



**EUROPARC Federation  
Report to Council  
29<sup>th</sup> January 2015**

Title: Planning for new members – Brothers or Cousins?

Recommendations:

- ❖ Decisions relating to the recommendation in the paper

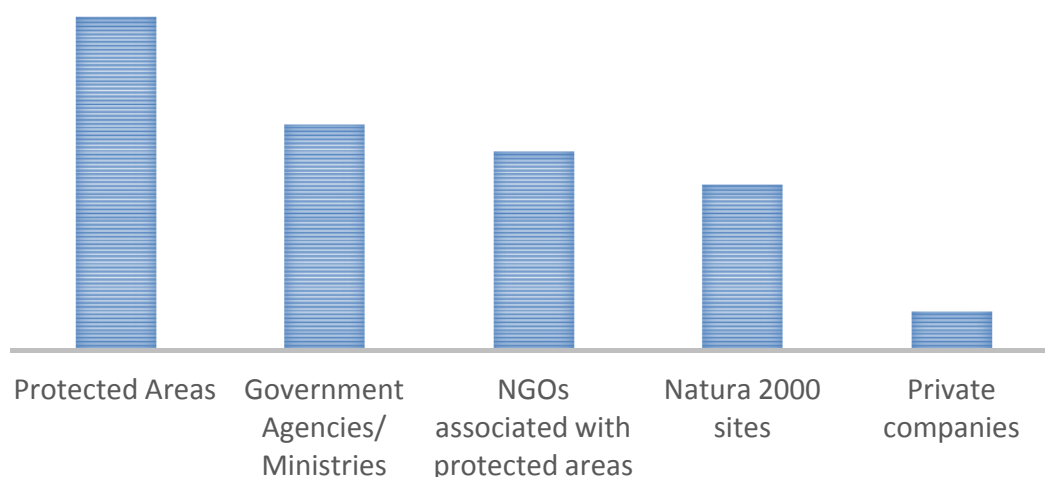
## More brothers or new cousins?

Membership is the life blood of our organisation, we are *de facto* a member organisation. It defines our legal status, tax responsibilities and fundamental purpose.

From across Europe many protected areas organisations and a few individuals identify with the purpose and aims of EUROPARC and for differing reasons wish to be associated with the organisation and its work. However in a period of unprecedented financial pressures, many either consider being a member unaffordable and a saving they must make and either resign or are lost by default of payments, or some may see no benefit in or support of the work of the Federation.

Over the 6 year period of the EUROPARC Strategy we are aiming for an increase of 20% of new members. When asked during the consultation process, members stated their willingness of having more parks involved in EUROPARC.

### Who should be the members of EUROPARC?



A summary of all consultation findings is included in the annexe.

Although the consultation response gave clear indication of the types of members they wanted in the Federation, we did not ask the members, during the consultation if having new parks /protected areas as members was to the exclusion of other type of members.

Therefore, there is a question to be answered by this new Council as they consider this aspect in the implementation of the present Strategy:

Do we want more **brothers** (same type of members) or **new cousins** (new types of members). The responses will require very different approaches, analysis and actions.

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
380	391	500	433	434	422	393	360	364

#### The "Federparchi" effect

In 2008 Federparchi merged with EUROPARC Italia, previously there had been 21 Italian members of the Federation. Following the merger brought in 118 members, with a guaranteed paid membership fees of 2 years. In the meantime the strike off policy came in, due to advice from the financial auditor to reduce the amount "debt" we were carrying, since we were maintain a large number of members on file who had not paid any fees. Following the strike off policy, many, although it has to be said not all, of the Italian members who had come in as part of the Federparchi merger began to, drop off, due to unpaid fees. Whilst a member remains in the members database (even with 2 years non paid fees) we still invoice them and they need to be shown as "potential" income. Hence this too is creating a false expectation in income. This rapid increase and decrease principally through the Italian members, may skew the pattern of membership. However the underlying trend, although remains downwards, but in smaller increments

#### Present situation as in December 2014

#### Who are our members

VOTING MEMBERS		Minimum Fee
Group A) <sup>1</sup>	States and National Governmental Organisations	2,330
Group B)	Provinces, Régions, Länder, Comunidades, etc.	2,330
Group C)	National Parks, Nature Parks and other Protected Areas	585
Group D)	Other Official Agencies, Associations, Institutes and corporate bodies.	585
Group E)	Non-governmental Organisations on a national or international level	585
Group F) <sup>2</sup>	Supporting Organisations	200
NON-VOTING MEMBERS		
Group H) <sup>3</sup> Honorary Members	Individual members being persons who have distinguished themselves in work related to protected areas.	---
Group I) <sup>4</sup> Supporting Members	Supporting individuals: members being individual persons, who support the Federation	52

Every two years, these figures are reassessed on the basis of average European Union inflation rates (Eurostatistics).

<sup>1</sup> For Group A members, a guideline fee is fixed for each country, taking into consideration the population numbers and the Gross National Product.

