



Agriculture and Protected Areas Commission

Terms of Reference

Overall Mission

To undertake a feasibility study exploring the option of a Charter for Sustainable Agriculture.

Make recommendations to EUROPARC Council on future developments.

Background

Parks and Protected Areas (PAs) represent, now more than ever, ideal territories to promote sustainable agricultural practices and activities favouring regional rural development, by promoting high quality products, local resources and historical and cultural characteristics.

PAs are places of excellence where to experiment new and advanced forms of agro-environmental policies with particular regard to the typical products and the preservation of the landscape. That ensures the continuity and sustainability of the agricultural practices conducted with traditional methods representing an essential element to keep alive the social, economic, historical and cultural community of the PAs.

Unfortunately, both among the public and the decision makers, the conflicts between protected areas and agriculture are more known than the huge numbers of positive relations, collaborations and common initiatives already existing and promoted together by PAs and local farmers.

The **European Charter for Sustainable Agriculture in Protected Areas**, aims to support and make visible an efficient model of agriculture economically viable and socially acceptable, where the practices of sustainable agriculture, sustainable management and enhancement of local products are within the PAs priority objectives.

The ECSAPA won't be an alternative product/certification (with the risk also of become competitive with the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas - ECSTPA), but rather a tool that allows to assess the contribution that agriculture can offer to protected area management, in terms of nature conservation, and vice-versa.

In fact, just as in the case of tourism, agriculture and silvo-pastoral practices can be an interfering factor and a potential threat to biodiversity but, if properly conducted and interpreted, it can also be a factor that contributes to the PA's overall strategy. At the same time, the healthy environment and well-managed natural territory in PAs can permit the development of a very high-quality agriculture.

Taking in consideration and trying to compound the needs of nature protection and the interests of local stakeholders (farmers, breeders, artisans and related sectors) the Charter represents an



instrument of dialogue and cooperation and a methodological tool to involve the local population in the management and promotion of the PAs.

Terms of Reference

- *Link to EUROPARC Strategy*

The activity and the results of the Commission will be based on, and coherent with, the [EUROPARC Strategy 2015-21](#) (in particular Strategic Theme 3 and related specific actions) as following:

STRATEGIC THEME 3 PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY - ROLE OF PROTECTED AREAS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	
Priority AREA 3.2	Sustainable Agriculture in and around Protected Areas
Strategic OBJECTIVE	To promote people and nature friendly agriculture across Europe
OUTCOME	Agriculture policy and practice supports the management of Protected Areas and contributes positively to their objectives for nature and people.
ACTION 3.2a	Investigate and initiate a "Charter" for Sustainable Agriculture developed from the Protected Areas methodology of working in partnership with relevant stakeholders to encourage people and nature friendly agriculture in or around Protected Areas.
ACTION 3.2b	Input to the lobbying work of existing European platforms working on the CAP reforms for the next financing period

Moreover, the Commission will act in the framework of the NGO EU Grant, that defines and supports part of the actions of EUROPARC in 2016-17, as following:

NGO Work Area	Promoting sustainable development to contribute to turning the Union into a resource-efficient, green and competitive low-carbon and climate resilient economy
	Working for Nature to protect, conserve and enhance the Union’s natural capital
NGO Objective	Objective 1.3(E) Enhance synergies and maximise coherence between the objectives of biodiversity conservation and those of agriculture (Target 3 of the EU Biodiversity Strategy - “Increase the contribution of agriculture to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity”)



- ***The Role of Protected Areas. Promoting Sustainability. Link whit EU policies.***

The Commission will operate taking in consideration that the Charter will be first of all an instrument supporting the conservation of natural resources, the main Protected Areas mission, and a way to strength the role of PAs in promoting sustainability.

In order to increase the dialogue between EU and protected areas network, the Charter will be also conceived from the beginning as a tool to implement at local level the EU policies on agriculture, rural development, biodiversity and green economy (e.g. EU Biodiversity Strategy).

