

Environmental Connections. Europe and the wider world.
Report of the 4th ESEH conference, Amsterdam 4-9 June 2007, by the Local Organising Committee

Introduction

This report provides an evaluation of the organization of the 4th ESEH conference, written for the Board of the ESEH. We, the Local Organising Committee, regard the 4th conference as very successful and we received very warm affirmative comments. However, we also made mistakes and it is a fruitful attitude to learn from mistakes. Therefore this report contains a critical self-evaluation of both goals and results. For the ESEH as a scholarly community it would be effective if the ESEH Board hands over this report to the next LOC's. This report also contains valuable statistical information. In particular for future professional organizers who typically need to make a sharp calculation of incomes and costs, this is important. The Scientific Committee makes its own independent report to the Board.

The attachments to this report are:

- 1. programme book
- 2. abstract book
- 3. list of participants
- 4. instruction for chairs
- 5. information and form for Educational Grants
- 6. call for papers
- 7. keynote address

Committees

The committees for this conference were composed as following:

Local Organising Committee (LOC)

Dr. Petra van Dam (head), Vrije Universiteit, Faculty of Arts

+ general coordination, acquisition, budget control, contacts with Executive and SC, opening session, publishing workshop

Prof. dr. Karel Davids (chair), Vrije Universiteit, Faculty of Arts

+ acquisition, Conference City Panel Award

Dr. Adriaan de Kraker, Vrije Universiteit, Faculty of Life and Earth Sciences

+ Educational Grants, regional session, excursion

Dr. Hans Renes, Vrije Universiteit, Faculty of Arts/University of Utrecht

+ coordination excursions, Maps Exhibition

Dr. Wybren Verstegen, Vrije Universiteit, Faculty of Arts

+ PR, Poster session, regional session, excursion, student-assistants

Scientific Committee (SC)

Dr. Gabriella Corona, National Council Research, Naples, Italy (chair)

Prof. dr. Timo Myllyntaus, University of Turku, Finland

Dr. Richard Oram, University of Stirling, Scotland

Dr. Peter Szabo, Eotvos Lorand University, Budapest, Hungary
Prof. dr. Erik Thoen, Universiteit Gent, Belgium

Advisory Board (AB)

Prof. dr. Jan Luiten van Zanden, International Institute of Social History and University of Utrecht (chair)
Prof. dr. Jan Boersema, Vrije Universiteit, Faculty of Life and Earth Sciences
Prof. dr. Peter Boomgaard, Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, Leiden
Prof. dr. Erik Thoen, Universiteit Gent
Prof. ir. Klaas van Egmond, Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, Bilthoven

Administration and logistics: Nicolette van Erven, director of MCCM meeting management B.V., Harmelen.

The LOC started 2,5 years before the conference, immediately after the conference in Firenze 2005. The AB was installed 2,5 years before the conference by the LOC. There were two joined meetings of LOC and AB. The SC was installed 1,5 year before the conference. A shortlist was prepared by the LOC and the ESEH president for this, taking care of a balanced regional representation, and the members were asked by the president. For future conferences, we advise to install the SC earlier, possibly before the First Call for Papers, so the SC Chair can advise on selection method of submission and the structure of the database etc. On 29 June 2006 a joined meeting of LOC, SC and Executive Board took place in Amsterdam, which served to finalize the selection of papers and discuss the conference programme. Apart from the usual email communication, regular reports by the LOC to ESEH President Poul Holm were sent about once every three months and for the 29 June meeting an extensive summarizing report was handed over. In the last half year no reports were sent in anymore, since all major decisions had been taken. Special items discussed with the ESEH president were the Call for Papers, the shortlist for the SC, the agenda for the 29 June meeting, and the conference programme. A list of keynote speakers was discussed at the 29 June meeting with SC and Executive and the speaker was asked by the President. ESEH treasurer Ulrich Koppitz was involved in all matters concerning ESEH finances, in particular also in the distribution of Educational Grants, see below. Publication of Calls for papers and other announcements to the ESEH community and the wider world were carried out, respectively, by ESEH secretary Lenka Uhlirova and ESEH vice-president Jan Oosthoek.

Scientific Programme

Goals

We followed the programme of the former three conferences in St. Andrews 2001, Prague 2003 and Firenze 2005 staging the following elements: an opening session with introductions by representatives of the hosts and a lecture by a renowned historian, a plenary poster session, parallel sessions of 3 papers of each 1,5 hours, a half day devoted to the presentation of the research of the hosting European Region (the Netherlands and Flanders), called the Regional Session.

