

**Third Biannual Report of the
European Society for Environmental History,
2005-2007**



10th June 2007

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The report provides an overview for the period between the Third Ordinary General Meeting (OGM) Florence, Italy, in February 2005 and the Fourth OGM in Amsterdam, in June 2007. The Report is divided in thematic sections charting the activities and progress of the society with appendices about particular activities. The financial report is also included.

1. General overview

Board and Regional Representatives

During the Third Ordinary General Meeting of the ESEH on Friday 18 February 2005 a new Executive Board and Regional Representatives were elected for the period 2005-2007. The results of the elections were as follows:

Executive Board

- President: Poul Holm, *Roskilde University, Danmark*
- Vice-President: Mauro Agnoletti, *University of Florence, Italy*
- Vice-President: Jan Oosthoek, *University of Newcastle upon Tyne*
- Secretary: Lenka Uhlířová, *CENIA, Czech Environmental Information Agency, Czechia*
- Treasurer: Ulrich Koppitz, *University of Düsseldorf, Germany*
- Ex-Officio: Petra van Dam, *Free University, The Netherlands*

Regional Representatives:

- Benelux, **Petra van Dam**, The Netherlands
- British Isles, **David Moon**, England, UK
- Czechia & Slovakia, **Leos Jelecek**, Czechia
- Francophone Countries, **Geneviève Massard-Guilbaud**, France
- Germanophone Countries, **Andreas Dix**, Germany
- Hungary, **Lajos Racz**, Hungary
- Iberian Peninsula, **Manuel Gonzáles de Molina**, Spain
- Italy, **Marco Armiero**, Italy
- Nordic Countries, **Timo Myllyntaus**, Finland
- Russia & additional Eastern European Countries, **Julia Lajus**, Russia

Membership

During the years 2006 and 2007, after the introduction of credit card facilities the treasurer sent several reminders regarding membership fees and inquired if individual members asked for exemption according to paragraph 3.9 of the ESEH constitution. However, many members of the old mailinglist who joined the ESEH before the constitution was approved and membership fees were introduced did not respond; thus in 208 cases no membership has been established according to the constitution. Finally these cases were removed from the database, after that on June 1st 2007 the membership of ESEH consisted of 287 paying members from 29 countries, about 80% of whom are affiliated within Europe.

Website

The website remained an important communication tool for dissemination of information about ESEH. The most significant development has been the move of the site to a server owned by ESEH. This decision had been taken after access and uptime problems with our previous provider Schlund in Germany as well as problems related to transitions between boards. The server was bought in August 2005 and installed at the University of Southern Denmark. With the move of Poul Holm to the University of Roskilde, Denmark, the server moved also and is located there at present.

At the same time that the server was acquired, a content management system was installed to replace the old website. The content management system in use at present is the open source platform Plone. It is extremely scalable, has an easy to use news system, RSS news feed and member pages which can be maintained by the members themselves. Ease of use and maintenance was paramount and it has proven that the maintenance of news items as well as adding documents is easy. However, the maintenance of membership pages, in particular the database containing passwords is cumbersome. The same applies to the addition of new features which requires some programming skills. For ease of use it is perhaps a consideration to move to blog like systems which are easier to maintain and more in line with contemporary developments in web publishing. Direct access to the server is also desirable.

Visitor development

The development of visitor number was tracked until January 2005 when the free service used turned into a pay-only service. Since the launch of the new website no statistics have been gathered in a systematic way but the graph below provides an indicative snapshot of the monthly number of visitors. Note that these numbers are not reliable and should at least be doubled.

