



Naturhistorisches Museum der Burgerminde Bern



Friends of Soqotra Annual Conference and AGM 2011

September 23-25, Bern, Switzerland – Second Circular

VENUE

The 10th Annual General Meeting of the FoS will be held at the Natural History Museum of Bern, in Switzerland from 23.-25.9.2011.

Contact details

Dr Eike Neubert
Naturhistorisches Museum Bern (NMBE)
Bernastrasse 15
CH-3005 Bern
Switzerland
Tel. +41 31 350 72 68
Fax +41 31 350 74 99
eike.neubert@nmbe.ch
<http://www.nmbe.ch/>



Natural History Museum of Bern, Switzerland (Please be aware that there is no parking place available at the museum). Source picture: Wikipedia.

HOW TO REACH BERN

By plane

Bern Airport (www.alpar.ch, German-only website) features only a small number of direct European flights and transfer connections through Basel, Zurich, and other airports. In most cases it may be more convenient to fly to Zurich (www.unique.ch), Basel (www.euroairport.ch), or Geneva (www.gva.ch), and to reach Bern by train from there. Zurich and Geneva offer very convenient changes at their respective airport railway stations, with direct connections; the journey will take 75 (Zurich) or 120 minutes (Geneva). Trains leave Zurich Airport twice an hour always at 13 minutes or at 40 minutes past the hour. Trains leave Geneva Airport twice an hour always at 01 minutes or at 36 minutes past the hour. You should buy your ticket at the rail ticket counter at the Airport as there is a surplus charge if you buy it on the train.

EuroAirport Basel has frequent bus connections to Basel main station, from where the train to Bern takes approximately one hour. Train tickets are available at vending machines and counters at the stations; timetable info at www.rail.ch. (There is a possibility to have your luggage checked through to Bern directly, see www.sbb.ch/pv/fly_e.htm.)

By train

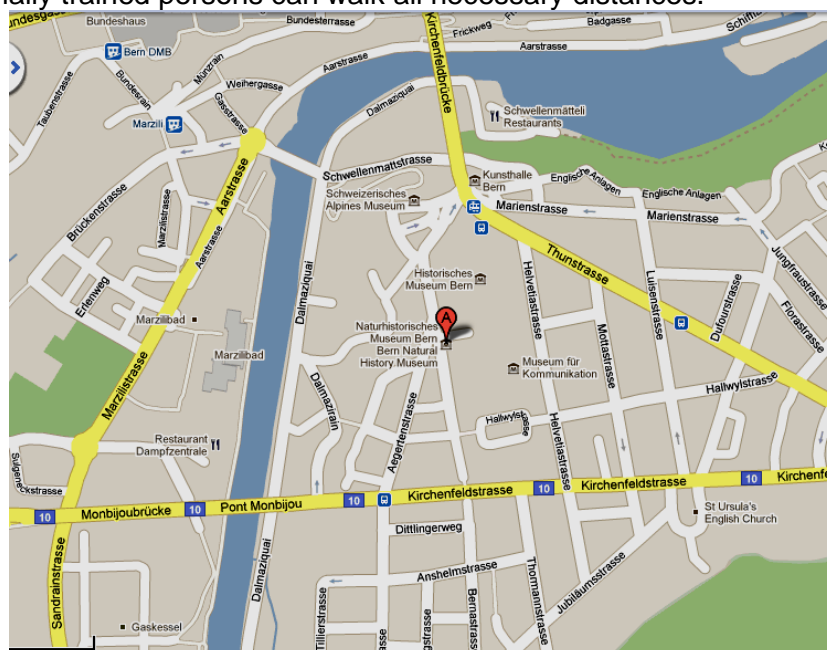
Participants from neighbouring countries may consider travelling to Bern by train. There are convenient connections from most countries to Bern Central Station. For timetable information look at www.rail.ch.

By car

Bern is easy to reach via the Swiss highways (NEVER go faster than 120 km/h, Swiss tickets reach legendary levels!). However, the city is car-hostile, and parking space is rare and expensive. Check whether your hotel provides parking space, or consider to come by train.

Inner city Bern

As in all larger Swiss cities, the local traffic system is excellent and provides a number of transportation possibilities (www.bernmobil.ch, only in German). However, the city is quite small, so normally trained persons can walk all necessary distances.



ACCOMODATION

Rooms can be booked in hotels listed below. Two hotels at walking distance to the museum are listed below offering rooms at reasonable fairs (Swiss level!).

