

**EUROPARC Federation
Council Meeting Minutes, 25th January 2014**

Location:	Ballater, Scotland, UK			
Date:	Saturday, January 2014	Start :	9:30	End : 16:30
Attendees:	Council Members Present: Thomas Hansson, Rolands Auziņš, Ignace Shops, Gábor Szilagyí Co-Opted Council members present: Eric Baird, Paulo Castro Others Present: Kaja Lotman (Nordic Baltic Section President – Section representative), Carol Ritchie (Director), Federico Minozzi (Policy Officer, minutes) Erika Stanciu (came in for the discussion on World Park Congress)			
Apologies	Giampiero Sammuri, Marian Jager-Wöltgens, Dominique Leveque, David Cameron (Internal Auditor), Wilf Fenten (EUROPARC Consulting)			

Agen da Item	Notes	Decisions Taken	Actions
0.	The president opened the meeting and welcomed all participants. Thomas Hansson also indicated that apologies were sent by Giampiero Sammuri, Marian Jager-Wöltgens, Dominique Leveque, David Cameron (Internal Auditor), Wilf Fenten (EUROPARC Consulting)		
1.	Minutes of Debrecen Council meeting	Decisions Taken	Actions
	Council members asked some corrections to be made to previous council meeting minutes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Page 2 paragraph 5: "<u>Paulo Castro</u>: It is necessary to agree on the content. It is necessary to show why option 5 is not a good option." Should be <u>Paulo Castro</u>: It is necessary to agree on the content. It is necessary to show why option 5 is a good option. - Page 2 "<u>Eric Baird</u>: July meeting was the one when they admitted that they have just two options." Should be "<u>Eric Baird</u>: July ODC meeting was the one when they admitted that they have just two options." 	Change in procedure of minutes approval: Circulate minutes to President and Council members for approval. Approval to be made online – silent consensus principle - within 3 weeks after the meeting. Revised Minutes noted.	Directorate to send draft minutes to President and Council for approval.

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	Matters arising	Decisions Taken	Actions
	Were moved at the end of the agenda		
2.	President´s and Council report	Decisions Taken	Actions
	<p>President gave a short overview of activities undertaken and representation meeting/events attended on behalf of the Federation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Charter Network meeting and awards in Brussels - Charter award in Germany Southeast Rugen Biosphere Reserve - EUROPARC Consulting board meeting - Nordic Baltic Section meeting - James Hutten Institute – Aberdeen for project partnership development <p>PC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Romania for the Tourism Conference, where a common declaration was made between different organisations running tourism certification schemes. - 20 Anniversary of EUROPARC Spain - Charter Net meeting <p>RA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Worked with the Transboundary WG on the new guidelines for transboundary certification and re-evaluation: work in progress, final version expected before summer. - Attended the Nordic Baltic Section meeting. <p>GS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalising report after Conference - skype meeting call with EAI – invited to attend the EAI focus group meeting in march <p>EB:</p>	Council noted the report.	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting with Cairngorms NP for science and protected areas project - Contacts with health and PAs WG - Council meeting arrangements with CR; - Will attend focus group meeting with EAI <p>IS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attended film presentation in the Netherlands on wilderness - Attended Charter award ceremony in Brussels - Had informal meeting with Commissioner Potocnik, provided updates EUROPARC and the merger process. - Providing support to members to set up the new “low-land” section, next meeting expected in march. - Will have a meeting with Civil Scape, seeking opportunities for cooperation - Got the Royal Award in recognition of the international work for the environment <p>KL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pleased to join for the first time the Council and will represent the sections in the course of the year, - Attended the Nordic Baltic Section meeting 		
	Director’s Report		
	<p>CR briefly shared some highlights of the report that was circulated to the Council. Main events in calendar for 2014 were presented. The efforts to reduce and control expenditures, mainly travel, making in house finance statement, gave positive balance result at the end of the year: +42000€ almost. Nevertheless we still have to consider that not all activities planned within the NGO grant were finalised, therefore the final instalment expected in may by EC might probably reduce that result of 20k.</p>	<p>Council noted the report and Mandate the subgroup on finance to review the reserves policy and prepare a proposal for the council in May</p>	<p>Reserves policy to be revised</p>

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	<p>A successful project application was approved and will be financed by DBU (German Environment Foundation): project presented in partnership with ProPark network to develop online training for park managers in Romania, CR reminded the election procedures towards the GA 2014, and suggested to start thinking for potential candidates: MJ, RA, GS can't stand for a new round as they have already accomplished two mandates. Call for nominations will be out in March.</p>		
5.	Treasurer's report	Decisions Taken	Actions
	<p>Treasurer gave a short abstract of the report, and apologised for not having been able to circulate the report on time. He highlighted the risks and challenges of current financial situation and trend: the reserves are being used, and even if improvement have been made to reduce and keep under control expenditures, and had a positive result at the end of 2013, we are not in the condition to increase and refill the reserves. The membership fees strategy has to be discussed and revised. Some countries, Italy in particular are having big troubles in paying membership fees, agreements with regions can be made to address the issue and get Regions as member on behalf of the PAs in their area.</p>	<p>Council notes the report.</p>	<p>Treasurer to send the report</p>
6.	Membership report	Decisions Taken	Actions
	<p>The Treasurer presented the situation on membership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Klagenfurt University request to change membership category. - 9 resignations letters were received - 14 new members were accepted <p>47 members have been strike-off as they didn't pay their membership fees in 2012 and 2013. This means a big loss of members but was necessary as unsustainable to keep non paying members in the organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Category change for Klagenfurt approved. - Strike off list confirmed - Resignations confirmed, even if the Council decided to wait for the new director of the Thayatal National Park to be nominated before sending the letter. 	<p>Directorate will write to Klagenfurt University and inform them of the decision, and send out the new invoice. Directorate will send letter to resigning members to thank</p>

