



European Chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration

Annual Report 2017



ORGANIZATION

SER Europe status

Since June 2012 SER Europe is officially established as an international non-profit organization with legal seat in Belgium, hosted by the Research Institute for Nature and Forest in Brussels. The full text of the SER Europe statutes is available on the SER Europe website.

*European Chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration (in short: SER Europe or SERE),
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Management

During the member's assembly in Freising (SER2016 conference) the SER Europe Board was renewed and now consists of 14 members from 12 different European countries.

Executive Committee members:

- Jordi Cortina (Chair), Universidad de Alicante, Spain
- Agata Klimkowska (Secretary / communication), Eco-Recover, Netherlands/Poland
- Kris Decler (Treasurer, webmaster, policy-interface), Research Institute for Nature and Forest INBO, Belgium
- Anne Tolvanen (European representative in SER International), Natural Resources Institute, Finland
- Ása L. Aradóttir (SER2018 Conference), Agricultural University of Iceland

Other board members:

- Melinda Halassy (at large), Institute of Ecology and Botany, Hungary
- Sabine Tischew (at large), Hochschule Anhalt, Germany
- Elise Buisson (at large), l'Université d'Avignon, France
- Johannes Kollmann (at large), Technische Universität München
- Klára Řehounková (at large), University of Ceské Budejovice, Czech Republic
- Dagmar Hagen, Norwegian Institute for Nature Research, Norway
- Tatiana Marras, University of Tuscia, Italy
- Francis Isselin-Nondedeu (at large), Polytechnic School of the University François Rabelais
- Jonathan Mitchley, University of Reading, UK

Ad hoc assistance and Newsletter:

- Julia-Maria Hermann

Board meetings

04/04/2017 Online

30/08/2017 In person (Brazil)

06/10/2017 Online

12/12/2017 Online

Bi-annual General Membership meeting

The next bi-annual General Membership meeting will take place in early September 2018 at the SERE2018 Conference in Iceland.

Affiliations and networking

SER Europe aims to function as a 'network of networks' to 'connect and educate the European restoration community'. Affiliating with national organizations supporting SER Europe's vision and carrying it out through local and national work, is essential to build a consistent and sustainable network. In 2017, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with Eurosite, the European Network of Site Managers. In turn, SER Europe became "Friend of Eurosite" in order to establish a long-term working relationship. One of the outcomes was a successful joint LIFE NGO project proposal for financial support of more and better knowledge sharing in the field of ecological restoration.

SER Europe now has affiliations with:

- Eurosite
- Netherlands: OBN, The Dutch Knowledge Network for Restoration and Management of Nature
- Finland: the Finnish Board on Ecological Restoration
- Italy: the Italian Forest Restoration Society)
- France: REVER (Le Réseau d'Echanges et de Valorisation en Ecologie de la Restauration)
- Spain : Asociación Española de Ecología Terrestre.

These organisations represent national networks of ecologists, researchers, and practitioners in their respective countries. Negotiations started with the Eden Project (UK), and German working group on Restoration Ecology (GfO).

Contacts were made with the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA), the European Federation of Soil and Water Bioengineering (EFIB), the Latin-American and Caribbean Society for Ecological Restoration (SIACRE), H2020 projects MERCES and AMBER, and other networks and organizations to invite them to participate in SERE biannual Conference to be held in Iceland in September 2018.

Collaboration with SER International

For the past years, SER Europe has been a driving force for a global restructuring of SER. Following the announcements in 2015, the transition process was started in 2016 toward a truly international and decentralized organization, while keeping its current assets and strength. Anne Tolvanen is representative of SER Europe in the board of SER International and member of the Chapter Relations Committee. Kris Decler is at-large board member of SER International and member of the Science and Policy Committee.

SER Europe Strategy 2016-2020

The strategy adopted in 2016 can be summarized in 22 actions as follows:

EVENTS

1. Promote a web-based forum to discuss issues related to ER and SERE.
2. Organize or support at least two events (courses, workshops) per year.
3. Organize SERE 2018 Conference and negotiate future venues.
4. Define terms of SERE collaboration with Conference organizers.
5. Prepare Conference declarations.
6. Promote Conference follow-up activities.

