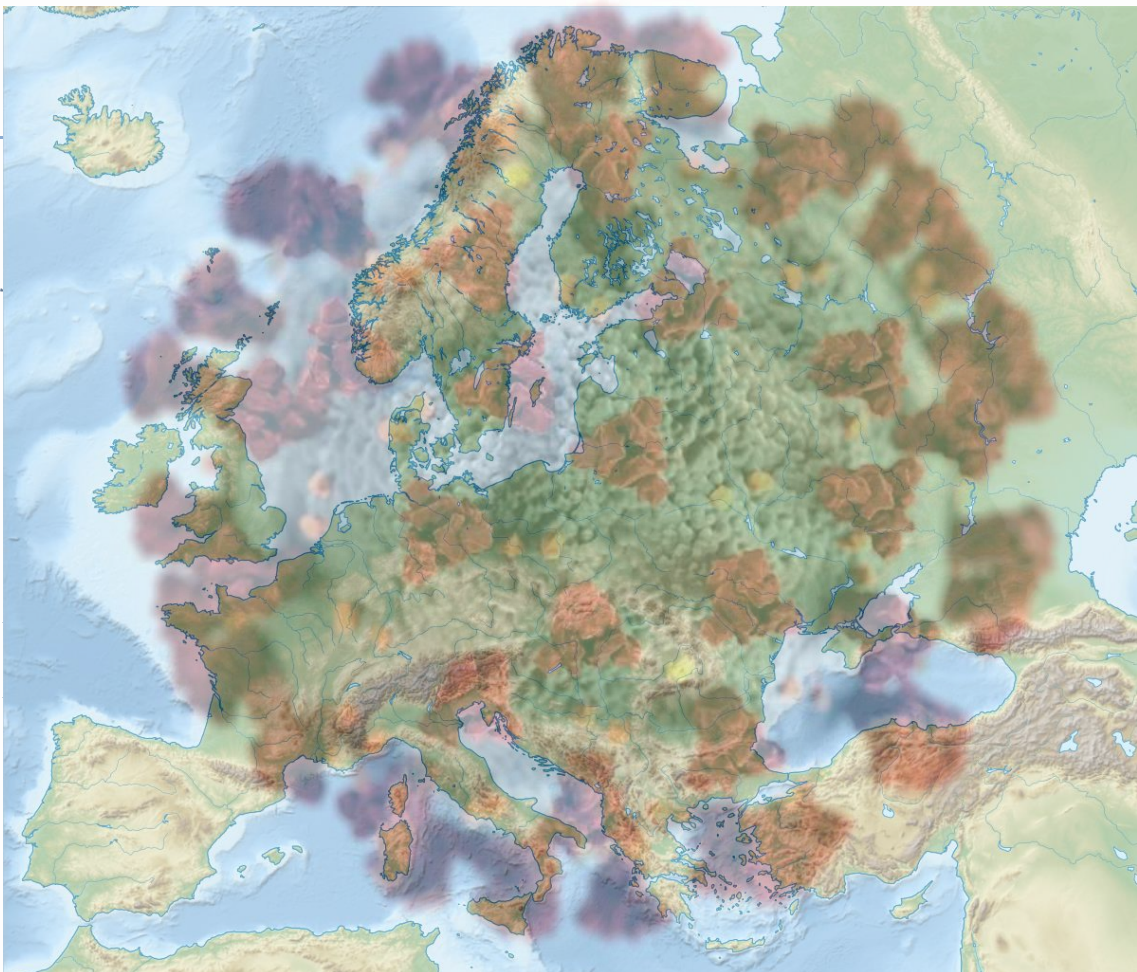




European Chapter of the
Society for Ecological Restoration
Annual Report 2020



FOREWORD

2020 was not a normal year, for anyone. Thus, let me start with a message of support to all the Ecological Restoration community across Europe, as well as your families. SERE shares the grief with those of you hit close by Covid-19.

The virus obliged SERE and the University of Alicante to postpone our 2020 Conference now positively planned on-line next September 2021.

In 2020, SERE struggled to keep its activity, as the following pages will show you. But we planted a seed at the end of the year by opening the position of SERE Program Manager that we hope will dynamize and help bring the Society to a more active and influential position, but this will have to be seen in our next Annual Report.

