

A group of about ten people are walking away from the camera on a wide, wet beach. The wet sand reflects the sky and the people. The sky is a vibrant blue with scattered white clouds. The horizon is visible in the distance.

EUROPARC FEDERATION ANNUAL REPORT 2022

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*Michael Hošek,
EUROPARC President.*

President's remarks



2022 was a strategic year for EUROPARC. The Global Biodiversity Framework was adopted with the goal of ensuring sustainable use of natural resources on one-third of land and sea areas in the form of not only Protected Areas but also OECMs.

The goal is clear, but the path to it is not easy. Maintaining the quality and benefits of Protected Areas, means we need to start working with landscape users to ensure our natural resources

are sustainable. Both the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the draft EU Nature Restoration Law assert that Protected Areas are a key pillar in their objectives. This is the main challenge for EUROPARC: to be constantly at the forefront of the development of Protected Areas, but equally to be at the vanguard of the development of tools that support the people that work for them. Of course, all this is within the context to reverse the negative trend in the state of biodiversity.

2022 was also the first year after almost two years of the COVID-19 pandemic. EUROPARC quickly adapted to connecting and collaborating online and is now working to effectively balance the online and physical networking in terms of communication with and between members. Related to this, Protected Areas are no longer exclusively a matter of public administration: increasingly, there are many good examples of private Protected Areas, with the private sector increasingly aware of the importance of ensuring sustainability of our natural resources. EUROPARC will continue to expand its network, liaise with new sectors, adapt and rise to the challenges that present themselves for the benefit of all members.

All of the above is framed within a world that is uncertain and rapidly changing, including (especially?) in combination with climate change. EUROPARC's role is to bring a clear vision to this situation, but also a pragmatic approach that can be implemented in practice. In 2022, it was clearer than ever that all of this depends above all on cooperation, not only between our members, but also with other partners outside our silos. We will only be able to do this through a coordinated joint effort. That is why every member is so important to EUROPARC and, I believe, why EUROPARC is so important for its members.

**Michael Hošek
President**

*EUROPARC Directorate at the Conference
2022 in France.*

Strengthen and grow our Network to deliver our vision

EUROPARC seeks to work with our members to generate collective foresight for Protected Areas policy and practice. By being open to an approach of continual development, we will stimulate new ways of thinking and learning from each other that will enable different ways in which our shared future can unfold.



Increase the human and financial capacity of the network

Members and Directorate Update

In 2022, EUROPARC had 15 new members, 4 strikes off and 4 resignations. We currently have 404 members.

With the EUROPARC team spread out across Europe, finding time to connect and review our work collectively is key. This ensures that we are constantly able to work to the best of our abilities for and with our members.

Overall, the team in the directorate has grown with new projects. A full-time Youth Officer was employed, a part-time communication assistant was employed until August, and two new staff members joined the Directorate with the start of the NaturaConnect Horizon project. Also, some staff changes occurred in our finance department: in developing the services provided, tasks have been reassigned and revised accordingly. An overview, plus contacts, of the EUROPARC Directorate can be found on the final page of this publication.

Meetings and projects

The EUROPARC General Assembly took place in Argelès-sur-Mer, before the Annual Conference. The President, the Treasurer, the Youth Representative and the Internal Auditor presented their reports. The Executive Director then provided an update about the work of the Federation in 2021 and 2022, and invited the Sections and EUROPARC Commissions to provide specific updates. Additionally, the membership voted in favor of a statute change that will allow the General Assembly and voting to take place online in the future.

Through the generous support of the Alfred Toepfer Stiftung, the EUROPARC Directorate was able to come together at Gut Siggen in March 2022.

Here, training to facilitate a world café and on the basics of the appreciative inquiry approach were delivered. Planned actions for the year were reviewed and there was a collective brainstorm about the 50th anniversary celebrations of EUROPARC in 2023. The training on appreciative inquiry and world café were put to good use at the Conference in Austria.

A large number of meetings were organised and attended by the team to develop new projects and initiatives, all aimed at contributing to implementing the priorities of our strategy. Multiple meetings were managed internally and with our members, in particular within Sections, Commissions and Task Forces.

In 2022, we submitted three project applications:

- 1) GreenHealth: offers the opportunity to pilot and develop the Healthy Parks Healthy People Europe Programme;
- 2) MPA4Change: under Interreg EuroMed programme, focuses on Marine Protected Areas;
- 3) The LIFE NGO grant for 2023: this was also approved.

In addition, following requests from our members, we formalised support to the following project proposals: "BIC - Interreg Central Europe - Promoting Biodiversity Keeper Communities"; LIFE ResLand under the LIFE Climate Action call; "SmARF" submitted under the LIFE Climate Adaptation Call; "FerNET" LIFE application focused on the marine ecosystem and species protection (*Patella ferruginea*); LIFE ReBOMB focused on species protection in the Apennines IT.

Learn more about our current projects here.



Voting during the General Assembly.

Finance

Financing the Federation is an ever-present issue. The EUROPARC fundraising strategy was revised in 2022 with the active involvement of the Council. In particular, a code of ethics and gift acceptance policy were finalised and approved. The Council, with the support of the Directorate, has actively worked to develop these documents, which will guide and help our fundraising work over the coming years.

Partnerships

Diversifying EUROPARC's income is a necessary step to ensure a financially stable Federation. Our partnership with Gymglish, an online language school, is ongoing. Furthermore, in 2022 we started a partnership with Senhive to help promote their technology that helps detect wildfires, 'SEN-EYE'. Whilst we were positive about the potential of this new technology, Senhive shifted their work focus and, as such, have ceased to work on the product.

Learn more about the partnership with Gymglish [here](#).

Summary of Balance Sheet EUROPARC Federation

ASSETS		2022	2021
Assets	Total fixed assets	8 333,68	6 723,03
	Total current assets	758 723,04	459 985,35
Total Assets		767 056,72	466 708,38
LIABILITIES			
Profit Reserve		218 611,51	201 672,81
Liabilities	Provisions	30 875,42	27 861,40
	Accounts payable	517 569,79	237 174,17
Total Equity and Liability		767 056,72	466 708,38
Income and Expenditure			
Income			
	Membership fees	355 277,27	346 506,32
Grants	EC core grant	323 699,70	164 309,39
	Project grants	336 773,30	237 993,40
	Other income	250 886,65	123 949,10
Total income		1 266 636,92	872 758,21
Simplified Expenditure			
Total Personnel costs		715 948,21	595 094,43
Total Office costs		28 360,92	27 946,76
Total Travel and Subsistence		159 537,19	14 621,04
Total Other direct costs		183 383,61	93 936,40
Total Overhead costs		88 689,89	56 805,32
Total External Assistance/ Professional Fees		73 778,40	78 571,69
Total costs		1 249 698,22	866 975,64
Result		16 938,70	5 782,57



EUROPARC Conference in France © Lee Kershaw.

Build the capacity of our organisation and its members

LIFE ENABLE: supporting lifelong learning and professional development

In the LIFE ENABLE project, partners are actively engaged in developing capacity-building opportunities. In 2022, the project was featured and promoted at multiple significant events, including the ESPARC Conference in Spain as well as the EUROPARC Conferences in Austria and France. The French Conference marked the beginning of the application process for the European Nature Academy - a major, new knowledge hub with cost-free competence-based blended learning courses for Europe's Nature Managers.



Also, the project continued developing the Training Needs Analysis tool as well as working on a Gap Analysis of current training provision to identify the capacity-building needs of nature's managers.

In June 2022, in Schneverdingen, Germany, LIFE ENABLE assembled 17 marine and forest experts and partners' representatives to start the process of developing marine and forest competence-based blended learning courses. In August, the LIFE ENABLE team filmed several educational videos for the European Nature Academy in two locations in Scotland: the Scottish Seabird Centre in North Berwick and NatureScot's Battleby Conference Centre.



