



Purple crab observed in Khlieh um  
Joh Jew  
(Meghalaya, NE India),  
EuroSpeleo Project  
ESP 2022-02  
(Netherlands).

Photo:  
Marcel Dijkstra



Fédération Spéléologique Européenne a.s.b.l.  
European Speleological Federation (F.S.E.)

Headquarter: 2, Rue du Fort Olisy, L-2261 Luxembourg

Postal address: B.P. 3067, L-1030 Luxembourg

R.C.S. Luxembourg F7846

Web: [www.eurospeleo.eu](http://www.eurospeleo.eu)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/eurospeleo>

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/eurospeleo\\_fse/](https://www.instagram.com/eurospeleo_fse/)

e-mail: [contact@eurospeleo.eu](mailto:contact@eurospeleo.eu)

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## FSE Projects and the Code of Ethics

For the start of the new year, and in the name of the entire FSE Bureau, I would like to express my best wishes to you all for a great caving year, effective conservation projects, all in good health and with a lot of fun.

Since more than 15 years FSE supports many speleological projects. Some of these are, or have been, organised in countries close to Europe, others in countries all over the globe. To support speleology and caving activities in all its forms is our common goal: camps, congresses, research or conservation activities, trainings or expeditions.

All these activities should be organised in the best possible way and with respect to the environment and all life forms. Those concerned are all projects that are supported by the FSE either by funds, equipment from FSE's official partners or simply by moral support.

Many years ago, FSE has adopted the [UIS code of ethics](https://www.eurospeleo.eu/ECPC/charta/) and FSE also has its own speleological Charta regarding cave protection:

<https://www.eurospeleo.eu/ECPC/charta/>

It is needless to say that all FSE

FSE should follow these rules. Carrying the FSE logo means being in line with FSE aims and objectives and respecting FSE statutes and regulations, including those from the FSE Commissions.

It is also self-understanding that events under the auspices of the FSE have to comply with national laws and customs in the country where the activity takes place. It is obvious that when a project fails such "good behaviours", the FSE Bureau will review the funding or the conditions of sponsorship for such a project in question.

These obligations should in no way stop anyone from presenting an application for a good project and eventually receive FSE EuroSpeleo Project status though. Quality projects always will be well appreciated and supported.

Please be aware that the **guidelines for EuroSpeleo Projects 2024 have been revised** and incorporate now **two deadlines** as outlined below. With this measure we strive to be more objective when it comes to the distribution of sponsoring items and financial grants by evaluating the applications for each semester at the same time.

**30th of April** for projects taking place from **01/07 to 31/12** of the same year.

**31st of October** for projects taking

place from **01/01 to 30/06** of the following year.

You will find the new guidelines, which are effective for projects taking place after 1st of July 2024, on our website: <https://www.eurospeleo.eu/eurospeleo-projects/>

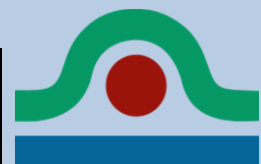
Please also note that the **16th EuroSpeleo Forum** will take place during **SYPHONIA 24 in Caselle in Pittari**, Salerno Province, Campania Region in southern Italy from 31st October to 3rd November 2024 (for the website see the list on page 2).

At this event FSE will hold its annual GAM and as already mentioned in the latest issue of the EuroSpeleo Newsletter, we expect that the member delegates will be present as we intend to vote on revised FSE statutes and we need a 2/3 quorum for this to be legally binding.