As new features we introduced the following:

- we structured the conference into sub themes from the beginning. In the call for papers, after introducing the main theme, we specified 5 sub themes, and these were put in the registration form as keywords so that authors and organizers of panels, papers and posters would make a choice. The aim was that these would facilitate the Scientific Committee (SC) to create consistent strings in the conference.
- in the opening ceremony we invited a person from outside the field but with a strong interest for history to reflect on the role of EH. We worked on communication between this person and the keynote speaker in order to create a dialogue between the conference and the wider society.
- we organized a publishing workshop (2 hours) where the editors of leading journals in EH could present their editorial policy, in particular aimed at young and starting scholars, with ample time for discussion and closed by drinks with the editors
- our Advisory Board advised us to have more plenary lectures on the programme. In response we organized a Plenary Panel Session (on the morning of the last day), in order to present the panel selected by the Scientific Committee as the best panel in relation to the main topic of the conference (on the basis of the submitted abstracts) and founded a new ESEH prize to reward this panel, the Conference City Panel Award
- we introduced panels of 'Individual Papers', i.e. panels without a common theme
- we further developed the idea of sponsored sessions that was introduced at earlier conferences incidentally, in particular for the Regional Session (sponsored by a bank, a scholarly society and a university) and the Publishing Workshop (sponsored by a national research school).

Regarding the preparation of the programme we want to note the following. The combination of accepting both panels and individual papers was a great challenge, as it has always been within ESEH. The basis conflict cannot be solved: i.e. one asks for panels but the evaluation is based on the individual papers. So the SC 'destroys' part of the panels by rejecting one or more of the papers and this gives problems of two natures: 1. conflicts with the organisers 2. much work to try to complete the panels. Both the SC Chair and the LOC advise, for the future, to accept only entire panels in the selection process, while leaving the possibility for individual submission of papers open. This implies a flexible grading system, allowing the quality of some papers in the panel to flow over to a less great paper, so to say.

The regional session on Wednesday afternoon was organised in three parallel sessions, two of which were followed by a short excursion. The themes concerned research on the environmental history of the Low Countries, carried out both by scholars from the area and from abroad. Over 120 delegates attended this session. Probably the fact that the language was English (as in Prague) contributed to this high number.

Evaluation

On the whole we were happy with the structure and content of the scientific programme. The attempt to structure the conference into sub themes from the beginning was not much rewarded by the SC when making panels, which was related to the fact that the keywords were not integrated in the lists of submissions produced by the database. After restoration of the documents by the LOC, the keywords turned out to be useful to make strings. Some themes in the programme attracted much more submissions (like animal

exchanges) than others (resources) and this caused problems for forming strings, since it led to simultaneous panels of the same theme.

We found that the publishing workshop on day 2 just before lunch and before the Regional Session was not so well timed. The drinks took place when lunch had already started. This type of session fits better at the end of a day. This place on the programme, however, was a response to the request of the sponsor, the N.W. Posthumus Research school for Economic and Social History, which expected that its PhD students from both the Netherlands and Flanders would also go to the Regional Session.

The quality of the Plenary Poster session was very good. One person of the LOC took special care of this session, from the registration onwards. He gave the presenters a precise instruction and asked them to submit a PowerPoint slide about their poster (not: of their poster) two weeks before the conference. So he could discuss the lay-out and use of language with the presenters, which in some cases led to a changed submission. Slides with images and big-lettered short texts work out better than those with lots of small-print text.

Some presenters were not happy that they were asked to present their paper in so-called Individual Papers Panels, without common theme. However, we deem this more honest and better than so-called thematic panels which have no coherence. Also the chairs reacted to this, by giving each paper discussion time, instead of the usual communal discussion in the last 30 minutes. The other great advantage was for making the programme. These panels served as reserves. In the months between publication of the programme and the conference, there was a regular, small flow of withdrawals of papers. The affected panels could easily be restored by putting in papers from the IP panels. Deliberately, such IP panels are placed at the end of the day and of the week. In this way the thematic coherence and the order of the programme could be kept intact. The latter is very important, once scholars have finalized their travel bookings, i.e. after the first publication of the programme. Yet another and unforeseen advantage, was that the number on the afternoon of the last day was smaller than at the other days. Since the number of present delegates tends to be smaller too at the last day, the number of delegates per session remains fairly constant, which is encouraging for the presenters. We advise future LOC's to experiment with IP panels, and make those bigger, for instance of 6 papers.

