

# Report

18<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting European Scientific Diving Panel  
11 April 2017 | Station Marine d'Endoume | Marseille



## Attendance

Jean-Pierre Féral, (Chair), France	<i>By skype</i>	<i>Excused</i>
Martin Sayer, UK	Massimo Ponti, Italy	Pedro Neves, Portugal
Jouni Leinikki, Finland	Thanos Dailianis, Greece	
Maria Asplund, Sweden	Wanda Plaiti, Greece	
Philipp Fischer, Germany	Dimitar Berov, Bulgaria	
Alain Norro, Belgium	Donat Petricioli, Croatia	
Haakon Hop, Norway	Tatjana Bakran-Petricioli, Croatia	
Joke Coopman, EMB Secretariat		

## List of Decisions and Actions

**Decision 1:** The last two paragraphs under chapter 2 - European competency levels for scientific diving will be adapted as follows: *“Certificates providing equivalence to the ESD and AESD reference levels (the so-called standards) are issued to members of permanent staff, contract staff, research students, technicians, and trainees or students of nationally recognised research institutions. The issuing institutions must be members of the national scientific diving bodies represented at the ESDP (see Annex 1).*

*A scientific diver who meets these requirements will obtain either a certificate corresponding either to the ESD or AESD reference level that is valid for a period as stipulated in the national legislation of the Member State of which they are a national. The ESD and AESD reference levels only indicates the training level, and not the current level of diving competency.”*

**Decision 2:** The maximum level for AESD will be kept at 29m, the wording of the text of paragraph 2.1.4.2 and 2.1.4.3 will be changed to: *“20 dives deeper than 20m of which 10 dives deeper than 29m”*

**Decision 3:** change the wording from paragraph 2.1.4.2 to *“15 dives deeper than 15m of which of 5 dives deeper than 25m”*

**Decision 4:** Document on the delivery of science through diving is accepted without comments

**Decision 5:** Document guidelines for scientific diving from large vessels is accepted without comments

**Decision 6:** As the current ESDP objective are very general; they still can be used for the future.

**Decision 7:** The word “primary” will be eliminated in the sentence describing the Associate member. The sentence will be rephrased as follows: *“must be supported by or seeking support from a relevant national authority that there is an intention to implement the ESD and AESD qualifications as standards for scientific diving in their country”.*

**Decision 8:** The last phrase describing a full member will be changed as follows: *“must recognise the ESD and AESD qualifications as accepted standards for scientific diving in their country and provide evidence that the national standard is fully equivalent to the ESD and AESD standards”.*

**Decision 9:** Norway is accepted as a full member until next year under the condition that ESD and AESD are fully implemented and they are able to grant the ESD and AESD equivalent scientific diving licences

**Action 1:** Delete annex 1 from the 17<sup>th</sup> ESDP meeting report

**Action 2: Philipp Fisher** will update the consultation documents with the DOI information instead of contact information and will include a date and version on the documents.

**Action 3:** the ESDP should make an instruction to circulate to all countries to include the phrase “equivalent to ESD and AESD standards” to insert on the national scientific diving licences where these exist.

**Action 4: Jean-Pierre Féral** will circulate the adapted (according to the last updated definition of membership) membership list to all delegates for approval.

**Action 5: Jouni Leinikki** will update the mailing list (to be sent when completed by JPF) and contact the Israeli and Latvian contacts to receive feedback.

**Action 6: Jean-Pierre Féral** will write a first draft for proposal to apply for a call for proposals from EuroMarine in one of the foresight workshops after having contacted the board.

**Action 7: Jean-Pierre Féral** will pursue the investigation of associate ESDP with MARS and EuroMarine (“umbrella associations”) and define a way forward and submit this as a proposal to the board.

**Action 8:** all members are required to fill out the table with the details of the ESDP members concerning the legal status, the type on representation, the member list, website, ... in order to include this in proposals to possible “umbrella associations”

**Action 9:** create an action list or a shared calendar in google docs with to do’s and deadlines per delegate and plan a work session via skype in order to start drafting the specific items on the future association.