Best speleological wishes

**Jean-Claude Thies, FSE President**

## FSE Partners



## Cave and Karst related events

For more detailed information please consult the list of European caving events at the FSE website:

<https://www.eurospeleo.eu/events/>

**15 - 20 April 2024**

**21<sup>st</sup> Int. Symposium on Vulcanospeleology** - Hotel

Flamingo, Sta. Cruz Island, Galapagos, Ecuador

<http://www.vulcanospeleology.org/calendar.html>

**29 May - 2 June 2024**

**Balkan Cavers Camp** - Gračac, Croatia

<https://eurospeleo.eu/event/balkan-cavers-camp-2024/>

**22 - 26 May 2024**

**Annual Meeting of the German Cavers** - Diefurt,

Altmühltal, Bavaria <https://www.vdhk.de/jahrestagung>

**26 May - 01 June 2024**

**Characterization and Engineering of Karst Aquifers (CEKA)** -

Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina

<https://www.karst.edu.rs/en/>

**6 - 9 June 2024**

**14<sup>th</sup> Int. Cave Rescue Conference (ICRC)** - Ramales de la

Victoria, Alto Asón, Cantabria, Spain

<https://www.escueladeespeleologia.es/producto/14th-international-cave-rescue-conference/>

**10 - 14 June 2024**

**EUORKARST** - Sapienza University, Rome, Italy

<https://iah.org/events/eurokarst-2024>

**24 - 29 June 2024**

**Conference Man and Karst 2024** - Ragusa, Sicily, Italy

<https://cirs-ragusa.org/blog/man-and-karst-2024/>

**1 - 5 July 2024**

**NSS Convention** - Sewanee, Tennessee, USA

<https://caves.org/convention/2024-nss-convention/>

**12 - 15 August 2024**

**Asian Trans-Disciplinary Karst Conference 2024** - Gadjah

Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<https://karst.geo.ugm.ac.id/en/main-page/>

**9 - 13 September 2024**

**7<sup>th</sup> EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium** - Košice, Slovakia

[https://www.eurospeleo.eu/ECPC/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/7ESPS\\_2024\\_1circ\\_EN\\_v6.pdf](https://www.eurospeleo.eu/ECPC/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/7ESPS_2024_1circ_EN_v6.pdf)

**19 - 22 September 2024**

**17<sup>th</sup> European Cave Rescue Meeting** - Mostar, Bosnia and

Herzegovina <https://gss.ba/gssubih-organizator-ecra-e-2024-godine/>

**28 September - 6 October 2024**

**2024 International Show Cave Association Conference** -

(Mulu National Park, Malaysia) <https://www.i-s-c-a.org/>

**31 October - 3 November 2024**

**Syphonia 2024 - International Meeting of Speleology and**

**16<sup>th</sup> EuroSpeleo Forum** - Caselle in Pittari, Salerno, Italy

<https://www.tetide.org/syphonia2024/>



## Invitation to the 7<sup>th</sup> EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium in Slovakia

### **“Water in Caves and Karst” Understanding - Vulnerability - Protection**

On behalf of the European Cave Protection Commission and the Institute of Geography, Faculty of Natural Sciences of the University Pavol Jozef Šafárik we kindly invite all speleologists, scientists and authorities active in monitoring and management of cave, karst and groundwater, to participate at the 7<sup>th</sup> EuroSpeleo Protection Symposium organized jointly by the University Pavol Jozef Šafárik (UPJŠ) in Košice (SK) and the European Cave Protection Commission (ECPC) of the European Speleological Federation (FSE). The symposium will be held at the teaching-training facility of the University of Pavol Jozef Šafárik in Danišovce, district of Spišská Nová Ves, Slovakia.

Caves and karst are important features of the European landscape and have intrinsic natural beauty and value. However, they are constantly exposed to numerous human impacts, directly inside the cave environment or indirectly in the associated surrounding. Karst regions suffer from destruction, air and water pollution associated mainly due to forestry, agricultural chemicals, quarries, landfills, mining, urban and rural development and uncontrolled mass tourism.

At this symposium we would like to welcome the cave experts or the main responsible persons for monitoring matters, one from each FSE member state's speleological organisation and from the official administration responsible for the reporting, to exchange experience, practical issues, cross border coordination, monitoring and reporting issues.

