

2020



EUROPARC FEDERATION

ANNUAL REPORT



EUROPARC

F E D E R A T I O N

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.

*Adamello Brenta Reg Park (IT) © Stefania Petrosillo
Titel: Montaña Palentina Natural Park, Palencia, Spain
© Juan García Lucas*

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President's remarks



In 2020 EUROPARC Federation grew to 385 members from 37 countries, covering 40 million hectares and 40% of Natura 2000. As the biggest network of Protected Areas in Europe, we have an important role to play: to be the voice of nature. With evidence-based solutions we help to achieve the EU Green Deal objectives and give proof that protecting and restoring wildlife positively affects the socio-economic benefits.

Yet, the year 2020 certainly has been one of the most unusual in EUROPARC's 47-year history. In the space of 6 months, with the arrival of COVID-19 in Europe, things which had previously been 'taken for granted' changed: people's daily lives and our work in Protected Areas was turned upside down.

We adapted our work to the new fully online situation. After a period of adjustment, this "virtual" world has become our new reality and as a network we have, I hope, retained our "humanity", our care and support for our members albeit within the squares of a Zoom room. We wanted to ensure that members found solace in the unity of our network, as we all navigated the uncertainties and how to operate under new conditions. Especially when change seemed to overwhelm, we found resilience, innovation and new solutions.

The 2020 European Day of Parks went online with #ParksForHealth. Beautiful video and audio material came flooding in from our members as people were keen to show all that Protected Areas provide for society.

Another highlight was EUROPARC's Online Conference. Created in very short notice, EUROPARC utilised skills and creative energies across the team to stage an extremely successful conference, with 210 attending over 2 days. The event ensured a positive networking and learning environment and was retained by EUROPARC members and colleagues across the sector.

2020 was also the year of member's consultation where we sought input for the new strategic direction of EUROPARC. The entire process had to be modified as an online event. Despite the challenges this allowed many members to engage with the consultation process that perhaps may otherwise have not.

EUROPARC's webinar programme, with 17 webinars being held and an average of 250 participants each continued to attract very positive feedback. Drawing from across the network to bring examples of good practice, has ensured that these webinars have become a highly valued and appreciated service we provide. Watch out for new developments in 2021!

Overall in 2020, EUROPARC has embraced the change in how we now work with new digital tools, realising that international cooperation and connection as well as ensuring a place for our youth to be involved, are more important than ever.

The extent of what we have achieved in such a tumultuous year is described here in this annual report and is a testament to my

colleagues in the EUROPARC Council, Directorate, Sections, Commissions and indeed across the membership.

Change has certainly been the overriding theme of 2020. From the response to COVID-19, to the new EU Strategies, it is clear that Parks and Protected Areas need to be involved in discussions about the future of society and be prepared with solutions to ensure they are part of a safer and more sustainable Europe.

The global response to COVID-19 taught us that we were able to develop a vaccine 4 times faster than predicted, changed our behaviour at high speed which was never expected to be possible before, based our decisions on science and never discussed the cost. With COVID-19 we didn't discuss the feasibility but necessity and invested in a new kind of solidarity.

The only way to predict and 'be ready' for the future is to be a part of creating it. Let's take the COVID-19 lessons as an example for change where we, the Parks of Europe, can and should be the Changemakers of the Future- for the future of our climate, our biodiversity and the health of our Parks and our People.

Ignace Schops
President

*EUROPARC
Directorate
during the
online team
time in 2020*



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**



Apuseni Nature Park Administration (RO) © Andrei Lovan

Managing places for nature

Protected Areas are better managed through international cooperation.

EUROPARC has had participatory status within the Conference of International NGOs since 2013. With this we follow closely the development and implementation of the Bern Convention and Landscape Convention.

Like all institutions the work of the Council of Europe was severely affected by the Covid restrictions. However, 2020 remained busy especially as the Conference of INGO's itself was under reform. After a challenging series of debates, new rules and terms of references, supported by EUROPARC were unanimously passed. This will give EUROPARC and other interested INGOs the opportunity to propose new committees and structures to bring forward relevant environmental climate and health agenda, as they relate to human right and democracy, which are the tenets of the Council of Europe.

EUROPARC attended a meeting of the Bern Convention and was invited to participate in a working group looking at a new vision and strategy for the Bern Convention.

EU Green Deal

In 2019 the European Commission and Parliament presented the EU Green Deal. EUROPARC Federation is strongly convinced that the vision expressed in the Green Deal is our life-line to a sustainable future. If we want clean air and drinkable water for everyone. If we want a biodiverse and climate-neutral society. If we believe in justice and solidarity and if we would like to give a perspective to the future generations, for these reasons we give our full support to the EU's Green Deal. To underline this support, EUROPARC sent a letter to Mrs Ursula von der Leyen, Mr David Sassoli, Mr Frans Timmermans and Mr Virginijus Sinkevičius.

[You can read it here](#)



Putting Policy into Practice

EUROPARC's Seminar Dialogue 2020

By bringing together representatives of the European Commission (EC) and Protected Areas professionals on an annual basis, EUROPARC aims to highlight the contribution of Protected Areas in implementing key European policies, raise the awareness of Park managers on EU policy developments and provide the European Commission with clear insights about the challenges faced by professionals in the field.

In 2020, EUROPARC and the Nature Unit of the European Commission-DG ENV, met to discuss the theme "Partnerships for Biodiversity: Biodiversity, climate and Protected Areas towards 2030".

40 participants met online to discuss the role of Protected Areas and Natura 2000 in the new EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 and EU climate policies, in the framework of the EU Green Deal. During the meeting, the EC presented several of the most relevant targets for Protected Areas as set out in the Biodiversity Strategy. EUROPARC of course welcomes the Green Deal and the

high ambitions of the EC, and additionally emphasised the importance of financial support and innovative governance models for Protected Areas and the implementation and enforcement of the current EU Nature legislation.

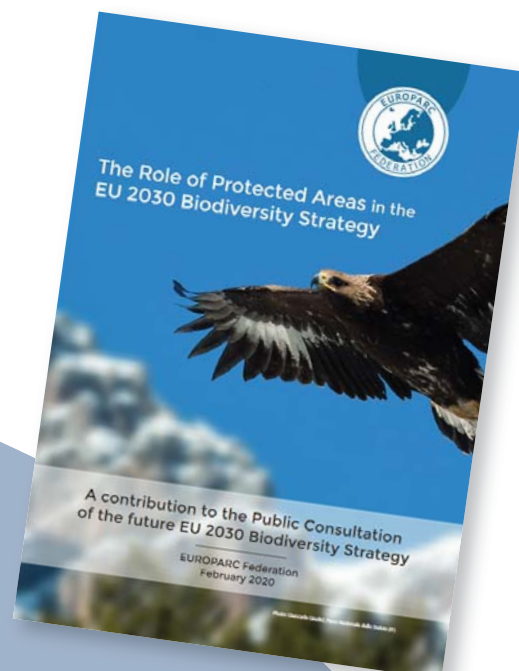
We thank DG ENV and DG CLIMA for this successful exchange: the dialogue continues!

New Policy Paper: The Role of Protected Areas in the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy

The new EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy recognises the role of Protected Areas and sets ambitious goals.

EUROPARC, together with 17 other members of the European Habitat Forum (EHF), developed a Position Paper on the EU targets for Protected Areas. With this document we propose to the European Commission and Member States, a series of recommendations, and priority measures to: improve management effectiveness of the existing Protected Areas, protect 30% of EU land and sea, and to define strict protection.

[Much more was discussed, which you can find here](#)



[You can read it here](#)

EUROPARC meets commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius

President Ignace Schops and Executive Director Carol Ritchie met DG Environment Commissioner Sinkevičius on the 18th of June – online.

In a fruitful and productive meeting they discussed the role of Protected Areas in the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy 2030, some of the impacts of COVID-19 on Parks and the possibility of opening small grants to look at post-COVID impacts, the need for new and innovative capacity building to equip Natura 2000 managers to deliver more effective outcomes and the Healthy Parks Healthy People Europe programme.

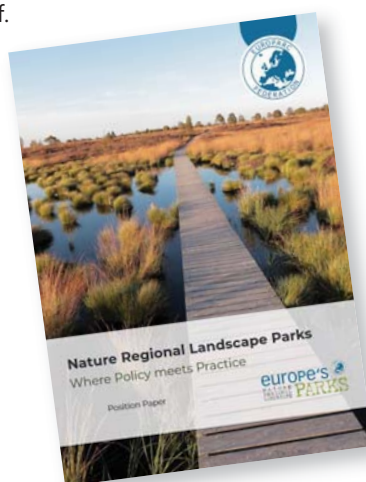
Making nature more connected

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

New Policy Paper: "Nature Regional Landscape Parks - Where Policy meets Practice"

Nature Regional Landscape Parks (NRLPs) can play a vital role in a sustainably managed Green Europe. This was one of the main messages from EUROPARC as we participated in the European Week of Regions and Cities, through the webinar: 'The "real" Green Deal'. Examples of good practice from across the Nature Regional Landscape Parks members were shown and indicated that their practices can be replicated and scaled-up for a bigger impact in Europe. The EUROPARC policy paper "Nature Regional Landscape Parks - Where Policy meets Practice" was also launched: It highlights the essential role

NRLP's play in implementing a large number of European policies, from biodiversity to sustainable agriculture. Additionally, the "EUROPARC Youth Manifesto" was promoted, highlighting the need for young people to be encouraged to stay in rural areas to ensure these areas are future-proof.



A recording of the webinar and the policy paper can be found on our website here

EUROPARC - working in the EU platform for coexistence between people and large carnivores

EUROPARC is an active member of this platform, where we discussed the new EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the changes to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). We also had specific discussions on tourism, looking at the synergies and conflicts that arise in connection with tourism activities related to large carnivores and other land uses in specific regions. Additionally, we attended and contributed to the 10th regional workshop of the platform, which took place in Salzburg (A) and focused on financing measures for protection and damage prevention.

