



**EUROPARC Federation  
Report to Council  
25<sup>th</sup> January 2014**

Title:

Directorate Report -

Summary :

Update on activities of the Directorate

Recommendations :

❖ To note the report

## **Directorate Report Update 2013**

2013 concluded the celebrations of our **“40 years – Working for Nature”**, with a spectacular cake and party in Debrecen at the end of the conference! Thanks to the Hortobagy team for an excellent conference. The conference report is being finalised and will be published soon!

### **Project applications and end year finances**

Since we left Debrecen in October the Directorate team have been hard at work.

The NGO grant was finalised immediately after (indeed during!) the conference and submitted. We should have an answer by end February 2014. Contingency plans will be drafted in the event we are unsuccessful.

The PA insight was produced, and distributed just before the Christmas break.

The Director also gave a presentation at a research event in the Cairngorms National Park which led to establishing an agreement with the Hutton Research institute, to submit a grant application to the Macaulay development trust in support of our project to establish guideline for research in protected areas. The European element of this project is supported by the Alfred Toepfer Stiftung by giving 3 days at Siggen in September. Monies from the NGO grant will be needed to cover travel costs. Identification of participants is needed and suggestions from council welcome.

Discussions have begun with several parks, notably Bayerischer Wald in developing youth ranger + training and opportunities, as a follow up from the youth conference in Debrecen. EUROPARC is developing these ideas to develop a project and will produce some communications following the conferences participants willing to engage with young people. We await the publication of the conference report.

EUROPARC has commissioned a report by the CED PPN of Torino University to gather information about N2000 sites for which members have responsibility and analyse the overlap between N2000 sites and protected areas. The preliminary results have been produced and are under analysis; a final report will be received in February.

Following the EUROPARC Consulting board meeting in November, a resource recompense of 20K was gratefully received. Administrative detail regarding the verification contract with Consulting have been finalised and Directorate staff now working towards streamlining the processes.

### **End year result 2013**

The end year finance statement has been produced and is attached. This will be reported by the Treasurer. This is draft as it is as yet unaudited. The final statement and audit will be available in February when we submit the NGO reports.

### **Representation and Events**

The Director and Treasurer attended the 2nd Ecotourism conference in Romania and gave a keynote speech and led a workshop, as well as signing a new agreement to cooperate with the ecotourism network. A declaration was agreed and is attached for your reference.

The Charter networking meeting and awards ceremony was a huge success in Brussels, with 90 people attending. We anticipate repeating the event in 2014.

## **Projects**

The LIFE project EME Natura2000: Efficient Managers for Efficient Natura2000 Network, in association with Pro Parks (Ro) continues following a project update meeting in Romania. EUROPARC are now working on producing the international training course, programme manual and toolkit. The first training courses will be in the 3rd quarter of 2014.

The EU Grundtvig project Volunteer Management in European Parks was concluded and all finance and project reports submitted. New guidelines in the management of volunteers in protected areas have been produced and disseminated; we will continue to do so across the membership.

## **Conference 2014**

A meeting of the Organising group of the 2013 conference in Killarney National Park Ireland was held. An outline programme and workshops were agreed and speakers and workshop leaders suggested. The possibility of hosting a parallel youth conference was discussed, as requested by council. The Irish team felt, given their plans had already been advanced prior to this suggestion, and with a very restrictive budget and small team available, to organise a parallel youth conference, was beyond their capacity. However additional effort through webinars, interactive live webcasts etc will be made to identify youth audience. They are also looking at a possible student/youth rate for the conference. This will be discussed further on the council meeting agenda.

## **Conference 2015**

The Network of Swiss Nature parks are interested in hosting a EUROPARC conference. Initially they were happy to host 2015; however with a change in Director, in the new year, they now think this is too soon and are asking for 2016. I am trying to persuade them for 2015 as there is sufficient time. However a host for 2015 had better be approached lest they drop out of 2015 definitely. Suggestions to approach are urgently needed. My thoughts amongst the current council members are with Latvia or Estonia, Portugal. Denmark may be another possibility. I would be grateful if council members could give this some serious consideration.

## **World Parks Congress**

A report has been received from Erika Stanciu and Peter Ogden following the WCPA hosted meeting about the WPC2014 at EUROPRC conference 2013. A clear decision and budget for EUROPARC participation in WPC 2014 is needed. The Director has contacted IUCN and WPC seeking further clarification regarding the submission of papers etc but no response has been received. Current estimates to take 4 EUROPARC representatives to WPC, this would be required if we are to cover all topics being suggested would be approximately a minimum 12K Euros, for registration, travel and subsistence. Further a common theme under which to gather European input is needed and identification of members attending. Directorate has sent out an email seeking information to agency members and sections and to WCPA, with whom we have agreed to collaborate. This will be discussed further on the council meeting agenda.

