



EUROPARC Federation Annual Report

January - December 2014



EUROPARC
F E D E R A T I O N

A map of Europe with various regions highlighted in white and blue. Numerous small black star symbols are scattered across the map, primarily within the highlighted areas. The text 'Coming together', 'Keeping together', and 'Working together' is overlaid on the top left of the map.

Coming
together
Keeping
together
Working
together

EUROPARC Protected Area members - **PasE** - (highlighted in white) with respect to the overall European Protected Areas - **PAs**- (highlighted in blue), and agencies (black symbols). **PAsE** are reported in the map within the limits of the available cartographic information deriving from the international databases (WDPA, CDDA).

EUROPARC is the umbrella organisation of Europe's protected areas. It unites national and regional parks, nature and biosphere reserves, marine and landscape protected areas, together with a large number of Natura 2000 sites in 36 countries, with the common aim of protecting Europe's unique variety of wildlife, habitats and landscapes.

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EUROPARC Executive Director
Carol Ritchie
Picture: Gábor Nagy

Director's Remarks



Coming Together

2014 was certainly a year for EUROPARC members to come together. For the first time in our 40 years we undertook a comprehensive consultation Our Future Dialogues - "Listening to the Past: talking about our Future". This gave members a chance to shape the future of the Federation and its work to support Protected Areas management in Europe. The feedback received was fantastic! From the online questionnaire and meetings across Europe, new and old voices were heard and lots of views and opinions debated. It all resulted in the approval of a 6 year strategy with ambitions to restructure, develop and change, and to realise our vision of "Sustainable Nature; Valued by people."

Of course the highlight of our year, is the coming together at our annual conference and our hosts Ministry for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Ireland, did not disappoint. 300 delegates explored the theme "Understanding the Value of Nature" in Killarney National Park (IE) through stimulating keynote speeches and in hardworking workshops. There too, we awarded three young inspirational conservationists the Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarships and we look forward to reading the fruits of their studies in the months to come.

Finally the members came together to elect a new council and President. So we said farewell to Mr Thomas Hansson as President and welcomed Mr Ignace Schops in that role. Council member too completed their terms of office.

We are indebted to them all for their dedicated service and generous gift of their time and expertise which guided the Federation through a challenging few years.

Keeping Together

As the biggest Protected Areas network in Europe, maintaining vitality in our organisation is always needed. We may not always agree, but do seek to maintain and keep the passion and vision that help people keep together in a European network. Our Junior Rangers, at the annual international camp in Krkonoše and Karkonosze National Parks (CZ and PL) can always be relied on to remind us through their youthful enthusiasm and dedication, just why connecting young (and old) people with nature is so important.

Our Transboundary network too had their biggest ever meeting in Hainaut cross-border Nature Park (BE/FR) and with a second meeting in Finland. They remain determined to keep nature together across international borders and expand and improve transboundary work across Europe.

European Day of Parks in 2014 focused on "Parks for Nature. Parks for well-being. Parks for peace." reminding us all that many parks of today were places of war in the last century. The inspirational events, and entries from over 100 parks across Europe to the European Day of Parks reminded us all that keeping our network together, working for a common purpose, makes us more as a whole than individually and brings



Members getting together at the EUROPARC Conference 2014 in Killarney (IE)
Picture: Don MacMonagle

encouragement and motivation knowing we are part of a bigger movement.

Working Together

EUROPARC is no stranger to hard work and 2014 was a year that took us across the world in pursuit of our goals. EUROPARC was well represented at the prestigious World Parks Congress in Sydney, Australia. Working together with partners and members we highlighted many of the success and challenges for Protected Areas in Europe. We also learned and listened to ideas from other parts of the world to share through our network.

We worked together in many seminars and workshops on diverse topics including European funding, communication skills, health and Protected Areas and improving research partnerships plus 15 full day workshops at our conference! EUROPARC on behalf of its members is involved in a number of projects for example, looking at developing biomass production in nature parks, educational opportunities for Protected Areas and governance in nature and regional parks. Members have also worked together through working groups and produced a phenomenal amount of work including a substantial report on the Charter for Sustainable Tourism and case studies on Health and Protected Areas.

EUROPARC too works together with members and partner NGOs to lobby and influence policy at a European level. With a significantly increased profile across a range of policy areas, with many

European institutions, we work harder than ever to ensure the voice of Protected Areas is heard.

Working together is hard wired in the DNA of EUROPARC. International cooperation and sharing experience to support and improve the management of Europe's Protected Areas is our on-going mission. We have represented EUROPARC at meetings all over Europe from Greece to Norway where some grassroots park development is particularly encouraging.

With a membership that comes together, keeps together and works together we are sure of more success to come.

Carol Ritchie
Executive Director

"Coming Together is a beginning, Keeping Together is a process, Working Together is a success."

Henry Ford

What we do

The EUROPARC Directorate report

An aerial photograph of Kornati National Park in Croatia, showing a series of small, sandy islands and peninsulas scattered across a deep blue sea. The islands are mostly devoid of trees, with sparse low-lying vegetation. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

The Directorate of the EUROPARC Federation is committed to fulfilling the aims of the organisation, deliver its strategic goals and implement the strategy agreed by the members.

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.

Where the Council is the driver, the Directorate of the EUROPARC Federation is the engine of the organisation. The small team of eight, split between the headquarters in Regensburg (DE) and an office in Brussels (BE), 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 and many dedicated members. Their support is gratefully appreciated and acknowledged in this report.

*Kornati National Park (HR)
Picture: Novena d.o.o*

Communicating our message

Communicating messages about the values and benefits of our natural heritage for society is crucial, if support for action is to be harnessed. Fostering societal acceptance and understanding about biodiversity and the role of Protected Areas in Europe is fundamental if we want to increase recognition of the importance of protecting nature and living more sustainably.

Communications, therefore, continued to play a pivotal role in the work of the EUROPARC Federation in 2014.



Key Activities 2014

Publications, promotion and publicity

All the regular publications are produced to inform the EUROPARC network and wider public about Protected Area management across Europe. They can be found under <http://www.europarc.org/library/publications/>.

The social media presence of EUROPARC has been particularly successful. With more than 2500 "likes" on Facebook and 1000 followers on Twitter as well as more than 2000 Tweets posted, it is a valuable tool in our communication mix. During 2014, EUROPARC's website also saw an increase in traffic reaching more than 160 000 page views with some 38 000 different users. It was regularly updated throughout the year and frequent news items posted. In 2014, EUROPARC planned a relaunch of the new EUROPARC website. The launch is planned for early 2015.

Articles about the activities of EUROPARC appeared in numerous publications around the globe. Press releases included the European Day of Parks, seminars on improving communication skills, networking, the economic impact of Protected Areas in Europe and Alfred Toepfer Medal and Scholarship, and were sent to press across Europe. EUROPARC further developed a system of monitoring of communications reach and effectiveness.

Events and representation

EUROPARC represented its members' interests at international events throughout the year.

The European Day of Parks 2014 under the theme *Parks for Nature. Parks for well-being. Parks for Peace.* was celebrated in a variety of initiatives and activities in more than 100 Protected Areas in 23 countries, counting more than 300 activities. The high reach number through social media with some 5000 interactions showed the active interest and participation of our members.

For the 2014 European Day of Parks, EUROPARC ran an online contest on Facebook for the most inspirational entry. We invited people who work in Protected Areas, as well as those who visit them to reflect on the beauty of nature and share their feelings and emotions in any piece of art that expresses how they feel connected to their most favourite Protected Area. The award went to Anne-Marie Austad, representing the Majjistral Nature and History Park (MT) for her beautiful artwork created for a special Day of Parks event. To boost the visibility of the day, EUROPARC also created a special promotional video and invited the young author to receive her award at the EUROPARC Conference.

The **EUROPARC seminar series at Gut Siggen** (DE) continued this year gathering 21 participants in total over the course of a week, thanks to the Alfred Toepfer Stiftung F.V.S. (DE). Giacomo Benelli, who has been involved in Protected Area

EUROPARC
Siggen Seminar
participants 2014
Picture:
EUROPARC



management and worked very closely with several EU funding programmes, provided basis for work and discussion with a workshop on *European Funding for Protected Areas: Successful Projects for Effective Management of Protected Areas*. Erika Stanciu of ProPark (RO) an experienced project manager also gave her practical insights. Participants' feedback of the seminar showed very positive results and EUROPARC is most grateful to the Alfred Toepfer Stiftung F.V.S. for providing such wonderful learning facilities at Gut Siggen.