The project and all actions are made possible with support from the LIFE financial instrument of the European Community

Learn more about the project here.



Conferences

After two years of online events, in 2022, live EUROPARC networking came back! The year was extra special with two EUROPARC Conferences organised:

EUROPARC Conference in Austria

From the 2nd to the 6th of May, 182 people from the EUROPARC network got together in Neusiedler See – Seewinkel National Park, Austria, to discuss “Communicating in the 21st Century - Question your Mindset!”.

Communication is everywhere: from technical reports and social media posts, to stakeholder engagement processes. All those working in Protected Areas need to be equipped with exceptional skills if they want to communicate effectively.

Whilst EUROPARC managed to keep a strong connection during the peak of COVID-19, it was important to ensure that networking practices were at the forefront of the Conference. Participants were able to learn with and from each other throughout the Conference. Interaction and exchanges were interlaced throughout the programme, from the World Café that kickstarted the Conference to the participatory Mind Factories where participants actively worked on their topics of choice.

Learn more about the Conference in Austria here.



The World Cafe at the EUROPARC Conference in Austria.

EUROPARC Conference in France

The strength of a network is based on the connections it creates. That's why EUROPARC was excited to offer its members a second opportunity to connect at the Conference in France with the theme “Climate Change; Resilient Parks”.

The Conference was organised in the framework of the NaturAdapt project. The project created the foundations of a dynamic collective learning process on Climate Change Adaptation in Protected Areas. You can learn more about the project here (page 37).

The Conference provided its 250 participants with an exclusive look at the Climate Change Adaptation

Methodology, shared on-the-ground experiences from nature managers on climate change adaptation through the “Field Station” sessions and allowed participants to reflect on how climate change affects them and their work during interactive plenary sessions.

Learn more about the Conference in France here.



A field station session at the EUROPARC Conference in France.

Webinars and Podcasts

EUROPARC webinars are one of our most popular and easily accessible networking and experience-sharing tools.

In 2022, a total of 13 webinars were organised on a wide range of topics related to Protected Area management. Over 3,000 people registered, resulting in around 1,500 webinar participants, as well as many more that watched the recordings.



Learn more about the 2022 webinars [here](#).

A new communication method introduced in 2021 was further developed in 2022: EUROPARC Podcasts "Voices from the Parks". These serve as amplifiers to distribute the importance of Protected Areas for the wider society. A total of 6 podcasts were produced on topics ranging from youth involvement to urban forestry.

You can listen to the podcasts [here](#).

EUROPARC Sections

- Nordic-Baltic
- Atlantic Isles
- Central and Eastern Europe
- Low Countries
- Nationale Naturlandschaften e.V. (Germany)
- Francophone
- Federparchi (Italy)
- Spain
- Members - no section

Section Agreements

EUROPARC Sections reflect the priorities and characteristics of the areas they cover in pursuit of common goals, as a European Federation. They undertake a huge volume of work and both support and inform the work of the Federation as a whole.

In order to improve and strengthen the cooperation with our Sections, Sonja Miller from NNL e.V. (formerly EUROPARC Germany) was co-opted in the Council as the new Section representative. The Council analysed EUROPARC's ongoing partnerships, with a specific focus on the development of new partnership agreements with Sections. Four meetings were organised with Sections (two online and two live) to prepare and finalise the agreements. These were then approved by the Council and will be formally signed in 2023 to guide mutual cooperation and responsibilities for the implementation of the EUROPARC Strategy until 2030. More specific agreements for the implementation of detailed tasks may be developed with individual Sections in 2023.





Part of the Sustainable Agriculture Commission meeting at the EUROPARC Conference in France.

New Commissions

As a member association, it is vital to provide opportunities for members to develop and participate in the work of the Federation. Working on common goals agreed as an association, which develop and promote the value of Parks and Protected Areas as well as benefits to the membership as a whole, is fundamental to the EUROPARC ethos. By offering their time, expertise and ideas to specific groups, both the person and their organisation benefit in many ways.

Over the course of the year, the Council revised the structure, composition and terms of reference of Commissions and Task Forces in order to align priorities and areas of work with the new EUROPARC Strategy.

The following four commissions are now operational: Sustainable Agriculture, Healthy Parks Healthy People Europe (HPHPE), Management Effectiveness and Periurban. Each commission has developed a road map

and work plan to further the work in their topic area. In most cases, this will culminate in a member-led project to develop and advance Protected Area management.

New Policy Strategy

A priority for 2022 was to revise the Policy and Advocacy strategy of the Federation, aligning it with recent International and European policy developments and importantly to the goals of the EUROPARC Strategy to 2030. Thanks to the support of an advisory group involving members and Sections, a new policy plan and priorities has been agreed and the Policy and Advocacy Strategy adopted. This will guide our collective policy work over the coming years.

More information on the composition and objectives of the commissions [here](#).

Promote greater inclusion and equity within and by our network



Learn more about the support to Ukraine [here](#).

Support to Ukraine

In these difficult times for Ukraine and for all humanity, there was an urgent concern to work together as Protected Areas in Europe and to stand up for the people and their livelihoods in Ukraine. To be as effective as possible, EUROPARC joined the call of the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) to aid Ukrainian Protected Areas. FZS has been active in Ukraine for many years and during the war was able to aid Protected Areas in Ukraine, sheltering displaced people and providing supplies. EUROPARC members really stepped up with support for our Ukrainian colleagues.

Strengthen the Status of Protected Areas for a Stronger more Sustainable Nature

In response to environmental and societal challenges, including climate change, health and well-being and the green recovery, the role of Protected Areas needs to be fully recognised with improved investment in them.



EUROPARC President Michael Hošek speaks at the Seminar Dialogue 2022.

Champion the value and benefits of Protected Areas in response to environmental and societal challenges

Seminar Dialogue

Since 2017, EUROPARC and the EC's DG ENV have brought together representatives of the European Commission and Protected Areas to highlight the contribution and the challenges of Protected Areas to the achievement of the European policy goals.

In 2022, 13 EUROPARC members and 12 Officers from different DGs of the European Commission took part in the Seminar Dialogue. It focused on "The new Restoration law: the role of, and the impact on, Protected Areas" and "Nature Conservation in the Climate change context".

The discussion was rich and concluded by EUROPARC President Michael Hošek saying:

"The new restoration law is very much welcomed by Protected Areas; it 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 for skills and concrete answers on how to deal with these new challenges in future nature protection."

Learn more about the Seminar Dialogue here.



Large Carnivores

The EU Platform on Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores brings together disparate representatives with an interest in this issue.

EUROPARC continued to be an active member, attending annual meetings and contributing to the elaboration of the Toolkit for the setting of Regional Platforms. Also, EUROPARC organised a thematic webinar focused on conflict management through participatory processes: an opportunity to explore tools and solutions to support constructive dialogue in Protected Areas.

Learn more about the thematic webinar here.

Learn more about the EU Platform here.

EU Nature Restoration Law

EUROPARC is closely following the preparatory work for the publication of the EU Nature Restoration Regulation. EUROPARC welcomed the proposal and is working to support its successful approval in partnership with other organisations. Thematic discussions and exchanges between members and with the European Commission took place during the Siggen Seminar and the Seminar Dialogue in Brussels. The proposed legislation will be crucial for nature recovery and EUROPARC is seeking to ensure Protected Areas can actively contribute to its implementation.

Bern Convention

EUROPARC's membership stretches well beyond the 27 countries of the EU. Representation in the Council of Europe ensures that EUROPARC works closely on the development and implementation of relevant policies and strategies to reflect the perspectives of Protected Areas from all over Europe. It enables EUROPARC to facilitate the dissemination of knowledge and expertise particularly to members for whom the Bern Convention is the principal European nature framework. Also, EUROPARC is contributing to ensure coherence between EU policies and Council of Europe initiatives.