**Action 10: Philipp Fischer** will draft a (quarterly) newsletter and ask the Members to comment on it. Once approved, it will be send to the mailing list/newsletter site.

**Action 11:** all members should add relevant publications (all IF but including impact factor 5 or higher in the dedicated category) from the last 5 years in the ZOTERO database

**Action 12:** Alain Norro will send email in the coming weeks asking the member countries to nominate one expert on rebreather diving in order to constitute a working group on that topic aiming at the creation of a competency level of occupational scientific diving at work using rebreather.

**Action 13:** Martin Sayer will draft a questionnaire for the survey on medical examinations needed to practise SD in member countries.

## 1. Chair's welcome and adoption of agenda

**Jean-Pierre Féral** welcomed the ESDP members and stated that it is the last meeting as an EMB panel. He thanked the EMB for all the support given in the last 9 years and stated that the ESDP has gained a lot of visibility thanks to the EMB. The agenda was approved.

## 2. Approval of Minutes from 17<sup>th</sup> ESDP Meeting

**Jean-Pierre Féral** stated that the annex 1 should be deleted from the report as it was not agreed upon during the meeting; it was only one of the proposals.

**Action 1:** Delete annex 1 from the 17<sup>th</sup> ESDP meeting report

The Minutes were approved.

## 3. Validation of the last version of ESDP Consultation documents

Three consultations documents are up for approval by the ESDP members.

As a general remark, **Alain Norro** stated that the contact list on all the consultation documents should be updated. **Jean-Pierre Féral** added that all the documents also should contain a date and version. **Martin Sayer** suggested that it might be useful to keep the contact info in a separate document to avoid having to update the documents each time there is a change in contact details. **Philipp Fisher** suggested that it could be better to include DOI's instead of contact persons, as those are less likely to change.

**Action 2: Philipp Fisher** will update the consultation documents with the DOI information instead of contact information and will include a date and version on the documents.

The three documents up for approval:

### a. Common Practices for Recognition of European Competency levels for Scientific Diving at work

**Jean-Pierre Féral** made a suggestion to change the wording of the last paragraph under chapter 2 - EUROPEAN COMPETENCY LEVELS FOR SCIENTIFIC DIVING, firstly because they seem to mix the notion of "standard" (ESD or AESD reference level) and "certificate" (a national issued document), secondly because it appears to be in contradiction with the terms of the EU Directive 2005/36 / EC on the recognition of professional qualifications and lastly because it doesn't take into account the national rules concerning scientific diving.

One of the main discussion points is the duration of the validity of the certificate and whether or not the document should include a minimum validity period. The validity is set by the national authorities and differs in each Member State. In UK, SE, FI, NO and DE, the certification is valid for life, while in FR and BE, it is only valid for 5 years. **Maria Asplund** added that the ESD/AESD standards are added to the national certificate and this addition is only valid for a period of 5 years. It is decided to leave out the sentence that refers to the validity of the national certificates in order not to complicate the licensing unnecessary.

The most important item of the national certificates however is that they are recognised by other countries as well so that the mobility of the divers across Europe is guaranteed. The goal of the standards is to make an equivalence system that makes the national certificates recognised by any country in the EU. The certificate therefore has preferably to make a reference to the ESD standard.

Several countries still experience issues with the issuing of certificates. **Maria Asplund** clarifies that in Sweden, the issuing body is now the armed forces but they will stop issuing certificates after the end of this year, so the items of SD will probably not be addressed. Also **Thanos Dailianis** says that Greece still hasn't managed to get SD into the national legislation. The same situation applies for Croatia says **Tatjana Bakran-Petricioli**, although they are currently working on new legislation to implement this. For now, however, there is no official SD certificate on national level. Also in Norway, **Haakon Hop** explains that there are still no official certificates for scientific diving after issuing of S-certificate was terminated. There is an ongoing discussion with the Norwegian Labor Inspection Authority on how to proceed with this. Also, since scientific diving has become more difficult, particularly at Universities, the current direction is that professional (non-scientist) divers are hired to collect samples. Students at Norwegian Universities are generally not allowed to dive, which limits the possibility for diving projects for graduate students and recruitment to scientific diving.

