

EUROPARC Federation, Joint EUROPARC Council / Eurosite Board Meeting

Location:	Schwerin, Germany
Date:	Thursday, 16 th June 2011
Start :	9:30
End :	12:30
Attendees:	<p>EUROPARC Council Members: Erika Stanciu (President), Eberhard Henne, Rolands Auzins, Dominique Leveque, Gábor Szilagyi Marian Jager-Wöltgens, Johannes Hager, Paulo Castro</p> <p>Eurosite Board Members: Henkjan Kievit (President), Yves Verilhac (Secretary), Matti Määttä (Treasurer), Teo Wams, Xavier Escute, Fabrice Bernard</p> <p>Others Present.: Wilf Fenten (EUROPARC Consulting), David Cameron (Internal Auditor), Carol Ritchie (Director EUROPARC), Regina Schöfer (Executive Administrator EUROPARC), Neil McIntosh (Director Eurosite), David Cameron (Internal Auditor EUROPARC)</p>
Apologies	Valter Zago, Pio Forte (Treasurer),

Agenda Item	Notes	Decisions Taken	Actions
	Erika Stanciu, the President of EUROPARC opened the meeting, followed by general introductions from all participants.		
1.	Presentations		
	<p>Eurosite</p> <p>Henkjan Kievit, the President of Eurosite and Neil MacIntosh, Head of Network Services gave a short overview over Eurosite's organisation and activities.</p> <p>(Details can be found in the attached sheet.)</p> <p>Eurosite organises numerous workshops, seminars and conferences for their members. In May they held a workshop on wetland management in France and a marine and coastal workshop is planned in August.</p> <p>The collaboration between Eurosite and EUROPARC started in 2003 during a project to implement Natura 2000 system and intensified last year after the Council/Board decisions to work together more closely.</p>		
	<p>EUROPARC</p> <p>Carol Ritchie, the Director of EUROPARC gave a short overview of EUROPARC's organization and activities.</p> <p>EUROPARC was founded in 1973 with an impetus on international cooperation. It currently has 445 members in 36 countries, 70% of its</p>		

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	<p>members are individual parks or protected areas. 40% of national parks in Europe are EUROPARC members.</p> <p>The aim of the organisation was then and still is to help protected areas fulfil their role as preservers of the natural beauty of Europe, to encourage cooperation and exchange between their managers/staff, and to promote their aims and work across Europe.</p> <p>It operates with a directorate of 6 staff; there are 7 regional/national sections as well as several working groups and committees. The main “brands” are the Charter for Sustainable Tourism (100 charter parks) and the Transboundary Parks programme (8 in 11 countries).</p>		
2	Report from the Joint Committee	Decisions Taken	Actions
	<p>A verbal progress report was given by Erica Stanciu.</p> <p>Two years ago both organisations started the discussion about stronger cooperation as at EU level PAs are still not recognised (the Commission solely focuses on Natura 2000 sites). Both organisation have a huge amount of expertise and want to have a stronger voice – an ideal basis for a strong cooperation.</p> <p>EUROPARC and Eurosite were given the mandate from their governing bodies to form a joint committee. This met twice in 2010 and 2011. The aim of the current meeting was to decide what form the cooperation should take and formulate a recommendation to the respective General Assemblies.</p>		
3.	Joint EUROPARC/Eurosite Paper	Decisions Taken	Actions
	<p>Two options are presented in the paper:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A continued close cooperation. 2. A merger where both existing organizations will be setting up a new organisation. 		

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Option 1 was straightforward but needed to be underpinned by a formal contract or Memorandum of Understanding.

Participants went into an open and in-depth discussion on the realisation of option 2:

Eurosite saw itself as a European organisation with its own structure and identity and felt that some of its members would be opposed to a direct merger with EUROPARC under the EUROPARC name. EUROPARC felt they had the stronger position due to the much larger membership, and would risk losing the strong branding and trademark registrations of their most successful initiatives and awards if they were dissolved.

