



EUROPARC Federation Annual Report

January - December 2011



EUROPARC
F E D E R A T I O N

EUROPARC is the umbrella organisation of Europe's protected areas. It unites national parks, regional parks, nature parks and biosphere reserves in 35 countries, with the common aim of protecting Europe's unique variety of wildlife, habitats and landscapes.

Quality Qualité Qualität

*Cover Photo: Syöte National Park (FI)
Picture: Tuomas Uola*

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Carol Ritchie
Picture: Karin Björk



Directors Review

2011 a year of quality, unity and value

As Europe's largest protected area networking organisation EUROPARC's work in 2011 focused on providing valuable services to its many members across Europe. EUROPARC enabled its members to benefit from: an increased awareness of legal and policy issues in the European Union; the development of new ideas and innovation through experience exchange and the raising of standards and greater efficiency and a stronger message in the field of protected area management.

EUROPARC is therefore delighted that its membership has remained stable during 2011 and that the organisation is maintaining its services to members in these financially difficult times. The communications work, of the Federation keeps members engaged and informed across the network. Further development of programmes and activities all provide EUROPARC's members with tools that facilitate protected area management. The success of the services provided can be seen by the significant level of participation in the Federation's events and activities by members during 2011.

The exchange of experience on both the policy and practical issues of protected area site management is invaluable and the networking between members is a laboratory where new ideas, partnership and projects are forged. The 2011 EUROPARC Conference in the Schwabian Alp was a particular highlight during the year and a good example of

such networking. The 330 delegates called upon the EU and its member states to establish the legal, financial and human resource conditions necessary to fulfil the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity by 2020.

Continual development and improvement is necessary if EUROPARC is to remain an effective and efficient network. As such the Federation recognises the need to collaborate closely with other NGO's and to seek to combine forces where prudent and possible. In 2011 EUROPARC and Eurosite members therefore agreed to increase the existing collaboration by looking to the creation of one representative organisation.

A new President, Thomas Hansson(SE), and council were elected in September 2011 in the General Assembly. The Assembly also bade goodbye to Council member Eberhard Henne (De), whose input to the work of the Federation was gratefully appreciated, and to President Erika Stanciu, whose quiet yet strong leadership took the Federation through a challenging six years.

The year ahead looks to be another challenging year with changes in staff and new project development. As always EUROPARC looks forward to the innovation 2012 will bring and in particular to working closely with its members to further the protection of our shared natural heritage.

Carol Ritchie, EUROPARC Director



*Members of EUROPARC come from protected areas in 35 European Countries.
Picture: Christine Wawra*

Who we are

The EUROPARC Federation is a non-governmental organisation, founded in 1973. It has since grown to become Europe's largest protected areas network and currently has over 420 members spanning 35 countries.

EUROPARC is built on the principle that Europe's natural heritage can be better conserved and managed through international cooperation. To this end the organisation seeks opportunities for networking, exchange and collaboration in all areas of protected area work. Of equal importance is communicating efficiently as a protected area community, particularly concerning the challenges and opportunities that impact on the management of Europe's shared natural heritage as well as the importance of the fundamental ecosystem services provided. Europe's protected areas are essential for sustaining a healthy environment for society now and in the future.

Members that make up the Federation's network are responsible for the management of Europe's biodiversity. They represent European, national and regional protected area designations including Natura 2000 sites, national parks, biosphere reserves, regional parks and many more. EUROPARC members also have responsibility for the overall implementation of Commission directives, including the management of Natura 2000 sites.

EUROPARC is committed to the continual improvement in the management of nature conservation and sustainable development, to build a coherent green network across Europe.

More information: www.europarc.org

What we do

The Directorate Report

The Directorate of the EUROPARC Federation is committed to fulfilling the aims of the organisation and to deliver its strategic goals.

The work of the Federation is overseen by the EUROPARC Council and President. They bring a wealth of experience and expertise to bear on the work of the Federation and also represent EUROPARC across Europe. A new Council and President were elected in 2011.

Where the Council is the driver, the Directorate of the EUROPARC Federation is the engine of the organisation. The small team of six, split between the headquarters in Regensburg (DE), and an office in Brussels (B) manages a number of important European projects and represents the Federation and its members' interests.

The work of the Federation is also supported by efforts from working groups on sustainable tourism, values of protected areas, health, wilderness and transboundary cooperation.

The efforts of the Council, the Directorate, the working groups and all others, individuals and members, who support the Federation, are to be commended. Work carried out is summarised in this section.

*Syöte National Park (FI)
Picture: Tuomas Uola*



*Captain Misha
Hills, Djerdap
National Park (RS).
Picture:
Dragan Bosnic*

Communicating our message

Fostering societal acceptance and understanding about biodiversity and the role of protected areas in Europe is crucial if support for action is to be harnessed. This can be achieved through communicating messages about the values and benefits of our natural heritage for society. In turn this will increase recognition of the importance of protecting these special places and lead to positive action.

It is for this reason that communications continued to play a pivotal role in the work of the EUROPARC Federation in 2011. Further, clear communications are essential if members are to access the wealth of knowledge and experience that is held with the network. Following the outcomes of the conference in 2010 a new nature message was central to the communications work this year. Activities in 2011 were based around the International Year of Forests and in particular on the European Year of Volunteers.

Key activities 2011

Publications, promotion and publicity

In order to keep the EUROPARC Network and a wider public informed about protected area management across Europe the following regular publications were produced: 11 E-News, one Annual Report, one EUROPARC Journal "Protected Areas In-Sight", one Conference Report and three Charter News Mails. In the framework of different projects, particularly Parks & Benefits, a number of reports and publications were produced in digital and printed form.

New in 2011 were the EUROPARC and Junior Ranger Facebook pages which now have a total of 450 fans between them. Together with the website they have contributed to the visibility of the Federation and Europe's protected areas. Visits to the EUROPARC website increased by over 6000 last year to roughly 40,000 from 160 countries.

Articles about the activities of EUROPARC appeared in numerous publications around the globe. Seven press releases were sent to press across Europe. A half hour programme on the EUROPARC Conference, featuring Council Member Marian Jäger-Woltgens, was produced and shown by the German television company

Participants of the
Siggen Seminar
2011.
Picture:
EUROPARC



ZDF. In addition, the event “Get your Hands Dirty for Nature”, which took place in Brussels and was funded by the GRUNDTVIG project “Volunteer Management in Parks” was filmed by a local television station. The EUROPARC staff appeared in a newspaper local to Regensburg after taking part in volunteering work for the nearby Altmühltal Nature Park for the European Day of Parks (EDoP).

Events and representation

EUROPARC represented its members' interests at around 40 international events throughout the year. These included the following events organised by the Federation:

The European Day of Parks celebrated the European Year of Volunteers in 2011 with the motto “Volunteering – Nature needs you”. Over 500 events were registered by 185 protected areas in 17 countries.

The EUROPARC seminar series at Gut Siggen (DE) continued this year, thanks to the Alfred Toepfer Foundation (DE). This year the week was used by the Directorate to develop a number of project applications and the Sustainable Tourism Working Group and for the seminar “A New Nature Message”. The seminar was attended by 18 communications specialists from member protected areas in 11 different countries. Helen Spoor from the communications agency Futerra provided the basis for work and discussion with a workshop on Branding Biodiversity.



