

Statutes of the EUROPARC Federation

Preamble

The protected areas of Europe safeguard biodiversity and are the repositories of our natural and cultural heritage.

They are the sources of creative inspiration, cultural and spiritual fulfilment as well as contributing to increasing environmental understanding, contributing to socio-economic well-being.

Separated by sovereign states yet united in the common goal to sustain nature and manage protected areas the EUROPARC Federation commits itself to manage and strengthen protected area networking across Europe.

To further this goal, the EUROPARC Federation, founded in 1973, should be converted into an organization under European law when conditions are optimal.

Art. 1 - Aims of the Federation

The aims of the EUROPARC Federation are to promote:

- a) The activities of organisations and individuals concerned with protected areas and their values and benefits;
- b) Environmental awareness, education, learning and capacity building for protected areas across Europe;
- c) International co-operation, in particular by fostering multi- and transnational partnerships;
- d) Mutual support and assistance, in particular by the creation of networks, through exchange and understanding of ideas, skills and experience, as well as training on legislation, policy and practice relating to the organisation, administration and management of protected areas;
- e) Cooperation with and advocacy work towards the European Institutions, national governments, international and national non-governmental organisations and institutions in order to raise their concern and strengthen action for protected areas and to foster the aims and activities of the EUROPARC Federation, and
- f) Understanding and sympathy for the interests of European protected areas amongst the wider public.

Art. 2 - Seat, Legal Status and Official Languages

- a) The organisation is called "Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe (EUROPARC Federation)". It is a non-Profit Organisation, registered in the German Register of Associations; the name will be followed by the letters "e.V." (registered association).
- b) The Seat of the association is in Regensburg (Germany).
- c) The association shall pursue, exclusively and directly, purposes of public benefit as described in the section of the German Fiscal Code entitled "Recognised Purposes". It shall carry out non profit-making activities and shall not primarily pursue purposes in the interest of its own profitability.
- d) The funds of the association shall only be used for the purposes specified in the Statutes. The members shall receive no payments from the funds of the association. They shall have no entitlement to a share in the assets of the association.
- e) No person may be favoured with payments which are alien to the purpose of the association or with disproportionately high payments.
- f) The official languages of the Federation shall be German, English and French.

Art. 3 - Members and Voting Rights

- a) Members of the EUROPARC Federation shall be organizations or individuals involved in work related to protected areas.
- b) Membership of the Federation shall comprise the following categories:

Voting members:

Group A: Organisation working at an international level, across 2 or more countries

Group B: Organisations working at a national or federal level within one country

Group C: Organisations working at a regional level within a country

Group D: Organisations working at a local level below regional within a region or country

Group E: Parks and other Protected Areas

Group F: Supporting Organisations

Non-voting members:

Group H: Honorary Members: Individual members being persons who have distinguished themselves in work related to protected areas and those who have received the Alfred Toepfer medal.

Group I: Supporting Individuals: Supporting members, being individual persons, who support the Federation

c) Applications for membership are to be made in writing (electronic application is also valid) to the Council. The Council decides on admission. The General Assembly shall also have the power to appoint exceptionally, on the recommendations of the Council, persons of distinction and achievement within the area of interest of the Federation to be Honorary Life Members. Such members shall be members of Group H.

d) Members shall be obliged to take forward the aims of the EUROPARC Federation within their legal competence and possibilities.

e) During the General Assembly only members who have paid their fees have a right to vote. The number of votes for each member shall be based on the current regulations laid down by the Council and which have to be approved by the General Assembly.

f) Voting rights may be delegated in writing to a member present. One member can only bring up to 5 signed proxy votes.

g) Membership shall come to an end on resignation or expulsion by Council decision. Resignation may only be effected by letter (electronic resignation is also valid) and becomes valid upon ratification by Council.