The concept of sponsored sessions was especially fruitful in the Regional Session. The LOC is responsible for the programme of this session. We chose to have three parallel panels of 2,5 hour each with a tea break, so no plenary lectures. These were combined with so-called on site excursions, both in the university and to a nearby institute, or films. This was satisfying from an intellectual point of view. Also it gave opportunities to invite sponsors to support a particular session devoted to a theme of special interest to them, while using a part of the sponsoring for overhead financing. For instance, the Dutch Water bank was interested in sponsoring the Regional Session on water management institutions and sponsored a tour by boat in the Amsterdam canals for all participants.

Regarding the execution of the programme during the conference, we received one complaint that chairs were not informed in time about presenters in their session who did not turn up. This demands a daily check of the presenters on the programme against

the list of arrived delegates. We hope that future LOC's will devise a more efficient system for this.

Also some chairs had not received our instruction that was sent out by email. We were at this point too careful with distributing paper copies. Future LOC's might wish to have a set of paper copies chair instructions ready at the registration desk.

Social Programme and ESEH activities

Goals

We stuck to the main items as organized at former conferences:

- Separate rooms for meetings of the Full Board and the Ordinary General Meeting of the ESEH
- lunches and receptions
- the ESEH Awards Dinner
- Field Excursions

We added a Maps Exhibition, lunch facilities for special groups and changed the set up of the closing ceremony.

Evaluation

The time and rooms scheduled for all meetings turned out satisfactory.

Many delegates agreed with us that an informal closing procedure before the final dinner was much more agreeable than the formal ones we had thus far and which take up a lot of costly plenary time, yet were attended by very few delegates. At this informal closing ceremony the two ESEH awards were presented, the committees were thanked and the baton passed on to the next LOC. We hope that in the future members of the Executive Board will show more commitment in attending this ceremony and the dinner.

The facilities for meetings for special scholarly groups during lunches need better and earlier publication for the delegates in the future. They were realized at no extra costs: a table was reserved for an informal meeting in the restaurant, and one group took their lunch out on trays to a special reserved room.

We received a few comments that the (50% vegetarian, partially organic) food at the receptions though of good taste was of little quantity. This was also related to the type of distribution. Food carried out on trays reaches more people. Also Dutch traditions have it that a reception is a drink, not a meal. All drinks were complimentary during the conference.

Regarding the ESEH Awards Dinner on the last day: The Artis Zoo was a great location and the 100% organic food was very much appreciated. However, a third of the delegates who had registered and paid for this (heavily sponsored) dinner did not turn up, in spite of our distribution of vouchers in the conference bag. A thunderstorm took place right before and during the beginning of the dinner which might have prevented some delegates from coming. This was disappointing. We advise future LOC's to strongly encourage delegates who do not attend preregistered dinners to give their vouchers back, so the LOC can give those to delegates on the waiting list and to assisting students. Also the messages board at the registration desk might serve to exchange vouchers. ESEH resources are scarce and we should prevent such wastes of valuable food resources.

The same applies to the Field excursions. For the excursions some 20 persons did not turn up. This was a pity, since for these excursions waiting lists existed and we could not cancel anymore the prebooked lunches. Also the guides had put great efforts in the preparation, including making highly valued excursion guidebooks with maps and texts. We received information that due to a power cut some trams were cancelled and some delegates were prevented to attend. Our advice to future LOC's is to consider organizing the excursions on the day *before* the conference. With our sister organisation the ASEH this seems to work out very well. Also it might be wise to double check subscription during the conference.

One feature which was much appreciated by the delegates was the free public transport card available to all. This was already announced on the website and in the last-minute instruction sent to all delegates by email one week before the conference. Due to the programme, there was quite a lot of moving through the city for the several social events and this worked out well.

Regarding the Field excursions, registration on line turned out to be very practical. Excursion 2 to the IJsselmeerpolders was cancelled well in advance to the conference, due to insufficient registrations and registrations were paid back. Instead a city tour of Amsterdam by bike was realized for the same fee and a new registration was organized by email.

Registration and programme statistics

The number of submitted papers and panels was 287. The LOC entitled the Scientific Committee to make a list of some 200 papers, taking into account the number of rooms available. A maximum of 9 parallel rooms was foreseen. Also, on request of the Executive Board, the SC was asked to apply a rejection rate of about 25%. This figure was chosen because some complaints were filed after the Firenze conference that a 45% rejection rate was very high.

