9th Biennial Report of the European Society for Environmental History
2017–2019

Prepared by Péter Szabó
(President of ESEH 2017-2019)
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I. General overview

At its 9th Ordinary General Meeting (OGM) in Zagreb, Croatia, 29 June 2017, ESEH elected new Board Members and five new Regional representatives. At the meeting of the Council of Regional Representatives (CRR) the same day, five Regional Representatives were elected onto the Board. Because the Regional Representative for Italy was not voted in at the OGM in Zagreb, the Board appointed an interim RR for Italy in 2018.

These elections resulted in the following Board and Council of Regional Representatives for 2017–2019:

**ESEH Board**

President
Péter Szabó, *Institute of Botany, Czech Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic*

Vice-Presidents
Borna Fuerst-Bjelis, *University of Zagreb, Croatia*

Wilko Graf von Hardenberg, *Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Germany*

Secretary
Giacomo Parrinello, *Center for History at Sciences Po, France*

Treasurer
Ulrich Koppitz, *Medical History Library, Düsseldorf, Germany*

Regional Representative for German speaking countries and Chair of CRR
Martin Knoll, *University of Salzburg, Austria*

Regional Representative for Baltic Countries
Kati Lindström, *KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden*

Regional Representative for Romania
Stefan Dorondel, *F. I. Rainer Institute of Anthropology, Romania*

Regional Representative for Israel
Yaron J. Balslev, *Tel Aviv University, Israel*

Regional Representative for Croatia
Hrvoje Petrić, *University of Zagreb, Croatia*

Chair of the Local Organizing Committee for the 2019 Biennial Conference in Tallinn
Ulrike Plath, *Tallinn University, Estonia*

**Council of Regional Representatives**

Andrea Gaynor, *The University of Western Australia, Australia* – Australasia

Kati Lindström, *KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden* – Baltic states

Tim Soens, *University of Antwerp, Belgium* – Benelux countries

Ian Rotherham, *Sheffield Hallam University, UK* – Britain and Ireland

Hrvoje Petrić, *University of Zagreb, Croatia* – Croatia

Pavel Chromý, *Charles University Prague, Czechia* – Czechia and Slovakia

Charles-François Mathis, *Université Bordeaux Montaigne, France* – France

Martin Knoll (chair), *University of Salzburg, Austria* – German speaking countries

Vaso Seirinidou, *University of Athens, Greece* – Greece

Dénes Sálata, *Szent István University, Hungary* – Hungary

Yaron J. Balslev, *Tel Aviv University* – Israel
Melania Nucifora, CTSA Catania, Italy – Italy
Paula Schönach, University of Helsinki, Finland – Nordic countries
Adam Izdebski, Jagiellonian University Krakow, Poland – Poland
Inês Amorim, University of Porto, Portugal – Portugal
Stefan Dorondel, F. I. Rainer Institute of Anthropology, Bucharest – Romania
Alexei V. Kraikovskii, European University at St Petersburg, Russia – Russia
Jelena Mrugić, University of Belgrade, Serbia – Serbia
Sandra Swart, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa – South Africa
Juan Infante, Pablo de Olavide University, Spain – Spain
Onur İnal, University of Hamburg, Germany – Turkey

