

President's Message Board

Dear friends, environmental historians,

Among the many projects of the current ESEH Board is widening the Society to new geographical areas, whether they are European or not. For this purpose, we have called, a few months ago, for applications from countries or areas which so far have had no Representative in our instances. This call has raised a somewhat surprising list of applications. Surprisingly, several areas we were thinking of have not shown up while other, further removed areas have.

The list of the countries/areas for which an application has been received is the following: Croatia, Greece, Poland, Serbia, Turkey, South Africa, Australia and Oceania. It is our intention to seek scholars from other countries where we do have members but which are not yet represented in our Council of Regional Representatives, such as Portugal, the Baltic countries, Slovenia, Canada, the USA, etc. Applications can be sent spontaneously: if you belong to an area that has no ESEH Representative, send a letter explaining why you, or somebody you know, would like to/should become a RR, for which area, along with a CV. But as it is now, the list of applications is already promising.

To stick to our constitution, these applications must now be evaluated by our Nomination Committee (NC). This Committee, recently renewed, is composed, as our constitution provides, of three Regional Representatives plus two other members, nominated by the Board. Its members are David Moon (RR Britain, chair of the NC), Leos Jelecek (RR Czechia and Slovakia), Antonio Ortega Santos (RR Spain and Portugal), Sabine Barles (France) and Laura Hollsten (Finland). They will decide if the applications we have received are acceptable, then nominate the accepted applicants as provisional RRs. Our next Ordinary General Meeting, in Turku, will have to approve, or reject, these nominations.

We can be proud of this forthcoming widening, which was not so easy to handle democratically. It will have taken two successive terms, four years in all! Indeed, the ESEH had not widened in terms of geographical areas being represented since the years that followed its creation. This widening necessitated a revision of our constitution: in the former one, all RRs belonged to the Board. But it would have been impossible to govern the Society with a 20 or 30 member Board. Meetings would have been too costly, and decisions by consensus, that we privilege as often as we manage, impossible. This is why we created this two level system: a Council of RRs, and a Board, the respective attributions of which you will find out in the constitution if you are interested to know more. We hope we have built a sustainable and democratic mode of governing the society.

The fact that the ESEH will soon include representatives of such a large number of countries is, for sure, a sign of the society's good health, and of its widening of its audience.

Geneviève Massard-Guilbaud, President
Christof Mauch and Petra van Dam, Vice-Presidents
Paris, Munich and Amsterdam, June 2010

Notepad Editor: Phia Steyn

Items for the next Notepad should be sent by 15 September 2010 to the address shown below.

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