



**EUROPARC Federation
Report to Council
10th May 2013**

Title:
ODC Communique

Summary :
Results ODC meeting 24th April 2013

Recommendations :
❖ To note the report.

Meeting of the Organisational Development Committee

24th April 2013.

Offices of Staatsbosbeheer, Sloterdijk, Amsterdam, Netherlands

It is the wish of both EUROPARC and Eurosite organisations that a single new network for nature should be established. The Organisational Development Committee (ODC) was created to bring forward proposals to both existing organisation for the formation of that new network and to recommend processes through which it can be established. The ODC appreciates that members of both organisations will want to see what it is that the new network expects to deliver and in what ways those changes benefit them as members. We know that uncertainty is disruptive and clarity is required on what is to be done and how it is to be achieved.

The second meeting of ODC was held on 24th April and considered a series of papers on vision and purpose, management, governance, finance and legal structures.

Underlying principles

The objectives and principles for the future have been set out in the Networking for Nature document. Building on this, the ODC believes that the added value that a new network can bring falls mainly within three topic areas as follows.

- **Management:** Ensuring that we are able to **manage places** for nature to the highest standard and with improved knowledge and understanding of systems.
- **Resilience:** Making nature more **resilient** in the face of pressures, for example from climate change, invasive non-native species and changing technology.
- **Benefits:** Ensuring that people derive **benefits** from nature in a sustainable way, through developing sustainable development practices including sustainable tourism, working to deliver ecosystem services, and that these benefits reflect health, well-being and other social and economic values.

Resilience, benefits and management are three underpinning concepts for the new network which reflect the work and values of EUROPARC and Eurosite. Within this framework a wide range of activities might be supported. The ODC reviewed a paper covering more detail and this will be presented to Board/Council members in May and will form a significant part of the information for presentation to members later in the year.

Values, Management and structures

Securing the advantages of a new network is a key priority and the ODC is clear that the new network must be more influential, more sustainable and able to adapt to changing circumstances. Protected areas do not exist in isolation from other land uses and demands and we will need to use the strengths of the existing networks as well as being able to develop new activity. Achieving this requires sound organisational and financial structures.

A series of values were identified that will guide the new network. For example, it is likely to be facilitating and service based, offering a clear benefit to members. It will be a voice for nature across Europe and its strength will come from the organisations which form the membership. The values will reflect those of the members and must create the impression of a dynamic and creative movement that is able to adapt and manage change.

The ODC believes that a governance structure is required that involves members openly in setting out priorities and ways of working but which is also lean enough to manage resources effectively in what is likely to remain a difficult time financially. The work it sets out to do will dictate the staffing structure and it must also reflect what is deliverable from known resources. Although the network must have ambitions for growth it has to start from a realistic position and must look for economies of scale when compared to the existing networks.

The ODC considered that the Governance of the new network might allow for a President, who would be the figurehead and senior representative of the network and for a Chairman/woman who oversees the day to day business of the Board or council. A combined role would be an onerous one and who require a very significant commitment of time. The ODC will continue to explore options for this and for the governance structure.

There is significant merit in having regional or geographic arrangements (sections) within a network and ODC wishes to explore what role regional groupings might make. The role of standing topic groups is also likely to be valuable. Views will be sought from existing sections and other groups to inform this thinking.

The ODC is commissioning advice on the options for legal and financial structures, including advice on the merits of possible locations for establishing a new legal entity.

Process and Next steps.

- The objective is to set up a new network in January 2014. This will require the agreement by EUROPARC and Eurosite AGMs in autumn 2013. ODC next meets in June. Preliminary legal advice will be available for this meeting.
- ODC members are preparing additional material on the scope of the work of the new network and how it expands on the role of the existing organisations.
- Options for transfer of powers, functions, liabilities and assets from the existing organisations will be considered and recommendations presented to the AGMs.
- A business plan will be drawn up offering an indication of organisational structure and funding.

The ODC wishes to thank Staatsbosbeheer for the use of their office.

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