

EUROPARC Federation
Council Meeting Minutes, 29th 30th January 2015

Location:	Regensburg				
Date:	Thursday 29th, and Friday 30 January	Start :	9:00	End :	12,00
Attendees:	Council Members Present: Ignace Shops, Paulo Castro, Kaja Lotman, Olaf Ostermann, Michael Hosek, Vittorio Alessandro, Co-opted Council : Olaf Holm Others present: Carol Ritchie (Chief Executive), Federico Minozzi (Managing Director), Roger de Freitas (Internal Auditor), Richard Pardington (EUROPARC Consulting)				
Apologies	Dominique Leveque				

Agenda Item	Notes	Decisions Taken	Actions
1.	<p>Welcome from the President The President welcomed the new Council for the first meeting of the mandate.</p>		
2.	<p>Introductions After a short introduction by the President, the Chief Executive presented the legal structure of the Federation and its main functions. The Auditor raised the attention of the Council on their role and functions: to provide a mission and vision for the organisation and make strategic decisions, avoiding to get involved in operational matters. The Treasurer gave an overview of the financial situation of the organisation. In the course of recent years there has been a reduction of the fix costs and an increase of variable costs which, together with a decrease in membership fees, have produced negative results. The reserves are being progressively used, without the capacity to restore them in due time. There is the need to increase the resources via the acquisition of new members and/or the development of new projects. We need a change to prevent facing unstable situations with reduced reserves in the near future.</p>		

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	PC and CR clarified some questions raised by the Council.		
3.	<p>Appointment of Vice Presidents and Council structure In order to perform better as a Council, to facilitate the follow up of Council decisions, IS proposed to introduce 2 Vice Presidents – as foreseen in the statutes. He proposed to the Council to nominate KL and MH, who could also well represent the Federation in Eastern and Northern Europe. Council welcomed the proposal and discussed the opportunity to nominate also a representative of the Mediterranean/Western Europe, to ensure diversity and members might not misinterpret the new functions. The Council proposed PC and agreed to nominate 3 VP: they would support the President, and help to follow up decisions made by the Council, as an “inner-council” but will not create a new level of governance. Also other tools can be considered to ensure active involvement and participation of members from the various regions (Mediterranean in particular), such us via Working Groups, Sections...</p>	<p>Vice Presidents appointed: Kaja Lotman, Michael Hosek and Paulo Castro.</p>	
4	<p>Coopted members There are currently 2 seats on the Council to be still filled. An informal agreement with Sections was made to ensure their involvement in the selection process. Council discussed the areas of expertise that it would be desirable to have represented in the council. The main areas recommended were: Economics, Marketing and fundraising, Communication, Agriculture, Scientific research, Tourism. It might also be useful have people with a totally different background, and different approaches to the role and function of PAs, not necessary PA expert (Consumers, Spiritual Values, Land owners...).</p>	<p>The Council mandated IS to identify 2 persons to be coopted on the basis of the discussion. Time range: one month.</p>	

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	<p>Coopted members should speak English, be open minded and able to think “out of the boxes”. Gender balance should be considered. (Other experts for specific issues can be convened to meetings when relevant) <i>In future Council should have the flexibility to decide if and when coopted members are needed: <u>Statutes would need to be changed to reflect this.</u></i></p>		
<p>5</p>	<p>Membership PC presented the current composition of EUROPARC members: EF is essentially a park association (64%). There has been a peak of members in 2009-2010 with Federparchi becoming Italian section, now after the strike off of the non paying members, and consequent decrease, the number are more or less stable. Still there are 192 organisations that currently belong to sections but are not members of the Federation: this issue has to be addressed to comply with Statutes regulations. Currently membership fees cover the salary of staff. We need to clarify our relation with Sections, define which are the members we are looking for, and how to reach them. Council agrees on the necessity to increase the membership and focus attention on parks first (“brothers”).</p>	<p>Council agrees to contact National Parks (“brothers”) that are not yet members. At Section Workshop (see point 10) issue on Section Members that are not members of the Federation should be addressed</p>	<p>To start, the Directorate will produce a list - by countries - of national parks that are not members: Council members will contact them directly – possibly priority to IUCN Cat II.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Minutes of the Killarney Council Meeting The President asked the Council if there were remarks on the minutes, and then asked for approval. Notes of the Skype meeting of December: approved Directorate Report: CR gave an overview of the current situation of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Killarney minutes approved • Notes approved • Council noted the Directorate Report • Council noted the Treasurer Report • New members approved, 	<p>CR to send the Calendar of events to Council. CR will contact the Ministry of Finland who resigned.</p>

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	<p>the activities and updated the Council on positions and role changes in staff: CR is the new Chief Executive and FM is the new Managing Director. A new administration officer should start soon and as the Communication officer will be leaving in February the Federation, consideration for potential changes in the distribution of staff among the two offices (Reg and Bx) if possible. Recruiting of a new member of staff will be done accordingly with managing priorities and Strategy objectives.</p> <p>Council discussed also the calendar of upcoming meetings</p> <p>Treasurer Report: PC presented the report. In the current situation we do not expect to be able to put back resources in the reserves as we managed in previous years. The reserves are decreasing and we have become more dependent on the EC NGO Grant. Council was informed of new applications, and resignations of members.</p>	<p>including: Riserva del Furlo David O’Neill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resignations noted: TCV, Finnish Ministry of Environment; <p>Council Meetings 2015-17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Next Council meeting will take place in the 5 Terre NP – Italy 7th-9th June - October 2015 in Regensburg - January 2016 in Prague - June 2016 in Estonia - September 2016 in Switzerland - January 2017 in Portugal - June 2017 Germany (Berlin, Hamburg or Schwerin) 	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Working Groups</p> <p>CR presented the situation of current working groups with their mandates officially ended in December 2014, and informed the Council that some had expressed their desire to continue. Council agreed to wait before giving any new mandate and to discuss this matter also with the Sections.</p>	<p>Working Groups issue to be included in the future agenda, possibly of next Council. Put WG in standby for the moment.</p>	<p>CR to send WG summary sheet to the Council and contact WG members to inform them about the decision.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Council Roles and responsibilities</p>		

