

2017



EUROPARC FEDERATION

ANNUAL REPORT

EUROPARC is the voice of Protected Areas in Europe. We unite national, regional and periurban parks, nature and biosphere reserves, marine and landscape protected areas, together with a large number of Natura 2000 sites in 37 countries. We want to see a **Sustainable Nature: Valued by People** with Protected Areas being the substantial component to deliver that vision.



EUROPARC
F E D E R A T I O N

Eurasian Blue tit in the Magic Mountains, Portugal - João Cosme

Photo on the front and back covers: Magic Mountains, Portugal

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President's remarks



New voices, new values, new visions ...

Dear EUOPARC members and friends, it is my pleasure to present you the EUOPARC Annual Report. 2017 was an excellent year for EUOPARC Federation. We successfully undertook new challenges with engaged in new opportunities, advancing the implementation of EUOPARC Strategy 2015-2021.

I would like to congratulate everyone who was involved in an action or project, big or small within the Federation. Unified we make a difference for nature! And it is noticed! Our lobby and advocacy approach is highly appreciated, both at the European Union and at country level.

As a Federation, we successfully attracted more members across Europe, which indicates that the actions we undertake and the tools we produce are valued and appreciated. In 2017 we strengthened the relations with EUOPARC Sections and their national and regional perspectives. Special attention goes to the committed work of the EUOPARC Commissions. Their insights help us to better advance the agenda in many of our strategic objectives, and provide members with new resources.

We managed a successful move to digital communication tools, with webinars, case studies and a growth on social media channels. Not to forget the launch of the new logo of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas.

New voices, new visions, new values – for people and nature in Europe

A highlight was our annual Conference in the Magic Mountains in Portugal. A big, big thank you to ADRIMAG (EUOPARC member who hosted the Conference)!

Thanks to a fantastic organisation, the Federation showed the world we are able to combine an international high-level Conference with the power and inspiration of field work.

The **intervention of the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres** – recognising the important work of the EUOPARC Federation – made a deep impression across Europe. A special thank you also to the **Goldman Environmental Foundation** for making possible to have Marina Silva, candidate for the presidency in Brasil, sharing her ideas and experience at the Plenary Session.

During the General Assembly, the Federation elected the new Council for the next three years. A magic moment for me as well, with the official and emotional integration of FEDENATUR and the strong mandate you assigned me as EUOPARC President. Teaming with an experienced and professional Council, we are ready to serve and guide the Federation into the future!

I could write a book about 2017! So much work delivered by all our members, sections, you! So much work initiated, supported and guided by the fantastic team at the Directorate, led by our Executive Director Carol Ritchie. Thank you so much! With you, I am convinced we make a difference for nature and for people!

Jointly we go "forward to basics"!

Think globally, act locally and change personally!

Ignace Schops
President

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EUROPARC

F E D E R A T I O N

Welcome to the EUROPARC Federation Annual Report

Download the strategy in EN, DE or FR at: <http://www.europarc.org/our-strategy>

Photo: Triglav National Park, Slovenia



The EUROPARC Federation Annual Report provides a clear view on how we are implementing the **EUROPARC Strategy 2015-2021**.

Each of our 4 strategic themes of work has its own section in the report and the priority areas and present the relevant objectives shown. Also, the associated activities are summarised for each area of work.

Travel across our four priority areas and discover the activities and projects that the Directorate and EUROPARC Commissions have undertaken in 2017. In particular, the work we do to **lobby on behalf of our member's interest is highlighted in blue throughout the report**.

As in the previous reports, this new Annual Report also presents **updates provided by EUROPARC Sections**: chapter 5, Our European Network, highlights the work done at national and regional level across Europe.

We wish you happy reading!
Your Directorate team.



Working for nature

Enhancing the management of places for nature, facilitating the exchange of good practice and promoting international cooperation.

In Brussels, EUROPARC works to ensure that Protected Areas have higher visibility at European level and achieve greater recognition of their role and function.



**Managing places for nature
Making nature more connected
Grow the protected area network
Inspiring people**

Gargano National Park, Italy

Managing places for nature

Protected Areas are better managed through international cooperation.

Following the evaluation process of the Natura 2000 Birds and Habitats Directives and the conclusion that the **Directives are fit for purpose**, the European Commission found that substantial improvements in their implementation are needed. In order to provide guidance and better support their implementation, an **"Action Plan for nature, people and the economy"** was launched by the DG Environment in 2017.

The Action Plan was one of the highlights of the EUROPARC Conference 2017. During the Plenary Session, *Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries*, Karmenu Vella addressed EUROPARC Conference participants with a welcome video-message that was followed by an in-depth presentation of the Action Plan by Humberto Delgado Rosa, Director for Natural Capital. Later, Micheal O'Briain, Deputy Head of Nature Unit, joined the technical workshop on Natura 2000 management, where the role of Protected Areas in delivering the Action Plan was highlighted; Mr. Delgado Rosa took part in the Presidents meetings where the role of local and regional authorities was addressed.

EUROPARC Commission on Natura 2000 is working to collect best practices for the implementation of the Directives and, in 2017, it was responsible for the organisation of the webinar "The EU Habitats Directive: from Theory to Practice" also, they led the workshop "The Laws of Nature. Managing Natura 2000 Sites" during the EUROPARC Conference.

www.european-parks.org/

The first European Summit of Regional Nature Parks

With almost 900 Regional Nature Parks in Europe, covering 8 % of the total surface area of the EU-28, Switzerland and Norway, these Parks not only represent outstanding landscapes – they are key players on conservation of biological diversity and cultural identity, and are agents for the sustainable development of rural areas.

At the first **European Summit of Regional Nature Parks**, the Association of German Nature Parks (Verband Deutscher Naturparke e.V., VDN) and EUROPARC Federation presented the results of an in-depth-study on the work of Regional Nature Parks in Europe. The Living Landscapes book is now available in English and German: it encompasses the work of Regional Nature Parks and presents best practices from across Europe.

In addition a joint Declaration entitled **"Regional Nature Parks – Working for Europe"** was signed during the Summit. In the Declaration, representatives from

Regional Nature Parks call on the European Union and its Member States to make greater use of Regional Nature Parks in implementing an integrated, far-sighted approach for a sustainable rural Europe.

Representatives of Regional Parks from across Europe further met at the EUROPARC Conference in Portugal in September 2017. They agreed that EUROPARC Federation continue to provide a vital platform for Regional Nature Parks, following the successful work of the Project.

The project **"Europe's Nature-Regional-Landscape Parks"** was supported by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (Bundesamt für Naturschutz) with funding from the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz, Bau und Reaktorsicherheit).



www.european-parks.org/publications/book-living-landscapes

Policy

A new successful initiative was developed in 2017 by EUROPARC, the Seminar-dialogue with EUROPARC members and the European Commission. The Seminar-dialogue **format enabled EUROPARC members to present case studies of practical work exemplifying the implementation of EU policy. Also, it offered an opportunity for dialogue with representatives of the Commission. The event, "Partnerships for Biodiversity: European policies and the role of Protected Areas"**, was jointly organised with the Directorate-General for Environment and took place in their premises. This event brought together over 20 EUROPARC members and several officers of the European Commission. Participants analysed the role protected areas are playing in the implementation of the European policies and shared case studies, management needs and expectations on different subjects, including: habitats and species to discuss periurban biodiversity, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, transboundary cooperation, education and youth engagement.

<http://www.EUROPARC.org/news/2017/06/seminar-dialogue-dg-environment-partnerships-biodiversity>

In 2017, EUROPARC continued to be an active member of the **European Habitats Forum**, and chaired the **working group on Natura 2000**, following closely the completion of the EC "Action Plan for Nature, People and the Economy". EUROPARC contributed to the work of the **Council of Europe** on Protected areas, ecological networks and landscape convention attending meetings and events in Strasbourg and across Europe.