The EUROPARC Conference 2011 was hosted by the Schwabian Alp Biosphere Reserve in southern Germany in September and organised by EUROPARC Germany. 330 international experts from the field of nature conservation attended the conference under the theme “Quality counts - Benefits for Nature and People”. The annual General Assembly took place during the conference and saw the election of a new president, Thomas Hansson, and Council for the Federation. Members bade a sad farewell to Erika Stanciu who stepped down after two terms as president. In addition, closer cooperation between EUROPARC and Eurosites was discussed. The members unanimously voted that the creation of one organisation should be pursued. Furthermore, discussions about a new strategy for the Federation began.

Three regular and one induction council meetings took place in 2011. There were also two section meetings. The aim of these meetings is to discuss the work of the Federation and ensure better planning and cooperation.

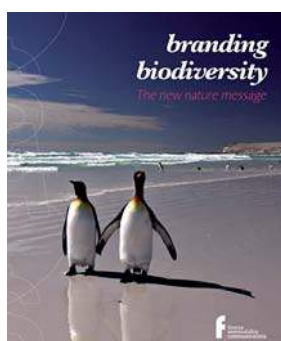


*EUOPARC Staff participate in the European Day of Parks by volunteering for Altmühltal Nature Park (DE).
Picture: Johann Bauch, Altmühltal Nature Park*

Internal networking and partnerships

EUOPARC enjoyed stronger relations with all its Memoranda of Understanding partners in 2011. Representatives from REDPARQUES, Parks Forum and the US National Park Service participated in and gave presentations at the Conference this year. The MOU with the US Parks Service was renewed and refreshed and signed with Jon Jarvis USNPS Director at the IUCN World Protected Areas Leadership meeting. EUOPARC worked closely with the International Ranger Federation on a new Youth in Action project. Furthermore, plans were developed with Parks Forum for an exchange platform for protected area staff which will be launched in 2012.

Over the year EUOPARC has enjoyed partnerships with many organisations. A full list can be found at www.euoparc.org/our-partners-and-funders. The Federation looks forward to continued cooperation with existing partners and to building fruitful relations with new partners over the next 12 months.



Branding Biodiversity - the new nature message from Futerra

The year ahead

In 2012 EUOPARC will continue to build on the communications work developed in previous years and develop new positive biodiversity messages to young people, and the wider society. A new Communications Officer will take over from Morwenna Parkyn in April and bring further innovation to the organisations communication work.

The focus in 2012 will need to be on additional funding and marketing activities for the Federation and its members as well as and the development of new projects. Innovations will include expanding the organisation's social networking reach through a Twitter account and also a number of schemes to encourage more networking amongst members.

There are also a number of events taking place this year including the EDoP in May, which will focus this year on the theme "See the sky. Touch a tree. Feel the air. Find yourself." The Siggen Seminar will take place in May as well and will see protected area practitioners learning about conflict management. EUOPARC 2012 will take place in October in Genk, Belgium and will be centred around the theme "(Re)connect". It will be hosted by the Kempen and Maasland Regional Landscape.

More information: www.euoparc.org

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Cover of the CAP factsheets produced and supported by a consortium of European NGOs including EUROPARC

Representing members interests in Europe



The policy and advocacy activities of the Federation in 2011 sought to gain further support for Europe's protected areas and EUROPARC members from European Union institutions. The EUROPARC Federation operates with a strong pan-European strategy to create a more effectively managed natural environment. EUROPARC members have the responsibility for the implementation of European directives in their respective member states and a substantial majority of our members actively manage Natura 2000 (N2000) sites within their protected areas. The work of the organisations members in their protected areas is directly relevant and pertinent to the European Commission's priorities.

Key activities 2011

2011 was a year with many new developments for the European Union. These included discussions and crucial decisions concerning the revision of several policies and financing programmes relevant for EUROPARC's protected areas network. Among them were: the CAP reform, the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy, N2000 sites, the new Biogeographical Seminar process, the review of the LIFE + financing programme, a new policy for green infrastructure, and sustainable tourism in the EU. The EUROPARC Federation was able to provide input; drawing from its member's experience, into these important European initiatives, which themselves will impact members when implemented.

EUROPARC also created new and stronger partnerships with other environmental organisations based in Brussels. The organisation remains an active member of the European Habitats Forum. Cooperation with BirdLife International, the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), European Landowners Organisation (ELO), World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) was based on the EU's biodiversity policy and on a joint position regarding the CAP reform process.

The Federation also has a representative in the N2000 and Sustainable Tourism Expert Groups of the Environment and Enterprise Directorate Generals (DG). Here EUROPARC represents



*Agricultural landscape in the Cotswolds AONB (UK).
Picture:
Nick Turner*

member's views on both technical matters and the implementation of related policies.

Success and challenges

"The Common Agricultural Policy reform: the role of protected areas" was the theme of a very successful seminar organised in January 2011 in Brussels. It was a good opportunity for participants to share views on the reform and to define new strategies and initiatives to take forward joint positions through publications and press releases. This clarity has enabled EUROPARC to participate in consultations and meetings with input from members. EUROPARC was also represented at the European Agriculture Ministers meeting by council member Gabor Szilagyi during the Hungarian presidency of the EU.

During the year EUROPARC also met with representatives of the Tourism Unit of DG Enterprise, to present the work the Federation has been developing over the last 15 years with the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas.

The work on policy and advocacy completed in 2011 also lead to the development of several new project applications.

The year ahead

For the EU, 2012 is a crucial year. Many of the policies that are already under discussion will be approved. New ambitious targets for halting and reversing the loss of biodiversity in Europe by 2020 and a new EU Biodiversity Strategy have been adopted setting out concrete priority measures for achieving these targets. Aligning the Biodiversity Strategy targets with the Convention on Biological Diversity's Programme of Work should ensure cross compliance and the synchronisation of work for protected area managers across these commitments. Mobilising EUROPARC's network of protected landscapes across Europe, including N2000 sites will be a key mechanism in the successful implementation of this strategy. Thus EUROPARC's active involvement in this debate, in partnership with its members and other organisations, will be very important.

In 2012 the Federation will also celebrate 20 years of N2000 and LIFE, and continue to contribute to the Expert Groups' activities mentioned above. Another aim is to strengthen connections to relevant Members of the European Parliament regarding the needs of Europe's protected areas.



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Junior Rangers
at the
International
Camp 2011.
Picture:
Federico Minozzi



Investing in young people

EUROPARC is actively involved in supporting European protected areas to develop innovative environmental education programmes and initiatives that closely involve local communities and civil society.

Key activities 2011

Youth in Action

In 2011 EUROPARC successfully applied for a six month project, "Action for Youth in Parks", co-financed by the European Union's Directorate General Education and Culture learning "Youth in Action Programme". The project aimed to improve quality standards in the delivery of youth environmental education across Europe. The main activity of this project was the organisation and realization of a five day workshop for European rangers in Denmark in November. Twenty seven rangers from 15 European countries took part in the workshop which looked at the main issues related to environmental education for young people.

The Junior Ranger Network

The International Junior Ranger camp took place this year in the Weerribben-Wieden National Park (NL), and was dedicated to the topic "Healthy Parks, Healthy People". Fifty participants from ten different countries attended the event and took part in the fun but informative activities organised by the park.

This year a new Junior Ranger Facebook page was launched to improve networking and get Junior Rangers more involved in the network. In addition Kullaberg Nature Reserve (SE) Majjistral Nature and History Park (MT), and many German parks started Junior Ranger programmes in 2011. Moreover an international Junior Ranger exchange, financed with Leader+ resources, took place between the Cairngorms and the Bavarian Forest National Parks (UK/DE).