As for now, this is SERE 2020, in the year of the pandemics.

Jordi Cortina-Segarra, Chair



Cover images: Map of Europe - Wiki-Commons; Coronavirus by [CDC](#) at [Pexels](#).

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),
p/o Research Institute for Nature and Forest
Herman Teirlinckgebouw, Havenlaan 88 bus 73, 1000 Brussels, Belgium
International non-profit company N^o 849.548.764
www.ser-europe.org
info@ser-europe.org*

The SER Europe Board was renewed in 2019. There were no changes in 2020. The board consists currently of 15 members from 13 different European countries.

Executive Committee members:

- Jordi Cortina-Segarra (Chair), Universidad de Alicante, Spain
- Berit Köhler (Secretary), Norwegian Institute for Nature Research, Norway
- 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



[Board details](#)
[SERE website](#)



Other board members (at large):

- Aveliina Helm, Institute of Ecology and Earth Sciences, Estonia
- Melinda Halassy, Institute of Ecology and Botany, Hungary
- Sabine Tischew, Hochschule Anhalt, Germany
- Elise Buisson, l'Université d'Avignon, France
- Johannes Kollmann, Technische Universität München, Germany
- Klára Řehounková, University of České Budejovice, Czech Republic
- Agata Klimkowska, Eco-Recover, Netherlands/Poland
- Josu G. Alday, Universitat de Lleida, Spain
- Alice Nunes, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal
- Thorunn Petursdottir, Soil Conservation Service of Iceland
- Jonathan Mitchley, University of Reading, United Kingdom



Program Manager:

- Jordi Pietx (as of 1.11.2020)

Board meetings (all on-line) and Major agreements taken:

- **07/04/2020:** agreement to postpone the SERE 2020 conference to late summer 2021 due to COVID 19.
- **05/06/2020:** write an application for the Competitive Membership Development Grant Program under the Partnership Fund; conduct a meeting to produce a first version of a board plan (incl. content for the Grant Program proposal).
- **02/11/2020:** board agrees to offer Jordi Pietx the position Pietx as the SERE new program manager.
- **24/11/2020:** Thematic meeting – Welcome and work plan for the new SERE Program Manager, Jordi Pietx.
-

Bi-annual General Membership meeting

The next biennial General Membership meeting was planned in early September 2020 at the SERE2020 Conference in Alicante, Spain. Due to the pandemic crisis the Conference was postponed and is now planned in virtual format on September 7th -10th 2021.



[SERE 2021](#)

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. The membership structure of SER was transformed. Following the 2019 Memorandum of Understanding, SER Europe and SER International have started a first joint project on adapting WWF Spain Restoration Standards to the SER International Principles & Standards for the Practice of Ecological Restoration, with support of a Swiss foundation. Future partnerships are under discussion.

Anne Tolvanen is representative of SER Europe in the board of SER International and chaired the Chapter Relations Committee. Kris Decler is at-large board member of SER International and member of the Science and Policy Committee. Vicky Temperton, Leuphana University (Germany) is also SER Director at large, and is connected to SERE board, though not member of it.

[SER Europe Strategy 2016-2020](#)

The SERE Strategy ends its 5-year period and plans are underway for a revised Strategy starting in 2021. The current 2016-2020 Strategy is available at SERE website.



[SERE 2016-2020 Strategy](#)

ACTIVITIES

COMMUNICATION

Newsletters

SERE newsletter issue did not come to light, since our last 2019/Q1, with focus on Spain. At the end of 2020, with the contracting of a new program manager plans were underway to re-start SERE newsletter quarterly in 2021.

Twitter

Board Member Jonathan Mitchley created a Twitter account [@SER_Europe](#) in December 2016 and provided regular tweets on the latest news in ER in the EU. In November 2020 the account had 669 followers and had sent 658 tweets since it was created, when the new SERE Program Manager took over the curation task.



Publications

SER Europe (Kris Decler) collaborated in the publication of the second edition of the 'International Principles and Standards for the Practice of Ecological Restoration'. Several board members were active in the review of working drafts.