EUROPARC actively contributed to the work of the Bern Convention in the production of its strategy and plan for action towards 2030. This foresees an important role for Protected Areas. EUROPARC attended the Standing Committee meeting in Strasbourg and contributed to the work of the expert groups on Protected Areas and on Climate Change. Particular attention has been given to Convention funding, the Strategy and plan for action to 2030, Large Carnivores, Emerald network, Climate Change and Protected Areas. In addition, EUROPARC was elected to lead the new Environment, Climate Change, Heritage and Health Committee, which we initiated in 2021.

Learn more about the Bern Convention here.



Stefania Charisiadou from DG Env speaks at the Seminar Dialogue 2022.

Policy Actions

EUROPARC is committed to strengthening the case for Protected Areas at high political level in Europe. For this, EUROPARC organised events, shared information, attended and contributed to meetings and initiatives in Brussels and engaged our network in relevant European activities. In 2022, activities included:

- The Seminar Dialogue with the European Commission;
- Participation in EU events: Green Week, Week of Regions, LIFE Awards, Natura 2000 Awards;
- Providing feedback on EU consultations;
- The Siggen Seminar for PA managers on Nature Restoration.

We maintained our established cooperation with EU Institutions (EU Parliament, EC, CoR), live in Brussels and online, contributing to relevant meetings, expert groups, committees and intergroup bodies. EUROPARC maintained the focus of our policy and advocacy work on Protected Areas and Natura 2000 for the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy. EUROPARC joined the new European Biodiversity Platform (EUBP): this provides an opportunity to continue our engagement in relevant expert groups with the European Commission, Member States and other NGOs and in our seat on the stakeholder advisory group of Biodiversa+.

In 2022, EUROPARC attended 2 EUBP plenary meetings, 2 NADEG and 2 Nature Directors Meetings (Strasbourg and Prague). These have been good opportunities to contribute and gain a better understanding of ongoing policy developments mainly on Protected Area related targets, Nature Directive implementation matters, the proposed legislation for nature restoration, as well as on other areas that have a direct impact on biodiversity, including agriculture, climate and energy. At the same time, this involvement provided valuable opportunities to raise the case for Protected Areas, share practical experiences and challenges and identify opportunities for the future.

EUROPARC continued to cooperate closely with other organisations in the framework of the European Habitats Forum. The focus of the exchanges and discussions in 2022 has primarily been on the EU Biodiversity Strategy, with specific attention given to the Protected Area targets and EU Nature Restoration. EUROPARC attended and contributed to two annual plenary meetings, two meetings with DG Env, and regular meetings/exchanges and inputs into the European Habitat Forum (EHF) thematic working groups (protected areas, nature restoration, pollinators). In the main, these have been opportunities to gather information on policy developments and share knowledge, expertise and perspectives with other organisations to develop and coordinate actions for policy development and implementation.



LIFE UrbanGreeningPlans project partners meet in Lisbon.

LIFE UrbanGreeningPlans

Urban areas are heavily affected by climate change. Furthermore, the need for green spaces has only increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Responding to these societal challenges adequately involves ensuring that more space for nature is available and assured.

To do so effectively for humans and biodiversity, it is important to learn from and build upon Periurban Parks. The LIFE UrbanGreeningPlans project does exactly this.

Within the project, the cities of Athens, Milan, Lisbon, Barcelona and Brussels are working on different actions on the ground. Furthermore, the project gives ample opportunity for the different cities to visit and learn from each other.

In 2022, project partners came together in Lisbon for a Periurban Park Symposium. During the symposium, different large-scale nature restoration and connectivity projects were introduced. They all shared the same goal: connecting urban areas to natural landscapes and improving Green Infrastructure.

Furthermore, a meeting in Milan allowed project partners to learn from the innovative communication work Parco Nord Milano is undertaking within the project. Through their “Bee Highway” and tree-planting actions, they directly involve citizens in measures to improve biodiversity.

Learn more about the project [here](#).



The LIFE UrbanGreeningPlans project has received funding from the LIFE Programme of the European Union.

Develop and nurture cross-sectorial partnerships

Agriculture and Protected Areas

The commitment to sustainable agriculture in and around Protected Areas continued in 2022 with the promotion of EUROPARC's Position paper "Protected Areas as Laboratories for Sustainable Agriculture". This highlights the role of Protected Areas in implementing the EU Green Deal & EU Agricultural Policies and recommends the take into account Protected Areas and Natura 2000 sites in the National Strategic Plans of the European Common Agricultural Policy. This paper was widely disseminated among EU decision-makers.

The EUROPARC Sustainable Agriculture in Protected Areas Commission further worked in elaborating project proposals to test the methodology of a new Charter for partnership between Protected Areas and farmers. Funders and partners to develop this work were sought.

Joao Melo, chair of the Sustainable Agriculture Commission, during the workshop at the EUROPARC Conference in France



Council of Europe

Since 2013, EUROPARC has had participatory status within the Conference of International NGOs. In 2021, EUROPARC lobbied for the creation of The Thematic Committee: Environment, Climate Change, Heritage & Health (ECCH&H). Led by EUROPARC to develop cross sectoral understanding and actions across Council of Europe conventions, in 2022 the Committee worked on:

- Expressing to members states the concerns on future financing of the Bern Convention;
- Lobbying the German government to sign the Landscape Convention;
- Sending inputs to the Drafting Group on Human Rights and Environment (CDDH-ENV) preparing the Recommendation "Promotion and protection of human rights by ensuring a clean, healthy and sustainable environment".



Participants of the TransParcNet Meeting 2022.





Field Trip at the TransParcNet Meeting 2023. Photo: Zdeněk Macot.

Transboundary Programme

EUROPARC's Transboundary Programme supports a process of mutual understanding, often between countries where history may have created mutual distrust, or administrative barriers and develop management tools to enable greater cooperative management of shared natural and cultural resources.

In 2022, The TransParcNet Meeting was held in the Binnental - Veglia Devero Transboundary Park (IT/CH), focusing on "PARKS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE: Ways to a closer involvement and to better identification of people with their parks".

More than 30 people from 16 organisations and 7 different countries participated.

Having seen a rise in the interest of nature and open areas as "safe" places since the COVID-19 pandemic, it was pertinent for Transboundary Areas to discuss and share experience on the practical management and elaboration of cultural heritage across borders. Four "pillars" of parks and cultural heritage were identified: culture, migrations, trading and languages. Shared experience revealed these to be common drivers of a variety of local processes. Transboundary cooperation should therefore focus on these aspects, as well as on nature protection, in order to sustain, develop and manage these special cross-border areas.

The TransParcNet network continued to grow: during 2022, the Håldi Transboundary Area (NO/FI) and the European Nature Park of Scarpe Escaut Plains (BE/FR) were awarded with the certificate. Moreover, in 2022, three areas renewed their transboundary commitment: Maas-Schwalm-Nette Nature Park (DE/NL); Neusiedler See – Seewinkel & Fertő-Hanság National Parks (AU/HU); Saxon-Bohemian Switzerland (DE/CZ). Currently, there are 13 Transboundary areas involving 29 Protected Areas. Very sadly, the Ukrainian war has meant that cooperation with Russia in Pasvik-Inari trilateral park and between Oulanka and Paanajärvi National Parks has been halted.

Several meetings have been organised to present the programme to other European cross-border areas and interested associations, among them: the Three Nations Park of Pyrenees (SP/FR/AD), the Common Wadden Sea (NL/DE/DK), The Pelagos Sanctuary (FR/IT/MC).

Learn more about the event here.



The Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT). The participation in the IUCN-WCPA Transboundary Conservation Specialists Groups actively continues.

EUROPARC seeks to further enlarge the network by reaching out to include marine transboundary areas and biosphere reserves.

During a special mission in Brussels, Council member Stefano Santi met with European Commission and Council of Regions representatives to explore developing future synergies. DG ECHO - European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations - was very interested to learn more about cross-border cooperation in response to fires and natural disasters, especially after the terrible fire of Summer 2022 in the Saxon-Bohemian Switzerland Transboundary Area (DE/CZ).