Hotel Continental
Zeughausgasse 27
CH-3011 Bern
Tel. +41 (0)31 329 21 21
Fax +41 (0)31 329 21 99
info@hotel-continental.ch
www.hotel-continental.ch

Hotel Nydeck
Gerechtigkeitsgasse 1
3011 Bern
Tel + 41 (0)31 311 86 86
Fax + 41 (0)31 312 20 54
info@hotelnideck.ch
<http://www.hotelnideck.ch/pages/english.php>

Both hotels are also at walking distance from the train station. Breakfast will be provided at the hotel for the days of the meeting. **On Saturday, 24.09, lunch will be provided** at the meeting venue (Natural History Museum).

For the smaller budget:

Bern Youth Hostel
Weihergasse 4
3005 Bern
031 326 11 11
<http://www.gruppenhaus.ch/index.cfm?lang=e&h=456&lang=d>

The Youth hostel is quite well known, and also in walking distance to the museum. You can form smaller or larger groups, which may reduce the price per person.

or

Hotel/Pension Marthahaus
<http://www.marthahaus.ch/>

For more hotels, please check the following sites:

<http://www.booking.com/city/ch/bern.html>

http://www.g26.ch/bern_hotels_00.html

For more information on the city, please use the official tourist information site

<http://www.berninfo.com/en/>

Schedule

The meeting will be held at the lecture hall of the museum. On Saturday, the event will be open for the public. The meeting will be announced at the University of Bern, and a press release in appropriate media of the region will be prepared.

Friday, 23 September 2011:

Arrival of participants

Early bird registration (12.00h - 16.00h): please contact the information desk of the museum at the entrance

Informal meeting 19.00h at
Restaurant "Zunft zur Webern"
Gerechtigkeitsgasse 68
3011 Bern
<http://www.restwebern.ch/>

Saturday, 24 September 2011:

09.00h - 09.30h	Registration for registered participants
09.30h - 10.30h	Welcome addresses by Host and Chairman, lectures
10.30h - 11.00h	Coffee Break
11.00h - 12.30h	Lectures
12.30h - 14.30h	Lunch break at NMBE
14.30h - 16.00h	Lectures
16.00h - 16.30h	Coffee Break
16.30h - 18.00h	Group Discussion/Additional Lectures
18.15h - 19.30h	Informal Discussions – Reception (possible; not confirmed yet)
20.30h - open end:	Dinner at a nice place in the city, dinner ca. 40.-SFR without beverages

A lecture programme, including short abstracts, will be provided at arrival. As a preview and as part of the basic schedule, topics of currently confirmed presentations currently include **Soqotri Culture and Language**, on Legends and Poetry (Miranda Morris), **Marine Biodiversity and Ecology**, on Soqotra's Coral Communities (Rebecca Klaus et al), Coastal Fish Diversity (Uwe Zajonz et al), Marine Protected Areas and genetic connectivity (Hannes Pulch et al), **Soil Erosion and Plant Nursery** (Dana Pietsch et al), **History and Archaeology**, Soqotra as a gateway to the Red Sea (Julian Jansen van Rensburg), **Ecotourism** vs Environment in the region (Khawla Al-Muhannadi), **Photography**, Perception of Islands in Visual Media (Claudius Schulze).

We have yet to confirm several invited speakers from several institutes, not yet included above so there will be more talks than mentioned here. There will be flexibility in the programme as to duration of the presentations, as a guideline 15-20mins but not exceeding 30mins to allow a round of questions and answers.

Sunday, 25 September 2011:

10.00h - 12.00h Meeting of the FoS Committee Members (open at request)
Present and Apologies
Minutes of the AGM 2010 and Year Report
Finances and project updates
Tayf, Website and Matters Arising
Varia
Elections of Committee Members

12.00h - 13.30h **Lunch break** at NMBE

To discuss for Sunday Afternoon: Departure - guided city tour (cost!)?

Shall we make a visit to the mountains on Monday? If yes, I need to organise this, for possibilities check – please confirm. Check at:

<http://www.maennlichen.ch>

This provides an idea of the most spectacular mountains you can see in Europe (Mönch, Eiger, Jungfrau). This is the holy trinity of > 4.000m altitude mountains

If you are certain of your visit, please forward the schedule of your arrival and departure in a brief email to the organizing committee at eike.neubert@nmbe.ch with CC to info@friendsofsoqotra.org in the simplest format possible, and a preference for activity on Sunday afternoon (city/mountain/personal).

Looking forward to seeing you there! Ahlan wa sahan...

Eike Neubert, host of the FoS AGM 2011 & Kay Van Damme, FoS Chairman

Friends of Soqotra,
www.friendsofsoqotra.org