

15. & 16.11.2022

**Seminar-Dialogue
with the European Commission**

**Partnerships for Biodiversity
European policies and the role of Protected Areas**

organised by:



**EUROPARC
FEDERATION**



This event is funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or CINEA. Neither the European Union nor CINEA can be held responsible for them.

Partnerships for Biodiversity European policies and the role of Protected Areas

***2022 Seminar-dialogue with European Commission
Organized in cooperation with DG ENV, with the participation of
DG CLIMA***

TUE, 15.11.2022 (16:00 – 20:00)

***EUROPARC Federation Office, Boulevard Louis Schmidt 64, 1040
Brussels***

WEN, 16.11.2022, (09:00 – 16:00)

European Commission, Av. d'Auderghem 19, 1040 Brussels

Report ¹

Since 2017, EUROPARC and DG ENV have successfully organised the Seminar Dialogue. This year, on the 16th of November, **EUROPARC members had a new chance to sit with the European Commission** to share their experience and needs for the effective management of Natura 2000. By bringing together representatives of the European Commission and Protected Areas' professionals, EUROPARC aims to **highlight the contribution of Protected Areas to the achievement of the European policy goals**, whilst giving the European Commission a clear insight into the challenges faced by professionals in the field.

The Seminar counted with interventions from EUROPARC members and from the different DGs. It was a chance to share experiences from the parks and latest policy updates and funding opportunities. EUROPARC and the European Commission DG Environment set up a programme focused on the following key areas:

- **The new Restoration law: the role of, and the impact on, Protected Areas**
- **Nature Conservation in the Climate change context**

¹ Speakers' presentations available here: <https://www.europarc.org/seminar-dialogue-with-the-european-commission-2022/>

After 2 years online, the Seminar Dialogue 2022 was in presence again.

TUE, 15.11.2022

The event with the European Commission was anticipated by an internal networking meeting only for EUROPARC members, on 15th of November at the EUROPARC Federation Brussels Office. That was the opportunity for some of the participants to share expectations from the Seminar with EC, and to refresh their knowledge of the complex institutional structure of EU and discover how the EUROPARC Brussels Office interact with the European key actors in its Lobby and Advocacy work.



At the EUROPARC Brussels Office

WED, 16.11.2022

13 EUROPARC and PAs representatives and 12 Officers from the European Commission took part of the dialogue on 16th November.

SESSION I. THE NEW RESTORATION LAW: THE ROLE OF, AND THE IMPACT ON, PROTECTED AREA

After the opening **welcome** from the acting Head of Unit D.3 – Nature Conservation, DG Environment, Mrs Luisa Samarelli, and the EUROPARC President Mr Michael Hošek, the day was opened by Mrs Samarelli. She provided a quick update on the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and a presentation of the **Commission’s proposal of the new Nature Restoration law.**



The (acting) Head of Unit Mrs Luisa Samarelli opening the event

The proposal outlines that by 2030, restoration measures will cover 20% of EU’s land and sea. The second target entails that by 2050 measures will be in place for ALL ecosystems in need of restoration. The law proposal also details the targets connected with the Habitats and Birds Directives, more other sectors/habitats, identified as essentials (e.g. the urban ecosystems).



The achievement of these ambitions will need the engagement by the Member States, that will be asked to prepare their own *National Restoration Plans* showing how they will deliver on the targets. These documents will be designed by Member States in consultation with stakeholders and will be regularly updated. EU countries are expected to submit National Restoration Plans to the Commission within two years of the

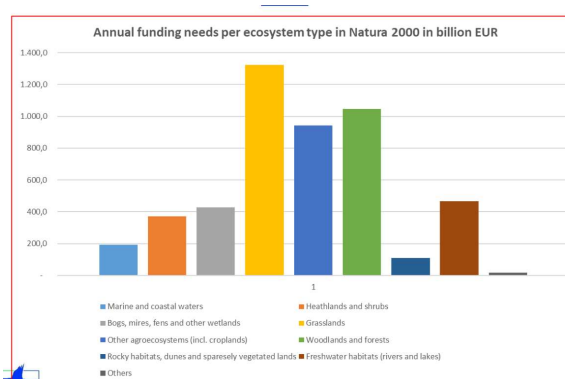
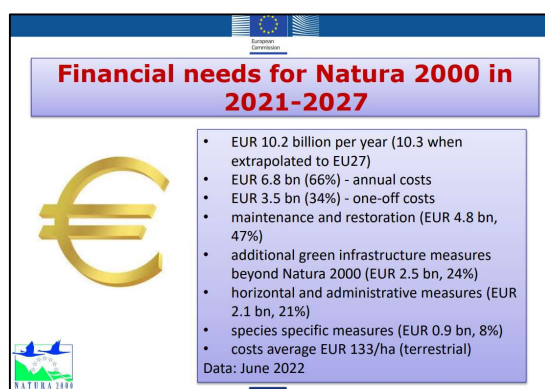
Regulation coming into force: this short time is considered a criticism, as well as the need to include regional and local authorities in the national processes.

The text of the Commission's Proposal for a Nature Restoration Law is available in English here: https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/nature-restoration-law_en

Conservation and restoration need resources.

Mr Przemek Oginski, DG ENV, introducing this crucial topic in his presentation on the **“The EU level PAF: funding needs and opportunities for nature”**.

He presented the estimations of the financial needs for Natura 2000 in the current EU long-term budget (also known as Multi-annual Financial Framework – MFF) running from 2021 to 2027. The Commission analysed if and how the financial resources devoted to biodiversity in different programmes were successful are effective. During the French presidency of the Council, an important proposal has been made, for a new big financial investment in nature protection and restoration for the next MFF.