***Learn more about
the TransParcNet here.***



Podyji National Park & Thayatal National Park (CZ/AT) receive their Transboundary Award.

Maas-Schwalm-Nette Nature Park (DE/NL).



Enhance the status of nature on land and sea and people's connection to it

By being able to provide ways in which people are more and better connected to nature in sustainable ways, EUROPARC will contribute to a society where equity to access and enjoy nature are no longer hoped for goals, but are achieved in practice.





Participants of the Siggen Seminar.

Improve Protected Areas governance, planning and management effectiveness

New Commission

A new dedicated participatory group to focus on Protected Areas and Management Effectiveness was established to address and develop an important priority area of EUROPARC Strategy and as an opportunity to further connect policy and management practice. The first meeting of the Commission took place live at the EUROPARC Conference in France and also during a dedicated 2-day hybrid meeting in Prague, in November. The group contributed to developing a project concept, which will be considered for funding application under LIFE in 2023 and defined priority actions for 2023.

Siggen Seminar on Nature Restoration

One of EUROPARC's main capacity-building events is the Siggen Seminar. Generously supported by the Alfred Toepfer Stiftung, EUROPARC offers a yearly, multiple-day training in Gut Siggen in Northern Germany.

In the sphere of the Nature Restoration Law, the 2022 Siggen Seminar looked at the role of Protected Areas in nature restoration.

As clearly stated by the EU in the Green Deal and the Biodiversity Strategy 2030, protecting the nature we have will not be enough to reverse biodiversity loss. A complementary, ambitious effort is now needed in nature restoration.

11 experts from across Europe came together to discuss the role Protected Areas have to play in this process. The seminar followed the "co-petition" approach: working together, but in separate teams, participants aimed to answer the following 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?

This resulted in a presentation, open for use by all Protected Area managers, that details the outcomes of the Seminar.



Learn more about the event here.



NaturaConnect kickoff meeting.

Start of the NaturaConnect project

Building a resilient nature network across Europe - Start of the NaturaConnect project

A resilient and well-connected network of conserved areas promotes biodiversity and species protection.

Against the background of the EU's 30% conservation targets, EUROPARC joined a Horizon Europe project, involving collaboration with 22 partners from research institutes and non-governmental organisations across Europe. NaturaConnect is developing tools and methods to help EU countries identify potential sites for the designation of conserved areas. The aim of the project is to develop connectivity scenarios based on various criteria and to design a blueprint for a Trans-European Nature Network (TEN-N). NaturaConnect will contribute to EUROPARC'S European Nature Academy (in the LIFE ENABLE project) by producing capacity building materials relevant to the development of connectivity and management of the TEN-N.

Learn more about the project here.

Workshops Social Impact Assessment Fidelio

Stakeholder engagement is an essential skill for Protected Area managers. It is not uncommon for a park's work, either at the designation stage or throughout the park's working life, to encounter difficulties and resistance from local communities or certain groups of stakeholders.

EUROPARC was approached by the University of Warwick to help create two workshops for them on Social Impact Assessment of Protected Areas within the Fidelio project.

Within the two workshops, participants from the EUROPARC network were introduced to the social impact assessment tool developed within Fidelio and were able to give direct inputs on its further development.

Learn more about Fidelio here.



NaturaConnect receives funding under the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement number 101060429

Involve youth in the work of Protected Areas

Youth Actions

Young People are the decision-makers of tomorrow. It is important they are given the opportunity to consider how the present management of our environment will affect them, so they can express their thoughts, opinions and get involved in the issues that will eventually impact them. EUROPARC is committed to a greater integration of youth in our organisation and across Parks in Europe.

To update our understanding of what is happening on the ground as parks restarted their Junior Ranger and Youth+ projects after the lockdowns, EUROPARC launched a registration process across the membership. In 2022, this resulted in 28 Parks with registered Junior Ranger Programmes from 14 countries, of which 15 have Youth+ Programmes.

Council Youth Representative, Leonardo Cerno started his mandate and, together with EUROPARC's new Youth Officer, Jessica Micklem-Kolenic, ran a successful youth workshop at the EUROPARC Conference in France. During 2022, a group of EUROPARC youth started to build the structure and format for a EUROPARC Youth Council to kick off in 2023.

Thanks to the generous support of the County Administrative Board of Skane and the Kullaberg Nature Reserve, the Kullaberg International Youth+ Summer Experience was the first of its kind. Nine young people from eight countries came to the Swedish Park for a three-weeks work experience. They helped with nature conservation, a Junior Ranger camp, and a design-thinking workshop.

Learn more about the Youth+ Programme here.

The EUROPARC Youth Manifesto champions youth empowerment.

In the beginning of 2022, two young people were interviewed in a EUROPARC Podcast about their experiences of getting involved in decision-making spaces in their Protected Areas. Currently, seven Protected Areas have young people actively involved in decision-making and EUROPARC continues to work further to encourage parks to bring youth into their governance systems.

EUROPARC met with the Directorate-General of Education, Youth, Sport and Culture to highlight EUROPARC's Youth+ programmes.

EUROPARC further shared the Youth Manifesto as a model for good practice in the 4th Public Participation and Deliberative Democracy Festival and it is available on our YouTube channel and as a EUROPARC podcast.

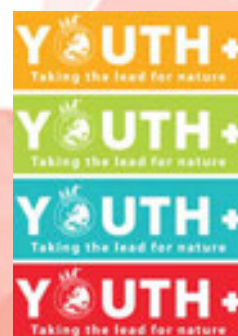


The Protected Areas that current have young people actively involved in decision-making are:

- Cairngorms National Park (Scotland)
- Loch Lomond National Park (Scotland)
- North York Moors (England)
- Prealpi Giulie Regional Park (Italy)
- Pembrokeshire National Park (Wales)
- The Bavarian Forest National Park (Germany)
- Wattenmeer (Germany)

Read the Youth Manifesto here.

Join the Junior Ranger and Youth+ programme here.



Kullaberg International Youth+ Summer Experience.

Winners of the Alfred Toepfer Scholarship 2022 at the EUROPARC Conference in France, together with President Michael Hošek (far left) and Alfred Toepfer Stiftung Council member Andreas Holz (far right).



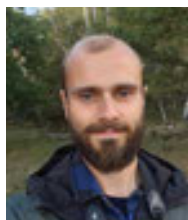
Alfred Toepfer Scholarship

Empowering young professionals and providing them with opportunities to network is essential if we want to create the next generation of skilled nature managers. After a COVID-19 induced break, we were once again able to award the Alfred Toepfer Scholarship in 2022.

The winners are:



Espen Quinto-Ashman



Espen works as Bird Ringer in Charge at Ottenby Bird Observatory. Here, he leads a team of up to 20 volunteers in the daily standardised ringing activities and other biological inventories on the reserve. During his study visits in Poland and Romania, he will study how the management practices in the different parks are suited to the different ecosystems and how well they fulfil their job of protecting biodiversity. He is particularly interested in how the presence of different species of large herbivores and carnivores, as well as the local hydrology, can affect the health of the habitats.

Caitlin Cunningham



Caitlin works as a Marine Sustainability Adviser for NatureScot. In her role, she is directly involved in helping to tackle the climate emergency through the development of renewable energy, whilst also balancing the conservation of biodiversity through minimising environmental impacts. During her study visit to the Netherlands, Caitlin will learn from marine and coastal renewable energy developments that impact protected sites, as well as the mitigation measures in place to protect biodiversity.

Margaux Pierrel



Margaux works as a Conservation Ranger for the National Parks and Wildlife Service in Ireland. Margaux has a strong interest in the concept of "shifting baseline syndrome" (SBS), also referred to as "environmental generational amnesia". SBS is the situation in which over time, knowledge or memory is lost about the state of the natural world because people do not perceive changes that are taking place. Her scholarship project is to study the effects SBS has on conservation measures in Protected Areas, particularly in terms of species loss, land use changes and rewilding.

