

EUROPARC Federation
Report to General Assembly 2013
10th October 2013

Paper no 7

Title:

Report and recommendation from Council regarding the future of the Federation, following the work of the Organisational Development Committee

Recommendations:

- ❖ To note the report

EUROPARC and Eurosite have been in discussion for some years to find a route to strengthen the network of European protected areas and to become the major 'green voice' for integrated management and sustainable development of protected areas in Europe.

Those discussions culminated in the decision by the General Assembly of 2011 to

“build on collaboration and, by 2013, create one network organisation”

Throughout 2012, a joint committee from Eurosite and EUROPARC deliberated and analysed how this could be achieved. The aim was to seek and to identify the most efficient way to build a new network with respect for the origins of both organisations, whilst eliminating potential legal and financial risks involved. They presented their findings to the Board of Eurosite and Council of EUROPARC.

In 2012 both EUROPARC and Eurosite General Assemblies agreed to:

"Transforming the two organisations into one new network organisation by using the legal structure of EUROPARC taking into consideration the views expressed by the general assembly."

Further a framework strategy "Networking for Nature" was also adopted by members as the basis of a unified protected area network.

EUROPARC and Eurosite subsequently formed the joint Organisational Development Committee (ODC). With the consent of EUROPARC Council and Eurosite Board, legal advice on the organisational possibilities was jointly commissioned. At the final meeting of the ODC, this advice was presented. The Organisational Development Committee then prepared its report based on the legal advice given.

One of the main recommendations of the legal advice was to create "one network organisation, based on the existing EUROPARC structure", with guarantees to Eurosite that organisational changes to structure of EUROPARC would be made. Notwithstanding these guarantees, designed to ensure that the interests and values of Eurosite would be incorporated, and a wide range of internal /organisational/ and other changes, this was deemed unacceptable to Eurosite. The Organisational Development Committee therefore did not recommend this option.

An alternative position, that both organisations shall be dissolved, and a new joint organisation be formed, was proposed. This, the only remaining alternative, given Eurosite's stated position, formed the basis of the final ODC proposal. The summary of the ODC recommendations are contained in their report (see the supporting document) but their principal recommendation to create the network organisation is:

Agree to establish a new not-for-profit association in Germany, aiming for a target date of 1 January 2014

This proposal, which requires the dissolution of EUROPARC and Eurosite, followed by merger with Eurosite into a new, German law based organisation, was rejected by EUROPARC Council, for the following reasons:

- The proposal does not comply neither with the previous GA decision, nor with the decision of EUROPARC Council. EUROPARC Council, whilst agreeing to at its [meetings in June 2011](#) and [September 2011](#), that a merger where both existing organizations will set up a new organisation, also asked then for the legal options to be detailed and explored, indicating the concerns of EUROPARC of the risk involved.
- There are risks financial, legal, and reputational which have been overlooked or underestimated in the ODC report; Council considers these risks too high and unable to be mitigated against, especially in the current stringent economic and volatile political circumstances.
- The ODC proposal simply recreates another organisation based in Germany, with similar legal basis to EUROPARC, and, in order to meet our legal obligations, a direct transfer of existing staff: in other words, a full scale change with attendant costs and risks, to create an organisation which we already have.
- Crucially, the identified benefits of this 'new organisation' could be delivered using the existing EUROPARC structure, whilst avoiding these risks and costs. These benefits could include:
 - Closer application of General Assembly decisions of 2012;
 - Retention of intellectual property rights, and 'brand values';
 - More measured management of the transition process.

Therefore, EUROPARC Council proposes:

- **We continue to develop a European protected area network, committed to the principles agreed in the Networking for Nature framework, built on the strengths of the EUROPARC Federation.**
- **We invite Eurosite members to participate with EUROPARC to fulfil that goal.**

President and Council of EUROPARC

August 2013

Supporting documentation

ODC report - Supporting document 7.1

** All background material associated with the ODC report will be available in the members area of the EUROPARC website.*