ESEH Committees
Financial Control Committee
Dominik Collet, Heidelberg University, Germany
Stéphane Frioux, University of Lyon 2, France
Nomination Committee
Christian Rohr (chair), University of Bern, Switzerland
Kati Lindström, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden and University of Tartu, Estonia
Ana Isabel Queiroz, University of Lisbon, Portugal
Conference Site Selection Committee
Patrick Kupper (chair), University of Innsbruck, Austria
Borna Fuerst-Bjelis (Board representative), University of Zagreb, Croatia
Tomasz Samojlik, Polish Academy of Science, Poland
ESEH 2019 Program Committee
Finn Arne Jørgensen (chair), University of Stavanger, Norway
Hrvoje Petrić (Board representative), University of Zagreb, Croatia
Santiago Gorostiza, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (ICTA-UAB), Spain
Andrea Gaynor, The University of Western Australia, Australia
Kati Lindström, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden and University of Tartu, Estonia
Leona Skelton, Northumbria University, United Kingdom
ESEH Travel Grant Committee
Anna Mazanik (chair), Central European University, Hungary
Ulrich Koppitz (Board representative), University of Düsseldorf, Germany
Renaud Bécot, Laboratoire de recherche historique Rhône-Alpes, France
ESEH Research Grant Committee
Marcus Hall (chair), University of Zurich, IEU, Switzerland
Giacoimo Parrinello (Board representative), Sciences Po Paris, France
Sofie Míttas, Johannes Kepler University, Linz
Summer School Committee
Inês Amorim (chair), University of Porto, Portugal
Martin Knoll (Board representative), University of Salzburg, Austria
Omer Aloni, Tel-Aviv University Buchmann Faculty of Law, Israel
Žiga Zwitter, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
Victor Matasov, Moscow State University, Russia
Editorial Committee (Berghahn/ESEH/RCC book series)
Christof Mauch, *Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, Munich, Germany*
Helmuth Trischler, *Deutsches Museum, Munich, Germany*
David Moon, *University of York, United Kingdom* (until 2018)
Dolly Jørgensen, *Umeå University, Sweden*
Kieko Matteson, *University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, U.S.* (from 2018)

St. Andrews Article Prize Committee
Martin Schmid (chair), *Institute of Social Ecology/Vienna, Austria*
Yaron Baslev (Board representative), *Tel Aviv University, Israel*
Maïka de Keyzer, *University of Antwerp, Belgium*

Turku Book Prize Committee
Jane Carruthers (chair), *University of South Africa, South Africa*
Eva Jakobsson, *University of Stavanger, Norway*
Christof Mauch, Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, Munich, Germany
Stefan Dorondel (Board representative), Institute of Anthropology, Bucharest, Romania
Marianna Dudley, *University of Bristol, United Kingdom*

Tallinn Dissertation Prize Committee
Gabriella Corona (chair), *National Research Council, Institute of Studies on Mediterranean Societies, Naples, Italy*
Ellen Arnold, *Ohio Wesleyan University, USA*
Elena Kochetkova, *National Research University Higher School of Economics, St. Petersburg, Russia*
David Moon, *University of York, UK/Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan*
Viktor Pál, *University of Helsinki, Finland*

ESEH Next Generation Action Team (NEXTGATE)
Viktor Pál, Coordinator (assistant to Board), *University of Helsinki, Finland.*
Roberta Biasillo, *Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society/LMU Munich, Germany.*
Elena Kochetkova, *National Research University Higher School of Economics, St. Petersburg.*
Tayler Meredith, *University of Birmingham, United Kingdom.*
Erin Spinney, *Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, University of Oxford.*
Simone Schleper, *Leibniz Institute of European History (IEG), Mainz, Germany.*
II. Financial Report  
(prepared by ESEH Treasurer Ulrich Koppitz)

In the conference year 2017, the income of ESEH was larger than in previous years because the Board replaced many tasks of a professional conference organizer – otherwise provided by the university administration - with a turnover of more than 84,000 Euro. This effort was rewarded not only with 1,500 Euro from the final surplus, but also an increase of membership fees in connection with conference payments via PayPal. Moreover, 1,000 Euro were donated to support the Turku Prize in the 2020s. Expenditures amounted to ca. 13,000 Euro, mostly for conference and summer school in Croatia, whereas high income of over 18,000 Euro led to an increase of capital by over 5,000 Euro.
In such a good state, expenditures in 2018 have been increased for funding 2 workshops, 1 summer school plus 2 archival travel grants with 500 Euro each, 1 more grant could not be collected before the end of the year. Although income decreased in this non-conference year to 4,000 Euro, the financial means still improved in order to secure prizes, travel aids and grants for the 10th ESEH conference in the following year.
III. Presidential report

Between 2017 and 2019, ESEH focused its activities around six areas: 1) support for next generation scholars, 2) support for scholarly development, 3) biennial conferences, 4) recognition of outstanding scholarship, 5) communication, and 6) members, networks and regions. This report provides details for each of these areas.