You can find all information on the symposium at the ECPC website: <https://www.eurospeleo.eu/ECPC/esps/>

The first circular can be downloaded at:

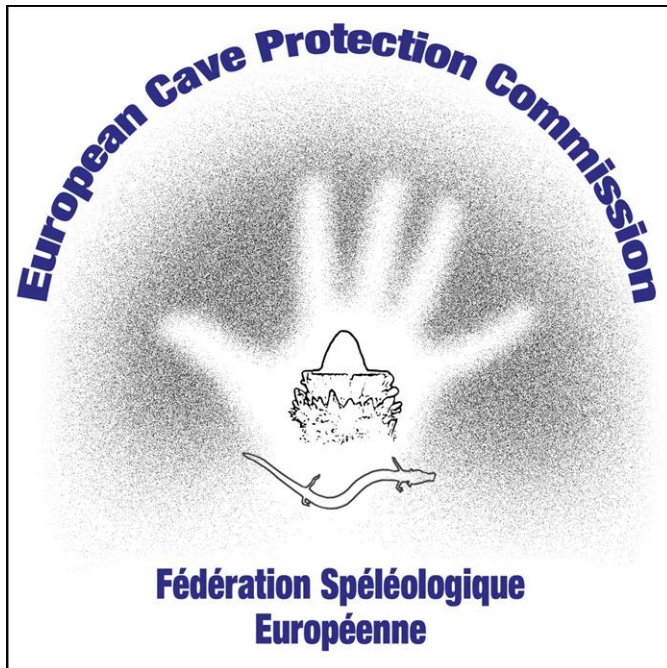
[https://www.eurospeleo.eu/ECPC/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/7ESPS\\_2024\\_1circ\\_EN\\_v6.pdf](https://www.eurospeleo.eu/ECPC/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/7ESPS_2024_1circ_EN_v6.pdf)

The application form is available at:

[https://www.eurospeleo.eu/ECPC/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/7ESPS\\_2024\\_Application\\_EN\\_v6.pdf](https://www.eurospeleo.eu/ECPC/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/7ESPS_2024_Application_EN_v6.pdf)

FSE is  
a member  
of the





## Call for Cave Protection Projects EuroSpeleo Protection Label 2024

It is with great pleasure that the FSE announces the next call for Cave Protection projects to receive the "EuroSpeleo Protection Label 2024" from the European Cave Protection Commission of the FSE (ECPC).

The EuroSpeleo Protection Label (ESPL) is a European speleological award managed by the ECPC, financed by the FSE budget. The ESPL will help to promote amongst the speleological clubs of Europe, cave protection activities that are designed in an integrated ecological way, taking into account EU environmental directives, the principles of administration of the Natura 2000 sites and the IUCN Guidelines on caves and karst protection.

### **With what kind of projects can you apply?**

The EuroSpeleo Protection Label will be awarded every year to one unique Cave Protection project. A European speleological jury established by the ECPC Board will make the selection. Any project aiming at protecting caves developed by a club, a local committee or a national commission from a member country of the FSE can be the subject of an application.