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme





*Junior Rangers enjoying the water at the international Camp in Weeriben-Wieden National Park (NL).
Picture: Federico Minozzi*

Success and challenges

The Junior Ranger Camp was a wonderful event. The most interesting outcome in 2011 was a project idea that was developed by the participants for a joint international communications campaign to raise visitor awareness about the effects of litter and waste in protected areas.

The new Facebook page and new members to the network were also positive developments. Furthermore the Youth in Action workshop was a good opportunity to see how the Junior Ranger programme is implemented in different countries and to share experiences and best practices.

The year ahead

In 2012 a report will be published on the results of the Action for Youth in Parks project and a best practise guidance booklet. EUROPARC also hopes to implement follow-up activities during the course of the year.

The 2012 Junior Ranger Camp will be hosted by the Triglav National Park (SL), in transboundary cooperation with Prealpi Giulie Regional Park (IT), in July.

Further information:

www.europarc.org/what-we-do/junior-ranger

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*Rangers from across Europe at the Youth in Parks workshop in November.
Picture: Federico Minozzi*



Charter
Networking
meeting
Djerdap
National Park
(RS).
Picture: Djerdap
National Park



Sustainable tourism – business and nature in partnership

EUROPARC has been involved in the field of sustainable tourism since the development of its European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in 1995. The Charter is a practical management tool developed by the Federation. It enables protected areas to develop and manage tourism sustainably alongside the private enterprises and communities. 89 protected areas in eight European countries currently have Charter status with more joining every year!

Networking in 2011

From 28th June – 1st July this year over 200 protected area practitioners met from 21 countries to listen to speeches, attend workshops and network on the topic of sustainable tourism. The conference “Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas. Building bridges - Seeking Solutions” took place in Djerdap National Park (RS). The focus of the seventh Charter Network Meeting was EUROPARC’s European Charter for Sustainable Tourism.



The Charter Network was expanded when 12 new Charter areas were awarded the European Charter at the annual EUROPARC conference in 2011; five areas were also reevaluated. In July seven new verifiers were trained for the increasing number of Charter evaluations on the Island of Vilm (DE).

Project work

The EUROPARC Federation was also involved in three projects, each concerning sustainable tourism but all taking the Charter forward. EUROPARC would like to thank the entire Charter network for their help and support with all three projects below:



*Verifiers training
2011, Island of
Vilm (DE).
Picture:
EUROPARC*

Parks & Benefits

PARKS & BENEFITS was a Baltic Sea Region Programme project (2009-2012) and thus an important contribution to the EU-Strategy for the Region and its objectives. It aimed to ensure sustainable regional development in eight protected areas in six countries in the Region using EUROPARC's European Charter for Sustainable Tourism.

The project was approaching its end in the final months of 2011 and the partners met for the last time at the South-Rügen Biosphere Reserve (DE) in October. The project was a great success and produced a number of fantastic results not only for the partners involved but for the wider protected area network. Two of results worth mentioning here are: "The Guide to Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas" and "Public-Private Sector Partnerships: Mutual Benefits for Business and Protected Areas". Both publications are available from EUROPARC. In addition the EUROPARC exhibition "Living Parks" was extended at the beginning of the year to include information about the project parks and was hosted by five of the participating protected areas.

The value of the "Charter" in identifying sustainable tourism destinations

There has been much discussion in recent years about sustainable tourism destination particularly from the European Commission. EUROPARC was a pioneer in the field of sustainable tourism for protected areas with the establishment of the Charter in 1995 but times have changed and the sustainable destinations project presents a good opportunity to take a good look at the Charter and its economic value for protected areas. This a two-year project funded by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN). It involves nine partners who form a study group of experienced Charter protected areas.

In 2011 a report detailing the comparison between the Charter and proposals from the European Commission was produced. In addition, the "magic numbers" data set for the Charter, first created during the CharterNet project, was refined. This is a data set that will provide evidence of the scope and breadth of Charter areas and thus sustainable tourism across Europe. This valuable data set will be a useful lobbying tool in EUROPARC's work with the European Union. Furthermore, a thorough analysis of the past ten years of Charter evaluations has been undertaken. The extracted case studies will be analysed during 2012 and a best-practice publication will hopefully be produced.





Charter
awardees 2011.
Picture:
Christine Wawra

Sustainable Tourism in Enterprises, Parks and Protected Areas (STEPPA)

STEPPA came to an end in November 2011. It was a project funded through the European Union's Grant programme "Knowledge networks for the competitiveness and sustainability of European Tourism". Bringing together 10 partners from across Europe, the project sought to enhance the competitiveness of tourism enterprises in protected areas whilst enabling the experiences of differing tourism business certification systems to be shared and analysed.

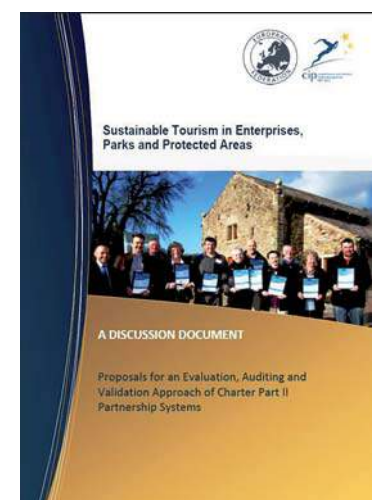
For 18 months the project partners, led by the University of Eastern Finland, gathered data and shared experiences. Two surveys were carried out that give a snapshot of the attitudes and responses of business and customers choosing a more sustainable business and some measures of economic impact are also considered. The data produced was made available to and customised for those who took part in the survey. Their results are available on the EUROPARC website in multiple languages and they can be used as templates by those undertaking similar surveys in the future.

In addition, the Charter tourism business methodologies were scrutinised in this project and suggestions made for improvement and change. A proposal for one methodology will be finalised through the dedicated work of EUROPARC's sustainable tourism working group.

More information: www.european-charter.org

Contact: info@european-charter.org

The STEPPA Project came to an end in 2011 and produced some useful results



Transboundary cooperation – nature beyond boundaries



The EUROPARC Transboundary Following Nature's Design programme was launched in 2003. It promotes greater awareness of the common responsibility for border regions as well as the values and benefits of transboundary management between protected areas. There are currently 17 certified EUROPARC transboundary protected areas (TBPAs) that form a network of best practice examples in transboundary cooperation and provide technical support to other European TBPAs

Key activities 2011

From 7th to 10th June 2011 the third TransParcNet meeting was held in the transboundary National Parks Krkonoše (Czech Republic) - Karkonosze (Poland) Mountains. It was attended by 35 representatives of transboundary protected areas from across Europe. The topics covered in the meeting were focused on the development of better transboundary cooperation and in particular the work of sustainable tourism within a transboundary setting.

At the General Assembly at the 2011 EUROPARC conference Krkonoše National Park (CZ) and Karkonoše National Park (PL) as well Oulanka National Park (FI) and Paanajärvi National Park (RU) were re-awarded their transboundary certificate after more than five years of successful cooperation. At the end of the year EUROPARC received an application for Transboundary status from Saxon Switzerland and Bohemian Switzerland National Parks (DE/CZ) with the Elbe Sandstone Protected Landscape Area (CZ). The German Dutch TBPA Maas-Schwalm-Nette has also applied for reevaluation in 2012.

