

**EUROPARC Federation
Report to Council - 16th June 2011**



Title:
Update – EUROPARC/Eurosite Collaboration

Summary :

The purpose of this paper is to provide feedback on the growing collaboration between the two networks. It provides an overview of preliminary results and lists options for the way forward.

Recommendations :

- ❖ To consider the paper and decide on the format of future collaboration.

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Introduction

At the AGM of Eurosite and General Assembly of EUROPARC, in September 2010, members of both organisations mandated the establishment of a Joint Committee. The remit of the Joint Committee is to develop initial steps involved in growing collaboration between the two networks: this includes consideration of how joint working is functioning currently, possible future direction and research into what options could better meet the needs of members of both networks.

The purpose of this paper is to provide feedback. It provides an overview of preliminary results and the option, which has emerged as most favourable. The Joint Committee identified that there are, basically, two options:

1. To build on collaboration by creating one, formally constituted, new organisation.
2. To continue collaboration as presently, on an informal, but more product defined and outcome oriented basis;

Given that growing collaboration is a primary goal, there is a clear recommendation that it would be in the best interests of both Eurosite and EUROPARC to seek to form one new network organisation, which could then represent the interests and needs of a combined membership. Subject to the views of Eurosite and EUROPARC members, it is now proposed to put this forward for consideration at the 2011 AGM and General Assembly.

Preliminary Conclusions to date

Given the express desire of both networks to collaborate, as well as the growing overlap in what members in both networks do, there is an opportunity to build on the strengths and eliminate (inherent) weaknesses in both networks. Despite the (largely historical) differences, it is proposed to realise a new organisation, which is fit for purpose and better able to meet the needs of members in future.

- Subject to the views of members of both networks, it is the clear recommendation of the Joint Committee to establish one, new network organisation, which is designed to serve the current and anticipated future needs of existing and prospective members.
- At the same time, this is recommended as a necessary development to improve delivery of networking services and better realise opportunities which will benefit the members of that new network.

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Background – the context

It is necessary to consider the backdrop against which collaboration would be required to work, as well as the anticipated future needs and expectations of members of both organisations.

Eurosite and EUROPARC both have their own identities (see Annex 1), cultures and rich, historical legacies of delivering actions for Europe's nature: each network has and currently continues to pursue its own specialisms and areas of priority determined by members. This is a legally binding obligation, determined by the existing statutes of each network. However, Europe's nature and the landscape of organisations with management responsibilities for nature conservation are changing: at EU level, the policy framework within which members work is expected to alter significantly in the coming years (Natura 2000/ CAP/ Fisheries/ Marine etc). Furthermore, key EU funding mechanisms are currently being redefined (in particular, LIFE) whilst national structures and civic society are constantly developing. Within the memberships of both networks, there are also significant changes either currently taking place or likely to occur. The operational context of organisations with responsibilities for nature protection are changing, which includes mergers; budgets for nature conservation organisations across Europe are likely to be under increasing pressure in the next few years; however, levels of demand will remain and the challenge for all organisations will be to deliver quality services with fewer resources. For members of both Eurosite and EUROPARC, it will be necessary to consider alternative ways of working to deliver activities as efficiently as possible and maximise opportunities, which also ensure continuing focus on practical and integrated protected area management.

Given this context, it is entirely logical that members and their network organisations work to re-think their services and how best together they can add value for members. The challenge is to critically look at what Eurosite and EUROPARC do now and build on that basis for a more sustainable future.

Option 1 assessment

Both Eurosite and EUROPARC have a long history of collaboration on various projects, which has enabled each network, with complementary areas of expertise, to work together – these include the Natura Networking Programme, the Natura Network Initiative and Green Days. Joint working in this way has been effective and has delivered significant activities, which members of both networks have been able to be involved with: however, the last such project, the Natura Networking Programme, ended in 2008.