TOOLS

7. Promote diffusion tools: LinkedIn group, Facebook, Tweeter, Newsletter.
8. Support writing of Restoration Prioritization Frameworks of European countries.
9. Develop ER standards for different sectors.
10. Launch a student video contest.
11. Adapt SER International Professional Certification program.
12. Develop a semantic internet search engine for ER.
13. Promote the use of SERE Knowledge base.
14. Participate in RTD and implementation programs (H2020, LIFE+, etc.) as subcontractor or as part of the advisory team.

POLICY

15. Foster EC and member states policy on ER, and provide support as needed.
16. Continued support to EHF.
17. Contribute to define H2020 priorities and participate in other DG-RTD initiatives.

GOVERNANCE

18. Connect with major national organizations dealing with ER.
19. Create structures to link with affiliated organizations.
20. Negotiate reciprocal benefits with affiliated organizations.
21. Organize SERE Board into action committees.
22. Define a plan to renew SERE Board and ensure wide participation.

ACTIVITIES

COMMUNICATION

Newsletters

4 newsletters were produced:

- [The SER Europe Quarterly March 2017](#)
- [Extraordinary newsletter April 2017](#)
- [The SER Europe Quarterly June 2017](#)
- [The SER Europe Quarterly November 2017](#)

Twitter

Board Member Jonathan Mitchley created a Twitter account '@SER_Europe' and provided regular tweets on the latest news in ER in the EU.

Publications

SER Europe was asked to support the diffusion of the following books and write a preface:

- Navarro-Cano, J.A.(coord.), Goberna-Estellés, M., González-Barberá, G., Castillo-Sánchez, V.M., Verdú, M., (2017). Restauración ecológica en ambientes semiáridos. Recuperar las interacciones biológicas y las funciones ecosistémicas. CSIC, Madrid.
- Prach, K., et al. (2017, in Czech). Ecological Restoration in the Czech Republic II. The first volume (in English) was published in 2012 and is available as pdf at www.restoration-ecology.eu.

Website

SER Europe's website has been regularly updated with information on events, reports, reviews of recent publications, etc. News, together with general SER Europe information can be

accessed at www.ser-europe.org. Contributions and comments should be sent to Kris.Decleer@inbo.be.

Knowledge Base

One of the aims of SER Europe is to disseminate knowledge on ecological restoration in Europe for practitioners, policy people, scientists and further stakeholders. With our Knowledge Base and its supporting search engine, we provide a tool for the restoration community to share knowledge, best practice experiences, interesting case studies, etc. The Knowledge Base continued to grow in 2017. Further contributions and comments can be sent to Kris.Decleer@inbo.be.

CONFERENCES, TRAINING AND OTHER EVENTS

Preparations started for the organization of the

- the bi-annual SER Europe Conference SERE2018 in Iceland
- the SER Europe Summer School on Ecological Restoration 2018 “Best practice in management and restoration of European dry grasslands”, jointly organized with EUROSITE

SER Europe successfully partnered with universities and NGOs to organize a series of educational events for practitioners and academics:

- SER Europe supported the **LANDCARE Erasmus+ project and the 2nd International Meeting on training capacities** in relation to land degradation and rehabilitation in Southern Europe (Lisbon 25-28 October 2017, www.landcare.es). Organizers invited different sectors of the Portuguese ER network (architects, civil engineers, mining industry, ecological organizations, NGOs...), to foster the creation of a formal Portuguese network of ER. Collaboration between SERE and LANDCARE will continue through 2018 by organizing the workshop *Ecological restoration: challenges for education and training, and opportunities for employability* at the SERE Conference Iceland 2018, together with the European Federation of Soil and Water Bioengineering and project ECOMED. Further, SERE will promote the final meeting of LANDCARE project *LandCare for the future: The meeting point for educators and students*, 16-18 July 2018, Faculty of Education Sciences, Santiago de Compostela, Spain (<http://www.landcareforfuture.com>). With these actions, we aim to promote education and training in ER in Europe, and encourage the creation of a thematic group on this topic.
- Managed by Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI), the Endangered Landscaped Program aims at reversing biodiversity loss and providing inspiration for a fundamental shift in the policy and practice of nature conservation (<http://www.endangeredlandscapes.org>). ELP aims at restoring natural ecological processes, populations and habitats across Europe, for a better and more sustainable future. It forms part of a program of enabling activities that will support the implementation of a portfolio of landscape-scale restoration initiatives due to be announced in 2018. **CCI together with SERE co-organized the workshop *Identifying Priority Actions of Landscape Restoration in Europe***. In preparation for the workshop, a consultation exercise asked over 900 experts across Europe to identify the questions, which, if answered, they consider would make the biggest contribution to addressing the restoration of landscapes and ecosystems. Nearly 700 questions were received in

response to the consultation exercise – covering social and economic issues, policy, habitat connectivity, the scale of intervention, impacts of climate change as well as questions relating to practical management. During the workshop, 37 experts, comprising a collaboration of NGOs, academia, government and research institutions, gathered for two days to discuss and reach agreement on which are the 100 highest priorities. A peer-reviewed article and a summary for policy makers were prepared following workshop conclusions and will be used to raise awareness on the need to develop scientific and governance tools for landscape-scale ER in Europe.