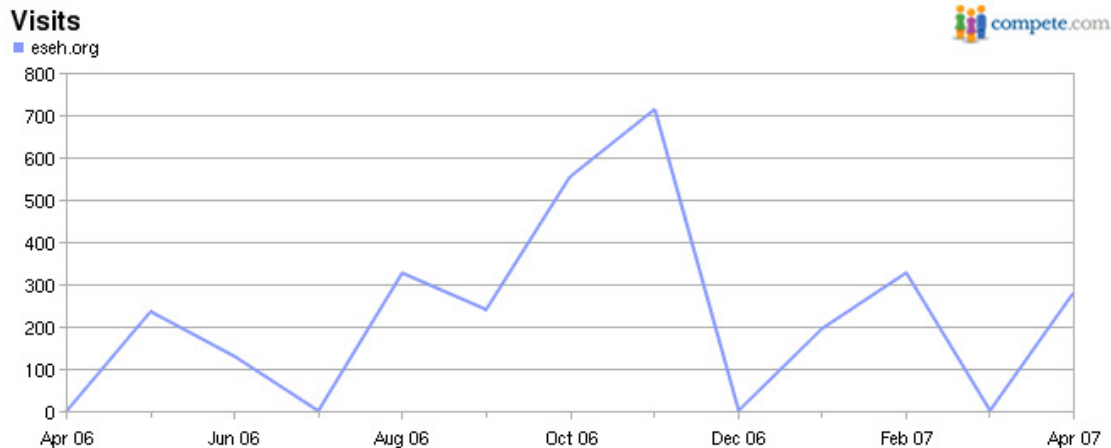


Figure: Visits to ESEH website, April 2006 – April 2007 (Source: compete.com)

In Google the websites position when searched for environmental history is 10 and its rank 6/10, which is rather good for a small site like ESEH's.

Newsletter

The ESEH newsletter continued to be published in the journal *Environment and History* (E&H) throughout the period of this report. The Newsletter appears four times per year in February, May, August and November and is simultaneously published on the ESEH website. Co-operation with the publisher of E&H, Andrew Johnson of White Horse Press, was very smooth and without any difficulties.

Centre for Environmental History initiative

In 2005, May 19-20, a workshop in combination with evening lecture and field trip was held in Neuburg upon Danube to inquire into possibilities of a Centre for European Environmental History (CEEH) in this town. With the local organizers from the County of Neuburg, several joint activities in the field of environmental history - e.g. summer school, workshops, series of conferences and/or publications, archive and secretariate - have been discussed openly as well as their costs, benefits and constraints. In most issues, however, their feasibility remained unclear for financial and other reasons, so that no further effort to establish a Centre for European Environmental History was undertaken. The idea of summer schools and many other issues discussed at this workshop will remain on the agenda of the ESEH.

International co-operation

The ESEH continued to work with a number of organisations including the American Society for Environmental History, the Forest History Society (FHS), IUFRO and Latin American Society for Environmental History. A particularly important development was the establishment of the Association of South Asian Environmental Historians in June 2006. A greetings address on the occasion of the Founding of the Association of South Asian Environmental Historians was delivered by ESEH President Poul Holm. The address invited the new society to join the international network of ICE-HO, the International Consortium of Environmental History Organizations.

Forest History Library and bibliography initiative

The Forest History Library in Durham NC planned another application at the National Endowment for the Humanities in order to enlarge systematically their Online Environmental History Bibliography and asked the ESEH for international cooperation and financial support as well. After many organizational efforts, the financial commitment of ESEH and individual ESEH members in this vital issue could not be carried out, however, as the contested application in the U.S.A. finally did not succeed.

ICE-HO and 1st World Congress of Environmental History

The International Consortium of Environmental History Organizations (ICEHO) part of which is the ESEH are organizing the 1st World Congress of Environmental History in Copenhagen, 4.-8. of August 2009. Therefore in 2009 no ESEH conference will take place, board meetings and the Ordinary General Meeting 2009 will be part of the joint Conference in Copenhagen. Members of the ESEH are especially invited to take part in the first World Congress of Environmental History taking place in Europe. Key organizers of this conference, e.g. Poul Holm as chair of the Organizational Committee, Verena Winiwarter as chair of the Programme Committee and Steven Anderson as chair of the Preparation Committee are also members of the ESEH.