[SER Standards](#)

SERE within the European Habitats Forum open letter to EC President and Environment Commissioner on **the importance and urgency of adopting an ambitious EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy and Farm to Fork Strategy to guide the post-Covid 19 recovery process**. April 29th.



[EHF Open Letter](#)

Website

SER Europe's website continued its activity, pending a general revision and updating. News, together with general SER Europe information can be accessed at www.ser-europe.org.

Contributions and comments regarding the webpage should be sent to info@ser-europe.org.

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. Due to cyber security issues the knowledge base is currently off line, in anticipation of a lasting solution.

CONFERENCES, TRAINING AND OTHER EVENTS

Due to the exceptional framework of the Covid-19 pandemic no events, training activities or other events were conducted in 2020. By the end of the year the board started plan for a new SERE Webinar Series in 2021 on the status of restoration in single European countries.

PROJECTS

As a continuation of 2019, SERE has been part of the team producing two **new handbooks on Evidence-based Improvements in the Birds and Habitats Directives Implementation (E-BIND)** commissioned by the European Parliament. The handbooks will include a chapter on Guidance and tools for effective restoration measures for species and habitats co-authored by SERE Board Member Kris Decler (INBO, Belgium).

Internal Guidelines on SERE participation in partner research projects

*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

SERE has been involved in the following policy development processes in 2020. This is an area of increased interest as the start of the new 2030 European strategies and programs:

- ***The importance not to keep behind river and wetland health – Post Covid position statement*** (Original title in Spanish: *La importancia de no dejar atrás la salud de los ríos y los humedales, post-COVID position statement*) promoted by CIREF (Iberian Centre for the Restoration of River Ecosystems), with support of different organisations including SERE. 22 April 2020 – Earth Day.
- EHF open letter to the President, Vice-president and Environment Commissioner of the European Commission on ***The importance and urgency of adopting an ambitious EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy and Farm to Fork Strategy to guide the post-Covid 19 recovery process.*** 24 April 2020.
- ***Support letter European Parliament Forest Policy and Legislation Biodiversity 2030.*** May 2020.
- ***Restoring EUs Nature. Position paper by the European Habitats Forum. October 2020.***
- ***Protected Areas Target - The Nature Protection Commitments in the 2030 EU Biodiversity Strategy. Position paper by the European Habitats Forum. September 2020.***
- SERE feedback position paper on the ***“Protecting biodiversity: nature restoration targets under EU biodiversity strategy”*** Roadmap. December 2nd.



[Position paper](#)

AFFILIATE/SISTER ORGANISATIONS

SERE affiliated organizations are networks at national and regional level in Europe who coordinate action and convey SERE membership in the country. There is no formal relationship between the affiliates and SERE, only a Memorandum of Understanding.

In such way, SER Europe hopes to contribute to a more effective restoration community outreach and interaction across (1) possible language barriers between practitioners, policy people and scientists, (2) differences between national restoration policy cultures and socio-economic conditions and (3) multiple knowledge disciplines and topics in the theory and practice of ecological restoration.



What follows is a short report on the activity of these affiliated organizations during 2020.

Spanish Association of Terrestrial Ecology / Asociación Española de Ecología Terrestre



The Spanish Ecological Restoration Network's aim during 2020 was i) to dynamize the network despite the pandemic and ii) organize future meetings in ecological conferences in Spain.

i) For the first task, Jordi Cortina-Segarra (SERE Chair), Carolina Martínez-Ruiz (University of Valladolid, main coordinator of the restoration WG of AEET), and I, have been meeting quarterly to discuss actions and ideas to share within the Spanish restoration network. Based on these meetings the main achievements were:

- We created a distribution list with more than 150 registered members (scientists, private practitioners, and public managers) that works perfectly. Over 2020 there was frequent exchange of information with a mean of 24 emails per month. Exchanges mainly focused on sharing recently published papers and information about conferences, talks, and seminars related to ecological restoration.
- We also created a webpage and a blog to provide a place for sharing restoration projects' outcomes (positive and negative). However, site activation and blogging are still under way.
- We prepared a presentation entitled "From what to where: the Spanish ecological restoration network" scheduled at the Spanish restoration network meeting planned within the SERE 2021 conference. It is planned to get feedback from WG members concerning priorities and needs for Restoration Ecology in Spain.