Furthermore, despite continuing cooperation, as long as the two organisations continue to be legally constituted as independent organisations, there remain

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limits to what can be done to further intensify or grow the links: largely, it is dependent on external project funds, which are far from certain and increasingly scarce. Where commonly beneficial projects are identified, both organisations are in a position where they agree to act as joint partners, which can be viewed as wasteful of resources, certainly from a funder's perspective. Equally, as independent organisations, Eurosite and EUROPARC technically remain in competition for project funding. Ultimately, continuing independence is a barrier to further collaboration and limits how both networks are able act in the best interests of members.

Most importantly though, the work of members and their areas of interest and involvement have developed over the years to such an extent, that the need for and original purpose of maintaining two networks, effectively, has been surpassed: it is less and less sustainable, nor is it pragmatic, to continue as two organisations. At network level, there are significant opportunities, which cannot be fully realised if Eurosite and EUROPARC were to continue as two independent legal entities.

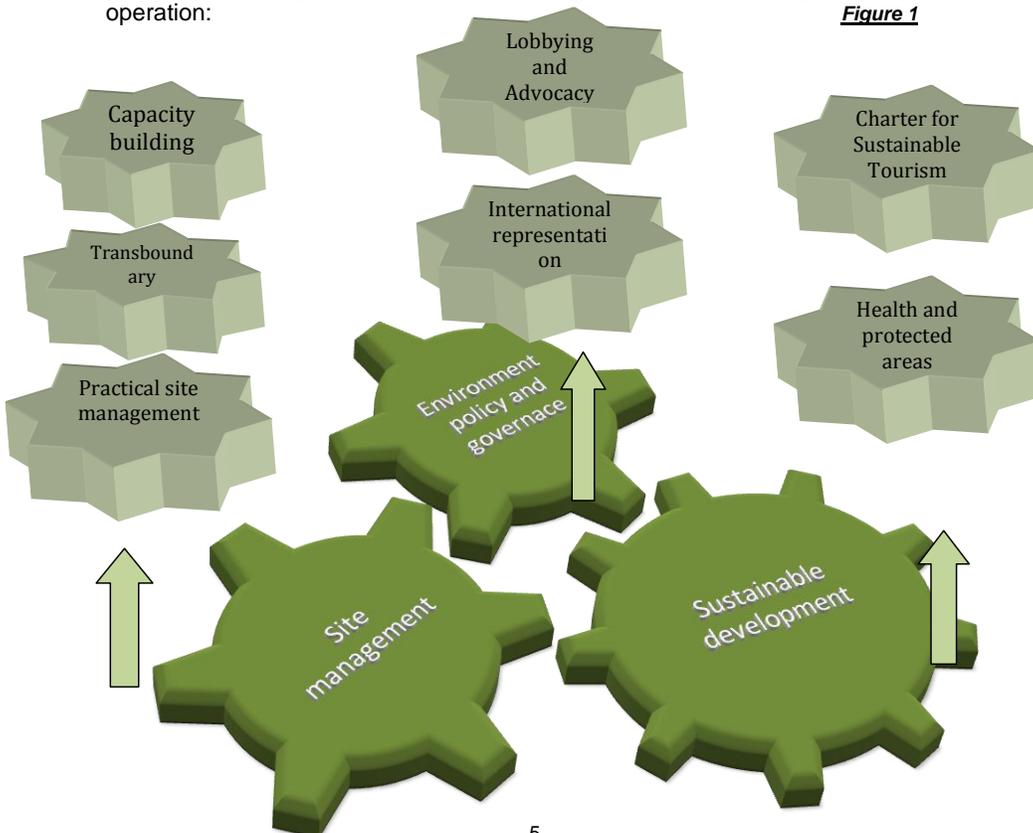
Option 2 assessment

Traditionally, at a core level, Eurosite is viewed as the site managers' network and EUROPARC is viewed as the park managers' network. However, there are considerable overlaps in the services provided for members, as well as members' priorities and interests, which merit a more efficient and improved way of meeting their needs.

