

EUROPEAN SCIENTIFIC DIVING PANEL  
(ESDP)

28<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting – 20<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Video Conference

MINUTES

		ACTIONS
1. Welcome and Present	<p>PRESENT: J-P Féral (J-PF; France), M Sayer (MSa; UK, intermittently), A Norro (AN; Belgium), Michael Schmid (MSch; Germany), J Leinikki (JL; Finland), G. Cervin (GC; Sweden), P Balazy (PB; Poland), C. Cerrano (CC; Italy), W Plaiti (WP; Greece),</p> <p>Applicants: L. Hadjioannou (LH; Cyprus), T. Murk (TM; Netherlands)</p> <p>Apologies: M Frost (MARS), P. Fischer, (Germany) C. Crisp (Gibraltar), M. Ponti (MP, Italy)</p> <p>Absents: D. Berov (Bulgaria), D. Petricioli (Croatia), P.M. Carlsson/I. Nesse-Aarrestad (Norway), PT D. Paulo (Portugal), B. Mavrič (Slovenia)</p>	
2. Adoption of the agenda	Agreed – with an inclusion of a point on the varia about the distribution list ESD (managed by MP), asked by AN (see point 12).	
3. Approval of minutes from the 27 <sup>th</sup> ESDP meeting	Corrected draft version has been approved without changes.	
4. New ESDP applications – reviewed versions	<p><b>The Netherlands:</b> Tinka Murk (TM), representing the Dutch Scientific Diving Platform (DSDP) presented the changes taken place since the 27<sup>th</sup> ESDP meeting:</p> <p>Since the 27<sup>th</sup> ESDP meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The DSDP distinguishes a steering group (SG) with representatives at directors level (responsible for employees, and mostly not SD themselves) to interact with e.g. the ministries and take main decisions and an Expert group (EG) to discuss SD details for the SD protocol and procedures. This division of responsibilities worked very well.</li> </ol>	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. The Ministry has agreed to study the possibility to segregate scientific diving from other occupational diving. They installed a task force that will contact responsible ministries of ESDP statutory member states. They expect to decide in autumn whether they will legally accept the Dutch SD protocol and certification.</li> <li>3. Training capacity is built to meet the demand. Reaching out to other groups than biologists. Standards for Dutch SD are published online. Authority to deliver certificates is DSDP (yet to be discussed). Is it recognized by law? Visiting Scientists in the Netherlands: each assessed separately at the moment.</li> <li>4. Project diving plans are registered centrally in all participating institutes and are available for review by the safety officers and Ministry.</li> <li>5. SD regulation formally only applies for diving in Dutch national waters (or from Dutch ships). NL SD working abroad will apply local safety regulations and if the NL ones are stricter, they will be applied as well.</li> <li>6. The North Sea is not considered as a special case, as diving can be easy and shallow or very challenging. In the Dutch SD protocol the conditions are leading for what is possible (or not), and this is discussed and decided (with a dive-safety officer) at the level of the project-dive protocol.</li> </ol> <p><i>Comments:</i>  J-PF: DSDP should create a page for the ESDP website with “Welcome to dive for science in Netherlands” to explain regulations for foreign visitor SD</p> <p>AN: Should <u>not</u> call the training program “European Scientific Diver” but give it a national name. Also do NOT add the ESDP logo. Training should take place in the conditions where the SD work will take place. NL divers can be trained abroad, e.g. in Belgium also if the DSDP acknowledges that training and a specific training for offshore North sea condition may be organized after the ‘core’ training.</p> <p>WP: Complements to NL for making their ministry to cooperate.</p> <p>MSch: Germany has trained many students from other European countries, also from NL. Certification needed when they join international projects.</p> <p><i>Decision on membership:</i> pending</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to complete table of requirements</li> </ul> <p><b>Cyprus:</b></p>	<p>Link with national training agencies? Link with GUE?</p> <p>What about diving organized by NL recognized research projects when outside NL waters?</p>
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	<p>Louis Hadjioannou (LH) presented the changes taken place since the 27<sup>th</sup> ESDP meeting:  Pending:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to complete table of requirements</li> </ul> <p>Situation has changed very little since our last meeting. There is no distinction between types of divers (recreational, scientific, occupational). Changes include: SD Committee has had some communication with several ministries (labour, environment, ... what else?) in connection with SD. Also new members to the committee: Geological survey department, Department of antiquities.  Training is already established. Focus is still on marine ecology and archaeology.  Instructors are trained abroad to the AESD level.</p> <p>J-PF: Where and by who? Quality control?</p> <p>LH: Trained in the UK by the scientific diving training team of the University of Southampton.</p>	
<p>5. National updates</p>	<p><b>Belgium</b> – Some activities going down due to Covid pandemic. From this year onward, the theoretical part of training is given in collaboration with the University VUB in Brussels. We are facing difficulties with students. They most often do not have the level 2 diver certification that is prerequisite to enter the practical session.  Belgian has a new research Vessel from early 2022 (R/V Belgica) and did start SD operations from that ship (already two successful cruises)</p> <p><b>Bulgaria</b> – no report.</p> <p><b>Croatia</b> – no report</p> <p><b>Finland</b> – New training program by the Finnish Scientific Diving Academy (FSDA) in association with the University of Helsinki was accepted by FSDA to comply with the AESD standards in Finland. Training of SD has picked up during the pandemic, as well as the need for SD work force.</p> <p><b>France</b> – Training was stopped due to COVID. Hoping to have a new had to postpone the 7<sup>th</sup> ECSD. It will be held in Roscoff in 2023.</p> <p><b>Germany</b> – Almost all training centers have just resumed after the Covid-19 pandemic. Some institutions have been able to train despite the restrictions caused by the pandemic. New operational rules for SD have been accepted. They are not as strict as before, but more considering SD needs. Canadian diving tables adopted for SD, which has made it easier to conduct shallow dives.</p>	