- SERE supported the **International Symposium on Sustainable Restoration of Mediterranean Forests** (Palermo, Italy, 19-21 April 2017) organized by IUFRO, together with other organizations, including the Italian Society for Forest Restoration (SIRF, affiliated to SER Europe). The book of abstracts of the conference can be accessed at:
https://www.palermocongress2017.com/files/PACO2017_Book_Abstracts.pdf.
Chiatante, D., Domina, G., Montagnoli, A. & Raimondo, F. M. (eds), Sustainable restoration of Mediterranean forests. *Fl. Medit.* 27: 5-76. doi: 10.7320/FIMedit27.005.
- In a two days working meeting in Zaragoza (Spain), we prepared an **advanced course on Dryland Restoration and Monitoring**, together with CIHEAM-IAMZ, IUCN and ICARDA, to be held at the IAMZ facilities in Zaragoza (Spain) in February 2018.
- SER Europe co-organized the **First Meeting of the German Restoration Network** in Friedenfels (Germany, 21-22/11/2017)
- **Conference on “Reconciling biodiversity protection and extractive activities”** (Nov. 9th 2017, Brussels): The event was organized by the European Commission addressed the latest news regarding raw materials in the EU within the Raw Material Week 2017. The conference dealt with several aspects of biodiversity protection and mining sites as e.g. sustainable and responsible sourcing and mining, critical raw materials and restoration of post-mining sites. Klara Rehoukuvá, representing SER Europe, demonstrated the effectiveness of ecological restoration in post-mining sites at a country and global scale, and promoted the role of SER Europe facilitating knowledge transfer.
- SER Europe Chair attended the final meeting of the **NASSTEC project** (Marie Curie Program; <https://nasstec.eu/conference/programme>) in Kew Garden, London (Sept. 25-26th 2017) to present SERE and discuss the use of native seeds in ER in the Mediterranean. Earlier (Feb. 2nd 2017) SERE was also present at the 3d meeting of the NASTEC Project in Córdoba (Spain). Collaboration will continue to **promote a certification strategy for native seeds in Spain**. Related to SERE support to the use of native seeds in ER and the International Network for Seed Based Restoration (INSR), our organization was introduced in INSR e-newsletter 4 (<https://mailchi.mp/d23fda66f1dd/insr-e-newsletter-edition-4-june-2017>).

PROJECTS

SER was explicitly mentioned in the EC Tender **ENV.D.3/SER/2017/0038 Evidence-based improvements in the Birds and Habitat Directives (BHD) implementation: systematic review**

and meta-analysis (<https://etendering.ted.europa.eu/cft/cft-display.html?cftId=3128>), and will join the expert group as subcontractor. SER Europe must identify and delegate

- (1) SERE experts who are willing and able to participate in workshops and
- (2) review all output material of the project (on-line hand books).

SER Europe has received an increasing number of invitations for partnering in research projects (e.g. Horizon 2020) and consultancy projects (e.g. calls from DG ENV), and to provide letters of support for proposals of consortia. However, SER Europe must avoid direct competition with the interests of its members who may be involved in different consortia. In order to keep transparency, internal guidelines were approved to deal with such invitations:

- Participation in or support for proposals is only possible when the goals and methods of the proposal are in line with SER Europe aims.
- Participation in proposals can only be considered for tasks where SER Europe provides added value as ‘the network of networks’ on ecological restoration or as an international platform for communication and discussion (e.g. via SER conferences and workshops, website, knowledge base, etc.).
- If participation is considered appropriate, SER Europe will preferentially engage through subcontracting via one of the partners of the consortium. In case the selection procedure foresees two rounds, the subcontracting will be preferentially negotiated during the second round.
- SER Europe encourages its active members involved in relevant project proposals to promote the participation and potential added value of the Society as subcontractor to the project (also in order to reduce competition between consortia with different representatives of the Society).
- Any engagement in a project proposal needs to be approved by the Board.

