

# Proposal for hosting the MESO2020

ICArEHB, Universidade do Algarve, Faro, Portugal

## 1. Introduction to the Proposal

Mesolithic in Europe Conferences have been held all over Europe for the last 40 years, although the Ninth International Conference on the Mesolithic in Europe will be held for the first time in a southeastern European city, Belgrade, Serbia.

Our proposal for hosting the MESO2020, would relocate the congress to the southwestern most point of Europe, in the city of Faro, Algarve in southern Portugal. While the well-known shellmidden sites from the Muge valleys have been known for more than 150 years and the Sado sites for close to 7 decades, Portugal has always been seen as a marginal region when compared to the Northern and Eastern Europe during the Mesolithic.

If chosen, Faro will provide the opportunity to the delegates to see a series of important Mesolithic sites, both regional as well as to go to the traditional shellmiddens of the Sado and Muge river valleys.

The southern Portuguese Mesolithic has been of considerable importance to understand the transition to agriculture in southwestern Europe, specifically in Iberia with the arrival of the Cardial horizon. The MESO2020 in Faro would be the perfect setting to discuss topics such as Transitions (both from previous and to latter periods). The recent research in both Sado and Muge valleys have also brought up new data that provide the context for discussions on Regional Identities, Landscape and Territories, Rituals and symbols, or Social relations.

The research in both Sado and Muge valleys has shown that the western Atlantic coast is pungent with new and important data. Thus, it would be the perfect timing and setting for holding the 10<sup>th</sup> Mesolithic in Europe Conference at the University of Algarve, Faro, Portugal under the auspices of the Interdisciplinary Center for Archaeology and Evolution of Human Behaviour (ICArEHB).

## 2. The Universidade do Algarve and ICArEHB

The **Universidade do Algarve** is a public higher education institution located in the southern part of Portugal. In the academic year of 2013-2014 there were circa 8500 students of which over 2000 were enrolled in Graduate programs. The University's core research and teaching areas are: science and technology, management and economy, earth and marine sciences, social sciences and more recently health. At present the University of Algarve offers 48 undergraduate (licenciatura) and 87 Graduate programs (65 MsC/MA and 22 Ph.D.). International, inter-personal and inter-institutional networks, and projects developed in cooperation with other universities are reflected in its teaching and research activities so as to foster innovation and

update of learning contents, project incubation, curriculum development, scientific research and training. International projects are fully integrated into the life of the institution. In 2014, the University had over 800 permanent teaching and research staff that developed a significant number of research projects for which contributed the work produced by 190 fellowship grant holders, demonstrating a clear commitment towards R&D and innovation. At present, the University has well-established research centers in several fields such as marine sciences, bio-medicine, electronics, chemistry, arts and communication and archaeology.

**ICArEHB** is a new interdisciplinary research center located at Universidade do Algarve (Portugal). It was evaluated and funded by the Portuguese National Science Foundation (FCT) during 2013, and received the highest grade (24.5 in a total of 25 possible points) among all Portuguese research centers in Archaeology.

ICArEHB aims to bring together a group of both foreigner and national young researchers, many with international experiences with a main objective: understanding and developing research in evolution, ecology and human behavior from an archaeological and anthropological perspective. In the last 5 years, several researchers belonging to ICArEHB have worked both individually and in collaboration to develop their own projects in the two focal research areas that are the main goal of ICArEHB: adaptation and evolution of human behavior.

Research is organized in three main groups: Prehistoric Coastal Adaptations; African Archaeology and Human Evolution; Development of Complex Societies. These groups are not independent from each other, since their scientific enquire frequently overlaps and overflows to the other lines. Research focus mostly on the emergence of Anatomically Modern Humans, hunter-gatherer coastal adaptations, the development of complex societies, and African Archaeology using different disciplines and methodological approaches, such as Geoarchaeology, Use-wear analysis, Zooarchaeology, Paleobotany, GIS, and Earth Sciences. Currently, there are close to a dozen projects taking place in Iberia and southern Africa.

### 3. ICArEHB organization's capacity and experience

Our team has had a considerable amount of experience organizing main international congresses. The main examples are listed in Table 1.

Table 1.

Name of Congress	Date	Number of Participants	Proceedings
IV Iberian Archaeological Congress	September, 2004	600	12 volumes
JIA2011	May 2011	200	2 volumes
Use-Wear	October 2012	150	1 volume
MUGE150th	March 2013	120	2 volumes
Raw Material exploitation in Prehistory	March 2016	120 (est.)	1 volume (est.)

In all cases we were able to publish the proceedings and, with the exception of the Iberian congress, all within 2 years from the time of congress.