2. Financial report 2005-2007

The most important expenditure of this period was made to buy a server in 2005. Moreover, in that year five travel grants have been issued in addition to the grants given by the conference organizers in order to enable applicants from South America and Eastern Europe to join the ESEH conference 2005. Also a minor part of the travel costs of a workshop held in Neuburg 2005 to explore possibilities of a Center for European Environmental History in this town were covered by ESEH. In 2006, as usual, the ESEH shared in the travel costs of the Scientific Committee preparing the next biannual conference in Amsterdam. On the same occasion an executive board meeting was held and part of the travel costs covered by the society. Another considerable but permanent expenditure are the fees to enable credit card acceptance including the obligatory leasing of a machine. Although credit card facilities are prerequisite in terms of financial justice - ca. 40% of the members do not have a bank account within the Euro currency zone - the easiest and cheapest way to collect fees is at the conference desk, thus this practice should not be abandoned in the next years.

Income2005	IncomeSort	SumIncome	Expenses2005	SumExpenses
from 2004	Giro+Savingsbook	6.532,85	bank /credit card fees	269,94
Fees 05 (Postbank)	Membership Fees div.yrs	1.610,00	Notary fees	75,40
Fees 05 (Conf. Desk)	Membership Fees div.yrs	2.990,00	Ice-Ho 2003-05	116,77
Donation	donation	60,00	Travelgrants Florence	1.100,00
interests savings book	net interests 2005	59,89	Website Hosting	228,00
			Website-Server Roskilde	2.609,58
SUMincome		11.252,74	Travel Neuburg EB partly	242,25
			postage/ bureaumat.	103,58
			SUMexpenses	4.745,52
		Inc. minus Exp. 2005		6.507,22

Income2006	IncomeSort	SumIncome	Expenses2006	SumExpenses
from 2005	Giro+Savingsbook	6.507,22	bank fees	120,00
Membership Fees 06	members. fees div.years	2.005,43	credit card fees	560,53
interests savings book	net interests 2006	38,65	Website Hosting (end)	91,87
	donations	50,00	SC Amst. Travel (partly)	538,40
	SUMincomeBudget	8.601,30	ExB Amst. Travel (partly)	645,82
			SUMexpensesBudget	1.956,62
		Inc. minus Exp. 2006		6.644,68

More important than the financial possibilities of ESEH is the application for Sponsoring for environmental history projects triggered by ESEH activities, amounting to some 22.000 Euro in 2005: The 3rd ESEH conference in Florence was sponsored by the Breuninger Foundation, who covered conference fees (€ 3.600) and travel costs (€ 8.595) for members of the ESEH board and of the Scientific Committee who prepared the conference, and the Government of Tuscany generously financed travel grants for conference participants from disadvantaged countries (€ 7.500). Also in 2005, the environmental history workshop in Neuburg was sponsored by the County of Neuburg (ca. € 1.500) and the Breuninger Foundation (€ 1.000). In 2006, the meeting of the Scientific Committee in preparation of the 4th ESEH Conference in Amsterdam was sponsored by the Breuninger Foundation (€ 1.156).

3. Budget 2007

For the current year 2007, the budget covers only 50% of the travel costs for board members from Eastern Europe, whereas the costs for the Scientific Committee who prepared the conference and will be chairing sessions are this year jointly covered by the Local Organizing Committee in Amsterdam and by the Breuninger Foundation Stuttgart. The Local Organizing Committee also provides travel grants for conference participants from disadvantaged regions amounting to 10.000,- Euro.

Thus, the ESEH budget for the conference year 2007 is fairly balanced and allows for one or two major projects to be pursued due to the project plan 2007-2009 which will be discussed and published by the new board.

IncomeBudget2007	IncomeSort	SumInBEuro	ExpensesBudget2007	SumExBEuro
	from 2006 savings+giro	6.644,68	bank fees	120,00
	Memb.Fees 07 midMay	741,50	credit card acc. fees, ca.	550,00
	more memb.fees 07 ca.	1.800,00	ICE-HO fees 2006-08	120,00
	interests savings book	40,00	EastEurop.Board half travel Amst.	2.500,00
			Travelgrant Amsterdam hardship	250,00
			registration fees at court, ca.	100,00
			<i>project plan item 1 (to be decided)</i>	<i>1.000,00</i>
			<i>project plan item 2 (to be decided)</i>	<i>500,00</i>
	SUMIncomeBudget	9.226,18	SUMexpensesBudget07 ca.	5.140,00
			BUDGET_result_2007	4.086,18