- ***Working together***

The Commission's work is part of the **EUROPARC Strategic Theme 4: WORKING TOGETHER - BUILDING OUR ORGANISATION** and aims to help the federation to reach the Strategic Objective "Improve the governance system of the EUROPARC Federation to meet good governance principles and to increase the effectiveness of the Federation".

This Commission will be led by [Federparchi-EUROPARC Italia](#) and [EUROPARC France](#), and will involve interested members from across the EUROPARC Federation, to embrace point of views and experiences coming from different parts of Europe.

Explicit attention will be putted to explore and transpose positive aspects and lessons learned from the other two EUROPARC programs: the [European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas](#) and [Transboundary Parks](#). The Commission will consider all possible coordination and contacts between these programs. At the same time, the specificity of this new tool will be fully maintained, in order to design an instrument useful also for protected areas that are not interested on tourism or on transboundary cooperation.

Planned activities and outputs over 2 years

In order to realize its mission already mentioned (to undertake a feasibility study exploring the option of a Charter for Sustainable Agriculture, and make recommendations to EUROPARC Council on future development), the Commission will elaborate its program along the two year to:

- develop the framework of a feasibility study of the Charter, considering technical, economic, legal, operational, and scheduling aspects (i.e. adapting the *TELOS* approach)
- seek funding supporting the feasibility study
- help EUROPARC in the collection and selection of best practices and case-studies
- identify other similar tools and methodologies and indicate if they may already be used
- explore connections with Charter for Sustainable Tourism and Transboundary Parks
- explore links with EU related policies
- planning of workshops as needed (if funds allow)
- planning and application of a pilot project to test the Charter
- reporting and communicating with EUROPARC headquarters



- elaborate mid-terms reports to inform EUROPARC members (e.g. during the annual assembly)
- make recommendations to EUROPARC Council

EUROPARC Directorate could also ask the Commission to support the lobby activity of the Brussels Office in preparing policy papers related to the topic and/or attending specific meetings or events in Brussels (e.g. European NGOs platforms meetings, experts hearings with European Parliament's Commissions).

The final outputs requested to the Commission are:

- at least one project proposal elaborated
- the feasibility study published by end of 2018
- the recommendations to the Council sent by end of 2018

Moreover, other possible connected outputs are:

- one workshop organized
- one or more policy papers for lobby in Brussels elaborated and/or one meeting of European NGOs platforms or one experts hearing in E. Parliament organized
- a collection of case-studies and best practices realized

Indicators

- 1 feasibility study published
- 1 recommendation document elaborated
- number of project proposals elaborated
- successful funding - amount of fund collected
- one funded workshop realized
- number of policy papers and other lobby events realized

Duration on the Commission. Way to work. Resources and potential sources

The Commission will act two years, until end 2018

Possibly, an informal and temporary pre-commission could be established in order to better define the "road map" of the Commission.

The Commission will be composed by **at least 7 members** but perhaps with a wider consultative group which would operate as a **e-forum**. It should nominate a chair and a secretariat shared by EUROPARC Italia/Federparchi and EUROPARC France. One EUROPARC staff member or Council member will oversee the Commission.

EUROPARC will support the initial meeting in 2016 or 2017 and set up the communications platform to encourage online interaction.

A possible project or funding should be sought by the Commission.



General Information

Why does EUROPARC have Member's Commissions?

The EUROPARC Federation is a membership organisation. It exists to serve the needs of our members as they have identified them in the statutes of the organisation and its recently approved strategy.

However the services expected by the members may not always be able to be provided fully by a team of staff, further one might want to consider that as a membership organisation, the role of and functions of the members in running the organisation and delivering on its goals should form a part of the Federation's governance and structure.

With that in mind the creation of the new strategy offers an opportunity for some renewed thinking on how members can have a role in the functions of EUROPARC.

It may be useful to suspend the attachment to the current structure, or order to pause and consider what is needed and achievable.

The strategy was written with the then existing structure, this does not compel EUROPARC to retain that, as the delivery of the aims and action expressed, should in most cases, take precedence. Further, the need for change to the delivery structures was already indicated in the strategy.

What makes a Good Group?

Groups working together with a common purpose, are good for people in that they can provide members with important social interaction, support and enriched opportunities for learning.

