

EUROPEAN SCIENTIFIC DIVING PANEL
(ESDP)

30th Plenary Meeting – 18th May 2023

In person (no Internet) - Roscoff , France

MINUTES

		ACTIONS
1. Welcome and Present	<p>Present: J-P Féral (J-PF; France), M Sayer (MS; UK), A Norro (AN; Belgium), J Leinikki (JL; Finland), M Ponti (MP; Italy), T. Dalianis (TD; Greece), L. Hadjiaoannou (LH; Cyprus), L Wels (LW; Spain), R van der Ven (RvdV; Netherlands)</p> <p>Apologies: D Berov (Bulgaria), P Fischer (PF; Germany)*, C Crisp (Gibraltar), P. Carlsson (Norway), P Balazy (PB; Poland)*, G. Cervin (GC; Sweden)* <i>(*) report by email</i></p> <p>Absent: D Paulo (Portugal), B Mavrič (Slovenia)</p> <p>Observer: Francesco ? (Netherlands)</p>	
2. Adoption of the agenda	Agreed – no changes were proposed.	
3. Approval of minutes from the 29 th ESDP meeting	Circulated before the meeting with comments. Minutes were approved.	
4. National updates	<p>Belgium – Theoretical Training now operated for BELSPO at the University of Brussels (In future this should become an inter-university course) , the practice remains operated in clear Mediterranean water while the Offshore North Sea module is organised from our research Vessels–renewing ESD/AESD issues remains on the numbers of dives of the applicants.</p> <p>In Belgium SD is recognised by law like in France. We have a Royal Decree, making training compulsory before any work can be started and that for all sectors of occupational diving. BELSPO, the Belgian Science</p>	

Policy Federal public services is managing the sector of occupational scientific diving in Belgium.

Bulgaria – No report

Croatia – no report

Cyprus - Small community of SD. There is an ‘unofficial’ national committee, but attempting to get this officially ratified. No status for SD – but taking on some training jointly with University of Southampton (UK). Looking to start their own training programme.

Finland – New courses, new divers. ‘Diving for science’ event including citizen science engagement (especially maritime archaeology). Before next ESDP there will be introductory meeting highlighting occupational scientific diving. National committee has no official status in Finland.

France – Noted that the ECSD7 was successfully organised by France. No changes of note. Almost complete catching up of certificates of competence that could not be completed during covid pandemics.

Germany – 1) The new and updated regulations for scientific diving compiled by the German Commission for Scientific Diving and the national body for HSE have passed the Ministry of inner affairs and will be published in July 2023.

2) The national body for HSE is now (visiting) member of the ISO-initiative "Standards und Scientific Diving". Germany will handle the ISO initiative the same way as France or Belgium as in Germany we have a legal background for scientific diving.

3) In autumn 2023, the next crossover-course for AAUAS and CAUS scientific divers to the ESD (based on the German certified research diver) will be held in Helgoland.

4) The German Commission for Scientific Diving has published new „operation recommendation“ for gas-blending (NITROX) in scientific diving, for scientific offshore diving and for measures how to get back to scientific diving after a COVID-Infection.

5) The German Commission for Scientific Diving is in the process to signing a new strong contract with the national association of recreational diving VDST, in which the overlap between scientific and recreational

diving is clearly defined. Since 1.5 years, both organisations work closely together especially in Citizen Science. For this, the chair of the German Commission for Scientific Diving KFT (Philipp Fischer) has been elected as member of the Board of Directors of the national association of recreational diving (VDST) with the function of Director of Science and in this function has been elected also as „Special Duty Director for Science at CMAS“ with a special focus on Citizen Science.

Gibraltar – No update

Greece – ECSD8 (to be held in Crete April 2024) may provide a good opportunity to establish a Greek NC. HMCR have applied for a formal exemption from commercial diving regulations. Other groups trying to get certification through recreational training bodies. Is creating some confusion, hence the drive for a NC.

Italy – AOISS has moved to new web platform. English version coming soon. Provides clarity on how **Italian SD/ESD** standards are used and delivered, in compliance with the ESDP standards. Italian law provides that in the absence of specific laws, Professional Orders and Workers' trade Associations (such as AIOSS) may define the minimum quality/training standards of their members, obviously in compliance with any other national regulations. Whenever possible, these organisations should adopt the documents provided by national, European or International standards bodies. AIOSS is working with the Italian national standards body (UNI) to have the SD training programme and occupational diving practices available. These standards won't be compulsory because Italian law leaves the responsibility of adopting this type of standard to the employer. However, it is expected that at least all public bodies will adopt them. They will be fully compliant with ESDP standard, with some addition (e.g. the surface attendant and scientific freediving qualifications); however, the document will be written accordingly to the UNI/ISO standardised templates. AOISS working to align with the Italian law on generic scientific standards. New qualification introduced by national archaeology body for 'diving archaeologist' which is not equivalent to ESD, but they will be working to revise in order to be comparable. J-PF points out that even the Italian version of the website is not fully informative. He suggests that the already significant update be completed as soon as

possible. He was also surprised that the (A)ESD system, which is necessarily fixed since it is a "minimum" reference, could only be "recommended" in its Italian version. What impact will this have on the issuing of national certificates? This point should be clarified. Massimo is asked to share the Italian documents with JP and AN

Netherlands - Complex legal situation. Strict rules on occupational diving. Scientific diving weren't represented so established NC, training and certification follows ESD standards. 4 week course (2 weeks theory; 2 weeks practical) will ensure complete equivalence with ESD. Setting up an administrative platform. Now requesting with national regulators to recognise the scientific diving sector.