Inspire everyone to look after Parks

European Day of Parks

Raising awareness about the role of Protected Areas is an essential part of the work of the Federation and the European Day of Parks is the main catalyser.

After two years of online European Day of Parks, it was now high time to Rethink, Restore and Reconnect!

- Rethink our relationship to nature;
- Restore nature itself;
- Reconnect with nature.

These were the main themes of the celebration in 2022.

Once again, many Parks and Protected Areas throughout Europe organised offline events, with around 100 registered on the EUROPARC website!

Furthermore, the event generated an exciting online “buzz”. Hundreds of posts on social media marking this special day resulted in a massive reach of thousands of people.

The European Day of Parks remains one of EUROPARC’s most important events to put the work and services of Protected Areas on the map.



Learn more about the EDoP 2022 here.

New Communications Strategy

Effective communications are essential to the functioning of the EUROPARC Federation. The new Communication Strategy was created in order to define priorities and actions of the EUROPARC Strategy. The new strategy, as well as a redesign of EUROPARC’s corporate identity, was approved during the EUROPARC Council meeting in France.



Alfred Toepfer Medal

The Alfred Toepfer Medal is a recognition for those who have made a significant contribution to nature conservation in Europe, awarded at the our Conference. In 2022, the award was presented to Purificació ‘Puri’ Canals i Ventín from Spain.

Puri Canals represents the commitment to nature conservation through scientific knowledge and activism.

Her work has been carried out on a local, national and international scale. Her drive for marine conservation, particularly in the Mediterranean, is outstanding. Currently, she is president of MedPAN, the Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas Network.

Learn more about Puri here.



*Puri Canals,
President of MedPAN.*



Promote sustainable development tools and approaches for people and nature

EUROPARC wants to ensure the future of our climate, our biodiversity and our health, by making the Parks and Protected Areas of Europe the Change Makers of the Future. This will allow us to realise our vision: Sustainable Nature, Valued by People and Championed by EUROPARC members.

Strengthen the role of Protected Areas in delivering health and well-being



Healthy Parks Healthy People Europe Commission

In 2022, the Healthy Parks Healthy People Europe (HPHPe) Commission continued its work to support Protected Areas to develop better health outcomes for society.

The HPHPe Commission provided inputs to the IUCN WCPA Health and Well-Being Specialist Group as well as advice on HPHPe to the Prespa National Park in Albania.

EUROPARC collaborated in the development of a project proposal through an “online HPHPe surgery - Developing projects to deliver the Healthy Parks Healthy People Europe programme in practice”. The GREEN HEALTH project proposal, in which the promotion of the HPHPe toolkit has a central role, was subsequently submitted.

The HPHPe toolkit was also promoted in the webinar “Ways to Wellbeing in Nature, Activating Parks and Protected Areas as Natural Health Centres” - with 114 persons attending, it received very good feedback. An HPHPe LinkedIn group was also launched in December and promoted during the workshop.

Learn more about the online HPHPe surgery here.

Learn more about the webinar Ways to Wellbeing in Nature here.



HPHPe Toolkit.



New Parks Wallonia

EUROPARC was invited by the Wallonian Region (BE) to be part of the jury for the selection of two new national park projects in Belgium. EUROPARC was pleased for the opportunity to contribute to this process and is grateful to the Wallonia Region for the initiative, especially as this can inspire other countries and regions across Europe. Congratulations are extended to the two parks that will soon join the European Protected Area family: Entre-Sambre-et-Meuse and Vallée de la Semois.

Learn more about the parks here.

Improve visitor management and sustainable tourism

European Charter for Sustainable Tourism

EUROPARC believes that Sustainable Tourism in European Protected Areas provides a meaningful quality experience, safeguards natural and cultural values, supports local livelihoods and quality of life and is economically viable.

To further that goal, EUROPARC has created the Sustainable Tourism Task Force, composed of 5 members representing Sustainable Destinations from Spain, Italy, the Atlantic Isles, the Nordic Baltic and Portugal.

In 2022, 6 new Parks joined the network of Sustainable Destinations and 9 renewed their commitment. 11 Tourism Businesses from Matsalu, Soomaa and Lahema National Parks in Estonia, and 15 from Montanhas Magicas Portugal were awarded as Sustainable Partners.

Additionally, in recognition of their contribution to sustainable tourism in their Protected Areas, 6 sustainable partners were awarded with the following Star Awards categories.

Learn more about the award [here](#).



Star Award Winners at the ceremony in Brussels.





- **Hotel Ristorante La Pieja (IT)** - Global approach to sustainability (overall winner)
- **Trescàlia (ES)** - Contribution to conservation
- **Hotel Gran Rey (ES)** - Reducing impact on the Environment
- **Explore Iberia (PT)** - Building my Community
- **Pensión Candelaria (ES)** - Communication the values of my Park and my Business innovation
- **Projecte Sèpia (ES)** - Innovation (special award)

After two years, EUROPARC was able to again celebrate the ECST award ceremony at the European Parliament. It provided the opportunity to refresh the collaboration with DG GROW - DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, which is showing a new interest in sustainable tourism in the framework of the EU Green Deal.



Furthermore, EUROPARC organised a range of ECST events in 2022:

1. Webinar: Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas:

A webinar, exclusively organised for the ECST network, 'Charting the way forward', with Xavier Font and Gloria Crabolu from the University of Surrey. They presented the hidden role of sustainable tourism indicators and certification in creating positive change. Translation was provided in Spanish, Italian and French.

2. Webinar within the framework of the EU Green Week: Green Tourism: Make it real!

The key role of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas in tackling the new challenges ahead. In the webinar, Klemen Langus, director of Tourism Bohinj, presented the new strategy prepared by Slovenia's Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve to become a sustainable destination by 2025+.

Learn more here.

3. Webinar: Reducing tourism seasonality through sustainable experiences with Xavier Font, University of Surrey. The webinar discovered how destinations can reduce tourism seasonality and create more a more sustainable form of tourism.

Learn more here.

4. Workshop at the EUROPARC Conference in Argelès-sur-Mer, France on Carbon neutral sustainable destinations. Furthermore, the ECST verifiers also gathered in France to discuss the new applications to the network.

Learn more here.

ECST verifiers in France.



Outdoor Sports

Our cooperation with ENOS continues, the European Network of Outdoor Sports.

The annual meeting of the collaboration between the two organisations took place in Vallon-Pont-d'Arc, with a further joint workshop entitled 'Outdoors Sports and Protected Areas. Best friends forever?' presented at Euro Meet'22, the Biennial ENOS Conference. ENOS co-organised a workshop entitled 'What happens to ice, happens to us at the EUROPARC Conference in France. The 10 Good Principles of Outdoor Sports in Protected Areas have been further disseminated across social media. With IMBA, in the framework of the European Day of Parks, EUROPARC organised the webinar Outdoor Sports/ Take Care of Your Trails.

Learn more about the event here.



Teresa Pastor presents the SEE project results at Euro Meet 22.

SEE Project

The SEE project seeks to introduce sustainability and environmental concepts in sport training programmes to minimise impacts and enhance cooperation between outdoor sports and Protected Areas. In 2022, three exchange meetings took place (France, Ireland and Sweden) which made progress in collecting good practice and devising a Toolkit.

The results of the survey that EUROPARC carried out among our members on their perception of the impacts caused by Outdoor sports in Protected Areas were presented on several occasions.



SEE project partners meet in France.