### **What are the criteria to receive the FSE EuroSpeleo Protection Label and what is the prize?**

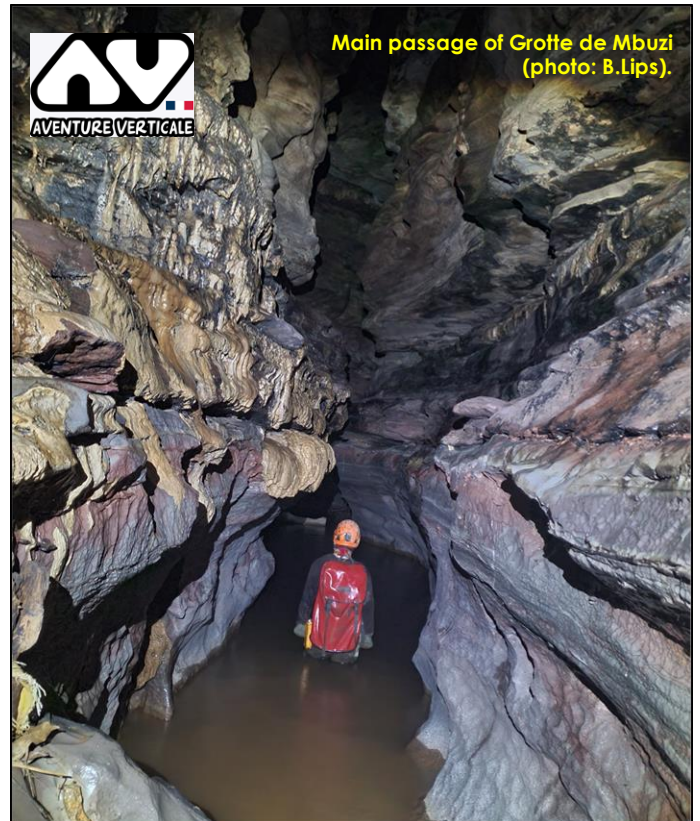
The application should be a quality project easily reproducible in other European regions and countries. The application should be sent to [protection@eurospeleo.eu](mailto:protection@eurospeleo.eu) before 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2024, in English language. Please refer to the ESPL2024 Guidelines and Application Form published on the FSE website at: <https://www.eurospeleo.eu/ECPC/espl/>

The approval of the national speleological organisation, member of the FSE, is mandatory.

The reward for the label 2024 is EUR 800 plus one item of caving gear from our FSE-sponsor Korda's.

**Best Speleo Wishes**

**The ECPC team**



## EuroSpeleo Project ESP 2023-03: Expedition to Kongo Central yielded 10 km of passages from 12 caves

A team of researchers from the Royal Museum for Central Africa, as well as cave experts from France and Germany set off on 4th of July 2023 for a 3-weeks field-trip to Mbanza Ngungu (Kongo Central, Democratic Republic of the Congo/DRC). The team was excellently supported by geology students from the Republic of the Congo ("Congo Brazzaville") and from the DRC, who were responsible for the daily negotiations with the villagers and actively took part in the scientific work (water and geological sampling) as well as in the cave surveying. Josiane Lips and Jean-Philippe Dégletagne also organized a biospeleological training for biology students of the Institut Supérieur Pédagogique in Mbanza Ngungu.

Main target of the speleological fieldwork was the re-mapping of Grotte de Ngovo (east of Langa village), explored by Congo-based Belgium cave enthusiasts in the 1950s, who produced a sketch map of the cave, showing approximately 5,860 m of passages. The 2023 speleological team succeeded in mapping 4,984 m in Ngovo, only leaving a smaller section of the cave unsurveyed, which is more difficult to access, unsurveyed for the next field-trip. A nearby vertical cave, Kadia Pemba (Kadia Mbemba), was linked to Ngovo through a 35 m deep pitch.

A major surprise however, was Grotte Ngungi (west of Langa village), a complex sinkhole cave with an impressively steep entrance doline. The cave was not mentioned by previous explorers. Grotte Ngungi was mapped in 2023 to a length of 2.1 km. It features an impressively steep entrance doline. The cave was not

mentioned by previous explorers.

Grotte Ngungi was mapped in 2023 to a length of 2.1 km. A very narrow meander provides access to a spacious and beautiful underground river passage (4-6 m wide, 5-8 m high), which can be easily traversed and develops straight towards Ngovo. The team ran out of time in wide open passage only 500 m from Ngovo. A connection of both caves is very much likely, which would place the entire system among the top twenty caves of Africa.

Twelve caves with a total of about 10 km of passages were mapped during the field-trip.

The full report of the expedition is available at <https://www.eurospeleo.eu/2023/10/01/cave-documentation-in-the-mbanza-ngungu-area-congo/>

## EuroSpeleo Project ESP 2022-11: Expedition to Mae Hong Son province in Thailand very successful

The expedition "Neua 2023" led two cavers each from Belgium, France and Poland, as well as one caver from the UK and Thailand to the Mae Hong Son province in northern Thailand at the Myanmar border. Karst areas in three different districts (Pang Ma Pha, Mae Hong Son and Pai) were targeted.

