

EUROPARC Federation

Report to General Assembly 2013 10th October 2013

Paper no 5

Title:

Directorate Report

Summary:

Update on activities of the Directorate 2012, update on work plan for 2013, provisional summary work plan for 2014

Recommendations:

- ❖ To note the report
- ❖ to approve the provisional work plan for 2014

Director's Report to the General Assembly

Report of 2012 activities

The report of the activities of the EUROPARC Federation for the period January – December 2012 was contained in the annual report issued April 2013. Copies in English, French and German can be obtained by download from the EUROPARC website (<http://www.europarc.org/library/europarc-publication/annual-report/>).

Update 2013

2013 has been exciting and challenging year for the EUROPARC Federation. Following the establishment of the organisation in 1973, we have celebrated our **“40 years – Working for Nature”**, with a range of special communications. It is anticipated that not only will the annual conference reflect on EUROPARC achievements but refocus our energies as a network on what we aspire to for the future of protected areas and the nature we are committed to conserve.

The EUROPARC Federation undertakes a number of projects, from which we expect the results to derive a benefit for the wider membership.

The LIFE project EME Natura2000: Efficient Managers for Efficient Natura2000 Network commenced in late 2012, and ran throughout 2013, in association with Pro Parks (Ro). It will look at developing a communication tool-kit for N2000 managers. EUROPARC will bring international expertise from our European network into that training. Further the communication kit developed will be available at the project completion to be replicated and used across our membership. The first training courses in communications for N2000 managers should take place in 2014 and members will be invited to attend.

The project Volunteer Management in European Parks, co-financed by the EU Lifelong Learning Programme, is coming to its end in October 2013. Among the most significant outputs of this project are three trainings for volunteer coordinators, three workshops on volunteering at EUROPARC Conferences, several Learning exchanges across protected areas in Europe; specific training material produced; [Guidelines for volunteer management in PAs published](#), and [a research on the impact of volunteering in PAs](#). All material is available on [the EUROPARC website](#) for members to make use of.

The application for the NGO core grant in 2012 for 2013 was successful with an increased in grant received. An ambitious work plan associated with this grant is underway during 2013.

During 2013 the Directorate has organised a one day event in Brussels exploring climate change and the responses of Protected Areas. A report will be produced exploring some case studies, which will include examples from N2000 sites in Europe presented at the TransParcNet meeting in June 2013. The TransParcNet meeting was successfully hosted by the Nature Park Maas-Schwalm-Nette. 30 participants from 15 countries met at the Dutch German border and considered aspect of climate

change in transboundary parks and the need for cultural understanding to enable good working relations.

A meeting of the Advocacy and Policy group will be convened to respond to EU Commission policy areas such as green infrastructure and common agriculture policy. Further they will work towards a position paper to be presented to relevant committees, MEP's and Commission departments to highlight the work of protected areas in implementing commission policy.

EUROPARC will present the experience of protected areas in nature sports into the Nature Sports conference October 2013 in Slovakia "Outdoor Sports factor for sustainable development and health", and seek a dialogue to introduce European codes of practise for sporting bodies in use of nature areas.

EUROPARC has obtained the Participatory Status from the Council of Europe, and will continue to exchange information and contribute to the work on Natural Habitats, Protected Areas and Ecological Networks.

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.

Through the work of EUROPARC's Health and protected areas working group a desk top research study will be undertaken in order to capture good practise example of programme and initiatives developed by EUROPARC members.

Every month EUROPARC has made a themed analysis of interest to members in our e-news, in addition to a celebratory e-card for the 40th years Working for Nature anniversary year highlighting the values and benefits of Europe's protected areas.

A review of current communications material has been undertaken. Plans are in place to refresh the current EUROPARC website as finances allow.

The International Junior Ranger camp entitled Parks in Europe: discover how they work – took place in the Bavarian Forest National Park this year with 46 participants, including 29 Junior Rangers, 14 Rangers and mentors, 2 members of the EUROPARC staff and 1 volunteer ranger from Australia, coming from 11 European countries and representing 15 different protected areas. A new brochure presenting the guidelines of the Junior Ranger programme has been published and distributed at the camp. Sponsorship and assistance was received from the National Park Bavarian Forest, Sparkasse Freyung-Grafenau, dm Drogeriemarkt Cham and Junior Ranger Verein Nationalpark Bayerischer Wald e.V.