Art. 4 - Organs of the Federation

These are the organs of the association:

1. General Assembly
2. Council
3. Internal Auditor

Art. 5 - General Assembly

a) The General Assembly shall take place every year. The invitation to the General Assembly shall be made in writing, by fax or e-mail eight weeks before the date of the assembly.

b) Its duties shall include:

1. Reviewing the statutes and deciding upon any General Assembly Regulations changes that have to be made.
2. Electing the Chair of Council and 6 other members of the Council. The candidates can only be nominated by members of the EUROPARC Federation.
3. Approving members' subscriptions.
4. Approving the outline work plan and a budget estimation for the next year regarding the delivery of the current strategy.

5. Approving the year-end financial statement of the previous year.
6. Discharging the Council.
7. Appointing honorary members.
8. Approving the overall strategy of the Federation.
9. Deciding on proposals made by members, provided these have been circulated not less than ten weeks to the Council and not less than four weeks to members before the start of the General Assembly.
10. Electing the internal auditor, and
11. Dissolving the EUROPARC Federation and taking consequential action.

c) A General Assembly can modify the statutes or the General Assembly Regulations of the EUROPARC Federation only when the proposals have been circulated not less than four weeks before the beginning of the meeting and stating the items to be discussed. A change of statutes requires a two-thirds majority of the votes cast.

d) An Extraordinary General Assembly has to be convened, if this is requested by at least 30 % of the members or by the Council in written form stating the reasons and the purpose.

e) The regulations for the EUROPARC General Assembly including Council Elections (except for statute change regulations, statute 5c) must be approved by the EUROPARC General Assembly with a simple majority of the votes cast.

f) A record of the resolutions of the General Assembly shall be kept, which shall be signed by the respective person presiding over the General Assembly and by the person taking the minutes.

Art. 6 - The Chair of Council

The role of the Chair of Council, who has the title President, is to lead the Council, ensuring that it fulfils its responsibilities for the governance of the organisation.

Art. 7 - The Council

a) Composition

1. The Council shall consist of seven elected members, including the President. The Council may nominate up to three council members as Vice-Presidents. The treasurer is to be selected by the Council out of the elected or co-opted Council members.

2. The President's term of office shall be three years, and he may be re-elected only once for a consecutive period of three years.

3. The term of office of elected council members other than the President should be three years, and they may be re-elected only once for a consecutive period of three years.
4. At the election every three years, at least two Council members should not have served on the Council in the previous three years.
5. The members of the Council shall remain in office until new members are elected.
6. In case of resignation, incapacity, expulsion or death of a member of the Council, the Council may co-opt a replacement for the rest of the current term of office of the Council. The involvement of these co-opted council members shall be ratified during the first following General Assembly.
7. The Council can co-opt up to five additional members in consultation with EUROPARC sections. Co-opted Council members do not have voting rights in Council meetings.
8. Elected Council members must be members of the EUROPARC Federation or belong to a member organisation.

b) Duties

The duties of the Council shall be to:

1. Follow up the decisions of the General Assembly.
 2. Convene and prepare the General Assembly.
 3. If necessary convene an Extraordinary General Assembly.
 4. Draw up an annual report of business and accounts of the EUROPARC Federation.
 5. Prepare budget estimates and action plan arising from the EUROPARC strategy.
 6. Convene members no later than four weeks before the opening day of the General Assembly.
 7. To provide an agenda for the General Assembly.
 8. Manage the Federation's representative commissions, working groups and committees.
- These matters (duties 1-8) can be delegated to the Executive Director.
9. Deciding on the establishment, relocation or dissolving of an office.
 10. Deciding on the appointment of a Director.
 11. Deciding on the appointment, appraisal and dismissal of a Director, according to the Council's standing orders.
 12. Recommending the overall strategy.
 13. Agree and accept new members of the Federation.
 14. Expulsion of members.
 15. Representing the EUROPARC Federation.