On the Nam Lang Plateau several large collapse dolines were investigated, the largest of which was 300 m in diameter and 150 m deep. However, only short caves were discovered at the bottom of these dolines.

The main objective of the expedition was to find a possible connection between the resurgence cave Tham Huai Kun, briefly explored by Australian cavers between 1983 and 1994, and one of its upstream caves.

The re-survey of the Tham Huai Kun led to the discovery of a new wet and narrow gallery in the SW section of the cave, which was pushed to a point less than 100 m from an upstream cave in the south called Tham Pung Hung. Closer investigation by two teams in both caves yielded a handshake connection of the caves.

The connecting hole was enlarged by digging to allow a human to pass through.

Another nearby cave with a large principal passage, Tham Pha Daeng Yai, may also be connected through a sump to the system. This sump is located close to the main gallery of Tham Pung Hung. Also the vertical cave Tham Pha Daeng Yai was connected to the system by following a strong draught.

The entire cave, now called Long Snake System, has a total of 8,614 m of surveyed passage and a current depth of 161 m. There are other caves in the surroundings, which could be candidates for future connections.

The expedition was supported by equipment from FSE's Official Partner Aventure Verticale and financial grants from FSE as well as the Belgian Federation UBS.

For the full report, including an overview map of the Long Snake System, see

[https://www.eurospeleo.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/ES\\_2022-11\\_NEUA\\_Thailand\\_Report.pdf](https://www.eurospeleo.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/ES_2022-11_NEUA_Thailand_Report.pdf)



## New UIS Bulletin online

The new UIS Bulletin (vol. 93, no. 1+2, for 2023) comprises 93 pages and is available for download at:

<https://uis-speleo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/UIS-Bulletin-65-12-December-2023.pdf>

## FSE and UIS to strengthen personal exchange

FSE and UIS (Union Internationale de Spéléologie) have decided to meet regularly for a formal exchange to improve cooperation and discuss common interests and strategies. The caving world is not just deep and dark but incorporates many different aspects of speleology. Only together we can handle this.

In 2023 both organisations met twice at international events: the first time in Postojna (SI) at the "International Karstological School" in June and a second time in Sloup (CZ) at the Czech "Karst, Caves and People" meeting which was held in September.



Board members of FSE and UIS in Sloup (CZ). From left to right: Johannes Mattes; Jean-Claude Thies; Nadja Zupan Hajna; Zdeněk Moťyčka; Alena Gessert (photo: Michal Hejna).

## Report on the online-questionnaire - Survey on activities for children and young cavers by the working group „European Children and Young Cavers” (ECYC)

When the FSE general assembly last year agreed to establish a new working group to support children and young cavers in Europe, it decided nothing less than to put children and young cavers finally in its spotlight. As our community has gained so much knowledge and experience in underground exploration, science and protection, it is only logical that the next generation should benefit from it. As first activity of the ECYC we ask the national organisations to complete an online-questionnaire about children and young cavers. We intended to get information about the status of youth work in Europe as well as an overview of the needs and ideas of our members in order to develop a suitable program for the working group.

