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National Commission for Stratigraphy Belgium

NCS meeting report 16/12/2019

Meeting report: National Commission for Stratigraphy Belgium

GSB-RBINS, 16/12/2019

Present (6): Bernard Mottequin (Chair), Kris Welkenhuysen (Secretary, Webmaster), Jacques Verniers, Alain Herbosch, Katrien De Nil, Marie Coen-Aubert

Excused (6): Stephen Louwye, Vanessa Heyvaert, Frieda Bogemans, Michiel Duser, Edouard Poty, Martin Laloux.

The Chair opens the meeting at 10h10.

1. Approval of the previous meeting report

The report of the 2018-12 meeting is approved without remarks and will be made available on the website. The agenda for the meeting is approved.

2. Reports of subcommissions

2.1 Lower Palaeozoic (Jacques Verniers)

Regarding the proposal document for new groups in the Lower Palaeozoic, the text was published one year ago, but some checks are needed. The problem still is that the PhD's on which the proposal is based, were started after the field work undertaken by the geologists of the programme of revision of the geological map of Wallonia (some of these maps have been already published) was completed. This generated discrepancies between the proposal and the mapping. The discussion is ongoing and will be continued in the afternoon. The aim is to finish by Eastern 2020. New research might be possible as MSc or BSc theses, but there is nobody really available for supervision in Belgium.

Alain Herbosch asks about the status of the groups proposal. Jacques Verniers responds that there were no comments received, so it is accepted.

2.2 Devonian (Marie Coen-Aubert)

The revision of the Eifelian lithostratigraphy of the southern and southeastern margins of the Dinant Synclinorium is ongoing, with the definition of new members (Denayer, 2019) based on the detailed descriptions of outcrops, including new ones that have not yet been described formally.

2.3 Carboniferous (Bernard Mottequin, on behalf of Edouard Poty)

There was no new proposal of formations but, this year, the attention has been paid to the recognition of the Devonian–Carboniferous boundary in the Namur–Dinant Basin that is currently under discussion on a worldwide scale by the Task Group gathering members of the international Subcommissions on Devonian and Carboniferous stratigraphy. In fine, a new GSSP should be selected for this boundary, maybe in Belgium as nice sections are available in the Dinant-Spontin area. An important overview based on the revision of the most important sections still accessible nowadays, including paleontological and sedimentological data, has been submitted. Moreover, the results were presented during the 19th International Congress on the Carboniferous and Permian at Cologne.

2.4 Permian-Triassic-Jurassic

Nil

2.5 Cretaceous

Nil

2.6 Paleogene-Neogene (Katrien De Nil)

There have been two meetings since the last NCS meeting, and an excursion to the core repository in Perennes-lez-Binche.

The proposal for the Brussel Formation is expected to be submitted by the next meeting. There are four units, which are defined on the basis of the deposit model and a geotechnical division (important for work in the field). There are no remarks yet, input from Etienne Steurbaut is still expected.

Discussions regarding the Maaseik and Beselare members are still ongoing.

A revision of the Neogene stratigraphy is being prepared as "Neogene 2020", coordinated by Noël Vandenberghe. It will become a special volume of *Geologica Belgica* (Volume 23 (3-4) to be published in 2020). It will contain about 10 papers, all at a different level of preparation. It is planned to meet with Dutch colleagues in 2020.

2.7 Quaternary (Kris Welkenhuysen, on behalf of Frieda Bogemans)

There are no new items to report as there were no meetings in 2019.

2.8 Walloon Region (Bernard Mottequin, on behalf of Martin Laloux)

There was an effort in 2019 to homogenise the Lower Devonian units used in eastern Belgium and in the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg.

The programme of revision of the geological map of Wallonia comes to an end in December 2019. The fieldwork is done, but publishing will take time. Martin Laloux will retire during the first semester of 2020. He should be replaced by someone from the team of field geologists, but nothing is clear to date. Regarding the future, especially concerning the NCS, there will be more information by the next meeting. Bernard Mottequin and Katrien De Nil will contact Céline Vanneste to get more information.

5. Any other business

5.1 Challenges of the NCS (Bernard Mottequin)

The NCS has a role to play in the transfer of knowledge on Belgian stratigraphy. For two decades, too many retirements of top earth scientists, in the RBINS and also in most Belgian universities, have never been balanced by new recruitments. A significant amount of knowledge about Belgian stratigraphy is consequently already lost. It is proposed for the NCS, in cooperation with the RBINS and universities to organise 1-day excursions or conferences for professionals, students etc., led by retired experts. Jacques Verniers responds that for the Lower Palaeozoic, it is possible to think of excursions together with the publication of the revised stratigraphy, though not in 2020. Alain Herbosch remarks that it is sometimes difficult to get people interested, since for example at the ULB, there is a lot of modelling but no fieldwork. Bernard Mottequin wants to propose this also to the other subcommissions. Jacques Verniers suggests to also collaborate with *Geologica Belgica*.

5.2 Website (Kris Welkenhuysen)

The website use statistics are presented. The website visits are still increasing, with 8000 sessions in 2018 and 9000 sessions in 2019.

The member lists should be updated for each subcommission.

Since the website is the official reference for the formal Belgian stratigraphy, it is proposed to add a reference for citation to every unit page.

A versioning system is also proposed. Katrien De Nil responds that this can be useful for discussion and proposal documents, but it is deemed not necessary for other pages.

It is proposed that for each subcommission, a list is made with all group, formation and member names and their abbreviations. Katrien De Nil remarks that a downloadable list would indeed be useful. Katrien De Nil also proposes to add stratigraphic tables to the website (see e.g. the Paleogene-Neogene table).

At this moment, descriptions on the website are missing at some levels (e.g. group level description for the Landen Group). These should be checked and completed.



The news section remained static during the last year. Relevant news can be sent to the Webmaster. Kris Welkenhuysen also discussed with Xavier Devleeschouwer, webmaster of Geologica Belgica, to align the news, especially since the Miscellanea are not anymore published. Katrien De Nil proposes to also post new discussions and proposals in the news section.

The Chair closes the meeting at 11h30.

Bernard Mottequin (Chair), Kris Welkenhuysen (Secretary, Webmaster)