Protected Areas role in climate change mitigation and adaptation

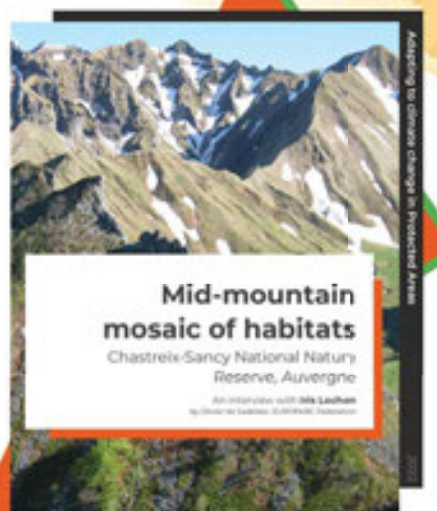
Natur'Adapt Project

In 2022, The EUROPARC Federation made significant progress in the area of climate change adaptation.

The Natur'Adapt project aimed to support the adaptation of European Protected Areas to climate change through the planning and implementation of concrete management measures.

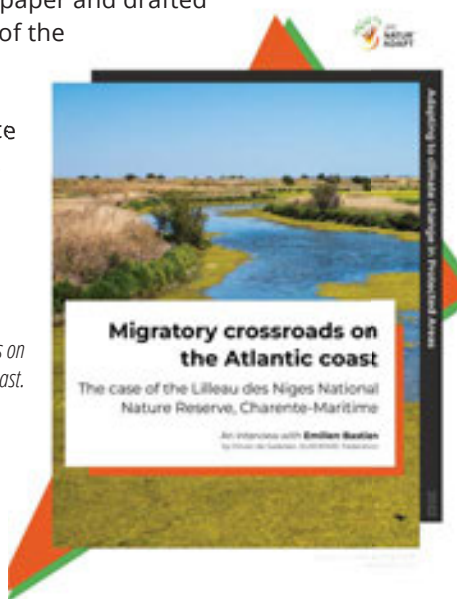
One of the key actions in 2022 was sharing the results of the LIFE Natur'Adapt project through a series of 6 articles about the experimentation phase, with 5 case studies filmed for publication in 2023. In addition, the EUROPARC Climate Change Task Force worked on refining a policy paper and drafted the programme of the EUROPARC Conference planned in France in October 2022.

Mid-mountain mosaic of habitats.



The EUROPARC Annual Conference 2022, focused on Climate Change, Resilient Parks. This conference brought together 250 Protected Area professionals in Argelès-sur-Mer, France, in the framework of the LIFE Natur'Adapt project. In a highly participatory programme, participants had the opportunity to discuss the impacts of climate change on Protected Areas, how to adapt and what kind of management is needed in the future.

Migratory crossroads on the Atlantic coast.



Discover the articles here.



Strengthen the role of Protected Areas in the transition to a green economy

Innovative Finance

Throughout 2022, EUROPARC worked with Palladium, a major investment company, to bring private sector investment that will fund restoration projects and tackle climate change effects. In order to achieve this, Protected Areas, their agencies and ministries need to scale-up their approaches. EUROPARC continues to work with Palladium to help members understand what is needed to attract the investment funding that is available.

Palladium has been working with Parks in the UK to test a model and shared this in a webinar, the Sigen Seminar and at the Austrian and French conference workshops. We are keen to develop and test this model with other Protected Areas to explore how the necessary investment in nature can be secured.

Our European Network

Over the years, the Federation has supported the creation of regional and national sections. The EUROPARC sections fulfill many of the Federation's aims, working to implement the strategy, whilst reflecting the priorities and characteristics of the areas they cover. These articles are written by the Sections themselves.



EUROPARC Section representatives at the 2022 Conference in France.

europarc.org/sections

EUROPARC Atlantic Isles
EUROPARC Central and Eastern Europe
EUROPARC Low Countries
EUROPARC Francophone

EUROPARC Italy / Federparchi
EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic
EUROPARC Spain
Nationale Naturlandschaften e.V.
(EUROPARC Deutschland)

EUROPARC Atlantic Isles

2022 was the year that we all started to meet each other again: it was a joy to see friends and colleagues and share conversations, food and drink. Yet again, a very interesting year for us all managing face to face, while continuing to maximise the benefits of working online in many different locations.

Activities

We continued to run our successful programme of webinars both in the UK and Ireland and also in Partnership with the Nordic Baltic section.

Subjects covered:

- Creative ways of engaging with visitors in Protected Landscapes
- Low Carbon Lake District -carbon budget and accounting methodology and practical application-
- Airborne LiDAR use in peatland restoration
- Inventive Communications – For the love of peat: Inspiring people to care for blanket bogs.
- Corporate Partnerships
- Exploring the need to diversify the protected Landscapes workforce and governance.

In partnership with Nordic Baltics Section:

- Volunteering
- Social Impact
- Corporate Partnerships

We also organised another online member's event with the themes of:

- Restore – Nature
- Reconnect – People
- Rethink – Economy

Speakers came from a range of sectors and countries providing different perspectives, experiences and ideas. Alongside the themes we also organised site visits that proved very popular with all those involved.

Throughout the year we have engaged with over 700 individuals online.

This year was the final year of our Erasmus+ funding enabling us to support a group to attend the EUROPARC Federation Conference in Austria. This was a group of varying ages who would never normally have the opportunity to attend a EUROPARC Conference. Participation enabled them to gain insight into EUROPARC's work, build their networks and contribute to discussions.



Site visit to North York Moors NP looking at Restoration Projects.

Following this, a group of 8 people from 7 different national Parks visited the Stockholm peninsula looking at access to protected landscapes. Not only did they gain a knowledge of different approaches and ways of life, they also created new contacts: on their return, they were motivated and re-energised for their work becoming advocates for EUROPARC.

Site visits included looking at restoration on the North Cumbrian coast and a Nature Restoration project on the River Esk Catchment in the North York Moors National Park. All agreed that by having face to face events the learning and interaction was much more beneficial.

We developed a new three-year strategy for EUROPARC Atlantic Isles with a strong emphasis on our learning and development role.

The future

EAI is planning to continue online webinars but develop formats further to have presentations, panel discussions and workshops online, including the continued joint Nordic Baltic events. We are going to focus on reinstating regular site visits as a learning tool for our members.

EAI is placing a strong emphasis on diversifying the protected landscape workforce and governance structures and hope to take the lead in this with the wider EUROPARC Federation.



EUROPARC
Atlantic Isles

Learn more about the section here.

EUROPARC Central and Eastern Europe

After the closures imposed during the pandemic, in 2022 the long-awaited opportunities for face-to-face interactions finally reopened.

The Section actively participated in the EUROPARC Conference in Austria and the Annual Conference and General Assembly in France. After several remote meetings during the pandemic, the reunion and exchange of ideas in a personal atmosphere was inspirational and highly motivating. Both events were truly wonderful gatherings between old friends and colleagues: they provided fresh energies to discuss new challenges for the Section and issues related to the handover of the Section's Presidency.

The Section was represented in a number of meetings and workshops, both online and in person.

This year's European Day of Parks' theme, "Building on our Roots", brought many exciting ideas for events to highlight the importance of our natural heritage and the heritage of all these organisations across Europe. The Section contributed to this year's event with interactive walks, guided excursions, photo tours, bird watching programmes and a wide range of outdoor educational activities.

The Section was actively involved in the preparatory work for a new partnership agreement between the EUROPARC Federation and the Section. We are convinced that the new agreement will offer new opportunities to strengthen our cooperation and improve the relationship between the Section and the Federation, as well as to encourage the work and the internal cooperation of the Section members.



Field trip during the EUROPARC Conference 2022 in Austria. Photo: Marianna Kiss.



Learn more about the section here.

EUROPARC Low Countries

For the Low Countries section 2022 has been a year of transition. In the Netherlands and in Flanders there has been a lot going on at the National policy level regarding a new policy framework for National Parks and Landscape Parks. This process took a long time and prevented the continuation of our regular operation. Michiel Rijsberman has meanwhile resigned as the Low Countries section president. Erwin van den Berg will be the president ad interim until we officially have selected a new President / coordinator.