ii) Tasks related to the conference that we developed during 2020 were:

- We planned the "V Meeting of the AEET Working Group on Ecological Restoration" as a symposium within SERE 2021 conference.
- AEET provide funding for 5 registration grants for AEET-member students to participate in SERE 2021.
- We organized a special session entitled "Restoration in Spain within the framework of the UN 2021-2030. How can Spain contribute to the objectives of the strategy?", within the XV Congreso Nacional de la AEET, 2021 "The value of Nature for a Global Society" that will be held in Plasencia (Spain) in October 2021.

All these events will give us feedback from the Spanish restoration community to identify/detect the main priorities/needs/problems in the Spanish restoration community. All this information will help driving the Spanish restoration network strategy during the next years.

Finnish Board on Ecological Restoration - FBER



1. Board and membership, who you are and how many. Who represents your organization at SERE Board.

- The Finnish Board on Ecological Restoration FBER has two Chairs from two organizations: Kaija Eisto from Metsähallitus, Saija Kuusela from the Finnish Environment Institute
- There are twelve Members in the FBER from the following organizations:
 - Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of the Agriculture and Forestry, Tapio Forest consultancy, Finnish Environment Institute, Metsähallitus, Natural Resources Institute Finland, University of Jyväskylä, and the Finnish Forest Centre
- Three expert groups work under FBER: forest restoration, peatland restoration and semi-natural grasslands expert groups. Each of these groups involve 15-20 members. Hence the total volume of FBER and its expert groups is approximately 60 members.
- SERE representative: Anne Tolvanen from the Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke)

2. Communication activities (website, social networks, media appearances, etc.)

- Website for the Finnish Board on Ecological Restoration
FBER <https://www.metsa.fi/en/nature-and-heritage/habitats/finnish-board-on-ecological-restoration-fber/>



3. Events and activities

- Board meets 4-5 times a year.
- Expert groups meet 2-6 times a year depending on the group.

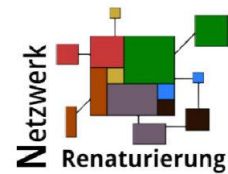
4. Projects

- There were no specific projects in FBER.

5. Policy actions

- FBER expert groups participated in setting restoration targets for the national Helmi habitats program. The Helmi program focuses on protecting and restoring mires, restoring aquatic bird habitats, wetlands and coastal areas, managing semi-natural grasslands, restoring forest habitats, such as herb-rich forests and sun-exposed esker forests and managing and restoring coastal and aquatic environments, such as sandy beaches.

Restoration network (Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Luxembourg) - "Netzwerk Renaturierung"



The German Renaturation Network (GRN) is going strong, but due to the Corona pandemic its activities were reduced in the past year. An already fully organized two-day meeting at Anhalt University of Applied Sciences had to be cancelled at short notice. However, the members of the network informed each other about online meetings by mail, partly these announcement were also posted at the GRN website, and the network is also used as basis for joint publications and grant proposals. Despite the special situation, the number of members of the network continues to grow, and now amounts to 182 enthusiastic practitioners and scientists, and of course, we are planning new events for 2021.



[GRN website](#)

French Network for Exchange and Valorisation in Restoration Ecology / Réseau d'Échanges et de Valorisation en Ecologie de la Restauration



REVER had to cancel its 2020 annual 2 to 3-day workshop in the Alps due to the pandemic (now programmed from June, 29th to July 1st 2021 - link).



[REVER'11](#)

However, it was able to organize a national summer school (initially planned to be international) in Brest from August 24th to 27th. This summer school brought together twenty participants around the methodological issues of restoration monitoring considering both vegetation and fauna (arthropods). The data collected should allow producing some advice on monitoring procedures (e.g. quadrat size) in the near future.

Through the French Ecological Engineering Stakeholder Network, REVER also actively participated to the judging panel of the National Ecological Engineering Award which rewards exemplary projects notably in the field of ecological restoration and invasive species management.

