



EUROPARC Federation
Report to Council
3rd February 2012

Title:

EUROPARC/Eurosite Joint Committee Report

Summary :

Feedback from Joint Committee Meeting on 12 January
2012 in Brussels

Recommendations :

- ❖ To note the report
- ❖ To decide on further progress

EUROSITE & EUROPARC – feedback from Joint Committee 12 January 2012

The first meeting of the new Joint Committee was attended by: Thomas Hansson, President of EUROPARC, Marian Jager and Eric Baird (members of the EUROPARC Council) and Carol Ritchie; Eurosite was represented by HK, YV and NM. This meeting preceded two meetings arranged with the DG Environment Director General, Karl Falkenburg, and Environment Commissioner Potocnik. The meetings with the EC officials provided a key opportunity to present both organisations and make the point that we are in process of becoming one main 'green partner' organisation in Europe. The main aim was to ensure that they are aware of the planned development and to discuss how the EC could work with us in future.

The meetings were extremely positive and the following messages well received:

- In future, we will represent more than 20% of Europe's area covered by nature managers. Natura 2000 is key, will be well managed and we work to strengthen it and improve its management.
- Together, we are the main gateway to all site managers for the EC; also, we enable tremendous outreach to European citizens, natural areas being visited by huge numbers of visitors – e.g. Staatsbosbeheer achieve 150 million visitors to site per year.
- Natura 2000 is a core component of wider protected areas: we can be a key means to support effective management practices, providing added value as a trainer, communicator etc ... This is highly relevant to the EC given that we are a critical point to ensure good management and to strengthen implementation of Natura 2000.
- We are well placed to help the EC position Europe as a global player – Natura 2000 is the largest network of sites in the world; we are leading on initiatives to develop sustainable tourism etc. Such areas of expertise have application and usefulness beyond the EU.
- We can offer an ecosystem approach to management, especially important to achieve EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy targets and strengthen implementation of Natura 2000.

Key points of feedback from the EC included that there needs to be growing emphasis attached to strengthening the management of Natura 2000 and that it is essential to see Natura 2000 as a core, working tool to achieve gains for nature and benefits for other sectors at the same time. Also, there is a need for Natura 2000 to become embedded within wider society – generating wider acceptance and awareness of Natura 2000 amongst the general public is a key priority for DG Environment. During the meetings, which were also attended by Stefan Leiner, it was confirmed that the EUROSITE and EUROPARC 2012 Annual Conference had been selected to be the 'main event' for the EC for celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Habitats Directive. This is a significant development, one which means that the Conference will be heavily promoted and attended by high level officials from the EC, EU and across Europe. It will clearly be a valuable opportunity to confirm EUROSITE and EUROPARC together as key players in European nature conservation.

Additionally, the Joint Committee progressed several issues for the merger process - the following summarises the main points agreed:

- To update a draft joint agreement, discussed during the meeting, to cover the interim / transition phase during the merger process;
- To schedule the next meeting of the Joint Committee for 2 March. The following items were identified for the agenda:
 - Feedback from respective Board and Council meetings (in January and February);
 - To discuss the function of the new organisation, taking into account previous discussions;
 - To scope financial capacity requirements and complete a preliminary analysis of likely income models;
 - Develop a plan of prioritised deliverables with agreed timescale.
- **To hold a joint EUROSITE Board & EUROPARC Council meeting in Siggen, Germany, on 24 May**, plus a Joint Committee meeting on 25 May. (There is also an option to hold a further Joint Committee meeting in August if required, the need for that to be determined in May.)
- To have joint papers ready for the General Assemblies by end of August;
- To have individual AGMs, for internal business, followed by a joint AGM of members from both networks to discuss the merger process – if necessary, this can be preceded by a joint EUROSITE Board and EUROPARC Council meeting to agree matters for presentation etc.