[Learn more about EUROPARC work in Brussels](#)



www.europarc.org/european-policy-natura-2000/

Making nature more connected

Demonstrating the importance of green corridors in land use planning and promoting land connectivity in and around Protected Areas.

As member of the **Green Infrastructures Expert Group** and the **European Habitats Forum Working Group on Green Infrastructures** (EHF WG), EUROPARC has continued to follow the implementation of the EU Strategy in this field.

EUROPARC's Periurban Commission is specially moving this agenda forward, collecting case studies on land connectivity, green infrastructures and environmental benefits arising from periurban parks. Their first face-to-face meeting was held in Barcelona and the Commission organised a workshop at the EUROPARC Conference on the topic "Making an impact - Measuring the impact of people in periurban parks".

<http://www.EUROPARC.org/large-carnivores-networking-seminar>

Large Carnivores

EUROPARC continued to be an active member of the **EU Platform for the coexistence between people and large carnivores** and attended the annual meeting of the platform in Brussels. In addition, EUROPARC participated in a workshop in Romania and organised a thematic networking workshop in Prealpi Giulie Nature Park. Further contributions to the policy debate concerning people and large carnivores' coexistence have been held in close cooperation with the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions. <http://www.EUROPARC.org/large-carnivores-networking-seminar>

Wilderness

Wilderness represents a fundamental element of Europe's natural heritage. It is characterised by areas large enough to sustain the ecological functioning of natural processes and the shaping of natural structures.

EUROPARC Central and Eastern Europe Section and IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas organised an international workshop where they sought to learn lessons from other countries and discuss future development of the topic in the region. The event gathered 25 experts from 7 countries and the film records of each presentation are available at <http://www.EUROPARC.org/news/2017/05/wilderness-central-eastern-europe>

EUROPARC continues to be active on the Wild Europe Platform joining their regular meetings. In 2017, the focus was on protecting **the old-growth forest in Europe** and EUROPARC joined the conference organised by Wild Europe to initiate a **common protection strategy** ensuring a multi-sector approach. <http://www.EUROPARC.org/news/2017/12/protecting-old-growth-forest-europe/>

The Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process

The Biogeographical seminar process, seeks to gather evidence of the state of Europe's biodiversity. EUROPARC was a member of a consortium led by ECNC, contracted to deliver this process on behalf of the European Commission.

In the course of 2017, EUROPARC contributed to facilitate the second Alpine Natura 2000 Seminar in Italy and the second Mediterranean Seminar in Cyprus.

Further two networking events were organised: one for the Alpine region, hosted by Prealpi Giulie Nature Park (Italy) on the **coexistence between people and large carnivores**; and another for the Continental Region, hosted by Šumava National Park (Czech Republic) focusing on **mountain forest habitat management**.



More about the Biogeographical process: www.EUROPARC.org/europe/biogeo-seminars



Grow the Protected Area network

Policy

The role of Periurban parks in relation to nature protection, health and well-being, agriculture, and tourism has also been illustrated on several occasions in Brussels throughout 2017. This included during the **European Week of Regions and Cities 2017**, the Seminar-dialogue with DG ENVI, and other events at the Committee of the Regions.

Marine Protected Areas experience in sustainable fishery was discussed during the "Seminar-dialogue Partnerships for Biodiversity: European policies and the role of Protected Areas" organised jointly with DG ENV in Brussels: the event focused on how MPAs implement the target 4 of the European Strategy for Biodiversity (Make fishing more sustainable and seas healthier).

In addition, thanks to EUROPARC's input to the European Parliament PECH Committee (Fisheries), the important role of MPAs was included in two 2017 resolutions of the European Parliament.

Enlarge and grow the Protected Area model, especially in the marine/coastal and periurban environment.

Integration with the Federation of Periurban Parks

The official integration ceremony of Fedenatur into EUROPARC took place during the EUROPARC General Assembly in São Pedro do Sul, on 6th September: FEDENATUR President Roberto della Rovere came on stage and formally communicated the dissolution of FEDENATUR and its integration into the EUROPARC Federation.

Marine Protected Areas

Step-by-step, EUROPARC is enlarging step by step its scope in relation to Marine issues. In 2017, a webinar on **Tourism Strategies in Marine Protected Areas** was organised and case studies presented at the workshop "Managing across the great divide – connecting land and sea", during the EUROPARC Conference.



Ignace Schops and Roberto della Rovere in the official integration of FEDENATUR, EUROPARC General Assembly 2017, Portugal

Inspiring People



Celebration of the European Day of Parks 2017 in Montenegro

www.EUROPARC.org/european-day-parks-edop-2017/

Promote the values and benefits of Protected Areas, through inspiring celebrations, European level programmes and Awards.

European Day of Parks

In 1999, EUROPARC initiated the European Day of Parks (EDoP). Now, on and around 24th May, hundreds of activities are organised to celebrate the valuable work of our parks, highlight their importance and show their connection across Europe.

Changing Climate – Changing Parks was the theme of the 2017 European Day of Parks celebration. Over 400 events in 25 countries were organised, reaching thousands of EU citizens. Exhibitions, practical workshops, activities with schools and guided tours, were some of the main events organised between May and June 2017, they highlighted:

- how healthy parks are fundamental for the livelihoods of millions of European citizens;
- how Parks are changing too, finding ways to face the effects of climate; change and to minimise its impacts;
- how protected areas plant, care, restore and promote genetic diversity;
- how protected areas are finding new ways to reduce our footprint and promoting sustainability in their local communities.

Communication tools were produced in 20 European languages, which contributed significantly to the high dissemination of the campaign within national and regional press. There was also a high "buzz" on social media, which can be followed via the hashtag #EDoP2017. More information is available at

<http://www.EUROPARC.org/european-day-parks-edop-2017/>

Alfred Toepfer Medal

The Alfred Toepfer Medal recognises those who have made a significant contribution to nature conservation in Europe. Nominated by members, the Medal is an opportunity to praise and value the work of peers from across Europe.



At the EUROPARC Conference, the Alfred Toepfer Medal 2017 was awarded to **Rauno Väisänen** from Finland, in recognition of his international cooperation for the benefit of protected area management, and especially of his foresight as EUROPARC Council member as the founder the Nordic-Baltic Section that brought the protected area managers in the region together.



www.EUROPARC.org/alfred-toepfer-medal



Youth+ Programme

In the course of 2017, EUROPARC continued to build up the Youth network with the support of Laura Peters, Youth representative in the EUROPARC Council. A Youth Council composed of young people from across Europe's Protected Areas was established, and they organised and managed a stand at the EUROPARC Conference marketplace.



Junior Ranger Programme

Every year, EUROPARC organises the **International Junior Ranger Camp**: Junior Rangers between 13 to 17 years old gather in one Protected Area to share experiences and meet new friends from all over Europe. They learn about nature and how other Protected Areas are managed, but also gain deeper understanding and experience about environmental issues and Europe's cultural diversity.

The **16th International Junior Ranger Camp** took place in Switzerland, in Habkern from the 17th to the 22nd of July. The camp was organised by the **Swiss Rangers Association**, under the theme "Team Nature". Here, 45 participants took part representing 14 protected areas from 10 countries from all over Europe.

Junior Ranger Camp 2017, Switzerland

The Junior Ranger Film

In 2016, EUROPARC launched a call for producing a joint video documentary in the framework of the Junior Ranger Programme: 15 Junior Ranger teams from all over Europe were invited to identify endangered habitats and species in their protected areas, develop an action plan for their conservation and produce a short video to document and report their work during one year.

