

Nematology News

Ready for ICN 2022

1 to 6 MAY 2022 - CONFERENCE CENTRE OF ANTIBES JUAN-LES-PINS - FRANCE



"Crossing borders: a world of nematode diversity and impact to discover"



The congress organization is nearly fully finalized!

594 paid registrants for the ICN and 163 participants at distance (757 in total)

Scientific program is under revision and should be online on April 6

The organizing committee is currently working on the choice of a mobile app that will be proposed during the congress (most probably Eventool) and on an e-poster session that will occur the week before the congress.

This e-poster session will be the occasion to see and discuss on posters presented on line by registered participants who will not attend in person the congress. There will be two slots available so that anyone, regardless of where they work, can join this e-poster session. More informations will be sent by IFNS in April.

Pandemic restrictions: the required use of the vaccine pass (Passe Sanitaire) at restaurants, bars, and public meetings/ events was suspended on March 14. Mask requirements are still also suspended except when using public transportation, in airports or transportation centers, or at the discretion of certain businesses.

Note that the regulations to enter France and pandemic restrictions may still change in response to changing pandemic conditions, so check the status regularly on the ICN 2022 website:

« COVID-19 measures - <https://www.alphavisa.com/icn/2020/covid19-measures.php> »

Bienvenue in France ! We hope to see you all soon !

Dr. Pierre Abad & Dr. Eric Grenier

From the president

Dear colleagues, friends and all ESN members,

My time as member of the ESN board and president is coming to an end. It was a longer period than planned due to the pandemic. I would like to take the opportunity and thank all members who have supported the work of the ESN board during my presidency since 2014. My special thank to Philippe Castagnone who is leaving the board as well. I am very grateful as well to Catherine Lilley, who agreed to stand for the presidency. For those of you who do not yet know her, please find a short paragraph on her scientific career in the newsletter.

I am also happy that we have two candidates to join the board. The board agreed that we want to go back to the tradition to have a representative from North America on board again after James Baldwin left us and Shahid Siddiqui a candidate fulfilling this condition. Shahid worked at Bonn University, Germany for many years and has now moved to UC Davis in California. The second candidate is Wim Bert, who is head of the Nematology Research Unit and Promoter for the International Master of Science in Agro- and Environmental Nematology at Ghent University. He has for many years supported the ESN by managing the webpage. I think we have two superb scientists to succeed us on the ESN board and I propose to the ESN membership to elect the candidates to join the board.

Our next meeting in conjunction with the other Nematology Societies, the 7th International Congress of Nematology is soon going to start, and I am looking forward to meeting many of you again in person. Thanks also to the IFNs officers for organizing the programme and to the team at Pierre Abad, chair of the ICN. The organisation of the conference under these conditions was a major job and I admire your power to continue the planning in confidence that we will finally meet.

Fundamental principle of science is international and peaceful exchange and cooperation. I cannot do without commenting on the horrifying aggression by Putin's military in the Ukraine. The following statement of Russian scientists published on-line when the war started and now removed by censorship is reflecting the solidarity with the Ukrainians by the scientific community.

We, Russian scientists and scientific journalists, strongly protest against the hostilities launched by the armed forces of our country on the territory of Ukraine. This fatal step leads to huge losses of human life and undermines the foundations of the established system of international security. The responsibility for unleashing a new war in Europe lies entirely with Russia.

There is no rational justification for this war. Attempts to use the situation in Donbass as a pretext for launching a military operation are not credible. It is clear that Ukraine does not pose a threat to the security of our country. The war against it is unfair and, frankly, senseless.

Ukraine has been, and remains, a country close to us. Many of us have relatives, friends and colleagues living in Ukraine. Our fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers fought together against Nazism. Unleashing a war for the sake of the geopolitical ambitions of the leadership of the Russian Federation, driven by dubious historiosophical fantasies, is a cynical betrayal of their memory.

From the president

We respect Ukrainian statehood, which is based on really working democratic institutions. We treat the European choice of our neighbours with understanding. We are convinced that all problems in relations between our countries can be resolved peacefully.

Having unleashed the war, Russia has condemned itself to international isolation, to the position of a pariah country. This means that we scientists will no longer be able to do our work properly: scientific research is inconceivable without full cooperation with colleagues from other countries. The isolation of Russia from the world means a further cultural and technological degradation of our country, in the complete absence of positive prospects. War with Ukraine is a step to nowhere.

We are bitterly aware that our country, which made a decisive contribution to the victory over Nazism, has now become the instigator of a new war on the European continent. We demand an immediate halt to all military operations directed against Ukraine. We demand respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Ukrainian state. We demand peace for our countries.

<https://www.eureporter.co/world/russia/2022/02/24/an-open-letter-from-russian-scientists-and-science-journalists-against-the-war-with-ukraine/>

I wish to see you in good health at the ICN in Antibes in May 2022.