4. Appendices

Appendix 1

List of committees and committee members

Conference Committee 2007

Gabriella Corona (chair), *Istituto di Studi Sulle Societa del Mediterraneo (ISSM)*, Italy
Richard Oram, *University of Stirling*, United Kingdom
Petr Szabo, *Central European University*, Hungary
Eric Thoen, *Ghent University*, Belgium

Nomination Committee (provisional)

Andreas Dix (chair), *University of Bonn*, Germany
Gabriella Corona, *Istituto di Studi Sulle Societa del Mediterraneo (ISSM)*, Italy
Laurence Lestel, France
Christian Pfister, *University of Bern*, Switzerland
Petr Szabo, *Central European University*, Hungary

Astrid Kander (resigned and was replaced by Laurence Lestel)

Financial Control Committee

Martina Kaup, *Bielefeld University*, Germany
Phia Steyn, *University of Stirling*, UK

Education Committee (provisional)

Bernd Herrmann, *University of Goettingen*, Germany
Poul Holm, *University of Southern Denmark*
Timo Myllyntaus, *University of Helsinki*, Finland

ESEH Committee for a Centre for European Environmental History (provisional)

Martin Knoll, *University of Regensburg*, Germany
Geneviève Massard-Guilbaud, *Blaise Pascal University Clermont-Ferrand*, France
Verena Winiwarter, *IFF (Faculty for Interdisciplinary Studies) University of Klagenfurt at Vienna*

Appendix 2

Short Reports from Regional Representatives

Benelux: Petra van Dam said that she devoted all her time and energy to conference organisation [4th ESEH conference 2007 in Amsterdam].

British Isles: David Moon reported on the conference in Milton Keynes and several seminars, especially a seminar organised and widely promoted by Chris Smout on European - Japanese matters in environmental history.

Czechia & Slovakia: Leos Jeleček mentioned the problems in postcommunist countries with perception of history as a tool for justifying faults. The historians are interested mainly in writing political history. There are few people and institutions who are interested in the subject e.g. Prof. Brazdil et al. in Brno and Prof. Bicik et al. in Prague. A special section on Environmental history and historical geography was founded within the Czech geographical society, and the Internet journal *Klaudyan* was innovated.

Francophone Countries: Geneviève Massard-Guilbaud organised the first meeting of environmental history in France. It was successful in both teaching and research as well. Research positions in her institute devoted to environmental history have been created. However, there is a reluctance to use the term Environmental History in France, scientists do not like to be identified as environmental historians. As a other bottleneck of the development of the subject in France she identified underrepresentation of French presenters in programmes of the international conferences.

Germanophone Countries: Andreas Dix distributed information on environmental history matters. Germanophone countries are quite active in the field. He announced first introduction to the subject published in German by Verena Winiwarter and Martin Knoll.

Hungary: Lajos Rácz reported that within last two years they organized 4 conferences about subjects of environmental history, published the books and keep the discussion with neighbouring countries.

Nordic Countries: Timo Myllyntaus set up a network of 60-70 people for collecting and dissemination of the information. This information was distributed also to other RRs. Environmental history was not so much expanding in Scandinavia. They organised a conference attended by about 100 people from Scandinavia. Thanks to English as an official language also a number of people from USA and Canada came. In Rejtaviek the Nordic history conference will be held this year. Also the Nordic session during the ASEH conference 2007 was organised by the network.

Russia & additional Eastern European Countries: Julia Lajus mentioned that she serves as a RR for a short period only. In Russia there are problems similar to Czechia. There are several small centres with scattered activities which are not centralized. She also mentioned problems with definition of environmental history in Russia. She understands her task mainly to promote the subject. They already succeeded in translation of books from key authors e.g. Crosby, Winiwarter etc. They created the syllabus for the environmental history course based on the syllabus of the Central European University in Budapest.