10 Junior Ranger teams from 10 different Parks were able to document their actions and EUROPARC coordinated the collection of the videos and produced a final documentary "A European Tour of Junior Rangers: Working for Nature". The film was launched at the EUROPARC General Assembly 2017 and it is available on EUROPARC YouTube channel at <https://bit.ly/2KuxX8g>.



Helping people and organisations learn

EUROPARC promotes collaborative work and capacity building of Protected Area staff, through networking meetings and technical workshops, developing new digital learning tools and producing guidelines developed by members for members.

**Collaborative work
Staff development
Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarships
Training**



*TransParcNet Meeting 2017,
Julian Alps Transboundary
Ecoregion (IT/SL)*

Collaborative work

Bringing people together, creating a stronger network.

Transboundary Parks Programme

The **Transboundary Parks Programme** is a special verification and certification system that aims to promote and facilitate cross-border cooperation between European Protected Areas.

In 2017, 2 areas were successfully re-evaluated: the Saxon-Bohemian Switzerland Transboundary Parks (DE/CZ) and the German-Dutch Nature Park Maas-Schwalm-Nette (DE/NL). They received the awards at the **Transboundary Parks Award Ceremony** during the EUROPARC Conference 2017 in Portugal. Both transboundary areas are great examples of cooperation with extremely professional staff and activities implemented. The Nature Park Maas-Schwalm-Nette has also developed a united management system, where representatives of the two countries work shoulder-to-shoulder every day – an experience that could inspire other transboundary territories.



TransParcNet: the Transboundary Parks Programme Network

Annually, the TransParcNet gathers Protected Area professionals interested in Transboundary Cooperation to discuss and share good practice. “**Changing Climate, Changing Parks**” was the theme of the **9th TransParcNet meeting**, which gathered over 40 participants from 10 countries. Representatives from Parks working within the Transboundary Parks Programme framework came together to share

experience and project outcomes in the field of climate change mitigation and adaptation. The 3-days meeting was hosted by the Julian Alps Transboundary Ecoregion, which encompasses Triglav National Park (Slovenia) and Prealpi Giulie Nature Park (Italy).

Get to know the TransParcNet at:

www.EUROPARC.org/discover-our-transboundary-areas/



Participants of the TransParcNet 2017 in the Julian Alps Transboundary Ecoregion (IT/SL)

www.EUROPARC.org/nature/transboundary-parks/



Staff development

Promoting the exchange of experiences, information and ideas

Annually, the EUROPARC Conference is the main gathering of our members. Thus, it is the ideal moment to promote the exchange of experiences between members from across Europe, and organise capacity building sessions. In the Magic Mountains, Portugal, members were invited to share a taste of their parks and projects at the EUROPARC Marketplace, and had the chance to join one of **16 thematic workshops** on different aspects relevant to Protected Areas management.



Discover the outcomes of the workshops and tutorials with the Conference report and download all presentations at:

www.europarc.org/europarc-conference-2017/



New digital tools for members

Making use of digital and accessible tools to share information and develop capacity is at the core of EUROPARC's work.

EUROPARC has now a new section on its website "EUROPARC Toolbox" where all the resources can be found per topic. We have covered the most relevant topics for Protected Areas and Natura 2000 management and the resources available include case studies, EUROPARC LIVE videos, webinar recordings, and the latest updates from Brussels and the Network. www.EUROPARC.org/toolbox

In 2017, a new innovative tool was launched, to enable exchange of technical aspects of protected areas in a highly cost-effective way. **The EUROPARC webinars are online seminars** of 1:15 hours where we invite 3 experts to share best practice. Attendance is free and members only need a good internet connection to take part in the discussion. Seven webinars were held on topics such as Natura 2000 management, Sustainable Agriculture, Transboundary Cooperation, Marine Protected Areas, Sustainable Tourism and Health and Protected Areas and over 525 persons participated.

Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarship



Each year the EUROPARC Federation, with support from Alfred Toepfer Stiftung, awards three Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarships (ATS) **to promising young conservationists**, who are committed to working for the benefit of Protected Areas. The aim of the Scholarship is to enhance international cooperation and advance the quality, innovation and European dimension of Protected Area management. Each Scholarship is worth €3.000 and enables successful applicants to undertake a study visit on a particular theme to one or more Protected Areas in a European country.

Get to know the 2017 winners:

Zerrin Karaarslan is a *Landscape Architect* working for *Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks*, Turkey. She is also Ph.D. Candidate in Ankara University Graduate School of Natural and Applied Sciences. In order to enhance her knowledge on the **benefits of ecological restoration on protected areas** as a means of ecosystem health and human health, she will make study visits to the best restoration practices at different ecosystem types.

Csaba Bereczki is *biologist/project coordinator* at *Hortobágy National Park Directorate*, Hungary. Csaba will broaden his knowledge about **invasive alien species**, the spreading of which is among the biggest nature conservation issues nowadays. He will collect information about species within the Carpathian-basin and identify species that are likely to appear in the near future. During his study trips, he will focus on different **best-practice methods of eradication**, and also how these methods could be adjusted to local conditions.

Carmen Martínez is an *Environmental Technician*, working for *ANSE* and *Lecturer* in Methods Area of Experimental Sciences at Faculty of Education at the University of Murcia, Spain. She is engaged in the protection of Mar Menor, a Mediterranean Coastal Lagoon, establishing a management plan and involving inhabitants and workers in its conservation. With the Scholarship, she expects to establish **general guidelines for coastal wetland management**, find ways to involve locals and stakeholders, mainly traditional sectors as artisanal fishermen, and start a network of NGO working in wetland conservation.



www.europarc.org/natural-heritage-scholarships

Winners of the Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarship at EUROPARC Conference 2017, Portugal (from left to right: Zerrin Karaarslan, Csaba Bereczki and Carmen Martínez)

All webinar recordings and presentations are available on

www.EUROPARC.org/EUROPARC-webinars/previous-webinars



Participants of Siggen Seminar 2017

Training

Increasing expertise on EUROPARC programmes and developing new training for Protected Area managers.

Siggen Seminar

Through the generous support of the Alfred Toepfer Stiftung E.V.S, EUROPARC offers annually a training seminar in northern Germany. In 2017, the "Siggen Seminar" focused on "Sustainable Agriculture in and around Protected Areas" and gathered 20 participants from 10 countries. During three days, EUROPARC members and representatives from partnering NGOs

working in the field of Sustainable Agriculture shared high level experiences and very interesting practices to discuss how protected areas can improve partnerships with farmers and the agricultural sector.

Download the report

www.europarc.org/2017-protected-areas-for-sustainable-agriculture/

Promoting Sustainability

Parks are catalysts for sustainability at a local, regional and national level.

EUROPARC seeks to mainstream Protected Areas as models for sustainable development, to deliver social, economic and environmental benefits: providing Parks methodologies and quality standards and working closely with EU institutions to raise the voice of Protected Areas.

**Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas
Sustainable Agriculture
Nature and Health
Climate Change
Future topics**



Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

Sustainable Tourism is Good for Parks and Good for People.

European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

2017 was declared by the United Nations the **International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development**. To celebrate the occasion, EUROPARC organised a series of three webinars with best practice from the **EUROPARC Charter Network** - the network of Protected Areas awarded with the *European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas*. **Overtourism**, a growing phenomenon observed among many world destinations in which Protected Areas was a specific subject discussed in 2017. **How can Parks better manage their tourist flows, ensuring socio-economic benefits whilst protecting nature?** The EUROPARC annual journal Protected Areas In-Sight 2017 had a special edition to highlight the topic, with case studies from the network.

