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27th European Congress of Arachnology, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2-7 September 2012

Location: Evolutionary Zoology LAB, Jovan Hadži Institute of Biology, ZRC SAZU.

Organizing committee: Matjaž Gregorič, Nina Vidergar, Tjaša Lokovšek, Ren-Chung Cheng, Klemen Čandek, Olga Kardoš, Martin Turjak, Tea Knapič, Urška Pristovšek, Klavdija Šuen, Miha Pipan.

Scientific and program committee: Matjaž Kuntner, ZRC SAZU, Slovenia; Simona Kralj-Fišer, ZRC SAZU, Slovenia; Ingi Agnarsson, University of Puerto Rico, USA; Christian Kropf, Natural History Museum Berne, Switzerland; Daiqin Li, National University of Singapore, Singapore; Miquel Arnedo, University of Barcelona, Spain.

Recently 157 participants from 39 countries met in Ljubljana, Slovenia, for presenting, discussing and sharing arachnological topics. This was the 27th European Congress of Arachnology, held from the 2nd to 7th of September 2012.

The rooms of the Evolutionary Zoology Lab are located right in the centre of Slovenia's capital, Ljubljana. Surrounded by the picturesque old town and the river Ljubljanica, there were plenty of possibilities for sightseeing for the participants. Easy to see and reach was Ljubljana castle, only a 15 minute walk away, as well as the Triple Bridge, the Tromostovje. There were also numerous neat little restaurants and bars providing food from different nations for enjoying a nice lunch or supper. But the participants were of course also busy presenting 86 oral and 67 poster presentations. Topics ranged from taxonomic, phylogenetic and morpho-

gical questions to studies about behaviour and ecology, as well as biodiversity and biogeography. Each day began with a talk from one of the four plenary speakers, namely Fritz Vollrath, Eileen Hebets, Fiona Cross and Jason Bond. They were carefully selected by the scientific committee to introduce the audience to the most recent results from their respective fields of study.

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Eileen Hebets, Lauren Esposito and two of the organizers, Matjaz Kuntner and Nina Vidergar (left to right); © of all photos in this report: C. Komposch, Oekoteam



top - Škocjan cave; **middle** – Czech team at the bowling night (from left to right: Ondrej Košulič, Petr Dolejš, Vladimír Hula, Jana Niedobová, Stanislav Korenko); **bottom** – Jakob Walter (left), Christian Kropf (right)

Especially mentioned should be the DNA barcoding symposium, designed as a forum for the latest insights. Oral presentations were given by Wolfgang Nentwig, Miquel A. Arnedo, Ingi Agnarsson, Matjaz Kuntner, Jeremy Miller as well as Peter van Helsing and Liana Lasut. The discussion centred on

the question of whether barcoding is a helpful tool for biodiversity assessments and ecosystem monitoring. A further topic was the optimization of PCR methods to obtain a respectable amount of DNA for the barcoding technique. Likewise, discussion took place concerning the COI system and addition of a more genus-specific primer, which might be better for biological questions. The Swiss project was also presented as well as the German Barcoding of Life Project, which barcodes the German terrestrial and freshwater biota, and a Central European spider preservation and barcoding pilot project. A heated debate, as well as a constructive discussion began after the oral presentations based on different concepts and opinions of the audience.

But with brains exploding with information there was a short break, refreshments and snacks provided by the local cafe LP; whose waiters made sure no one ever had an empty cup of coffee.

The social program delighted the participants. The bowling night on Monday required sporting activity from the participants in the appropriately named Spider Bowling Club. The Russian party on Tuesday night led to a cosy get-together and culinary experiences. Numerous types of vodka as well as caviar and fish were available for tasting. During the Music Night on Wednesday a band performed and got the participants swinging their hips. On Thursday the Congress Dinner took place and excellent food was offered. The week was completed by an excursion on Friday. The trip to the Škocjan caves and the Lipica Stud Farm was a great experience and enabled the participants get to know Slovenia. After visiting the Stud Farm the tour continued to Koper, where the participants had a wonderful view over the Mediterranean Sea. While hiking and collecting some even lost their way and reached Italy. All in all, a magnificent end to the week.

As every year, the scientific committee awarded prizes for oral and poster presentations. Students were provided with prize money and a membership of AAS, BAS or AraGes. In the field of **Systematics and Evolution, the following oral presentations were rewarded**: 1st prize: Henrik Krehenwinkel, 2nd prize: Elisabeth Lipke, 3rd prize: Marija Majer. For their posters, these students were rewarded: 1st prize: Jana Plíšková, 2nd prize: Susanne Meese, 3rd prize: Cheng-Ya Chang. In the field of **Ecology and Behaviour the prizes for oral presentations were**: 1st prize: Katrin Kunz, 2nd prize: Shazia Quasin, 3rd prize: Reiner Neumann. The rewarded posters were:



Three opilionologists (left to right: Plamen Mitov, Christoph Muster, Gregor Wachter)

1st prize: Urška Pristovšek, 2nd prize: Hsien-Chun Liao, 3rd prize: Klaas Welke.

The meeting was closed by the General Assembly of the ESA members. Several issues were discussed,

such as publication of the proceedings and payment of membership fees. New elections of council members took place (two new council members: Sara Goodacre and Wolfgang Nentwig) and two new honorary members (Yael Lubin, Rudy Jocqué) were proposed. Furthermore the 28th European Congress of Arachnology was announced. It will take place in summer 2014 in Torino, Italy, organised by Marco Isaia and his team.

Special thanks go to the organizing committee and the scientific and program committee. They did a wonderful job and made sure that we were able to witness a harmonious, interesting and informative week. Finally we would like to thank the sponsors. Without their support, the realisation of the congress would not have been possible.

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19th International Congress of Arachnology

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The 19th International Congress of Arachnology (ICA 2013) will be held at the Howard Beach Resort, Kenting National Park, at the subtropical southern tip of Taiwan, from June 23 to June 28, 2013. It is the first ICA to be held in Asia. The meeting will be organized and hosted by an Asian Organizing Committee of Affiliates of the International Society of Arachnology. Asian and International Keynote speakers and a variety of topical sessions (taxonomy, systematics, behaviour, physiology, ecology, biodiversity) and additional symposia (genus *Nephila*, spider silk, urbanization and arachnid diversity, systematic and biogeography symposium of non araneoids) have been organized. In addition, there will be opportunities for collecting arachnids and excursions organized for participants. The program is not finalized, so participants may propose additional symposia, or direct general inquiries, to the Organizing Committee; see the Symposium website (<http://araneae.thu.edu.tw/ica2013/welcome>) or e-mail spider@thu.edu.tw.

I-Min TSO



ICA 2013

Kenting National Park, Taiwan
<http://araneae.thu.edu.tw/ica2013>