In 2014, EUROPARC Federation undertook the biggest and most comprehensive member's consultation of its history to date. At various places and meetings members were able to help the Federation to develop the new strategy 2015-2021. EUROPARC's members had the opportunity to express their views through a consultation campaign either in an online survey that was available in five languages or attending local meetings.



EUROPARC's think tank team gathered in Siggen to analyse the results of the big member survey, **Our Future Dialogues** and worked intensively towards creating EUROPARC's new strategy.



The **EUROPARC 2014 Conference** hosted by the Irish Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht with the support of the Irish Heritage Council and Coillte, took place in the town of Killarney, Ireland next to Killarney National Park. Some 300 international experts from the field of nature conservation attended the presentations, workshops and field trips under the theme *Understanding the value of nature*. The conference 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.

The annual EUROPARC **General Assembly** took place during the conference in Killarney, Ireland. A new president and council were elected and the new 6-year strategy was unanimously approved by the members.

The 2014-2017 council members are:

- Ignace Schops (BE), President
- Kaja Lotman (EE)
- Olaf Ostermann (DE)
- Michael Hošek (CZ)
- Paulo Castro (PT)



EUROPARC Team
at EUROPARC
Conference 2014
in Killarney (IE)
Picture: Don
MacMonagle

- Vittorio Alessandro (IT)
- Dominique Lévêque (FR)
- Roger de Freitas (UK), Internal auditor
- Olaf Holm (FR), Section representative

The year ahead

In 2014, EUROPARC planned and designed a new website and will build on its use in 2015.

The year will develop the communications work achieved in previous years and bring new positive and constructive messages about Protected Areas, biodiversity and sustainable development to a wide range of audiences.

The development of new projects and planned communication initiatives will adapt depending on available funding. Communicating the messages through existing and new internet based services and networks, and regular updates of the website will further improve EUROPARC's presence in the public and its service to members.

Some of the interesting events happening in 2015 include:

The **European Day of Parks in May 2015** will be coordinated and organised under the theme ***Nature is Our Business***. The initiative will be addressed to all Protected Areas in Europe, with an active involvement of EUROPARC Sections and other regional networks of Protected Areas.

The **Siggen Seminar** will take place in April under the topic ***From Designation to Implementation - effective management and monitoring for N2000 and multi designated sites***, taking into account the mandate of the Fitness Check for the EU Nature legislation. The seminar will bring together EUROPARC members, especially from agencies and regional governments, partner organisations and representatives of DG Environment to present case studies, exchange experiences and try to identify the main common gaps, challenges and successes in the management of N2000 sites.

EUROPARC 2015 conference, will take place 26-27 October in the medieval city of Regensburg, Germany, headquarter town for the EUROPARC Federation, on the theme ***Protected Areas in a Changing World***. The conference, which will be the major European gathering of Protected Area managers in 2015, will offer a great opportunity for exchange of experiences, to present innovations on management of Protected Areas and updates on EU environmental policies, to elaborate new projects and initiatives for Protected Areas in Europe, and to discover on the ground how Protected Areas are managed.

More information: www.europarc.org

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During the Charter
Award Ceremony
2014 at European
Parliament in
Brussels (BE)
Picture:
EUOPARC

Representing members' interests in Europe



During the course of 2014 EUOPARC, through meetings, seminars and conferences, continued its active work highlighting and sharing, at the highest European institutional level, the contribution that Protected Areas provide towards the implementation of relevant EU and international policies.

EUOPARC also strengthened its role as the European platform for Protected Areas, providing to its wide network, access to information and news on relevant political developments, technical guidelines and funding opportunities.

Key Activities 2014

A specific effort has been made to quantify and further value the role of our members in the management of N2000 sites: a dedicated research, conducted for us by the CED-PPN, was published and presented to the European Commission. To improve site management and facilitate the exchange of good practices and international cooperation among site managers, EUOPARC was also actively involved in the Mediterranean Biogeographic Seminar in Greece.

Having its seat in Brussels within the IUCN office and being a member of the EHF and other platforms, EUOPARC worked in close

cooperation with other environmental organisations on most relevant EU policies and strategies for nature conservation, sustainable development and to ensure synergies between biodiversity conservation and farming priorities, towards the implementation of the new CAP.

In the course of the year EUOPARC attended and contributed to more than 60 meetings, conferences and events in Brussels with EU institutions, partner organisations, local authorities and other relevant stakeholders. Direct contacts were established with new MEPs, with the Commission and an active role played on several EC working groups such as those on Green Infrastructures and Natura 2000 management.



*EUROPARC
President Ignace
Schops opening
the Charter Award
Ceremony 2014
Picture:
EUROPARC*

Closer cooperation with the Council of Europe was established and contribution to the debate provided within the expert group on Protected Areas and Ecological Networks.

Success and challenges

In the course of the recent years EUROPARC has achieved a higher visibility at European level and a good recognition among European institutions and international partner organisations for its work and the role Protected Areas play across Europe. In this context EUROPARC had the opportunity to provide specific inputs to the EU Mediterranean transnational cooperation programme, to ensure Protected Areas would be included among the priorities in the upcoming funding programme.

Among the great success of the year we should mention the Charter Awards ceremony at the EU Parliament hosted by the MEP Renata Briano in December, and the first EU Natura 2000 award given to the EUROPARC Spanish Section: a great recognition of the work the network is doing to improve nature conservation and site management.

EUROPARC continued to play its active role for the protection of wilderness in Europe, hosting one of the annual meetings of the Wild Europe platform in Brussels, and in partnership with Slow Food produced a first collection of good practices on sustainable agriculture in Protected Areas.

The year ahead

With our new strategy entering into force and wide changes at EU level after the 2014 elections, in the course of 2015 we will revise our policy and advocacy strategy, keeping our focus mainly on nature and biodiversity, sustainable development, education and climate change.

EUROPARC will actively contribute to the European debate on the effectiveness of the Habitats and Birds Directives, showing the value of the Natura 2000 legislation and the role of Protected Areas across Europe in managing those special sites. For this we will also be directly involved in the coordination of the upcoming Biogeographic Seminars in partnership with ECNC, ELO, Eurosite and CEEweb.

In 2015 we will also cooperate with the Council of Europe for the Celebration of 50 years of Protected Areas Diploma, contribute to the Green Week and continue to share news and funding opportunities with our members.

More information: <http://www.europarc.org/europe/>

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Great
experiences at
the International
Junior Ranger
Camp 2014 in
Krkonosé
National Park
(CZ)
Picture:
EUROPARC



Investing in Young People

We believe international cooperation is fundamental to manage our European natural heritage, and making sure young people have a role in that is an important component of our work. Young people are at the heart of the local communities living in and around Protected Areas, they are also the future advocates, guardians and potential employees of these areas.

The Junior Ranger programme is an initiative, to which all Protected Area members of EUROPARC Federation are invited to participate thereby creating a valuable sharing and learning network amongst those running youth activities.

Key Activities 2014

The international Junior Ranger Camp took place last year in the Krkonosé Mountains National Park (CZ) at the border with the Polish Karkonosze National Park, providing a great opportunity to investigate with young people how transboundary cooperation works in Protected Areas.

Other important events for our network in 2014 were the 3rd European Ranger Conference, hosted in Brijuni National Park (HR), with a dedicated session on EUROPARC's Junior Ranger programme, and the IUCN World Parks Congress in Sydney, where we had the great opportunity to extensively present and share information on the Junior Ranger programme.

Success and challenges

The network of Protected Areas involved in the Junior Ranger programme across Europe has been growing quite significantly reaching almost 60 parks from 21 different European countries.

At the International Junior Ranger Camp 2014 we had 50 participants coming from 13 European countries and representing 16 different Protected Areas. The core theme of the camp was "Following wilderness across boundaries" with the objective to help young people understand benefits and values of working across borders for Protected Areas, biodiversity and people.



Discovering
Krkonos National
Park (CZ) during
International
Junior Ranger
Camp 2014
Picture:
EUROPARC

During the course of the camp, Junior Rangers presented how their respective parks work on transboundary cooperation, or what are the initiatives and projects they manage in partnership with other parks across Europe. At the end of the camp it was clear how meaningless are today's borders, both for young people and for biodiversity!