Ralf-Udo Ehlers

ESN Board Elections

Dear ESN member,

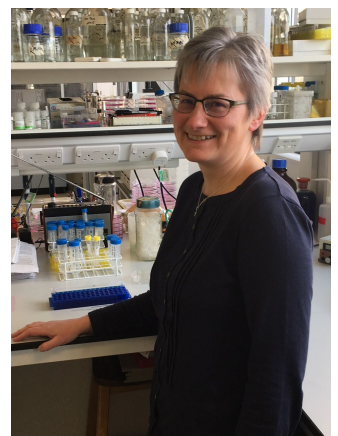
ESN constitution foresees the election of new members of the governing board during the General Assembly at ICN 2022. The ESN board will mark a change as both ESN president, Ralf-Udo Ehlers, and board member Phillipe Castogne, come to the end of their mandate. Ralf and Phillipe can not be thanked enough for their enormous work and substantial support of the ESN.

We would like to present, Catherine Lilley, who agreed to stand for the presidency, and Shahid Siddiqui and Wim Bert, as candidates for the ESN board.

Dr. Catherine J. Lilley

After graduating with a degree in Botany I completed a PhD at the University of Durham in 1991, investigating how inducible gene expression in *Agrobacterium* could be harnessed to deliver plant protection in the rhizosphere. A postdoctoral position working on regulation of seed storage proteins in oilseed rape was followed in 1994 by a move to the University of Leeds, where I joined the group of Howard Atkinson and began my long association with Plant Nematology. I still work within the Plant Nematology Group, now led by Peter Urwin. During my time at Leeds I have been involved in a wide range of research projects with many collaborators and have witnessed the huge progress that has been made in the understanding of plant-nematode interactions and nematode genomics.

From my earliest work to characterise proteinase genes of soybean cyst nematode through to the more recent genome sequencing projects for potato cyst nematode, I have always had a keen interest in the molecular aspects of the research. However, the beauty of the job is its varied nature that has taken me from field trials of GM potatoes in the UK to nematode problems of bananas on smallholder farms in Uganda to working with agribusiness in China. My current lab interests include identifying new resistance genes for *G. pallida* and investigating the function of novel effectors of cyst nematodes. One of the most rewarding and enjoyable parts of my job has been the opportunity to support and encourage many undergraduate and particularly postgraduate students over the years and introduce them to nematology. Student participation at ESN meetings is of enormous benefit both for the students themselves and the wider nematology community and over the coming years we hope to foster a greater involvement of students and early career researchers within ESN.



Dr. Catherine J. Lilley

ESN Board Elections

Prof. Dr. Wim Bert



My interest in nematodes was triggered by my master's thesis in biology, which I completed at Ghent University in 1995. I then went on in the same year to study a Master of Science degree in Nematology at Ghent University, whilst at the same time beginning a Master of Environmental Sciences degree at the University of Antwerp. My professional career began in 1996 with a position at the Department of Biology (Ghent University) as a research and education assistant. I was awarded my PhD in 2003 for my research, which focused on the morphology and taxonomy of plant-parasitic nematodes. During my post-doctoral studies at Ghent University, I was able to further develop my “classical” research on taxonomy and morphology in combination with molecular phylogeny. At present I hold a position as an associated professor, being the head of the Nematology Research Unit, Department of Biology, at Ghent University. Our current work centres on taxonomy, phylogeny, morphology, and biology of nematodes from natural and agricultural ecosystems. With a wide scope of interests ranging from nematode phylogeny to species delineation, we integrate a tradition of light-microscopy and ultrastructural morphology with molecular approaches. One of my key objectives is to provide global access to nematode biodiversity, with a focus on plant-parasitic nematodes and the development of fast and efficient identification techniques, with detection being the first step towards a solution to the problems associated with nematode pests.

I also have a strong interest in nematode education and capacity building. I lecture and co-lecture for eight nematode-related courses; I hold the position of Promoter for the International Master of Science in Agro- and Environmental Nematology (<https://imanema.ugent.be>); I chair the Educational Board in MSc Nematology; I am also promoter for the Erasmus+ capacity building project for Nematology Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (<https://nemedussa.ugent.be/>); and supervisor of a group of talented and promising PhD and master students.

For both research and education, the ESN is crucial to forming meaningful connections between everyone involved, from young students to well-established scientists. I especially enjoy helping young scientists to develop fully and express themselves while providing support, advice and cooperation, values that are embodied by the ESN. I currently enjoy the responsibility for the ESN website and Facebook page and am hopeful that I will also enjoy an appointment to join the ESN board. See you all in Antibes. We will travel to Antibes by bus (in the framework of Ghent University sustainable travel policy) together with 37 Ghent nematologists (including many master students). For those who live in the region, we still have several places left and you are welcome to join us in this exciting adventure. Feel free to contact me if I can be of assistance.

