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HAPPY BIRTHDAY, EUROPARC! 40 years Working for Nature

Working together to protect nature and motivate Europe's citizens to enjoy nature's benefits was the original idea to found the EUROPARC Federation. On Sunday, May 12th, Europe's biggest protected areas' network turned forty and officially started the celebration of its achievements and people under the theme "40 years Working for Nature".

In the midst of an economic crisis and in an important period for the European Union's development, a group of likeminded individuals met in 1973 inspired by the Stockholm Declaration of 1972 which recognised the right to a healthy environment for all people. They founded Europe's first protected areas' network, now known as the EUROPARC Federation.

The driver for this group of protected areas' managers was to improve communication about Europe's protected areas, based on their joined approach that working together was the right way to manage and protect the shared natural heritage in Europe.

EUROPARC's mission derives from the idea to secure a long term future stating that it is "(...) the leading European organisation for protected areas bringing together dedicated professionals, government agencies, decision makers and supporters to increase effectiveness in conserving and enhancing natural and cultural heritage on land and sea for the well-being and benefit of current and future generations."

International collaboration and exchange are the strengths of the Federation which celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2013. "40 years Working for Nature" was only possible through the "familiar" setting started in 1973 and the pan-European cohesion of people. The Federation's success is mainly visible in its renowned programmes, the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas and the Junior Ranger Programme.

Since it's birth on the 12th of May 1973, EUROPARC Federation has grown to be the biggest network of its kind with more than 400 members in 36 countries. All of its participants remain committed to make the network grow further and invest their time and energy in sustainable spaces for nature - and for the people.

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Interview opportunities:

- Thomas Hansson, President of the EUROPARC Federation
- Carol Ritchie, Director 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 420 members in 35 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.

Photo attached (contact us for high resolution pictures):



EUROPARC Council meeting May 2013, in Latvia