1) Support for next generation scholars

It is now traditional for ESEH to co-sponsor the organization of European Summer Schools on environmental history with 500 EUR per event. We co-sponsored the Summer School “An Environmental History of the First World War” held at the Centre International de Recherche de l'Historial de la Grande Guerre, in Péronne, France on 2-7 July 2018. The second co-sponsored Summer School in connection with the 10th Biennial Conference was going to be held in Tartu, Estonia in 2019, but unfortunately this event was cancelled by the organizers shortly before the actual event was going to take place. A further means of supporting the next generation of European environmental historians is through ESEH’s travel grant scheme. Travel grants support scholars who need financial assistance to attend the biennial conference. For the 2019 Conference in Tallinn we received 29 travel grant applications, of which 28 were awarded a travel grant. The average amount granted was 285 EUR, totalling 8000 EUR. A different grant scheme, ESEH’s recently established research grants assist outstanding doctoral students and recent PhD graduates to complete their research in environmental history. ESEH awards up to two grants per year, each 500 EUR. The awardees for 2018 were Jayne Regan, Australian National University: “A Wealth of Romance: Conservation and commercialism on the Great Barrier Reef, 1885–1970”, and Patrick J Klinger, University of Kansas: “The climate of union: An environmental history of the Anglo-Scottish Union of 1707”. Research grants for 2019 went to Katrin Kleeman, Ludwig Maximilians University/Rachel Carson Center, Munich: “A Mist Connection: The Icelandic Laki Fissure Eruption of 1783” and Anna Varfolomeeva, Central European University, Budapest: “The narratives of hardship and glory: gender dimensions of stoneworking in Northwestern Russia.” In order to strengthen the presence and influence of next generation scholars in environmental history in Europe and beyond, the Board decided to establish the ESEH Next Generation Action Team (NEXTGATe) in 2018. The main activities of NEXTGATe include active social media presence and exploring new ways of scholarly communication. For example, prior to the Tallinn Conference, NEXTGATe members organized a successful Twitter conference. NEXTGATe also organized on-site activities and networking at the conference, including the highly popular ESEH Next Generation Action Team Pub Night, where next generation scholars could meet and mingle in a relaxed atmosphere. NEXTGATe also initiated the ESEH Dissertation database, which in late 2019 included 30 unpublished dissertations on environmental historical topics. More on the activities of NEXTGATe can be found in the 2018/4 Notepad section of the journal Environment and History.

2) Scholarly development

ESEH supports with 500 EUR each up to 2 small workshops per year (with less than 100 participants) organized by an ESEH member on any topic in European environmental history. Applications are administered through an open call and decisions are made by the Board. In 2017-2019, the following workshops were selected for support:
• “Environmental History of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey” 27-28 October 2017, TürkeiEuropaZentrum (TEZ) Universität Hamburg, Germany.
• "First Baltic Conference on the Environmental Humanities and Social Sciences (BALTEHUMS)” 8-9 October 2018, Academic Center for Natural Sciences, Latvian University, Riga, Latvia.
• “The Second International NEHT Workshop: Environmental Histories of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey” 6-7 September 2019, Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara, Turkey.
• “Conference for Environmental History 2019. Environmental History Events in the Mirror of Historical and Natural Sources in the Carpathian-Balkan Region during the Past Five Millennia.” 29–30 October 2019, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary.

Furthermore, the ESEH Board decided to endorse (without financial support) the workshop "Middle Eastern Animals: Interdisciplinary Perspectives from Early Modern to Contemporary Times" held on 27-28 June 2019, at the University of Vienna, Austria.

ESEH has continued its successful cooperation with Berghahn to publish the series Environment in History: International Perspectives. Six volumes were published in 2018-2019:

• Managing Northern Europe's Forests: Histories from the Age of Improvement to the Age of Ecology. Edited by K. Jan Oosthoek and Richard Hölzl.
• A Living Past: Environmental Histories of Modern Latin America. Edited by John Soluri, Claudia Leal, and José Augusto Pádua.
• Ice and Snow in the Cold War: Histories of Extreme Climatic Environments. Edited by Julia Herzberg, Christian Kehrt, and Franziska Torma.
• Changes in the Air: Hurricanes in New Orleans from 1718 to the Present. By Eleonora Rohland.