Download it here

www.europarc.org/library/publications/pa-insight-journal/

*Verdon Nature
Regional Parc, France,
photo by S.Blanc*



A new logo, a new life

The new logotype of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas was officially launched at the Charter Network Meeting. **The new logo represents the vision and the five values of the Charter**, in a strong and dynamic design and is available in seven European languages. Alongside with the logo, the graphic guidelines and the story behind the new graphics were presented. For the first time, sustainable partners and tour operators working with the Charter Areas have a special logo, aiming to reinforce their commitment to sustainability.

During the meeting, a workshop focused on the Communications about the Charter took place: the structure of the communication strategy was drafted, and some of the main actions directed to Parks were decided. The strategy will be in place during the first semester of 2018, after the final meeting of the Communications and Marketing

Commission, where the steps taken during the workshop will be followed up and activities for different target audiences will be established. To strengthen the Charter network internally, a **new Facebook group** was created and all professionals working with the Charter are invited to connect!



www.facebook.com/groups/europarc.charter.parks/

<http://www.EUROPARC.org/sustainable-tourism/logo-and-graphic-guidelines/>



EUROPARC
Sustainable Tourism
in Protected Areas



EUROPARC
Sustainable Tourism
in Protected Areas

Watch the short-film of the meeting and read the outcomes technical workshops that took place.

www.europarc.org/charter-network-meeting-2017-outcomes/



Charter Network Meeting

Every two years, the Charter Network comes together to exchange experience and advance the Charter Methodology. In 2017, the Network Meeting was co-organised by Federparchi-EUROPARC Italian Section and was hosted by **Gran Sasso e Monti della Laga National Park (Italy)**. Gathering over 80 participants, the focus of the meeting was on how the **Charter is working to support recovery and renewal**, especially relevant for the area around the National Park given the impacts of the severe Italian earthquakes in 2016.

Charter Award Ceremony

In 2017, for the first time since the very beginning the ECSTPA Programme on sustainable tourism, the number of Parks re-evaluated (15) **has been higher than Parks that applied for the first time (7)**. This demonstrates the concrete results achieved and is further confirmed by the applications for the 2018 awards: especially though, it **reflects the commitment of Parks in working continuously with their local stakeholders, under the standards and guidance of the ECSTPA**.

www.europarc.org/news/2017/12/charter-award-ceremony-2017-21areas/

Furthermore, several of these Parks are also implementing **Charter Partners and Charter Tour Operators**, necessary steps for those willing to achieve a higher quality tourism experience. Also, in 2017, for the first time, 1 Park in Sweden was awarded, expanding the Charter Network to 20 countries (since the start of the Charter programme **164 PAs** in Europe have used this tool at least once).

Watch the short-film of the meeting and read the outcomes of the technical workshops that took place.

www.europarc.org/charter-network-meeting-2017-outcomes

Policy

As each year, the Charter Award 2017 was successfully organised in the European Parliament in December, this year hosted by Scottish MEP Alyn Smith. 21 Sustainable Destinations was awarded at the presence of about 80 participants. The event drew high participation of Members of the European Parliament, as well as representatives from the Commissioner Vella Cabinet and of the Committee the Regions. It enabled Protected Areas to express to the EU institutions the benefits that sustainable tourism strategies provide for people, environment and local economy.

EUROPARC continued its advocacy work with the European Institutions to **ensure synergies between biodiversity conservation and sustainable tourism** and to share good practice and experiences from the parks.

EUROPARC attended several events in the framework of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism 2017, among them the High-level conference on tourism organised by the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions in September.



Field trip in Gran Sasso National Park, Italy, Charter Network Meeting 2017

Sustainable Agriculture in and Around Protected Areas

www.EUROPARC.org/toolbox/sustainable-agriculture/

Promoting nature friendly agricultural practice across Europe

While agriculture and Protected Areas are **often perceived to be in opposition**, they are **in fact playing complimentary roles**: agricultural activities play a central role in the management of EU land and the conservation of its biodiversity, as almost half the territory consists of farmland. Protected Areas and agricultural production are **part of the same landscape and of a larger, more integrated rural ecosystem** from which goods and services from nature can be optimised by means of integrated complimentary systems.

The Commission on Sustainable Agriculture established in Siggen in March 2017, is working on the **identification of tools and methodologies** to support Protected Areas' work on sustainable agriculture with local farmers. The Commission members provided valuable inputs to the EUROPARC Brussels Office for the current debate of **the future of the Common Agricultural Policy**, and actively contributed to in the collection of case studies on sustainable agriculture - these are available on

www.EUROPARC.org/toolbox/sustainable-agriculture/

*Oulanka National Park,
Finland, Marku Sirkka*

Policy

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

In 2017, EUROPARC increased its advocacy work for sustainable agriculture in Brussels and reinforced cooperation with other organisations working on sustainable agriculture and biodiversity conservation: EUROPARC is an active member of the NGOs Sustainable Food and Farming Platform –SFFP, of the working group of EHF on agriculture, and of the CAP NGOs working group.

The debate on the future CAP was very strong in 2017, full of initiatives both from EU institutions and NGOs. EUROPARC actively contributed to the debate, attending a large number of relevant meetings and events with DG Environment, DG Agriculture, European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions, and partnering organisations in Brussels to spread the message that **partnerships between PAs and farmers have to be supported and recognised by the future CAP**. The experts of the EUROPARC Sustainable Agriculture Commission dynamically supported EUROPARC in this advocacy and lobby work.

Furthermore, EUROPARC supported the **Living Land Campaign**, promoted by several NGOs in Brussels, for a new EU's Common Agricultural Policy. The campaign highlights the need for a Fair CAP – for farmers and rural communities; environmentally Sustainable – for clean air and water, healthy soil, and thriving plant and animal life; for health – for good food and the well-being of all people; and globally Responsible – for the planet's climate and sustainable development around the world.





Nature and Health

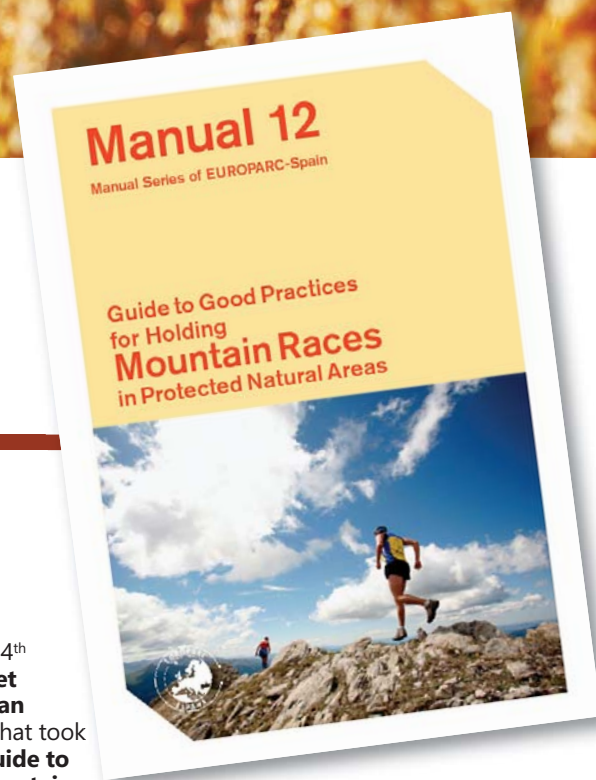
Highlighting the benefits of nature for human health and bringing together Protected Areas and the health sector.

Parks make a significant contribution to human health and well-being. To follow up the work in this area, EUROPARC created a **Commission on Health and Protected Areas** that will work on policy development and showcase best practice. In 2017, the Commission organised a webinar "Natural Benefits: Nature, Health & Protected Areas" and delivered a workshop at EUROPARC Conference. Their main focus was on the production of the **toolkit "Health and well-being from parks and Protected Areas"**, a practical guidance for parks and national authorities to implement programmes & policy and increase health benefits for communities. The toolkit will be available in 2018.