**Philipp Fisher** states that the main question the ESDP should focus on is how the ESDP can assist the national committees in getting the ESD licences recognised. **Martin Sayer** adds that showing the safety record of scientific divers helps also to persuade the H&S authorities.

**Alain Norro** notes that a country should grant their own national licences, which can be based on the EU standards, and prove in what way they fulfil and differ from the EU standards. It was further argued that the most stringent rules always apply when diving in another country.

**Decision 1:** The last two paragraphs under chapter 2 - European competency levels for scientific diving will be adapted as follows: *“Certificates providing equivalence to the ESD and AESD reference levels (the so-called standards) are issued to members of permanent staff, contract staff, research students, technicians, and trainees or students of nationally recognised research institutions. The issuing institutions must be members of the national scientific diving bodies represented at the ESDP (see Annex 1).*

*A scientific diver who meets these requirements will obtain either a certificate corresponding either to the ESD or AESD reference level that is valid for a period as stipulated in the national legislation of the Member State of which they are a national. The ESD and AESD reference levels only indicates the training level, and not the current level of diving competence.”*

**Jean-Pierre Féral** had proposed a second adaptation in this document to change the depth under paragraph 2.1.4.2 and 2.1.4.3 from 29 to 30m for the AEDS. This was not agreed upon as in the previous meeting, it was already decided to keep the maximum level at 29m. The main argument for this is the difficulties that this may cause in Sweden according to Maria Asplund as the maximum level in Sweden is set at 29m by law. **Massimo Ponti** made a suggestion however to change the wording of the text. This was agreed upon.

**Decision 2:** For the AESD 29m will be kept in the text, the wording of the text of paragraph 2.1.4.2 and 2.1.4.3 will be changed to: *“20 dives deeper than 20m of which 10 dives deeper than 29m”*

A third adaptation proposed by Jean-Pierre Féral was to change the depth under paragraph 2.2.4.2 from 24 to 25m for the ESD. This was accepted and also the change in wording proposed by **Massimo Ponti** was accepted.

**Decision 3:** change the wording from paragraph 2.1.4.2 to *“15 dives deeper than 15m of which of 5 dives deeper than 25m”*

#### b. [The delivery of science through diving](#)

**Decision 4:** Document on the delivery of science through diving is accepted without comments

#### c. [Guidelines for Scientific Diving from large research Vessels](#)

**Decision 5:** Document guidelines for scientific diving from large vessels is accepted without comments

## 4. The Future of ESDP

A Tour de table was held on the ending of the ESDP panel under the EMB umbrella focusing on questions regarding the reached goals, the unaddressed items and possible ways forward for the ESDP.

**Martin Sayer:** recognized the need to continue working with the ESDP, but under another format and to open it up to other groups as well as the ESDP is now too exclusive to be able to represent the entire SD community. It is worth looking on how the American AAUS is operating and see what items can be included in the new ESDP format.

**Haakon Hop:** NO uses the connection to the ESDP in order to try to get some leverage on the Norwegian Labor Inspection Authority to change the diving standards to comply with ESD/AESD. The current change in standards in Norway is heading the opposite direction limiting divers using SCUBA to shallow waters, which is not beneficial to the SD community mainly working using SCUBA.

**Maria Asplund:** As the armed forces in Sweden will end the issuing of diving certificates by 2018, the full support from the ESDP is needed to help defend that the current standards are maintained. The danger is that a commercial diving school is trying to become the issuing authority, which will be a conflict of interest inside the Swedish national scientific diving committee since that school has a seat in the committee. Another risk exists with the international recognition (ESD-AESD) that may be lost in such case (to be revised when better knowledge of the situation is known).

**Jouni Leinikki:** Goal was to improve the competency of SD in Finland and get more scientific training. FI would like to get more interest from professional diving schools because it supplied for good courses. They did get more visibility after joining the ESDP and they got more divers become members of the committee. The biggest challenge now is to get decent training and international recognition.

