

General Assembly of the German National Committee (DNK) of the IUBS

Venue: Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS)

Time: Wednesday, April 8th 2009, 11:15 - 15:30

Agenda and participants: see attached lists

Handouts: documents about the University of Freiburg and FRIAS

TOP 1

Welcome by the Head Administrator of FRIAS, Dr. Carsten Dose, presenting information on FRIAS and some historical aspects of its implementation and goals.

TOP 2

Welcome by Prof. Dr. Ralf Reski, President of the DNK, especially to the former and the new Executive Directors of IUBS, Dr. Talal Younès and Dr. Nathalie Fomproix. Short introduction on the new structure of the DNK with its 42 member societies, explanation of the new DNK homepage with links to the international bodies IUBS, IUMS, ICSU, UNESCO and to the national member societies, several of which have already provided their dossiers with their own homepages.

Those who have not yet submitted a dossier are kindly asked to do so at their earliest convenience.

TOP 3

Introduction to IUBS (objectives, organisation, and activities) by former Executive Director Dr. Younès, who served IUBS for 30 years.

- IUBS, a NGO was founded in 1919, the same year as ICSU, the umbrella of the Unions.
- IUMS separated from IUBS in 1980.
- IUBS has 84 Scientific Members and 44 Ordinary Members represented by countries (National Academies, research funding organizations as in Germany, other Biological NGO's and institutes). Some are financially supported by their governments, however with respect to their affiliation with IUBS and the implementation of programs, they are independent NGOs. Ordinary Members pay annual dues, this being the major source of income of IUBS. Scientific Members do not pay but receive financial support from IUBS.
- Overview of the development of IUBS in accordance with the evolution of biological disciplines.
- IUBS as a think-tank for programs which, if successful, can make it to autonomous organizations, e.g. DIVERSITAS, which started off as an IUBS program "The Decade of the Tropics" in 1984. Another important program is "Integrative Biology" which started in the IUBS GA in Taipei in 1997 leading the way to "Science for Health and Wellbeing", an inter-union program chaired by IUBS. It found continuation in the ICSU-Program "Ecosystem Change and Human Well-being" which was implemented in December 2008. IUBS supports its programs not through research funds but by granting seed money for workshops, conferences and international meetings.
- How to create a program? Identify key topics, ask questions leading to hypotheses, establish an initiation group, present the proposal to the IUBS-GA, get it approved.

- The Darwin Year activities of IUBS: Seven conferences and 2 associated meetings in New Zealand, China, Japan, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Venice, and Cape Town, the latter together with the IUBS GA in October; affiliated IUBS-sponsored conferences in Germany and India. Contributions/contributors for the Cape Town meeting "Human dimensions of Evolution" are still being sought (Gesellschaft für Anthropologie!).
- Encouragement of Germany to participate more in the scientific discussion going on in IUBS (joining steering committees of IUBS Programs, proposing new programs).
IUBS and its members do not have direct political influence, e.g. on the attitude of a country towards evolution and creationism. However, e.g. the program "BioEd" Biological Education continues training teachers and thus influences the spreading of arguments for evolution in its member countries. Dr. Younes mentions an article in PNAS (2009): D. Kapogiannis, A.K. Barbey, M. Su, G. Zamboni, F. Krueger, J. Grafman: *Cognitive and neural foundations of religious belief*. Vol. 106 (12): 4876-4881.
- In this context Prof. Reski announces the First Interdisciplinary FRIAS Symposium "Evolution" which will take place at the University of Freiburg 16th/17th July 2009. Participants are highly welcome.

TOP 4

Dr. Nathalie Fomproix introduced herself as the new Executive Director of IUBS, who started by March 2nd 2009. She is a trained molecular biologist with a PhD from the University of Paris V. As a postdoc she worked for 5 years at the Karolinska Institutet of Stockholm. In 2006 she was appointed project manager for the Chemistry Cluster of Research of the Rhône-Alpes Region in Lyon.

