

## EUROPARC Council Election 2021

### Commitment required for EUROPARC Council

The EUROPARC council normally meets 2-3 times per year for 2-3 days on each occasion. These generally take place in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2nd and 3rd quarter of the year, with the latter meeting coinciding with the EUROPARC conference.

The council will consider and agree in advance the meeting and timing requirements, considering cost and sustainability of the meeting cycle.

Online meetings take place for about 90 minutes approximately every 6 weeks.

Council members are usually expected to follow a particular line of work within the EUROPARC portfolio of programmes. This may require additional time commitment and involvement.

During Covid restrictions all council meetings have been online and have been found to be satisfactory and productive. **It is likely this will remain a major component of the Council modus operandi**, so having access to good quality IT, camera, microphone and connection, to enable frequent online connectivity is needed.

Council members should ensure they represent the membership as a whole and not just their country, although sharing the specificities of their country and region is of course helpful.

### Specification of Council Member

Each council member must have:

- integrity
- a commitment to the organisation and its objectives
- an understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of being a council member
- a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to their duties as a council member
- strategic vision
- good, independent judgement
- an ability to think creatively
- willingness to speak their mind
- an ability to work effectively as a member of a team

## General Description of the Functions of the Council

### Council leadership

Every organisation, including EUROPARC should be led and controlled by an effective Council which collectively ensures delivery of its objectives, sets its strategic direction and upholds its values.

### The Role of the Council:

- Council members have and must accept ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of EUROPARC, ensuring it is solvent, well-run, and delivering the outcomes for which it has been set up.
- Council members should focus on the strategic direction of EUROPARC and avoid becoming involved in day to day operational decisions and matters.

### The Council in Control

Council should collectively be responsible and accountable for ensuring and monitoring that EUROPARC is performing well, is solvent, and complies with all its obligations.

- The council must ensure that EUROPARC complies with its own governing document, relevant laws, and the requirements of any regulatory bodies.
- The council should maintain and regularly review EUROPARC's system of internal controls, performance reporting, policies and procedures.
- The council must regularly review the risks to which EUROPARC is subject, and take action to mitigate risks identified.
- The council should ensure that it upholds and applies the principles of equality and diversity, and that EUROPARC is fair and open to all sections of the community in all of its activities.

### The High Performance Council

The council should have clear responsibilities and functions, and should compose and organise itself to discharge them effectively.

### Council review and renewal

Council should periodically review its own and EUROPARC's effectiveness, and take any necessary steps to ensure that both continue to work well.

- Council should regularly review and assess its own performance, that of individual members, and of sub-committees, commissions, task forces, working groups and other bodies.
- Council should have a strategy for its own renewal. Recruitment of new members should be open, and focused on creating a diverse and effective Council.
- Council should periodically carry out strategic reviews of all aspects of the EUROPARC's work, and use the results to inform positive change and innovation.

### Council delegation

Council should set out the functions of sub-committees, the director, and agents in clear delegated authorities, and should monitor their performance.

- Council should define the roles and responsibilities of the President in writing.
- Council should define the role of the director in writing.
- Council should ensure that staff, volunteers and agents have sufficient delegated authority to discharge their duties. All delegated authorities must have clear limits relating to budgetary and

- other matters.
- Council should set clear terms of reference for sub-committees, working groups, commission, task forces advisory panels, etc.
- All delegated authorities must be subject to regular monitoring by the council.

### **Council and trustee integrity**

Council should act according to high ethical standards, and ensure that conflicts of interest are properly dealt with.

- Council members must not benefit from their position beyond what is allowed by the law and is in the interests of EUROPARC
- Council should identify and promptly declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest affecting them.

### **Council openness**

Council should be open, responsive and accountable to its users<sup>1</sup> IE members, partners and others with an interest in its work.

- EUROPARC should identify those with a legitimate interest in its work (stakeholders)<sup>2</sup>, and ensure that there is a strategy for regular and effective communication with them about EUROPARC' achievements and work.
- Council should be open and accountable to stakeholders about its own work, and the governance of EUROPARC
- Council should encourage and enable the engagement of key stakeholders, such as users and beneficiaries, in EUROPARCs planning and decision-making.

## **Recruitment of a new Council**

The governance responsibilities in running an organisation are so important that council members have to bring along more than just a commitment to the mission and an interest in serving. Every member of the EUROPARC Federation council should have a specific competence or experience that is needed on the council.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the recruitment process is to ensure that the Council as a whole has the competencies necessary for effective council performance.

### **POLICY**

Council members will be elected by members based on a demonstrated record of possessing the specific qualifications and competencies necessary for effective governance.

Council members will be given an annual assessment of their performance. (This could be self-assessment, peer assessment or external assessment).

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<sup>1</sup> Users of EUROPARC are statutory authorities managing protected areas, those living and in protected areas, European agencies, NGOs involved in protected areas.

<sup>2</sup> Stakeholders are not the same people as members, but they do have an interest in there being an effective organisation, and benefit from its existence, just as the members do.

Those who are eligible for election to another term will be evaluated on their performance as a member over the years, and on their continuing ability to contribute a competency that is still needed by the organization.

Term limits will be strictly followed. This will ensure a regular infusion of new individuals who will bring needed competencies, provide fresh thinking and keep governance connected to the stakeholders.

## Competencies

### Universal Competencies:

**ALL council members must have:**

- A commitment to EUROPARC's mission, vision and values.
- Demonstrated willingness to devote enough time to council work i.e. work that is truly council work, and not Federation work. Council work relates to the strategic direction of EUROPARC and networking whereas Federation work involves the implementation of the strategy and leading the organisation's activities and work programme.
- Demonstrated capability to exercise leadership, teamwork, sound judgment on complex matters that will come before a council from time to time, personal integrity. (Note 'demonstrated').

### Collective Competencies:

Council **AS A WHOLE** needs:

- Diversity of experience, gender, background.
- Experience and expertise in management of protected areas.
- Financial background and expertise (both knowledge of financial sector and understanding of managing finances).
- Good knowledge of the users that are served by EUROPARC.
- High level leadership experience in a business organisation. (This is about core competencies, what people bring to the table and reflects the engagement that members have with the whole working world in which EUROPARC operates in doing its job).

### Desirable Competencies:

Given **current needs**, these characteristics should be looked for in recruitment:

- Ability to communicate with and influence key stakeholders<sup>2</sup> and public officials and influence legislation. This is brave new territory for EUROPARC; therefore the experience of working on commercial and charity NGO boards would be a desirable competence.

## Specific Skills and Competencies

- **Advocacy** – Ability to work with senior decision makers at European level from all sectors to promote Europarc and ‘sell’ its role and abilities
- **Networking** – Support staff team and make connections at the highest level for staff to follow up and develop relationships
- **Strategic Visioning** – Experience of developing the strategic direction for an organisation
- **Risk Management** – Council members are responsible for the organisation and need to take a mature approach and assessment to risk management their liabilities
- **Finance** – ability to understand NGO finances
- **Other Board/Council Experience** – Corporate, NGO or statutory agency
- **Review and evaluation** – The Council will need to assess not only itself but also reviewing the organisation’s strategic direction experience in setting targets, monitoring and evaluating performance and programmes in commercial and non-profit organisations
- **Human Resources/Appraisal** – experience of human resources issues to help support director and also lead appraisal of director(s) as appropriate.
- Sitting on appointment and disciplinary panels.