However, both organisations felt that, for the benefit of its members, setting up a new organisation had to be based on a technical decision rather than subjective feelings in order to form a powerful new organisation

If given the mandate by their GAs, legal, independent advice would have to be sought on the format of the new organisation. The option of simply changing the statutes and operating under one name should be explored as a starting point. Another necessity was a cost-benefit analysis of each step.

The joint Board/Council then carried out a risk/benefits analysis:

The risks of staying two independent organisations included:

- Competition for funding
- Not being able to maximise benefits for members
- Losing members
- "Divide and conquer" strategy by the EU
- Greater vulnerability
- Operational and financial burden of running two organisations

The risks of forming one organisation included:

- A reduced budget from membership fees

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of strong brands - Loss of membership (could be minimised by obtaining consensus on the process) - Limited financial and human capacity to undertake merger - Loss of staff - Loss of corporate memory (= experience) <p>The benefits of forming one organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Possible EU or other funding for the merger - $1 + 1 \geq 2$ (added value!) - One louder voice - Developing bigger brands (would need to be developed very quickly and incorporated into the work plan) - A fresh start resulting in increased motivation, new spirit and more fun - More powerful lobbying - Better access to financial resources - Better contributions from members as they support just one organisation - Increased efficiency, effectiveness and lower operational costs - More knowledge and experience because of a bigger network - Easier communication - Not competing for membership - Fewer meetings - More robust staff support 		
4.	Next steps	Decisions Taken	Actions
	<p>The first step for both organisations would be to work jointly on all projects from now on. This would go hand in hand with an immediate commitment to communicate and work together.</p> <p>Both sides acknowledged the need for a framework of reference and terms of engagement in form of a contract.</p> <p>Due to the financial constraints of both organisations it was felt that a timeline was needed to focus the process (see action column for details). It was felt that this was an ambitious but feasible timeline. It</p>	<p>It was agreed to work jointly on all projects from now on.</p> <p>An immediate commitment to communicate and work together, formalised by a draft contract or MoU immediately after the General Assemblies.</p> <p>A common paper to be presented to both GAs. If GAs consented to merger, it was agreed to seek a mandate to proceed according to the proposed</p>	<p>Timeline:</p> <p>2011:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint communication to members of both organisations about the outcome of the meeting • Joint paper to both General Assemblies to go out at the beginning of August

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<p>would be reviewed in 2012, if necessary.</p> <p>Both organisations will present the same paper to their respective General Assemblies. The two options will be to either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stay separate, or - form one joint organisation. <p>The paper will be concise, clear and short and will contain a recommendation by the Council/Board to consent to the merger. If both GAs consent to the merger a mandate will be sought to proceed with working out the technicalities of the merger and present a viable model at the following General Assembly. The paper should clarify why the merger would be the better option and include the SWOT analysis above. It will contain a clear timeline.</p> <p>NMc acknowledged that the initiative had come a long way in quite a short period of time. He suggested an exchange of staff after the General Assemblies to get to know each other and get an understanding of each others' skills and knowledge. Eurosite would be willing to travel to Regensburg. If possible, attendance of the GAs should be opened up to staff (Eurosite GA 7-8th September, EUROPARC GA 22nd September).</p> <p>On behalf of all participants ES thanked CR and NM for their joint working and organisation of the meeting. Thanks was also given to Ian Jardin, former President of Eurosite, who had taken forward the process by writing to ES. Eurosite thanked ES for the invite and for moderating the session and joint committee meeting.</p>	<p>timeline.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Committee to continue with the next meeting to be scheduled in October/November • If mandate is given by GAs, obtain neutral, technical guidance on formulating a contract and the merger process • Meeting with the European Commission to discuss the proposal <p>2012:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint work plan and contract on interim cooperation by 1 January 2011 • Back-to-back Council meetings/GAs (dates tba jointly) • Proposal to General Assemblies on new organisation <p>2013:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registry of new framework/organisation
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President of EUROPARC
Erika Stanciu

President of Eurosite
Henkjan Kievit

Minutes
Regina Schöfer