Participants shared also their views on wilderness, which was mainly associated with unspoiled nature, peace, quietness, relax and beauty, freedom and fun, but also with the lack of civilization and lack of mobile connection and Wi-Fi.

A specific meeting took place during the camp with Rangers and mentors to present how Junior Ranger programmes are being run in each park, exchange ideas and views on the future of the programme, present the proposal for a Youth+ programme, and report about the recent IRF Europe Ranger conference in Croatia.

The year ahead

The Junior Ranger Camp 2015 will focus on **active citizenship for nature** and will take place in Finland, kindly hosted by the Nuukio National Park.

In 2015 EUROPARC will continue to promote the Junior Ranger programme across Europe and will present a new project proposal to develop a dedicated programme for young people aged 18-25 years. This will possibly be created as a follow up for those having already been Junior Rangers, looking at youth ambassadors for Protected Areas and leaders for the Junior Ranger programme in the future.

We will endeavour to organise in 2015 the second EUROPARC Youth Conference.

More information:
<http://www.europarc.org/nature/young-people/junior-rangers/>
www.facebook.com/pages/Europarc-Junior-Ranger-Programme/266313873379549?fref=ts

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Happy recipients
of Charter
Awards 2014
with EUROPARC
President Ignace
Schops
Picture:
EUROPARC



The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

EUROPARC has been involved in the field of sustainable tourism since the development of its European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas was born in 1995. The programme enables Protected Areas to develop and manage tourism sustainably, together with private businesses and local communities. The Charter has grown to be one of EUROPARC's most successful programmes, with more and more Protected Areas being interested in joining the network of certified Charter Areas. It has been recognised a model system by many organisations including the World Tourism Organisation, the Spanish Tourist Board, the German Federal Agency for Nature Protection (BfN) and the EU commission through DG Enterprise and Industry.



Key Activities 2014

In 2014, the network of certified Charter Areas grew from previously 119 to 131 Protected Areas in 16 European countries, sharing the same principles for managing their tourism activities. We gladly welcome three new countries from the Dinaric Arc region who have joined the Charter family with new awardees this year: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia.

In April sustainable tourism was on the European Agenda at the International Academy for Nature Conservation on the Isle of Vilm, Germany. EUROPARC and BfN (German Federal Agency for

Nature Conservation) brought together tourism experts and Protected Area managers in a 3-day seminar, including a verifier training and preparations on the internationalization of Charter methodology.

After the huge success in 2013 also this year the Charter Award Ceremony took place in the European Parliament, kindly hosted by MEP Renata Briano. More than 90 people, amongst them representatives from Charter Areas, Charter verifiers, tourism business partners and politicians of the European Parliament came together this year. The half-day event included awarding and re-



*European Charter
for Sustainable
Tourism in
Protected Areas
Renewal and
Retraining at BfN
Academy in Vilm
(DE)
Picture:
EUROPARC*

awarding of 16 Protected Areas with the Charter. We were especially pleased to see the first Marine Protected Area certified: Area Marina Protetta Torre del Cerrano (IT). As in previous years, EUROPARC Consulting, with their great expertise, supported the Federation with the management of the verifications.

The event was a great opportunity to present the new "Charter Parks" to the community and further show how parks are effectively working with tourism businesses and tour operators across the network. Representatives of Charter parks met and shared good practice examples which helps understand and underline the role that ECST plays for tourism, environment and regional development.

Charter Part II (working with tourism businesses) has been making great progress, especially in Spain and Italy, involving certified tourism businesses in the Charter network. The development of Charter part III (working with tour operators) methodology in France was very successful. The first 7 French tour operators were awarded the Charter in April 2014 thanks to the hard work of EUROPARC France and IPAMAC. In December applications of 7 more tour operators wanting committing to sustainability were already in for evaluation.

The growing interest in the Charter, the efforts to continuously improve and develop its values are the positive results of the ongoing committed work and support of all verifiers, the Sustainable Tourism

Working Group, the Evaluation Committee and EUROPARC Consulting throughout the year.

The year ahead

In 2015, the promotion of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas will continue in order to strengthen its networking activities and develop forward the Charter part II with tourism business and Charter part III with tour operators. An intensive cooperation between the Federation and its sections is sought for and a reorganisation of tasks may be needed as the work of the Charter grows.

Work on updated Charter forms and guidelines will be finalised, resulting in a new and more modern strategy of the entire programme. A report produced by the STWG will assist in the future planning. The 9th Charter network meeting will take place in Portugal 4 - 7 May 2015.

EUROPARC will certainly continue to promote the benefits of the Charter with partner institutions and organisations, encourage new Protected Areas in Europe to get involved in the Charter process and develop a new international project on sustainable tourism.

More information: www.european-charter.org

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Participants at
TransParcNet
meeting 2014 in
Hainaut cross-
border Nature
Park (BE/FR)
Picture:
Samuel Dohle



Naturally without borders - EUROPARC's Transboundary Parks Programme

Mutual support, experience exchange and learning from best practice are at the heart of the TransParcNet, the Federation's network of certified Transboundary Areas. EUROPARC's Transboundary Parks Programme is itself widely recognised as a quality assessment of cross-border cooperation between Protected Areas.

Key Activities 2014

2014 the 6th EUROPARC's TransParcNet meeting took place. More than 70 participants joined the Federation in Hainaut cross-border Nature Park (BE/FR). It was the biggest TransParcNet meeting so far. During this year's reunion, the participants could learn about EU funding possibilities for transnational cooperation and look into the Green Infrastructure Strategy of the European Commission paired with practical examples from cross-border areas.

At the annual Conference in Ireland the transboundary area Ecoregion Julian Alps composed of Triglav National Park (SI), Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve (SI) and Prealpi Giulie Nature Park (IT) saw the renewal of its EUROPARC Transboundary Certificate. A common application for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas is the planned next step in their collaborative work. This would make the Ecoregion

Julian Alps the first certified transboundary Protected Area applying for that process.

With support from its network EUROPARC was able to put together case studies on Green Infrastructure from Transboundary Areas. These serve as good practice examples and highlight the importance of cross-border Protected Areas for implementing EU's Green Infrastructure Strategy on the ground. They are available on the EUROPARC website.

New re-evaluation guidelines and forms have been approved and are already in use, ensuring a better comparability of re-evaluations in the future. Chairs of Transboundary and Sustainable Tourism Working Group met in order to find synergies between the two EUROPARC programmes. Since several Charter parks lie in border areas and some transboundary parks want to develop tourism more sustainably, better coordination and collaboration of the two



*Exploring Hainaut cross-border Nature Park (BE/FR) during TransParcNet meeting 2014
Picture: Samuel Dohite*

Working Groups on common projects seem worthwhile.

Members of several Transboundary Areas travelled to the IUCN World Parks Congress in Sydney and presented their successful cross-border cooperation as well as EUROPARC's Transboundary Parks Programme to a wide international audience. Communication about the programme was again strengthened this year in social media, eNews and on the EUROPARC website.



The year ahead

In 2015, EUROPARC will continue their efforts to promote the programme to Protected Areas all across Europe and seek more intensified cooperation with other organisations outside the network. Applications for re-evaluations in 2015 have already arrived at EUROPARC.

The 7th TransParcNet meeting will take place from 9 - 12 June 2015 in the National Parks Bavarian Forest (DE) and Šumava (CZ). It will focus on "The value of healthy ecosystems for nature and people", having a closer look at values of maintaining and restoring ecosystems across borders.

More information:

www.europarc.org/nature/transboundary-parks/

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*Representatives of Ecoregion Julian Alps (IT/SI) receive renewed EUROPARC Transboundary Certificate at conference 2014 in Killarney (IE)
Picture: Don MacMonagle*

Participants at 1st
Communications
Training Course in
Spain
Picture:
EUROPARC



Efficient Managers for Efficient Natura 2000 Network



EUROPARC partnered with ProPark and others, for a three year project, "Efficient Managers for Efficient Natura 2000 Network" (2012 – 2015), mainly financed by the European Union DG Environment's LIFE+ Communication programme.

The aim of the project is to increase the management capacity and support for Natura 2000 sites in Romania by developing site managers' communication skills and support the integration of biodiversity concerns in territorial planning processes, in and around Natura 2000 sites. The lessons learned here, will be of benefit to the wider EUROPARC network.

EUROPARC in this project is greatly involved in developing the good practice guidance incorporated into an interactive toolkit, manual and programme for the high quality communications' trainings to improve the skills and capacity of site managers to communicate Natura 2000 issues.

