

Address of the President of the Speleological Federation of European Community

BY

B. KRAUTHAUSEN

**Honourable members of the Greek authorities,
Honourable members of the Hellenic Speleological Society, and gentlemen, dear colleagues and friends,**

Many of the early roots of human consciousness and culture lie in antique Greece. Also first descriptions of early caving and of the underground world - the hades, the river styx - are known worldwide.

As President of the speleological Federation of the European Community, thus representing about 40.000 cavers and scientists, its an honour for me to be here in the heart of human culture and a centre of speleological research.

we heartly welcome your initiative as well as the subjects of your congress, because the protection of karst is one of the principal targets of our Federation.

Probably you know that in a world of growing population and landuse karstwater represent an important ressource and an unique potential, even today, about 1/5 of the worlds population, about 900 mio people, are supplied by karstwater.

But at the same time human impacts on karst regions and their fragile and sensitive environment are obvious.

Its up to us cavers and scientists, who have acces to the underground world, to underline the potential, to determine the risks and to give answers to these questions.

That is why your congress and conference must be regarded as very important. So please let me express in the name of our Federation as well as in the name of the German Speleological Association my congradulations to the organizers. We add our best wishes for succesful meetings.

Thank you