From the Mr Przemek Oginski's Presentation

Taking the floor to start to present the Protected Areas' perspectives, João Cardoso de Melo, (from Cascais Ambiente - PT) and member of the EUROPARC Council shared the **results of the Siggen Seminar 2022 “Nature Restoration – The role of Protected Areas”**. In that context, eleven experts from all over Europe came together to discuss the role that Protected Areas must play in the restoration process. For two extensive days, participants worked in teams to find answers to the questions:

- What are the benefits of nature restoration for communities?
- How to implement nature restoration (from a governance perspective)?
- What are the key roles of Protected Areas (managers) in nature restoration?
- How can restoration projects be set up?



João Cardoso de Melo, Cascais Ambiente (PT)

5 key roles of Protected Areas in Restoring Nature in Europe



1. Protected Area management teams are experienced and skilled ecosystems caretakers. They have the **know-how to support, lead and inspire restoration projects**. They have the ability and governance tools to plan, implement and monitor them to ensure success.
2. Protected Areas **offer high quality reservoirs of diverse species and functional habitats and ecosystems**. They can serve as a model and a source to be connected to restored areas.
3. Protected Areas are, or can be, **living labs for nature restoration projects**. Their features and structures are well suited to incubate pilot projects, demonstrate what is possible to achieve and share learnings and successes.
4. Being a connection between people and nature in living land- & seascapes, Protected Areas can **help communicate and collaborate with communities** to foster ownership, pride and involvement in nature restoration projects at a local level. They can help communities thrive, be rewarded and celebrate success!
5. **Bring in resources and funds for restoration** to drive action. Protected Areas can be a bridge between local, regional, and global activities and networks

Mr Henrik Jansson, Director of Parks & Wildlife, Metsähallitus - (FI) presented the **Finland's Parks experiences and lessons learnt in Identifying restoration priorities and actions**. Finland is engaged since years in habitats restoration. The topic is very important in the country, especially for the connection with the forestry sector, and one of the challenges is to find a compromise between conservation and economic use of the Finnish forest heritage.



Mr Henrik Jansson and Mrs Luisa Samarelli

SESSION II. NATURE CONSERVATION IN THE CLIMATE CHANGE CONTEXT

The EUROPARC Climate Change Task Force has been working in the preparation of a **White paper: Protected Areas and the European strategies for climate change adaptation and biodiversity**. Its key messages were shared with the Seminar Dialogue’s participants by Mr Olivier De Sadeleer, project manager of the Natur’Adapt Project. The Climate change defies us to take into account the big incertitude on the future, in all strategies and actions for biodiversity, at all levels, inside and outside Protected Areas.



Mr Olivier De Sadeleer, EUROPARC and Mr Frank Wassen, DG ENV

These concepts are already included in the planning work of the Brussels Environment Agency (BE) as shown in the presentation of the **Case study: Climate change adaptation into the management of natural heritage sites, regional parks and forest in Brussels (BE)**.

The dialogue with the research and scientific sector is necessary for the implementation of the EU policies, especially in a climate change context. This will be one of the aspects of the new EUROPARC project **“NaturaConnect”**, introduced by the project manager Mrs Marit Schnepf.

Objectives

- Support planning authorities, by collecting and making accessible the **best available data and tools** to assess biodiversity and the benefits to people.
- Provide input to planning authorities into the design of an effective Trans-European Nature Network by **anticipating future developments in climate and land use conditions** that may limit or enable the development of such a network.
- Identify **alternative configurations of protected areas and corridors** based on preferences related to policy targets.
- Identify opportunities and challenges to the implementation of the network, mechanisms, and instruments of implementation, particularly **financial instruments** and ways to mitigate barriers through extensive dialogue with practitioners.
- Showcase applications of the protected area network design through **case studies**.

Mrs Marit Schnepf

For the European Commission Perspectives, Mr Peter Loeffler, DG CLIMA shared an update on the **Climate Policy Developments Relevant for Protected Areas**.

Finally, the decision makers in EU and at the international level have started to agree about the connection on climate change, biodiversity and human health.


Mr Peter Loeffler

In order to help the managers to deal with climate change in Natura 2000 sites, the Commission is preparing a new **guidance on climate change and Natura 2000**. Mrs Stefania Charisiadou, DG ENV, updated the participants about the ongoing process.

Update of climate change & Natura 2000 guidance

- Update the 2013 Guidelines on climate change and Natura 2000 building on:
 - Links with broader **climate change policy and targets**
 - **Practical guidance & advice for N2K managers and nature authorities on CC adaptation** to refine their conservation approaches and strategic planning based on examples of good practices
 - **Funding opportunities**





Mrs Stefania Charisiadou, DG ENV

The rich debate was resumed with the conclusions by Frank Wassen, DG ENV, and the EUROPARC President Michael Hošek. The new restoration law is very welcomed by Protected Areas. The law and its implementation should take into account the climate change impacts on habitats and ecosystems. The Natura 2000 management rules should also become more flexible. There is a need of indications, skills and possibly also concrete answers on how to deal with these new challenges in the future nature protection. The matter is urgent.

The dialogue collaboration between EUROPARC, the Protected Areas and the European Commission will continue. Protected Areas are willing and ready to offer experiences and look together for answers, good for the nature and humans inside and outside Protected Areas.



Mr Michael Hošek, EUROPARC President

