Tin Rožman, Tomislav Kos, Iva Čupić, Tvrtko Dražina, Domagoj Gajski and the students Marita Machata, Borna Matić, Nikola Pischiutta and Karla

Tolić, for creating an unforgettable congress — perfectly balancing science, culture, and camaraderie. With its perfect blend of rigorous science, warm hospitality, and Adriatic charm, the 35th European Congress of Arachnology will remain a cherished memory for all who attended.

News from ESA General Assembly

The General Assembly of the European Society of Arachnology took place on 5 September 2025 during the Zadar congress. President Gabriele Uhl opened the meeting, providing an overview of the Society's activities and thanking all members and the local organisers for another successful year.

The current ESA Council remains largely unchanged, with most officers standing for re-election. The composition for 2024–2025 includes Gabriele Uhl (President), Sara Goodacre (Vice-President), Christian Kropf (Treasurer), Jason Dunlop (Membership Secretary), Maria Chatzaki (Communication Secretary), Marco Isaia and Elena Piano (Newsletter and EarlCNews Editors), Matjaž Gregorič (Webmaster) and Vladislav Ivanov (Social Media). Julien Pétilon was elected Vice-Treasurer. Welcome Julien!

Membership continues to grow steadily, reaching 440 members from 63 countries as of August 2025 – an increase of 36 since last year. According to Jason Dunlop, the Society remains vibrant and increasingly international, with new members joining from Asia and the USA.

The General Assembly conferred honorary memberships on Paul Selden (UK) and Marek Michal Zabka (Poland), both recognised for their outstanding lifetime contributions to arachnology. The laudatio for Paul Selden was given by Gabriele Uhl and the laudatio for Marek Zabka was given by Tamás Szuts. Heartfelt tributes were paid to our late honorary members Christa Deeleman-Reinhold (Netherlands), by Martina Pavlek, Peter Jäger and Jeremy Miller. Her work has profoundly shaped European arachnology. Please read up on the presentations in the minutes of the General Assembly that were sent to all members on October 1st, 2025.

In his Treasurer's Report, Christian Kropf presented a solid financial situation, with a balance of around CHF 7900 that allows and continue funding congresses, student grants and projects such as Spiders of Europe



and Spiders of Ukraine. Members were reminded to keep their annual fees up to date.

The Arachnid Biodiversity Research 2024–2025 project, coordinated by Nina Polchaninova in Ukraine, received Society support for fieldwork and outreach activities. A new call for the 2026–2027 edition will open early next year.

Vladislav Ivanov reported on ESA's online presence, noting 1,509 followers on Facebook and inviting suggestions for alternative communication platforms. He encouraged members to share news and research via social media. The newsletter editors Marco Isaia and Elena Piano announced that the next issue – the tenth – will follow this congress, and reminded members that contributions are always welcome.

Finally, the Assembly approved the continuation of ESA's support for students, including travel grants and awards for the best presentations. The next ESA meetings will be held at the ICA 2026 in India, the 36th ECA in Wrocław (2027), and likely Trier (2028).

The meeting concluded in a warm and collegial atmosphere, reflecting once again the spirit of cooperation that defines the European Society of Arachnology.

See you soon in Poland!

We are now all looking forward to meeting again at the 36th European Congress of Arachnology, to be held in Wrocław (Poland) in 2027 — continuing the tradition of excellence and friendship that defines our Society.

Announcements

- The Editorial team of the ESA Newsletter is working on the fourth issue of the EarICNews dedicated to students. EarICNews 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 2025 at the following link: <https://forms.gle/7vbjL6PoUfnh2cR6>
- **The 23rd International Congress of Arachnology** will be held in 2026 in Kochi (India), organized by Mathew Joseph.
- **The 36th European Congress of Arachnology** will be held in Wrocław (Poland), hosted by Izabela Jędrzejowska in September 2027.



Congress photo in Zadar, September 4th, 2025