There were a number of additional events and meetings that looked at developing the programme:

- the first transboundary verifiers training was held on the Island of Vilm (DE) in July
- the members of the Transboundary Steering and Evaluation Committee (STEC) met twice in 2011 to discuss the future of the programme

- the working group met once at the EUROPARC Conference
- an intern with the EUROPARC Federation collected information on all TBPAs in Europe and also carried out a survey to establish magic numbers for the current TBPAs

The year ahead

In 2012 the promotion of the transboundary programme will continue and the network will become stronger with its three new members. The fourth TransParcNet meeting will take place from 11th – 14th June in the Inari-Vätsäri Wilderness Area (FI), Øvre-Pasvik National Park (NO) and Pasvik Zapovednik (RU) transboundary area.

More information:

www.europarc.org/what-we-do/transboundary-parks

Contact: office@europarc.org

Krkonoše - Karkonosze Mountains transboundary area (CZ/PL) are reevaluated. Picture: Christine Wawra



Volunteer management – working for nature



2011 marked the European Year of Volunteering. This was the perfect framework for a number of EUROPARC activities and particularly for the project “Volunteer management in European Parks” that kicked-off in February 2011. The project is a GRUNDTVIG project financed by the European Unions Lifelong Learning Programme and follows on from a previous project on the same subject. It aims to improve the quality of volunteer management in protected areas.

Key activities 2011

EUROPARC Germany, lead project partner, coordinated the various activities that were carried out by the nine other project partners from around Europe in 2011.

EUROPARC's main responsibility is to communicate and disseminate information on the project and on the values and benefits of volunteering for protected areas and for the civil society. This has been done through regular project updates on the website and in our publications and the coordination of communications activities amongst the partners. In addition the European Day of Parks 2011 was dedicated to volunteering this year, a workshop on the topic of volunteering was organised at the EUROPARC Conference, and an outdoors volunteering workshop was organised in Brussels.

Participants of the "Getting our Hands Dirty for Nature" event in Brussels.

Picture: Federico Minozzi



Success and Challenges

Many of EUROPARC's members were involved in the celebration of the European Year of Volunteering through the events mentioned above. This was a very positive development with regards to the promotion of the important work volunteers do in protected areas around Europe every year. For the European Day of Parks over 500 events on the theme of volunteering were registered by 185 protected areas in 17 countries. The outdoor volunteering workshop organised in November was attended by officials from the European Union's Directorate General of the Environment and other environmental organisations. 35 people worked side by side for a day getting their hands dirty for nature in a Natura 2000 area in Brussels.

The year ahead

The GRUNDTVIG project on volunteering will continue during 2012. In the framework of the project a study will be carried out which evaluates the benefits of volunteering in parks on local communities and volunteers. Furthermore EUROPARC will continue to communicate about the project and results will be passed to our wider network as and when they are available.

More information:

www.europarc.org/what-we-do/volunteer-management

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EUROPARC Awards 2011

– recognising achievements



Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarships

Each year the EUROPARC Federation in cooperation with the Alfred Toepfer Foundation awards three Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarships to promising young conservationists with practical experience in the field of conservation and in the work of protected areas. The scholarships enable them to undertake a study visit to one or more protected areas in European countries other than their own. The awards are each worth EUR 3.000 and are generously donated by the Alfred Toepfer Foundation (DE). They are presented to the scholarship winners each year at the annual EUROPARC conference.

The three winners in 2011 were Tünde Ludnai, Ross Watson and Robbert Casier. Tünde (HU) will study the role of rangers in the different fields of management of Special Protection Areas (SPAs under the Bird Directive) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) under the Habitats Directive. Ross (Scotland, UK) aims to develop European partnerships and information sharing in the field of grazing management across woodland habitats. Robbert (BE) hopes to increase communication and exchange of knowledge between Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and World Heritage marine sites in the Mediterranean Sea.

Alfred Toepfer Scholarship winners 2011.

Picture: Christine Wawra



Alfred Toepfer Medal

The Alfred Toepfer Medal, named after the founder of the EUROPARC Federation, Dr h.c. Alfred Toepfer (1894-1993) is awarded annually by EUROPARC in recognition of a particular individual who has made a significant contribution to nature protection in Europe. This year the award went to Dr Hans Biebelriether for his work in international relations in the field of nature protection and his work in shaping protected areas across Europe and at home in Germany.

The National Park Bavarian Forest is Dr Hans Biebelriether's life's work. It was under his leadership that this first German national park developed to be an outstanding and well known international nature reserve. Dr Biebelriether has also worked intensively on in the field of European protected area management and has had a considerable impact on many functions of the development of large protected areas in Europe.

Dr Hans Biebelriether nomination for this award was led by the Bavarian Forest National Park (DE) and Czech protected areas. The laudation speech at the conference was given by Eberhardt Henne who has worked extensively with the awardee.

More information on both the award and scholarships: www.europarc.org/what-we-do/

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*Dr. Hans Biebelriether (DE), winner of the Alfred Toepfer Medal 2011.
Picture: Christine Wawra*

Our working groups – harnessing expertise

In five themed working groups the EUROPARC Federation brings together experts from our membership and around Europe to focus on issues important to protected areas and N2000 sites across the continent. These working groups consider policy issues, bring together best practice, develop new methodologies and look to future agenda and development. Each working group is mandated to examine subjects of relevance to protected areas in Europe and deliver activities and output that would benefit the wider membership. Over 40 members from countries across Europe are actively involved in working groups.

Health and Protected Areas

The Health Working Group focused on project planning, situation analysis at national level and the topic of benchmarking in 2011. In addition, they established links with the Scandinavian project 'frisk i naturen' and held a workshop at the annual EUROPARC Conference

Sustainable Tourism

The members of the Sustainable Tourism working group met three times in 2011. They reviewed the roles of the actors involved in the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas; gave their input into the Charter projects STEPPA and Sustainable Tourism Destinations; looked at funding models and development projects for the Charter; and helped organise the 2011 CharterNet meeting in Serbia.

Transboundary

In 2011 the transboundary group met twice to discuss the development of the EUROPARC Transboundary Programme. They also helped with the organisation of and participated in the annual TransParcNet meeting and provided advice and input into the verifiers training in June. Finally they were involved in the reevaluation of two transboundary protected areas.

Wilderness

The Wilderness Working Group is using a grant from WWF Europe as well as generous support from Wild Europe to develop work in the field of wilderness. A LIFE application was submitted for a project to further skills in the management of wilderness in Natura 2000 sites. Additionally the group have been drafting a clear definition of wilderness that can be adopted by the EU and developing a wilderness register with the consortium.

The Value of Protected Areas

In 2009 the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity report (TEEB) showed that the value of ecosystem services provided by nature to our society is much greater than previously acknowledged. This Working Group looks to develop this concept in connection with protected areas. Its members came together for the first time at the EUROPARC conference, where a strategy was discussed regarding the forthcoming tasks that are to be taken forward in 2012. In addition, a LIFE application on a project dealing with peatland economics and carbon storage was drafted for submission in 2012.

More information:

www.europarc.org/who-we-are/our-working-groups

Sustainable Tourism Working Group met in Olot (ES) in May 2011.

Picture: Lasse Loven



Our European network

EUROPARC Federation Section Reports

Over the years the Federation has supported the creation of seven regional and national sections. The Sections fulfil many of the EUROPARC Federation's aims, whilst reflecting the priorities and characteristics of the areas they cover. They undertake a huge volume of work to a high professional standard and both support and stimulate the work of the Federation as a whole. Only Federation members can form or be members of Sections of EUROPARC. Full Section reports can be obtained from them individually but a summary of their achievements is detailed in this chapter.

