

EUROPARC Federation, Council Meeting

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| Location: | Bad Urach, Germany | | | |
| Date: | Wednesday, 21 st September 2011 | Start : | 9:15 | End : 15:00 |
| Attendees: | Council Members Present: Erika Stanciu (President), Eberhard Henne, Rolands Auzins, Dominique Leveque, Gábor Szilagyi Co-Opted Council members present: Marian Jager-Wöltgens, Johannes Hager, Paulo Castro Others Present.: Wilf Fenten (EUROPARC Consulting), David Cameron (Internal Auditor), Carol Ritchie (Director), Regina Schöfer (Executive Administrator) | | | |
| Apologies | Valter Zago, Pio Forte (Treasurer), | | | |

| Agenda Item | Notes | Decisions Taken | Actions |
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| | The president opened the meeting and welcomed all participants. | | |
| 1. | Minutes of previous meeting | Decisions Taken | Actions |
| | The minutes of the previous meeting were discussed. | The minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 th June 2011 in Schwerin, Germany, were approved as a true and accurate record. | |
| 2 | Matters arising | Decisions Taken | Actions |
| a) | <u>NGO grant report feedback:</u> No feedback had been received from WWF and Eurosite. The directorate had drafted the letter but it had not been sent. A Dutch European Member of Parliament was waiting for feedback from the Federation on this matter. | Directorate to send letter even without support from WWF and Eurosite. | CR to send letter and copy to M J-W and ES. |
| b) | <u>Cooption of Temporary Treasurer</u> Gabor Szilagyi had agreed to deliver the Financial Report to the General Assembly in the run-up to the conference and agreed to fill the post until a permanent appointment will be made. The Council agreed to approach three people with financial backgrounds to ask if they would take on the post. | Gabor Szilagyi was unanimously appointed as Temporary Treasurer. It was agreed that the appointment of a new Treasurer would be a key priority for the new Council. | GS and M J-W to approach possible candidates. Agenda item for next Council meeting. |
| c) | <u>Charter for Sustainable Tourism - French Methodology :</u> Wilf was liaising with the French Section and some affected parks about a possible solution. | | WF to liaise with the French partners in French to facilitate cooperation. |

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| <p>d)</p> | <p><u>Alfred Toepfer Medal:</u></p> <p>The Bavarian Forest National Park had declined to deliver the laudation speech at the award ceremony as they felt the timing and context was inadequate.</p> | | <p>Directorate to explore alternatives.</p> |
| <p>3.</p> | <p>President's/Council Report</p> | <p>Decisions Taken</p> | <p>Actions</p> |
| | <p><u>Paulo Castro:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instrumental in Europarc's BEST application including Azores, Canaries, Madeira + Cape Verde as project partners. Answer expected in November 2011. • Working with a Geopark in Portugal towards Charter certification. • Ongoing Skype meetings with members of Sustainable Tourism Working Group. <p><u>Rolands Auzins:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involved in Parks & Benefits project. • Promoted the annual conference to the Nordic-Baltic section. • Chasing membership payments for the Federation. <p><u>Gabor Szilagyi:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting EUROPARC as part of a number of high level events in connection with the Hungarian EC presidency. • Writing enews article about high level meeting of agricultural ministers in Hortobagy. • Represented EUROPARC at meeting of Nature directors in Hungary in June. Talked about funding for members. • Drafted project proposal including EUROPARC, Slow Food, Hortobagy, a polish park and other project partners (promoting local national park products). Application to be submitted mid-October. <p><u>Dominique Leveque:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • French section has a major drive to convince French parks to | | |

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| | <p>get involved in Europarc. Success was recruitment of several new members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mediating between French parks, the section and Charter administration to find solution to the French problem. • Promoted EUROPARC at regional meeting. <p><u>Marian Jager-Wöltgens:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMP are exploring the option of being Dutch section. A proposal may be lodged in November. • Liaising with Bettina Soethe of EUROPARC Germany over a project involving the institute for mentally handicapped people. <p><u>Johannes Hager:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of the EUROPARC 2011 conference and obtaining funding for it. • Link between Federation and sections needs discussing. <p><u>Eberhard Henne:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending discussions in Parliament • Liaison with Eberswalde High School who are preparing a paper on management effectiveness to be completed mid-October. Will pass copy to CR. <p><u>Erika Stanciu:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked hard during presidency to achieve her goal to involve more Eastern European members in EUROPARC Federation events. Successes in the Serbian Charternet conference. • Submitted several Life + proposals. • Wilderness working group continues work. Definition of "Wilderness" will be put on website of Wild Europe initiative. Comments in two weeks at the latest. • Member of steering group for Wild 10. Will ask for endorsement to work for an organisation, maybe Europarc. | | <p>EH to send copy of paper to CR.</p> |
| 4. | Treasurer's Report / Internal Auditor Report | Decisions Taken | Actions |
| a) | <u>Treasurer's Report:</u> | | |