In 2014, EUROPARC produced the first drafts of the materials and tested them at the first Communications Training Course organised in Spain with the help of EUROPARC Spain and ProPark. Our first seminar on improving

Communication Skills for Natura 2000 managers as a part of the LIFE EME project took place at the premises of the CENEAM. Managers, communicators, technicians and officers from various European countries and N2000 sites learned how to improve their communications skills in different fields, from active listening, negotiation, creative writing to using social media and talking to media. EUROPARC will be organising the second course in 2015 in Romania.

A further component of this project is to support the improvement of territorial planning in Romania. This incorporates biodiversity concerns. By providing guidance to the most important economic sectors that are using land and natural resources, they will learn how to actively contribute to the development of regional territorial plans which are looking at biodiversity concerns and the objectives of the Natura 2000 network. The project runs until July 2015.

More information: www.europarc.org/get-involved/trainings/communication-skills/

Contact: office@europarc.org



Woody biomass
Picture:
Dea Mijakovac

Biomass in EU Nature Parks



Exploiting the potential of solid biomass in EU Parks

Using biomasses for producing heat and energy is growing across Europe and is a process often sustained by central or local governments. An efficient and sustainable supply chain of biomass is an indispensable condition for such a system. BioEUParks is a new project applied under IEE Altener Programme in which EUROPARC is partnering with 9 other environmental associations and Nature Parks from 6 EU countries.

The project seeks to contribute to increasing the local supply of biomass from sustainably managed forests and agricultural residues, aiming to develop an efficient and sustainable biomass supply chain in five European Nature Parks. This will also promote short supply chains and small-scale installations. This can be realised due to sharing of objectives and co-planning with local key actors. For this reason, the project aims also to develop a methodology of encounter, discussion, sharing and co-planning to overcome the social conflicts that can arise when significant structural interventions are under consideration, such as

the growth and use of biomass. Furthermore, the project will mainstream the experience and improve the skills of Nature Park managers, engineers and technicians.

EUROPARC, as the umbrella organisation for European Protected Areas joined the project this year and will mainly support the communication of the project at an international level. EUROPARC will coordinate the dissemination of the BioEUParks project on local, national and European scale in order to make this initiative known and contribute to the debate on biomass production and its conversion in energy, including issues linked with the environmental sustainability of such operations. During the course of the project, EUROPARC will also coordinate the organisation of six National Workshops, almost 80 Ad Hoc meetings and by the end of the project organise an International Mainstreaming conference in Brussels, presenting the project's results along with the after project communication strategy.

More information: www.bioeuparks.eu

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Use of e-learning for Protected Areas staff development

During 2014 EUROPARC had been involved with ProPark (RO) in the project “Increasing education opportunities on sustainable development for protected area managers in Romania”. The project is funded through Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (DBU) and during the following 30 months supports development, implementation and promotion of e-learning to increase knowledge transfer to Protected Area professionals on nature conservation management. Lessons learned and materials developed in this project will be available to the wider EUROPARC network. ProPark Foundation, founded with the aim to help Protected Areas staff to develop their competencies, is pioneering the establishment of comprehensive capacity building programmes in Romania. This project will support ProPark to introduce new approaches into capacity building programmes by using modern technology. With developing online training, the time of face-to-face training sessions can be reduced, resulting in a more cost and time effective training for Protected Area staff and their employers, important when resources for staff development are limited.



*Team spirit during the 1st Train the Trainer seminar in Romania
Picture: ProPark (RO)*



Working groups
discuss content
of online training
seminar
Picture:
ProPark (RO)



Key Activities 2014

- Kick-off meeting in Braşov with ProPark and EUROPARC
- 2 Train-the-Trainer seminars for ProPark trainers to learn how to introduce new approaches into the capacity building programme for Protected Area staff by using online training tools
- Establishment of 11 working groups of ProPark trainers to develop online training sessions and material on 6 topics
- Creation of web-platform to provide online lessons and training material
- Project communication through ProPark and EUROPARC media

The year ahead

In 2015 30 participants are expected for the first two training cycles for Protected Areas Specialists in a combination of online lessons and a 10 day face-to-face session. Based on the feedback from participants the online lessons and face-to-face training sessions will be revised and training material improved.

More information: <http://www.europarc.org/get-involved/trainings/education-opportunities-pas/>

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Alfred Toepfer
Scholarship
winners 2014, Joss
Ratcliffe, Milene
Matos and Natalya
Yakusheva at
EUROPARC
Conference 2014
Picture: Don
MacMonagle



Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarships 2014



Each year the EUOPARC Federation, with support from Alfred Toepfer Stiftung F.V.S. (DE), awards three Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarships to promising young conservationists, who are committed to working for the benefit of Protected Areas. The aim of the scholarships is to enhance international cooperation and to advance the quality, innovation and European dimension of Protected Area management. Each scholarship is worth € 3000 and enables successful applicants to undertake a study visit on a particular theme to one or more Protected Areas in a European country. After the trip the scholars are expected to present the Federation with a report.

The winners in 2014 were – Milene Matos (PT), Natalya Yakusheva (SE) and Joss Ratcliffe (UK).

Joss Ratcliffe is a young researcher based at the Environmental Research Institute in Thurso, Scotland. Joss will visit a range of wetland sites managed by Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife Finland including Koli National Park and sites in Lapland and Ostrobothnia that most resemble open treeless peatlands in Scotland. He plans to visit sites representative of different mire types and restoration techniques as well as observe less intensive forestry practices such as the use of natural regeneration and what affect this has on ecosystem function and biodiversity.

Milene Matos is from Portugal and has been working on biodiversity conservation and invasive plant species control, but she lacks further experience, namely on how to correctly communicate these aspects to the general public, in order to engage it and raise public awareness. She wishes to learn from Parque Regional del Sureste (ES) team's experience and replicate the best practices in Portugal.

Natalya Yakusheva currently holds a position of a PhD candidate at Södertörn University, Sweden. Her research is focused on the governance processes of nature conservation policy in the Carpathian countries, namely Poland and Slovakia. In particular she scrutinizes how various policy frameworks are translated and implemented on the ground, what are the implications, potential issues and benefits of Protected Areas for local communities. She aims to explore links between political objectives (EU biodiversity strategy) and day-to-day implementation, i.e. management activities of transboundary Protected Areas in the Alps (Prealpi Giulie Nature Park, IT and Triglav National Park, SI).

More information: www.euoparc.org/get-involved/awards-2/ats/

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EUROPARC Working Groups

The EUROPARC Federation brings together experts from our membership and around Europe to focus on issues important to Protected Areas. These working groups consider policy issues, bring together best practice, develop new methodologies and look to future agenda and development. They are convened as appropriate to consider relevant topics. They meet as required and have been an excellent breeding ground for new ideas and innovative solutions.

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. These groups are a strong “working arm” of the Federation, where issues of importance to the Protected Areas of Europe are examined and developed by Protected Areas for Protected Areas, with high membership participation and involvement.

In 2014 four working groups were active supporting EUROPARC's work. More than 40 members have participated in working groups dealing with topics as diverse as advancing project ideas for cross-border Protected Areas in Europe or assessing ecosystem services for specific sites.

Economics and Ecosystem Services (EES)

The main activity of the joint EUROPARC-Eurosite working group in 2014 was a successful 2-day workshop on economics and ecosystem services in November in Amsterdam. 20 participants from Turkey, Latvia, Italy, Spain, Germany, Scotland, England and the Netherlands attended the event. Issues like communicating ecosystem services, rapid assessments of ecosystem services for specific sites, carbon credits and climate certificates as well as stakeholder engagement and drinking water as an ecosystem service were discussed. It was concluded that ecosystem services offer great potential for Protected Areas, if agreements are to be retrieved from voluntariness.

Health and Protected Areas

Case studies that highlight the benefits of Protected Areas for health and well-being were gathered from among the EUROPARC membership. These good practice examples are now available on our website and were also presented in a webinar organised with the support of EUROPARC Atlantic Isles. At the World Parks Congress EUROPARC and members of its Health and Protected Areas Working Group presented their work to a vast international audience.

Transboundary

Members of the Transboundary Working Group in close cooperation with STEC (Steering and Evaluation Committee) developed new guidelines for re-evaluation to maintain the excellent standard of the programme. A new informational flyer and roll-up for the Transboundary Parks Programme could be designed thanks to the generous support of Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife Finland. Both products will be available in 2015 and will help to promote the programme further.