At first we wanted to know if and how young cavers are trained in member organisations. The majority of members stated that they have no specific training for young cavers or children. New cavers are trained by the individual clubs or participate in the educational courses of the national organizations, if such exist. In Portugal some local associations promote discovery activities for children, while in Italy the caving groups offer training for younger people starting from the age of 16. In Spain camps, courses and joint activities in caves between autonomous communities, Olympic caving etc. are organized. Luxembourg doesn't organize regular training activities for young cavers, but they offer introduction courses for small groups, mainly from the Scouts. The Scouts seem to be also the connecting point to caving for young cavers in the UK, as well as the university caving clubs. The situation is similar concerning initiatives or programs dedicated to young cavers: Slovakia stated that excursions for children - but not especially for cavers - are offered, while in Italy even summer camps are organized by some regional groups. In addition, Croatia reported that they arranged workshops for school children, but not especially for young cavers. Germany strikes a new way with its youth group, which is self-organized as a WhatsApp group. In Luxembourg they regularly offer a caving introduction to the National Youth Service for a restricted number of participants from 16 years and older. All other responding countries stated that there are no specific initiatives for young cavers. Cave and karst related materials (e.g. books or other resources) for schools and educators are rare as well. The most interesting outcome of this part of the survey was that in Slovenia the karst and its features are part of the obligatory Slovenian school curriculum. This is a topic that needs to be further investigated for the other European countries, too, since it would give us the chance to introduce karst and cave related topics more prominent in the national curricula and thus raise awareness for speleology. Moreover, the responding countries of the

survey reported about several past projects, camps and other activities in Italy, the Netherlands, Croatia, Greece and Luxembourg. Switzerland and Germany are the only countries with active youth groups. For the activities of ECYC it is important to know, if young members under 18 are allowed at all to participate in FSE member organisations; if not, our possibilities to support measures would be limited. Fortunately, the majority of responding countries confirmed that children can become members, but the effective number of young members varies greatly from a handful to nearly 1,000. Not all FSE members were able to provide exact figures, but from the given information we assume that integration of children and young cavers in national speleological organisations is strongly associated to the offered activities and the public awareness of speleology in a country rather than to the size of the national organisation.

When asked about proposals or wishes for activities of the ECYC, some FSE members stated that they just began the discussion about this topic. In contrary to this Sweden inquired for help concerning of child-friendly caving trips around Europe. For many cavers with children this would indeed be a help to combine their interests with family needs. Furthermore we could offer guidance for a responsible introduction to caves and karst landscapes for families. Italy and the UK suggested conducting international camps, which could also be accompanied by a specific cave/science training for youth instructors like Italy suggested. A similar approach was proposed by Austria with cross-border youth trainings or even multilingual children's books on cave research. Luxembourg is mainly interested in didactic age-tailored material about caves and karst from other countries. All suggestions would surely help to improve the situation of Europe's young cavers. Well-edited didactic material could help to integrate cave and karst related topics in the national curricula, and thus strengthen the public perception of speleology. Camps or a specific training for youth instructors would help to integrate the interested youth in a better way. The ECYC online-questionnaire was only a first but important step in order to develop a strategic plan for our work. It clearly showed that there is room for improvement for activities for children and young cavers in Europe. This is a great motivation for ECYC's work. ECYC will discuss the outcome of the survey in more detail. The planning for our first big event is in progress. You will soon get info about it.

Unfortunately, only 15 FSE members completed the survey within the deadline. We are convinced that also the other FSE members are interested in supporting children and young people. Therefore we kindly remind everyone that it is in our all interest to guide the next generation.

Today's children and young people are the adults of tomorrow who possibly continue your explorations and help to protect caves and karst also in the future. Discovering the world through their eyes also helps us adults to rediscover the known with a new exciting perspective. In case you are also interested to put the children in your spotlight, get in touch with us at [youngcavers@eurospeleo.eu](mailto:youngcavers@eurospeleo.eu).



## EuroSpeleo Project ESP 2023-08: The 2023 Pico del Oro Plateau Caving Expedition (Perú)

Between 25th August and 20th September 2023 an expedition which is part of a wider series of North Perú caving expeditions organised by Espeleo Club Andino (Perú, [www.cuevasdelperu.org](http://www.cuevasdelperu.org)) and Groupe Spéléo Bagnols Marcoule (France) was conducted by a team of international speleologists.