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| | <p>Gabor Szilagyi had submitted a report to the General Assembly in advance of the meeting and explained the main points.</p> <p>Core income was slightly lower than the previous year and most areas. There had been no major liquidity problems in 2010. The Federation had been financially stable; however, GS clearly indicated that a major drop in membership, such as the writing-off of a large number of Italian parks through non payment would have a significant impact on core funding through membership fees.</p> <p>The payment of €48k in settlement of a legal claim from an ex-employee had also adversely affected the budget.</p> <p>A number of project applications had been submitted in an attempt to generate income. Initiatives of project funding involvement through the sections should be explored in line with the outcome of the section meeting in June.</p> <p>Council members discussed whether projects really contributed towards funding of organisations. It was concluded that for each project there has to be a careful calculation of cost recovery in order to make it viable. It was often better to be a project partner rather than the lead, to bid for a tender or be a subcontractor.</p> <p>GS explained the difference in appearance between the membership income and account information chart. The account chart shows a snapshot at the end of the year whereas the membership income shows the total income for the year.</p> | | |
| <p>b)</p> | <p><u>Internal Auditor Report</u></p> <p>The Internal Auditor David Cameron referred Council members to his report to the General Assembly, which had been circulated prior to the meeting and invited questions.</p> <p>He concluded that only one of his 21 recommendations had not yet been implemented: the one referring to the role of the sections. This had not been progressed.</p> | <p>Role of the sections to become a key priority for the workplan of the new Council.</p> | <p>Incorporate role of sections into guidance document to the new Council.</p> |

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| | <p>DC suggested to review the role of the Treasurer. Rather than the workload resting on an individual, a subgroup of Council members should be established that deals with financial management to advise the Directorate. Chair could be the Treasurer, it could be supported by the Internal Auditor as an advisor and should include one or two other Council members.</p> <p>He also urged the Council to reconsider the role of the Internal Auditor. The current brief only refers to the audit of financial accounts. This is already done by an external auditor. It would be more beneficial to the Federation if the role of the internal auditor would be extended to reflect a wider governance and management point of view.</p> <p>The Strategic Risk Register was still valid and a good and comprehensive reflection on the risk the Federation could face.</p> | | <p>Suggest formation of financial management subgroup to new Council at next meeting.</p> <p>Suggest review of role of Internal Auditor to new Council at the next meeting.</p> <p>DC to add introductory paragraph to Risk Register pointing out that the risks are potential and not existing risks.</p> |
| 5. | Directorate Report | Decisions Taken | Actions |
| a) | <p><u>Project applications:</u></p> <p>5 project applications had been submitted during 2011, one was still in progress. CR was hoping to win at least 2 or 3 of those, which would be enough to cover costs.</p> <p><u>Lobbying work:</u></p> <p>A joint paper with WWF and Birdlife on the CAP Reform had been submitted to the European Commission.</p> <p><u>Finances:</u></p> <p>Current cash flow allowed coverage of two months' operating costs. Due to pre-financing of projects it may, however, be necessary to tap into reserves at the end of the year.</p> <p>The outlook for 2012 is uncertain, particularly if there will be no additional income from new projects. The Directorate is continuing to</p> | | |

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| | <p>look for savings and efficiencies, especially through reduction of travel.</p> <p>The Federation needs and additional €150k income to present a balanced budget next year. This should be feasible with obtaining the NGO grant and income from new projects.</p> | | <p>CR to add expected income from EUROPARC Consulting of €10-15k.</p> |
| b) | <p><u>Membership Update:</u></p> <p>The application for membership from the Cotswold Conservation Board was unanimously accepted.</p> <p>Strike offs: write strike off letter, offering new category. Up to Federparchi to offer this to Italian parks. Highlighting special situation of Charter parks that are to be struck off.</p> <p>Try to resolve the issue by writing to Federparchi.</p> | <p>The Council unanimously approved the membership application from the Cotswold Conservation Board.</p> <p>The following membership applications had been received since the last Council meeting and were endorsed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • France, Natural Regional Park Massif des Bauges • Italy, Coastal Dunes from Torre Canne to Torre S. Leonardo • Italy, National Park of Alta Murgia • Netherlands, Marian Jager-Wöltgens • Romania, ProPark - Foundation for Protected Areas • Switzerland, Swiss Parks Network • United Kingdom, John Thomson • United Kingdom, Eric Baird <p>The Council adopted the suggested list of strike-offs for recommendation to the General Assembly (see attached).</p> | <p>Include information on new membership category with strike-off letter. CR to write again to Federparchi to highlight the special situation of Charter parks that may be struck off.</p> |
| c. | <p><u>25 Year Membership Awards:</u></p> <p>The Council noted the list that had been circulated prior to the meeting (see attached).</p> | | |
| 6. | Working Group Guidelines | Decisions Taken | Actions |
| | <p>Council members discussed rotation of members on the Evaluation Committee. It was clarified that the rotational system would start in</p> | | |