Minimizing
Conflicts

Finding
Solutions

More information can be found here

Putting Policy into Practice

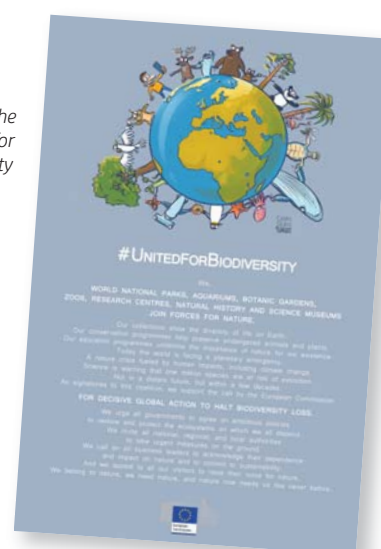
EUROPARC & the Global Coalition for Biodiversity

On the occasion of World Wildlife Day 2020, the European Commission launched a new Global coalition "#UnitedforBiodiversity". EUROPARC endorsed the coalition with the intention to join forces and raise awareness about the dramatic effects of the biodiversity crisis. On the occasion of the Natura2000 Day, we called upon our members to join the EU Coalition for Biodiversity Conservation.

With this communication campaign, the Commission is calling for stronger mobilisation in raising awareness about the need to protect biodiversity, ahead of the crucial CoP 15 meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2021.

You can join the coalition here

The pledge of the
Global Coalition for
Biodiversity



Grow the Protected Area network

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

Periurban Parks

Planning a Periurban Park is key to improving its management. In the webinar 'How to plan and manage a Park for nature and people: the experience of Periurban Parks', we introduced different approaches and specific actions to better plan Periurban Parks. Special attention was paid to planning the areas at the borders of the Park, as it safeguards the rest of the area. In the webinar we explored that, due to the high number of visitors, it is essential that all aspects of Periurban Parks are well planned.

[You can watch the webinar here](#)

Apart from working on the webinar and a future toolkit, EUROPARC, in close coordination with Brussels Environment and the Periurban Commission, responded to the Life Preparatory call #8 "Designing mechanisms to increase the presence of biodiversity in urban and peri-urban areas". The project "Life UrbanGreeningPlans" was submitted in September.

Marine

EUROPARC together with IUCN organised the webinar "Towards a NO-Plastic Sea: EU policies and Marine Protected Areas actions". It had presentations from representatives of both institutions, as well as external guests from the European Commission and the University of Barcelona. It looked at the sources and distribution of plastic litter through inspiring case studies. Further, during the EUROPARC Conference a dedicated workshop "Marine Protected Areas – why does our marine environment merit special attention?" was organised, with representatives of

the project LIFE INTEMARES participating. The workshop and the accompanying article in EUROPARC's journal 'Protected Areas In-Sight' 2020 strengthened the relationships between EUROPARC and the project, and highlighted the importance of capacity building for Marine Protected Area managers in order to reach the ambitious targets of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030.

Putting Policy into Practice

EUROPARC was invited to participate in a consultation workshop organised by MedPan, the Network of Marine Protected Area Managers in the Mediterranean. This workshop, in which a multitude of institutions took part, aimed to identify the main limiting factors that will prevent Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) from reaching the targets identified in the Roadmap for Mediterranean MPAs, which is currently being developed. Different EUROPARC representatives contributed with their expertise on this topic, both through a survey and during the workshop under the theme of 'Capacity and Awareness'.

The EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 sets ambitious objectives for marine protection, and the Farm to Fork Strategy identifies important targets for sustainable seafood: EUROPARC is engaged to guarantee the recognition of the Marine Protected Areas' role in these debates.

EUROPARC and the EHF

In the framework of the European Habitats Forum we actively worked with other European NGOs to develop joint positions to support the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.



Inspiring People

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



The European Day of Parks

Since 1999, EUROPARC has celebrated the European Day of Parks on the 24th of May. Of course, due to the corona crisis the celebratory day could not take place in its usual form. However, this was not going to stop us from celebrating Europe's Parks and Protected Areas!

By chance, it had been decided in 2019, that the 2020 European Day of Parks would focus on the topic of health and nature with the slogan "Nature, good for your health!" However, as it became clear that many parts of Europe would have to celebrate the European Day of Parks from their homes, EUROPARC adapted and launched an online campaign with the hashtag #ParksForHealth. We called upon all our members to virtually come together to connect and showcase how

healthy parks are fundamental for the health of millions of European citizens AND the health of our planet.

Members sent videos, sounds and pictures from their Parks to highlight Europe's amazing natural heritage. After all, Europe's Parks and Protected Areas are still working for our communities by generating fresh air, clean water and a refuge for nature in the times of confinement.



The online campaign really generated a buzz, with over 300 articles published related to the European Day of Parks and #ParksForHealth. Our Facebook page received 17.000 visits on the 24th of May and tweets mentioning #ParksForHealth reached over 50.000 people! We even got a mention of Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries Virginijus Sinkevičius.

With the inputs Parks send us, we managed to make a beautiful #ParksForHealth video that was watched by over 6000 people and reached 36.000 people.

[You can watch the video here](#)

A big thanks to all our members that made this special version of the European Day of Parks such a success!

Some live events could still be organised across Europe



[You can find the report with an overview of the activities organised here](#)



Commissioner Sinkevičius with the Natura 2000 Awards finalists

The Natura 2000 Awards

The 5th edition of the European Natura 2000 Award Ceremony was celebrated online on October 14th. After a welcome message from the European Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, Virginijus Sinkevičius, the Award winners on each of the five categories were announced. The Citizens' Award, a special mention selected by public voting, was also granted at the end of the ceremony. In this edition, 79 eligible applications were received, from which 27 entered the finals. EUROPARC is proud that several of our members were among the finalists, including the success of the Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic, which was granted the Natura 2000 Award on the Cross-border Cooperation and Networking category for their project.



[You can read about their project here](#)

EUROPARC's Natura 2000 Commission

With the approval of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, our Natura 2000 Commission has mainly been helping to better define the criteria for the implementation of the Protected Areas targets. During 2020 the N2000 Commission continued working closely with EU institutions to strengthen the relation between Protected Areas and Natura 2000, ensuring the role of Protected Areas is well understood and integrated in the framework of new policy priorities.

Junior Ranger & Youth+

In 2020 one of the areas of work that has severely been impacted by the pandemic sadly, was with our young people. There was a long list of activities foreseen for Youth, in the framework of the Youth Manifesto - with a Youth+ Camp and meeting opportunities at the EUROPARC Conference and at the European Ranger Congress - and for Junior Rangers with the annual International Junior Ranger Camp foreseen in Norway, which all had to be cancelled.



Despite the difficulties, we have continued collecting good case studies from Protected Areas on Youth engagement, revised our Junior Ranger toolkit with guidelines for PAs and organised a successful workshop **"Stronger with Youth – how do we plan together for 2030?"** at the EUROPARC Conference, where youth presented the experience of their respective parks in the implementation of the Youth Manifesto: Prealpi Giulie Natural Park (IT) and of the Yorkshire Dales National Park (UK).

[You can find the outcomes of the conference here](#)



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**



*Lemmenjoki
National Park (FI)
© Harri Tarvainen*

Collaborative work

Bringing people together,
creating a stronger network.



Transboundary Parks Programme

Despite the pandemic, 2020 was an intense year for the Transboundary Parks Programme. EUROPARC organized a training for the new Transboundary verifiers. Originally planned as face to face, the theoretical part of the training took place online and involved six new potential verifiers. Three of them were able to conclude the practical part of their training, accompanying experienced verifiers during their evaluation visits.

Due to COVID-19, the face to face annual TransParcNet meeting planned in Alpe Veglia Devero-Binntal Area (IT-CH) was unfortunately not possible. However, cross border cooperation stops for nothing – this is why EUROPARC decided to move the meeting online. Fittingly, the theme was “Cross border cooperation in COVID Time”. The 54 participants from 18 countries welcomed the presence of the European Commission DG REGIO and DG ENV in December. Two working groups discussed the challenges of the cooperation during the pandemic and about future projects for the network, creating a stable working group with this specific aim.

[You can read all outputs here](#)



The online TransParcNet meeting 2020

The Transboundary Task Force remained very active, working closely with the Directorate to organize the TransParcNet meeting and to collect specific inputs for the EUROPARC future Strategy.

In 2020 the programme was able to welcome a new member: Internationaler Naturpark Bourtanger Moor – Veenland in Germany and the Netherlands. In close

cooperation between the German districts of Emsland and Grafschaft Bentheim and the Dutch province of Drenthe, the European spirit becomes tangible in the midst of nature.

[You can read more about this new Transboundary Area here](#)

Julian Alps Transboundary Area (SI-IT) and Bavarian Forest and Šumava National Parks (DE-CZ) successfully re-evaluated as confirmed Transboundary areas. Two candidatures were postponed for 2021 due to the impossibility to organize verification visits due to the COVID-19 crisis.



Verifiers visiting the new Transboundary area Internationaler Naturpark Bourtanger Moor – Veenland © Barbara van den Ham

Staff development



Supporting e-learning
and capacity building
for Natura 2000 Managers

Promoting the exchange of experiences, information and ideas.

LIFE eNatura2000.edu

LIFE e-Natura 2000.edu (or 'LIFEedu' for short), entered the project's main delivery phase in 2020. Over 12 months, new environmentally sustainable ways for nature managers to access information, learn and network were tested. The range of innovative tools and approaches used were also designed to avoid the costs of traditional training.

The project created 3 purpose-built Moodle platforms and made 78 online presentations, 25 video demonstrations and 2 podcasts.