Sport and Nature

EUROPARC participated in the 4th **Nature and Sports Euro'meet** organised by **ENOS**, the **European Network of Outdoors Sports**, that took place in Cataluña. There, the **"Guide to good practices for holding mountain races in protected natural areas"** produced by EUROPARC Spain was highlighted.

EUROPARC and ENOS have been working together for the past years the definition of guidelines and code of conducts for outdoor sports in Protected Areas and N2000 sites. A first joint workshop was held at EUROPARC Conference 2017.



Download the Guide in English at:
<https://bit.ly/2JLofNw>

EUROPEAN DAY OF PARKS

24 MAY
2017

changing climate
changing parks

Climate Change

Supporting Protected Areas on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

EUROPARC decided to raise awareness on this important topic by choosing "changing climate, changing parks" as the motto for the European Day of Parks 2017. This day was celebrated in 25 countries with over 400 activities reaching hundreds of European citizens to highlight the importance of Protected Areas for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The TransParcNet meeting also focused on the topic of climate change, where Parks shared concrete projects and activities being implemented across borders.



Ambar catchers in Lithuania



Future topics

Exploring new topics to support Protected Area managers' contribution to sustainable development.



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

IMPACT INTERREG Europe project

IMPACT Interreg Europe celebrated its kick-off meeting in Seville in early 2017. The year was mainly dedicated to the collection of good practice related to the project main topic– **promotion of sustainable socio-economic activities in protected areas** - and to the subtopics: **biodiversity and environmental awareness raising**. Case studies are available on the EUROPARC website.

Also two other interregional meetings were organised (in Isernia- Italy and in Klaipeda – Lithuania), where partners presented

socio-economic activities in and around their protected areas. In addition, an open-dialogue on the limits of socio-economic activities in Parks was organised at the EUROPARC Annual Conference.

During the project implementation, four videos were produced: an introductory film about *IMPACT Interreg Europe* <https://bit.ly/2jnA1CR> summarising the main objectives and the expectations of project partners and three video interviews to project stakeholders in different topics.



More information at:

<http://www.interregeurope.eu/impact/>

Natural Park Label and its value

<https://bit.ly/2E1po5s>

Protected areas and their benefits for businesses

<https://bit.ly/2rfro03>

and IMPACT Interreg Europe for youth and volunteers

<https://bit.ly/2HM8Ss0>



Policy

EUROPARC was actively represented during the **Green Week** 2017 in Brussels. The president of EUROPARC Ignace Schops moderated the session on the contribution of EU nature policy to creating green jobs, highlighting the role of Natura 2000 and the protection of biodiversity in creating employment.

During the **European Week of Regions and Cities 2017**, organised by the Committee of Regions, EUROPARC participated in the workshops related to "nature protection in cross-border areas", "nature and health", and "Cohesion Policy biodiversity in regions and cities", where the experiences of EUROPARC members were shared.

Working Together – building our organisation

Being an effective and efficient network means looking for continual development in the fields of governance, human resources, finances and communications.

Ibex in the Julian Alps Transboundary Ecoregion



Governance – how we work
People Power – human resources
Federation finances
Talking and listening



Governance – how we work

Improving the governance system of the EUROPARC Federation to meet good governance principles and increase efficiency.

General Assembly 2017

EUROPARC annual General Assembly (GA) opened the Conference Programme in Sao Pedro do Sul on the 6th of September. In 2017, members were called to elect new Council Members and the EUROPARC President for the period 2017-2020.

Ignace Schops was re-elected unanimously, with 6 Council Members also elected. Get to know the new Council of EUROPARC: <http://www.europarc.org/europarc-council/>

Parallel with the EUROPARC GA, FEDENATUR members gathered in their final General Assembly, where the Network of Periurban Parks was officially dissolved to integrate into the EUROPARC network. Later, FEDENATUR members joined the EUROPARC GA and received a warm welcome to EUROPARC family.

Moreover, during the General Assembly, members were asked to vote on the approval of some changes in the Statute and Regulations of the Federation.

Within EUROPARC, the internal auditor actively takes part in Council meetings and produces an annual report with recommendations for improving the governance processes within EUROPARC. He provides guidance to Council members to better perform their role in delivering the EUROPARC mission for the members.

Download all reports from General Assembly 2017

www.europarc.org/documents-general-assembly-2017/

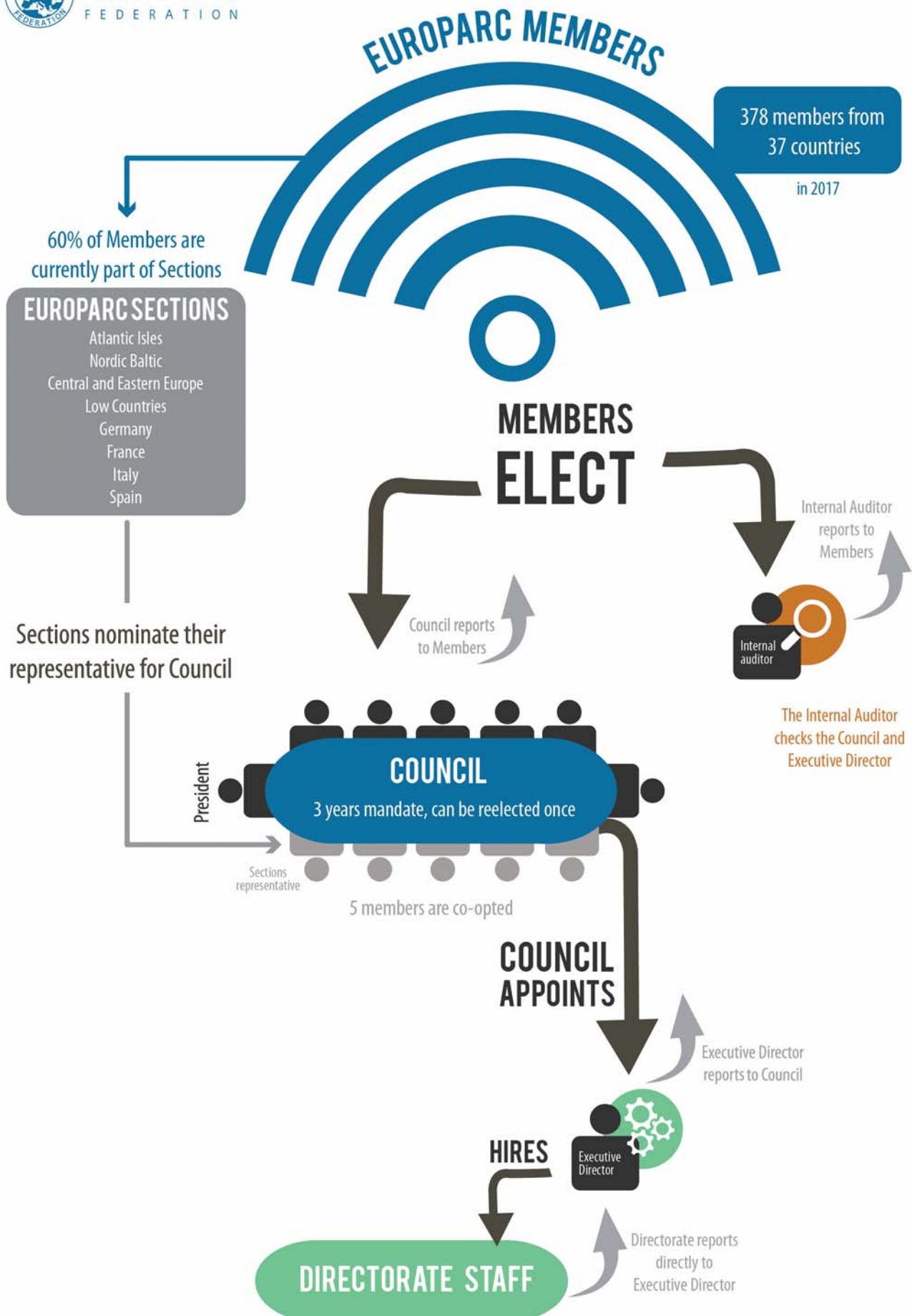
EUROPARC Council Members elected at EUROPARC General Assembly 2017. From left to right: Roger de Freitas (internal Auditor), Paulo Castro, Enzo Lavarra, Nele Sober, Ignace Schops, Laura Peters (Youth Representative), Pete Rawcliffe, Michael Hosek, Olaf Holm.