While some activities slowed down, the board of REVER tried to renew its functioning to provide better service to its members: more regular shorter online board meetings, a new easy-to-manage mailing list, an improved website making its update easier. The board also keeps working on a synthesis of ecological restoration in France.

Portugues Ecological Restoration Network / Sociedade Portuguesa de Ecologia



The Portuguese Ecological Restoration Network (ResECO), a working group of SPECO – Sociedade Portuguesa de Ecologia, is coordinated by Alice Nunes (also representing the organization at the SERE Board) and Patricia Rodríguez-González. Currently, ResECO has about 260 registered members (professionals and entities), representing the restoration of forests and agro-forests, quarries and mines, areas affected by the construction of infrastructure (e.g. roads), urban areas, rivers and wetlands, coastal areas including dune systems, marine ecosystems (e.g. marine grasslands) and island ecosystems, including more specific themes such as the recovery of burnt areas or the control and eradication of invasive species; and continues to grow.

During the year 2020, and despite the circumstances, several activities were carried out within the scope of the network, namely:

- i. the continuous updating of the registration and mailing list of members;
- ii. regular dissemination to the members about national and international initiatives and events related to ecosystem restoration, communicated by members, from SER or from other sources;
- iii. ongoing preparation of a short note to submit to *Restoration Ecology* journal on “*Connecting ecosystem restoration in Portugal: launch of the Portuguese Ecological Restoration Network*”, co-authored by ResECO coordinators;
- iv. revision of the translation to Portuguese made by Brazilian colleagues of the SER “*International Principles and Standards for the Practice of Ecological Restoration, 2nd edition*”; and
- v. several communication activities about ResECO, listed below:
 - Interview about the network for the national radio Antena 1, at 28th February 2020; Antena 1 - Ponto de Partida 126 - Consertar a Degradação da Terra (in portuguese): <https://www.rtp.pt/play/p2063/e458902/ponto-de-partida>



- Nunes A., P. Rodríguez-González (2020) Connecting Ecological Restoration in Portugal: prospects for the Portuguese restoration network. Oral presentation at the Final Conference LIFE Biodiscoveries Project, 23-24 September, online.
- Nunes A. (2020). Participation in online debate on the “Decade of Ecological Restoration”. Organized by LPN – Liga para a Protecção da Natureza, within the 15th edition of the Social Responsibility Week, promoted by APEE - Portuguese Association of Business Ethics, and GCNP - Global Compact Network Portugal. November 18, 2020.
- Nunes A. and P. Rodríguez-González (2021). Oral omunication in the Webinar “Recuperação de Ecossistemas – de que se trata, qual a relevância e urgência”, organized by Associação Bandeira azul da Europa (ABAE), 17th March 2021, online.
- Updating of the contents ResECO’s page at SPEC0's website:
<https://www.speco.pt/pt/plataformas/reseco>
- Dissemination of ResECO for the scientific community and students, e.g. in Global Changes and Sustainability discipline within the MsC degree program in Biotechnology for Sustainability, at ITQB - Instituto de Tecnologia Química e Biológica António Xavier, Universidade Nova de Lisboa; Plant Ecology discipline within the Biology degree course at Faculdade de Ciências da Universidade de Lisboa, etc.



MEMBERSHIP

At the end of 2020 SERE had 225 members, a 12%△ compared to 201 in 2019.

FINANCIAL REPORT

SAVINGS ACCOUNT

	Amount
Total income 2020	€ 31.001,13
Total expenses 2020	€ -20,00
BALANCE ON 31/12/2020	€ 30.981,13

CURRENT ACCOUNT

	Amount
Total income 2020	€ 4.195,80
Total expenses 2020	€ -1.074,74
BALANCE AS OF 31/12/2020	€ 3.121,06

SERE current bank and savings accounts are located at the socio-environmentally friendly TRIODOS bank. The maintenance of both accounts is free of charge.



***SER Europe thanks all the members
and other donors who contributed to the Society in 2020.***

***Join SER and Europe Chapter
to support our efforts to advance ecological restoration.***

info@ser-europe.org · www.ser-europe.org

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**RESEARCH INSTITUTE
NATURE AND FOREST**

April 2021



**UNITED NATIONS DECADE ON
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RESTORATION
2021-2030**