Annex 2 summarises the primary activities of both networks. The third column describes common services, which both networks currently provide or undertake independently of each other, but where there has been growing cooperation and collaboration.

Closer analysis reveals that the activities of both organisations are remarkably similar. There are three main pillars of work, which currently overlap, being addressed to lesser or greater degrees by both networks. Figure 1 below sets out three pillars of work, which could form the foundation of a New European Protected Area organisation, with the building blocks being existing areas of operation:

Figure 1



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Combining the technical, practice-based expertise of Eurosite with the socio-economic and sustainable development expertise of EUROPARC within one new organisation, would be very significant in terms of representation for joint interests in Europe. Most importantly, members' priority needs are clearly identifiable here – their purpose and expectations of joining a European network organisation are still clearly maintained. Furthermore, there is a clear opportunity to build on a combination of specialisms, which will enable the needs of members to be more efficiently realised.

Moving forward

To bring together two organisations and develop a new, shared culture will always be complex. Both EUROPARC Council and Eurosite Board, together with the joint committee are acutely aware of the sensitivity with which such discussions should be developed and communicated. At an early stage, both EUROPARC and Eurosite stated their current positions. For EUROARC, the dissolution of the existing organisation, which would be required for a merger, was not an option. Analysis of the financial and legal risks were deemed unacceptable. For Eurosite the option of unilaterally merging with the existing EUROPARC was also not a viable option.

Therefore, although the final goal of one organisation to represent European protected areas was clear, the final configuration of the organisation and the timing of its creation remain open for discussion. However, the opportunity to create a new platform for European protected areas, with increased areas of activity should not be missed.

To ease both organisations through this change process, a transitional model has been discussed. This would enable both founding organisations (EUROPARC and Eurosite as endorsed by their memberships) to remain as legal entities, whilst creating a third "jointly owned" body - this would act as the operational arm on behalf of EUROPARC and Eurosite and staff and financial resources, with the agreement of the members of the constituent founders, could be diverted and directed into the new organisation. Further research into the legal implications of such a transitional model will need to be undertaken.

This proposal requires some challenging and courageous decision-making in the coming months and years, but the benefits derived from a single representative body need to remain clearly communicated to the respective memberships.

Function and purpose of a new organisation – benefits for members

In any change, there are understandable concerns that the spirit and specific interests of members could be 'lost' in a new, large organisation. However, it is entirely possible to define a structure, organised around the three core pillars in Figure 1 above, which ensure sufficient attention for core business, whilst also enabling the combined and overlapping interests to be more effectively pursued.

Some initial ideas for the vision and mission of a proposed new European network body.

Proposed Mission:

Our mission is to promote the integrated management of all European protected areas through improving the quality of nature conservation practice and sustainable development of natural resources.

Proposed Purpose:

To serve the needs of members, support the work of partners and enable them together to achieve greater results for Europe's nature through networking.

Proposed Function:

To achieve its mission, we will bring together innovative knowledge-based expertise in conservation management and sustainable development, for the benefit of protected areas. The added value is realised through working collectively – practical information, experiences and ideas shared and harvested to produce real, innovative learning opportunities, essential for up-scaling operations and delivering greater efficiency and impacts.

A new strategy, with clear goals and objectives would need to be developed at an early stage to ensure the new organisation captured the vision and mission declared and that expectation could be managed and outputs achieved and delivered on behalf of the combined membership.

A new organisation, which builds on the respective areas of expertise in both networks, would be able to:

- Achieve greater sustainability and increase the scope of (inter-linked) activities through networking;
- Enable members to maintain focus on 'on the ground' practice, at a time of growing collaboration and possible institutional mergers at membership level and assert the value of practical experience in implementing nature conservation priorities;
- Generate economies of scale, whilst improving core network services;

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- Increase project development and realisation opportunities – as one organisation, there would be greater capacity and scope to secure bigger projects that meet members' shared priorities;
- Enhance capacity to advocate and lobby on behalf of members' combined, common interests;
- Better meet members' needs in more holistic ways, ensuring support in all aspects of protected area management.
- Create a vast knowledge bank of practical information and experience to increase exchange and direct learning opportunities;
- Build knowledge and stimulate innovation and development in nature conservation, protected area management and sustainable development.

