

Report

17th Plenary Meeting European Scientific Diving Panel
20 December 2016 | Regus, Stephanie Square | Brussels



Attendance

Martin Sayer (Chair), UK
Jouni Leinikki, Finland
Pedro Neves, Portugal
Jean-Pierre Féral, France
Philipp Fischer, Germany
Alain Norro, Belgium
Karen Donaldson, EMB Secretariat

By skype
Massimo Ponti, Italy
Maria Asplund, Sweden
Thanos Dailianis, Greece

Observer
Dimitar Berov, Bulgaria
Dr. Ilia Krastev, Bulgaria
Dr. Lubomir Kenderov, Bulgaria

List of Actions and Decisions

Decision 1: Jean-Pierre Féral voted in, with 7 yes and 1 abstain.

Decision 2: Bulgaria became an associate member of ESDP.

Decision 3: Keep some form of the national representation board in the new organization.

Action 1: Karen Donaldson to circulate the most recent version of the Terms of Reference (March 2015) to the Panel.

Action 2: Martin Sayer to send updated version to Karen Donaldson to update the Annex 1 details, who will then send the draft to the Panel members for a final review and acceptance. [Done]

Action 3: Karen Donaldson to send a doodle poll to determine whether to hold the ESDP meeting on the 21 or 24 (noting Jean-Pierre Féral couldn't make the 21). Since Jean-Pierre Féral can't make the meeting, it was also suggested to add more possible dates/locations.

Action 4: Jean-Pierre Féral to start an open document (e.g. Google doc) for a proposed budget so that everyone can input.

Action 5: Martin Sayer to follow up with the Society for Underwater Technology offer to support meetings if held in London (office, food, Secretariat support etc.).

Action 6: Maria Asplund will send out further information on the implications.

1. Chair's welcome and adoption of agenda

Martin Sayer welcomed the ESDP members. Agenda was approved.

2. Approval of Minutes from 16th ESDP Meeting

Actions to be addressed:

- a. Add participants list, separated into members and observers;
- b. Publish flyer to promote scientific diving;
- c. Continue to send high level diving papers to Jean-Pierre Féral and bring to the attention of EMB members as an output of ESDP;
- d. Jean-Pierre Féral to send website address to Karen Donaldson;
- e. Reword end of point 3: updates decided at 16th meeting accepted, with the draft to be finalized at 17th meeting.

Discussions arose as to how to moderate the high level papers to ensure their quality and relevance to scientific diving. For example, if zotero is used as a platform, there would need to be a limit so that only papers already in the database can be uploaded, but allow for open access viewing and downloading.

The Journal of Underwater Technology did a special issue on papers from the 2nd European Conference on Scientific Diving. Martin Sayer to send link. [Done] *Secretariat note: link was also sent to the full EMB membership in a Message to the Board.*

The Minutes were approved.

3. EMB Panel Review

More feedback is needed between the meetings to determine the future of ESDP so that it can be made and actioned upon in a timely manner. To be discussed further in later Agenda Item 10.

4. Vote for new Chair

Decision 1: Jean-Pierre Féral voted in, with 7 yes and 1 abstain.

5. ESDP Terms of Reference

It was recommended that even if not explicitly discussed, the ToR should remain on future meeting Agendas as a running item. It was also discussed whether the ESDP Dropbox should be reinstated, though with less documents so that it doesn't cause storage issues among the Panel members. For example, it could just contain the Terms of Reference.

Action 1: Karen Donaldson to circulate the most recent version of the Terms of Reference (March 2015) to the Panel.

6. Membership

a. Bulgaria

Dimitar Berov presented the application from the Commission for Scientific Diving Activities (CSD) to become a member of ESDP as the representative for Bulgaria.

The CSD is under the umbrella of the Bulgaria National Association for Underwater Activities (BNAUA). The presentation included an overview of scientific diving in Bulgaria. Currently it mostly focuses on marine biology and ecology.