A well-functioning participation group can be

- Good at finding problems;
- Promoting innovation;
- Can make better decisions than individuals on some kinds of tasks;
- Can be good tools for implementation, in that group decisions to which members are committed will be carried out willingly;
- Can also help fend off the negative consequences of large organisational size, by keeping communication lines short and hierarchies relatively flat.

However, it must be noted that, groups can turn sour and be ineffective. The Federation would need to be aware of any difficulties that arise in order to manage.

EUROPARC should endeavour to create differing types of groups, suited to the needs and task required by the Federation, but ensure we maximise the positive opportunities indicated.



What types of Groups will EUROPARC have?

Types of Participation Groups of the EUROPARC Federation		
Internal Participation groups of EUROPARC		
Technical standing committees	to analyse specific aspects of EUROPARC work, particularly existing programmes such as charter and TB	Guidelines of the work of these groups already exists.
Commissions	To undertake a piece research or advise on a given topic or theme , develop a project and prepare a report with recommendations for EUROPARC	Will take over the function of previous working groups with a great emphasis on evidence gathering and outputs
Forum	Predominately e-forum to explore area of works, stimulate discussion	All commissions should have their own platform as well as exchange across the Federation.
Advisory panels	to give overview or audit the work of the Federation on a given topic	International work of the Charter is one such example
External working groups	Groups which the Federation is asked to join a group managed by other organisations. Can also be called “platforms” e.g. large carnivores	Current groups and platforms we are involved in

The creation of new commissions

It is important that the work of the groups is closely aligned to the **Federation strategy**. As such, all outputs need then to be reported to the Federation, its members and to funding bodies. Therefore maintaining and strengthening communication lines with all parties involved is essential. As per current working groups guidelines

To facilitate this, Federation Directorate staff will be assigned, where possible, to support and assist groups. Additionally the council may decide to act as an advocate of the theme/topic within the council if the group does not include a council member. This does not presume financial support to attend commission meetings.



Given an analysis by council and directorate, a call for creation of commission is then made. The strategic remit of each will be identified in the call. Council should give some consideration as to the chairing of such commissions, there can be nominated by council or selected by a group.

Other suggestions by sections and members can be considered but there is a danger of “spreading ourselves too thin” as resources and capacity are limited. Groups can for e-forums at any time and any reasonable suggestion from sections and member will be considered.

Interested parties in a commission should identify a chair, through which a basic proposal for the specific workplan remit of the commission.

This plan would include

Strategic theme addressed by the commission (the directorate will complete any aspects related to the NGO grant or other projects)

- objective,
- planned outputs over 2 years
- indicators
- potential members if the proposal comes from a group of members,
- resources, and potential sources

Plan of meetings, schedule of work will be agreed by the Directorate and the group.

CVs of working group members should be submitted when the request for the establishment of the commission is submitted or soon thereafter.

The numbers of commission the Federation can support will be dependent on the Federation’s income, so the Council will agree by a list of priorities which commission will be supported.

Outputs

Annual meetings of council and chair of commissions should aim to take place at the annual conference. Groups are expected to produce an annual forward plan, directly related to the strategy of the Federation. Outputs of commissions will be presented in the Federation’s annual report and promoted to members in its communications, annual reports and to funders where applicable.

Finances

All Federation monies are accountable to the members and to specific donors. Procedures for eligible expenses will be provided. Ideally working groups would be supported with travel and expense costs within a given agreed allocation. This is our aim although the allocation is speculative, based on an anticipated income, and is therefore regularly monitored and reassessed. Should no project or other tangible work be realised then working groups would be dissolved and an e-forum of interested parties set up in its place. Whilst the Federation would endeavour to reimburse travel and meeting costs within agreed limits, contributions to some of these costs from the member organisations, in recognition of the benefits of having their staff member in a Federation working group, would be appreciated.



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EUROPARC COMMISSIONS

A work plan indicating the groups anticipated output for the forthcoming year should be lodged to the directorate and agreed no later than October of the preceding year to enable budgets to the coming year to be prepared.