You can see some of the videos and find out more information about the project here

By June 2020, 78 participants from 19 countries had successfully completed three online courses. Led by EUROPARC, Fungobe (EUROPARC Spain) and ProPark, the online courses developed capacity building competencies which nature managers require for their daily work - the courses covered inclusive communication, building alliances for Natura 2000 and biodiversity conservation. In addition, 5 project webinars on integrated management planning, marine nature conservation and visitor information attracted 993 participants.

IMPACT Interreg Europe – Innovative Models for Protected Areas: exChange and Transfer

The IMPACT Interreg Europe project was successfully finished in 2020. It aimed to explore new management models to balance preservation and exploitation of Protected Areas. Through a four year process, different regional administrations around Europe helped to transform the potential of the natural values present at their regions into growth, income and green jobs that will benefit the surrounding communities. The project has achieved 5 policy changes in the 5 participating regions.



The project and all actions are made possible with support from the LIFE financial instrument of the European Community

In September, a new smartphone app was launched to further enhance digital learning and networking for users. By the end of the year, more than 600 users had downloaded the app.

The project is well on-track to successfully conclude in July 2021.

You can download the app here



EUROPARC
FEDERATION



Fundación Interuniversitaria
Fernando González Bernáldez
PARA LOS ESPACIOS NATURALES



PROPARC
PENTRU ARII PROTEJATE



Länsstyrelsen
Skåne



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

TESAF



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

More info here



© Stefania Petrosillo

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 webinars

Especially in a year where everything was moved online, we were happy to be well prepared for digital learning. 2020 proved to be a big year for EUROPARC webinars! We organised 17 webinars, which a total of 4309 people attended, resulting in an average attendance of 253 people per webinar.

With topics ranging from climate change to sustainable tourism and health, EUROPARC webinars have become a well established format for knowledge transfer and the sharing of best practice examples.

They were all recorded and can be accessed on our website [here](#)

Alfred Toepfer Scholarship winners

The call was closed on 3 May 2020, during full lockdown. We received a total of 32 applications. The Council jury selected 3 awardees, who unfortunately have not yet been able to receive their award since there has still been a travel ban in most European countries. We will seek an opportunity on or offline to officially award the Scholarship when it is safe to do so.



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 annually offers a training Seminar in Northern Germany, free for EUROPARC members.

In 2020, COVID19-related travel bans forced us to adapt to new conditions and innovate by going 100% digital. From March 23 to 25, a total of 23 nature conservation professionals from 13 European countries participated, including members of DG Clima, DG Envi and EASME.

Through workshops and case studies, participants discovered:

- The LIFE Natur'Adapt project and key concepts and elements of methodology for climate change adaptation in Protected Areas;
- How NatureScot ran a climate change risk assessment and vulnerability diagnostic of Scottish Protected Areas features;
- How the Basque Country regional government developed adaptation management plans for their Natura 2000 sites;
- How the Portofino Marine Protected Area is collaborating with local stakeholders on climate change adaptation;
- Which synergies can be found in the current legal framework of France for climate change adaptation and biodiversity conservation?

Highlights of the presentations as well as recordings are available for download on the Federation's website [here](#)

By leveraging technologies, it was possible to enable collaboration and personal contributions. Together, participants built the prototype of a collaborative online library on climate change adaptation for Protected Areas and also shared interesting ideas on how to improve policies to help Protected Area managers adapt to a changing climate.



[You can find the online library here](#)



Gut Siggen – which we will hopefully visit again in 2021



Siggen Seminar

23-26 March 2020

Helping Protected Areas adapt to climate change

registrations at europarc.org/siggen-seminars



Sustainable Tourism Training for Tomorrow

The ERASMUS+ "Sustainable Tourism: Training for Tomorrow" project aims to build the capacity of Protected Area stakeholders in the field of sustainable tourism.

The project thus far has developed an open access, online training platform which you can access from the Sustainable Tourism Training for Tomorrow website. The platform is an excellent resource for all Protected Area staff, businesses, local/regional authorities, and others to access some sustainable tourism training based around the Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas.

[You can access the platform here](#)

The learning platform was launched in 2020 within the webinar: Sustainable Tourism – Training for Tomorrow: A new tool to help learning about Sustainable Tourism in Protected Area, showcasing case studies from La Gomera (Spain)" by Manuel Fernando Martín – vice president of the Sustainable Tourism Association of La Gomera and Parc naturel régional de la Montagne de Reims (France). The audience also heard from Sara Zappini, the director of "Terme di Rabbi", a thermal and wellness spa in the Stelvio National Park, who has already successfully used the learning platform: "To reach your goals, we need to work together". The platform specifically helped her to have a look and share best practice and find new ideas from around Europe.

[You can watch the webinar here](#)

The project will be complete in 2021 and all material will be moved to the EUROARC website for greater longevity, use and dissemination.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

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



Sustainable agriculture in and around Protected Areas

Promoting nature friendly agricultural practices across Europe

Workshop on agriculture at the
EUROPARC online conference

EUROPARC's Commission of Agriculture in Protected Areas discussed the role of Protected Areas in the implementation of the Farm to Fork and the Biodiversity strategies and supported the Brussels office in the elaboration of key messages for debates with the European Institutions. Messages include the need for coherence between the new future CAP and the Green Deal and its accompanying policies and strategies.

Moreover, we had some changes in the Commission: Hans Schiphorst left because of his retirement and Pierre Schmelzle and Joao Melo are now co-chairing the Commission.

With the aim of seeing concrete experiences of collaboration between farmers and Parks, the EUROPARC Brussels office team visited the Belgian Parc Naturel Burdinale-Mehaigne on the 18th of June 2020. Focused on rural development, the Park is developing several projects designed to reconcile agriculture and biodiversity. In Wallonia, the 12 Natural Parks cover approximately one third of the Walloon territory. Their main mission is rural development in harmony with nature. Created in 1991, the Burdinale-Mehaigne Natural Park covers 11,000 ha over 4 municipalities (Burdinne, Braives, Héron and Wanze). Originally, the creation of the park aroused some



resistance, especially from farmers, but today things have changed: Park managers and farmers are working hand in hand and the Park is considered a partner of the farming community. However, building trust requires a lot of time and capacity to continue to build the essential dialogue.

Within the online EUROPARC Conference, a special workshop was held on communication between farmers and Protected Areas - *'Agriculture in Parks: how can we communicate to farmers, with farmers, for farmers?'* The workshop analysed the main aspects of the new EU policies connected with agriculture and environment and demonstrated how Protected Areas can promote better communication between Parks and farmers, highlight the value of farmers towards for the public and consumers, and support the relationships between farmers and public authorities.

[You can find the workshop outcomes here](#)

[You can read more about the visit here](#)

Putting Policy into Practice

EUROPARC closely followed the CAP development process and contributed to the debate around the Farm to Fork Strategy: in this, we underlined the role of Terrestrial and Marine Protected Areas in producing sustainable and healthy food and the importance of working in partnership with farmers and fishermen. EUROPARC participated in stakeholder consultations organised by the European Commission, in meetings with MEPs and in the Farm to Fork Conference. Moreover, EUROPARC also became an official member of the European Food Policy Coalition, providing the platform with specific inputs on Protected Areas. The co-chair of EUROPARC's Agriculture Commission was part of the panel at a CopaCogeca event, which aimed to increase dialogue those involved with industrial agriculture.

Before the start of the trilogue process on the CAP, EUROPARC sent a letter to Ursula von der Leyen and Frans Timmermans about the need to guarantee coherence between the CAP and Green Deal strategies. This generated a positive response from vice president Timmermans.



Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

Sustainable Tourism is Good for Parks and Good for People.

The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

In 2020, ECSTPA welcomed 7 new Sustainable Destinations to our network and proudly awarded 9 Sustainable Destinations that renewed their commitment. The new Parks came from Estonia (1), Italy (3), Spain (2) and Sweden (1). Despite the pandemic, verifiers were able to conduct their verifications in situ! A special questionnaire was prepared to check the effects of the pandemic in the verified parks.

The Charter Award Ceremony has been postponed to 2021.

With the pandemic badly affecting tourism in Protected Areas, in Spring 2020 we organised a workshop exclusively for our ECST members – the purpose was to gather information about their situation, identify their needs and consider what messaging should be developed to ensure sustainable tourism remains not just viable but is a better alternative in new tourism markets.



Overcrowding in Krkonose NP © Jakub Kaspar



EUROPARC
Sustainable Tourism
in Protected Areas

VI Iberian conference

In cooperation with the municipality of Sabugal and EUROPARC Spain, EUROPARC organised the sixth conference of the Iberian Network of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism. The conference took place online on the 4th and 5th of November 2020. A total of 388 participants registered including 260 from Spain and 111 from Portugal. Technology allowed for simultaneous Spanish-Portuguese translation. Overall, the meeting was a resounding success.

FIDELIO research project

EUROPARC coordinated two workshops in the framework of the FIDELIO research project on the impact of COVID-19 on Protected Area management and its policy implications. As many countries imposed lockdowns during the Spring and Autumn COVID peaks, Parks' management authorities had to come up with new safety measures. This study analysed the experiences of 14 European Protected Areas (mostly ECST awardees) during the coronavirus pandemic.

You can read more about the research and its outcomes [here](#)



CEETO

The CEETO project ended in June 2020. EUROPARC Federation made significant contributions as the communication manager designing and testing over three years new Sustainable Tourism governance models in eight Protected Areas of Europe. The project has been the catalyst for developing a set of outputs to support the work of Protected Area managers in Europe.

The Handbook on Successful – Innovative Practices in Europe offers a valuable reference and knowledge base, compiling some of the most successful stories, management and monitoring tools required for sustainable tourism practices in Protected Areas.

[You can read it here](#)

Also, the Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas were designed to support policy makers at international, national and regional levels in the process of shaping tourism planning and management within and around Protected Areas.