TOP 5

Activities/conferences of the societies during the Darwin Year - special activities/ events with regard to Darwin 200/150

- Gesellschaft für Biologische Systematik: Tree of Life and special phylogenetic guided tours in the Botanical Garden of Berlin-Dahlem.
- VBIO: Deutscher Biologentag in Berlin (November 2009) with a Darwin meeting.
- VAAM: Special section in Annual Meeting 2009.
- Deutsche Zoologische Gesellschaft: International Annual Meeting in Munich with several contributions to phylogeny and evolution (cosponsored by IUBS).
- Gesellschaft für Anthropologie: Annual meeting in September 2009 with one topic being evolution.

Other societies have their annual meetings which are announced on their homepages, but from the societies' point of view a special contribution to the Darwin Year has not been made.

The International Congress of Systematic and Evolutionary Biology (ICSEB) that was planned for 2007 in Mexico has been postponed to July 2009 and will take place in Veracruz (Mexico).

TOP 6

Activities of VBIO (German Life Science Organisation)

Prof. Reinhard Krämer presents the recent history of VBIO, a unification of two big associations, the VDBiol with 5300 individual members, 63 cooperating members and 32 institutional members (scientific members, societies) and the VBBM, an association of the biological and biomedical societies. He gives credit to the untiring endeavours of Prof. Rudi Balling, the chairman of the Deutsche Genetische Gesellschaft, who was the driving force for the unification. Prof. Krämer, as chairman of the scientific societies in the VBIO is a member of the Steering Committee of VBIO and Prof. Reski is a member of the Advisory Board. VBIO has established several working groups e.g. on freedom of (teaching) science at universities, teacher-training in modern biology and others. For historical reasons VBIO has 2 offices, in Munich and in Berlin. The Munich office deals with the Federal Ministry for Research and Education program "Transitions" which has been implemented due to the notion that there is no current market for a BSc in Biology, as the first generation of students has finished its studies but potential employers are not aware of their skills.

Another recent activity of VBIO is consulting politicians, especially in the "super-election-year 2009" with three elections being held in Germany. In that respect it is greatly appreciated that biologists now have a scientifically based (hopefully) unanimous voice in politics and public consulting.

Finally the membership question was discussed: In principle all German biological, biology-related and biomedical societies have become members of the DNK. However, not all of these societies are also members of the VBIO. This is (partly) due to the fact that membership in the DNK is free, whereas membership in the VBIO costs 2 € per active member of a society. Those societies which have not yet joined the VBIO are encouraged to join this important association.

TOP 7

Planning upcoming DNK activities

Prof. Korsching reports of activities to solve the copyright problem of many journals with respect to putting scientists' publications as PDF files on their homepages. There is an initiative termed "Aktionsbündnis Göttinger Erklärung" to negotiate with the publishing companies about a waiver of the copyright for articles on the authors' homepages. Every scientific society is encouraged to sign the Göttinger Erklärung.

With respect to biodiversity research and conservation in Germany an initiative "Network and Forum" (Netzwerk und Forum) has recently been implemented which is sponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Research and Education. DIVERSITAS Germany should have the lead in that initiative. At the kick-off meeting in Berlin on 29th/30th April one of the workshops is dedicated to the "scientific societies". The Gesellschaft für Biologische Systematik was the only one of the participants to receive an invitation. Several of the societies concerned have not yet been invited and the goals of the workshop are not quite clear. VBIO will participate and in the meantime perhaps more of the related societies may get an invitation. DFG has been addressed, but without the assignment of a special task.

Dr. Roswitha Schönwitz plans to participate.

PreCOP 10 in Nagoya, Japan. The next conference of the parties to the CBD will take place in Nagoya in October 2010. In the preceding conferences IUBS co-sponsored a "PreCOP" symposium to allocate science a voice in the COP negotiations. The last PreCOP9 was initiated by the DNK. The outcome of the PreCOP has been put in the form of recommendations which could make it into the official documents of the COP. The documents have also been published on the IUBS homepage. In addition to that reports and manuscripts have been submitted to IUBS for publication in "Biology International online". The issue is still pending. A similar PreCOP should be initiated for Nagoya next year. The title and scope of the conference has to be identified by our Japanese colleagues. From the IUBS side "Microbial Diversity" would be a worthwhile issue.