A Youth Ranger Conference will be held in parallel to the regular EUROPARC conference, with 20 participants to enable the voice of Europe's youth to be heard in relation to biodiversity and its future management and to encourage further youth programme to be developed in protected areas and N2000 sites across the network. This has been made possible through the generous support of the Alfred Toepfer Stiftung.

A 2 day workshop is planned with 12 participants from 10 countries in Siggen, Germany courtesy of the Alfred Toepfer Stiftung, examining in detail good practice in the creation and implementation of integrated management plans for protected areas and N2000 sites.

The future development of the Charter for Sustainable Tourism and its alignment to European Commission 2020 Biodiversity Strategy, and international policy agenda such as the CBD guidelines for Biodiversity and Tourism will be discussed by the Sustainable Tourism working group and others. Work by EUROPARC France is bringing a methodology for recognition of tour operators in the Charter, with ongoing development of the Charter in Spain, Italy as well as new work in Estonia, and in the Dinaric Arc. This profile of the Charter will be further raised at an event hosted in the European Parliament where the Charter Awards for 2013 will take place.

Outline Work plan 2014

Due to the ongoing discussions over the future of the EUROPARC Federation, as a result of the discussions and report of the ODC, it was not possible, for the Directorate to finalise its draft work plan for 2014 in time for the publication of this report.

Suffice to say however that one priority for the EUROPARC Federation will be seeking an extensive consultation exercise with members to ascertain members' priorities in order to finally complete a new strategy to take the EUROPARC Federation of protected areas forward.

The biggest challenge facing the network will be the continuing economic pressures faced by many of our members. This potential loss of membership fees will invariably have an impact on the finances of the Federation and plans with the Treasurer and Council are under discussion to anticipate and mitigate the financial impacts and the options and responses of the Federation. This uncertainty has also made workplanning for 2014 rather conservative budget and is focused on our core services as well as project development to bring in new resources.

However EUROPARC directorate remain positive and optimistic, with flexible plans in place for 2014. These include taking forward the work of the Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas and seek alignment and mutual recognition with other certification system, the transboundary programme and working groups will continue with a outreach to extend the network, to develop the transboundary work and initiate projects. Junior Ranger work, including youth rangers will continue, as we anticipate the outcomes derived from the Youth Conference of 2013. Other areas of work such as protected area management effectiveness, wilderness, sustainable agriculture and protected areas continue to be monitored seeking opportunities to develop further input, ideas and project partnerships with members is always welcomed. The ongoing policy and lobbying work will be reviewed and aligned with commission policy. We will seek to continue the work of Volunteering in Parks following the completion of that GRUNDTVIG project to develop management guidance for volunteers. The work of the EME Life communication for N200 managers will see the delivery of the first training programmes and development of the communications tool-kit. An analysis of protected areas governance models in conjunction with Pro Parks of Romania will also be undertaken.

EUROPARC is of course indebted to the hours of work given freely by members volunteering in the working groups, council and sections. Without them we would achieve much less.

Provisional costs and indicative budget for 2014

This outline budget statement for 2013 has not been audited. The audited accounts will be produced in March 2014

New headings	Projected 2013	Estimated 2014
Membership fees	260,000	260,000
Project grants	162,932	160,000
Other Funding	51,000	80,000
Other income	853	1000
Donations	400	
Income total	475,185	501, 000
Personnel	282,129	285,000
Travel	70,000	55,000
Rentals	26,000	25,000
External Assistance	31,000	46,000
Other Costs	16,000	15,000
Overheads	47,000	40,000
Projects	37,000	35,000
Expenditure total	507,129	501,000

The project grant costs for 2013 show an increase in income from that originally projected. This reflects the higher level of NGO grant received as well as additional other funding from Alfred Toepfer Stiftung and some small sponsorships received. An increase in staff costs reflects increase cost in employing our intern as well as the creation of a part time post to accommodate the additional administration of managing the Charter. External assistance has been cut back significantly taking into account the needs to make saving so a number of print projects were changed in favour of e-versions. The current membership fee payment rate of 72% is excellent, given the current economic difficulties, however were that to increase to 80% or more, including fees due from 2012, the current predicted negative report of around 30,000K for 2013 would be eliminated.

The indicative budget for 2014 carries those additional staffing levels, and shows too, the addition of the charter fees as income , however this income is offset by the tax paid on charter fee income as well as the verification contract plus tax payable to EUROPARC consulting.

Travel costs will be curtailed in 2014 and aligned with consultations with members, over the strategy development. Additional travel will be curtailed to provide sufficient time for staff to develop funding applications and to consolidate the work of the Federation.

Carol Ritchie

Director

August 2013