



## **EUROPARC Federation**

### **Report to Council**

**10<sup>th</sup> May 20132013**

Title:

Directorate Report

Summary :

Update on activities of the Directorate

Recommendations :

❖ To note the report.

## **Director's Report to the Council**

### **1. Update since previous meeting in Jan 2013**

The annual report for 2012 has been published and is available online at <http://www.europarc.org/uploaded/documents/1391.pdf>.

Further the external audit of our accounts has been completed; to the satisfaction of the auditors Solidaris they note no discrepancies in our financial management systems or in the accounts. We have also submitted our 3 year tax declaration and clarified outstanding tax issues with the relevant authorities.

### **2. Staffing**

One member of staff was dismissed as previously indicated.

Julia Schonhärl has resigned her post as Communications Officer; she will take up a new post in development work in the Jordan. She will be replaced by Dea Mijakovac (our previous intern) as soon as a work permit can be obtained for her. Further Heike Blankenstein will commence her maternity leave in August and we are currently seeking a one year replacement.

In the mean time we will increase the contracts of our admin assistants to compensate during this time.

Change is an inevitable feature of the workplace these days and EUROPARC is adaptable and responsive to accept and manage these changes.

### **3. Representation.**

#### **WCPA Europe meeting**

The Director was invited to participate in the meeting of the WCA in Montenegro and asked to be a member of the WCPA steering group for Europe. This we hope will establish close and collaborative links with the network of individuals with an interest in protected areas. Further the WCPA may have their own members meeting at the Hungary conference, at hereby facilitating greater networking amongst these memberships. A new MOU is being drafted and agreed between WCPA and EUROPARC and will be signed at the general assembly in Hungary.

#### **Other representations**

Petra Schultheiss represented EUROPARC at the Nature sans frontières: Journée européenne de la coopération des parcs naturels having an opportunity to share and explain the Transboundary following nature design to interested parties from Spain, France and Italy.

EUROPARC was also represented at the Forum for the future of Agriculture ELO Conference, The Habit-Change project Conference (Climate Change and Pas, the NGO CAP meeting (to discuss a way forward in the CAP) and hosted the Wild Europe, all in Brussels.

#### **4. General Assembly 2013**

Given the celebratory nature of our meeting this year - "40 years working for nature", we are considering some changes to the structure of the general assembly. Our MOU partner has already been invited to participate and it may be that we can facilitate some discussions. Whilst we need to maintain the business element of the meeting we can try to keep it to a minimum. The Directorate will offer some suggested formats to discuss with the President. Input is of course welcome.

#### **5. Siggen Seminar 2013. Purpose and process of Management Planning for Protected Areas.**

Mike Appleton has kindly agreed to lead this training seminar at no charge and we are delighted to have of his experience and expertise. So far applications are a little slow, but we will continue to advertise.

The latter half of the week at Siggen from Wed 4<sup>th</sup>-Sat 7<sup>th</sup> has been set aside for EUROPARC business and development. This can be offered to working groups to meet, or other meetings as required. I would appreciate guidance on how council wishes that time to be used. EUROPARC staff will be having some intense team time that week also.

#### **6. Projects**

The NGO grant application was successful this year with a 50% increase on previous awards.

However the loss of one fund with the Bavarian Environment Fund and the membership debt from last year as well as uncertainties over membership income this year still makes for challenging economics and prudent use of available funds. However we can breathe a little more easily for a year or so. The Directorate continues to see grants tenders and sponsorship from multiple sources as well as ensure there is a regular flow of income from current internal EUROPARC sources.

The Grundtvig Volunteering and Life Communication project are ongoing with regular updates in the monthly e-news.

#### **7. Project development 2013**

Currently we are considering to be a project partner with EUROPARC Spain a Leonardo funded project to review and produce training courses available for protected area staff.

We are also developing project concepts for the training of Charter and Transboundary verifiers as well as possible mediators for conflict resolution particularly in a Transboundary situation.

The Grundtvig project will end this year and we are considering the future development of work with volunteers and see this moving more into a possible life communications project development. .

Assuming working groups are given a mandate by the council we will be working with them to support the development of project application arising for their work.

There is as ever no shortage of ideas - but only of capacity within the team to prepare applications.

## **8. Workplan 2013**

### **“40 years – Working for Nature”.**

The Directorate launched 2013 with the celebration of EUROPARC’s 40years. The communication plan for this year long campaign is appended. Highlights will include.

- Monthly special e-cards to members , highlighting a member park or area
- Special themed monthly e-news
- “People’s history of EUROPARC” looking at how the organisation developed through the eyes of those involved,
- European day of parks will focus on My Park. My passion. My story. Where we will be encouraging park to share stories from staff and visitors about what is special about their place. We hope to collect these for future publication.
- Our Siggen seminar will look at management planning,
- The youth conference “Now it’s our turn – Junior Ranger ambassadors for Parks” running parallel to our main one,
- The 40 years anniversary will culminate in the conference in Debrecen in October where we will share the 40years anniversary with Hortobagy national Park.
- Special Charter networking and awards day in Brussels

Any help or information Council members can give with background information pictures; stories of their experience with EUROPARC would be most welcome.

## **9. Lobbying**

A series of events are planned to further increase our profile and networking opportunities in Brussels. As well as contribute to commission policy.

These will include the following

- A one day event in collaboration with the Committee of the regions on climate change management in PA’s - A good practices report across protected areas with showcase of initiatives and practical activities undertaken by protected areas and N2000 sites on climate change adaptation. Contacts will be made with EUROPARC’s MOU partners across the globe to gather case studies from their members in protected areas for the above report
- Advocacy and Policy group, EUROPARC will provide inputs and recommendations into the Green Infrastructures EU policy developments, bringing the protected areas and N2000 sites manager perspective, The EUROPARC policy and advocacy group will meet with EU Commission officials in Brussels to provide input and develop a position paper to protected areas on this policy area.
- EUROPARC will also participate and give its contribution in EC events and conferences such as the European day of Tourism. 2013
- EUROPARC will involve our members and experts to contribute to the biogeographic process; we will endeavour to contribute to the process in steering committees, and preparatory workshops not only via the EHF representative but also more directly involving members for the upcoming Alpine Seminar for example

- EUROPARC will seek to contribute 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 use of nature areas
- EUROPARC will actively engage with ECOA and provide input and advice where appropriate and disseminate information throughout our membership .Meet with ECOS to define and determine collaboration between EUROPARC and ECOS.
- EUROPARC is also working towards the development of standards in sustainable agriculture in protected areas. With Slow Food International and in consultation with IFOAM and others, EUROPARC will seek the feasibility of developing a Charter for Sustainable Agriculture in Protected Areas.

Carol Ritchie

Director

May 2013