EUROPARC Governance Structure



EUROPARC
FEDERATION



People Power – human resources

Developing the potential of human resources and the communications flow between all components of the Federation.

EUROPARC and its Sections

Following the partnership agreement signed by EUROPARC and its Sections at the General Assembly 2016, the Directorate hosted a first technical meeting in Siggen with Sections representatives, to coordinate future actions and introduce the **Communications Strategy of the Federation 2017-2021**.

EUROPARC Commissions

EUROPARC Commissions are groups of experts within the EUROPARC network that are brought together to advance policy, activities and best practice on topics relevant to the membership. The Commissions are working on Natura 2000 (page 6), Health and Protected Areas (page 21), Sustainable Agriculture (page 20) and Periurban (page 8).

Smaller internal commissions are also created for short termwork. This included in 2017, the membership commission who drafted up the changes to the membership categories and fees, agreed at the General Assembly.

A communications and marketing commission was also created to complete the communication strategy and marketing plan for the Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (page 18).

Such short term commissions dissolve when their work is complete but they enable EUROPARC to continue to draw on the expertise of our membership to develop the organisation.

www.EUROPARC.org/EUROPARC-commissions/

Watch the EUROPARC LIVE video about the cooperative work between EUROPARC and the Sections.

<https://bit.ly/2rfgYxX>

- Nordic-Baltic
- Atlantic Isles
- Central and Eastern Europe
- Low Countries
- Germany
- France
- Italy
- Spain





Lake District National Park, UK

Federation Finances

Finding new ways for funding and sustaining financially the Federation's activities.

EUROPARC Membership

Being a member of the biggest network of European Protected Areas gives a wealth of unique opportunities to support your work. From management tools and capacity building events, to experience exchange with like-minded professionals, as well as having your issues represented at a European level each brings a flow of ideas, support and creativity to all aspects of Protected Area work

In December 2017, EUROPARC had **378 members in 37 countries**, who represent hundreds of authorities and thousands of Protected Areas. Despite the financial difficulties many European countries face, **EUROPARC gained 8 new members in 2017** from 7 countries – Belarus, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, Spain, Switzerland and UK. The new members balanced the 4 members that unfortunately resigned and the 12 members that were struck off, after not paying their membership fee for the last two years.

So far, we can proudly say EUROPARC is the largest and most representative Protected Area network in Europe, representing 40% of the total area of the Natura 2000 network.



European Association
Periurban Parks

Financial Report

Balance Sheet

	2017	2016
Assets		
Assets		
Total fixed assets		5 404,50
Shares in affiliated companies (EP Consulting)	5 242,51	0,00
Total current assets	284 023,08	308 202,83
Total Assets	289 265,59	313 607,33
Liabilities		
Profit Reserve	183 071,08	176 313,67
Liabilities		
Provisions	18 166,00	20 388,5
Accounts payable		116 905,16
	88 028,51	
Total Equity and Liability	289 265,59	313 607,33

Income and Expenditure

	2017	2016
Income		
Membership fees	269 102,50	273 378,50
Grants		
EC core grant	157 231,95	109 267,20
Project grants	110 605,37	117 297,64
Other income	144 471,07	105 989,68
Total Income	681 410,89	605 933,02
Simplified Expenditure		
Total Personnel costs	428 315,46	350 698,06
Total Office costs	27 149,98	25 435,35
Total Travel and Subsistence	103 421,74	95 241,52
Total Other direct costs	18 832,62	17 862,32
Total Overhead costs	28 189,52	31 038,20
Total Project direct costs	9 146,99	9 318,97
Total External Assistance/ Professional Fees	59 597,13	64 974,59
Financial Assets Depreciation		0,00
Total costs	674 653,44	594 569,01
Result	6 757,45	11 364,01

Talking and listening

Developing smarter communications.

EUROPARC Conference

The EUROPARC Conference 2017 “**New Visions, New Voices, New Values – For People and Nature in Europe**” took place in the Magic Mountains Region in Portugal, between the 6th – 10th September. Over 300 delegates from 37 countries had the chance to directly connect with their peers and share their best practice, projects and ideas. The programme was packed with great speakers, useful networking opportunities, practical workshops, warm summer temperatures, genuine smiling faces and the delicious Portuguese gastronomy. The film and main highlights of the Conference can be found at

EUROPARC Conference 2017 had a special participation from the **Goldman Environmental Prize Foundation**, an award that honours grassroots environmental heroes from across the globe. The Prize recognises individuals for sustained and significant efforts to protect and enhance the natural environment, often at great personal risk. Ten Goldman Prize winners from Europe joined the Conference and shared their experience with participants. Moreover, a special call was made by the Foundation at the Gala Dinner: EUROPARC Members are invited to suggest their own heroes to be awarded.

www.EUROPARC.org/pa-insight-journal/

Three versions are available for download at

www.EUROPARC.org/library/publications/pa-insight-journal/

All information available at



www.goldmanprize.org



Lorraine Rominger, Deputy Director of the Goldman Environmental Prize speaking at EUROPARC Conference 2017, Portugal





Fivelda waterfall, Magic Mountains, Portugal

Talking, Listening, Engaging

EUROPARC produced the annual **Journal of the Federation - Protected Areas In-Sight** that followed the topic of the Conference “**New Visions, New Voices, New Values – For People and Nature in Europe**”. The Journal was restructured, bringing now a more practical approach to the challenges Protected Areas face.

Digital communication channels are becoming the preferred tool to exchange and access information. On the new EUROPARC **Toolbox section** of the website, all latest updates on policy and programmes, as well as case studies and toolkits from a wide range of topics can be found.

We continue to grow in online reputation, with a total of 180,925 pages viewed and over 40,000 visitors; 596,661 persons reached in Facebook; and 282,900 impressions in Twitter. In 2017, EUROPARC got 920 new followers on Facebook and over 800 followers on LinkedIn. All members are invited to connect with EUROPARC in the different networks.

EUROPARC webinars have also proved to be a great success, with an average of 75 participants per webinar in 2017. In total 7 webinars were organised and all recordings are available.

EUROPARC Communications Strategy

With the support of the Communications and Marketing Commission, EUROPARC launched in March 2017 the new Communications Strategy and Action Plan of the Federation for 2017-2021. It aims at translating the objectives of EUROPARC Strategy into communication activities – *identifying key audiences, messages, tools and responsible* – for the better implementation of the Federation’s strategic objectives. It also appoints the role of each EUROPARC components – Sections, Council, Commission and Directorate – on delivering the benefits of EUROPARC membership.

Our European Network

EUROPARC Atlantic Isles
EUROPARC Central and Eastern Europe
EUROPARC France
EUROPARC Germany
EUROPARC Low Countries
EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic
EUROPARC Spain



Over the years, the Federation has supported the creation of regional and national sections. The EUROPARC sections fulfill many of the Federation's aims, working to implement the strategy, whilst reflecting the priorities and characteristics of the areas they cover.