Major new caves on the high-altitude (>3,250- 3,550m) Pico del Oro Plateau in North Perú were explored. This high plateau has significant potential for deep caves, as it is potentially underlain by limestone units that may have up to 2,700 m of relief, and it is situated above a very large resurgence of the Rio Negro River. Previous expeditions in 2018-2022 had explored a major river sink (Tragadero 1 de la Planura del Pico del Oro) that was choked and impassable, which lies towards the edge of the high plateau and also identified a cave entrance (Tragadero de la Soledad) just above the first of a set of major river sinks towards the west of the plateau.

The 2023 expedition discovered a series of major caves that demonstrate the world-class potential of this area to host deep caves. The expedition formed two groups of 5 cavers, who explored two areas of the plateau. The first team explored two new caves that are almost completely vertical (Lorenzo's Right Eye and Left Eye) to the east of the plateau, in challenging terrain beyond Tragadero 1 de la Planura del Pico del Oro. These river sinks were left ongoing (and getting bigger) at -141 and -158 m, with further vertical pitches of ~40 m in both cases. Both caves also have a strong draught. These vertical caves lie ~2,420 m above the very large Rio Negro resurgence.

A second team explored a line of ~12 major river sinks that form a NW-SE line, and are ~10 km further away from the plateau edge and Rio Negro resurgence. The first of these river sinks (Tragadero de la Soledad), went down a series of ~65 m of short entrance pitches to a major streamway, which is exceptionally well decorated. This near horizontal streamway continued for ~2 km to a large chamber, and a junction with an even larger and more decorated streamway that sumped after 0.5 km and a 40 m pitch. However, there is a strong draught before this sump, and there may be a climb into a large overlying passage that is ~30 m high, which will need to be explored in the future. This second larger streamway is heading NE and directly towards the two vertical potholes explored by the first team, and the very large and cold Rio Negro resurgence at the base of the plateau. All of the caving expedition members then combined to explore and map the currently 2,350m long and -205 m deep Tragadero de la Soledad. The second team also made a brief reconnaissance trip to a series of 5 further major river sinks (Sinks 2-6), one of which (Sink 2) was explored for >200 m and was left wide open, although with bad air.

The expedition team will now need to return in 2024, with a much larger amount of rope and rigging gear. The 2023 expedition was supported by FSE's official partner Korda's (400m of rope, where 200 m was sponsored by FSE).

Full report at: <https://eurospeleo.eu/2023/11/15/esp-2023-08-north-peru-caving-expedition/>



Tragadero de la Soledad, northern Perú (photo: B.Langford).

## EuroSpeleo Project ESP 2023-05: Exploration Arañonera 2023, Spain

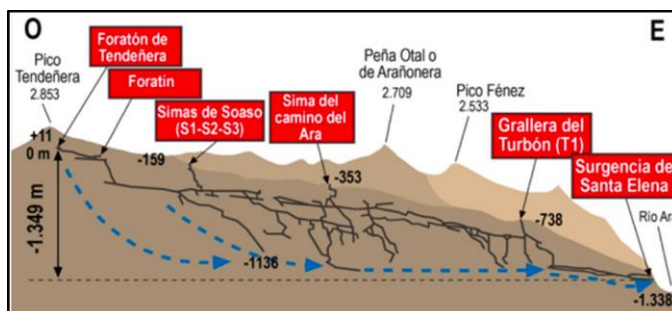
Tendeñera mountain range is located in the Central Pyrenees (Huesca, Spain). It is characterised by a steep relief formed by Pleistocene and Holocene karst glaciers, with a strong east-west trend between the Ara and Gállego rivers. The Arañonera cave system is the most important of the Sierra de Tendeñera, with 1,349 m of depth, a length of more than 47 km and 8 cave entrances.

The 2023 exploration mainly targeted the upper part of the Arañonera cave system focusing on continuing and closing the explorations in the new deep route known as the "Groga" line, and explored from -900 m up the "Riu Amunt", in the "Somnis de Glòria" collector. Exploration and mapping works have also been carried out in the "Eclipse gallery" and in the upper galleries of the "Riu Fantasma", extending the total length of the system. A new route with great potential has also been explored in the "Gran Cañón", called the "Cruxi" line and "Zig-Zag river", which represents a large water inflow.