ESN Board Elections

Dr. Shahid Siddique

My career is built on diverse international experiences, which have not only shaped my understanding of diversity but have also prepared me to get involved with activities that enhance organizational diversity and equality. I did my PhD in Grundler's Lab at BOKU (Vienna), where I investigated relevance of plant cell wall modifications in facilitating cyst nematode infection. Afterwards, I moved to Germany and worked at the University of Bonn as a research group leader, focusing on biology of plant-nematode interaction. After ten years of research work in Germany, I moved to USA in 2019 and joined UC Davis (Department of Entomology & Nematology) as an Assistant Professor and Plant Nematologist. My research at UC Davis focuses on elucidating interactions between root-knot nematodes and their hosts using molecular and applied methodologies. I am also teaching an undergraduate and a graduate level nematology course at UC Davis. I have been the member of ESN since 2007 and I have regularly attended annual meetings and contributed to various activities of the society. For example, I contributed to the organization of 2010 ESN meeting held at BOKU in Vienna. I am also recipient of a cost action grant (European Cooperation in Science and Technology; COST 872) that helped me improve my nematology skills. ESN activities has a major impact on my career, and It will be an honor to join and serve ESN governing board. I am confident that with my diverse background and life history, I can bring new and different perspective to the table.



Dr. Shahid Siddique

Advances in Nematology Meeting, Dec. 2021

The annual Association of Applied Biologists (AAB) Advances in Nematology meeting took place on December 14th 2021 and for the first time since 2018 made a return to its traditional home at the Linnean Society of London. It was good to be back at this historical venue under the watchful eyes of Charles Darwin et al., although a resurgence of COVID19 just days before the meeting, in the guise of the Omicron variant, meant that only 10 people were able to make it there in person. Fortunately we had already decided to make it a hybrid meeting, given the success of the previous year when a fully virtual meeting had been a necessity and had led to increased attendance and the benefits of global representation.

Advances in Nematology Meeting, Dec.2021



Left: Socially distanced attendees.

Right: Olaf Kranse presenting



With 119 attendees and many offers of platform and poster presentations there was a packed schedule. As many talks as possible were fitted in, both in-person and virtual, as always making sure that student and early career scientists were well represented (9 of the 11 offered talks), whilst aiming to cover the diversity of nematode research and a broad range of topics. There were also 30 offered posters – certainly the greatest number for many years.

We had two invited speakers: Sebastian Eves-Van Den Akker (University of Cambridge) gave a great talk about using genomics and transcriptomics to understand host-nematode interactions and uncover how the nematode exploits its host to obtain vitamin B5; Solveig Haukeland (ICIPE) joined us virtually from Kenya to talk about potato cyst nematodes in East Africa, a first for many of our delegates and a most welcome addition to the meeting. This theme was continued by John Jones (James Hutton Institute, Dundee) who discussed the development of PCN-resistant potato lines for use in Kenya. Other presentations covered plant parasitic, entomopathogenic and free-living nematodes; with a good balance between fundamental nematode science and ‘in-the-field’ application. There were two awards for student/ECR presentations: The Brian Kerry Award for the best platform presentation was a tie with the award split between James Price (James Hutton Institute, Dundee) and Olaf Kranse (University of Cambridge). James brought us up-to-date with his work on an egg-shell annexin of potato cyst nematode and its role in hatching, whilst Olaf demonstrated clever technology for high-throughput phenotyping of the *H. schachtii*/Arabidopsis interaction using a 3D-printed, plate-stacking robot, automated image capture and a machine-learning approach to count and measure nematodes. Thanks go to CABI and AAB for the book prizes for the Brian Kerry Award. The Poster Prize went to a nice piece of work from David Pires (University of Évora, Portugal) who is investigating the use of nematophagous fungi for the biocontrol of pine wilt nematode. Thanks to all attendees and contributors for making the meeting a success. We very much hope that more people can be present in-person at the Linnean Society for this year’s event on Thursday 8th December, 2022 - keep the date in your diaries. Building upon the success of the last 2 years (and learning all the time about what works best in this ‘new virtual world’!) the meeting will once again be hybrid, allowing for the greatest engagement and representation.

AAB Nematology Group Nematology Group

UGent Nematology Alumni network

On 29 October 2021, the International MSc in Agro- and Environmental Nematology (IMaNema) at Ghent University held its first online Alumni Event, bringing together the alumni and staff of both the master programme (PINC, EUMAINE, IMaNema) as well as its satellite programmes in Kenya and Ethiopia, running since 2018. The event was held as a networking opportunity for UGent-trained nematologists who have spread across the world, and allowed them to reconnect with their cohorts and meet like-minded colleagues. More than 70 alumni from more than 15 countries participated in the online event.