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| | <p>January 2012.</p> <p>The guidelines for the Wilderness Working Group need to be amended. ES to send comments to CR.</p> <p>The Council felt that this paper was very useful and should be included in the presentation to members.</p> <p>CR praised the work of the working groups and committees, who were paying for their own travel and invested their own time in the work of the Federation.</p> | | <p>ES to send comments on Wilderness Working Group to CR.</p> <p>CR to include paper in her presentation to members.</p> |
| 7. | Eurosite | Decisions Taken | Actions |
| | <p>CR explained that the suggested paper to the General Assembly captured the essence of the discussions with Eurosite and the sections in Schwerin, but was a shorter and clearer version.</p> <p>The Council's recommendation would be the second option, i.e. establishment of a joint organisation. The paper did not go into detail as to the technical process of creating this joint organisation.</p> <p>Councillors noted that the Eurosite membership had endorsed option two during their General Assembly and that it had given the Eurosite board the mandate to initiate discussions towards a merger.</p> <p>Council asked ES to clearly indicate to the General Assembly that this is the starting point of a process – there are no clear solutions yet and that the membership needs to authorise the Council to carry out negotiations.</p> | | <p>Directorate to publish paper on the website.</p> |
| 8. | EUROPARC Consulting Report | Decisions Taken | Actions |
| | <p>Wilf Fenten distributed the new EUROPARC Consulting information leaflets that would be handed out to all General Assembly attendees and asked sections to include it in their communications wherever possible.</p> | | |

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| <p>He reported that competition for work/tenders/projects was fierce. In the past EC had a success rate of about 50% for bids, now a good result is 1 in 5.</p> <p>Consulting was working closer than ever with the Federation, which was of mutual benefit. Examples were the Grundtvig project for which Consulting had produced a comparison study between the Charter for Sustainable Tourism and TSG indicators. This resulted in a further project proposal to extend the TSG indicators to the rest of Europe. Results will be known in October.</p> <p>Although cash flow is low (~50-60k bank balance) it is not at critical level. EUROPARC Consulting is expecting further project income in October (about €40k).</p> <p>They had won the Wadden Sea World heritage site project. Funder was the German Government but the Danish Ministry was also looking at adopting the same type of project.</p> <p>Consulting was also working with a German company of surveyors on contract bid funded by the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau. The scope of the contract is yet unknown.</p> <p>The most successful part of Consulting business is study tours. There have been a number of study tours in 2010 and 2011 and further tours were already planned and booked. EC will make this a more prominent feature on their website.</p> <p>The next Board meeting will coincide with the Federation's section meeting in Regensburg in November.</p> <p>Consulting had been in charge of organizing the workshops at the conference. WF was hoping that they would get the contract again next year, including the conference report.</p> <p>The Council noted that EC needed to find a way to finance travel as travel was one of the greatest expenses.</p> | | |
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| | <p>Subject to winning some of the projects EC was also looking to employing a Project Coordinator on a 1-year contract, as this would enable WF and RP to concentrate on securing new work.</p> <p>Consulting expressed their hope that their work would be recognized as valuable during any merger discussions with Eurosite and that they could be contributing substantially to the Federation funds in the future, if project bids turn out to be successful.</p> | | |
| 9. | Charter for Sustainable Tourism | | |
| a) | <p><u>Approval of Italian and Baltic Sea Area Charter methodologies:</u></p> <p>PC explained that the aim of the STWG was to formulate one methodology that could be adapted to all regions in the future. Currently every country/region was presenting their own methodology.</p> <p>With regard to the French methodology further clarification was needed. A meeting would be arranged in Paris including the French section, Norbert Heukmes and Federico Minozzi to answer any outstanding questions, before the methodology is passed to the Charter Evaluation Committee for assessment.</p> | <p>The Council endorsed the Italian and Baltic Sea Area Charter methodologies.</p> <p>In between Council meetings approval of Charter methodologies by the Council can be made via email.</p> | <p>Directorate to arrange meeting with French section, Norbert Heukmes and Federico Minozzi in France.</p> |
| b) | <p><u>Approval of Charter Evaluations:</u></p> <p>Council members endorsed the list of parks that had been awarded Charter certification during 2011.</p> | <p>Council members endorsed the list of parks that had been awarded Charter certification during 2011.</p> | |
| 10. | Elections | | Actions |
| | <p>Appointment of Election Committee</p> <p>Council discussed the appointment of the Election Committee.</p> | <p>The following persons were appointed as Election Committee:</p> <p>Jens Brüggemann (Chair)</p> | |