*Syöte National Park (FI)
Picture: Tuomas Uola*



High Cup, North
Pennines AONB
(UK).
Picture: North
Pennines AONB,
Shane Harris

EUROPARC Atlantic Isles

Key activities 2011

In 2011 the EUROPARC Atlantic Isles' (EAI) work programme helped strengthen the protected area network within the four countries of the United Kingdom, Ireland and Iceland. The Section and its members continued to play an active role within the EUROPARC Federation.

Economic benefits of protected landscapes

A successful seminar, 'Protect and prosper, Optimising the economic benefits of designated landscapes', was held in February 2011 in Oxford. The event, which attracted participants from across the UK, Ireland and Europe, highlighted the economic benefits of designated landscapes and areas and explored ongoing research initiatives, project work and practical examples.

Coastal and marine issues

The EAI coastal and marine working group held a successful networking meeting in Birmingham in July. Issues explored included marine planning and seascape character assessment. The group is also working to promote the UK Manifesto for Coasts and Seascapes, published in April 2011 with several other NGOs.

Volunteer Management in European Parks

EAI is a partner in the GRUNDTVIG funded project 'Volunteer Management in European Parks'. Volunteer coordinators from three UK protected landscapes attended a training seminar in Romania in May.

Junior Rangers

EAI is supporting members with developing Junior Ranger schemes and in the networking of protected areas with programmes. A seminar was held at Losehill Hall in February and a project application was prepared at the end of the year to develop the UK network.



EUROPARC
Atlantic Isles



*Pembrokeshire
Coast National
Park (UK).
Picture: Marloes*

Health and Protected Areas

EAI member and supporter Scottish Natural Heritage hosted a delegation from the Nordic-Baltic Section, to learn about Scottish experience in this field.

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism

The Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust and the Cotswolds Conservation Board were awarded Charter status for the first time in 2011. The Broads Authority and the Cairngorms National Park underwent successful re-evaluations.

Communications

EAI upgraded its website in the course of 2011. Information on UK and European developments was provided regularly in its E-News bulletins. EAI also uses Twitter and Facebook.

Success and challenges

The wider economic environment presented a challenge to EAI and its membership in 2011. Even so EAI continued to contribute to the life of the Federation, with staff, trustees, and members participating at the Federation's annual conference and in working group and section meetings.

The year ahead

The austere economic climate in the UK and Ireland will continue to have a major impact on the sections members and supporters; indeed the challenges of 2011 will become more acute in 2012. EAI is seeking to acquire new sources of funding to provide additional services to members. The provision of networking services and opportunities for exchange of expertise tailored to our members' needs in the Atlantic Isles region, whilst drawing on the added value of the Federation's pan-European work programme, remains important. EAI will also contribute to making a success of the cooperation between EUROPARC Federation – Eurosite.

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TransParcNet
participants.
Picture:
Andrzej Raj

EUROPARC Czech Republic

The EUROPARC Czech section brings together EUROPARC members who manage large protected areas in the Czech Republic: four national parks and the Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic, Palacký University in Olomouc and honorary member Mr. Jan Štursa. Key activities are aimed at cooperation, information and expertise exchange, promotional and educational activities. The section members also take part in EUROPARC projects, programmes and seminars.

Key activities 2011

Transboundary Parks Programme

In 2011 the aim to certify all four Czech national parks under the EUROPARC programme "Transboundary Parks - Following Nature's design" was fulfilled when the last national park, České Švýcarsko, applied to the programme together with its neighbor, the Saxony Switzerland National Park (DE).

At the annual EUROPARC Conference 2011 in Bad Urach representatives of the Krkonoše Mountains (CZ) and Karkonoski Park Narodowy National Parks (PL) were re-awarded their Transboundary certificate. This showed that these parks not only still cooperate to high standard but that their collaboration is ever improving.

In June the Czech Section organised the third Transboundary Parks Network (TransParcNet) meeting on the border of the Krkonoše (CZ) and Karkonosze National Parks (PL). Luční bouda, one of the oldest and largest mountain chalets in the Krkonoše hosted some 35 representatives from transboundary protected areas across Europe.

New presidency for the Section

In the second half of the year the Czech section began a new presidency. The president of the section for the next three years will be Michael Hošek, Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic. Michael will also be representing all sections on the EUROPARC Council in the 2011/2012 period.



EUROPARC
ČESKÁ REPUBLIKA



*Krokonose
Mountain (CZ).
Picture:
Kamila Antosova*

The year ahead

The Czech section has set several goals for the next year with the aim to increase its activity both at national and international levels. 2012 starts with lobbying activities concerning the establishment of an international section covering the wider region of Central Europe. The new EUROPARC section will bring significant benefits to its members, such as, including strengthening and promoting existing cooperation in Central Europe and facilitating opportunities for joint nature conservation cooperation and projects.

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*Mountain chalet
Luční bouda (CZ).
Picture:
Marek Dobrowolski*

Barrea Lake at
Abruzzo Lazio and
Molise National
Park (IT).
Picture:
ALMNP Archives



Federparchi – EUROPARC Italy

Federparchi was created in 1989 as a body co-ordinating several Italian regional parks. It was transformed into the Italian Federation of Parks and Natural Reserves in 1996. The organisation encompasses most of the Italian protected areas, regions, provinces, municipalities and environmental associations. In 2008 Federparchi became the EUROPARC Italian Section, “Federparchi – EUROPARC Italy”. The reason behind this change was the realisation that nature protection and sustainable development can be achieved more successfully when working internationally.

Key activities 2011

In 2011 the Italian section decided to focus its attention on the promotion and implementation of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST) in Protected Areas in Italy. Federparchi provided technical assistance regarding the process of the ECST to Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park, Colli Euganei Regional Park, Monte Rufeno Natural Reserve, Veglia Devero Regional Park, Val Grande National Park and seven regional parks of the Apulia Region.

The dissemination of the document 'Annual Social Statement' to members was again a great success in 2011. It is a key tool for protected areas that helps them to find the value of their areas. The Section provided those going through this process with support.

Public events on protected area management were held throughout the year and involved large numbers of public and stakeholders. Furthermore the Section organised several conferences to celebrate the anniversary of the Italian law on protected areas. These events put forward suggestions and initiated projects regarding the revision of the law.

International activities were predominantly linked to the election of the Sections President, Giampiero Sammuri, to the EUROPARC Council.





*Informing stakeholders about the Charter in Puglia (IT).
Picture: Federparchi-EUROPARC Italy*

Success and challenges

The severe economic crisis affected political choices deeply in 2011 in Italy. Italian protected areas were in the line of fire as a result of this several times during the year. Federparchi, however, continued its lobbying activity to show that parks are spaces where innovation and sustainable solutions become models of best practice with success. The section succeeded in keeping the attention on the essential role of protected areas in stopping environmental degradation and increasing the quality of life. The challenge was to continuously strengthen the protected area network to make it a political subject that cannot be ignored.

The year ahead

In 2012 Federparchi will hold an extraordinary assembly and board election. The year ahead will therefore be particularly busy and significant for the association. In addition, regular activities will also continue. These include: dissemination of information and support in the application for the ECST, developing the 'Annual Social Statement', re-training protected area managers, enhancing and extending effective environmental education, collaborating in national and international projects and working closely with the EUROPARC Federation.

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*Giampiero Sammuri, president of
Federparchi-EUROPARC Italy.
Picture: Federparchi-EUROPARC Italy*





EUROPARC France

Key activities 2011

Contribution of the French section to the EUROPARC lobbying strategy

The Vice President of the French Section presented a position paper from the French Federation of Regional Natural Parks (FFRNP) during the EUROPARC Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) workshop in Brussels in February. The paper requested a stronger territorial approach and a more effective greening of the new CAP. The position of the French section was included in the contents of a letter to the European Commission from the EUROPARC Federation on the CAP.