**Alain Norro:** the main concerns for BE is that the focus of the future panel is still on the science items and that the Board of ESDP remains composed from national committees members. In the BE view, the panel should not be opened up to any other kind or member (individual sport diving federation etc.), otherwise it will be difficult for BE to defend the membership to a future panel.

**Philipp Fisher:** it is most important is to bring research to the international level when diving is involved. The vision for the ESDP is to build a science network on international level and to make sure to create a competence body to make this research possible.

**Jean-Pierre Féral:** key components are scientific research and visibility. It is important to have a national committee to keep an overview of the implementation of the different regulations for all the different research institutes. The ESDP helps to support the national committee and give it sufficient leverage.

**Donat Petricoli:** more than 50 divers in Croatia. Croatia is now in the process of making new rules concerning SD.

**Thanos Dailianis:** ESDP is seen as a vehicle for international collaboration and communication and the calibration of standards. They expect from ESDP the further standardization across EU. Discussion on progress for the freelance divers.

**Dimitar Berov:** Panel is very important to get opinions, guidance and exchange of ideas on scientific research involving scientific diving. There is not yet a national regulation, only internal regulations per institute that are in line with the European agreed standards.

**Massimo Ponti:** underlines the relevance of exchange and cooperation not only in EU but also with American and Australian colleagues and the sharing of common training levels and to have a general framework at EU level and share experiences. Start the panel as a meeting of the national committees.

**Conclusion:** All members still see a need for a European panel, the main question concerning the panel is under what format and membership it is going to operate. The goals of the panel should be clearly stated on how they see themselves evolve and what kind of representation they foresee. The key question is representativeness of the national committees, who are then connected to the European panel and represent the national scientific divers. The formation of the national committees is set up differently in each country on the membership, voting rights, freelance divers (holding a certificate but are not employed by an institute),... This should be further looked in to.

## 5. Missions and objectives – How to use the EMB ESDP ToR

The question arises if the current mission and objectives of the ESDP are still sufficient for the future organisation. As it seems that they are very general, there is no objection to alternate them.

**Jean-Pierre Féral** and **Alain Norro** discussed the participation/organisation of conferences. ESDP could look into the option of granting the ESDP label to some conferences if it approves of its topics or

agenda. That way, ESDP could be turned into some sort of quality label. **Philipp Fisher** and **Martin Sayer** stated that it could be more interesting to support local workshops, based on the American system. This system however cannot easily be copied into the EU as the EU is entirely differently organised. **Haakon Hop** argued that it could be useful to make a list of all the scientific divers that are represented by the ESDP to really get an overview of how big the ESDP representation is. **Philipp Fisher** stated that the German Committee presented every year an overview to the minister of Research on the work done, how many dives, who was represented, It might be a good idea for other members to do this as well to get a full overview of the work done.

**Decision 6:** As the current ESDP objective are very general; they still can be used for the future.

## 6. Updating the definition of ESDP memberships

In Berlin 2007, it was stated that each national committee should represent the entire scientific community of their country and that it should be recognized by the national authorities. Three different levels of membership were agreed on: Committed; associate and full member (see doc 6) in order to try to gather a maximum of possible members for the ESDP. This is still valuable for the ESDP future as the status of committed member could be open for most EU countries.

**Haakon Hop:** stated that the last step of a full membership is very stringent, even so that NO could not become a full member.

**Martin Sayer:** states that is mainly a question of semantics as it reads that ESD and AESD are not the primary qualification in every country. The main issue is to demonstrate equivalency to issue an ESD/AESD card. On the full members however, he feels that ESDP must stay strong on demanding to mention a reference to ESD and AESD on the national certificates as this is the whole point in granting easy access from scientific divers all over Europe.

**Jean-Pierre Féral** states that the problem in France is that it cannot hand out ESD/AESD cards because it is not in the French law. **Alain Norro** replies that it does not need to be in the law as the cards only mention that the national certificate is equivalent to the ESD or AESD standards.

