



The Role of Protected Areas in the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy



**A contribution to the Public Consultation
of the future EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy**

EUROPARC Federation
February 2020

With the European Green Deal, the EU Commission aims to put climate, energy and environment at the heart of all political decisions, and ensure coherence between the different EU policies, from trade to industry, agriculture, and maritime affairs.

In particular, looking at the Protected Areas perspective, the EU's declared ambition is that Europe must lead the world when it comes to protecting our biodiversity. In this framework, the European Commission is preparing the new EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy.

The EUROPARC Federation advocates that, not only Natura 2000 sites, but that all national and regional Protected Areas are recognised as:

1 KEY ACTORS TO IMPLEMENT EU POLICIES IN THE FIELD;

2 KEY BENEFICIARIES OF EU POLICIES, PROGRAMS AND ACTIONS.

More specifically, the Biodiversity Strategy and Actions Plan should take into consideration the role of Protected Areas in the following points:

European Birds and Habitats Directives

To delivery of the objectives of the European Birds and Habitats Directives, the National, Regional, Natural and Periurban Parks, and Marine Protected Areas **offer an essential and indispensable contribution to the Natura 2000 network**. The effective management of Natura 2000 sites and all Protected Areas is crucial and must be a priority for the new Strategy.

Rural Development

Protected Areas prevent current rural abandonment and landscape fragmentation, promote community involvement and support green jobs. They create sustainable tourism destinations, encourage sustainable agricultural practices and partnerships between farmers and Protected Areas management. The new Strategy, together with the new *Common Agricultural Policy*, should underline and support sustainable rural development and the role of Protected Areas.

Economy

Europe needs a sustainable economy. **Protected Areas are significant laboratories** to promote a more socially inclusive, environmentally healthier and economically viable model for society. They value nature as an essential asset for green and sustainable economy.



Photo: Kullaberg Nature Reserve and Marine Protected Area (SE), Laura Peters



Climate Change

Protected Areas are vital places to tackle climate change: by protecting ecosystems, they provide natural solutions for mitigation and adaptation approaches. To address climate challenges faced by European landscapes and biodiversity, **Protected Areas promote habitats conservation and restoration**, ensuring better resilience of ecosystems, and raising capacity of managers to improve adaptation measures and planning.

Healthy ecosystems

Europe needs healthy ecosystems, who offer multiple benefits to human society by delivering essential environmental services, including food, water and air, as well as direct benefits for human health, recreation and tourism. **The mission of Protected Areas is to maintain healthy ecosystems**, fighting against habitats extinction, species extinctions, erosion and desertification.

Private Sector

The new Strategy should involve the private sector and businesses to create indispensable alliances for the sustainable use of natural resources. European **Protected Areas work in partnership with local enterprises** and the new Strategy should use, support and valorise their experience and their specific methodologies to implement dialogue and collaboration with land owners, farmers and the tourism sector.

UN Sustainable Development Goals

The work of Protected Areas is necessary to reach many Sustainable Development Goals:



Human Health

Physical and mental human health are improved and **health inequalities can be addressed, using green exercise and contact with nature** through outdoor sports and recreation. Protected Areas contribute to individual and community health and well-being creating and increasing opportunities for outdoor activities.

Young People

Young people play an important role in looking after our nature and Protected Areas and are the decision-makers of tomorrow. It is vital that young people get involved in the **governance of nature heritage**, so they can share their perspectives, and that they can develop the skills to manage resilient parks and build sustainable communities.

For more information, please contact:
EUROPARC Policy Officer, Stefania Petrosillo
stefania.petrosillo@europarc.org



Co-funded by the European Union. The production of this document has been supported financially in the framework of the European Commission' LIFE+ funding programme of operating grants for Environmental NGOs.

Responsibility for the information and views expressed in this publication lies entirely with the authors.