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	<p>IS proposed to assign specific roles to some of the Council members: MH to follow the Natura 2000 expert group of the EC KL to be the contact person for the Large Carnivore Platform</p> <p>Council also agreed on the format of the minutes of the Council meetings</p>	<p>MH new representative on N2000 EC expert group; KL new representative on Large Carnivores Platform;</p> <p>Minutes to be simple and easy to read, and therefore include: agenda item, short summary of the discussion, decision taken, action required.</p>	<p>FM to inform the EC on the changes</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>EUROPARC Consulting IS introduced the item and asked if all members had received the reports and if there were any questions or need for clarification. As there were no questions, he then invited RP – Chair of EUROPARC Consulting - to take the floor and present the issue to the Council. RP presented the complexity of the situation, the fragility of the company, its role and workload delivered in recent years and the severe threats it is facing. Sudden changes in the work plan that had been approved in 2012 – mainly referring to the progressive changes in the management of the Charter – together with unsuccessful applications and contributions given to the Federation, have put the company in troubles. The Company has always been supportive to the work of the Federation and in this phase would need a help to continue trading and be on the market. In case the Federation wouldn't support Consulting, this will likely mean the closure of the company in the short period. As there were no questions IS kindly asked RP to leave the room. The discussion started and this a summary of the main points that</p>	<p>The Council mandates the President to inform Consulting Managing Director and Advisory Board of the followings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Federation is unable to provide financial support to Consulting; - Confirms that the Charter Contracts is not being renewed to Consulting; - discuss with Consulting of the most appropriate future options for the company. 	<p>IS to inform Consulting on the decisions.</p>

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<p>lead to the final decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All recognised and appreciated the good work delivered in recent years by Consulting, contributing to raise the profile of the Federation, to attract new members and to successfully manage the Charter process in difficult times.• The council expressed their gratitude for the contribution EUROPARC Consulting and expressly mentioned the excellent commitment and work made by Wilf and his team.• In a situation of lack of resources the Federation has to plan very carefully its contracts, considering effectiveness and costs.• The change in the Charter management has taken several years and haven't been a sudden decision, Consulting should have considered alternative plans on time;• A more commercial role for Consulting in the promotion and marketing of Charter destinations could be envisaged in the future, while the Federation would deal with the management and verification process.• Currently giving a financial contribution to Consulting is a financial risk that cannot be taken;• A relevant % of the incomes of Consulting in the recent years have been contracts provided by the Federation. Today most of these services can be better delivered (cost/effectiveness) directly by the Federation;• The governance issues of Consulting raised by David Cameron (previous internal auditor) in his report were taken into account by the Council;• Contracting Consulting, which is owned by the Federation, is creating troubles and risks of not respecting transparency and EU public procurement regulations.		
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	<p>All agreed this is not a pleasant decision to take, but crucial to be clear and handle this carefully directly with Consulting Managing Director and the Advisory Board, in order to agree the best solution. The Council doesn't approve the request of a financial contribution for Consulting, confirms that the Charter process will be fully and directly managed by the Federation, and understood this could mean the closure of the company, or put it into a state of dormancy, but would leave any decision to be taken directly by Consulting and its Managing Director. Costs and damage limitation have to be taken in due account in the process as well as its direct implications in the EF results/finances.</p>		
<p>10.</p>	<p>Sections PC with CR and MH introduced the item and the floor was open for a debate, to collect ideas and inputs for action. Issue: Sections have evolved in the years but have never been effectively integrated in the structure of the organisation, having essentially been the result of a voluntary aggregation process of members. They have different origins, structures, legal statutes, their only joint character – as required by the statutes – is that they follow the aims of the Federation. There is a strategic governance issue to be solved in terms of purpose, mission and mandate of the sections and of their relations with the Federation and vice versa. The Section issue has been raised in the 2014 consultation by the members and is among the priorities of the new strategy, as Sections w</p> <p>The Council, considering the importance of the role of the Sections for the future, agrees to create a task force to lead the discussion process and to convene a meeting with the Sections in April. The</p>	<p>Council open to prolong the mandate of the coopted member representative of the sections.</p> <p>Task force meeting in Siggen on 19 and 20 April (arrival on 18th, departure on 21st). OO, MH, OH + Directorate + Sections.</p>	<p>Directorate to inform members that the Council is working on the Section issue.</p> <p>Directorate to invite Sections to the meeting.</p> <p>Directorate to include Sections market exchange in the 2015 Conference.</p>

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	<p>task force would include Sections + Council representatives (OH, OO, MH) + Directorate. The meeting will take place in Siggen on 19 and 20 April.</p> <p>The Council proposes to involve more actively and give more visibility to the Sections in the course of the 2015 Conference. A market exchange is proposed.</p>		
11.	<p>As no other matters were raised, the President thanked all for their attendance and closed the meeting.</p>		