The SC accepted 216 papers (110 papers in 32 panels, 106 as individually submitted papers) and 20 posters, in total 236 presentations. 50 papers and 1 poster were rejected. (figures of 2 August 2006, when the reports of the June 29 meeting of the SC were approved by the SC). The initial figures of acceptance were somewhat lower. However, the LOC requested the SC to reconsider all rejected presentations submitted by PhD students and proposed to ask them to present as poster. The LOC was happy to be able to use the submitted biographies for this purpose. Consequently the SC accepted a selected number of these based on adjusted criteria and decided to have those presented as they were submitted, either paper or poster. The rejection rate can be calculated as 18 % ($287-236/287*100\% = 17.8$).

After the registration procedure, we arrived at a programme with 180 papers and 14 posters. So 42 papers and posters were withdrawn by submitters after notification of acceptance during the registration period (until two weeks before the conference when the programme was finalised), that is 15 % ($42/287*100\% = 14.6$). The difference between the total number of submissions and the final presentations, expressed as percentage of the submissions is 32% ($287-194/287*100\%$).

All sessions at the final programme contained 3 papers, but for a few incidental cases of 2 papers where papers were withdrawn very late and no individual paper could be added anymore; and one session of 4 papers, where we had strong indication that a

person would withdraw, which indeed happened. The sessions were run in seven parallel rooms.

Of the 194 papers and posters at the programme 11 were not realized, because delegates did not turn up. Of course it is sad for the delegates present if this happens, since some sessions suffer heavily. Fortunately, sometimes there was a way out. Papers of people who were not present were read by colleagues. One of the affected chairs proposed that we should make a blacklist of people who do not show up and do not notify the conference organisation in time.

Below is a comparison with former conferences. We retrieved the figures of former conferences from the reports on the ESEH website and from private archives. For each ESEH conference, the table shows the total number of submissions, the numbers of papers and posters at the final programme, the total number of delegates registered, and the number of submissions which was either rejected by the SC or withdrawn, as a percentage of the total submissions.

Table 1. Delegate's statistics of the first four ESEH conferences

Conference	Submitted Total	On the programme			S-P&P/S*100 %	
		Papers	Posters	P&P		Del.tot.
St. Andrews 2001	148	95	6	101	32 %	120
Prague 2003	247 ¹	150	26	176	29 %	240
Firenze 2005	330	156	24	180	45%	unknown
Amsterdam 2007	287	180	14	194	32 %	254

We can conclude that over the years both the total of presentations submitted and the total at the programme keeps rising. Compared to the latest conference in Firenze, the total submission decreased somewhat. Yet the total of presentations on the programme increased by 8%, probably due to the lower rejection rate of 18 %. Also we conclude that in Amsterdam we had fewer posters than in Prague and Firenze. Presumably, this is the result of a decision by the Amsterdam SC: they did not ask to submitters of papers with low grades to present their presentation as posters, as was done in the past incidentally.

In total 254 persons attended the conference. This meant that 60 people attended the conference without giving a paper or poster. Some of these delegates chaired a session. It is a good custom to send out a special call for volunteer chairs before the first period of registration closes and, on request, send out special letters of invitation to such people. The LOC needs these people to chair the panels composed of individually submitted papers. It also provides people with a means to get funding. And the evident result is a higher total of delegates.

The total number of registered delegates was 275 when the conference started. Since 254 were present, it means a so-called no-show of 23, i.e. 8% (275-

¹ Of these 247 11 were posters.

254/275*100%). According to our professional conference organizer a no-show of 10 % is normal.

Educational grants

We received substantial funding for handing our Educational Grants from a private fund. We set up and published on our website a timeline, selection criteria and a form. The applicants' data were collected and sorted out by a committee consisting of one member of the LOC and the ESEH treasurer. They developed a grading system for all complete and timely applications of delegates with accepted contributions, taking into account structural disadvantage by country and social status, fairly balanced against their estimated travel costs. 19 people applied for a grant in time. 18 received a letter of acceptance and were asked to confirm. The grant consisted of waiving of the conference fees and a sum in cash (conferred during the conference). Finally we paid out grants to 14 people. One person withdrew due to personal circumstances. Unfortunately, four delegates from Russia could not come because they did not receive their visa. It turned out that our conference organizer had not received their requests for a letter of invitation, dated three months before the conference, until three weeks before the conference, when urgent reminders were sent out by the applicants and their supervisor. At that moment, the visa procedure as executed by the Dutch embassies in London and Moscow was already closed. In order to prevent such sad incidences in future, a member of a befriended and very experienced organization has advised to have a special person in future LOC's who deals with visa only. This would imply, for instance, sorting out from all relevant embassies what their procedure is, and closely following all delegates who need a visa. In particular for young and inexperienced PhD students that might seem very important. We also received a suggestion to send out letters of invitation together with the letter of acceptance (collectively, not on request).