Norway – no report

Poland –. The National Committee (consisting now of 6 institutions) gathered online at the beginning of April to discuss the most current issues. On April 13th members of the Committee had a chance to present the goals and tasks of the newly established PKNN during the underwater research conference entitled "Scuba diver in underwater landscapes - previous achievements and new challenges". Organizers of the conference (Foundation) as well as the representatives of the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn (inland waters scientific diving studies) research) expressed their willingness to join the committee. Other attendees - hydrobiologists from the Adam Mickiewicz Univ. in Poznan are also interested. Number of Polish researchers attended the ECSD7 in Roscoff. PKNN have received the declaration of joining with Faculty of Oceanography and Geography, Gdansk University (former Institute of Oceanography). Talks on the adoption of three new institutions are underway. The idea of the committee will also be presented during the Polar Symposium at IO PAN.

Portugal – no report

Slovenia – no report

Spain – Royal Degree 550/2020 determining the safety conditions for diving activities. Scientific diving is recognised but there is limited prescription of what is required. Part of the requirement to attend a SD course

but no detail as to what needs to be in a course. Attempt to define course content in line with ESD/AESD standards (other courses are following PADI SD course). The regional structure of Spanish legal system makes establishing a NC and adopting common standards, very difficult.

J-PF reported that he has had several contacts with several Spanish colleagues, all of them positive. However, things remained at the level of declarations of interest, with no concrete implementation on a national level. Things are never simple, especially in countries with a strong regional administrative structure.

Sweden – The situation in Sweden is stable (SSDC). SSDC has members from all the bigger universities, but also authorities dealing with marine environment, the big public Aquaria and the maritime museum in Gothenburg. We actively invite institutes working with occupational scientific diving as a tool. A total of 11 member institutes. Gothenburg university being by far the biggest actor with some 30 divers and 600 mandives per year. As before, all certifications as occupational diver goes through the Swedis armed forces, meaning that there are certain dive schools certified to give occupational courses. When a course is finished, the paperwork is sent to the armed forces, who gives out the specific dive certificate. This includes S30 (SCUBA 30 m), dive leader, ESD and EASD. It is one specific person at the armed forces who has this responsibility. And here there is a problem today, as the handling time is extremely slow. 6 months is common. We will at the upcoming national occupational divers meeting that is held next week, take up this problem. A meeting where we as scientific divers meet with dive schools and divers from coast guard, armed forces, police etc. We all have this problem in common, so we have to find a solution. We have no ESD course planned this year. We need to find new ways of financing the next course, as has been possible for the five courses held together with Germany and Finland. There is plans to give a course in scientific methods for scientific divers this summer. Probably a PhD-course, to be held by Leon Green and Maria Asplund at Kristineberg, University of Gothenburg. In Sweden there is still a limited access of pressure chambers, meaning that we have one 24/7 in Gothenburg. In the rest of Sweden, special caution has to be taken. (Several chambers exist but with limited access.)

	<p>UK – No changes in high-level regulations. A refresh of the NC – new website, new guidance notes (not legal necessity but have legal recognition), new committee membership.</p>	
5. ESDP Consultation Documents	<p>Medical review – spreadsheet updated with Italian details by MS; circulate to group. To write first draft for next ESDP meeting.</p> <p>ESDP Best Practice for using CCR for Scientific Diving at Work 2nd edition is being worked on by AN in June 2023</p> <p>Training reference document – 1. Training courses; 2. Certification processes; still awaiting full responses. MARS network questionnaire 1. What are SD facilities; 2. What are training courses – 14 responses but patchy replies regarding training courses. Concentrating on obtaining full data and moving to a first draft for adoption at next ESDP.</p>	
6. ESDP Terms of Reference	<p>Revision completed – new version is online; no comments received; new version was adopted.</p> <p>Discussion on use of ESDP logo – considered that because (A)ESD is in the national laws of statutory members then they need to keep control of the logo as a quality measure. Still lacking clarity as to what are standard processes for (A)ESD use and administration. It is key point today to include a clear and effective quality control process.</p>	
7. ISO 8804 update	<p>Three levels – 8804-1 level too low; viewed as an entry level qualification. Possible link between 8804-2 and ESD. 8804-3 does not link with AESD. Current draft will go out for consultation – next meeting toward end of year.</p>	
8. Election of new ESDP chair	<p>No nominations were received. No election took place</p>	
9. Any Other business	<p>No other business</p>	
10. Date of next meeting	<p>No decision taken J-PF will propose a poll for next June or July for a short e-meeting about ESDP's next steps and chair</p>	