EUROPARC
Atlantic Isles

EUROPARC Atlantic Isles

Key Activities in 2017

This year we held a 1 day seminar focusing on new funding sources for Protected Areas. Guest speaker Andrew Denton from the Outdoor Industries Association challenged seminar participants to think in new ways and to look at how protected areas could work closely with the private sector organisation that are closely linked to protected areas.

We also held a session at the end of the seminar gathering members views and input to take to the EUROPARC General Assembly in Portugal.

Webinars

EAI has pioneered the use of webinars and this year rejuvenated the programme working with those delivering projects. Howard Wood from Arran presented a case study on the first community lead Marine Protected Area and Paul Leadbetter presented the Pennine Peatlife Project. An upcoming programme a series of webinars into 2018 will be on Wildfires and engaging in partnerships with the private and public sector. All the webinars are recorded and can be found on our website

Erasmus+

In 2017, EAI was successful in gaining funding for Erasmus placements. This year we had a successful visits to range of Latvian National Parks and the German Nature Park of Am Stettiner Huff. The participants did pre-recorded webinars which can be found on our website

Coastal and Marine

Coastal visitor information pilot project

Following a contact made with Juan Rey at JiTT Travel at the EUROPARC Conference in Portugal in September 2017, Tin Vennes has been developing a potential project with JiTT, the Norfolk Coast AONB and the Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership.

The project aims to develop an app available as a free download. The app would put in place virtual area boundaries and provide coastal visitors with information to help them understand and safely enjoy a heavily-visited and ecologically sensitive coastal area better, while avoiding areas and activities that create pressure on fragile ecosystems (e.g. dunes) and species (e.g. beach-nesting birds). This could potentially provide a model for similar coastal areas in the UK and Europe.

The main successes and challenges

Following a very challenging year in 2016/17 there have been some changes and new plans developed for EAI over the last year. Sadly, after many years Richard Blackman left EAI to develop his work on Climate Change. Anita Prosser (former board member) took over the secretariat role covering his work. We recruited new board members including Professor Lynn Crowe from Sheffield Hallam University, Chris Dean from the Moors for the Future in the Peak District National Park, Kenny Auld from the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park and Richard Tyler from the Brecon Beacons National Park

We have developed a new strategy yet the major challenge continues to be resources to fund the work of the section to deliver the strategy.



Costwolds National Park,
UK, Countryside Agency,
photo by Nick Turner

EUROPARC Central and Eastern Europe

The EUROPARC Central and Eastern Europe Section (CEE) celebrated its second anniversary in 2017, since its expansion from the former Czech section in 2015.

The CEE section network includes approximately 30 members from eight countries – Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. The core areas of work remain **capacity building and transboundary cooperation through communication and experience sharing**.



Key Activities in 2017

Members Assembly of the CEE was combined with the workshop on communication and education

The Members Assembly took place in Sluňákov, at the centre for ecological activities of the Olomouc city, Czech Republic. The meeting was attended by more than 25 participants and was held in March. One of the key speakers was Katalin Czippan, vice Chair of the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication.



Outputs are available

www.europarc.org/network/sections/europarc-central-and-eastern-europe/

'Internal Workshop on wilderness definition and its protection in Central and Eastern Europe countries.

Organized by the section in cooperation with the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas. Representatives from 5 Central European countries presented views of both governmental and non-governmental bodies. The results of the event provide a clear overview of various approaches implemented by present countries.

Small workshop 'Management of Natura 2000 Sites in Central and Eastern Europe' organised by Hungarian colleagues in Fertő-Hanság national park in May 2017 was a successful example of information sharing among experts from the CEE countries. The low-cost enabled participation of colleagues from organisations with limited budgets.

Workshop 'Management of Mountain Forest Habitat Types in Natura 2000 Sites: Experience and Case Studies from the Continental Biogeographical Region' was held in Šumava National Park, Czech Republic, in November 2017. The event was organised under the Natura 2000 Biogeographical process.

Other activities are related to the internal membership campaign and the technical support of the EUROPARC Federation (facilitation of two workshops during our Annual conference, participation at the Bern Convention and European Commission events). Besides, Jakub Kašpar together with Michael Hošek arranged the campaign mission to Slovenia where they met all large scale protected area managers (February 2017). All other results and information are available at the CEE website (under the www.EUROPARC.org).

Successes and challenges

Successes: Above listed activities show that the CEE has been enlarging its impact and technical support across the region. The work plan for March/2017 – March/2018 has been continuously implemented.

Challenge is still linked with the activity of CEE members, and how to support all our colleagues in taking more active roles in the network.

Presentations are available

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/a8d1a252zwwj03h/AACk5R0_m5FLpnY0nr2s04Fla?dl=0

<https://www.facebook.com/europarccee>



EUROPARC France

In 2017, the French Section finalised its merger with the three French-speaking networks. It also continued its work under the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST) and was involved in European lobbying alongside EUROPARC.

Key activities in 2017

Forging closer links among networks

The French Section merged with the Walloon, Swiss and Luxembourg networks to form a broader "French-speaking Section". The main themes they share are sustainable tourism, sustainable agriculture, lobbying, the "inhabited natural park", economic activities, participation and local governance.

Helping to launch European projects

The French Section and the French National Parks Association were called upon to help launch European projects under the new funding programmes, mainly around the theme of sustainable tourism. The Massif Central Parks Association (IPAMAC) took part in several long-distance discussions and attended the ECST seminar in Italy. The general aim was to draw up a plan to secure recognition for the ECST and to promote it at a European level, to optimise the economic benefits, to identify sustainable tourist destinations, and to raise awareness among customers of responsible tourism and the ways in which tourism can help to safeguard protected areas. The French Federation of Regional Natural Parks and the Avesnois Regional Nature Park joined forces to launch a project for multilingual training in the ECST tool, coordinated jointly by EUROPARC and a university.

Involvement in European and international lobbying

The French National Parks Association shared its experience at the European Commission Seminar in Brussels on 14 June. The speakers included P. Schmelzle on branding and agriculture (representing the national and regional park networks), and J. Ljiljak on tourism (Haut-Languedoc Regional Natural Park).

The Federation of Regional Natural Parks took part in the event to obtain feedback and promote the study of Europe's national parks organised by the Association of German Nature Parks (VDN) with the European institutions. This was followed by a meeting of the technical working group on 20 and 21 June.

The first action of the new "French-speaking Section" was to prepare a common position paper on agro-ecology (sustainable agriculture, common agricultural policy). France Drugmant, policy officer for agriculture at the Federation of Regional Natural Parks, coordinated the exchange of views and experiences of the five networks (French national parks and regional natural parks, and Swiss, Walloon and Luxembourg parks) and produced a paper to accompany the strategy paper published by the French Federation of Regional Natural Parks. The work was reviewed by EUROPARC's Sustainable Agriculture Commission.

Main achievements and challenges in 2017

Participation in EUROPARC governance

Olaf Holm, Director of the Montagne de Reims Regional Natural Park, was elected to EUROPARC's Council. Pierre Schmelzle, representing the Parc du Pilat, was also co-opted to the Board once again. Mr Schmelzle was also elected as Chair of the new Sustainable Agriculture Commission at its inaugural seminar in Sigen in March.

ESTC accreditation

In 2017, **five regional natural parks and two national parks received ESTC accreditation** in view of their ongoing commitment: the Camargue, Haut-Languedoc, Queyras, Verdon and Vexin regional parks and the Cévennes and Mercantour national parks.

A new tour operator was approved for Part III.



