

From the President's Desk

Dear Colleagues,

ESEH members present at the Prague conference have shared the wonderful experience of hospitality and a truly unique atmosphere provided by the Local Committee. We are very grateful to our hosts for all their efforts.

Participants also shared the experience of being part of a vibrant and energetic scholarly community. Prague was wonderful, and we are looking forward to Florence, where we will meet as early as February 2005 for yet another scholarly and personal exchange.

Prague marks an important development in ESEH. We held the first elections prepared by a (provisional) Nominating Committee, and we voted for the very first time for Regional Representatives. I would like to thank the outgoing Vice-President, Sverker Sörlin, for the work he devoted to ESEH, and I would also like to thank our outgoing representative for the Iberian Peninsula, Mariano Barriendos, for his work. I am pleased to welcome Poul Holm as new Vice-President, and Manuel Gonzales de Molina as new representative for the Iberian Peninsula. I am particularly glad to be able to continue working with so many colleagues who were willing to stand for re-election. I believe I speak in all our names in thanking the members for their continuing trust in our abilities to further the aims of ESEH. Thomas Zeller, who chaired the prize committee, resigned from his position and we welcome Christof Mauch on the committee.

ESEH now has about 390 members, and we will soon be a registered charitable society under German law. Members of ESEH have contributed substantially to our budget by generously donating money, and I would like to acknowledge all these donations. The ESEH prize will change from being a book prize to a monetary one, due to a donation by the German Historical Institute, Washington, DC, who will sponsor the 2005 prize.

I hope that ESEH will be able to expand its services to members in the future. For now, let me wish you a productive autumn and ask you to remember to add your items to the ESEH bibliography and to keep spreading the word about us.

Sincerely,

Verena Winiwarter, President, ESEH

P.S. If you wish to write to me, please note my change of address (as given on the website), my e-mail is still the same, <verena.winiwarter@univie.ac.at>

ESEH Conference 2005

The next conference of ESEH will be held in Florence, Italy, in February 2005. The organisation of this meeting is in the hands of Mauro Agnoletti of the University of Florence, who joined the board as ex-officio member. A formal announcement and call for papers will be issued in late October 2003. For the latest information on the ESEH Florence 2005 meeting we advise you to visit the ESEH website regularly.

New Board and Regional Representatives

During the ESEH General Meeting on Friday 5 September 2003 a new Executive Board and Regional Representatives were elected. You can find a list of the Executive Board members and Regional Representatives at the Bottom of this Notepad. For contact details of the Board Members and Regional Representatives, please refer to the ESEH website, www.eseh.org.

The board warmly welcomes Poul Holm as the new Vice-President of ESEH and wishes to thank the outgoing Vice-President for the pleasant co-operation of the past years and the hard work he has put into ESEH.

New Vice-President

Poul Holm is 48 years old, married with three children. He graduated in history from the University of Aalborg, Denmark, in 1979, and earned his doctorate (dr.phil.) at the University of Aarhus in 1991. He was a curator for the Fisheries and Maritime Museum in Esbjerg, which was the original home of the Center for Maritime and Regional History which he established in 1994. Since 2000 he has been a professor at the University of Southern Denmark and Director of the Center for Maritime and Regional Studies. In 2001 he was elected chairman of the Danish Research Council for the Humanities and is currently also chairman of the European Network of Research Councils for the Humanities.

Poul Holm has published extensively in the field of maritime economic, social and regional history, while his interest in marine environmental history is more recent. He is currently chairman of the History of Marine Animal Populations project, which is a global 10-year research project (2000–2010) to bring marine history and archaeology into collaboration with marine ecology and paleoecology in order to enhance our understanding of changes in the biodiversity, distribution and abundance of marine life in the world's oceans. His latest book is *The Exploited Seas: New Directions for Marine Environmental History*, edited by Poul Holm, Tim D. Smith and David J. Starkey, published both separately by the International Maritime Economic History Association/ Census of Marine Life, St. John's Newfoundland, 2001 and as part of the series *Research in Maritime History*, no. 21 (St. John's, 2001).

