

EUROPARC Federation



**Report to Council
September 30th 2010**

Title:

Lobbying plan

Summary :

The lobbying plan to be submitted before the general assembly and the proposal from EUROPARC France to take forward aspects of its implementation.

Recommendations :

Approve the proposal from EUROPARC France



Motion by the French section regarding its contribution to the Europarc lobbying strategy

January 22, 2010

Goals:

On January 22, 2010, the French section of Europarc, in partnership with the Europarc Federation, organised the first seminar dedicated to "Europarc's lobbying strategy for the European Union" in the Montagne de Reims regional natural park.

The aim of this meeting was for each party to state their intentions with respect to lobbying and define practical actions to implement the EUROPARC strategy, which asserts the role of the European Federation in representing its members to European decision-makers. The day's discussions focused on presentations and examples of the current and future policy of the European Commission, the use of European funds for biodiversity, the vision of one lobbyist as to the place of Parks in Brussels and the organisation of Parks in northern France.

The rich and interesting work which was achieved during this day, involving 30 representatives from the Nordic-Baltic, Atlantic Isles, Italian and French sections - along with Europarc members from Denmark, Britain, Serbia and Estonia - highlighted the desire to mobilise the resources required for the European Union to recognise the expertise of Parks in terms of integrated land management.

The idea is to contact national and European politicians with a view to future EU policies identifying protected areas as key partners for achieving sustainable development, as well as aiming for the protection of biodiversity to rank as one of the European Union's priorities alongside employment and regional development.

Observations:

The contributions and discussions highlighted the following:

- 1. The importance of protected areas in Europe**

The presentation of work conducted by researchers at the Politecnico di Torino concerning 39 European countries¹ has demonstrated the importance of protected areas in these countries:

- 7,500 protected areas, covering 90,000 km² and 18% of the surface area of these 39 countries.
- some 25% of the population of these 39 countries live in areas concerned by European environmental protection policies.
- an increase of over 23% in protected areas between 1996 and 2006.
- 52% of these areas are category V protected areas as defined in the IUCN classification.
- mountains account for 34.1% of protected areas throughout Europe, while only 14% of these protected areas are on the coast.

2. **The added value that the EUROPARC Federation can bring to the Natura 2000 programme:**

Whilst emphasising that Natura 2000 now covers 25,000 sites covering an area of 728,000 km² - 17% of the surface area of the European Union - and 151,000 km² of maritime zones, the representative of the European Commission emphasised that the objectives set for 2010 would not be achieved. Only 17% of habitats and species in the European Union have satisfactory status in terms of conservation.

The three major priorities of the European Commission in favour of the conservation of biodiversity from 2013 onwards are as follows:

- **successful funding of Natura 2000:** by including Natura 2000 across the board in all EU policies in order to mobilise multiple sources of EU funding.
- **improving administration of Natura 2000:** reinforcing its administration and defining the objectives to be attained. The exchange of best practices will also be necessary, and a platform will be put into place to foster the exchange of experiences.
- **involving Natura 2000 area stakeholders:** win/win situations must be put forward to encourage stakeholders to take part in these actions. This shared work will also be necessary to engage synergies and cut management costs.

In addition, in the terms of the work carried out by the Politecnico di Torino, it appears that EU policy relating to the environment lacks consistency. It is evident that Natura 2000 recognised sites do not cover all protected European areas: the difference between these two areas amounts to some 50% of the territory. **These conclusions must lead to broader thinking as to policy to be put into play and the role of Natura 2000 zones.**

¹ 39 countries, 12 of which have recently joined the European Union (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia), 7 states which are not EU members (Norway, Switzerland, Iceland, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Gibraltar and Monaco) and 5 Balkan states (Albania, Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia),

On the basis of this information and scientific data gathered by the Politecnico di Torino, the following is evident:

The European Commission needs to be made aware that:

- **50% of Natura 2000 sites are in parks.**
- **Europarc brings together 400 protected areas in 39 European countries,** which gives it both considerable expertise in this field and legitimacy to speak on behalf of protected areas.

To this end:

The Europarc Federation must:

- **draw up arguments asserting its legitimacy to intervene on behalf of the parks, specifying what it can contribute to the European Union through the parks' expertise in terms of integrated land management,**
- **obtain funding from the European Union enabling it to demonstrate the correlation between Natura 2000 areas and its members.**

3. European parks: laboratories for the implementation of European policies for sustainable development

EU Member States will not reach the objective set by EU Heads of State and government regarding elimination of the loss of biodiversity by 2010. At the same time, "green growth" is increasingly being mentioned by EU Member States and institutions to direct future development policy, designed to counter the economic and ecological crisis.

In this context, the European Commission organised the conference dedicated to "Biodiversity protection beyond 2010"² bringing together the main stakeholders involved in drawing up and implementing European policy in favour of biodiversity and international institutions and experts. The findings of this conference, summed up in the "Message from Athens", highlight proposals for a remodelling of European Union policy in favour of biodiversity. They emphasise the fact that protected areas contain the most precious species for our ecosystems and constitute the basis for the conservation of biodiversity in Europe.

The 8 priorities set out in Athens related directly to the protected areas which constitute laboratories for fighting against the loss of biodiversity, including development issues. The following examples may be mentioned:

- "the need for a network of effective protected areas" which refers to Natura 2000: assessments of this network demonstrate the need to make further progress,
- implementing practical actions in favour of biodiversity and using the notoriety of Parks throughout Europe to pass on such messages,

² This conference was organised in Athens on April 27 and 28, 2009. The "Athens message" underscores the necessity of making biodiversity a universal priority policy.

- the necessity of including biodiversity in all EU policies; in this respect, the Parks make it possible to try out more consistent schemes and practices in line with sustainable development of European countries,
- these priorities recognise the relative lack of financial resources allocated to the protection of nature and raise the question of implementing new funds.

The Athens Message is consistent with the policy directions of the European Union defined in the Gothenburg strategy, which added an environmental dimension to the Lisbon process – the latter dealing solely with issues relating to employment, economic reform and social cohesion.

By establishing a link between the fight against loss of biodiversity and commitments to "green growth", the European Parks can constitute laboratories for implementing European policies. Their positive experience must be transferred to other territories. EUROPARC must be committed to the Parks being recognised as prime partners for experimentation as regards sustainable development and commitments to biodiversity.

Proposed action by the French section:

To contribute to Europarc's lobbying objectives, the French section has set itself the following missions:

- **enriching the arguments to be used by Europarc to demonstrate the correlation between Natura 2000 and the Parks, as well as the Parks' experience in terms of managing Natura 2000,**
- **identifying protected areas as prime partners for sustainable development experimentation, as well as placing the protection of biodiversity in European priorities alongside employment and regional development,**
- **showing the capacity of the parks to become experimentation sites for future EU policies, as demonstrated by the involvement of the parks in EU programmes,**
- **lobbying national and European politicians to ensure that EU policies beyond 2013 identify protected areas as essential partners in approaches to the following subjects: Natura 2000, sustainable tourism, biodiversity and economic development, global warming, ecological connectivity and so on.**