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| | | Richard Blackman Marta Mugica | |
| 11. | Letters from the German Section | | Actions |
| a) | <p><u>Statute Change Request:</u></p> <p>The German section had submitted a statute change request, however it was submitted outside of the statutory deadline and could therefore not be processed for the current General Assembly.</p> <p>The request was that members of the EUROPARC Federation that were also members of a section, had to become section members. The Council discussed this motion. The issue had been raised in 2008 and been rejected by the sections and membership then. Considerable efforts had been made since then to bring the sections closer to the Federation, e.g. giving the sections a seat on the Council, etc.</p> <p>Council members felt that the role and involvement of sections needed revising, particularly in the light of the recommendations of the Internal Auditor.</p> <p>The first step would be to raise the issue at the next Sections meeting in November in Regensburg.</p> <p>Council members agreed that this issue needed careful consideration at future meetings. The fundamental principles under which sections are established and operated needed to be examined. Following this any issues should be analysed to determine whether they were generic or country/area specific. Generic issues may entail a statute change, specific issues may be resolved by finding individual solutions.</p> <p>Discussions should be open and in close cooperation with the sections.</p> | See item 4b – role of sections to be a key priority for the new Council. | Agenda item for next Council and Sections meetings. |
| b) | <u>Application for membership by the German Section:</u> | Decision about membership application of the German section was postponed until completion of | |

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| | <p>The German Section had submitted an application for membership as they felt that currently the role of the sections was not participatory enough and that – as a section – they had no direct input in the decision making of the Federation.</p> <p>Council members noted their concern but cautioned that a decision would depend on the outcome of the discussions regarding the role of the sections.</p> | the review of the role of the Sections. | |
| 12. | Annual Conference 2011 | | Actions |
| a) | <p><u>Bad Urach Declaration:</u></p> <p>The German Section through Johannes Hager had submitted a conference declaration. This was endorsed by the Council.</p> <p>Input to be sought from conference attendees would be announced during the opening session. Feedback mechanism would be via a comments box and during workshops through the workshop managers. The final version would then be presented at the closing ceremony.</p> <p>The Declaration will be sent to key decision makers in the European Commission. Members will be encouraged to send it to decision makers in their countries. It will be used for lobbying purposes in the coming year.</p> | The Council endorsed the Bad Urach Declaration . | <p>JH to collect comments from attendees and formulate final version.</p> <p>Directorate to send to key decision makers in the European Commission.</p> <p>Directorate to encourage members to send to decision makers in their countries.</p> |
| b) | <p><u>Conference Workshops:</u></p> <p>Council members were briefed on the workshop organisation. There would be a full briefing for workshop managers and presenters on Friday night by Wilf Fenten and Carol Ritchie.</p> <p>Members of the new Council would be asked to meet at 14:15 on Saturday to leave the workshops early and attend a Council information session.</p> | | <p>Members of the new Council to attend briefing session at 14:15 on Saturday, 24th September.</p> <p>CR to consider workshop outcomes when formulating the new Strategy.</p> |

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| | Workshop outcomes would be summarised and presented by Wilf Fenten during the closing session on Saturday afternoon. These would feed into formulation of the new Federation Strategy. | | |
| 13. | Parks Forum Staff Exchange Paper | | Actions |
| | The Council noted the Parks Forum Staff Exchange Paper which had been distributed prior to the meeting (attached). | | |
| 14. | Any Other Council Business | | Actions |
| | <p>Suggested dates/locations for next meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday, 03.02.2012 (Maremma National Park, Italy) • Friday, 25.05.2012 (Gut Siggen, Germany) • Date and venue of third meeting (joint Council/Sections meeting) to be confirmed. | | |
| | <p>As it was her last meeting as President and Council member, Erika Stanciu thanked existing and past Council members for all their hard work and said that she had very much enjoyed working with them. She also remembered Aitkin Clarke as a great mentor and acknowledged his support before and during her presidency .</p> <p>On behalf of the Directorate Carol Ritchie thanked both the President and Council members for their work and input over the years.</p> <p>Wilf Fenten expressed his thanks on behalf of EUROPARC Consulting and praised the close cooperation with the Federation through the Council.</p> <p>On behalf of the Council Gabor Szilagyι thanked Erika Stanciu for her invaluable input over the last 6 years. He acknowledged that past few years had been crucial in the development of the Federation and that the leadership had gone through some very hard and difficult times at times. ES had managed to lead the organisation successfully during this period, which was no mean feat.</p> | | |