	<p><b>Greece</b> – Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted and diving activity has started increase. New candidates have been trained for SD at the HCMR. There is not yet an official SD certificate in Greece. Other universities and institutions are diving with recreational certifications due to lack of legislation. A new law for recreational diving in Greece which was commented by the HCMR.</p> <p>The meeting advised again Greece to set up a <u>national SD committee</u> with a wide representation of institutions to advance the legal recognition of SD. This will strengthen the position of the SD institutes towards the ministries as was recently the case in NL, and more generally everywhere the SD was finally legally recognized.</p> <p><b>Italy</b> – No major update. Introductory training is available in several universities. The recognition of the national AIOSS SD certificate, which is fully compliant to the ESDP ESD/AESD standards, is increasing among the employers. Although not mandatory, it is legally recognized by some employers according to the Italian law and included in some employee public selections and career assessment.</p> <p>AN &amp; J-PF: However, AIOSS supports trainings which standards are weaker than ESDP’s and issues so-called “European” diploma.</p> <p><b>Norway</b> – No report.</p> <p><b>Poland</b> –. On May 4<sup>th</sup> national committee (“Polish Committee on Scientific Diving”) has been established by the heads of 6 institutions: 1) Institute of Oceanology Polish Academy of Sciences, 2) Warsaw University - Archeology Department, 3) National Maritime Museum, 4) Institute of Meteorology and Water Management, 5) Institute of Biochemistry and Biophysics Polish Academy of Sciences, 6) Nicolaus Copernicus University - Center for Underwater Archeology. At present two more members are expected to join in, but the committee already represents one of the key institutions within the SD community. A scientific paper will be published about the SD committee encouraging new institutions to join in. Apart from institutes internal regulations, until now, there are no regulations established for SD on the national scale yet. Importantly, the term scientific diving (specifically “diving for research purposes, referred to in art. 1. paragraph 3 points 3 of the Act of 17 October 2003 on underwater works i.e. OJ of 2014, item 1398, as amended”) is recognized by law, as diving type activity that is different from recreational or commercial one A new law for occupational diving in Poland is under preparation, and the national SD committee is aiming to have SD recognized in it.</p>	<p>Should be documented</p>
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	<p><b>Portugal</b> – no report  TM: what about the validity of the Pt AESD training?  It is very unclear what criteria it is based on and whether it all SD institutes are connected. Ministry Pt does not recognise SD so there is doubt about the validity of national certificates. This needs to be clarified. There is not an agreement yet to link GUE(*)-ESD, so that needs to be discussed. Paulo could ask for discussion on that.</p> <p>(*) AN remind that GUE is a recreational training agency. As such GUE certifications cannot be recognised as equivalent to (A)ESD. In case PT government recognises GUE as their training agency for the national PT certificate its delivers for occupational scientific diving, then ESDP will have to reexamine the matter.</p> <p><b>Slovenia</b> – no report</p> <p><b>Sweden</b> – Gunnar Cervin was elected as the new Chair of the Swedish SD committee. New homepage was launched <a href="http://www.vetenskapsdykning.se/en/">http://www.vetenskapsdykning.se/en/</a>  Joint international SD training course are coming up in autumn. Underwater documentation course (PhD) in August in Kristineberg. Students from other countries are invited to join.</p> <p><b>UK</b> – Changes to medical examinations have been proposed. Formal guidance on returning to diving after Covid infection was released by HSE.</p>	<p>Should be clarified and documented</p>
<p>6. Rules for issuing ESD and AESD equivalence (statutory members) + Recognized qualification of European (occupational) scientific diver</p>	<p><i>Discussion:</i></p> <p>TM: Where/how train the trainers? What are the minimum requirements to become a SD trainer? Their quality is crucial as they may issue the national SD certificates. Now it seems to be either based on commercial training of trainers or learning in practise from an experienced scientific diver. There is no guarantee on their competences. Organising this at an European level would help synchronise approaches and collaboration between less and more experienced countries.</p> <p>For some countries the representativeness of the National Scientific Diving Committee is a problem. <i>e.g.</i> in Portugal and Greece some institutes have no idea about the existence of such a national cie. In those cases a temporary solution could perhaps be that only the institutes that are involved and agree sign.</p> <p>J-PF: The situation is that there is no common European certification, but a patchwork of national certifications that</p>	<p>AIOSS and Portugal to clarify the use of ESD and AESD in SD training course advertisements and certificates</p> <p>Link with legal authority?</p>