<sup>2</sup> For Group F members: An organisation can only apply to this category, if it does NOT belong into any of the other categories. If a member of another category wishes to be placed into the lower fee category it needs to clearly show to the Council of the Federation that the original fee is higher than 1% of their yearly turnover (minus staff and office costs). Proof has to be shown for the last two years.

<sup>3</sup> All Group H members are nominated by the Council. They do not pay a membership fee and have no voting rights.

<sup>4</sup> Group I members:

- a. Supporting members can be individuals or consultants that want to support the Federation.
- b. Individual supporting members cannot be active members of the administration board or employees in any of the parks or organisations that are members of the Federation. They cannot represent a park or organisation.
- c. Supporting members may participate in the General Assembly but have no voting rights (Art. 3b statutes).  
*(These regulations concerning Groups F, H and I members were modified by the EUROPARC General Assembly at its meeting in Pescasseroli, Italy on 30 September 2010.)*

### Present situation as in December 2014

We have a total membership of **364** where 14 are Group H: Honorary with no voting rights nor fees. Paying members are a total of **350** representing a theoretical income of 250.762 €. From the paying members only the Group F: Supporting Organizations and Group I: Individual does not have voting rights.

In terms of number of members, the membership situation is mainly composed by

- Group C - parks and PA represent 65% (226 in 350),
- Group D - other associations (34),
- Group E - NGO national/international (26)
- Group B - regions (19).

### 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



As in terms of value of fees in euro, the ranking has a slight change:

- Group C - parks and PA represent 53% (132.210 € in 250.762 €)
- Group B - regions (44.270 €),
- Group A - state/national agency (34.950€):
- Group D - other associations (19.890 €).

Note: group F has been a recent category in order we avoid losing members that are in difficulty to pay the full membership or are small organisations.

**In summary parks remain our main membership but although regions and agencies have lower numbers of member, they do represent a good proportion of the membership income**

#### **Recent evolution of membership (2009-2014)**

In the past years (2009-2014) and with a stable tendency, we have:

- 1) 118 new admissions (+66.261€);
- 2) 45 resignations (-23.332€);
- 3) 158 strike off rules (-116.913€).

In conclusion: a positive balance between resignations and new admissions, but a much higher final negative balance.

In fact in the past 6 years we have **lost a total sum of 85 members representing -73.984€** with an annual average loss of -12.331€. Yet, this balance loss represents only **4% of the average annual income of membership fees** of 312.335€ over 8 years (total 2007-2014=2.498.683€).

4) New members are mainly of the following types:

- Group C parks and other protected areas represent 53% of the new members (62 in 118),
- Group I individual (18)
- Group F supporting (14).

A relevant part of new members are Charter Park candidates. Group F increase is due to the economic crisis that has made members change to a less expensive fee;

5) Resigning members are of the following types:

- Group C parks and other protected areas represent 51% of the new members (23 in 45),
- Group E NGO (7),
- Group I individual (6);

Most parks who resign cite financial issues. NGO's and supporting organisations have cited various specific reasons but relevance of the work of the Federation to them, and need to be part of the Federation network usually part of the reason.

6) Strike off members are mainly of the following types:

- Group C parks and other protected areas represent 74% of the strike off members (117 in 158),
- Group D other associations (12),
- Group B regions (10)
- Group I individual (9);

These are all lost for non-payment of fees for 2 years.

7) The balance (new members-resignations-strike offs) are mainly of the following types:

Group C parks and other protected areas represent -78 out of -85, followed by Group A state/nation (-8). With a positive result (gain of members) in the balance there were only the Group F supporting (+9) and Group I individual (+3).

**Conclusion:** We have a known problem with membership, principally that we lose members through non payment of fees over 2 years, with no solution identified or decided.

**Next steps:**

What do we need to do in order:

- a) we prevent losing such a high number of members?
  - i) change of strike off rules?
  - ii) change the invoicing strategy?
  - iii) increase level of services provided?
  - iv) decrease membership fee value?
- b) Increase number of new members (new brothers versus new cousins):
  - i) new services provided?
  - ii) new members categories?
  - iii) campaign(s) for new members (best to “brothers or cousins”?)
- c) What are the target groups that suit us best for the purposes and funds available?
- d) What is the role of the Sections in the new members Strategy?
- e) Sections membership and EUROPARC membership are connected and can be a relevant issue for the new members Strategy?
- f) Will be there any statutory change needed in order we can achieve the expected 20% increase of new membership?

**Recommendations:**

To discuss this document during the Council meeting;

- To establish guidelines for a Task Force with a mandate to prepare a proposal ; “Becoming a stronger organization with a stronger membership, Sections and new members”;
- To appoint a Council member to chair this Task Force;
- The Task Force should have a maximum of 4 members (chosen in line with the guidelines);
- The Task Force can plan for a 2 day meeting to take place in the Siggen from April 17th -21st 2015.

The Task Force should produce a proposal and recommendations for the June meeting of the council and if it implies statutory changes are needed , then this will ensure there is adequate time before the general assembly, for formal approval.

Critical note: membership changes should be a good opportunity to clarify crossing issues of Sections and EUROPARC membership and therefore both section and membership action of the strategy should run in parallel.