[You can find the guidelines here](#)

Finally, the CEETO Manual of Sustainable Tourism governance for Protected Area managers is an operational document designed for use by both Protected Area managers and local stakeholders. It aims to assist in the implementation of Sustainable Tourism strategies in Protected Areas.

[You can read the manual here](#)

On May 8th, the webinar “Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas: the experience of the CEETO Project” provided an opportunity to recap on the main project actions and outcomes and get to know some of the best examples of sustainable tourism practices that were identified. The webinar highlighted how integrating buffer zones in the management of tourism was being applied in Slovenia and we got to know, from a technical perspective, how a new visitor monitoring tool is being deployed in Italy. Also, relevant tools for Protected Area Managers and policy-makers produced during the project were presented, as well as the CEETO network of sustainable tourism experts.

[You can watch the webinar here](#)

Medvednica Nature Park, one of the CEETO project partners © Medvednica Nature Park Public institution archive





Healthy Parks
Healthy People
EUROPE

Nature and Health

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

In June 2020, during the webinar "Healthy Parks, Healthy People Europe – connecting people and nature for a healthier and happier nature" EUROPARC's new programme "Healthy Parks Healthy People Europe" (HPHPe) was launched. The programme was developed by the EUROPARC Federation and built on the innovative practices gathered by the Health and Protected Areas commission over several years: it aims to maximise the contribution of Europe's Parks and Protected Areas to key policy priorities, including:

- Improving public health and well-being for all and reducing health inequalities
- Protecting, restoring and investing in biodiversity
- Responding to the climate emergency

Additionally, the programme wants

- More of Europe's Parks and Protected Areas to provide well-managed, accessible facilities and engaging target groups in health-promoting activities.
- More policy, practice and partnership working to maximise the potential of Europe's Parks and Protected Areas as key assets for improving public health and well-being and reducing health inequalities.
- More people from all backgrounds to be able to enjoy the health benefits of connecting with nature and support the case for better protection, restoration and further investment in Europe's Parks and Protected Areas.

The launch of the programme was accompanied with a brochure detailing what it wants to achieve and how. HPHPe was produced by the Healthy Parks Healthy People Commission (formerly Health and Protected Areas Commission).

[Read all about the programme here](#)





Yves Le Lostecque,
Michael McClure, Nicola
Notaro, Alberto Robles
and Carol Ritchie
at the Information
Sharing Event
© Stefania Petrosillo.

Outdoor Sports

The European Network of Outdoor Sports (ENOS) was invited to organise a workshop during our Annual Conference. This is part of the Memorandum of Understanding signed with EUROPARC.

The workshop "Outdoor sports – how do we measure the benefits they bring to people and Protected Areas?" showed the range of benefits that outdoor sports provide and how to value these effectively in economic terms.



Participants of the Information Sharing Event © Stefania Petrosillo.

[All presentations from the workshop are available here](#)



ENOS
European Network
of Outdoor Sports

Putting Policy into Practice

On the 3rd of March, 10 days before full lockdown, EUROPARC and ENOS organised an Information Sharing Event in Brussels. The event focused on the connection between nature conservation and outdoor sports.

After the launch of the 10 Good Principles for Outdoor Sports in Protected Areas in 2019, this event was an opportunity to reinforce the connection between the sports and the nature sectors, and to bring in the European Commission's perspective: this was achieved through the active participation of DG EAC's Yves Le Lostecque, Head of Sport Unit, and DG ENV's Nicola Notaro, Head of Nature Protection.

[You can read more about the event here](#)



Climate Change

Supporting Protected Areas on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

NaturAdapt – A dynamic collective learning process for Climate Change Adaptation

As a partner of LIFE Natur'Adapt, EUROPARC is engaging members to integrate climate change adaptation in their management practices. LIFE Natur'Adapt [LIFE17 CCA/FR/000089] is a 5-year project developed with the support of the LIFE Programme, the French Agency for Biodiversity and the French Ministry for Ecological Transition.

In 2020, EUROPARC continued to take an active part in steering the project, development of six French nature reserves to act as pilots and dissemination of the project's results. EUROPARC's core activities included organisation of the Siggen Seminar, coordination of a European task force on climate change adaptation in Protected Areas, leading two webinars and the publication of online resources on the topic.

[You can find resources on climate change here](#)



In April, the members of the Task Force on Climate Change shared their insights in the shape of a SWOT analysis for climate change adaptation in Protected Areas. In October, we worked with ENCA, IHOBE and EUROPARC-Spain to propose a closer look at climate change adaptation in Protected Areas and help our members move from theory to practice. Participants gained from important lessons being formed about the process and practice of planning for climate change adaptation in Protected Areas.

Putting Policy into Practice

In its endeavours to support policy makers, the LIFE Natur'Adapt team and the EUROPARC task force on climate change took an active part in the "Seminar-Dialogue" in June 2020 with the European Commission. A session was dedicated to discuss the threats and opportunities, strengths and weaknesses of Protected Areas in the face of climate change.

Early in October, an online working session was organised with experts from DG ENVI and DG CLIMA to work collaboratively on a policy paper that is currently in the making.



Future topics

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

A new EUROPARC Strategy

EUROPARC's strategy is the mechanism through which we implement our mission and vision, ensuring that the work of the Federation is valuable to our members. It provides a framework of what EUROPARC as an organisation wants to achieve so we can plan effectively and ensure adequate support to the work for Protected Areas in Europe.

2021 will be the final year of our current strategy, which started in 2015, following extensive consultation with our members.

To develop the new strategy, in 2019 some early first 'sounding questions' were sent out to our members and a consultation timeline developed and agreed. From the start of 2020, the proper consultation began with the support and supervision of a dedicated task force, which includes representatives of Council, Sections and Directorate. In May, we

launched an extensive online questionnaire, in multiple languages, for all our members. Through it we collected a lot of useful information on members' achievements, future priorities and areas of work: also, we gained insights and inputs about new trends and change factors, feedback about members' EUROPARC experiences and their needs and expectations in relation to implementation priorities. Overall, we received 86 answers from across 31 countries.

In parallel, we organised specific online workshops for Section members. Nine workshops were organised in most cases in the language of the hosting sections: 110 people from 19 different countries participated in the workshops. During the workshops, we looked at the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 targets, current changes and trends being encountered or

anticipated by Protected Areas, considered current EUROPARC work and identified new proposals and changes to aim to achieve by 2030.

Following guidance from Dialogue Matters, all data was analysed by the Directorate. The process then continued with a two days online workshop in October with the EUROPARC Sections, Council and Directorate which enabled future areas of work and core priorities to be identified.

The work continues in 2021 with the Drafting Team working over spring to organise all the inputs collected and prepare a draft of the Strategy. This draft will be sent out for further consultation before summer. The new strategy will then be revised and voted on at the 2021 General Assembly.

Lake District © danielkay



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.



Governance - how we work
People Power - Human Resources
Federation Finances
Talking and Listening