POLICY SUPPORT

SER Europe is recognized by the European Commission as a scientific stakeholder organization to advise policy matters, in particular the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy. During 2017 we continued our support to the European Commission and the Member States to achieve the commitments made under the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020..

SER Europe is active member of the European Habitats Forum, a stakeholder organization of different European conservation societies, organizations and institutions with secretariat at the policy office of IUCN in Brussels. More information: Kris.Decleer@inbo.be; <http://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/europe/work/?uNewsID=50>.

SER Europe participated in several consultation events coordinated or supported by the European Commission (e.g. Working Group on Green Infrastructure and Ecological Restoration, Nature Directives Expert Group).

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was under revision in April-May 2017. SER Europe emphasized the need for CAP to comply with the EU habitats directive, and EU biodiversity strategy objectives, and encouraged members to a) respond to the questionnaire adopt the support tool developed by Living Land. B) suggested model answers that emphasizes, specifically, the need for CAP to comply with the EU habitats directive, and EU biodiversity strategy.

SERE Chair contributed to FAO’s Mediterranean forest week, and to reviewing the Agadir commitment (*Towards a Mediterranean Regional Initiative on Forest and Landscape Restoration*). This ambitious agreement aims at (1) assessing ongoing national efforts on FLR, then setting a voluntary regional target to be reached by 2030 – which will include additional efforts to restore 8 million hectares of degraded forest landscapes by 2030; (2) reinforcing regional cooperation on FLR and LDN; (3) developing a consensual and diversified strategy for the financing of FLR efforts and reinforcing national capacities in order to better mobilize

existing financial instruments; and (4) establishing a voluntary monitoring and reporting system for FLR and LDN efforts in the Mediterranean context.

SERE was also present in the Forum on Biodiversity and Global Forest Restoration, hosted by SER and IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management (Thematic Group on Ecosystem Restoration) at Iguassu (Brazil, 27/08/2017), as a side event to SER 2017 Congress. The summary report and action plan of the forum can be found at <https://www.ser.org/page/SERDocuments>.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

- Support the organization of SERE 2018 Conference to be held in Reykjavik, Iceland
- co-organize the course on Dryland Restoration and Monitoring at CIHEAM-IAMZ (Zaragoza, Spain) in February 2018, and SERE2018 Summer School Best practice in management and restoration of European dry grasslands (Hungary, August 2018; <http://restorationcourse.okologia.mta.hu>).
- collaborate with the projects TECMINE, LANDCARE, ECOMED, MERCES and QUARRIES-ALIVE, EUROSITE and affiliated organizations (REVER, SIRF, OBN, FBER, AEET-SECF) for the diffusion of their activities related to ecological restoration, assistance with the organization of advisory panel work, participation in meetings and other activities complying with SERE goals.
- support a cluster of organizations in Spain under the lead of the private firm Semillas Sillvestres S.L., to promote and develop a Spanish strategy for the management and certification of seeds of native herbaceous species, following examples in Germany, France and other European countries.
- promote MoU with the European Federation of Soil and Water Bioengineering, (EFIB), the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA), and the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environment Special Interest Group on Ecological Restoration and Habitat Creation.
- assist emerging ecological restoration networks in Germany, the United Kingdom and Portugal.
- re-define the MoU with the future Iberian Society of Ecology (SIBECOL) which will be created by SERE-affiliated Spanish Association of Terrestrial Ecology (AEET), together with Iberian Limnological Society (AIL), Portuguese Ecological Society (SPECO) and others.
- promote participation in EKLIPSE calls concerning events related to ecological restoration.

Financial Report

SAVINGS ACCOUNT

Total income	€ 17.952,09
Total expenses	€ -11,13
BALANCE ON 31/12/2017	€ 17.940,96

CURRENT ACCOUNT

Total income	€ 22.149,56
Total expenses	€ -17.872,13
BALANCE AS OF 31/12/2017	€ 4.277,43



SER Europe thanks all the members and other donors who contributed to the Society in 2017

Join SER and support our efforts to advance ecological restoration.

Contact: info@ser-europe.org; European Chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration, Research Institute for Nature and Forest, Herman Teirlinckgebouw, Havenlaan 88 bus 73, 1000 Brussels, Belgium.

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