## **Plans for 2014**

### **Elections**

Current council members who are not eligible for re-election, having served two full 3 year terms, and will therefore stand down are Gabor Szilágyi, Roland Auzins, and Marian Jager-Woltens. All other council members are eligible for re-election and need to seek nomination for re-election. A call for further candidates will go out in March.

### **Consultation "Our Future Dialogues"**

The plan for the consultation was sent previously. The Directorate team have now created the online survey monkey and has been launched in 5 languages to members. Questions were consulted with the council task force and with sections. The focus group meeting are a crucial aspect of the process and I urge council members to liaise with staff and section to set these up as soon as possible. The consultation will close on 17th April. A report on conclusions will be produced for the council meeting in France where a full discussion on the production of the strategy will take place; the strategy itself will be drafted at a meeting in Siggen in June. EUROPARC AI submitted a paper on the role of sections, attached. We need to consider how to address this in the focus group sessions.

### **Funding and New projects 2014**

The ongoing efforts to identify alternative and additional sources of funding continues. As ever input from council is required to assist in funding sources in your country or region. It is difficult for us to research the funding available in 36 individual countries.

Currently we are considering.

From Junior Ranger to Volunteer Ranger: development of a programme/training for older Junior Rangers to educate them in leadership and environmental education skills, to become volunteers to support their parks in Junior Ranger activities and ranger activities.

Possible source: Erasmus+ (deadline October), for specific Bavarian activities Bayerischer Umweltfonds (17<sup>th</sup> September).

Charter for Sustainable Agriculture: Feasibility/-pre-study for a Charter for Sustainable Agriculture in Protected Areas to value and promote good practices for high quality and sustainable food productions.

Possible sources: EU money through agriculture ministries in partner countries and mava foundation (applications any time), require agriculture orientated partner to come in, we are in discussion with Slow food our MOU partner (for the last time!), and possibly smaller amount Gregor Luisidor Stiftung (1st September)

From the air to the ground: translating research on climate change into actions in protected areas  
Possible sources Money: DG Environment Climate Action, no announcements on funding sources as yet, and when we work with universities/researchers in Germany , possibly following siggen meeting, DFG (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft); no deadlines known

Other ideas and previous project applications are being revived. The single most difficult aspects of submitting applications is co-financing and finding partners. It is also the case that we must use some of the capacity of existing staff if we are to offset some of our ongoing costs. Any project that is entirely self financing doesn't contribute to the core running of the Federation.

EUROPARC, with Proparks of Romania submitted an application to DBU (Germany) to produce a pilot online training material for protected area staff. This application was successful and will commence in March 2014 and running for 30 month. With a total sum 209.385EUR, funding amount 102.758 EUR. Most goes to Propark to develop the work. EUROPARC will be the overall project manager, so not a huge income for EUROPARC but a valuable project as it introduces us to a new major funder in Germany.

### **Events 2014**

I have produced an outline calendar, to indicate the main EUROPARC events for 2014. This includes also the deadlines for the general assembly and elections.

The theme for European Day of Parks for 2014 is proposed to be under the theme *“Parks for Nature. Parks for well-being. Parks for peace”* in memory of the 100 years since the World War. 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 (Alparc, MedPan and Green Belt). The initiative will include a communication campaign organised at European level to raise the awareness of the wide public on the relevance and value of protected areas – including N2000 sites - for the conservation of nature and the peace among people and communities. Local events and initiatives will be promoted all over Europe, with a focus on transboundary protected areas located among the former War borders.

For the Siggen seminar in 2014 we propose, to focus on the new EU programming period 2014-2020 and EU relevant funding for the management of protected areas. The Seminar will be addressed to protected areas managers, with interventions from EU funding experts and EC representatives. The seminar will include formal training sessions, practical activities and will be an opportunity to exchange experiences on project management and development among PAs managers from different countries. The expertise and outcomes of the seminar will be gathered in a report, which will be made available to the wide network of PAs to facilitate the understanding of the new EU programs and of the opportunities for financing nature conservation and PAs management.

The Junior Ranger camp will be hosted by Krkonose National Park, Czech Republic.

The TransParcNet meeting will be from 3rd to June in Saint-Amand-les-Eaux in Hainaut cross-border Nature Park (F/B)

It is proposed to host the Charter Awards in the European Parliament in November 2014, to build on the success of the 2013 event. This is dependent on MEP support (there is a European election in June) and monies from the NGO application.

Carol Ritchie  
EUROPARC Director

January 2014