Sustainable Tourism

The Sustainable Tourism Working Group was busy as ever in 2014. Starting from the new EUROPARC strategy they produced a Charter action plan 2021. Furthermore discussions on

*EUROPARC
Working Groups
and Steering
Committees at
EUROPARC
Conference 2014
Picture: Don
MacMonagle*



how to communicate the Charter more effectively according to needs of members and sections took place, in order for EUROPARC members to understand the benefits of the Charter better.

The EUROPARC Federation is rightly proud and extremely grateful for the commitment and participation of those who work voluntarily to improve the management of our shared natural heritage through international cooperation. Even in these difficult financial times, members have found means to remain in touch and advance the support of Protected Areas in Europe.

In addition to Working Groups EUROPARC also retains two standing Committees, Charter for Sustainable Tourism and Transboundary. These committees make sure the certification programmes offered by EUROPARC are held to

a high standard. It is their excellent work that has ensured these programme are held in high regard by international organisations. All members of both committees give a huge commitment to the work and their long service to the EUROPARC Federation is acknowledged and appreciated.

Without the work of this army of volunteers across the range of topics relevant to Protected Areas, the EUROPARC Federation would not be able to accomplish the work to support its members and the management of Europe's Protected Areas.

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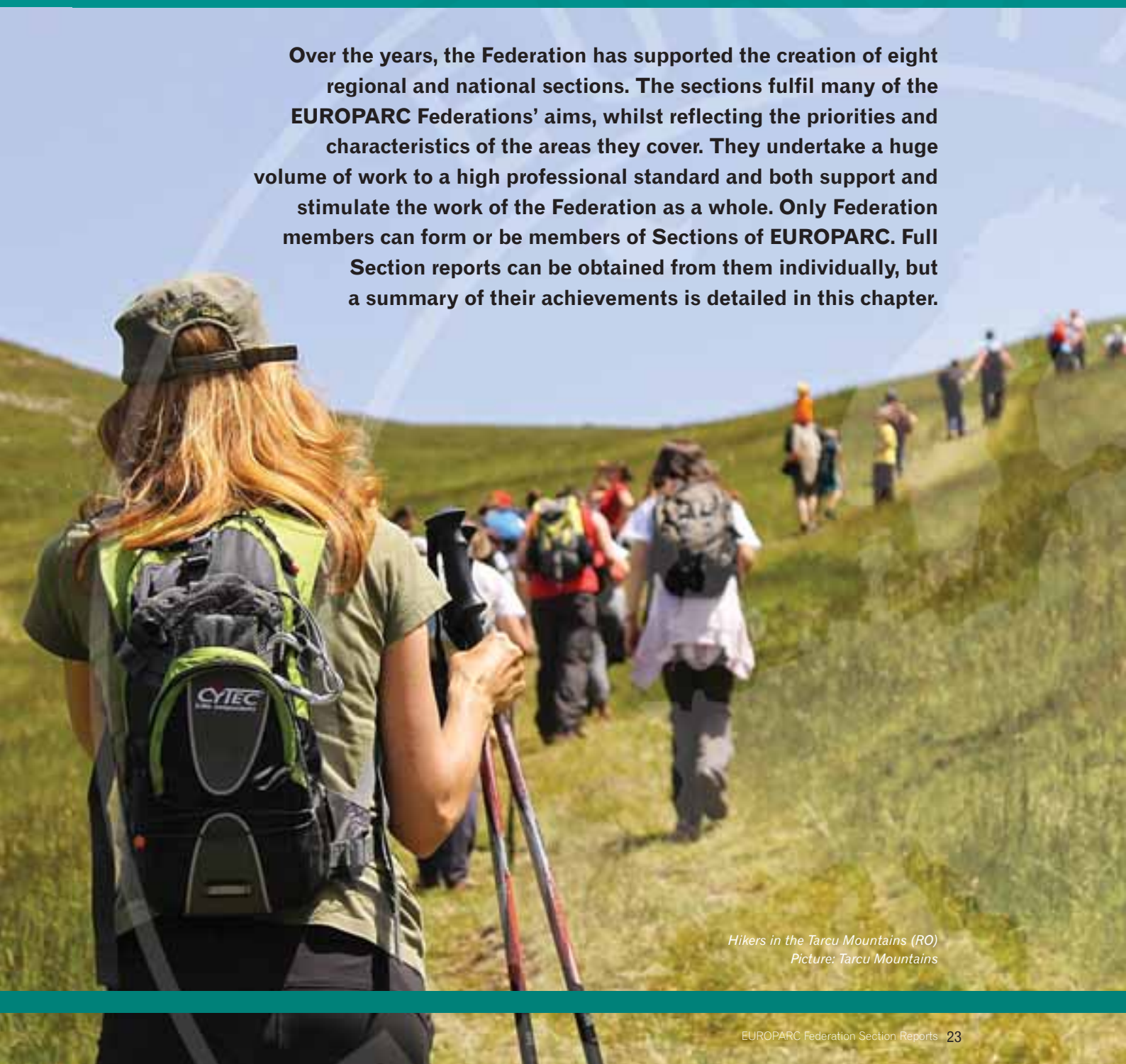
*Transboundary Working Group at their
meeting in June 2014
Picture: EUROPARC*



Our European network

EUROPARC Federation Section Reports

Over the years, the Federation has supported the creation of eight regional and national sections. The sections fulfil many of the **EUROPARC Federations' 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.**



*Hikers in the Tarcu Mountains (RO)
Picture: Tarcu Mountains*



*Dorset Coast at
Durdle Door (UK)
Picture:
Richard
Blackman,
EUROPARC
Atlantic Isles (UK)*

EUROPARC Atlantic Isles

EAI brings together EUROPARC members in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as the Republic of Ireland and Iceland. The Section and its members played an active role in the life of the Federation in 2014.

Key Activities 2014

Health & Protected Areas

EAI made an active contribution to EUROPARC's Health and Protected Areas working group. With support from Scottish Natural Heritage it coordinated the compilation of a set of case studies from across Europe. Published in the summer these included examples from England, Scotland and Wales. A webinar was held in December together with the directorate, for colleagues across the Federation, with speakers from Scotland, France and Finland exploring the partnerships that Protected Areas are forging with others to bring out the benefits of nature for health and well-being.

Also in December, together with our colleagues in the Nordic-Baltic Section, we held a seminar in Haapsalu, Estonia entitled "Integrating Nature into Human Well-being", which brought together practitioners from the Baltic region and the UK. A report summarising the day's discussions and outputs was published too.

Coastal Protected Areas and Marine Planning

The exchange of information for coastal protected landscapes on the subject of marine planning continued in 2014, with a webinar held in January to fulfil this aim. A report entitled "Marine Planning & Coastal Protected Landscapes" was subsequently produced for the Marine Management Organisation and made available to members.



EUROPARC
Atlantic Isles



North York Moors
National Park
(UK)

Picture:
Association of
National Park
Authorities (UK)

Communication & information sharing

EAI continued to publish its E-News bulletins with information for Protected Areas from its UK and European networks. It has also sought to expand its webinar programme. In addition to those mentioned elsewhere this included a webinar on the EU's 2014-2020 LIFE programme, which provided insights into its aims, the application process and a case study on the Moors for the Future LIFE project in the Peak District National Park.

Federation strategy development

Feeding into the Federation's consultative process, EAI held a workshop in March in Manchester together with colleagues from across the network, on the development of our future strategy.

The year ahead

Protected Areas Learning Programme

EAI has started to develop a Protected Areas Learning Programme that will bring together all aspects of its work for the benefit of member organisations. The first parts of this will be implemented in 2015 and will contribute to the implementation in the UK of the Federation's new Europe-wide strategy.

Sustainability

A further key challenge for EUROPARC Atlantic Isles in 2015 lies in acquiring further funding to ensure the continuing development of the organisation and services to EAI members.

Strategy

We will continue to draw on the added value of the Federation's vibrant pan-European network, and look forward to contributing to the implementation of the Federation's new strategy with the directorate, members and our counterparts in the other EUROPARC sections.

Further information: www.europarc-ai.org

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Participants at
Junior Ranger
Camp 2014 in
Krkonosé
National Park
(CZ)
Picture:
EUROPARC



EUROPARC Czech Republic

The Czech Section of the EUROPARC Federation followed its long-term strategic direction with the same composition of members. All key managers of large scale Protected Areas in the country have been actively involved in the Section activities. It allowed us to reach our goals thanks to mutual national cooperation as well as coordination of international activities.