Such an initiative is capable of generating a significant network organisation, which is designed to not only better meet and serve the needs of members, but also proactively address key partners' priorities, including the European Commission. Together, as part of one new organisation, Eurosite and EUROPARC members become stronger – primarily, that comes from being able to represent the common interests of members. Last, but by no means least, there is obviously a strong financial motivation, which would be understandably attractive to members of both organisations.

Are there interim steps or other alternatives?

Subject to the views of members of both organisations, Eurosite and EUROPARC would of course be able to do nothing. However, it is suggested that this would be failing in the duty of both organisations to seek to deliver performance improvements and look forward: standing still in a dynamic, changing operating environment risks both networks becoming redundant.

Equally, there is an option to seek to do more together, through, for example, projects: this is already being done, but it is a far from certain endeavour, does not enable forward planning, nor does it fully realise the potential that could be achieved by one new organisation. Apart from being able to improve services for members, with a constituency of more than 500 members, with practitioner-level expertise, the new organisation would be a unique and essential consultee, as well as a valuable asset for partners: moreover, the new organisation would be significant enough in terms of representative capacity to set a clear agenda of innovative and ground-breaking protected area management that others would be unable to ignore.

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Key Considerations – safe guarding existing members' interests

The following sections of this paper outline important matters for consideration and initial findings of the Joint Committee across 3 areas:

- A. Governance
- B. Location
- C. Membership

A. Governance

In considering different forms possible for the proposed new organisation (SEE ANNEX 3), the Joint Committee identified the following, common principles – effective governance requires:

- A clear and understandable structure, open and accessible for participation and involvement of members, usually by means of elections or nominations;
- Enhanced, transparent and critical functioning (governance) mechanisms, such as a Board or Council, with defined areas of responsibility.
- Clear separation between governance and management to ensure accountability.
- A Board or Council to set strategic direction, lead institutional development processes and oversee organisational performance and ensure long-term sustainability.
- Involvement of members, mostly through a representative body, in planning and implementation of programmes, carried out through systematic consultation and participation mechanisms on the ground.
- Innovative practices and ongoing documentation of best practices, as these are needed to promote better performance accountability.

An effective system of governance will enable the new organisation to formulate, review and reformulate its mission in a changing context. 'Good governance' ensures that programmes follow the requirements of the organisation's mission; promotes a performance orientation and accountability in the organisation; and requires that the values (integrity, participation, professionalism, quality, commitment), statutes (reporting and legal standards and procedures) and norms of socially concerned civic institutions are articulated, practised and promoted. An effective structure and process of governance is absolutely critical for ensuring accountability in this wider sense. In particular, 'good governance' with respect to financial and statutory accountability, requires an active, alert and functioning Board or Council. This body has primary responsibility to ensure that the necessary checks-and-balances for proper recording and reporting, according to agreed targets and rules, are being met.

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Whilst there are many forms of governance available, Eurosite and EUROPARC currently both have solid, very similar governance models, which share many common elements and principles. It is proposed that the existing models can serve as the best basis for the governance structure of the proposed new network organisation.

At this stage, subject to the views of members of both networks, only general principles have been considered: more time will be required to research the best form of governance, which could apply. Also, there is need to consider the implications that would stem from an eventual location and national regulations that may apply.

B. Location – important criteria

The specific rules, which can apply to any organisation and its governance mechanisms, vary according to the country of its base location. There are 27 EU Member States, which could, theoretically, offer a base location for the new organisation. However, it is necessary to filter the possible locations on the basis of several pragmatic considerations.