	<p>may or may not be equivalent to ESD/AESD standards. It is important that all national certifications are legally recognised, then they must be recognised in another EU country.</p> <p>The evident first step is to respect and integrate the recognized ESDP standards in the initial SD training nevertheless a legal status for SD is reached or not.</p> <p>Another important aspect is <u>insurance</u>. As long as there are no problems, one may find all these constraints too complicated, or even useless. The matter would change radically as soon as liability is involved. At that point, all the laws, regulations, etc., of the countries involved would be examined with the sole aim of shifting the responsibility elsewhere. This pattern is fortunately very rare in SD, but it must be integrated.</p> <p>As regards the training of trainers (a very important subject indeed), at present this can only depend on the laws in force in each country. The difficulty is that such training must meet two quality criteria: one, general, technical diving competence, the other, specific, scientific quality and efficiency. One way to explore, used in France, is to entrust part of this training to researchers or teacher-researchers who are also qualified “occupational” instructors with a diving BEES (Brevet d'État d'éducateur sportif = <i>State Patent of Sports Educator</i>) which is an essential diploma for teaching or supervising a high level sports activity. The rest of the training team is made up of experienced scientific divers and specialists capable of explaining the scientific issues (biologists, geologists, archaeologists, etc.), together with a specialist in law, a hyperbaric doctor and an emergency doctor.</p> <p>AN: national committees adapt to the (A)ESD standard. It's a matter of willingness to apply the Standards fully. In case of an accident, the certification of ESDP standard helps in the court.</p> <p>AIOSS certification raised discussion for including in their certificates the term “European Scientific” Diver and the ESDP logo, CC will take the question to the AIOSS meeting. Training advertisements for SD courses in Italy and Portugal claiming that they lead to the ESD or AESD raised discussion. Clarification is required from the arranging institutions.</p> <p>J-PF: Note on the use of ESDP logo: It is not allowed to put it on the national certificates (which is <i>national</i>). Doing so creates an ambiguity, giving the false appearance of a <i>European diploma</i>, which is of course not legal. A consensus has been reached years ago, concerning only the diplomas of statutory member states, not on the certificate itself, but on the back of a card stating the full equivalence to ESD or AESD.</p>	<p>MP or CC will have to report on that during next meeting</p>
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<p>7. National SD committees: ToR ratification, member list updating, representativeness of the occupational scientific diving (research organizations, universities, ...)</p>	<p>Chairman asked a question to consider if it is necessary to ratify the ESDP ToR in each national committee.</p> <p><i>Discussion:</i>  AN: ToR can be ratified at a meeting of a NSDC, and proven by a signed extract from the minutes. That can be published on the NSDC's website, along with the ToR</p> <p>WP: In countries without a NSDC, individual institutions can ratify ToR</p> <p>J-PF: In non-statutory member countries with a NSDC, it can ratify the ToR</p> <p>NL produced a list of member institutions and their representatives in the DSD-SG and DSD-EG</p> <p>Member list updating each year?  Representativeness of the occupational SD (Research institutions)  Private members of NSDC, should be public (with permission)</p> <p><i>Decision:</i> ESDP encourages to publish the NSDC members on their website</p> <p><b>There are worries</b> about the commercial/recreational diving industry that wants to educate people to the level of SD. Sometimes they even offer this to children of 14 years old. ESD is not a registered (protected) term. So if outsiders, e.g. PADI, decides to give out a ESD certificate, how to stop them? Perhaps the national SD committee should judge this.</p> <p>As a conclusion: In the end it is not really a problem, because indeed you can't do anything legally. It is like the simple use of "scientific diving". What is important is the certificate recognised by the responsible authority(ies) in each country, the name of the certificate, who issued it, whether it is valid, and <i>of course whether fully complying the ESDP standards.</i> For this, the list of recognised certificates between European countries should be published and disseminated.</p>	<p>All:  Publish the names of national SD committee members on the website.</p>
<p>8. Update on the ISO process</p>	<p>AN reported on the last meeting of the ISO working group (TC228, WG1):  Pushed by the rec diving industry, the ISO-group started to make a Standard for scientific diver training  AN was reviewing the previous happenings in the process aiming at 3 levels: (1) beginner SD suitable for Citizen Science, (2) Scientific Diver Ewhich is close to ESD but downgraded (3) Scientific Diving Project Leader which is a truncated version of AESD. AAUS has asked to add a fourth level for SD instructor.</p>	