Registration and time line

(The items without brackets were published on the website from the beginning, the items within brackets were internal deadlines.)

1 October 2005	1st Announcement of theme, place and date worldwide
1 January 2006	Setting up website Local Organisation Committee 1st call for papers and posters
1 February 2006	Opening submission of abstracts of papers and posters
1 June 2006	Deadline for submission of abstracts
(29 June 2006	Meeting of SC, LOC and Executive. Selection of papers)
(28 August 2006	Confirmation of results of 29 June meeting by SC)

1 November 2006	Scientific Committee (formally) finishes selection of abstracts Letters of acceptance/rejection are sent out to submitters Registration of all participants starts. Hotel reservation on-line.
1 February 2007	Reconfirmation for early registration by participants completed. Structure of programme published on the website.
(1 March 2007	List of participants published)
(15 April 2007	Draft program sent out to delegates by email)
1 May 2007	Draft program published
15 May 2007	Deadline late registration
5-9 June 2007	Conference

Above one finds the timeline we followed for this conference, based on the schedule handed over to us from previous conferences. Regarding this timeline we have a few suggestions for improvement.

The SC complained it had too little time for grading the 287 papers and posters. Our conference organizer found that our period for submitting abstracts was rather long. By shortening this period from 4 to 3 months, one can have more time for the SC. Scheduling a convenient date for the joined meeting in Amsterdam proved only possible after the lecture and exam season. This may be something to remember.

We used special conference software (Oxford Abstracts) to run this conference, including broad email communication modes, on-line registration facilities for all delegates, and on-line grading facilities for the SC. We found that at all deadlines where the software was involved we needed up to two weeks more before we had the on-line procedures running smoothly or we got the results of the database. This is because the procedures needed exposure to real people before we had found all errors (after we had run tests already ourselves) and the database needed manual correction after deadlines were reached. Some people were less successful at handling the facilities. Age and experience played a role. Such delays should be taken into account when using this schedule. An other point is that this particular software was not designed for the complicated programme structure we have, with both individual and panel submissions. This led to adaptations of the software and handwork which was time consuming. Also it was the main reason that we did not succeed to have all abstracts on-line integrated into the programme, as was foreseen, following the good example of the Prague organizers. When we had to deal with delays in getting the final programme published on our website, which was not acceptable since delegates had to finalize their travel arrangements, we sent the programme to the delegates by email.

We found that publishing the list of (registered) participants on the website stimulated delegates to check their registration details. We think that due to this and our repeated reminders sent by email we reached a good financial registration result. Over 95% of presenters on the programme had fulfilled their registration obligations two weeks before the conference, when we froze the programme and started editing it for the programme book. At this moment we proposed to the SC to take those off the programme who had not yet fulfilled their obligations and we approached the latter individually with the consequences. Fortunately, there was no need to execute this threat. We allowed a few insecurities regarding individuals who had payment problems of a technical nature, and with whom we had a constructive correspondence. As we found out, some credit card companies caused problems by changing their conditions.

Regarding the lay-out of the programme book, we received a request for the future to insert an index on the programme (on presenters), not just on the abstract book, as was realized now.

Finances

Since the financing of ESEH conferences is the sole responsibility of the LOC, we can be short here and give only the basic data and arrangements which might be relevant for future conferences. First a survey of the fees.

Table 2. Survey of conference fees

	ESEH member	Non ESEH member
Early fee (<i>registration and payment received by 01-02-2007</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/> € 220,--	<input type="checkbox"/> € 250,--
Late fee (<i>registration and payment received by 15-5--2007</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/> € 270,--	<input type="checkbox"/> € 300,--
Global reception <i>Wednesday June 6</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Free	<input type="checkbox"/> Free
Reception City Hall <i>Thursday June 7</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Free	<input type="checkbox"/> Free
ESEH awards dinner <i>Friday June 8</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> € 15,--	<input type="checkbox"/> € 15,--
Excursions Saturday June, 9		
<i>Excursion 1:</i> Waning Wetlands	<input type="checkbox"/> € 40,--	<input type="checkbox"/> € 40,--
<i>Excursion 2:</i> New and old land (Amsterdam)	<input type="checkbox"/> € 40,--	<input type="checkbox"/> € 40,--
<i>Excursion 3:</i> Roaring Rivers	<input type="checkbox"/> € 40,--	<input type="checkbox"/> € 40,--

The check on the membership was carried out after the conference by comparing our lists with those of the ESEH treasurer. So the effect was that the ESEH treasurer could send an incidental reminder for paying membership fees, after the conference had taken place. In future, it would be advisable to do this check before the conference, although the last weeks before the conference are very demanding for the LOC.