16. Proposing members' annual subscriptions.
17. Finalising the annual budget.
18. Prepare and present the Treasurer's Annual Report to the General Assembly with the support of the Directorate.
19. Prepare and present an annual report of the work of the Council to the General Assembly in line with the EUROPARC strategy.
20. Deciding the venue and the dates of the next General Assembly.
21. Recommending internal auditor for election at General Assembly.
22. Creating and amending documents relating to the procedures used in general and extraordinary assemblies in consultation with members and communicated to the General Assembly.
23. Initiate and approve commissions, working groups, committees and other mechanisms to facilitate the delivery of the EUROPARC Federation strategy.
24. Administrative, financial, tax and legal tasks can be delegated to the Executive Director in consultation with the President.
25. Delegate the Executive Director to prepare all internal strategies, plans and policies to implement the Federation strategy.

c. Standing Orders

1. The Council shall draw up its own standing orders and the work of the Chair of Council and the Council shall be governed by those standing orders.
2. The Chair of Council acts as the legal representative of the association towards external parties.
3. The Chair of the Council can delegate the Executive Director to act as their representative, for administrative, financial, tax and legal duties of the EUROPARC Federation.
4. The Council will conduct an annual review of its work, in line with the EUROPARC strategy and report to the General Assembly.

d. Decision-making

The Council shall make decisions by simple voting majority; in the absence of a clear majority, the acting Chair of Council shall have the casting vote.

Art. 8 - EUROPARC Federation Sections

Föderation der Natur- und Nationalparke Europas / Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe / Fédération des Parcs Naturels et Nationaux d'Europe
Waffnergasse 6, 93047 Regensburg
E-mail: office@europarc.org / Internet: www.europarc.org

- a) The members may propose the establishment of sections of the EUROPARC Federation in countries or groups of countries which conform to the present statutes. Such EUROPARC sections should be authorised by the council on approval of lodged statutes from the proposed section.
- b) Sections should deliver the aims of the EUROPARC Federation and work to implement the agreed strategy.
- c) Sections may have a different status.
- d) Sections are principally composed of EUROPARC members. EUROPARC sections may, in agreement with the EUROPARC council, also have members, who are not members of the EUROPARC Federation. Those are considered associates by the EUROPARC Federation and cannot access or benefit the same rights as EUROPARC Federation members.

Art. 9 - The Internal Auditor

- a) The Auditor is elected by the General Assembly to analyse the Federation's internal processes, in the period following on from their election. The Auditor's report shall be delivered to the General Assembly in writing.
- b) The auditor must not be a member of the Council, but may be a member of the EUROPARC Federation
- c) The Auditor may attend Council meetings.

Art. 10 - Membership Fees

The members cited under Art. 3 b shall pay a membership fee. Membership fees shall be set formally for two years at a time by the Board, taking the financial situation and the planned implementation of the organisation's strategy as well as the average inflation rate in the European Union (Eurostatistics) into consideration. The President shall present the reasons for determining the amount of membership fees to the Assembly. Membership fees must be approved in a resolution adopted by the General Assembly.

Art. 11 - EUROPARC Federation Directorate

The EUROPARC Federation shall be managed by an Executive Director who will deliver implementation of the overall strategy. The Executive Director shall report to the Council.

Terms of reference for the Executive Director will be drawn up and regularly reviewed.

Art. 12 - Dissolution of the Federation

- a) The dissolution of the EUROPARC Federation may only be decided at a General Assembly convened specifically for this purpose, attended by at least half of all the members of the

association and with a three-quarters majority of those present. In the event that the first General Assembly does not constitute a quorum, a second General Assembly with the same agenda may be convened within four weeks. This may then pass the dissolution with a three-quarters majority, irrespective of the number of members present.

b) In the event of dissolution of the association or a discontinuation of recognized charitable purposes the assets of the organisation accrue to a legal entity under public law or to another charitable body to be used for nature conservation. The General Assembly decided with the same majorities applicable for dissolution to which organisation the assets of the association accrue in the event of dissolution or discontinuation of recognized charitable purposes.

END