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	<p>PC presented a proposal for a new approach to revise the membership fees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - services to be included as part of their membership fees (Charter or other certification) - have less members but paying members - discuss the issue in more details at the May Council - for Charter Parks who are being strike off: they will lose the charter at the end of their charter strategy period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council approves the proposal of the Treasurer. - New members accepted 	<p>them for their involvement with the Federation and to provide clarification on the merger issue.</p> <p>Include membership fees in the agenda for next council meeting.</p>
		Council noted report.	
8.	EUROPARC Consulting report	Decisions Taken	Actions
	<p>Consulting not attending the meeting due to financial restrictions. The request of Consulting to have access to the membership data was discussed. Council will further analyse the role of Consulting once the governance report of the auditor will have been finalised.</p>	<p>Council decides to not give out the members data as its data protected.</p>	<p>Directorate shall inform consulting that it is not possible to pass the contact list of members as this data is protected. Information to members can be distributed by the Directorate, if provided, and according to the Communications structure.</p>
10.	Conference in Ireland 2014 updates and forward notice on 2015	Decisions Taken	Actions
	<p>The Director gave some updates on the 2014 Conference programme developments.</p>		<p>Council and Directorate to</p>

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	<p>Contacts have been established with Switzerland towards the 2015 conference, but still no formal proposal was made.</p>		<p>further investigate options for 2015</p>
World Park Congress 2014			
	<p>Erika Stanciu introduced the perspective and opportunities for EUROPARC to actively contribute and participate in the World Park Congress 2014, to represent Europe protected areas: we have the contents and experiences; we can represent our members; have the possibility to provide feedbacks for those at home. A project proposal can be developed and an application submitted to the ATF ES highlighted potential benefits: networking and partnerships, potential new links and role of EF as a network organisation; present good practices and experience of N2000 network. GS: suggests to contact IRF to collect feedbacks on the 2003 Conference. IS: it is crucial to be there and be visible, as we are the biggest organisation of PAs in Europe: we should clarify what the Commission is planning; have a keynote speaker there would be a great option and result; be part of a Europe stand; we should apply for funding to the Alfred Toepfer Foundation; the Congress is part of a wider process, we shouldn't see the congress as a simple event.</p>	<p>Council agreed on the importance to attend the Conference and represent and where possible coordinate the members who will attend. Financial resources are the main issue: agreed to submit an application to the ATF. In case we don't get the money we will try to coordinate those who will attend and collect feedbacks.</p>	<p>IS to contact European Commission to see their plans; IS to contact IUCN to see if we can have a keynote speaker; CR and ES to submit a proposal to ATF</p>
Economic and ecosystems service working group workplan for comment and approval			
	<p>The work programme was presented A short debate on the possibility and opportunity to develop a WG on Natura 2000 took place</p>	<p>The work plan of the WG was approved for one year mandate</p>	<p>Inform the WG GS will draft a document to develop a possible</p>

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			WG on Natura 2000
	Consultation “Our future dialogue” updates. Briefing for focus group meeting.		
	<p>CR made an introduction on the consultation process and on procedures. Focus groups meeting are addressed to members and proposed by geographic areas and by language, rather than by sections. Nevertheless the council considers important to have specific discussion with sections to include their perspectives in the consultation.</p> <p>The Sections will be invited to attend through their president and /or secretariat the next council’s meeting in France for discussions of sections’ future.</p> <p>GS informed that he has been invited to attend the EAI focus group meeting: EB and GS might both attend.</p>	<p>Council approves the document for focus groups; Where possible arrange side meetings with Sections (President/Director/Admin/ board); GS will also attend the EAI focus group:</p>	<p>CR to provide guidelines for section meetings; Include questions on membership fees in the guidelines for focus groups. Clarify resources to cover GS costs for EAI meeting.</p>
10.	Matters arising		
	European Day of Parks: CR introduced the 2014 theme.	Theme for 2014 proposed approved and welcomed.	For future, where possible, discuss the theme at the autumn council meeting and to get input from sections’ coordinators at the GA.
	IS: For the future, where possible, promote conference workshops as opportunities for members to share and communicate/disseminate their international project results and activities. An opportunity to get more participants		
	Auditors Report: Council would need a final version of the governance report from the Auditor before September.		Contact Auditor for the governance

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			report and check availability for next year.
	Video conferences as a possible solution for council members who might have difficulties to attend a meeting.		
	IS: has been invited by ELO as a keynote speaker for the Forum on the Future of Agriculture, where he offers to speak on behalf of EUROPARC and would be keen to present an initiative/project.		IS and FM to see with Slow Food if a project can be launched in that occasion.
	TH: a letter was received by the UNA national park In Bosnia Herzegovina, raising concerns for the new national planning which seems to ignore the role and function of the national park.	Get more information from the member and then write to the Government to express concerns and get further information.	Directorate to write to the park