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## 300 protected area professionals make their way back to Europe's top nature and cultural spots

**Regensburg, October 7** - 300 protected area professionals make their way back to Europe's top nature and cultural spots. They return with a better understanding of the Value of Nature.

EUROPARC's prestigious international conference, hosted by the Ministry of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, in Killarney National Park, Ireland, considered over 4 days, the values and benefits protected areas provide for society. Delegates from 28 countries all responsible for the management of Europe's essential protected green heritage stressed the need for better partnerships between parks and communities to retain our living working landscapes.

Delegates too, gained knowledge and tools to better assess the economic Value of Nature. The work of Metsähallitus and IEEP not only showed the political necessity and role that protected areas have in moving towards a green economy but also that the value of a national park can be 10 Euros into the local economy for every 1 Euro invested.

The urgent need to communicate the Value of Nature to the wider public was also emphasised, if people are to gain the physical and mental benefits of reconnecting to the natural world. Across Europe new ideas, plans, initiatives and partnerships will be forged arising from the highly successful EUROPARC conference in Ireland.

EUROPARC members during the conference also elected a new President - Ignace Schops (BE) and council: Kaja Lotman (EE), Olaf Ostermann (DE), Michael Hosek (CZ), Paulo Castro (PT), Vittorio Allesandro (IT), Dominique Leveque (FR), to lead Europe's largest protected area network. The Federation represents national, regional and nature parks of Europe and developed a new strategy-committing members to a vision of a sustainable nature; valued by people.

They have an ambitious plan working together across Europe, to ensure the work of protected areas is recognised and at the forefront, meeting the challenges of climate change, biodiversity management and sustainable development.

-ENDS-  
(305 words)





## Notes for editors:

### About the EUROPARC Federation:

EUROPARC Federation is an independent, non-governmental organisation whose membership brings together organisations responsible for the management of most of Europe's protected areas. Currently it represents over 370 members in 36 countries. These include protected areas, governmental departments, NGO's and businesses who themselves manage the green jewels of Europe's land, sea, mountains, forests, rivers and cultural heritage.

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### For more information, visit our website:

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High quality photos available [here](#).

Photos below in order of appearance: Ignace Schops EUROPARC's new President, new EUROPARC Council, evening entertainment and taste of Irish culture



The EUROPARC Conference 2014 is co-organised by the Irish Ministry for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht with the support of the Irish Heritage Council and the Irish Forestry body – Coillte.