A programme of technical support to mobilize European funds

A specific initiative was developed by the Section in the first quarter of 2011, which aims to help French natural parks use European funds more efficiently in their regions. This was part of the wider EU project, EUROP'ACT, which is coordinated by the FFRNP. The project facilitates these parks with the implementation of European programmes and encourages the development of strategic projects.

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism

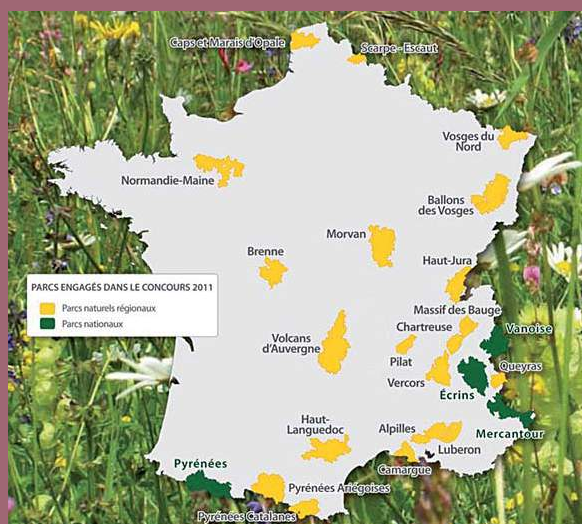
In 2011 the French working group on EUROPARC's European Charter for Sustainable Tourism:

- elaborated a new French methodology for the second part of the Charter, which awards businesses in the participating areas, bringing common elements and aspirations from all French protected areas together;
- began elaborating a pilot model for the implementation of Charter part three, a section of the Charter that has not yet been implemented and is currently under discussion and evaluation;
- developed a new project based on proposals for the third part of the Charter together with the association inter-parks of the Massif Central (IPAMAC). The project was selected by the Environmental Ministry of France and looks at building connections with the tourism sector and tour operators working within the protected areas.



EUROPARC
SECTION FRANCAISE

*French protected areas
participating in the
flowering meadows
competition 2011*



Active participation at the EUROPARC Conference 2011

At the EUROPARC Conference in Bad Urach the Section presented their "flowering meadows" competition to participants of the workshop "Increase and manage biodiversity". Three priority areas were recognised by participants:

- More support for farmers in European protected areas and their positive work for biodiversity
- Promotion of this experience at European level bringing the competition to a European level in 2012
- To highlight the importance of biodiversity within the CAP and vice versa, mention agriculture within the European Strategy for Biodiversity

*Meeting of the expert group of the project Sustainable
Tourism Destinations in Scarpe-Escaut Regional Park (FR).
Picture: C. Mairesse*



Success and challenges

Of the 33 members of the French section, 19 had been awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism up to and including 2011, and six are currently taking part in the application process.

The year ahead

In 2012 the Section will focus on the following activities:

- Allowing selected protected areas outside of France to participate in the "flowering meadows" competition. In 2012 the competition will be open to protected areas which share a border with French protected areas.
- Continue to implement and evaluate the second part of the Charter, working with businesses in Charter areas, and share the first results of the work on the third stage of the Charter with the other sections.
- Maintain the lobbying activities with European Institutions for a better recognition of the protected areas as crucial actors for in the sustainable management of the EU territories.

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Hainich National
Park (DE).
Picture:
Rüdiger Biehl



EUROPARC Germany

The realisation of the annual EUROPARC conference, the largest European Protected Area network event, was EUROPARC Germany's largest and most challenging activity in 2011. Great coordination and a large number of highly motivated international participants made the event a huge success.

Key activities 2011

EUROPARC 2011: European Protected Area conference

From 21st to 25th September 2011 the small town of Bad Urach in the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve (DE) hosted the largest protected area networking event in Europe and EUROPARC Germany was responsible for its organisation and implementation. Over 330 participants from 40 countries came together to exchange information and experiences under the theme "Quality Counts – Benefits for Nature and People". The conference was not just a great success with EUROPARC members. 25 % of the guests were non-members. This shows clearly that the conference has become one of the most influential international events in the field of protected area management.

Podium discussions, speeches from experts, workshops and excursions all ensured that participants worked together towards a stronger and more visible international protected area network and increased international relations. At the end of the conference the Bad Urach declaration was adopted. The document is directed to political decision-makers on various levels and demands better financial and human resources for protected areas as well as a modification of existing legal parameters. The 20th anniversary of EUROPARC Germany was also celebrated in style.

Nationale
Naturlandschaften





*President of the
German Section
Guido Puhmann
with the Mayor of
Bad Urach.
Picture:
Christine Wawra*

Climate mitigation certificates to help finance nature protection projects

EUROPARC Germany supports the basic concept where an appropriate financial recompense for protected areas working in climate mitigations should be made. The idea being tested is to “sell” the valuation given to these quality certificates, to private persons or to companies. The income from these sales would then go directly back into financing climate mitigation activities in peatlands, grasslands or forests. EUROPARC Germany is developing an online platform to put this idea into action. The platform involves all participants in the transactions process. The platform offers businesses the chance to support climate mitigation projects on their own doorstep. This leads to better identification with the region and is consistent with the growing trend to promote the image of environmental action.

In 2011 EUROPARC Germany carried out a pilot study on the implementation of this project idea. It was financed by the German Federal Agency for Nature Protection with resources from the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Protection and Nuclear Safety. The results of the study will form the basis for the development of the platform in 2012.

The year ahead

In 2012 the German section will continue to develop projects with a focus on the theme “people and nature in parks”. The Junior Ranger project is growing and “Nature: a matter of pride” is also still in great demand. EUROPARC Germany hopes to create long-term self-supporting structures for these successful projects and further activities. The change in management in 2011 also influences the coming year. The new Director Dr. Elke Baranek aims to create stronger synergies across the projects so that they profit from each other. In doing so she hopes to increase the efficiency and the stability of the associations work.

Further information:
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*3 minutes walk
from the middle
of Kristianstad
(SE) this visitor
centre lies
hidden in the
reeds.
Picture:
Lena Malmström*



EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic

The Nordic-Baltic Section is one of seven regional units which have been established to make the work of the EUROPARC Federation more effective.

It represents organisations from eight countries in the Nordic-Baltic Region. The section was formally established in April 2003.

The main goal of the section is: to promote the exchange of information and expertise and to encourage cooperation between the members, in order to improve the management of protected areas. The Section follows the key aims of the EUROPARC Federation and maintains active connections between its members and the Directorate of the Federation.

The section will have a new secretariat from 2012-2014 held by the Estonian Environmental Board.

Key activities 2011

The EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic Sections main activities in 2011 were a number of seminars and meetings which enabled exchange and networking amongst members across the region. The following seminars were held: a nature tourism seminar in Riga, Latvia; an ecosystem services seminar in Kristianstad Vattenrike Biosphere Reserve, Sweden; and a volunteering seminar in Tiikurila, Finland. In addition two section member meetings were organised and working group "Protected areas and Health" met once in the United Kingdom. Furthermore the Sections newsletter was published six times last year.

