

EUROPARC Scholarship for Young Professionals 2025

Application Guidelines

Investing in programmes with long-term benefits for nature and people is a core part of EUROPARC's ethos. The EUROPARC Scholarship for Young Professionals is a programme which furthers the capacity building of early-career conservationists, helping to build their network of experts who share their own practical experience, contributing to intergenerational learning.

In cooperation with the [EU LIFE Programme](#), EUROPARC invests in the professional development of young professionals working for Protected Areas and related disciplines.

While there are many opportunities for students to get scholarships to improve their skills abroad, there are few for those who have already entered the working world.

However, the management of a Protected Areas is complex and constantly challenged by new issues, most of them of a global scale. EUROPARC believes that networking among professionals can greatly improve the management of Protected Areas.

Hence, the aim of this scholarship is to give the opportunity to those young professionals that have chosen to develop a career in Protected Areas management to improve their skills and learn from other professionals by carrying out study visits to Protected Areas across Europe.

I. Objective

1. The programme offers the opportunity of financial support to individuals for a study visit to two or more Protected Areas in another European Country and to gather experience which will be both of benefit for the future career of the scholars, and to the EUROPARC Federation and its members.
2. The programme intends to enhance cross-national co-operation to advance the quality, innovation and European dimension of Protected Area management.

II. Target Group

Participation in the EUROPARC Scholarship for Young Professionals programme is open to young people who are **currently employed** by a European Protected Area or a nature conservation institution, administration, organisation or environmental NGO in a European country¹, preferentially for a EUROPARC member organisation.

III. Eligibility / Application Requirements:

1. The age limit is **18 – 34** on the **1st October 2025**.
2. Currently a resident of a European Country².
3. Presentation of the applicant's professional and personal reasons for the planned study visit. This will be elaborated in the online application form.
4. Proof of relevant contacts with target Protected Areas that are intended to form part of the study visit need to be established at the time of application. Evidence of contact will be requested for the pre-selected candidates.
5. Proof of current employment status which will be requested for pre-selected candidates.
6. Study visits to prepare master or doctoral thesis or form any part of field work or gathering of data or evidence for thesis, **will not be considered**.
7. The applicants should be available to receive their award at the EUROPARC Conference in Lithuania on the **7th to the 10th of October 2025**. Please check the EUROPARC website for details.
8. It is not possible to be awarded the scholarship more than one time or in addition to the Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarship.

IV. Study Visit

1. Study objectives and purpose must be described in the application. Applicants must demonstrate that their study visit will bring real benefit to their professional tasks.
2. The application must address **one** of the following selected themes faced by Protected Area Management:
 - **Nature Restoration** – Protected Area involvement in nature restoration in accordance with local and international targets.
 - **Visitor Management** – Exploring differences or nuances in tourism looking either at the benefits and or the challenges it brings to Protected Areas.
 - **Health and Well-being** – Contribution of protected areas to safeguard the European citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and well-being.

^{1,2} see current list of eligible European countries in <https://www.coe.int/en/web/about-us/our-member-states>

3. Any of the above themes can be undertaken in any or multiple types of Protected Areas, i.e. national park, nature and regional parks, nature reserves, biosphere reserves and Natura 2000 sites. We especially welcome applications that address their studies in Periurban and Marine sites.
4. The study visit must take place **in at least one European country, beyond the applicant's home country**. The choice (both in number and relevance) of the visited Protected Areas and countries will be an important selection criterion. We do encourage applicants to plan their trips as sustainably as possible. Information on sustainability must be provided in the application form.
5. **The study visit should be undertaken by October 2026.** An extension for up to 2 months can be granted if a well-founded request for exceptional circumstances is submitted 3 months prior to end of the scholarship period.
6. A report and video of the study visit is to be submitted to the EUROPARC Federation **by the 1st of October 2026**. The report structure should be based on the template provided by EUROPARC. This report is essential for final scholarship payment.
7. No economic activity or money can be earned as a result of the study visits during the scholarship.
8. For the scholarship awardees, a **final travel plan including** contact addresses, journey and the length of the visit has to be submitted to the EUROPARC Federation in early 2026, prior to the start of the trip. An unsatisfactory final study trip plan could lead to the offer of the scholarship being withdrawn.

V. The Award

1. The award will be worth **EUR 2.000 to each of the 2 successful candidates**.
2. The scholarship is paid in two installments:
 - a. The first installment – of **EUR 1.000 – around two-three months** prior to the start of the journey on presentation to the EUROPARC Federation of a **detailed travel plan**.
 - b. The remainder of **EUR 1000** on presentation of a **study visit report, which includes a video, photos and a short summary** to be published as news in the website. The report must be sent by the 1st of October 2026 latest.
3. The selection of the scholars is made by the EUROPARC Federation jury.
4. The winning scholars must be present at the award of the scholarship and must give a short announcement about their topic at the awards ceremony. The scholars employer should cover the full travel costs while EUROPARC and the conference hosts will cover the conference fee and accommodation. This will be from 7th to the 10th of October in Nemunas Loops Regional Park, Lithuania.

VI. Responsibility

Applicants, if awarded a scholarship, are expected to do the following:

1. Make their own travel plans and arrangements to achieve their objectives.
 2. Disseminate the results of their study visit amongst colleagues and in areas of work/influence to ensure that
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wider benefits are achieved.

- 3. Submit a report on their study visit by the 1st of October 2026, which will be placed on the EUROPARC’s website, as well as a **short film** (maximum 3 minutes) summarizing the topic of the study and a **short abstract with pictures** to be published as a news article on EUROPARC’s website.

VII. Applications

- 1. Applicants should fill in the online Application in English language. **Incomplete applications will not be considered.**
- 2. The deadline for applying for the Alfred Toepfer Scholarships is **15th of June 2025 23:59 CEST.**

VIII. Time Schedule 2025

When?	What?
May 5 th 2025	Call for applications open
June 15 th 2025	Deadline for applications
July 30 th 2025	Notification to pre-selected applicants
August 15 th 2025	Requirement of proofs (current contract and proofs of PAs contacts)
October 7 th to 10 th 2025	EUROPARC Conference / awarding ceremony in Lithuania
January – September 2026	Study visits
October 1 st 2026	Deadline for report

IX. Evaluation

- 1. A small jury of EUROPARC staff and EUROPARC Council members will evaluate the applications.
- 2. Additional points will be given to candidates from EUROPARC member organisations but others are encouraged to apply.
- 3. The jury will attempt to select one candidate that focuses more on the human element of Protected Area management and another that focuses more on the nature conservation element of Protected Area management but ideally topics should interlink these two aspects.

For any questions, email youth.europarc@europarc.org

To apply, visit the website: <https://www.europarc.org/yp-scholarship/>



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