Q&A:

Alain Norro asked to be sent a copy of the presentation [done]. He then asked about the training; how many people are trained, who is doing the training, how long is it, and who is certifying?

Dimitar Berov responded that the courses are run by BNAUA. CSD is integrated into this, and the training run by CMAS who give the certificate.

Jean-Pierre Féral asked if he thought it would be possible to have something recognized at the National level?

Dimitar Berov responded that there was something in the pipeline but that it was not yet approved. He clarified that CSD is a member of CMAS, but as an independent body from recreational activities.

Phillip Fischer stated that CSD should be given an incentive to go independent in practice, as currently they're under the same umbrella.

Bulgaria left the room, discussions arose around:

The level of CSD's independence: It was felt that though CSD was a good step forward, they should still be encouraged to become an independent legal entity so that they can set the course content and use their own levels of certificates along European standards.

Who is able to take the training: It was felt the training should be reserved for scientists at large, and there needs to be a mechanism to ensure a strong link to science.

Level of membership Bulgaria should be given: full vs associate.

Martin Sayer thanked Bulgaria for the time and effort put in so far, and stated that he understood that they have to base their training on CMAS. However, it would be better if they become fully independent with the ability to issue their own levels of certificates along European standards. At this stage, ESDP invited them to join as an Associate Member, and that they can join as full members once they gain independence.

Dimitar Berov accepted with thanks, and asked for a list of recommendations of what CSD should address, to be discussed at the next meeting.

Decision 2: Bulgaria became an associate member of ESDP.

b. Portugal

Pedro Neves updated ESDP on the situation. Portugal first applied under the Portuguese Diving Association, but following the recommendation for scientific diving to work independently, the Portuguese Association of Scientific Divers was created. 4 major institutions wrote letters of recommendation for the new Association, and it is therefore recognized by 98% of scientific organizations as the national representative of scientific diving. After approval of ESDP, it will start working on certification cards in early 2017.

Martin Sayer stated that since the last ESDP meeting, he had been contacted by three members of CMAS, including the head of the scientific committee of CMAS for Portugal (FPAS). All three wanted to join ESDP; at this stage they were refused, but it shows the group is becoming more active in this area. For the three individuals, **Martin Sayer** asked for CVs to demonstrate their education and use of scientific diving to support research, to be reviewed at this meeting, but he didn't receive anything. He noted that ESDP will have to keep the group in mind for the future and how to deal with them.

Maria Asplund stated that if it's the national body issuing the certificate that's fine, and it should be linked to the work authority to ensure safety levels.

7. National Updates

Finland: Struggling with financing for scientific diving training, unlikely to have any this year. Published a guidebook for employers of scientific divers to help better ensure the future of scientific diving in Finland.

Germany: Regulations stable, book ongoing.

Norway: 15-16 February 2017 there is a meeting of the Constitution of scientific divers, fairly sure they'll apply to full membership of ESDP.

Switzerland: Strong archaeological work, but the community is very small.

UK: No changes in legislation/qualifications, but regarding medical there are revised standards on body weight/fitness levels. Regarding funding, scientific diving was rated very highly following a two-year review process but now in Commissioning stage which evaluates based on quality and national need. However, hope to get same if not more funding.

France: Still in between old and new regulations regarding training and safety. No general rules for foreign divers, different rules for different countries.

Sweden: All work divers are under the same regulation, but the authority doesn't want that commitment anymore, a new body needs to be found to issue certificates. This may mean separation from other work divers, don't know when the current commitment will end.

Italy: The legislative proposals on the regulation of professional diving in the different sectors (trade, tourism, education, science) are blocked for years because the government and the parliament have other priorities. Despite this, rules based on the best practices, approved by the ministry of labour for the dives carried out by environmental agencies, are today already applied by some research institutes and university departments.

Greece: Don't have a legal representative, so will have roundtables in the coming months to update regulations.