The team counts with a series of Post-doctoral researchers that help in the organization as well as with both undergraduate and graduate students (MA and Ph.D. degrees in Archaeology) to help with the venue at the University. The campus has all the facilities necessary for the congress, namely internet, secretarial and financial services and rooms for parallel sections. In addition, UAlg can also provide local transportation services from downtown to the Campus. It has the capacity for handling large volumes of both e-mail and postal mail, to process bank transfers and at present we are stepping up to handle both online and offline payments.

UAlg contracts and services can also provide support for managing travel logistics for participants, including transportation and accommodation arrangements, etc.

#### **4. Venue location and dates**

The proposed location for the MESO2020 is the city of Faro, in the Gambelas Campus of the Universidade do Algarve in early September of 2020. The campus is located 5 km from downtown, in the edge of a pine tree national park forest and only two km from the Atlantic shore.



The Gambelas campus, Universidade do Algarve.

The campus has two main class room buildings with both standard class rooms and amphitheatres (table 2) within 3 minutes walking distance.

In addition, there are also other class and meeting rooms in various buildings and a great Amphitheater that sits 450 people that can be used for the Opening and Closing Ceremonies as well as the Keynote Addresses and main plenary sessions. Concurrent sessions will take place in one of two main buildings, likely in those amphitheatres with more than 100 seats.

There are restaurants, cafés and one student cantina with diverse food for all times of the day, with full service lunch with prices between 3 and 8 euros.

Table 2.

Number of sits	Type of room	Number of rooms
18	Class room	3
40	Class room	14
60	Class room	4
80	Class room	7
120	Class room	1
30	Amphitheater	1
100	Amphitheater	4
105	Amphitheater	3
160	Amphitheater	1
240	Amphitheater	2



Amphitheater with 240 sits.



The great Amphitheater for 450 people.

## 5. Organizational and fundraising capacity

Our experience shows that we are able, together with the revenue coming from the registration, to raise the necessary funds to organize the Conference and publish the Proceedings. In the past, we have had funding from Banks as well as Private Portuguese foundations, in addition to Municipal help for the logistics such as specific meals and transportation during excursions. It is our intention to cover the expenses for the Scientific Commission in terms of registration, hotel while in Faro and all meals.

In terms of registration costs, we foresee a slight increase when compared to MESO2015, following the values presented in Table 3.

Table 3

	Early Bird Registration	Late Registration
Regular Fee	175	250
Student Fee	75	150
Eastern Europe Regular Fee	100	150
Eastern Europe Student Fee	50	100

Registration will include the access to all events of the congress, including the mid-congress field trip to the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Chalcolithic sites of Algarve. A 3 day post-congress excursion to Sado, Muge and the Lisbon museums where most artefacts are housed will be also offered, but not included in the registration.

## **6. Logistics**

Algarve is served by the Faro International Airport, located a few km from the city as well as from the University Campus. It is a small airport, served mostly by low cost airlines, flying from a diversity of cities in France, UK, Ireland, Scotland, Germany, Spain, Holland, Belgian, Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Czech Republic, Luxemburg, Russia and Canada.

There are many hotels and hostels in Faro, at all levels of costs. There are public transportation (buses) from downtown Faro to the Campus, to the shore or to other close by cities. There is also a train line that runs both East-West along all of the Algarve as well as to Lisbon or Porto (3 hour travel). Seville is 2 hours away by car and 3 hours by high quality bus.

A series of beach towns are at a distance of less than half an hour by public transportation. Restaurants are in a large number from top quality examples (with various Michelin stars) to local taverns. Gastronomy includes wood oven breads, meats (lamb, goat, pork and beef) and all kinds of fish and shellfish directly from the sea.

## **7. Communications**

Effective communication at many levels is essential to a successful congress. The organization of MESO2020 will maintain regular and effective communication with and involvement of the international scientific committee and the participants via website and e-mail, after registration.

During the congress, there will be a specific wifi net for the participants, based on the Universidade do Algarve net system (no cost for the participants) in addition to the Eduroam higher education system, available on campus. There is also local administrative support available for general communications and correspondence.

## **8. Congress website**

Following the latter MESO congresses, we will register a new website with the address [www.MESO2020.com](http://www.MESO2020.com). We have developed a series of websites, both for congresses or Research units. Some recent examples are [www.icarehb.com](http://www.icarehb.com) or [www.rawmaterials2016.com](http://www.rawmaterials2016.com).

## **9. Proceedings**

We have, in previous congresses listed above, published all proceedings. While in the case of the Iberian meetings (IV CAP and JIA 2011), the volumes were published by the Universidade do Algarve, in the case of more international meetings and symposia we have published volumes in Springer Verlag (2 volumes), Cambridge Scholars Publishing (3 volumes) and BAR (1 volume integrated in the UISPP series).