Key Activities 2014

International Junior Ranger Camp 2014

Under the title 'Following wilderness across boundaries', Krkonosé National Park hosted and co-organised the International Junior Ranger Camp in July. So far, it was the biggest camp ever with participants from 16 parks in 13 countries.

Seminar on Alien Invasive Species

On behalf of the Czech Section, Bohemian Switzerland National Park organized a two day seminar focused on management of alien invasive species in Protected Areas. This issue is very important not only because of increasing impact on Europe's biodiversity, but also in relation to a new regulation on invasive species released by the European Union. It is a great opportunity to eliminate these species more efficiently in the European Union. The seminar was attended by 80 representatives from all important nature conservation and academic

institutions, including representatives from Bavaria, Saxony and Poland.

Translation of methodology on Evaluation of German National Parks

Based on agreement with the Ministry of the Environment, the section arranged a translation of the methodology as an inspiration for similar evaluation in the country. We do hope to start this process in 2015.

Success and challenges

Czech Section in a changing environment

The Czech Section was established in 2000. Since that year we have been significantly contributing to nature conservation in the Czech Republic as well as in neighbouring countries. Despite our success as the only technical platform of professional large scale Protected Area managers, time has shown us the need to cooperate more closely within the Federation. That is why we initiated the establishment of a new section.



Krkonoše
Mountains in
early spring (CZ)
Picture: Jakub
Kašpar,
EUROPARC
Czech Republic

The year ahead

Establishment of new EUROPARC Federation section for Central and Eastern Europe

Following our new EUROPARC Federation Strategy for 2015 – 2021, we approached our colleagues from Austria, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Romania with the idea to establish a new section covering our region. We do believe that our mutual cooperation would help us to better contribute to reach EUROPARC Federation goals. We all agreed on the preparatory meeting held in September 2014 in Podyjí National Park (CZ) to establish the section in March 2015 on an Initial Assembly in Šumava National Park (CZ).

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EUROPARC
ČESKÁ REPUBLIKA



Handrij Härtel, vice president of the Czech
section at Seminar on Alien Invasive Species in
Bohemian Switzerland National Park (CZ)
Picture: Jakub Kašpar,
EUROPARC Czech Republic

Promoting sustainable tourism at the beach in Dune Costiere Regional Park (IT)
Picture: Dune Costiere Regional Park (IT)



Federparchi-EUROPARC Italy

Key Activities 2014

In 2014, the Italian section focused on:

- Lobbying and relations with national and local institutions
- Studies, projects and services for members
- Education, training and awareness activities
- International cooperation

The most important activities have been realised under the framework agreement with the Ministry of Environment, about Natura 2000 management, biodiversity and IUCN Red Lists, and promotion of European Charter for Sustainable Tourism - ECST.

Federparchi has been also successfully involved in the IUCN Green List process at national, EU and international level, leading the Italian Reference Group in coordination with French and Spanish reference groups and IUCN-MED Office.

At the national level, Federparchi, as usual, offered technical assistance and services to members e.g. support to the ECST candidature and signed, promoted or implemented agreements with local municipalities (ANCI), private companies and credits institutes (ICCREA), associations and NGOs, FIAB, to promote cycling in parks.

The international commitment of Federparchi was also very intensive, through active participation in several international events, such as WPC in Sydney and CBD conference in Korea, and the implementation of international projects with Mediterranean countries e.g. MEET about sustainable tourism based on ECST methodology and FISH MPA BLUE, sustainable fishing in marine Protected Areas.

Successes and challenges

The collaboration with the Ministry of Environment continues to produce a lot of good results in several sectors, among them studies and research on biodiversity. This year Federparchi published the IUCN Italian Red List of Corals, Dragonflies and Saproxyllic Beetles and of Italian Flora and translated and distributed documents about Mediterranean invasive marine species. The definition of a "National Barometer of Life" through the application of the IUCN methodology is still ongoing.

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism is a priority for the Italian section. The Italian Charter network reached 25 Charter areas with 35 Protected Areas involved with the technical support of Federparchi and sponsored by the



*Federparchi providing training on sustainable tourism in protected areas according to the ECST methodology to Tunisian partners of MEET project
Picture: Federparchi*

Ministry of Environment. In 2014 Federparchi organised several trainings and events about Charter part II and one Charter national network meeting, focused on exchange of best practices, relation between local businesses and parks, monitoring and evaluation, marketing, tourism and Natura 2000.

The IUCN Green List methodology has been defined and adapted at EU level also with the important contribution of the Reference group guided by Federparchi, who tutored some parks in the Green List process. One of them, the Gran Paradiso National Park, is one of the first 23 Green Listed Protected Areas, certified in the World Parks Congress in Sydney.

The relation to Mediterranean partners is growing stronger and Federparchi is supporting some of them in evaluating the possibility to apply for membership with EUROPARC and for the Charter certificate.

The year ahead

In 2015 Federparchi will continue and improve its collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, IUCN and Mediterranean partners, about the same themes and topics. A priority will be also to reinforce and enlarge the fruitful cooperation with other EUROPARC national sections.

More information: <http://www.parks.it/federparchi/>

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 **Federparchi**



*MEET Training
Workshop for Eco-
Tourism Development
in Rome and Monte
Rufeno Reserve (IT)
Picture: Federparchi*



Regional
Landscape
Kempen and
Maasland (BE)
Picture:
Erwin Christis



EUROPARC Low Countries

Key Activities 2014

Currently the section has 20 members and met twice in 2014.

The first meeting in March took place in Antwerp (BE) and was dedicated at extending the present membership of the section. Therefore representatives of the Dutch National Landscapes and the Regional Landscapes from Flanders were invited. Council member Ignace Schops and section representatives introduced the EUROPARC Federation to the potential members, followed by an introduction to the new EU programmes. Alternative funding sources for Protected Areas, like visitor payback schemes and others were also discussed.

Discussions about the section's statutes and the EUROPARC network took place in the afternoon with the following conclusions:

EUROPARC Federation is a strong network of members. The Federation is unique in Europe where members and partners collaboratively work together and seek for opportunities and tackle the problems of biodiversity loss in and outside Protected Areas in Europe.

EUROPARC Federation is the biggest network in Europe. Safeguarding this position is key to be and stay the representative body of the natural heritage in and out with Europe.

EUROPARC Federation has to take leadership and show responsibility at the highest EU level. Therefore it is good to have a debate on the future of the Federation.

EUROPARC Low Countries appreciates the initiative of membership consultation taken and believes to have given its opinions and ideas for the future strategy concluding that the Low Countries members supported growth in membership and improved management effectiveness in the Federation.

A second meeting of the section was convened in September in Brussels (BE), combining it with the final meeting of the Interreg IVB WECAN project. The WECAN project focused on community engagement. Partners from France, Wales and Belgium examined and tested initiatives, actions and pilots concerning the economic benefits of natural heritage, the ways to communicate about this to policymakers and



*Watermill at
Nature Reserve
Tüschbroich
(DE)
Picture:
Maas-Swalm-
Nette Nature Park
(DE/NL)*

the broader public, collecting money by sponsorship and adoption schemes, visitor payback schemes and the ways to stimulate people to take responsibility. A region can benefit economically using its natural heritage as an asset, concluded the partnership.

Success and challenges

Although only created in 2014, EUROPARC Low Countries has first success to show. Activities organized by the section, such as a seminar on Economics and Ecosystem Services end of November in Amsterdam, were well received by the section members. However resources, time and money are limited and the section is operating on a shoestring budget. A major challenge for 2015 will be finding new members for the section.

The year ahead

The first section meeting 2015 is scheduled for spring, where the work plan for 2015 will be agreed.

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Mountain biking in
Haut-Languedoc
Regional Nature
Park (FR)
Picture: Haut-
Languedoc Regional
Nature Park (FR)



EUROPARC France

For the French section, the year 2014 marked the trial of Charter part III (for tour operators) by the accreditation committee, according to the French section methodology approved in 2013.

Key Activities in 2014

Finalising and trial of Charter part III

A multi stakeholder accreditation committee, which role is to examine tour operator's applications for Charter part III and to give opinion during the section meeting on the application approved, has been tested. The accreditation committee met twice, on 16th April and 16th December.