8. ESDP Consultation Document 1 revision 1

Discussions arose around how to word depth requirements for AESD (2.1.4.2-2.1.4.3). Decided to return to previous limit of 29m to better allow for Sweden's national limits, and deleted the upper depth restriction of the first point to be more inclusive and help people get the 20 deeper dives required.

Action 2: Martin Sayer to send updated version to Karen Donaldson to update the Annex 1 details, who will then send the draft to the Panel members for a final review and acceptance. [Done]

9. 3rd European Conference on Scientific Diving, 22-23 March, Madeira

Pedro Neves stated that they had received approximately 50 abstract submissions, and that the programme will be finalized by early January to start promoting.

There have been suggestions to hold the conference every two years instead of every year, to be determined based on future input.

Action 3: Karen Donaldson to send a doodle poll to determine whether to hold the ESDP meeting on the 21 or 24 (noting Jean-Pierre Féral couldn't make the 21). Since Jean-Pierre Féral can't make the meeting, it was also suggested to add more possible dates/locations.

10. Future organization of Scientific Diving in Europe

Martin Sayer reminded the Panel of the strawman created for 16th meeting, and noted that he hadn't received any comments on it. He suggested to use the American Academy of Underwater Sciences as a model. For example, the new organization could have different levels of membership, with different fees. The ethos of ESDP would be maintained through an Executive Board, with Committees as required (e.g. education and training, science, equipment, etc.)

Philip Fischer suggested maintaining the same name, ESDP, as it's well known so a brand could be built. For financial support, he suggested a €5 fee from every person certified. Issues arose with this suggestion as France doesn't charge, and Sweden doesn't issue certificates. However, if there was a need to pay, then a record of the cards given would be required which would be beneficial.

Decision 3: Keep some form of the national representation board in the new organization.

Jean-Pierre Féral stated that there needed to be an evaluation of the average amount of money needed to be efficient, and therefore the objectives of the organization need to be decided. For example, will there need to be Secretariat support, invited guests, publication and dissemination.

Action 4: Jean-Pierre Féral to start an open document (e.g. Google doc) for a proposed budget so that everyone can input.

Regarding funding, ideas included more ownership of ECSD, and use the fees for that to become a paying member of the organization (cost of being a member is same as difference in discount for the conference). Fundraising options were also discussed (getting sponsors, raffles, gifts), though it was noted the need to determine what kind of sponsor would be accepted. To support meetings, it was suggested to rotate through the members, though it was decided that the Secretariat support, maintenance of documents and website should remain consistent to avoid loss of information.

Action 5: Martin Sayer to follow up with the Society for Underwater Technology offer to support meetings if held in London (office, food, Secretariat support etc.).

Specialized trainings, workshops and multi-national summer school programmes were also discussed as a way to raise funds. Topics would need to remain scientific, and could include under ice work, rebreathers, orientations for diving officers, Euro transect lines etc. ESDP could offer badges and/or certificates for extra training. These courses could be used to bring countries together and develop standardizations. There could be an option to pay to use the ESDP brand, but would need to be careful to not become like CMAS.

The Membership was discussed, specifically who the organization will it be open to, and what the different categories of members could be.

Massimo Ponti asked how the election of the Steering Group would be organized and how the different members would be defined. He created a proposed structure which was shared with the Panel and will be added to the meeting report. (Annex)

Maria Asplund requested that members list how their national bodies are funded so that there is a list of examples.

Funding: COST Action/H2020

European network on Blue Forests, but it depends on scientists getting funding. There is big potential for an EU project on Blue Carbon, and a lot of seaweed work relies on scientific diving. Next COST call isn't until Autumn 2017 so there is a lot of time to develop the idea.

Already tried with coastal observatories (EBCO).

For calls, need to focus on science that relies on scientific diving, as opposed to framing it as scientific divers who want to do science. A stronger hypothesis is required, a real problem needs to be involved and you need to demonstrate that scientific diving is the best, if not only way to solve it.

11. AOB

New EU Directive that divers will become a regulated profession as of 2016.

Action 6: Maria Asplund will send out further information on the implications.

Meeting closed.