Finally, multiple re-equipping as well as collection of subterranean fauna and a hydrogeological study of the Tendeñera karst were carried out. The 2023 campaign consisted of multiple exploration trips from March to July and finally the international caving camp (7-27 August) located in the Soaso valley, near the S1 cave entrance.

The project was supported by a financial grant of FSE and 200 m of rope from Korda's.

Full report at: <https://eurospeleo.eu/2023/12/18/esp-2023-05-exploration-campaign-aranonera-2023-spain/>



Simplified profile of the Arañonera System.

## New FSE supporting gadgets: CAVER T-Shirts and blue Hoodies with Zip

For any enquiry regarding FSE items please send an email to [shop@eurospeleo.eu](mailto:shop@eurospeleo.eu)



CAVER tanktop shirts in cotton, blue; € 15 (all sizes)  
CAVER T-Shirt in cotton, black; € 15 (all sizes)  
Bat & Pencil colouring set; € 6  
Proteus bandana; € 12  
CAVER Hoodie with Zip, blue; € 38 (all sizes)



Caver designs made by Taraneh Khaleghi. A big Thank You to Nina and Anna for modelling.

Orders may be placed directly at FSE by email to [shop@eurospeleo.eu](mailto:shop@eurospeleo.eu)

Individual shipment costs depend on content and country of delivery.

**When buying FSE items you are actively helping to finance FSE projects.**



## SYPONIA 2024 and 16<sup>th</sup> EuroSpeleo Forum

The 16th EuroSpeleo Forum (ESF) SYPHONIA 2024 will be organised by our colleagues from the Società Speleologica Italiana (SSI) in Caselle in Pittari, Salerno, from October 31st to November 3rd, 2024. Under the motto "Water - Caves - Future" the meeting will spotlight the role of speleology as a bridge between different fields of science and knowledge. Pre- and post-congress excursions as well as various caving trips are planned. Details are available on the event's website [www.tetide.org/syphonia2024/](http://www.tetide.org/syphonia2024/).

The beautiful medieval village of Caselle in Pittari offers various kinds of accommodation as well as camping facilities. Over 400m<sup>2</sup> of indoor space is provided for vendors and exhibitors. A wide range of presentations and posters on the latest discoveries in cave science and exploration, workshops, organizational meetings and social activities with live music round off your congress experience and create memories with old and hopefully many new caving friends. The city of Caselle in Pittari is well connected to highways, the nearest railway station in Sapri is 26 km away and is connected with the shuttle service Sapri-Caselle in Pittari. The closest airport is Naples Capodichino (183 km) or, if you prefer, you can access the event by ferry to Salerno (42 km) or Naples (180 km). During the 16th EuroSpeleo Forum (ESF) SYPHONIA 2024 the FSE will also hold its General Assembly. More meetings and events of the FSE will be announced in the second circular. Once again Italy and its tradition-rich national caving congress will be the epicentre of European speleology. Be sure not to miss this! We are looking forward to see you there!



De-rigging the 120 m-shaft in Dara Cave (photo: B.Biela).

### EuroSpeleo Project ESP 2023-09: DEEP 23 (Dara Expedition, Lebanon)

Sixteen cavers from Lebanon, Canada, USA, Armenia, Poland and the UK targeted Dara Sinkhole, the deepest cave of Lebanon (-622 m) from mid-August to early September 2023.

The objective of the expedition was to ensure a protection status for Dara Cave, which is under threat from quarrying and construction activities, given the fact that the cave is hydrologically connected to karst resurgences along the coast that supply drinking water for Beirut. The team conducted extensive biospeleological collections and made a thorough photo and film documentation, including a photogrammetric survey of parts of the cave. Also, speleothem samples were collected. Full report at: <https://www.eurospeleo.eu/2024/01/26/esp-2023-09-dara-expedition-for-exploration-and-protection-lebanon/>