Following the traditional path of MESO Congresses, it is our aim to publish the proceedings. This will be as printed volumes, and we expect to organize the papers into two volumes. Scheduling is always difficult in cases such as the MESO Congress due to the number of participants. We expect to have the guide for authors ready before the congress. Thus, we expect to have the papers no later than December 2020 and the volumes published during 2021. We will contact

publishers such as Oxbow Books and Cambridge Scholars Publishing to contract the MESO2020 Proceedings.

In addition to the proceedings, we will also produce an abstract book with the complete list of abstracts and addresses of all presenters.

## **10. Proposal for the Congress scheme**

Since the Santander meeting that it seems that new interests have developed, such as chronological or other methodological issues that have advanced and provided new insights for acquiring and analyzing data. Also, the assignment of presentations to each of the nine general sessions (plus current research) seems more difficult each congress, likely due to the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary character of research and of each presentation.

Faro meeting can be the time for rethinking the traditional session scheme hold in the Mesolithic in Europe Conferences. We propose that the Scientific Committee review the nine session organization, and possibly change it.

In addition, and following the concept seen in the previous meetings, we would like to maintain the possibility of proposals for monographic and thematic sessions, including roundtables and workshops. In the case of the thematic sessions can be applied to poster sessions.

Finally, we also propose the inclusion of a session a day organized according to the format of Pecha Kucha (For more information on Pecha Kucha format, please visit: <http://www.pechakucha.org/>). This format, that uses short presentations of 6 minute and 40 seconds, will be dedicated mostly to preliminary research or younger stage career researchers presentations, will free time so the other presentations can return to the standard time of 15 minutes each.

## **11. Algarve**

Due to its geographical location, the Algarve enjoys one of the best climates in Europe all year round, with only a short period of rainfall (normally between November and March), maximum temperatures varying between 15°C and 31°C, and long hours of sunshine (the highest in Europe). With fine white sand beaches all along its coastline and a calm sea with water temperatures of around 22°C in the summer, the Algarve is perfect for the so-called “beach tourism”, although a wide range of different activities is offered.

This is why the Algarve, the southernmost region of mainland Portugal, is its most popular tourist destination, and one of the most popular in Europe. With an area of 5,411 km<sup>2</sup> and a permanent population of approximately 451,117 inhabitants, its population triples in the summer season due to a high influx of visitors. In total, the Algarve receives almost 10 million people every year, including national visitors, of which 7 million are foreign tourists.

The Algarve possesses two main urban centres: (1) the city of Faro, capital of the region, with an international airport, sports stadium, three university campuses and the main hospital; and (2) the city of Portimão, Algarve’s second main city and home to the University’s fourth campus. At the western most limit of Algarve sits the Sagres Peninsula where traditionally is said that the Discoveries started in early 1400’s, with Henry the Navigator.



Carvoeiro beach.



General view of the Sagres promontorium.

## 12. The city of Faro



The city and the marina of Faro.

Faro (Portuguese pronunciation: “fah-roo”) is the administrative center for the Algarve region with a population of approximately 60,000 inhabitants spread over 210 km<sup>2</sup>, of which 30% are integrated in the Ria Formosa Nature Reserve.

The city of Faro is bordered to the south by the Ria Formosa lagoon, a 19 km long system of barrier islands that communicates with the sea through six inlets, five of which are natural and have mobility characteristics, and one is an artificial inlet that was opened with the purpose of allowing easier access to the port of Faro. This system forms a barrier island system with three main islands, which can be reached by boat, and are excellent places to enjoy pleasant days in contact with nature, enjoying boating, biking or walking. The local cuisine, typically Mediterranean, the white sand beaches and balmy waters awarded with the “blue flag”, in some places inhabited only by migratory birds, are aspects to discover on the islands of the Ria Formosa, with a high potential for nature tourism. As an ancient city, Faro is to be (re)discovered. From pre-Roman origin, known at that time as Ossónoba, Faro was one of the most important urban centers of the southern Iberia. The city has both Arab and Roman ruins but most of the present attractive older buildings were constructed after the disastrous earthquake of 1755. Particularly attractive is the old part of the city surrounded still by the Moors walls, which date back to the 9th century. Currently, due to its central role and as the regional capital, Faro has significant infrastructures and public services in the region. The airport handles more than five million passengers a year, the University is internationally known in the fields of marine sciences, tourism management, biotechnology and arts apart from the Central Hospital and six secondary schools, all showing the central role of Faro in the whole region. The city also has an attractive marina, well-maintained parks and plazas and an old town full of outdoor cafés and pedestrian lanes. Besides its museums and beautiful churches and chapels, Faro also boasts a vibrant nightlife.

See more at: <http://www.ualg.pt/home/en/content/faro-1#sthash.MQZglctV.dpuf>



General view of the Ria Formosa Nature reserve.