Preliminary work has been undertaken based on the following criteria:

- Strength of connections currently within a country, in terms of membership presence and access to practical support facilities – for example, office space, technical expertise and services etc.;
- The need to ensure a level of service continuity and the level of disruption or break in services that could be caused in establishing a new base location due to relocation;
- The availability of staff with appropriate skills and experience;
- The desire to offer existing staff of both organisations new employment opportunities (taking into account their mobility) and to achieve maximum retention of skills and experience: alternatively, any potential redundancy costs;
- Obligatory taxes and legal costs;
- Access to national (or regional) level funding support;
- Information technology and reliability of telecommunications;
- Ease of access for members / degree of remoteness.

At this stage, without in any way ruling out other possible base countries, there are several locations, which would be able to fulfil such criteria and avoid major upheaval. Reflecting the strong connections of both networks currently, the following countries emerge as strong options – France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Another option is Belgium, and, most obviously perhaps, Brussels, although the on-site costs there can be up to 1/3rd more expensive than average costs across Europe. .

C: Membership – fee system considerations

Currently both EUROPARC and Eurosite operate as member organisations bound to the legal conditions of the country of origin - Germany in the case of EUROPARC, Netherlands for Eurosite. Both organisations charge member fees at differing rates for a range of members - these include, government agencies, individual protected areas, such as national parks, NGO's and other organisations. (See Annex 4 for current membership fees systems of both networks.)

When considering setting up a new body, a variety of fee structures could be considered, depending on the governance model selected, but some initial aspects will need to be considered – two possible scenarios include

- 1 Where both founding organisations retain their pre-existing legal identities and fee structures, then collected membership fees could be channelled into the new body to allow that body to function on behalf of the founders (EUROPARC and Eurosite). This could very well be a part of the transitional process.
- 2 Where the new body collects fees directly, the criteria upon which membership fees would be based would need to be agreed and then applied. The legal basis governing member associations in any host country would also need to be considered, as these govern the tax and charitable status of the organisation.

Any new organisational fee system could reflect the existing fee structures, but this would be a matter for the founding organisations to agree.

Comment [51]: Some kind of proposed schedule/decisions to be taken?

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Annex 1

Summary of key statistics EUROPARC and Eurosite

	EUROPARC	Eurosite
Founded	1973	1989
Number of members 2011	440	71
Governance	Elected president, Council of 9.	Board of 9 + Council of 22
Number of Countries represented	36	23
Staff numbers (current FTE)	6 permanent staff =, 4.8 FTE + 2 interns	4 permanent staff 2.8 f.t.e.
Others	7 sections with approx 22 between then staff. EUROPARC consulting 3 staff 2 standing evaluation committees, 7 working groups	N/A

Annex 2

Eurosite and EUROPARC's existing mission statements are broadly similar.

Eurosite's mission is: To exchange, enhance and promote expertise in the management of sites for nature, throughout Europe.

EUROPARC's Vision is: **Protected areas in Europe are valued by all as inspiring models for nature conservation and the preservation of wilderness. They are also living-working landscapes / seascapes: models of sustainable natural resource use benefiting society and maintaining Europe's cultural heritage and traditional rural livelihoods.**

And its MISSION is: **EUROPARC is the leading European organisation for protected areas bringing together dedicated professionals, government agencies, decision makers, and supporters to increase effectiveness in conserving and enhancing natural and cultural heritage on land and sea for the well-being and benefit of current and future generations**

Within this, there are common services, which both networks deliver for members:

- Exchange of information and experience to build knowledge and capacity building in protected area staff
- Gathering and disseminating examples of best practices in specific areas of expertise and experience
- Contributing to the development of guidelines in all aspects of protected area management
- Inputting to EU level consultations on various policy areas relevant to members;
- Building dialogue with the EC and other partners and representing the views of members and their interests.