3) Biennial conferences

The 10th Biennial Conference of ESEH was held in Tallinn, Estonia, on 21-25 August 2019. The conference was exceptionally well-organized and many thanks are due to the Local Organizing Committee, especially to Ulrike Plath, Kati Lindström, Linda Kaljundi and Kadri Tüür. The Scientific Committee received 219 individual paper submissions, 73 session proposals, 16 roundtable proposals, 10 special session proposals and 21 poster proposals. Of these, 176 individual papers, 69 sessions, 10 roundtables, 7 special sessions and 21 posters were accepted. In all, the conference was attended by ca. 500 scholars from all over the world. An open call for expression of interest was published by the Board for potential organizers of the 11th Biennial Conference in 2021. Two proposals were received (by the University of Szeged, Hungary and the University of Bristol, UK.) Based on the evaluation of the Conference
Site Selection Committee and the subsequent recommendation of the Board, the CRR selected Bristol, UK, as the site of the 2021 ESEH Biennial Conference.

4) Recognition of outstanding scholarship

Currently ESEH has four different prizes to recognize and promote outstanding scholarship in European Environmental History.

The St Andrews Article Prize (which comes with 500 EUR) rewards innovative and well-written article-length research in any European language published in 2017 or 2018 on any subject in the field of European environmental history, including Europe’s (post)colonial impact on the global environment. The Article Prize Committee received 26 submissions. The Prize was won by a multi-author paper: Hartman, Steven, Ogilvie, A.E.I., Ingimundarson, Jón Haukur, Dugmore, A.J., Hambrecht, George and McGovern, T.H. “Medieval Iceland, Greenland, and the New Human Condition: A case study in integrated environmental humanities.” Global and Planetary Change 156 (2017): 123–139. An honorary mention was awarded to Tim Soens for his article “Resilient societies, vulnerable people: Coping with North Sea floods before 1800.” Past and Present 241 (2018): 143–177. For the first time, a scientific cartoon for the winning article was prepared by Tomasz Samojlik, which will be available on the ESEH website.


ESEH also has the Environment and History Best Poster Prize in cooperation with the White Horse Press to encourage and elevate the status of poster presentations at the biennial conferences. First and second prizes are awarded (100 EUR and 50 EUR, respectively). At the Tallinn conference, the first prize was won by Dimitri van Limbergen for his poster „Back to the roots: Agroforestry and the rediscovery of Roman viticulture (200BC–AD200).” Nina Schläffli won the second prize for her poster “Shipping on the border: Environmental dimensions in the development of steam navigation in the Lake Constance region.”

Acting on the initiative of NEXTGATe, the ESEH Board decided to establish a new prize for the best dissertation in European environmental history. Following ESEH tradition, the prize was named after an important location in the history of our society: Tallinn. The Prize aims at supporting early career scholars based in Europe or based outside Europe but working on a European topic. It is intended to enhance the visibility of PhD students and post-docs in environmental history and the environmental humanities, and to strengthen inter-generational ties within the ESEH. A crowdsourcing campaign was initiated to sponsor

5) Communication

The ESEH website (www.eseh.org) was managed by the Vice-President Wilko Graf von Hardenberg and Secretary Giacomo Parrinello. ESEH also maintained an active presence on social media (facebook and twitter). We continued to publish the ESEH Society Pages (Notepad) in Environment and History. Through the efforts of Notepad liaison Marcus Hall, six further overviews of national research in various ESEH regions were published: Poland – 2017/3, Russia – 2017/4, Turkey – 2018/2, Spain – 2018/3, Israel – 2019/1 and Romania – 2019/2. Three Notepads were dedicated to others topics: Zagreb conference reflections: 2018/1, NEXTGATe introduction: 2018/4, ESEH celebrates 20 years: 2019/3. Members continued to receive the presidential newsletter four times a year and extraordinary communication when appropriate.

6) Members, networks, regions

In August 2019, ESEH had 1166 members, a 9% increase when compared to the previous period. ESEH remains a Basic level member of the International Consortium for Environmental History Organizations (ICEHO), which organizes the World Congress of Environmental History every 5 years. The latest WCEH took place in July 2019 in Brazil. ESEH is also a member of the European Alliance for Social Sciences & Humanities (EASSH), which advocates SSH in EU research funding strategies.

It was an important aim of the Board to widen the geographical scope of ESEH. To this end, two entirely new regions were established (Ukraine and North-Macedonia) by the Ordinary General Meeting. Furthermore, the existing regions of Croatia and Serbia were merged and Slovenia (so far not part of ESEH regions) joined in to create the newly established region of Croatia-Serbia-Slovenia.