Success and challenges

The main success for the Section in 2011 was the involvement in creating the "European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected areas: Guideline for implementing Part II of the Charter (working with tourism business partners) within the EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic section". Another important outcome occurred during the EUROPARC Conference 2011, where one of our members, Thomas Hansson, was elected as EUROPARC Federation president and another one, Rolands Auzins, was re-elected as EUROPARC Federation Council member. This shows that the awareness of the members



*Workshop participants on their way to do some labour of love in Nuukio National Park (FI).
Picture:
Lena Malmström*

within the section about its work and the activities of the Federation have increased and this in turn has seen a growth in the number of members. There are, however, still some challenges: some of the members are facing budget cuts or structural reorganisation. The section will support these members in any way possible.

The year ahead

2012 will be a busy year for the Section's new secretariat in terms of getting to know the work of the Section and also the communication with other sections and the EUOPARC Federation. The section will organise at least two seminars and two member meetings in 2012. Furthermore, regular newsletters and the continuation of the working group "Protected areas and Health" are definite priorities.

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*Bird watching on the Carl Linnaeus path on the outskirts of Kristianstad
Picture:
Lena Malmström*



*Monfragüe
National Park
(ES) joined the
European
Charter for
Sustainable
Tourism in 2011.
Picture:
Javier Puertes*



EUROPARC Spain

The Spanish Section was founded in 1993 and is championed by FUNGOBE (Fundación F.G. Bernaldez for Natural Areas). There are currently 26 members, all of them public administrations. The Programme of Work for Protected Areas (PoW) 2009-2013, a contribution from the Spanish protected areas to the Convention on Biodiversity, has formed the backbone of the Sections activities since 2008.

Key activities 2011

In 2011 many activities from the current PoW took place including:

- A seminar about management of marine protected areas was held in Vigo, with the support of the Xunta de Galicia
- The Section was able to organise an expert meeting to work on protected areas and global change thanks to the "Fundación BBVA"
- The topic of quality management for conservation in the PoW saw the adoption of the Standard of Conservation. In addition, a document on good practice in preventive management was developed and validated. A manual entitled "Standard guide for quality in conservation management in protected areas" was elaborated and published. This publication was sponsored by the Biodiversity Foundation.
- In 2011 a total of 36 Spanish protected areas were part of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism and 259 tourism companies were participating in the second phase. The number of protected areas accredited with the label "Q Standard for public use" increased to 28.
- In the framework of collaborative agreements with Colombia and México, a representative of the section was able to participate at the World Protected Areas Leadership in Colombia.
- The seminar "Volunteering in protected areas" was organised as a contribution to the GRUNDTVIG project "Volunteer Management in European Parks". The section also celebrated the first meeting of volunteer coordinators from Spanish protected areas.



EUROPARC Spains Manual 9



- A new year of the Master in protected areas and three courses in quality conservation management were completed.
- Finally, the Section co-operated with BBVA Foundation to organise the conference "Forests and the challenge of global change" as part of the European Day of Parks 2012.

Success and challenges

In 2011 the Spanish Section used the International Year of Forests as a framework for disseminating information about many of its current activities to a wider audience. In addition, several public and private foundations supported the Section's activities: Fundación BBVA, Fundación Biodiversidad, Fundación de las Cajas de Ahorros, Obra Social de Caja Madrid, Red Eléctrica

EUROPARC Spain particularly enjoyed working closely with its members and the EUROPARC Federation throughout the year.

The year ahead

The main task for the Section in 2012 is the implementation of several lines of work connected to the PoW for Protected Areas. These include the development of Natura 2000 guidelines and a manual that protected areas can use to include their intangible values in their planning and management. Furthermore, a new report on protected areas in Spain will be published.

More information: www.redeuroparc.org

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*Olga Baniandres opens the seminar about
volunteering in protected areas.
Picture: Javier Puertes*



*The Wadden Sea sustainable tourism project is one EUROPARC Consultings largest ever undertaken.
Picture:
Henk Veurman*



Our consultancy arm EUROPARC Consulting



Key activities 2011

EUROPARC Consulting is registered in Regensburg (DE) and also has a UK operation. The Managing Director, Wilf Fenten, is supported by Rachel Wieting, Anne Webster and an Advisory Board of five which always includes the Federation President and its Director who provide strategic direction and guidance.

The philosophy and ethos of EUROPARC Consulting is the same as the Federation's and its work over the past 12 months has included:

- Managing and processing several dozen applications, re-evaluations and verification visits for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas.
- Organising and implementing a study visit for the Lithuanian Baltic Environmental Forum to Scotland's Loch Lomond National Park and Clyde-Muirshiel Regional Park (UK) to examine the work of rangers.
- Developing a sustainable tourism strategy for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site in Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark.
- Creating a sustainable-tourism handbook for Dutch client ECEAT.
- Producing a report on Public-Private-Partnerships for the PARKS & BENEFITS project.
- Organising and carrying out a study visit by national park officers from the Ukraine to Southern France. Participants studied environmental education the production and marketing of local produce, sustainable tourism, etc.
- Workshop co-ordination for the EUROPARC Conference 2011 in Bad Urach (DE).

Success and challenges

During the first half of 2011 Consulting spent a lot of time and effort on project applications. The second half of the year was marked by some great new contracts and even more new enquiries and tenders. This turn-around has been due to some excellent team work between our UK office, the EUROPARC Consulting Board and the EUROPARC Federation team.

EUROPARC Consulting was created in 2001 to help individual protected areas use the skills, knowledge and expertise of professionals from across the EUROPARC network. The company provides advice, specialist expertise, knowledge training and learning across all protected area work – and through these commercial activities provide support for the work of the EUROPARC Federation. Between 2008 and the end of 2011, EUROPARC Consulting has contributed a total of €85,000 to the EUROPARC Federation.

Despite the current financial restraints in the public sector all over Europe EUROPARC Consulting is set to return to an even more positive position from 2011. The Board is currently reviewing its Business Plan and Operational Manual and developing the company's medium-term aspirations.

There is no other consultancy firm which deals exclusively with protected areas as its subject matter. EUROPARC Consulting should be the natural choice for all protected areas and local authorities dealing with protected areas. The company is about connecting people with great ideas and creative expertise as well as with specialist knowledge of protected areas.

The year ahead

2012 is shaping up to be a very busy year for Consulting. The company will: continue with its expert work on sustainable tourism in developing a strategy for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site; carry out Charter verifications in twelve countries; and organise a number of study tours to protected areas with targeted learning outcomes for a variety of groups. Building on its previous success of work in the Danube Carpathian ecoregion the company are developing an exciting capacity-building and communications project in the Western Balkans.

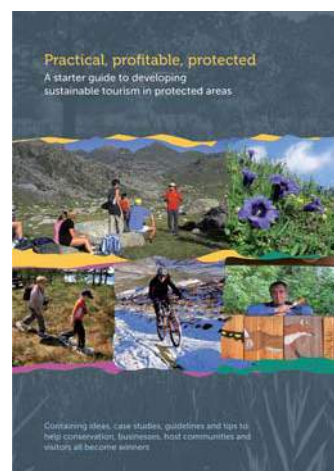
European protected areas award hundreds of contracts every year for advice and services; EUROPARC Consulting will gladly send in tenders for new projects. Clients include individual protected areas, local authorities, NGOs and government agencies. The company offers a tailor-made and flexible service and use EUROPARC experts with commitment and protected area knowledge.