TOP 8

DFG and international activities

Dr. Schönwitz reports on various German Research Foundation (DFG) programs and explains on request of the participants the evaluation procedure for grant applications. The system adopted 6 years ago consists of international reviews (usually 2), statements of a discipline-specific review board (Fachkollegium) and the final decision by the Joint Committee (Hauptausschuss).

The question of affiliation of the International Unions and ICSU with the DFG was raised. Exploratory meetings with the recently founded German Academy of Science (Leopoldina) took place, but the issue is still under discussion. DNK and IUBS do not see a reason to change the approved system.

TOP 9

Preparations for the IUBS GA in Cape Town 10th-12th October 2009.

Dr. Younès explains the rules and points of view for the election of IUBS representatives and programs. Each ordinary member may be represented by one person - if elected - either in the Executive Committee or in the Board of officers. Request for nominations has been sent to all members and a nominations committee will prepare a slate of candidates for election by the GA. Nominations can be made by the ordinary members (DNK and DFG), by the officers and EC-members.

Prof. Beck, the current Treasurer of IUBS proposes to nominate Prof. Reski for the Executive Committee. This suggestion is supported unanimously by the assembly.

Prof. Beck will take action accordingly.

In addition a deeper involvement in IUBS issues can be achieved through the Scientific Programs of IUBS, which are lead by a Steering Committee. Appointment as a member of a steering committee is made by the chairperson of the committee.

Apart from a scientifically important aim and novelty a proposal for a new program requires justification for the international cooperation of biologists (and other scientists).

Contributions for the scientific part of the GA "Human Dimensions of Evolution" are highly appreciated.

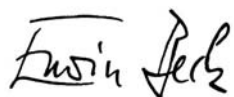
Prof. McGlynn (Gesellschaft für Anthropologie) is interested in preparing a proposal.

TOP 10

Miscellaneous

Participants thank Prof. Reski, his secretary for the preparation of the fruitful meeting and FRIAS for hosting it.

Freiburg i. Br., April 30th 2009

Handwritten signature of Erwin Beck in black ink.

Erwin Beck
DNK Secretary
IUBS Treasurer

Handwritten signature of Ralf Reski in black ink.

Ralf Reski
President of the DNK

DNK General Meeting on Wednesday 8th April 2009

List of Participants

Nr.	Society	Name
1	DNK President	Ralf Reski
2	DNK Secretary, former DNK President	Erwin Beck
3	DNK Vice-President / Spokesperson VBIO / Representative Gesellschaft für Biochemie und Molekularbiologie	Reinhard Krämer
4	Executive Director IUBS	Nathalie Fomproix
5	Former Executive Director IUBS	Talal Younès
6	DFG	Roswitha Schönwitz
7	Deutsche Botanische Gesellschaft	Ulf-Ingo Flügge
8	Deutsche Gesellschaft für allgemeine und angewandte Entomologie	Jürgen Gross
9	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Mykologie e.V.	Ewald Langer
10	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Protozoologie e. V.	Klaus Hausmann
11	Deutsche Zoologische Gesellschaft e.V.	Barbara Hellriegel
12	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Proteomforschung e.V.	Friedrich Lottspeich
13	Fachgemeinschaft Biotechnologie der DECHEMA e.V.	Dieter Sell
14	Fachsektion Didaktik der Biologie im VBIO	Ute Harms
15	Gesellschaft für Anthropologie e.V.	George McGlynn
16	Gesellschaft für Biologische Systematik	Regine Jahn
17	Gesellschaft für Tropenökologie e.V.	Karl Eduard Linsenmair
18	Gesellschaft für Virologie e.V.	Nikolaus Müller-Lantzsch
19	Neurowissenschaftliche Gesellschaft e.V.	Sigrun Korsching