	EUROPARC	Eurosite	Common Services	
1	Sustainable development initiatives – e.g. the Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas. And various other development projects	Technical site management issues - e.g. in response to climate change; adaptive management planning software systems & guidance.	Collection and promotion of best practices 'on the ground'. Development and provision of advice and guidance documents and materials.	
2	Healthy Parks, Healthy People Initiative	Commercial land management options.	Cross-cutting initiatives – e.g. health and nature; biodiversity and agriculture.	
3	Monthly Members' e-newsletter , annual journal published and various other information	EURO-SITE-MANAGER – 4 editions plus 4 special editions per year.	Communication about new, relevant policy developments at EU level	

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	services.			
4	Lobbying & participation in EU level for a.	Advocacy and representation of members' views at EU level.	Policy influencing and advocacy for members' interests and concerns. Input to EC-led consultations – e.g. funding mechanisms (LIFE), CAP reform	
5	Junior Rangers' programme; Training for volunteers in management of European parks. Capacity building programmes in Eastern Europe Alfred Toepfer scholarship programme	Site-based workshops – e.g. management of conflict in Natura 2000 sites.	Professional development and capacity building – e.g. organisation of conferences, workshops and seminars.	
6	Access to regional funds through Sections and EU funds.	Access to national and EU level funds.	Inclusion agendas – e.g., where possible, access to subsidies to enable networking and involvement.	
	Transboundary certification This is a special verification and certification system that aims to promote and facilitate transboundary cooperation between European protected areas.			
	Various international initiatives . Signatory of MOU's with Aустаріла , IRF, WCPA , Slow Food, and Redparques in South America to develop experience exchanges and other international collaborations between Europe and rest of world.			

Annex 3

Governance – notes on different types of organisation possible

Governance involves the totality of functions that are required to be carried out in relation to the internal functioning and external relations of the organisation. Quite separate from day-to-day management considerations for the organisation, appropriate forms of governance address:

- Delivery of vision, mission and strategy;
- Future directions and long-term strategic considerations;
- Issues of policy in relation to internal programming, staffing and resources;
- The norms and values that are the basis of institutional functioning;
- Obligations entailed in fulfilling statutory requirements; and,
- The external positions that are consistent with the overall thrust of the organisation as an institution in civil society.
- The functioning and performance of the organisation in society as a legal and a moral obligation.

Most importantly, governance requires the creation of structures and processes which enable the organisation to monitor performance and remain accountable to its stakeholders. A stakeholder, by definition, is any party, which has a stake in the outcomes of the organisation. Members are the key stakeholders, often with diverse interests, but all with a common or shared understanding and purpose for being part of the organisation, primarily because they subscribe to its vision. Resource-providers, donors, beneficiaries and regulators also have a stake in the outcomes of NGO performance, as do other external partners and indeed the organisation's staff. However, their stakes relate to the performance of the organisation, not to its governance directly.

A voluntary association (also sometimes called a voluntary organization, unincorporated association, or just an association) is a group of individuals who enter into an agreement as volunteers to form a body (or organization) to accomplish a purpose.

A Trust. In common law legal systems, a trust is a relationship whereby, property (including real, tangible and intangible) is managed by one person (or persons, or organisations) for the benefit of another. A trust is created by a settlor (also known as grantor), who entrusts some or all of their property to people of their choice (the trustees). The trustees hold legal title to the trust property (or trust corpus), but they are obliged to hold the property for the benefit of one or more individuals or organisations, usually specified by the settlor, who hold equitable title. The trustees owe a fiduciary duty to the beneficiaries, who are the "beneficial" owners of the trust property.

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The trust is governed by the terms of the trust document, which is usually written and occasionally set out in deed form. It is also governed by local law. The trustee is obliged to administer the trust in accordance with both the terms of the trust document and the governing law.