The afternoon commenced with presentations about the state of nematology education at UGent in the past and present, and included a discussion of the future of the study programme. Presentations by alumni about their experiences collaborating with each other followed, providing a showcase for the value of alumni networks. Participants were then given the opportunity to share their memories and experiences of their studies at Ghent University and its partners Jimma University, the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology, and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture.



The poster features a background image of a historic building in Ghent at dusk. Overlaid on this are three circular images: a group of people, a nematode, and another group of people. The text 'UGent Nema alumni' is prominently displayed in yellow and white, with 'online meet & greet' in a cursive font below it.

To register:
1.) scan the QR code

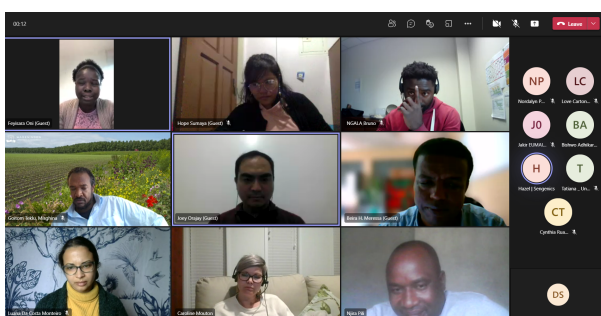
29 October 2021
13:00-15:30 CET

For inquiries please email:
nematology.gent@ugent.be

2.) or go to
<https://bit.ly/3v6OZ3e>



The bottom of the poster contains logos for Ghent University, vliros, International Nematology, and Agro- and Environmental Nematology.



This networking event is envisioned as taking place annually and aims to lay the foundation for future collaborations. One such resulting collaboration will be a series of online lectures in late 2022 by nematologists for nematologists, in an attempt to establish knowledge transfers between alumni and anyone interested to know more about our discipline.

The Nematology programme at Ghent University in all its formats has, since its inception in 1992, trained more than 350 students over the past 29 years. It is the only programme of its kind in the world. The programme is also coordinating the Erasmus+ CBHE project Nematology Education in Sub-Sahara Africa or Nemedussa. For more information about this project:

www.nemedussa.ugent.be

First Pan-African Nematology Network workshop

From 23-25 February 2022, the first PANEMA (Pan-African Nematology Network) workshop was held in Eldoret, Kenya. This workshop, hosted by Moi University, brought together more than one hundred trained nematologists, early-career researchers, students and plant doctors from across Africa and others working in agriculture and the field of nematology. For three days, participants were given the opportunity to attend lectures and engage with experts on various nematode-related topics. The hands-on workshop offered specialized training in the use of various equipment and scientific techniques, while participants could also follow practical trainings in the field and in the laboratory. The hands-on sessions were particularly appreciated by participants and illustrates the need for more specialized training and focused events for those working with nematodes. This workshop was the first step in bringing together African nematologists and has laid the groundwork for similar future events.



The Pan-African Nematology Network (PANEMA) aims to promote networking and academic exchange between nematologists working in Africa. The focus of the network is on sharing good educational practices, creating and strengthening networks between HEIs and providing additional educational opportunities for those working in agriculture and nematology. The next PANEMA workshop is planned for 2023 and will be held in South Africa. More information on this will be made available soon. PANEMA is a part of the Erasmus+ CBHE project, 'Nematology Education in Sub-Sahara Africa' or Nemedussa. For more information about this project and other PANEMA activities:

www.nemedussa.ugent.be

Dora Scott

Young nematologists Network

Following the success of the Virtual Nematology Conference in 2021 (VNC2021), which was reported in the last issue of Nematology News, the organising group of young nematologists identified a need for greater international networking and collaboration amongst young and early career nematologists. They proposed the establishment of a Young Nematologists Network (YNN) that will focus on the scientific and professional development of Postdocs, PhD and Master students who work in the field of Nematology. This will be student/ECR-led and will provide opportunities for young nematology researchers to participate in activities such as networking events, seminars, short courses, and workshops, both virtual and in-person.

Why join the ESN? - the movie

Please have a look at our video “Why join the ESN ?” made from some interviews during the 2016 ESN meeting. You can access this video via the homepage of our website <https://www.esn-online.org>

Also available at this address

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ebk0lvge179crq2/AABu_zaqEM-YJayZB1Zr9ZC8a?dl=0

Twitter link : <https://twitter.com/ESNematologists/status/869574031032365056>

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Information needed for the newsletter

The ESN Governing Board would like this newsletter to be a Forum that is more widely used by the membership to share news and information. So, if you have any information and/or images that might be of interest to ESN members please send a note to the editors (Wim Wesemael - wim.wesemael@ilvo.vlaanderen.be or Bart Vandenbossche - b.vandenbossche@e-nema.de). All that is needed is a small amount of text in a word file or an email message, along with an accompanying image.