Participation in EUROPARC's Charter work

IPAMAC participated in two working group meetings: in Vilm in April to discuss the revision of Charter methodology and in Killarney end of September during the annual EUROPARC conference to present Charter part III. Furthermore, representatives of the Italian and Spanish sections participated in the French Parks annual seminar late November through a Skype meeting with Paulo Castro.

In June, under the MEET European programme framework "Mediterranean Experience of Ecotourism" Parc Nationaux de France organised a seminar during which an assessment of the actions taken by the French Mediterranean Parks in the frame of Charter part I, II and III has been presented.

Input to the new EUROPARC strategy

The French section has been strongly involved in the work on the new EUROPARC strategy including the survey, and section's meeting with participation from Walloon Parks. This work resulted in a statement and letter to the EUROPARC Directorate and Council reiterating the priorities seen by the French section: Charter for Sustainable Tourism and lobbying.

Success and challenges

Representing EUROPARC sections

During the Killarney Conference, Olaf Holm, director of Regional Nature Park Montagne de Reims has been elected section representative to the EUROPARC Council and acts as contact person for the sections in 2015.



EUROPARC
SECTION FRANCAISE



*Hikers in Haut-Languedoc Regional Nature Park (FR)
Picture: Haut-Languedoc Regional Nature Park (FR)*

Charter Awards

In 2014, three French Regional Nature Parks Montagne de Reims, Loire Anjou Touraine, Morvan have received the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism adding up to 29 Protected Areas in France accoladed this award.

First tour operators certified with Charter part III

In April, seven tour operators have been certified with Charter part III by the accreditation committee Languedoc Nature, Chamina Voyages, Sud Randos, Rando Passion, Plaisirs et Maisons de Provence, Nature Occitane et Grand Angle and another five in December Place Voyages, Sud France, Escapeo, Cévennes Evasion, Destination merveilles.

The year ahead

The French section will get involved and support the implementation of the new EUROPARC strategy within its priorities: European Charter for Sustainable Tourism, lobbying, roles and engagement of sections.

More information: www.europarc-fr.org

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*Enjoying cross-country skiing in Haut-Languedoc Regional Nature Park (FR)
Picture: Haut-Languedoc Regional Nature Park (FR)*

Volunteers from
Lebenshilfe
Altmark-West, an
organisation for
people with
learning difficulties,
working for beavers
in Nature Park
Drömling (DE)
Picture:
Anett Roisch



EUROPARC Germany

The not-for-profit association EUROPARC Deutschland e.V., the German section of EUROPARC, is the umbrella organisation for national parks, nature parks and biosphere reserves – the „national natural landscapes“ – in Germany. The members of EUROPARC Deutschland are more than 40 Protected Areas, organisations involved in nature and environmental issues, e.g. BUND, NABU and WWF as well as foundations and friends' associations. Twelve staff are currently working in the headquarter of EUROPARC Deutschland. The association supports the „national natural landscapes“ across all German Länder through networking and exchange of information, capacity building in staff, cooperation with multiplicators in politics and economy, organisations of diverse events and PR-work addressed to the public.

Key Activities 2014

Knowledge about nature in easy language

People with learning difficulties have a right to „easy language“. So, texts need translation from everyday language to so called „easy language“: sentences are short; context is clear; facts are understandable and explained without loanwords. The brochures „Lake and pond“, „Stream, ditch and river“ and „Sea and coast“ offer knowledge on nature conservation in easy

language, and were produced in the framework of the project „Fully committed: People with learning difficulties discover, experience and preserve aquatic habitats“. The project has been bestowed the advancement award of the German Nature Conservation Award 2013, supported by the German Agency for Nature Conservation (Bundesamt für Naturschutz) and founded through Jack Wolfskin. The project forms part of the scheme „Discover diversity without barriers“ aiming at the development of inclusive offers accessible for all in national and nature parks as well as biosphere reserves in Germany. The scheme is promoted by Aktion Mensch.





Brochures in easy language
Picture: EUOPARC Deutschland e.V.

Success and challenges

“Market place nature”

“Market place nature” is an internet-based platform where project ideas aiming at environment and climate protection in the national natural landscapes in Germany and possible funders meet. In 2014, 20 projects in 12 national natural landscapes could be implemented successfully, e.g. workshops for older Junior Rangers and planting activities with old fruit varieties. EUOPARC Deutschland coordinates these diverse environmental projects, presents each and their development.

The year ahead

EUOPARC Deutschland e.V. also in 2015 will pursue the objective of realising and developing civic participation in the national natural landscapes, together with the membership of EUOPARC Federation. The topics youth and education, civic participation, tourism, business cooperation and professional expertise will be the basis of service towards the members of EUOPARC Federation.

More information: www.euoparc-deutschland.de
www.ungehindert-engagiert.de
<http://www.euoparc-deutschland.de/marktplatz-natur/>

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Participants at
Health &
Protected Areas
seminar in
Haapsalu (EE)
Picture:
Nele Sõber



EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic

Key Activities 2014

2014 was the last year for Estonian Environmental Board to host the secretariat of the Nordic-Baltic Section. During that year the Section organised 3 seminars:

- Seminar “Cultural heritage in Protected Areas” in Lahemaa National Park (EE). The seminar looked at cultural heritage and landscape protection, discussing case studies ranging from assessment of cultural heritage in Protected Areas, to how nature and landscape are valued in the traditions of local communities and how Protected Areas can be perceived as living environment instead of museums.
- Seminar “Biological diversity in wooded grasslands” on Muhu Island (EE), taking into consideration biodiversity in wooded grasslands, the influence of CAP on the protection of wooded grasslands and LIFE project on wooded grassland restoration in Salantai Regional Park.
- Seminar “Health and Protected Areas” in Haapsalu (EE). Global and European perspective on different aspects of health and nature were discussed from developing Scotland’s Natural Health Service to how activities in nature and a “green” municipality health policy can raise life quality of the citizens.

Success and challenges

Community Programme for Sustainable Development – Section members Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife Finland and Kemeru National Park are involved in Nordplus Adult Programme in the field of sustainable development in Protected Areas and successful relationship and collaboration with local communities living in and around these areas.

Estonian Environmental Board and Nature Conservation Agency of Latvia signed a cooperation agreement. The official framework supports activities already being carried out and forms the basis for future, more active transboundary cooperation work.

The postage stamp series on national parks has portrayed Finland’s special natural features – fells, forest, mires, lakes and marine areas – during different seasons.

Project “Assessment of ecosystems and their services for nature biodiversity conservation and management” aims to provide incorporation of ecosystem service assessment approach into the strategic planning documents of local municipalities of Latvia. The project will mainly focus on Latvian coastal areas but has been interesting for many members of the Nordic Baltic Section.



*Experiencing cultural heritage in Protected Areas at seminar in Laheema National Park (EE)
Picture: Nele Söber*



Project "Administering a National Protected Areas Network and Practical Nature Conservation" aimed to introduce the Estonian Protected Areas administration and management system and to show some specific topics in more detail to the Georgian Agency of Protected Areas (APA). APA employees visited Lahemaa National Park (EE) to learn more about the Estonian Protected Area system.

A Transboundary Park seminar was held in Paanajärvi National Park (RU) with participants from five different countries. Lively discussions about cross-border cooperation and the good spirit during the seminar proved that co-operation of European Protected Areas is essential and successful for biodiversity conservation, and especially necessary in times of tense political situation.

Remodelling and creating of new visitor centres and attractions took place in Hornborga Lake

Nature Reserve (SE), Laponia (SE) and Oulanka National Park (FI).

The year ahead

In 2015-2017, the Presidency and Secretariat of the Nordic-Baltic Section are hosted by Žemaitija National Park (LV). The section president for that time is Giedrius Norvaišas and the coordinator is Paulius Mika.

More information: www.europarc-nb.org/home/

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Celebrating the N2000 Award in Spain together with Stefan Leiner, Head of Nature Unit at DG Environment and EUROPARC Executive Director Carol Ritchie
Picture: Javier Puertas



EUROPARC Spain

The Spanish section was founded in 1993 and is championed by FUNGOBE (Fundación Fernando González Bernáldez for Natural Areas). There are currently 23 members, all of them public administrations which represent almost all Protected Areas in Spain. The implementation of the Strategic Programme for Protected Areas 2020 has started in 2014.