EUROPARC
SECTION FRANCAISE

For more information, please visit
www.europarc-fr.org

Contact person:
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German study group gains insight into educational offers of the Dutch De Sallandse Heuvelrug National Park (author: Neele Larondelle)

New guideline "Planning accessible experiences of nature"



EUROPARC Germany

EUROPARC Deutschland e. V.

In 2017, the mostly project-based twelve employees of the office of EUROPARC Germany in Berlin fulfilled the functions of the umbrella organisation: Project coordination with various thematic priorities including network maintenance, public relations and lobbying, resource mobilisation and strategic development. After renewed growth, 81 protected area administrations, park development associations, nature conservation associations, foundations and companies are now members of the association advancing the goal of strengthening the national natural landscapes, continuing to develop them qualitatively and increasing their appreciation among the population.



Learning from neighbours in study trips

Three international study trips in 2017 were training highlights for full-time staff and volunteer workers from protected areas. In the project "Actors from National Natural Landscapes in the International Exchange of Competence", **in short "ANNIKA"**, thematically focused events allowed participants to acquire in-depth insight into the working conditions in protected areas of another country, an inspiring exchange of experience and expertise and concrete suggestions for their own work. A group of German participants dedicated a week's visit to examining Dutch national parks on the topic of "Education for Sustainable Development". During their study visit, another group familiarised themselves with protected areas in Finland on the topic of "Alternative Financing Strategies for Protected Areas". German national parks, in a five-day programme, submitted their area of work 'Regional Development and Tourism' for discussion by foreign protected area employees from seven European countries in return. Their experience included the following: Personal experience on site, personal exchange with international colleagues and evaluative discussions within the study group yielded a multi-layered gain in knowledge. After around 2.5 years, the project is ending in mid-2018 with a final conference and the German-English publication of the project results. The project is funded by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) with resources from the Federal Ministry for the Environment (BMUB).

Integrative monitoring

In March 2017, EUROPARC Germany launched the project "Implementation of Integrative Monitoring of Large Protected Areas (National Parks and Biosphere Reserves)", which was also funded by the BMUB. The project's objective is to implement and continue a national monitoring system in all German national parks and biosphere reserves (except for the areas in the Wadden Sea which already have their own monitoring). Monitoring focuses on the operationalisation of the following six focal areas: Ecosystem and biodiversity, administration and management, education and communication, research and monitoring, sustainable land use and regional development. These topics are divided into two to fifteen sub-areas, which in turn include 389 ecological, economic and social or sociocultural parameters.

By the end of the 2.5-year research project, in October 2019, integrative monitoring will be applied and evaluated for the first time for thirteen national parks and fourteen biosphere reserves. In this programme, EUROPARC Germany assumes the role of a central coordinating body which oversees data queries, records these in a central database and subsequently evaluates them in monitoring reports.

Additional work areas of EUROPARC Germany, which were further developed in 2017, include junior rangers, volunteer management, accessible experiences in nature, valorisation of ecosystem services and the interim evaluation of national parks.

EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic

In 2017, the members of the Nordic Baltic Section had 2 technical seminars (followed by a members meeting) and gathered also at the EUROPARC Conference.



Key Activities in 2017

March 16-17 „Using databases in PA management“

In the workshop, we looked at different instruments for data collection and database (DB) (using DB for PA management and as information for society, legal status of DB, different DB cadastre, using DB for prognosis, reports and management plans...).

October 19th – 20th “Accessible Nature Tourism“

During the seminar, members looked at how accessibility can enhance tourism in Protected Areas, shared examples of visitor-friendly and barrier-free services, and looked at universal design principles for visitors with special needs.

The main achievement in 2017 was to find new secretariat for the period of 2018-2021. Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife Finland voluntarily accept this duty. Unfortunately, the Section could not establish good connections with representatives of official bodies in Denmark and Norway, who should have taken the Secretariat instead, as this means Finland is taking the lead for the second time. Indeed, the main challenge of the Section remains the low participation of these countries in Sections activities.

<http://www.europarc-nb.org/home/>



EUROPARC
Low Countries

EUROPARC Low Countries

In 2017, the EUROPARC Low Countries Section held 3 meetings. On the 27th of March the section met in Maastricht, where Joke Kersten officially ended her presidency and Hendrik Oosterveld was assigned the new president.

On June 21st, the section members met in Brussels at the Natural Sciences Museum. This was the first meeting since the new president, Hendrik Oosterveld had been assigned. Ignace Schops, president of the EUROPARC Federation explained in detail the structure of EUROPARC Federation and the role of the different sections. Ignace also explained that in future sections will work more closely together with the Federation.

Ignace confirmed that the Low Countries section secretary will be Natalie Henseler from the Regional Landscape Kempen and Maasland. Hans Schiphorst and Joke Kersten, the previous secretary and president were honoured for their efforts and work during the past years.

The 3rd meeting was held at the EUROPARC Conference in Portugal on the 9th of September. The Presidents of each Section gathered with EUROPARC Council and agreed to make a working programme and present it to the council. The Section Presidents will meet with the council twice a year. A brainstorm was held to identify the themes for 2017 and 2018. Several ideas were discussed and the topic of the next meeting defined: drinking water companies and ecosystem services. This theme will be discussed in relation to sustainability and local economy.

A new facebook group for EUROPARC Low Countries Section was established to promote more active sharing of experience.





EUROPARC Spain

The Spanish Section of EUROPARC has 24 members in 2017, who represent almost all Protected Areas in Spain. **The Programme Society and Protected Areas** is our road map through eight lines of action: landscape integration, ecosystem services, transfer of scientific knowledge, strategic communication, diversification of governance and funding models, greening of sectoral policies and international cooperation.

Among the main activities during 2017, the following are highlighted:

LIFE RedBosques: the project aims to improve the management of Spanish Mediterranean forests included in Natura 2000 (www.redbosques.eu/english-version):

- Document about the characteristics and conservation value of old-growth forests (available in English).
- Creation of a National Network of Reference Forests, based on shared criteria and protocols. 27 Reference Forests have been identified so far.
- Seminar on old-growth forests (November 2017 held at the Parc Natural dels Ports, Catalonia, participation of 40 people).
- Mobilities: 20 participants in 2 protected areas: Natural Park Sierra de Grazalema and Alconorcales, Andalusia, and Sierra de Guadarrama National Park, Madrid and Castilla y León.

Health: collaboration with the insurance company DKV in the project "Healthy Forests". Identification of healthy itineraries in protected areas, available at <https://es.wikiloc.com/wikiloc/user.do?id=3087415>

Second Mediterranean Natura 2000 Seminar: Collaboration with EUROPARC Federation in the preparation of the document and seminar held in Cyprus, November 2017.

Sustainable Tourism:

Support to Spanish members to develop the ECST. Assistance to 2 protected areas (Atlantic Isles of Galicia National Park and Maestrazgo, Teruel).

Several studies on carrying capacity were carried out to avoid impacts of tourism.

Workshop in Andalusia (June, Ronda): role of protected areas as assets for social and economic development especially in rural areas.

Workshop in Extremadura (November, Trujillo): communication of Natura 2000. Strategies and tools to transmit key messages from protected areas to local economic agents, local media and municipalities.



Yearbook 2016 – the state of Protected Areas in Spain: updating about Spanish protected areas and their management challenges

<http://www.EUROPARC.org/news/2017/06/protected-areas-in-spain/>

Training: 17th edition of the Master Degree on Protected Areas Management (33 participants). 4 courses (on line marine protected areas, communication, photography and tourism, 99 participants).

SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

The main challenge for the organisation is to involve as many people from different protected areas and sectors as possible in the development of the "Programme Society and Protected Areas". During 2017, a Commission of monitoring and promotion of the Programme was set up. Some of the initiatives include the compilation of projects and experiences characterised by their participatory and innovative approach.

www.redeuroparc.org

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