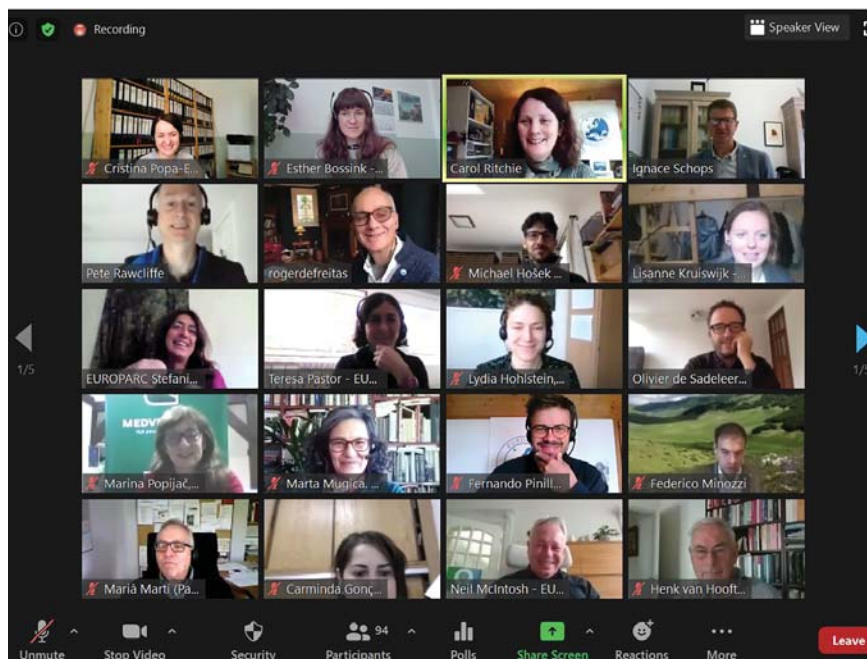


Governance – how we work

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

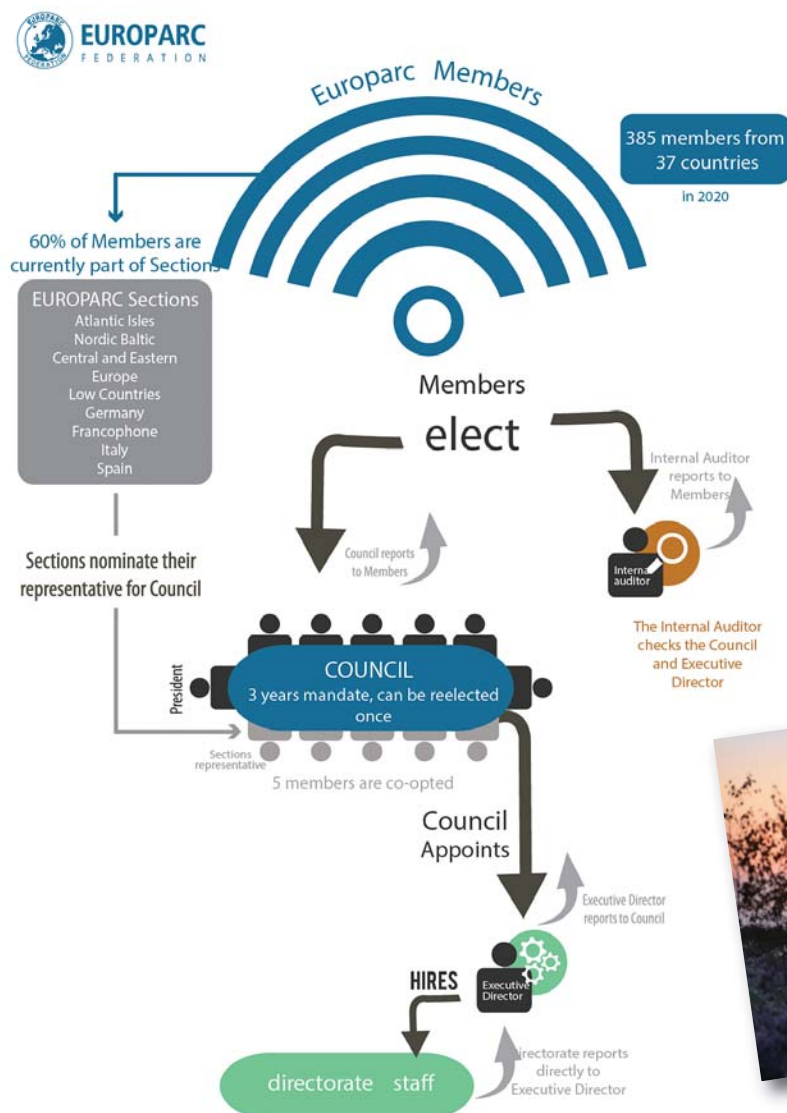
General Assembly 2020

Due to COVID, for the first time ever, the elections scheduled for 2020 had to be postponed to 2021: also, the EUROPARC General Assembly (GA) took place online, in compliance with the 'Verein' regulations in Germany. At the online gathering, following the opening of the meeting by the President, the Treasurer, the Youth Representative and the Internal Auditor presented their reports. The Executive Director then provided an update about the work of the Federation in 2019 and 2020, and invited the Sections and EUROPARC Commissions to provide specific updates. A provisional work-plan and budget for 2021 were presented and approved by the GA. Mr Roger de Freitas was confirmed as Internal Auditor for 2021. Additionally, the EUROPARC Conference 2021 was announced. It will take place in the Netherlands, from 4 to 8 of October, entitled: *"Tribute to our landscapes: where people and nature meet in harmony"*.



A screenshot from the first ever online EUROPARC General Assembly.

EUROPARC Governance Structure



Council Meetings

During 2020, all Council meetings have taken place online and were held more regularly: 8 such meetings were organised and held to better support the work of the organisation over a challenging year. The main topics discussed by the Council in 2020 included the following: the regular monetization of the financial situation of the organisation, inputs provided on the new Strategy Development process and projects and policy updates were shared for the organisation of the online Conference. Two thematic sessions were also organised, one on Climate Change and one on Fundraising.

The different reports can be accessed [here](#)



People Power – human resources

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

EUROPARC's Directorate is spread across Europe. To make sure we stay up to date with each other's work we have a team meeting every two weeks. Normally, we also all meet together once a year in December. Sadly, a face-to-face meeting was not possible in 2020, but we still had an informal team meeting online at the end of the year to take stock and prepare for the upcoming year, as well as celebrate together.

In 2020, some staff changes also took place. After six years of working for the Federation, Communications Manager Bárbara Pais left. We broadened the team with Esther Bossink in the role of Communications Officer and re-welcomed former intern Michaela Kozminova as a Communications and Membership Officer.

EUROPARC Commissions

EUROPARC Commissions are groups of experts within the EUROPARC network, that are brought together to advance, study and develop a specific topic relevant for the work of Protected Areas. Discover the work of the Healthy Parks Healthy People Commission on page 20, the work of the Protected Areas and Sustainable Agriculture Commission on page 17 and the Periurban Commission on page 6. Smaller internal Commissions and Task Forces are also often created to deliver a specific output, like for example the Climate Change Task Force. You can find their work on page 22.

EUROPARC Offices and Sections



Federation Finances

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

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, to (re-)presentation of your issues at European level, our network supports and stimulates the flow of ideas and creativity required for all aspects of Protected Area work.

In 2020, we extended a warm hello to a total of 15 members that joined the Federation, including from Greece, Italy, Spain, Netherlands, Denmark, United Kingdom and Sweden. With sadness, we said goodbye to 16 of our members from Romania, Norway, United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Finland, Belgium and France. In December 2020, the EUROPARC Federation totalled 385 members from 37 countries.

Financial Report

Balance Sheet

	2020	2019
Assets		
Assets		
Total fixed assets	3 704,85	7 813,99
Total current assets	338 139,06	342 593,96
Total Assets	341 843,91	350 407,95
Liabilities		
Profit Reserve	195 890,24	188 374,88
Liabilities		
Provisions	26 459,94	20 343,79
Accounts payable	119 493,73	141 689,28
Total Equity and Liability	341 843,91	350 407,95

Income and Expenditure

	2020	2019
Income		
Membership fees	353 259,12	344 802,5
Grants		
EC core grant	169 848,13	189 021,24
Project grants	191 515,02	302 308,70
Other income	142 796,68	108 118,66
Total Income	857 418,95	944 251,10
Simplified Expenditure		
Total Personnel costs	579 405,36	594 663,75
Total Office costs	28 050,62	27 500,00
Total Travel and Subsistence	17 835,21	114 709,53
Total Other direct costs	96 580,31	84 934,81
Total Overhead costs	51 738,85	58 879,10
Total External Assistance/ Professional Fees	76 293,24	60 535,98
Total costs	849 903,59	941 223,17
Result	7 515,36	3 027,93

Talking and listening

Developing smarter communications.

The first ever online EUROPARC Conference

The EUROPARC Conference is the highlight of the year for nature professionals throughout Europe - and we were not going to let COVID-19 stop that!

When it became clear that it would no longer be possible to have a face-to-face conference in Austria (which is postponed - not cancelled!), we decided to take the leap and organise our first ever online EUROPARC Conference.

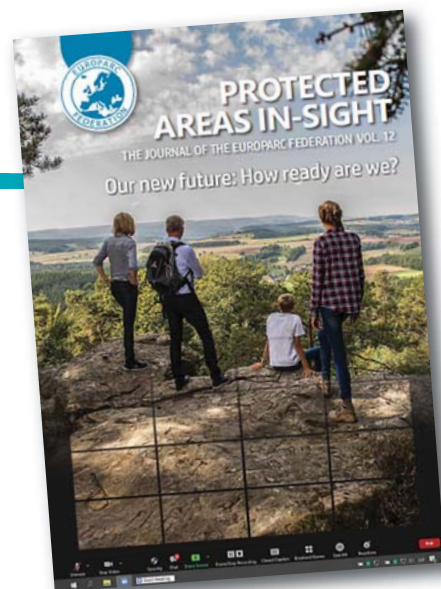
We realised that in these challenging times, international cooperation and connection is more important than ever. That's why EUROPARC wanted to ensure the opportunity to bring members together, albeit virtually. Thus, the online EUROPARC Conference 2020 "OUR NEW FUTURE: HOW READY ARE WE?" was born.

The innovative 2-day virtual event took place on the 8th and 9th of September. Following our look at the value of nature across multiple sectors of society during the 2019 EUROPARC Conference, in 2020 we decided to look to the future: we explored what skills and capacities Protected Areas need to implement the 2030 Biodiversity Strategy, and for the post COVID-19 world.

In the interactive online experience, we worked to enable delegates to connect with colleagues from across Europe and to bring the best of EUROPARC networking to the fore in these challenging times. Through our online platform, delegates could post things they found interesting, react to colleagues and connect with each other.

Thanks to our keynote speakers - Virginijus Sinkevičius, Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, Prof. Dr. Christian Baumgartner, Mike Appleton from IUCN and ProPark's Erica Stanciu - delegates started their day inspired. Workshops were then held in the afternoon sessions on topics ranging from professional nature management capacity building, climate change to sustainable tourism.

[The report of the conference can be found here](#)