Poul Holm
Center for Maritime og Regionale Studier
Syddansk Universitet, Denmark

International Consortium of EH Organizations

ICE-HO, the International Consortium of Environmental History Organizations, has been formed as a co-operation between the American and the European Society for Environmental History, together with the Forest History Society. The aim of the Consortium is to foster international communication among environmental history organizations. Specific goals include sharing information, learning from the successes and failures of others, and discussing common issues, concerns, and challenges. Membership is open to all organizations for which an important component of their focus is the history of the human interaction with the environment. An organization need not be solely focused on history nor solely focused on issues of environmental history to participate.

As a basic activity ICE-HO will engage in networking by providing a web-portal to make all its member organizations visible as parts of the growing community of scholars interested in the history of the environment from various perspectives.

Currently, the founding organizations seek the participation of other such societies or scholarly groups: ESEH-members active in other societies are invited and encouraged to kindly bring such bodies to our attention. Please write to Verena Winiwarter by e-mail, <verena.winiwarter@univie.ac.at>.

EH Major Theme at the World History Congress

In 2002 historians were invited to submit themes for the International History Congress in Sydney, which will take place in 2005. ESEH Vice-President Christian Pfister proposed the issue of societal responses to past natural disasters as a specialised theme for the congress. Thirty-five colleagues, most of them members of ESEH, signed a petition to back this proposal. Last year the response from the General Assembly of the International Committee for the Historical Sciences (ICHS) was a big surprise: the issue 'Humankind and Nature in History' was voted by the committee to become the topmost of three main themes to be discussed at the congress. The debates should occupy a full day of deliberations. Three themes are to be discussed in particular, including:

1. 'Ecohistory, New Theories and Approaches'
2. 'Disasters and How They Have Been Dealt With'
3. 'Natural Sciences, History and the Image of Humankind'

This decision of ICHS means that Environmental History is now accepted as a major theme in history. For a long time EH was a kind of Cinderella issue which had a non-professional smell. This recent decision of ICHS is to be interpreted as a clear indication that the community of historians is willing to concede environmental history the place it deserves.

On one hand this award may be due to the amount and the quality of publications in environmental history over the last decade. On the other hand it certainly reflects the outlook that the environment will become one of the key issues in the 21st century. For natural disasters this is already obvious. The choice

of the three themes mentioned above will spur research activities in these fields. More reflection is particularly needed on new theories and approaches in EH. This involves co-operation and competition with scholars from natural sciences. Historians have often – wrongly – the feeling of being inferior partners in such a co-operation because they cannot provide hard quantitative arguments. It should be stressed that the results of historical analyses are often better tailored to the expectations of the public, because they refer to people.

The decision of the ICHS committee is of particular relevance for ESEH, as our president Verena Winiwarter has agreed to co-ordinate the main topic, whereas I have been entrusted with the organisation of the issue of natural disasters. Outlines of papers on the disaster issue are to be sent to my e-mail address: <pfister@hist.unibe.ch>

Christian Pfister, ESEH Vice-President

European Society for Environmental History

Executive Board:

President: Verena Winiwarter, *University of Vienna*

Vice-President: Christian Pfister, *University of Bern*

Vice-President: Poul Holm, *University of Southern Denmark*

Secretary: Jan Oosthoek, *University of Newcastle upon Tyne*

Treasurer: Ulrich Koppitz, *University of Düsseldorf*

Ex officio:

Mauro Agnoletti, *University of Florence*

Regional Representatives:

Benelux, **Petra van Dam**, The Netherlands

British Isles, **Peter Brimblecombe (until May 2004)**, England

Czechia & Slovakia, **Leos Jelecek**, Czechia

Francophone Countries, **Geneviève Massard-Guilbaud**, France

Germanophone Countries **Andreas Dix**, Germany

Hungary, **Lajos Racz**, Hungary

Iberian Peninsula, **Muanuel Gonzáles de Molina**, Spain

Italy, **Marco Armiero**, Italy

Nordic Countries, **Eva Jakobsson**, Norway

Russia & additional Eastern European Countries, **Alexei Karimov**, Russia

ESEH aims to promote environmental history in Europe, by encouraging and supporting research, teaching and publications in the field. The ESEH maintains its web site at <<http://www.eseh.org>>.

Items for the next Notepad should be sent by 2 January 2004 to the address below.

All correspondence should be directed to the secretariat:

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