**Jouni Leinikki** proposes to set up a standard equivalence table per country to see how the national standards relate to the ESDP standards. For the terms of reciprocity, this is very important.

**Maria Asplund** and **Haakon Hop** state that they will recommend to their certificate issuing body to put the sentence “equivalent to ESD/AESD standards” on their national certificates as it is for Belgium.

**Decision 7:** The word “primary” will be eliminated in the sentence describing the Associate member. The sentence will be rephrased as follows: *“must be supported by or seeking support from a relevant national authority that there is an intention to implement the ESD and AESD qualifications as standards for scientific diving in their country”*.

**Decision 8:** The last phrase describing a full member will be changed as follows: *“must recognise the ESD and AESD qualifications as accepted standards for scientific diving in their country and provide evidence that the national standard is fully equivalent to the ESD and AESD standards”*.

**Action 3:** the ESDP should make an instruction to circulate to all countries to include the phrase “equivalent to ESD and AESD standards” to insert on the national diving licences.

## 7. Approval of new ESDP delegates (DK and NO)/info-list

**Jean-Pierre Féral** presented the last available list of full and associate members. It was argued that Greece is now mentioned as an associated member but according to the rules, it should be a committed member as they have no national committee. The same situation applies for Croatia. The situation with Denmark needs to be cleared out. It is expected that they will apply for membership in the next meeting. Portugal is listed as a full member as they were already confirmed in one of the previous plenary meetings.

**Maria Asplund** noted that the persons now taken up in the list are contact persons, as in Sweden the delegate to the ESDP will be chosen on an annual basis.

**Haakon Hop** gave a presentation on the situation in Norway where the Norwegian Scientific Divers (NSD) was set up as a national committee representing institutions and independent scientific divers (work/commercial divers are excluded). Currently, it has ca. 70 listed divers from 14 institutions. **Mats Walday** will be the official delegate to the ESDP. A problem is that there is currently no Norwegian national certification for SD, after the S-certificate was terminated. The certification is handled by the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority, but specific regulations for scientific diving are currently lacking.

The first priority of the national body is now to get the EU SD standards into the Norwegian legislation. The national authority has proposed changes for the worse to the diving regulations that will make SD costlier and thus hindering the recruitment of SD. Also, the depth limitations are proposed to change to (<10m when using SCUBA) and the minimum team requirements will increase from 3 to 4. The Norwegian Scientific Divers association hopes that with the help from ESDP it will get some leverage to prevent those changes in the national regulations. A big investment has been made on a new ice-going research vessel *Kronprins Haakon* with specific diving facilities, but the diving itself is made more difficult under the new regulations, so the committee will fight those proposals.

**Martin Sayer** asked whether other divers would go to Norway would be given permission to dive if they hold an AESD/ESD card. Haakon Hop replied positively on this. The issue would be if Norwegian divers would want to go to other countries as they do not have a certificate (older divers still has the S-certificate).

**Decision 9:** Norway is accepted as a full member until next year under the condition that ESD and AESD are fully implemented and they are able to grant the ESD and AESD-equivalent diving licences.

**Action 4:** **Jean-Pierre Féral** will circulate the adapted (according to the last updated definition of membership) membership list to all delegates for approval.

Concerning the information list, there was no feedback received from 3 members (Israel, Romania and Latvia). The updated list will be send to Jouni Leinikki so that the mailing list can be updated accordingly. He will also try to contact the Israeli and Latvian contacts.

**Action 5:** **Jouni Leinikki** will update the mailing list and contact the Israeli and Latvian contacts to receive feedback.

## 8. ESDP Business Plan

Round-table discussion on the form under which the ESDP should operate in the future and what the possible means of funding are.

**Jean-Pierre Féral** stated that France would prefer that the ESDP continues under the existing model and that they would not prefer to operate under the US AAUS model. The question here is to look to what types of organisations that exist to find out the best fit for the ESDP. **Jean-Pierre Féral** has been in contact with MARS (which is legally a Dutch non-profit association of marine research stations and laboratories) to ask if they would be willing to take up the ESDP as a panel. The initial reaction was positive, but the steering committee still has to vote on it. This is foreseen in the coming weeks. It is however not yet clear what the terms to associate with them will be, nor what benefits that ESDP can expect from them. This will be follow up on after a decision has been taken by the steering committee. **Philipp Fisher** stated that if cooperation with MARS is pursued, ESDP could try to look to get priority or discounted access for ESDP members/researchers to the marine stations.