As Low countries section we therefore don't have many activities to report apart from our preparations to give a fresh new start to our section and select a new coordinator and secretariat. We held online meetings on the 4th of May 2023 and 20th of June 2023 to further prepare this process. We will be present with a numerous delegation at the Europarc conference in Leeuwarden!

Learn more about the section here.



EUROPARC
Low Countries

EUROPARC Francophone

Key activities in 2022:

New strategy and a new way of operating

In 2022, the section was extensively restructured to define a new strategy and a new way of operating.

In total, the Francophone section held four meetings in 2022: in April, June, October and December 2022.

Four clear objectives emerged:

- No. 1: Feedback to and from the EUROPARC Network.
- No. 2: Creation of an „Annual programme of webinars for the Francophone section“ (after having identified the various proposals of each Federation) theme by theme
- No. 3: Discussions on common themes: European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (CETD), Regional Branding, tourism and visitor numbers.
- No. 4: Longer-term objective: after identifying common issues, the establishment of joint projects: a LIFE or an INTERREG thanks to our common language (more complicated to set up, but an interesting prospect).

One organisation:

- The French Federation of Regional Nature Parks continues to chair and run the section.
- Each meeting begins with a presentation of a protection model in one of the member countries (a varied group made up of periurban, national and nature parks).
- A theme will be chosen for each meeting to explore possible connections between members.
- Some time is set aside to hear news from each member and feedback from EUROPARC.



Learn more about the section here.

Attendance at two EUROPARC conferences and organisation of an in-person meeting in October

The Annual Conference organised in Argelès-sur-Mer was attended by approximately 20 members in person and, for most, was an opportunity for them to meet for the first time. It was undoubtedly one of the highlights of the year for the Francophone section, and helped to forge links and inspire subsequent meetings.

Seminar Dialogue

The Federation of Regional Nature Parks represented the Francophone section and the network of regional nature parks at the Seminar Dialogue of 16 November (Eric Brua, Clara Fontana and Aurélie Philippeau). It was able to meet the European Commission's DG Environment and lobby for climate change to be taken into account in N2000 management plans.

Organisation of a theme-based meeting on pressure from tourism

How can we deal with the problem of overtourism at certain sites? How can we calculate its impact on biodiversity? What tools are available? These are just some of the issues affecting all the members of the Francophone section.

This meeting therefore took place in a different context, in the presence of teaching and research staff from the Haute Ecole Robert Schuman (Belgium) in particular, and provided an opportunity to explore this issue of major interest in greater depth, using as examples the measures put in place in the network of French Regional Nature Parks, Parc National des Calanques and Alt Pireneu Nature Park in Spain.

The decision to base the section's meetings around a particular theme in order to explore it in greater depth was particularly appreciated by the group's members and will be continued in 2023.



EUROPARC Francophone Section at the EUROPARC Conference in France.

EUROPARC Italy / Federparchi

The Italian Federation of Parks and Nature Reserves, founded in 1989, joins bodies managing national and regional parks, marine protected areas, regional and state nature reserves, and consists of regional coordination offices. Since June 2008, Federparchi has also been established as the Italian Section of EUROPARC Federation. The Federation represents the Parks in the relations with the State, Regions, local Authorities, the European Union, and with any other public and private subject interested in the aims of the association and its members. Federparchi was created in 1989 as a coordination organisation of several Regional Parks, and in 1996 became the Italian Federation of Parks and Natural Reserves. Today, Federparchi involves many Italian Protected Areas and some Regions, Provinces, Municipalities, environmental associations: in 2020, it counts more than 150 members. In 2008, Federparchi took up the role of EUROPARC Italian Section, changing its name and becoming "Federparchi - EUROPARC Italia", recognising that only in the international prospect the mission of being good nature conservers and promoters of an economical sustainable development could be better achieved.

Activities in 2022

During 2022 Federparchi (the Europarc Italian section) activities have been focused on the support given to the Italian protected areas their biodiversity and their capacity to manage efficaciously, effectively, and safely their targets according to their conservation goals.

Federparchi also supported some of the EUROPARC Federation activities such as a webinar for young people in Parks. Federparchi and EUROPARC Federation organised a webinar on the theme „The role of young residents in building tomorrow's parks“. The webinar was inspired by the need to promote participation and sharing by young people living in the territories of parks in the activities of Protected Areas.

Federparchi and several members of the Italian Section participated in EUROPARC webinars and joined the EUROPARC Conference in France.



Italians are members of several EUROPARC Commissions bringing and sharing Italian best practices and involving the Protected Areas interested in the Commissions' themes.

Moreover, the Italian section continued to lobby and engage national and local institutions, carrying on studies, projects and services for members and partners. Regarding the activities promoted and shared with EUROPARC as national Section, Federparchi has been engaged in the national implementation of the ECST (European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas).

The ECST Part 1, after the stop imposed by the pandemic, has gained again importance, visibility and acknowledgements at national level. Some parks have been involved in the process of renewing or obtaining the certification from EUROPARC Federation thanks to the efforts of Federparchi in promoting the methodology at national level. During the Ceremony held in Brussels at the end of 2022, seven Italian parks have been certified and/or renewed: among them, the Gran Paradiso National Park, the oldest protected area in Italy. Now Italy is the European Country with the highest number of certified Protected Areas in Europe: more than 40 Italian Protected Areas are now part of the European ECST network.

Federparchi has been engaged in the promotion of Part 2 of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism as well. Federparchi supported new Protected Areas within the network and the implementation of the National methodology for the ECST Part 2 all over Italy. By the end of 2022, more than 200 enterprises have been certified in Italy in 15 Protected Areas (National Parks, Regional Parks, and Marine Protected Areas)

Several Italian enterprises certified with the ECST Part 2 participated in the Star Awards call and one of them won the awards (the hotel and restaurant "La Pieja" in Abruzzo, Lazio, and Molise National Park) for the category "Global approach to sustainability". This will be presented as a best practice at national level.

Moreover, Federparchi is still working on the ECST Part 3 promoting the implementation of the methodology among the Italian parks that already got Part 2. During 2022, several Parks have been involved and by the beginning of 2023, 3 or 4 Protected Areas will implement the ECST Part 3 in their territories.



Learn more about the section here.

EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic

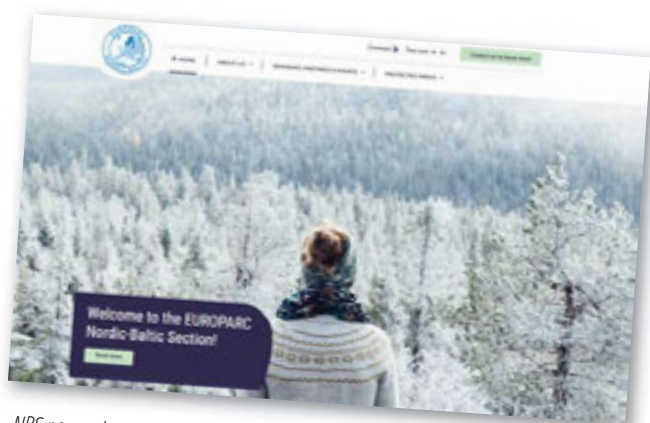
The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency oversees coordination of the Nordic-Baltic Section in 2021-23. The coordination team changed during 2022, as Section President Hasse Berglund chose to step down and a new President, Daniel Åberg took over at the end of 2022.

Building on lessons learnt during the pandemic and aiming to be inclusive for all members, the Section continued to prioritise digital ways of communication and networking. Both biannual Section Members' Meetings were conducted online in June and December 2022. A new website for the Section has been launched and will be further developed in 2023.

To facilitate capacity building, the Section continued its collaboration scheme with EUROPARC Atlantic Isles Section. We organised a series of joint webinars for our members to learn from the leading experts in the field of Protected Areas management. Three joint webinars were organised during 2022:

- Corporate Partnerships for Biodiversity Conservation - National Parks Partnership (UK) and Vattenfall (Sweden),
- Volunteering in protected areas (UK/Estonia),
- Carbon budget and accounting methodology and practical application (Lake district NP).