About our financial arrangement with the ESEH Executive the main principle is that the LOC does not get any money from ESEH and ESEH does not get any money from the LOC. However, some mutual financial benefits exist and were realized as following. The main point of interest is how to finance the ESEH officials.

For the preparatory meeting of the LOC, SC and Executive Board on 29 June 2006 the arrangement was as follows. The ESEH took care of hotels and travelling costs of the Eastern European member of the Executive and of the SC (sponsored by the Breuninger Foundation). The LOC provided 2 meeting rooms and catering, including two dinners, one lunch and refreshments for 14 people for 1 day and 2 nights.

For the conference, the LOC decided to waive all fees of and provide free catering to all members of the Scientific Committee, the Advisory Board and LOC. This applied also to the Eastern European members of the Full Board of the ESEH. This was financed by the LOC by not including this number of persons in the budget calculations on the income side (activa). The ESEH treasurer took care of hotels and travel reimbursements of the SC and the Eastern European members among the ESEH officials, enabled to do this by sponsoring from the German Breuninger Foundation. In addition, the LOC waived the registration fees (not catering costs) for all 18 people who received an Educational Grant (financed by a private fund), and for the 3 prize-winners of the Conference City Panel Award (financed by the same fund).

The arrangement for the Regional Session also deserves attention, although this was not an ESEH matter. All presenters in the Regional Session were free from paying registration fee. The latter fees were compensated by the sponsoring received for these sessions. Also these people had not been included in the budget calculations on the income side. The reason for this special arrangement was that, as we found out, Dutch and Flemish scholars invited for a session presenting research representative for the Low Countries were not willing to pay fees, also because most of them only came for half a day.

Regarding the professional conference organizer, it should be noted that the contract consisted of two parts: one part was a fixed payment in hours which was based on an estimated numbers of hours needed for preparation and execution of the conference (managing catering contracts, negotiating rooms, ordering and packing conference bags, running the registration, conference desk etc.). This was paid out per month. Over time this number of hours was increased by mutual agreement by 30%, also because some more tasks were delegated to the conference organizer, in particular the communication with the commercial sponsors and looking after their recompensation for their sponsoring (their logos in printed matter etc.). The other part was a variable payment based on the number of submissions and (separately) registrations, paid out in lump sums. This proved a satisfactory arrangement.

PR, public and scholarly outreach

During the conference a leading article was published in the daily newspaper *De Pers*, both in the paper version and on its internet site. A session of the monthly Historical Café in Amsterdam was focussed on the globalisation of biota, under the title 'Bloody Foreigners through the ages.' Here conference delegate and former ESEH president Verena Winiwarter gave a column and an interview was staged with the editor of the ABC environmental history series, Mark Stoll. Also a discussion was hold about invasive

species with Peter Coates as discussant. The VU university student history journal *Galapas* devoted an article to the conference, together with an article on sources about climate change.

After the conference, former ESEH vice-president Jan Oosthoek made a pod cast on the conference for his environmental history website, interviewing several delegates about their papers. The national historical journal *Historisch Nieuwsblad* devoted an article to the conference. Also the conference helped us to promote EH as a topic in the Netherlands. The Amsterdam student journal *Skript* will devote a special issue to environmental history with articles by VU University MA students, amongst others. The national popular journal for history *Spiegel Historiae* will make a special issue on how the natural agent influences human history ('Fatal Nature').

Final word

Conferences are made by and for people. Every ESEH conference thus far had its special character. We should continue to strive to improve our conferences and make them a pleasant place for scholars in Environmental History to meet and discuss, in particular also for young and starting scholars. With both the Amsterdam conference 2007 and this report we have contributed to this aim.

We thank all the members of the SC, the AB, the Executive, MCCM, the VU University and all our partners for their great contributions to making this conference happen. We wish the future organizers good luck.

On behalf of the LOC,

Petra van Dam
(Head LOC)

Amsterdam, October 2007