A non-profit organisation (NPO), also known as a “not-for-profit organisation”, is an organisation that does not distribute its surplus funds to owners or shareholders, but instead uses them to help pursue its goals. Examples of NPOs include charities (i.e., charitable organisations), trade unions, trade associations and public arts organisations. Most governments and government agencies meet this definition, but in most countries they are considered a separate type of organisation and not counted as NPOs. In most countries, NPOs are exempt from income and property taxation.

A charitable organisation is a type of non-profit organization (NPO). The term is relatively general and can technically refer to a public charity (also called "charitable foundation," "public foundation" or simply "foundation") or a private foundation. It differs from other types of NPOs in that its focus is centered around goals of a general philanthropic nature (e.g. charitable, educational, religious, or other activities serving the public interest or common good).

A foundation (also a charitable foundation) is a legal categorisation of non-profit organisations that will typically either donate funds and support to other organisations, or provide the source of funding for its own charitable purposes. The legal definition of charitable organisation (and of charity) varies according to the country and in some instances the region of the country in which the charitable organisation operates. The regulation, tax treatment, and the way in which charity law affects charitable organisations also varies.

Annex 4

EUROPARC existing fee structure

**Regulations concerning application of Articles 3e and 10
of the Statutes of the EUROPARC Federation e.V.**

**A) EUROPARC membership fees (Article 10)
Minimum Contributions 2011/2012**

EUR

VOTING MEMBERS		
Group A) ¹	States and National Governmental Organisations	2,330
Group B)	Provinces, Régions, Länder, Comunidades, etc.	2,330
Group C)	National Parks, Nature Parks and other Protected Areas	585
Group D)	Other Official Agencies, Associations, Institutes and corporate bodies.	585
Group E)	Non-governmental Organisations on a national or international level	585
Group F) ²	Supporting Organisations	200
NON-VOTING MEMBERS		
Group H) ³ Honorary Members	Individual members being persons who have distinguished themselves in work related to protected areas.	---
Group I) ⁴ Supporting Members	Supporting individuals: members being individual persons, who support the Federation	52

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Remarks

Every two years, these figures are reassessed on the basis of average European Union inflation rates (Eurostatistics).

- ¹ For Group A members, a guideline fee is fixed for each country, taking into consideration the population numbers and the Gross National Product.
- ² For Group F members: An organisation can only apply to this category, if it does NOT belong into any of the other categories. If a member of another category wishes to be placed into the lower fee category it needs to clearly show to the Council of the Federation that the original fee is higher than 1% of their yearly turnover (minus staff and office costs). Proof has to be shown for the last two years.
- ³ All Group H members are nominated by the Council. They do not pay a membership fee and have no voting rights.
- ⁴ Group I members:
 - a. Supporting members can be individuals or consultants that want to support the Federation.
 - b. Individual supporting members cannot be active members of the administration board or employees in any of the parks or organisations that are members of the Federation. They cannot represent a park or organisation.
 - c. Supporting members may participate in the General Assembly but have no voting rights (Art. 3b statutes).

(These regulations concerning Groups F, H and I members were modified by the EUROPARC General Assembly at its meeting in Pescasseroli, Italy on 30 September 2010.)

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Eurosite's current fee structure is:

Annex 1

Eurosite Membership Fees (as of 1 January 2010)		Fees determined by country and size of budget.		
		1	2	3
		30.00%	60.00%	100.00%
Level	Proportion of Annual Budget used for nature conservation	Albania, Andorra, Bosnia/Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, TFYR of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine.	Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Luxembourg, Poland, Turkey.	Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.
New Ground Level	For organisations with limited budgets directly managing a single or defined cluster of sites.	270	540	900
A	< €500,000	307	614	1,024
B	€500,000 to €1,000,000	675	1,350	2,250
C	€1,000,000 to €10,000,000	878	1,755	2,925
D	> €10,000,000	1,350	2,700	4,500
E	Optional Range > €10m	1,650	3,300	5,500
F				13,000
G				15,000
Eurosite Associate membership		250	350	500

Note: there was no increase to Eurosite's fees in 2011.