More information: www.europarc-consulting.org

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*Practical,
profitable,
protected –
a starter guide to
developing
sustainable
tourism in
protected areas*





Summer pastures on the Tanargue in new Charter area, Monts d'Ardèche Regional Park (FR).
Picture: Monts d'Ardèche Regional Park

Our members

EUROPARC membership in 2011

The EUROPARC Federation currently has a membership of 422 members from 35 countries. The geographical spread reaches from Northern Finland to the Azores and from Iceland to the Ukraine. Together the members of the EUROPARC network are responsible for the management of several hundred protected areas across the continent. This includes a substantial portion of Europe's Natura 2000 sites and encompasses a wealth of expertise in the field of nature protection and protected area management.

In 2011 thirty-one new members joined EUROPARC, giving them access to knowledge and enabling them to share professional experience, to collaborate on technical projects and to progress common aims. Five members resigned and 39 had to be struck-off due to non-payment of membership fees for two years. Despite the current economic crisis in Europe the Federation's relatively stable membership base is a great achievement. The Council, Directorate and Sections of the Federation remain grateful for the continued support shown by EUROPARC members. The Federation remains committed to serving their aspirations for international cooperation in nature conservation.

The membership is at the very core of EUROPARC's work and members contribute to the organisation's mission to be the leading European organisation for protected areas in order to represent the value and benefits of Europe's natural heritage. The Federation brings together dedicated professionals, government agencies, decision-makers and communities. Together these individuals work to increase the effectiveness in conserving and enhancing natural and cultural heritage on land and sea for the well-being and benefit of current and future generations.

Participation of the membership in EUROPARC activities throughout the year was excellent. With over 330 attendees the Annual Conference was the largest single networking event of the year. 21 protected areas successfully completed their Charter evaluation or re-evaluation in 2011. Other events included a communications seminar at Siggen (DE), verifier training on the Island of Vilm (DE), a conference on sustainable tourism (SB), the TransParcNet meeting (CZ), the international Junior Ranger Camp (NL) as well as numerous working groups and section meetings. Members are also active in a number of transnational projects and have contributed regularly to EUROPARC's publications.

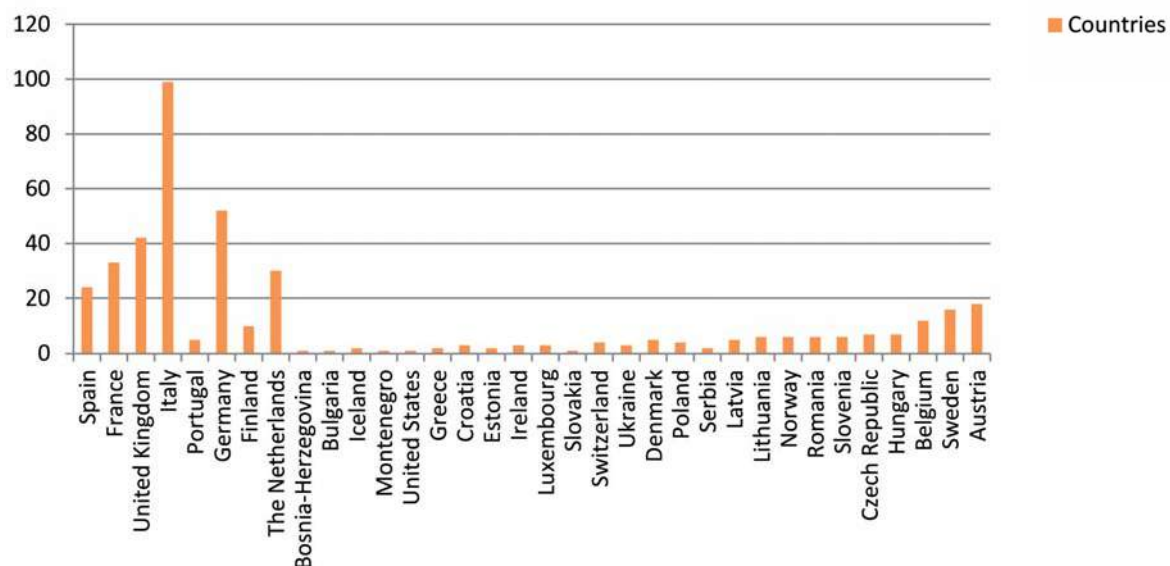
More information:

www.europarc.org/who-we-are/our-members

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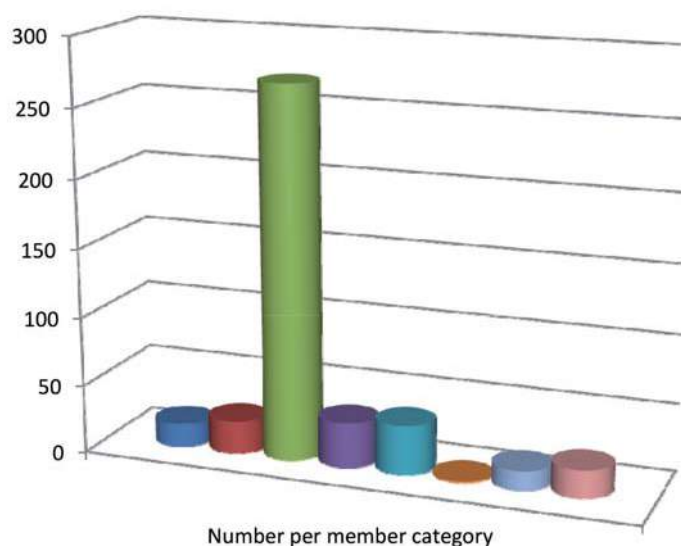


Number of EUOPARC members per country



EUOPARC member categories

- Group A: States/National Gov. Organisations
- Group B: Regional Government Agencies
- Group C: Protected Areas
- Group D: Other Official Agencies, Associations
- Group E: national or international NGOs
- Group H: Honorary members
- Group I: Individual members



Financial Report - changes

During 2011-12 the EUROPARC Federation undertook changes in its financial management systems, in order to rationalise and simplify accountancy and administrative procedure and to provide continuity of processes during period of staff change. Such changes invariably take some time to implement and unfortunately at the time of reporting these changes were not yet fully in place. The finance statements usually produced for the annual report, are the time of publication, not yet audited.

The normal financial statement will be forwarded to members as a supplement to this report. The fully audited end of year statement for 2011 will be provided for the General Assembly by the Treasurer in October 2012.

A word on membership fees

EUROPARC's work is currently financed in a number of different ways. Membership fees are one of these and a very important income for the Federation. As a membership organisation EUROPARC relies on these fees to sustain its network and activities.

The income received by members in 2011 was almost 84% of the invoiced amount of €334,114. The Directorate and Council are acutely aware of the financial restraints being imposed on members at present and are therefore very grateful for this remarkable achievement and show of support. In further recognition of the financial constraints on public authorities, there has been no increase in membership fees since 2007! In addition, 2011 saw the introduction of a lower fee rate of €200 to enable smaller protected areas and supporting organisations to join or stay a part of the Federation.



Income from membership fees fully covers current staff costs and offices in Regensburg and Brussels. However, in order to fund all other overheads EUROPARC needs supplementary income in the form of projects, donations from foundations and EUROPARC Consulting to ensure it can operate an effective team to serve the interests of its members.

Project money not only delivers new innovations, guidance and products as outputs of the project that benefit all members. Project income also can

cover some staff costs. When it is available, it frees up membership monies to pay for the services, publications, web and e-materials lobbying, meetings and representation the staff and council members undertake for members.

The Federation is of course always looking both to diversify and increase its income but remains aware that efficiencies and shrinkage to available resources is also necessary at times. This however is the normal life of an NGO!



EUROPARC
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