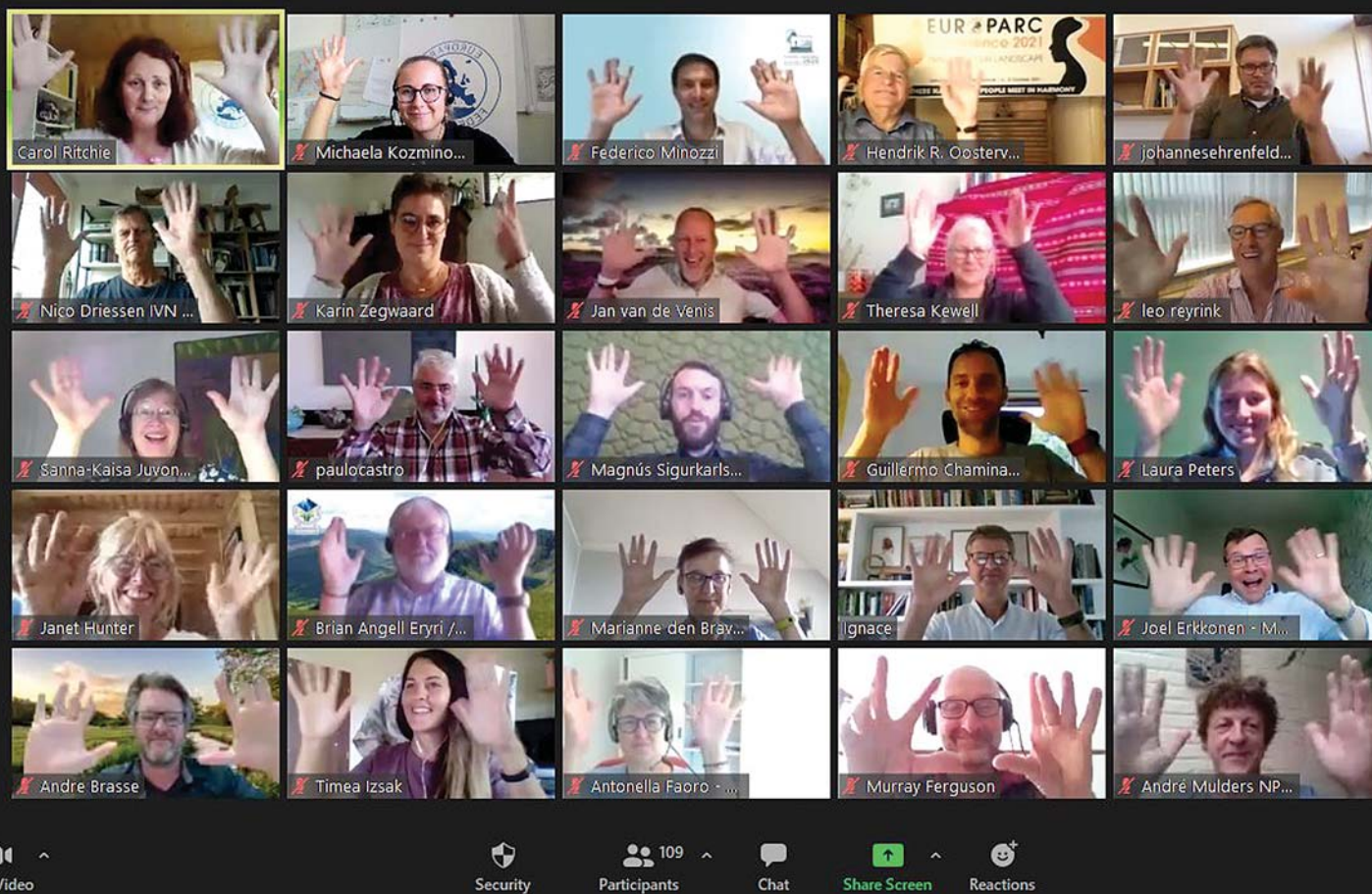
EUROPARC's online presence

EUROPARC continues to be very active on social media. Through our Facebook account, we reached 392,444 people and we now have over 7000 followers: on Twitter, EUROPARC has now 3479 followers and in 2020, the posts achieved 503.400 impressions. In April 2020, we also launched our Instagram page, which currently has over 700 followers. Additionally, we regularly send out a newsletter to over 6000 subscribers.

Our website is also regularly updated and a great information resource, with many case studies, webinars and interesting articles added continuously. Just last year, 56 case studies on a wide range of topics were added! We have also updated the webpages on EUROPARC's Policy Work, where you can find a lot of information to orient yourself in the complex Brussels environment.

[Check it out here](#)





EUROPARC Directorate had to connect through ZOOM in the strange year of 2020

Protected Areas In-Sight

Each year EUROPARC's annual journal Protected Areas In-Sight highlights the topic of the last Conference, brings thought-provoking articles from experts and inspiration on a wide range of topics from across the EUROPARC community. Following the theme of the 2020 Online Conference, the journal delves into the questions of 'Our New Future', explores how ready we are, and puts emphasis on the importance of nature professionals' capacity building. The 2020 edition is wrapped in a new design, symbolising the COVID challenge, which forced us to bring all our activities into the virtual ZOOM world. The publication is available in English, German and French.

[You can read it here](#)



Managing Director Federico Minozzi at the 10th regional workshop of the EU Platform for the coexistence between people and large carnivores

Events EUROPARC attended

As a result of the pandemic, the EUROPARC Directorate could of course not travel as usual. However, through online events, we were still able to be in contact with our peers and keep informed.

In May 2020, Executive Director Carol Ritchie attended the web conference from Interpret Europe 'Fostering heritage communities'. This conference laid the groundwork for the EUROPARC Conference and we want to thank our friends and colleagues at Interpret Europe for their help and advice.

Additionally, Carol Ritchie spoke at many webinars and conferences, including the IUCN WCPA 'Vital Sites: People and Parks; the pathways to social and ecological recovery.' This event focussed on how to increase the value of parks and Protected Areas for human health and well-being, social cohesion and economic recovery, whilst also achieving better conservation outcomes. Our Executive Director also shared the online stage with the Prime Minister of Iceland in a discussion about the creation of a new National Park in the country, explaining how national parks can connect people and places.

Our European Network

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.

www.europarc.org/sections

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



EUROPARC Central and Eastern Europe



EUROPARC
Central and Eastern Europe

The year 2020 started similarly to other years before. The section threw itself into everyday work and staff and Protected Area members were ready to plan activities for the year. Furthermore, Hortobágy National Park Directorate as section president together with Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority were ready to invite section members to the beautiful Danube-Delta to have the annual Members' Assembly of the section. Here, we could meet in person, discuss recent changes and challenges, chat about everyday life, learn about adaptation to climate change, work jointly on the new strategy of the Federation and visit the spectacular habitats of the Danube-Delta.

However, the COVID-19 crisis overwrote completely our everyday routine and ambitious plans. The members had the chance "to meet" only online since then, most of the events, amongst which our Members' Assembly, have been cancelled or went online. The situation challenged many of the members, but everybody tried to do their best. Additionally, the situation forced everybody to try and apply new techniques, new tools in tourism, in contact and in work, which might be a very positive outcome.

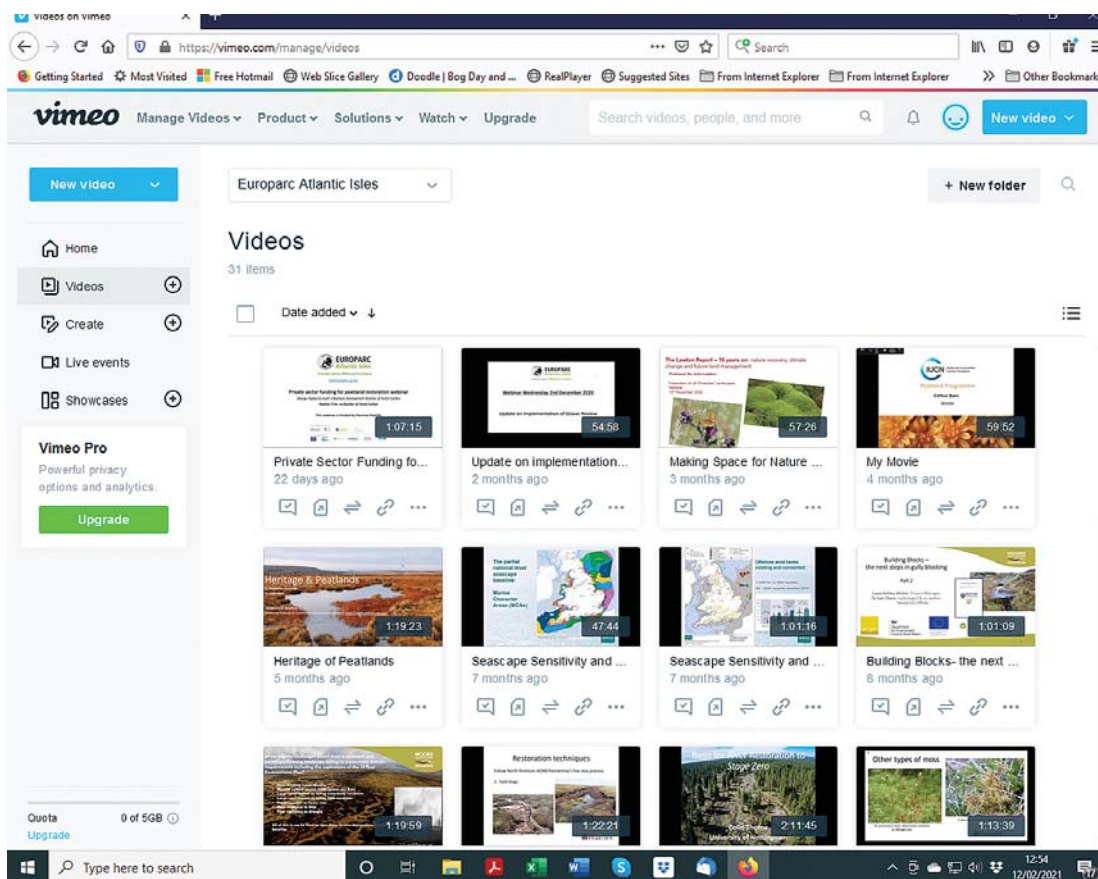
Some of the section members joined this year's European Day of Parks. Depending on national restrictions there were guided trips, bike tours, photo contests, but also online/video tours around Protected Areas or online quizzes.

We are at the beginning of joint work with the Carpathian Wetland Initiative, hopefully there will be a chance to tighten our connection in the near future.

One of the most important tasks was to work on the new strategy of the Federation, and to make our Central-European sound heard within EUROPARC family. Section members tried to do their best during the multi-circle collations, and actively took part at online workshops dedicated to the Strategy.

The Section was also represented at the General Assembly and the annual EUROPARC Conference. Both online events were very useful and inspiring for the members.

After this challenging year, dedication of active section members is still very difficult, or even more difficult. However, there is some progress, e.g. most of the members updated the contact information and sent their commitment in order to keep in touch more effectively. Moreover, more and more members were ready to involve young staff members in the work of EUROPARC.



EUROPARC Atlantic Isles

2020; what an interesting and challenging year it has been, and, in many ways, it has been busier than usual. We adapted quickly to working from home and getting to grips with the various technologies for communicating with one another, and as a result, we have communicated more.