A future option is to become a fully independent association of public interest. This is a very long process however, that will require funding from the member national committees. This might be an issue, as several national committees do not have funds themselves, as is the case for Belgium and Sweden.

A third option is to associate with EuroMarine. This is also harder than associating with MARS as ESDP will have to become a member itself from EuroMarine. It is however a possibility to apply for one of the calls for proposals from EuroMarine and subscribe to it in order to obtain the funding of 7.500 EUR.

**Action 6:** **Jean-Pierre Féral** will explore this possibility and propose then to co-write a proposal to apply for a call for proposals from EuroMarine in one of the foresight workshops.

**Action 7:** **Jean-Pierre Féral** will pursue the investigation of association with MARS and EuroMarine, and define a way forward and submit this as a proposal to the board.

**Action 8:** all members are required to fill out the table with the details of the ESDP members concerning the legal status, the type of representation, the member list, website, ... in order to use this in a file to send to possible “umbrella associations”

**Action 9:** create an action list or a shared calendar in google docs with to do's and deadlines per delegate and plan a work session via skype in order to start drafting the specific items on the future association.

**Action 10:** **Philipp Fischer** will draft a (quarterly) newsletter and ask the Members to comment on it. Once approved, it will be sent to the mailing list/newsletter site.

## 9. Update of previous and upcoming events

**Jean-Pierre Féral** has started to build an ESDP publication database on “Zotero” and has sent a link to all members for this. He has already implemented some sort of structure. The question now is to add all relevant SD documents (whatever the IF is) in this database, as it will be used as one of the ESDP “business cards” to state the level of importance of the ESDP work over the years. It was argued that only documents from the last 5 years had been added so far and among them documents with an

impact factor of 5 or higher have been stored in a special category. At the moment, there are ca. 150 references in Zotero.

**Martin Sayer** and **Jouni Leinikki** discussed that one could use the reference “scuba” to look for relevant documents as the word “diving” is too broad a concept and leads to a lot of publications that have nothing to do with the actual SD.

Another item that was discussed is the website that will be used in the future. It is proposed that the Wikipedia website will be updated as the EMB website will no longer be updated in the future.

**Action 11:** all members should add all relevant publications (including impact factor 5 or higher) in the ZOTERO database

## 10. Towards a tool to understand equivalence between ESDP & national standards

This item was addressed during the discussions under point 6.

## 11. New consultation document on the good practices to use rebreathers in SD

**Alain Norro** proposed to begin a new ESDP consultation document on the use of good practices to use rebreathers. The idea is to build up on the presentation that has been made on the last SD symposium in Madeira as it becomes more and more accepted by EU institutions. The goal is to start a working group consisting of 1 scientist per country that actually uses the technique.

**Action 12:** Alain Norro will send email in the coming weeks asking the member countries to nominate one expert on rebreathers.

## 12. Survey of medical examinations needed to practice SD in member countries?

**Martin Sayer** said that he is willing to take the lead on this item and start by drafting a questionnaire and follow up on this.

**Action 13:** Martin Sayer will draft a questionnaire for the survey on medical examinations needed to practise SD in member countries.

## 13. Any other business

The mailing list was updated by **Jouni Leinikki**.

**Martin Sayer** asked the EMB what is further expected from the ESDP now that the separation is imminent? Do they need to draft a report with final conclusions? Also, what will happen to the documents that were published under EMB logo? Who will be responsible for those documents and how is the future collaboration going to work on this? **Joke Coopman** will get feedback from Niall McDonough and follow up on those questions.

Date and location for the next ESDP meeting: Tuesday 26 October 2017 in (place to be chosen: Athens, Stockholm or Oslo)