Key Activities 2014

In 2014 many activities from the current Strategic Programme for Protected Areas 2020 took place, including:

Networking and cross-border cooperation award Natura 2000. EUROPARC Spain and the government of Castilla - La Mancha received recognition from the Natura 2000 Award in its first call for the application of the standard of quality management plans for Natura 2000 sites. On 23 July 2014, EUROPARC Spain and Castilla-La Mancha organised a local event for stakeholders, local authorities, Commission representatives and the press to celebrate winning the Natura 2000 Award.

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism maintains its momentum in Spain, currently with 38 Protected Areas involved and more than 400 tourism companies participating in Charter part II. As part of the last Charter Award Ceremony 2014 in Brussels, the first edition of the Award for environmental sustainability of tourism businesses was announced. The winning company was "El

Refugio de Cristal", a rural accommodation in the National Park Cabañeros.

On the other hand, 24 Protected Areas were accredited with "Q Standard for public use".

The geoportal on cultural resources protected natural areas was launched. It's a collection of nearly 40 different typology resources, tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

The Section's Annual Conference (ESPARC 2014) was held together with the National Parks Agency. More than 150 managers attended the conference, where about 30 oral presentations and posters illustrated the high level of experiences from managers of Spanish Protected Areas.





*Participants at annual conference ESPARC 2014
Picture: Javier Puertas*

European Day of Parks 2014. About 600 people enjoyed the day's activities "Parks for Nature. Parks for well-being. Parks for peace.", held in the biggest peri-urban park of Madrid city, "la Casa de Campo". EUROPARC Spain and the city of Madrid, through its Department of Environment and Health Mobility, organized the activities. On the other hand, the section co-operated with Spanish Association of Nature Photographers in organising the third photo contest of EUROPARC Spain.

The 14th edition of the Master Degree in Protected Areas was completed by 35 students from Latin-American countries and several Spanish regions.

Report "Marine Reserves: social and environmental benefits", one of the results of a project supported by Fundación Biodiversidad through the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund; also educational materials were developed: a brochure and a poster.

Success and challenges

The "Yearbook 2013 of the state of Protected Areas in Spain" was published at the end of the year, showing the current state and the evolution of the almost 2000 Protected Areas in Spain, their challenges and opportunities.

Several public and private organisations supported in 2014 the section's activities, such as the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of

Culture, Biodiversity Foundation, EUROPARC Federation, European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and the European Social Fund.

The year ahead

The main task of the section in 2015 is to promote the implementation of the Strategic Programme for Protected Areas 2020: Society and Parks, looking for strong partnerships which help to fulfil their potential. That will be the aim for the new Council, with the re-election of Carles Castell as President for a second period of 2 years.

More information: www.redeuroparc.org

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*Celebration of the European Day of Parks 2014
Picture: Javier Puertas*



Our members

EUROPARC membership in 2014

2014 was the year of listening to the past and talking about the future. At the beginning of the year EUROPARC members had the opportunity to express their views on the future direction, priorities and governance of the EUROPARC Federation through a consultation campaign. This was done through an online survey that was available in 5 languages and also through attending local meetings. These provided an opportunity to our members to get together locally and discuss on how EUROPARC can work for the members. We are also very proud of several of our members that have marked important years of their work, throughout Europe.

Working together offers a wealth of opportunities to network, develop partnership opportunities and make contact with like-minded professionals. By the end of 2014, around 370 members from 36 different countries who represent hundreds of authorities and thousands of Protected Areas, shared our idea of international co-operation to further the conservation of Europe's natural and cultural heritage. Together, the members of the EUROPARC network are responsible for the management of several hundred Protected Areas across the continent, which includes a substantial portion of Europe's Natura 2000 sites.

Although the financial difficulties are still present for most of our members, we are satisfied with the level of membership continuity. In 2014 we gained 10 new members from 9 different countries (Belgium, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, and Switzerland). Unfortunately, we lost 11 members due to resignation and we had to strike off 13 members who had not been paying their membership fee for the last two years.

Participation of the membership in EUROPARC activities throughout the year was excellent. Around 300 attendees visited the Annual Conference in Killarney. 16 Protected Areas successfully completed their Charter evaluation in 2014 and have been awarded during the Charter event in Brussels. Now, there are in total 131 certified Charter Parks from 16 European countries. We are happy that most of our

Protected Areas that have been awarded with the Charter, recognize the importance of this programme, and after a 5-year period, apply again for the re-evaluation.

Other events included the IUCN World Parks Congress where EUROPARC members from France, Germany, Finland, Scotland, Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Austria and the UK were present and gave their contribution to the success of the congress, the international Junior Ranger Camp in Krkonoše that, under the motto 'Following wilderness across boundaries', was the biggest camp ever with participants from 16 parks in 13 countries, 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:

<http://www.europarc.org/network/members/>

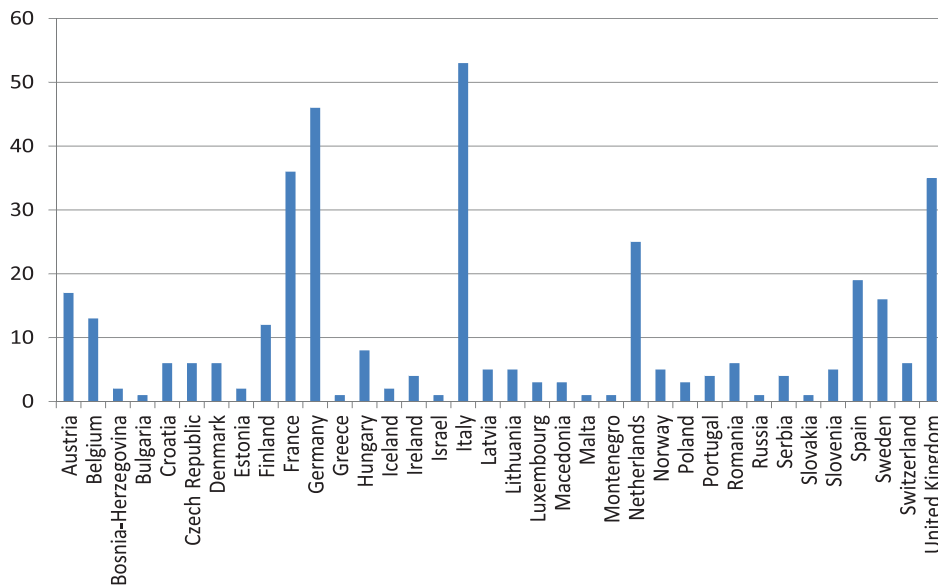
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Members at the
EUROPARC
Conference 2014
in Killarney (IE)
Picture: Don
MacMonagle

Number of EUROPARC members per country



EUROPARC member categories

- Group A: States and National governmental organisations
- Group B: Provinces, Régions, Länder, Comunidades, etc.
- Group C: National parks, nature parks a.o. Protected areas
- Group D: Other official agencies, associations, institutes a. corp. bodies
- Group E: Non-governmental organisations on a national or international level
- Group F: Supporting organisations



Financial Report

BALANCE SHEET

	2014	2013
AKTIVA		
Assets		
Total fixed assets	4199,40	5 862,40
Shares in affiliated companies (EP Consulting)	118 000,00	118 000,00
Total current assets	216 838,56	228 071,76
Total Assets	339 037,96	351 934,16
PASSIVA		
Profit Reserve	280 303,71	289 169,10
Liabilities		
Provisions	19 932,00	17 409,00
Accounts payable	38 802,25	45 356,06
Total Equity and Liability	339 037,96	351 934,16



EUROPARC
F E D E R A T I O N

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

	2014	2013
Income		
Membership fees	272 052,00	281 139,50
Grants		
EC core grant	154 770,00	105 504,00
Project grants	14 714,27	31 400,00
Other income	121 698,48	53 680,70
Total Income	563 234,75	471 724,20
Simplified Expenditure		
Total Personnel costs	282 491,90	284 798,81
Total Office costs	24 593,78	26 872,74
Total Travel and Subsistence	93 480,35	76 386,95
Total Other direct costs	24 464,71	19 187,76
Total Overhead costs	34 752,38	23 435,26
Total Project direct costs	10 347,74	16 339,40
Total External Assistance/ Professional Fees	101 969,28	29 488,85
Total costs	572 100,14	476 509,77
Result	-8 865,39	-4 785,57

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* Please note that these are contacts from **2014**. Current news on www.europarc.org.

Working together Keeping together Coming together

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EUROPARC

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