

Péter Szabó

I have been a member of ESEH since the first conference in St. Andrews in 2001. In the past fifteen years, I served the Society in various functions: as member of the Nominating, Travel Grant, and Article Prize Committees. In 2007, I helped to organize the 4th conference in Amsterdam as part of the Scientific Committee. Currently I am one of the vice-presidents of ESEH. I saw the Society grow and consolidate from excited beginnings to a large and internationally important organization. I think through these experiences I developed a sound overview of the Society's functioning as well as past and present activities.

If elected President, I will use the experience I have gathered to provide continuity in the running of ESEH. The biannual conferences, the system of grants and awards, the Society's role in global networks of environmental history, and the regional representatives are all important to maintain the involvement of members. At the same time, I see several directions in which the Society could develop. My priorities are threefold. First, it will be important to reach out to the next generation of European environmental historians. ESEH should take a greater role in providing platforms for young scholars to interact, build connections, and possibly to have their own representative in the Board. Second, while the Council of Regional Representatives has a firm place in the Society's functioning, I think there is room for working groups to emerge that will connect environmental historians with similar interests. Such voluntary working groups, a common feature of similar societies, will give ESEH a new impetus to carry out research in areas the members themselves deem important. Third, I will try to address the long-term challenge of engaging more environmental historians from the eastern half of Europe, who are still heavily underrepresented in the Society. This is the region where ESEH has the greatest unrealized potential to fulfil its mission to promote environmental history in Europe.

Péter Szabó
Institute of Botany of the Czech Academy of Sciences
Department of Vegetation Ecology
Lidická 25/27
Brno 60200
Czech Republic
peter.szabo@ibot.cas.cz