



**EUROPARC**  
F E D E R A T I O N

## EUROPARC Council Election 2017

### Election candidate information

*Name:* **Nele Sõber**

*Nationality/Citizenship:* **Estonian**

*Member organisation:* **Keskkonnaamet / Environmental Board (EE)**

*Position to be elected for (council member, treasurer, president):* **Council**

*Nominated by:* **Pallas-Yllästunturi National Park**

*Current Position:* **Nature education specialist**



**Please introduce yourself in a few sentences, your background, interests and experience.**

I have worked in different sectors (private, public and non-governmental), which has given me a broader view of organizational management. I have studied marketing and international business. As I believe in long-life learning, I completed additional education just couple of years ago in financial management and project management.

My work history includes several project management positions. EU structural funds projects have been on nature tourism and nature conservation. I have 11-years of experience in leading and managing NGOs (one on local level and another on regional level). Leadership experience has given me additional skills – ability to communicate with key stakeholders and public, networking and strategic management skills.

I have long experience in being in governance bodies of two non-governmental organisations – one operates in nature tourism, another in rural tourism and LEADER activities.

Recently I am intrigued by nature photography, learning this on my own. I dance in a local folk dance group. I am flexible, good team-worker, loyal, thoroughgoing and hard-working.

**Experience relevant to the EUROPARC Federation.**

I have the required skills, knowledge and experience:

- I am able to work in English on a regular basis;
- I have knowledge and experience in public administrations and strategic planning;
- I am familiar with different types of organisations;
- I have experience being in governance bodies.

**Languages spoken and level of fluency (basic, moderate, good)**

Estonian- mother tongue

English- good

German- basic

Russian- basic

**Personal statement (please answer the questions below as concisely as possible)**

I will bring fresh and out-of-box ideas into EUROPARC having various educational background and work positions.

*The EUROPARC Federation needs a group of strong leaders in the Council who are willing to invest time in taking the organisation forward and raising its profile and who will represent it at national and European level.*

**What is your relationship to the EUROPARC Federation and what is your motivation for becoming a member of the EUROPARC Council / EUROPARC President / EUROPARC Treasurer?**

I was Europarc Nordic-Baltic Section coordinator during 2012-2014. But I was introduced to Europarc network already in 2009, when I was national project manager for Baltic Sea Region program project "Parks and Benefits- generating socio-economic benefits by a sustainable management of protected areas". Project partners applied for Charter for Sustainable Tourism. In this project I represented Matsalu National Park tourism area, who at this point was learning from others. Matsalu was awarded as a Charter area in 2015.

**What do you think you can offer the EUROPARC Federation and its members?**

I will offer my diverse background, which helps to develop EUROPARC from other sides. I am very organized, analytical, responsible, results-oriented and able to work independently. These traits and qualities help to develop EUROPARC as an organisation.

*The Federation was founded for its members. It works hard to be the voice of these members on various levels and to facilitate their work on the ground.*

**How do you see the role of the members in the Federation and how would you stimulate and encourage their contribution?**

The role of members is to be the voice of EUROPARC in their respective countries. In order to do that, members must be active. Therefore, the role of the Council member is to bring together different countries and types of organisations. I am open-minded, friendly and communicative. This means that I will listen and act accordingly.

If I am devoted to the organisation, good team-member and take responsibilities – I will set an example to our members, who will be encouraged through my example.

Members should be more eager to share experiences and good practices. This will be achieved by active Council members.

**How would you develop the internal communication and cooperation within the Federation?**

I would like to develop internal communication into being more two-sided (Federation-members; members-Federation). Cooperation within EUROPARC can be stimulated with different project proposals or mediating cooperation proposals.

EUROPARC should continue using existing communication tools. However, EUROPARC should keep in mind future challenges in any communication.

*EUROPARC is an organisation that is constantly developing and that needs to stay on top of the political agenda whilst thinking about the needs of its members.*

**What should the principle functions of the EUROPARC Federation be in the coming years?**

EUROPARC acts on behalf of its members, mainly influencing future policies, promoting and sharing good practices and facilitating cooperation. But less effort is put into directly promoting protected areas and their values. EUROPARC reaches more people than one PA can ever do, and here the Federation can help.

As the world is changing and our youth is changing, Federation in communication has to be 2 steps ahead. Internal and external communication is vital to build nature-oriented public and raise awareness of PAs and their assets. Informed visitors understand the importance of well-kept environment. Being the member of EUROPARC Health Commission, we have discussed that we – that is PAs – have to address wider public in more fun and joyful way attracting people to the nature at the same time raising their awareness about the environment.

Members manage, conserve and protect, but EUROPARC – one voice of Europe's PAs – can help with the communication, also externally, which in my opinion is the challenge for the next years.

**In what areas, e.g. lobbying, funding, does EUROPARC need to maximise its external relationships and with whom?**

I think our representation on lobbying level is quite good. Funding is crucial in every organisation and this is where EUROPARC needs to be more effective – not to rely too much on members fee, but find other funding besides for example EU NGO grant.

Please return this form electronically to [elections@europarc.org](mailto:elections@europarc.org) before the 28<sup>th</sup> July.

Please don't forget to also **send us a separate picture of yourself and a two minute video** introducing yourself to our members.