

## Opening address

by J.L. VAN GOETHEM

Dear President,  
Director,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the organizing committee, especially on behalf of co-chairman Patrick GROOTAERT, I have the honour to welcome you to the 8th European Invertebrate Survey colloquium.

The E.I.S. started 22 years ago. Biannual meetings and a newsletter ensured fruitful contacts between the committee members. In the past couple of years a colloquium or symposium was held together with these meetings. May I remind you of Gembloux 1985, Paris 1987 and Strasbourg 1989. This combination provides potential participants with more opportunities to obtain funding to join E.I.S. meetings. Moreover these colloquia are in my mind the best way to promote E.I.S. projects and to arouse interest and participation in them.

A new political Europe is growing. Political borders will hardly exist anymore. this could make our work easier and more complete. Some 200,000 invertebrate species in Europe are essential components of numerous and complex ecological processes. What do we know about their distribution? Are they declining, vulnerable, or are they almost extinct? Where are the identification keys for European invertebrates?

There is still so much work to do but there are so few of us. Therefore I think the most important actions must be to focus on fund raising, especially from the European authorities. In every European country, there should be a Central E.I.S. Bureau with adequate possibilities.

I had the pleasure last week to receive a letter from our Honorary President, Professor emeritus Jean LECLERCQ.

He wrote:

" Messieurs les Présidents,

" Messieurs et Mesdames participants au Colloque,

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" C'est avec joie et fierté que j'observe la prospérité du projet européen que j'eus  
" l'audace de concevoir et de proposer, avec mon ami regretté John HEATH, en  
" 1969, projet auquel j'ai consacré tout ce que j'ai pu jusqu'au terme de ma  
" responsabilité de président, en 1985.

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" Le programme du colloque actuel est impressionnant et témoigne de la maturité  
" des soucis et des efforts dans ce qui est notre part dans la biogéographie appliquée  
" moderne. Je vous en félicite et souhaite que le colloque soit une réussite agréable à  
" tous points de vue.

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" Amitiés à vous tous. Bon travail !

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Before I can wish you the same, I would like to thank **Dr. Daniel CAHEN**, Director of the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, for giving us hospitality at the Institute and for financial support. Further financial support was given by the **National Fund for Scientific Research** and by the **Ministry of Internal Affairs**. **Geocart** and the **Abbey of Affligem** are offering a get together drink this evening.

Finally I owe a debt of sincere gratitude to the co-chairman **Patrick GROOTAERT**, to the members of the organizing committee and to the numerous persons who will ensure technical, secretarial and logistic help during these two days.

I have the honour to declare herewith the colloquium open.