	<p>Drafts are finished up to Level 2. The third level will be finished on May 19th.</p> <p>The drafts are now going back to national bodies for comments.</p> <p>The emphasis in the standards' contents is on training methods. In short ISO is training diver to science and ESDP trains scientists to methods of scientific diving. The word 'occupational' does not exist in the ISO' texts.</p> <p>AN will share the Levels 1 and 2 for the ESDP reps to study and propose possible changes to the national ISO working group members.</p>	To be reported by AN next meeting
9. Updating of the website	<p>J-PF proposed to add to the ESDP website a page to warn about false content about European Scientific Diving within the ESDP context.</p> <p>Members of the ESDP have seen training course advertisements on digital platforms containing misleading information about the recognition of the diplomas.</p> <p>ESDP has limited possibilities to limit the use of ESD and AESD, as they are not registered trademarks. ESDP can only deny individual advertisements and claims.</p> <p>National committees can also keep an eye for fake news and report on them. Then we could publish then on our web site</p>	J-PF will create the webpage and the ESDP will review it during the next meeting.
10. Consultation documents	<p>J-PF proposed new ESDP consultation documents clearly and briefly explaining the following subjects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training courses and national SD certification</li> <li>• Link between occupational scientific diving and citizen science</li> <li>• How to safeguard that SD trainers have a good level. (This will be picked up later)</li> </ul> <p><u>A follow-up is needed</u> at every meeting for every consultation document</p>	JL and TM take lead on Training courses and national SD certification PF and MSch will take lead on the Link between occupational SD and CS.
11. Chairman election	J-PF asked the delegates to consider names for the ESDP chairperson election in the spring meeting in 2023. Chairman application is open for statutory members.	Candidates will be named in the autumn meeting in 2022.
12. Any Other business	Martin Sayer announced on behalf of the <b>ECSD organizing committee</b> the places for the next three conferences: 2023 - France, Roscoff 2024 - Greece, Crete 2025 - Portugal, Azores	



	<p><b>MARS</b> – updated by Matt Frost (by email):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The MARS website hosted by the MBA has been updated along with associated ESDP information. We are continuing to develop the website and to improve processes so we can make rapid changes when requested.</li> <li>- MARS as a legal foundation closed on January 31<sup>st</sup> with the responsibility to continue the work passing to the MBA. The MARS network is being integrated into the MBA membership framework whereby marine stations and other networks will be invited to become institutional members of the MBA. The MBA will continue with the same aims and objectives of MARS. A pricing structure for MARS will be announced shortly.</li> <li>- The MBA is planning for a MARS meeting, possibly linked to a World Congress of Marine Stations meeting in 2023.</li> <li>- a reminder that The ESDP can ask the MBA to send out notices via the MBA member bulletin and ESDP members are invited to contribute articles of interest / activity reports etc. to the quarterly magazine ‘The Marine Biologist’. This has a wide reach and goes to members in over 40 countries.</li> </ul> <p><b>ESD distribution list</b> set up by MP to communicate among the SD community.</p> <p>AN: The contents of the messages are ambiguous. There is content which is not related to the ESDP activities. Is the list moderated? The issue should be brought up in the next meeting.</p> <p>CC: AIOSS will decide on actions to deal with the issue.</p>	
13. Date of next meeting	<p>October 25<sup>th</sup> 2022  Location: in case of face-to-face meeting, the Netherlands was proposed (<i>obviously CoVid permitting</i>)</p>	<p>A videoconference will always be possible</p>