The Section further developed the work with the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST). Our representative joined the recently created EUROPARC Sustainable Tourism Task Force. The Section continued its work with local tourism businesses through ECTS Part II. A Joint Task Force, comprised of 3 Section representatives, served as an independent evaluation committee that reviewed applications from ECST Part II candidates from Sweden and Estonia. Two businesses from Sweden joined the ECST family and 10 businesses received certification in Estonia, thus becoming the first European Charter for Sustainable Tourism business partners in the Baltics.



NBS new website launched in 2022.



ECST II in Estonia. <https://www.europarc.org/news/2023/03/first-ecst-business-partners-in-the-baltics/>

The Sustainable Tourism Focal Point created back in 2021, improved communication between Charter awarded PAs within the Section and identified common challenges and possible solutions. To proceed, external funding was needed, so several members from Estonia, Latvia and Sweden joined forces and developed a project proposal that was successful, funded through ERASMUS+. The project, "Improving baseline knowledge among tourism stakeholders in Protected Nature Areas for more sustainable tourism in the Nordic – Baltic region", will be implemented in 2023-24. This project aims to create a joint training methodology for tourism stakeholders operating in the Protected Areas: also, it involves a pilot group of relevant stakeholders in the process of elaboration allowing to test and fine-tune the methodology to achieve maximum adjustment to learners' needs.

In addition to our core mission, facilitating collaboration between our members, the Section sees value in inter-sectional collaboration. We were glad to be able to organise a study-trip for a group of 8 national park managers from the UK (Atlantic Isles Section) who came to Sweden to learn about visitors' management and accessibility. And of course, we really appreciated the opportunity to meet with all other EUROPARC Sections' coordination teams during the EUROPARC Conference for the first time after the pandemic.



Learn more about the section here.

EUROPARC Spain

The Spanish Section of EUROPARC is composed of 26 members in 2022. All are public administrations responsible for planning and management of protected areas. Thanks to the legal support of FUNGOBE, the Section has a Technical Office where a staff of 10 people catalyses a network of thousands of people.

ESPARC Conference 2022

The XXI Conference of EUROPARC-Spain took place in Sierra de las Nieves National Park and Biosphere Reserve located in Andalusia. The meeting brought together 150 participants from all over Spain. The conference proceedings include the conclusions of the workshops, which discussed the new scenarios for biodiversity conservation in relation to rural abandonment, fire management and prevention in protected areas, climate change adaptation, tools for visitor management, and the necessary alliances to involve local population in the benefits of protected areas.

LIFE Red Bosques Clima project: technical seminars

Within the framework of LIFE Red Bosques Clima project, two technical seminars have been held: one in the Basque Country about criteria to guide measures to adapt forests to climate change considering old-growth forests as a reference, and another in Castilla - La Mancha focused on restoration of forest habitats. A total of 85 professionals participated in the seminars, including technicians from protected areas, forest managers, researchers, consultants and rangers.

Experiences on protected areas, climate change and health

13 new experiences have been added to the EUROPARC-Spain WIKI platform. The experiences illustrate the role of protected areas in climate change adaptation and the health benefits of properly managed natural areas.

22nd edition of the Master's Degree in Protected Areas followed by 30 participants from Latin America, Spain and Africa

For the first time in more than 20 years, the Master degree, organised by three public universities and managed by FUNGOBE with the collaboration of EUROPARC-Spain, was developed online, although face-to-face activities have been maintained, such as the study trip to a Biosphere Reserve in Galicia. This synchronous online course facilitates the participation of active managers from anywhere, avoiding the difficulties of travel, while ensuring active interaction between students and teachers.

200 people trained on climate change and protected areas

A training action aimed at unemployed people has been developed in which some 200 people have participated. The participants have been trained in a common conceptual basis for the development of adaptation to climate change in protected areas, including climate change adaptation criteria in the design of management plans and measures and in the development of economic activities linked to protected areas.

We are Nature – Restore, Rethink, Reconnect

As part of the celebration of the European Day of Parks, a face to face event was organised focused on the challenges of ecological restoration both under the perspective of scientific knowledge and decision-making.

EUROPARC Spain participates in the communication campaign „Our Protected Natural Areas“

EUROPARC-Spain promotes the communication campaign Our Protected Natural Areas, together with Global Natura Foundation and the Association SoyEcoturista. The Protected Lives series brings us closer to people who live in or have a close link to a protected area.

Successes and challenges

The main challenge for the coming years is the development of the new „Road map“, the “Programme 2030, Global change and protected areas. Living conservation territories for human well-being”. It was elaborated following a participatory process, providing a framework to develop actions towards conservation and restoration, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, cooperation with sectoral policies, and the social and economic benefits of conservation.



Learn more about the activities here.

Nationale Naturlandschaften e.V.

- EUROPARC Germany

The German Section as the national umbrella organization Nationale Naturlandschaften e. V. (NNL e. V., in English: National Natural Landscapes) also represents together with the Verband Deutscher Naturparke e. V. (in English: the Association of German Nature Parks) the National Natural Landscapes (NNL) of Germany, the alliance of 16 national parks, 18 biosphere reserves, over 100 nature parks and 3 wilderness areas. In this role, we promote a future-oriented development of the NNL in order to bring them in as „key parts for the common European house“. We have made great progress on this path in 2022.

„Crazy about Tomorrow“ - image campaign of the German biosphere reserves

To mark the 50th anniversary of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) program, we joined forces with the German biosphere reserves to launch the nationwide „Crazy about Tomorrow“ campaign. With a roadshow throughout Germany and many online activities, the biosphere reserves brought themselves and their important tasks to the attention of the public. In addition to presenting innovative projects from the biosphere reserves, the campaign also included a contest for the public to participate. Interested people were able to contribute their own ideas and initiatives for sustainable development. The highlight of the campaign was a joint event in the Bundestag in Berlin with a clear message to policy makers: biosphere reserves are already providing important contributions in the areas of sustainability, nature conservation, climate protection and social issues, making them a strong partner for the federal government in addressing future challenges.

Digitization as an opportunity for future visitor management

An increasing number of visitors to protected areas are using tour platforms or apps to plan their outdoor experiences and navigate on site. However, rules and regulations that apply in protected areas rarely find their way into digital platforms. Often, trails exist in the digital world that do not exist in the protected area. Therefore, digital visitor management is of constantly growing relevance for the NNL. As an umbrella organization, we provide thematic networking and have been involved with „Digitize the Planet“ since 2020. The non-profit association digitizes nature conservation information as well as rules for the use of nature, e.g., designated trails and off-limit areas. The data is freely accessible and is disseminated primarily in outdoor platforms. More than 25,000 rules for almost 600 protected areas are already available as OpenData.



*The 18 German biosphere reserves present themselves in the Bundestag.
Photo: Isabel Gabel / NNL e. V.*

Many protected areas in Germany are working with Digitize the Planet as pilot partners, and the association also wants to recruit more members at international level. In addition, we cooperate with the tour platforms Outdooractive and Komoot to work together on large-scale digital solutions for local conflicts.

Repeated evaluation of the German national parks

As umbrella organization, we support the national park administrations in securing and improving quality management in their areas. Following an initial evaluation (2009-2012), all 16 German national parks are now – about ten years later – being re-evaluated by an external evaluation committee. For this purpose, the current situation in the national parks is compared with a desired target state, which was defined in advance for various fields of action. Concrete recommendations for the long-term maintenance and improvement of the quality of national park management are derived from the identified strengths and weaknesses. The federal and state governments, the administrations of the national parks and NNL e. V. hereby make a joint contribution to permanent quality assurance and continuous quality improvement of the national parks and thus to the conservation and development of biodiversity in Germany. The quality criteria and standards are available in German and English.

**Nationale
Naturlandschaften**



Learn more about the section here.

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