

Report on trip to Island of Vilm/Germany, 2nd to 5th December 2012

Governance of Protected Areas in Eastern Europe – case studies on different governance types and lessons learned

organised by

BfN and ProPark Foundation for Protected Area Romania

Summary

Several international guidelines and conventions of different bodies (IUCN; CBD PoWPA) highlight the importance of governance/government types for managing Europe's protected areas successfully. Unfortunately this topic has not been given as much attention as one would wish, which also reflects in the delay of achieving PoWPA goals, especially of the Programme Element 2 (Governance, Participation, Equity and Benefit Sharing).

A better understanding of innovative systems of protected area governance would help decision takers, policy makers and politicians to work towards less centralised governance types and herewith raise the chance of achieving the PoWPA goals faster. Surely all European countries will profit from new approaches in protected area governance, but especially Eastern European countries where mostly much centralised decision-taking systems are in place.

Improving knowledge on the existing governance types, their importance, legal and administrative frameworks and resources needed for their use will contribute to adopting appropriate governance types in the Eastern European countries.

The basis of the workshop in Vilm built the study "Governance of protected Areas in Eastern Europe – case studies on different governance types and lessons learned", conducted in 2012 by ProPark/Romania and funded by BfN, amongst 18 Eastern European countries. Desk research and face-to-face interviews allowed collecting information about the different types of protected area governance and their understanding, recognition and use in practice.

The programme of the workshop comprised:

Introduction

- Introduction of participants
- Presentation of CBD PoWPA requirements
- Training session on types of governance of protected areas (IUCN governance matrix)

Main part

- Presentation, analysis and discussion of the study (in general)
- Presentation of specific case studies with input from present representatives
- Introduction to the current system of reporting and evaluating the progress on governance for CBD
- Interactive working session to develop method/assessment system to improve the current reporting and evaluating system

End

- Working session: How to achieve diversity of governance types for protected areas in the present countries (in 5 and 10 years)
- final recommendations for study (content and on conduction of the study)
- evaluation of the workshop by BfN

About 24 people from different Eastern European countries and Germany took part in the 2 ½ day workshop. They were representatives from Ministries, Nature Conservation Agencies and NGOs, park directors and staff, individuals. The workshop was held on the Island of Vilm/Germany, which forms part of the Biosphere Reserve South-East Rügen, in the facilities of the International Academy for Nature Conservation of BfN.

Follow up and actions/next steps

- **Criteria for evaluation and monitoring of good governance.** Whilst conducting the study, ProPark noticed that there is the need for developing a very practically orientated method/assessment system on governance of protected areas to improve the current reporting and evaluating system of CBD. First ideas came up during the workshop. With its knowledge and experience EUROPARC and its members could contribute to developing and defining measurable criteria for the evaluation and monitoring of good governance in protected areas in Eastern Europe.

→ **Contact ProPark Romania (e.g. Erika Stanciu) and determine how EUROPARC could get involved and be of help in developing such a tool. (CR; FM?)**

- **Capacity building on governance types in protected areas.** The analysis of the current level of governance types showed that still very centralised governance types are predominant in Eastern European protected areas. This is not to be seen as negative or disadvantageous per se, but it appears that nature conservation benefits increasingly if a variety of governance types for protected areas is possible in a country. It could be of help to establish new protected areas and also to do it faster if other entities are involved/allowed to declare protected areas, e.g. communities, multi-stakeholder groups, private land owners. Before that capacity building on different levels is necessary (e.g. inform officials of ministries, government of different possibilities; teach local communities about their possible impact; show advantages (and disadvantages) of different governance types to park directors, staff, etc. As EUROPARC understood the idea is to create a knowledge hub in Eastern Europe on governance in protected areas, to set up a training facility in the region, to offer capacity training to people involved in nature conservation in Eastern European countries and provide training material.

→ **In the future EUROPARC could get even more involved in capacity building in the topic of governance in protected areas. BfN (Gisela Stolpe) showed interest in involving EUROPARC more in their training activities. Maybe a EUROPARC Academy could be**

established, making EUROPARC the nr. 1 training facility for nature conservation in Europe. (PS; CR; FM?)

- **Study on dis-/advantages of a national nature conservation agency.** State governance by a national agency was identified as a possibility to promote good governance in Eastern European protected areas. It could be interesting for EUROPARC to be partner in conducting a study amongst the membership about the advantages and disadvantages of such a governance system, e.g. together with ProPark, BfN.

→ Contact ProPark Romania and/or BfN and figure out if there are plans to further studies and if and how we could contribute (CR; FM?)

- **Potential PAs for TB in Georgia.** Georgia has a lot of potential transboundary protected areas. Unfortunately relationships with most of the neighbouring countries are very difficult. However the relevant people should be contacted and made familiar with the EUROPARC Transboundary Parks Programme. The first contact will go through Ekaterine Kakabadze, IUCN Programme Office for Caucasus Programme and former winner of the Alfred-Toepler Scholarship, who was present at this workshop and very interested in transboundary work, hence she executed a study on this topic.

→ PS will contact Miss Kakabadze and find out the important contact persons. The invitation to TransParcNet in Maas-Swalm-Nette 2013 will also be send to her. (Done, 02.01.2013)

- **Potential PAs for TB and Charter amongst case studies.** Reading the report “Governance of Protected Areas in Eastern Europe – case studies on different governance types and lessons learned”, ideas came to mind about potential candidates for the EUROPARC Transboundary Parks Programme and the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas. These protected areas should be contacted to inform the about EUROPARC’s programmes and see if they are interested in working to towards one or the other certificate. The protected areas are:

- Logarska Dolina Landscape Park; Croatia (Charter)
- Zasavica Special Nature Reserve; Serbia (Charter)
- Transboundary Lake Prespa Park; Greece, Albania, Macedonia (Transboundary)
- Not further specified; Ukraine, Romania, Slovakia, Poland (Transboundary)

→ PS will put a list together. Agree on contact strategy with Communications Officer and Director before contacting the different protected areas.

Others

During the workshop EUROPARC was approached by Alexandru Rotaru, UNDP Moldova, asking for support on establishing the first National Park in Moldova by sending a supporting letter to the Moldovan Government. This request was taken back to the EUROPARC Headquarter. The Director will deal with this topic.

Contacts of participants

Please find the list attached.

Colour code:

Red = still to be done

Green = done

Regensburg, 02.01.2013

Petra Schultheiß

Governance of Protected Areas in Eastern Europe

2 to 5 December 2012, INA Vilm, Germany

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