

SUBCOMMISSION ON NEOGENE STRATIGRAPHY

ANNUAL REPORT 1997

1. NAME OF CONSTITUENT BODY

Subcommission on Neogene Stratigraphy (SNS).

2. SUMMARY TABLE OF THE SUBDIVISION OF THE STUDIED PERIOD

SYSTEM	SERIES	STAGES	
N E O G E N E	PLIOCENE	L GELASIAN	
		M PIACENZIAN	
		E ZANCLEAN	
	MIOCENE	L	MESSINIAN
			TORTONIAN
		M	SERRAVALLIAN
			LANGHIAN
		E	BURDIGALIAN
			AQUITANIAN

3. OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The task of the Subcommission is to clarify and precise the stratigraphic subdivision of the Neogene by means of defining Global Stratotype Sections and Points (GSSPs) of Series and Stages. The base and the top of the Neogene System, as well as the base of the Piacenzian and Gelasian Stages, are already defined by GSSPs. Postal ballots for definition of remaining GSSPs, now firmly requested by ICS, will be proposed when the problem is

considered mature, and a wide consensus is predictable. The time requested to propose a successful postal ballot, according to our own experience, is highly variable, from 15 years (Oligo-Miocene boundary) to a few months (Piacenzian).

4. ORGANIZATION

SNS is a Subcommittee of the International Commission on Stratigraphy, created in 1971. Reference is made to the annual report of 1995 for a brief historical resume of the Subcommittee. As a result of the postal ballot for the election of the new bureau, the entire directory changed during 1996, with the former Chair, vice-chairman and secretary stepping down, and the new chairman elect, three vice-chairman and secretary taking over.

Regional Committees and WGs

- The Subcommittee has four regional Committees (Mediterranean, Atlantic, Pacific and Nordic). They will be reorganized in the future.
- The Transcaspian correlation (informal) Working Group chaired by Semenenko is making slow progress, due to political and funding problems.

Membership

The Neogene Subcommittee has 31 voting members and 25 corresponding members.

5. EXTENT OF NATIONAL/REGIONAL/GLOBAL SUPPORT OF PROJECTS

The present level of funding of the Subcommittee by IUGS through ICS is very low: the real expenses met to carry out the reported activities is one to two orders of magnitude greater. There is no official funding of SNS besides IUGS (through ICS), which prevents from giving more visibility to the progress and the accomplishments, that are only possible by the dedicated efforts of some scientists of high international standard. Also, SNS takes advantage of the performances of a very successful scientific program, the Ocean Drilling Program (ODP), that has dedicated several months of shiptime a year, in the last several years, to investigate Neogene targets.

6. INTERFACE WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

As mentioned above, a close link connects SNS and the Ocean Drilling Program (ODP): over 30% of the voting and corresponding members are active in ODP as shipboard scientists panel members, and several served as co-chief scientists, so they played an important role in shaping the scientific objectives of the most important scientific program in earth Sciences. A close connection also exists with International Geological Correlation Program (IGCP).

7. ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PRODUCTS GENERATED IN 1997

- Formal submission of the recommendation of SNS to ICS for the acceptance of the voted base of the Piacenzian. This was done at the end of October 1996. We were notified of the positive vote of the ICS Full Commission and ratification of IUGS in January 1997.
- Preparation of two papers for the official publication of the Gelasian and Piacenzian GSSPs on the official journal of IUGS (*Episodes*). The two papers have been recently prepared and are now being submitted to the journal.
- Distribution of a questionnaire to all voting and corresponding members in February 1997 with specific questions on each chronostratigraphic boundary. A total of 34 replies were received (21 from voting members, that is 68%). The results of the questionnaire are thoroughly reported on in Neogene >Newsletters # 4.
- Continuous contacts with Chairman and Secretary General of ICS in view of the organisation of the postal ballot within the Quaternary and the Neogene subcommissions on the possibility of changing the already ratified base of the Pleistocene Series. SNS is offering all the requested help and advice to ICS.
- Organisation of a workshop of SNS during the "Neogene Mediterranean Paleocenography Conference", an international congress jointly organized by Maria Bianca Cita and Judith McKenzie and cosponsored by the Geological Society of Italy and the European Consortium for Ocean Drilling Program. The workshop of SNS was

run on September 30 and was a very successful meeting, attended by over 40 people, as reported further on in this issue.

- Creation and dissemination of Neogene Newsletters n° 4, distributed in November 1997.

8. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN 1996

As stressed in item 5, the big problem encountered is represented by the low funding level.

9. WORKPLAN FOR 1998

- Submittal to all voting and corresponding members of SNS of a postal ballot on the GSSP of the Zanclean Stage (as base of the Pliocene Series) and the Messinian Stage.
- Establishment of an informal Working Group on the Miocene pre-Messinian Time-scale.
- Astronomic calibration of the Miocene Time-scale.
- Creation and dissemination of Neogene Newsletters n° 5 (September 1998).

10. POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES OUTSIDE IUGS

Requests of other fundings will be forwarded to the University of Padova and to CNR of Italy, with little hope of success.

11. ACCOUNTS FOR 1997

Carry-over from 1996	\$ 0
IUGS Contribution 1997	\$ 2085

The contribution was divided as follows:

SNS Chair (Padova)	\$ 1335
SNS Secretary (S. Donato M.)	\$ 250
RCPNS (Shizuoka)	\$ 250
RCMNS (Lyon)	\$ 250
	\$ 2085

The budget for the Bureau (SNS Chair, Padova) :

INCOME

From ICS-IUGS	\$ 1335
From other (national, i.e.italian) sources	\$ 2000
	TOT \$ 3335

EXPENDITURES

SNS Newsletters n.4 reproduction	\$ 600
Communication	\$ 600
Travel to Erice (Sicily), Catania etc.	\$ 2135
	TOT \$ 3335

12. BUDGET REQUEST FOR 1997

INCOME

Request from Chair (also for RC & WG)	\$ 6000
Request from RCPNS	\$ 1500
Request from RCMNS	\$ 1500
	TOT \$ 9000

ANTICIPATED EXPENDITURES

Preparation & distribution of Newsletter n.5	\$ 1500
Travel	\$ 6000
Communication	\$ 1500

TOT \$ 9000

Allotment requested from IUGS/ICS for 1997 \$ 6000

13. PREPARE OF INFORMATION

Name of Chair Person: Domenico Rio

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Padova, Italy, Via Giotto 1

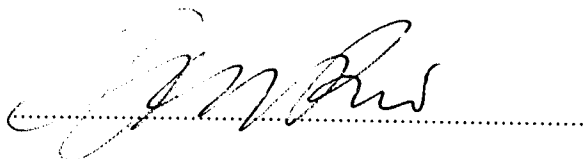
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Date: October 23, 1997

Signature of Chair Person

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Rio', is written over a horizontal dotted line.

Attachments: Annual Report of RCMNS and RCPNS.