Activities

EUROPARC Atlantic Isles (EAI) already had an active programme of webinars but these have gone from strength to strength. In 2020 we delivered the following webinars:

- Defra Glover update
- Making Space for Nature 10 years on
- Peat project and Peatland code update
- Heritage of Peatlands
- Seascape Sensitivity and Visual Buffers: Latest Approaches and Guidance Part 1: Visual buffers
- Seascape character sensitivity Part 2
- Building Blocks Peat Gulley's Part 1
- Building Blocks Peat Gulley's Part 2
- Pennine PeatLIFE Restoration Work Review
- Stage Zero river restoration approach, design and applications taken from Oregon into a UK river context of Honlicote Estate
- The Roles of Different Sphagnum Species in Bogs
- Working with Landscape character and qualities of designated landscapes – a Development Management Perspective
- Molinia Management

During this period, we had over 2500 webinar registrations and over 2500 views of the webinar recording from 17 countries and over 200 different organisations.

EAI recruited 5 new members to its board who have started to develop new ideas and activities. EAI now has a communications strategy as well as a plan to recruit more members. This year we recruited 7 new members including the key nature agencies throughout the UK and Ireland.

Our Erasmus+ study tours have been put on hold, but received a 1-year extension to the project. The groups are actively planning their study tours for when they are able to travel. The same applied to our site visit that were put on hold for this coming year.

Following the UK's exit from the EU, Protected Areas are keen to ensure that their links with colleagues throughout Europe are not lost, and EUROPARC plays a key role in achieving this.

The Future

This is an unknown for most, but for 2021 EAI is planning more webinars and a major online member's event. We hope we can restart our study tours later in the year and have an active presence at the EUROPARC Conference in the Netherlands



EUROPARC
Atlantic Isles

Francophone Section

In 2020, the Francophone Section was involved in the reflections on the renewal of the EUROPARC strategy and the collective development of a Position Paper on the Nature Regional Landscape Parks of Europe via the leadership of the platform by the Federation of French Nature Regional Parks.



Key activities in 2020

Facilitation of the "Regional nature parks Platform" by the FNRP:

The Federation of Nature Regional Parks (FNRP) in France coordinated and led, with EUROPARC, the working group composed of several networks of Nature Regional Landscape Parks including the Swiss, Luxembourg and Walloon networks, to co-write a policy paper for this category of Protected Areas. Several representatives of these networks, including Switzerland and France, took part in a virtual workshop organised and run by EUROPARC on 22 October during the Week of Regions in Brussels to present and launch this new document:

[Read it here](#)

Contribution to the renewal of the EUROPARC strategy:

The members of the Francophone Section participated in a workshop facilitated by EUROPARC, specific to each Section, to work on the new EUROPARC Strategy. Additionally, a workshop called "Presentation of EUROPARC tools" was co-organised by EUROPARC and the Francophone Section on 11 June, at the request of the members, in order to raise awareness about the diversity of EUROPARC activities. Finally, the Federation of Nature Regional Parks in France, as representative of the Francophone Section, took part in the workshop on 28 October with EUROPARC Directorate, Council and other Section representatives to further work on the future EUROPARC strategy.

Participation in network activities:

In order to develop exchanges of experience and collective projects between members, as well as to strengthen the importance of the national and EUROPARC networks and enhance their networking, there have been close contacts and exchanges between the technical teams of the national and EUROPARC network leaders, particularly on the following major subjects:

- Climate, Energy, Carbon: Collection of good practices of natural parks in Europe by the Austrian Park Network for their annual congress, survey of French regional parks on the "carbon" projects of other park networks in Europe, start of reflections on a European project.
- Natura 2000: A. Philippeau, who is in charge of the inter-network mission at the FNRP, has become a member of the EUROPARC Natura 2000 Commission.
- Sustainable agriculture, agro-ecology, CAP, food: F. Drugmant / F. Moesch, FNRP officers, are in contact with EUROPARC (S. Petrosillo) and the Sustainable Agriculture Commission.

Key successes and challenges in 2020

Launch of the Policy paper "Europe's Regional Nature and Landscape Parks"

Contributions to the EUROPARC strategy renewal workshops



Contact: Katy MONIER / kmonier@parcs-naturels-regionaux.fr

EUROPARC Deutschland e. V. becomes Nationale Naturlandschaften e. V.

Nationale
Naturlandschaften



An unusual year – also for Nationale Naturlandschaften e. V.

This year, new challenges had to be overcome, business had to be restructured and everyone needed to look to the future – including at Nationale Naturlandschaften e. V., the non-profit umbrella organisation for Germany's Protected Areas. In the future, the close alliance with the Verband der Deutschen Naturparke e. V. or VDN (*Association of German Nature Parks*) will enable the two organisations to work more closely together, under the umbrella brand "National Natural Landscapes", for the benefit of all areas. The concerted coordination of programmes and projects is intended to raise the profile of Protected Areas as important places for the physical and psychological well-being of the general public in Germany, as well as for eco-friendly tourism, especially during the coronavirus pandemic. Two important activities from 2020 are presented below.

Voluntourism for biodiversity in the National Natural Landscapes

With innovative partnerships between Protected Areas and tourist operators, National Natural Landscapes is supporting the establishment of attractive, and at the same time, professionally-meaningful "voluntourism" offers in four model areas (Müritz National Park, Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park, Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve and the Black Forest Nature Preserve). Voluntourism – the combination of holidaying with practical biodiversity activities – offers

holidaymakers the chance to support work in Protected Areas by taking part in conservation projects such as protecting moorland or natural habitats. At the same time, this raises holidaymakers' awareness of conservation concerns and encourages them to make a personal commitment – even beyond their holidays. The intention behind "Voluntourism for biodiversity" is that the concept will be imitated elsewhere. The project's guidelines for interested parties are intended to create impetus for the far-reaching circulation of new voluntourism ideas.

The project is promoted in the Federal Biodiversity Program by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation with funds from the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.

Digital visitor guidance in National Natural Landscapes

How can particularly sensitive areas in Germany's most cherished landscapes be protected while continuing to provide awe-inspiring nature experiences? Answering this question poses major challenges – and not just for Germany's protected areas. The need for effective visitor information and communication is especially evident during the current pandemic. An outdoor experience is usually planned on the Internet long before setting out on the trip, but maps and route information available on digital platforms rarely include the guidelines that need to be observed when out and about in Protected Areas. The digital world often displays paths that no longer

actually exist in reality in the Protected Areas. To overcome these challenges, National Natural Landscapes is getting involved as a board member in "Digitize the Planet" – a non-profit-making association for stakeholders from the outdoor sports, nature conservation and tourism sectors. The organisation digitizes conservation information and guidelines for using nature, from designated trails to off-limit areas. The information is freely accessible and is intended to be circulated primarily on outdoor platforms where it can be accessed by visitors at any time. In this way, "Digitize the Planet" supports digital visitor guidance in Protected Areas. In the first year since the association was founded, guidelines for over 40 activities in 11 pilot regions have already been digitized. In the coming year, the association also aims to recruit more members and supporters at international level in order to work together on large-scale digital solutions for local conflicts.

Future challenges in 2021

After a successful initial event in 2019, the second German-speaking MAB Youth Forum (Man and the Biosphere, MAB) will take place this year in the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve. The event, which lasts several days, encourages an informal exchange between young people living or working in biosphere reserves in order to gather their perspectives about the further development of these reserves, and to promote the participation of young people. In the future, the umbrella organisation aims to continue intensifying cooperation with its members, the VDN and the EUROPARC Federation, promote synergies as a central networking point and emphasize the importance of the protected areas for society.

Find more information about Nationale Naturlandschaften e. V. [here](#)



Young people's perspectives
of biosphere reserves at the
MAB Youth Forum
© Anand Anders



Federparchi-EUROPARC Italy

The Italian Federation of Parks and Nature Reserves, founded in 1989, joins bodies managing national and regional parks, Marine Protected Areas, regional and state nature reserves, and consists of regional coordination offices. Since June 2008, Federparchi has also been established as the Italian Section of the EUROPARC Federation. The Federation represents the Parks in the relations with the State, Regions, local Authorities, the European Union, and with any other public and private subject interested in the aims of the association and its members. Federparchi was created in 1989 as a coordination organization of several Regional Parks, and became, in 1996, the Italian Federation of Parks and Natural Reserves, today Federparchi involves many Italian Protected Areas and some Regions, Provinces, Municipalities, environmental associations; in 2020 we have over 150 members. In 2008, Federparchi took up the role of EUROPARC Italian Section, changing its name and becoming "Federparchi – Europarc Italia", thanks to the awareness that only in the international prospect the mission of being good nature conservers and promoters of an economical sustainable development could be better achieved.

Activities 2020

During 2020 Federparchi's activities have been focused on the support given to the Italian Protected Areas, their biodiversity and their capacity to manage efficaciously, effectively and safely their targets according to emergency situation due to COVID-19. The Italian section of EUROPARC focused on the relation between environment and health since December 2019 with a special meeting about "Parks and One Health" with "Campus Biomedical University" of Rome and the presence of Dr. William Bird CEO of Intelligent Health Institute of Reading (England), who also attended the EUROPARC Conference held in Latvia in September 2019. The workshop was particularly useful as on May 7th, soon after the first wave of Coronavirus pandemic, Federparchi and Campus Biomedical University released a security set of rules to visit Protected Areas, respecting all the cautions for sanitary safety according to Italian laws.

Such "safety protocol" was important in summer time when Italian natural Protected Areas registered an increasing number of visitors after the first period of lockdown.

Moreover the Italian section continued to lobby and engage national and local institutions; carrying on studies, projects and services for members and partners. Federparchi was able to use smart working already before the explosion of the pandemic. All the staff already had connections to the main server by remote personal computer so, the Italian section had no problem in continuing its work.

Regarding the Part I and Part II of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST), Federparchi supported the network of Protected Areas within the network and organized many webinars. Three webinars were held on 22, 28 of May and June 5th.

In September a special webinar (partially with physical presence) was held on the issue of sustainable mobility inside and outside Protected Areas. In December, there was the first webinar to promote ECST Part III amongst some Italian parks that already received Part II. The scheme for ECST Part III was adopted by Federparchi in July.

2020 was also the year of postponement of the IUCN Congress scheduled in Marseille for July. Federparchi had two meetings with new IUCN general director Bruno Oberle, in October and December.

Federparchi also increased the production of videos for a better dissemination and communication of its activities. In October a webinar was held on security when visiting parks and a video clip was released on Federparchi's website, and its social media. Between May and July Federparchi realized also six videos mixing nature and culture, using images by six national parks with excerpts of novels and poems.

Federparchi
FEDERAZIONE ITALIANA PARCHI E RISERVE NATURALI





Low Countries Section

At the EUROPARC Conference in Jurmala, Latvia on the 25th of September '19 the Low Countries Section held a meeting with 35 participants to discuss the actual topics and plan the activities for the next year.

Hendrik Oosterveld, president of the Low Countries Section, highlighted the importance of getting young people involved with the National Parks governance as was stated in the 'Youth Manifesto' at the EUROPARC Conference in Scotland in September 2018. The Junior Ranger program and the Youth + program are both important to achieve this. The Low Countries find it important to continue to work on this topic.

In 2020 one central theme was selected to work on: Climate and nature in relation to health. How can we reconnect people to nature? Can we find good examples, best practices to learn from? In May 2020 a meeting was planned to be organised in the Netherlands to explore this theme further and find inspiration from some existing examples.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic meant that we couldn't gather for a physical meeting. On the 20th of May a ZOOM meeting was organised instead. Besides the EUROPARC Federation Strategy Consultation process two main topics were discussed together with 17 participants from National Parks in Belgium and The Netherlands:

1. Involvement of young people in the National Parks:
 - There are 5 youth programs currently. These programs are briefly explained: IVN Junior Rangers, Youth +, Green Traineeship (social training in the time between studying and working through various assignments in National parks) Pop-up activities volunteering, Youth Consultancy
 - Junior Rangers will start up in Kalmthout (Belgium)
 - Efforts are being made in the Drenthe National Parks to involve young people in governance and policy. It appears to be difficult to interest young people in this. Research is being done into what young people want and which methods are best used for this.
 - At the NL Delta National Park there is a vacancy for a core team of 6 young people who will work as volunteers.
 - Current social discussions with a new relationship between health, climate and nature-inclusive agriculture require renewal.
 - In Belgium there are also various initiatives ongoing in connection with actively involving young people, such as the operation of the JNM (Youth Association for Nature and Environment).
2. EUROPARC's Healthy Parks Healthy People Commission (formerly, Health & Protected Areas Commission): Explanation strategy paper by Liesbeth Van Gysegem:

As a member of the EUROPARC Healthy Parks Healthy People Commission, Liesbeth Van Gysegem gave a brief explanation on the status of the Healthy Parks Healthy People program. The launch of the Jurmala communiqué in Latvia during the conference in September 2019 made a call to all parks to further develop activities around this theme in which best practices and cooperation between European parks are sought with the help of a toolkit.

"Healthy Parks Healthy People is a Europe wide program developed by the EUROPARC Federation to support parks and Protected Areas at the national / regional and local level to deliver better outcomes for the health of people and nature."

On June 29, 2020, EUROPARC organized a successful webinar "Healthy Parks Healthy People Europe: Connecting People and Nature for a healthier and happier Europe".

The Low Countries Section did not plan any further meetings in 2020. As the very proud host for the next EUROPARC Conference in 2021, if the situation permits, we hope to once again meet face to face for the EUROPARC Conference in Leeuwarden, The Netherlands from the 4th till 8th of October 2021! The conference theme will be: "Tribute to our landscape – Where nature and people meet in harmony".



EUROPARC
Low Countries

EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic



The activities of the EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic Section were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, as was everyone's activities on the globe. We had to refrain from meeting each other in person and instead took a digital leap in our communications.

Instead of travelling to the snowy northern part of Finland for our Members' Assembly, we sat down at our computers and greeted each other via our screens. The Members' Assembly took place on 22 April 2020. Views were exchanged about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in visitation numbers and visitor behaviour in the different Nordic-Baltic countries. The experiences and challenges were very similar: people had flocked to the national parks in big numbers including many first-time visitors resulting in overcrowding and unsuitable behaviour.

The EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic members participated in the EUROPARC Strategy consultation workshop for the Section on 9 June 2020. The Section emphasised the importance of Pan-European collaboration and cooperation and is looking forward to strengthening this.

A Section webinar "Share It!" was organised on 27 November 2020. In the webinar, the Section members had the opportunity to share information on an educational, inspirational, informative, fun, or an interesting activity with the other members of the Section. There were seven presentations from five countries. The presentations given were very relevant to Protected Area management, covering such topics as management of Natura 2000 areas, training of nature guides, nature education and communication in the indigenous Sámi languages, measuring litter, assessing impacts of visitation, and improvement of sustainability in urban national parks.

A Members' Meeting was organised online on 16 December 2020 wrapping up the year for the Section.

Our challenge continues to be how to engage more members in active Section work. The online working tools provide a good way to activate the membership. Through online meetings, it is possible to even increase interaction within our membership.

Metsähallitus, Parks & Wildlife Finland handed over the coordination to Sweden at the end of 2020. Parks & Wildlife Finland thanks all the Section members and the EUROPARC family for a great cooperation during our Section coordination 2018–2020.

*EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic Section members in the online Members' Meeting in December 2020.
Photo credit: Metsähallitus / Sanna-Kaisa Juvonen.*

*The EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic Section Members' Assembly would have been in Pyhä-Luosto National Park in Finland without the COVID-19 pandemic.
Photo credit: Metsähallitus / Juha Paso.*





Natural Park Poset-Maladeta. © Carlota Martínez, EUROPARC Spain

EUROPARC Spain 2020

EUROPARC Spain's Strategic Programme "Society and Protected Areas for human wellbeing" finished in 2020. This was our road map during the last 5 years and it included 8 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. The Technical office, managed by the Foundation Fernando González Bernáldez, is supported by 25 members, all public administrations at state, regional and provincial level. Moreover, the establishment of the so-called "Platform Society and Protected Areas" allows us to have a new mechanism to enlarge the vision of nature conservation beyond the limits of Protected Areas in order to work closer with other sectors. At the moment there are two municipalities that participate.

Key activities in 2020

Inspirational Experiences Award. In the second edition of this award, we received 68 applications: 22 in the category of EUROPARC Spain members, 39 of non-members and 7 under the special category of change climate. In this category, the project "Restoration of beach-dune systems as a conservation tool for preservation in a context of climate change" by the Montgrí Nature Park in Catalonia received the award.

[Other winners can be seen here](#)

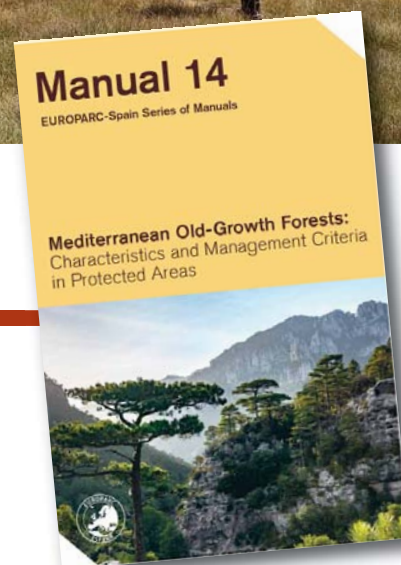
Project Co-Adaptation 2021: collaborative knowledge to accelerate adaptation to climate change. In 2020, several actions were developed: field study in two pilot areas (Garajonay National Park and Sierra Espuña Regional Park) about climate change perception, collaborative design of adaptation measures with stakeholders in the 2 pilot areas, and two webinars (Radical transformational leadership, protected areas and climate change; Mediterranean forests and climate change).

Sustainable Tourism. General support to the parks and enterprises involved in the Charter and specific support to Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve (Basque country) with their candidature for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism.

Carrying capacity. Studies in Gorbeia Natural Park and Protected Biotope San Juan de Gaztelugatxe (both in the Basque country) to support management decisions were finished.

Training. The main activity is the Master on Protected Areas, 20th edition: 20 participants, with many from Latin-American, had the experience of following the face to face Master degree under the difficult conditions related to COVID-19. It was still possible to have the field trip to Mariñas Coruñesas e Terras do Mandeo Biosphere Reserve (Galicia). Also, several training courses have been developed for employability in the Marine Natura 2000 Network, and some courses focused on Forest Management in the Natura 2000 Network. We also participated in the project lead by EUROPARC Federation LIFE e-Natura2000.edu.

[All publications available here](#)



Publications. During 2020 we published 11 e-bulletin and 2 Journals, as well as two manuals available in English: Mediterranean Old-Growth Forests, Characteristics and Management Criteria in Protected Areas (one of the results of **LIFE RedBosques**), and Protected Areas in the Face of Global Change Climate Change Adaptation in Planning and Management.

Alliances. A new collaboration agreement was signed in 2020 with the Association of Environmental Information Journalists.

Successes and challenges. One of the big successes was our webinar on the European Day of Parks, "Health, Biodiversity and Protected Areas", where we had 465 participants – a record for EUROPARC Spain! The main challenge is to keep giving support to members according to their priorities and the new challenges related to global change, including pandemics and climate change. During 2021 we will elaborate the new Strategic Programme based on the evaluation of the former programme, aligned with the European framework, like European policies and our contribution to the work of the EUROPARC Federation.

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