

2021



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.

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*Kobuleti © Agency of Protected Areas of Georgia
Titel: Adamello Brenta Regional Park © Stefania Petrosillo*

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President's remarks



We had hoped, like everyone, that 2021 would see us escape the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic. Sadly, this was not the case. For an international organisation working on networking and cooperation this has been quite challenging, but we successfully managed to adapt our work, taking stock of our experience from previous years. We managed to deliver most of the activities foreseen, even if it called upon our creative and innovative abilities, to use different techniques and technologies. We successfully ensured quality connections, on-line networking and utilising new and innovative participatory tools through our webinars, workshops podcasts and online conferences: this has enabled us to continue to support the work of our 397 members in 35 countries

2021 saw the election of a new EUROPARC Council and President, who are tasked with taking the strategy forward into 2030. Following an induction period, their collective skills, experience and wisdom will guide the direction of the Federation with a renewed commitment to serve the needs of the membership, grow the Federation and build the future of Parks and Protected Areas in Europe.

Thankfully, membership rate has remained stable in 2021: in December we had 12 more members than in the previous year and we remain grateful to the commitment and support of our members. This has ensured we have retained fees that provide us with leverage to co-finance European projects.

A substantial effort has been invested in 2021 for the development of new European projects that would address Nature and Biodiversity conservation priorities, while contributing to increase

our resources and deliver new tools for our members. We joined the consortium and actively contributed to the elaboration of the "NaturaConnect" Horizon Project, aiming to develop a resilient and coherent Trans-European Network for Nature and People, in support of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030 (the application was successful and will start in 2022). In 2021 we also started contributing to the development of another Horizon project, focused on health and biodiversity (the application was finalised and submitted in February '22). We gained a successful Erasmus+ project with ENOS (European Network of Outdoor Sports) which will develop a toolkit that bring nature, environment and sustainability in the heart of training for Outdoor Sports. Two LIFE Preparatory projects started. LIFE ENABLE will see the creation on the online European Nature Academy, which we hope will be the place of all Protected Area learning and skills development. Additionally, LIFE UrbanGreeningPlans, will build on the work of our Periurban Commission and the Periurban Parks toolkit, to ensure green spaces and Nature-based Solutions are within urban areas and connected to the wider parks outside of cities.

All projects are considered both in terms of how they enable us to deliver on our strategy on behalf of our members, as well as having a wider application for the whole EUROPARC network.

Collectively, through the delivery of actions across our strategy, EUROPARC has specifically contributed to the development and implementation of EU targets for Protected Areas as part of the EU Biodiversity Strategy. Further, we worked hard with other NGOs to ensure a better integration of nature and

biodiversity conservation priorities within the CAP. In addition, with our election as chair of the INGO committee on Environment, Climate Change, Heritage and Health, and EUROPARC's INGO status in the Bern Convention, we ensure our non-EU members' work is represented within the Council of Europe.

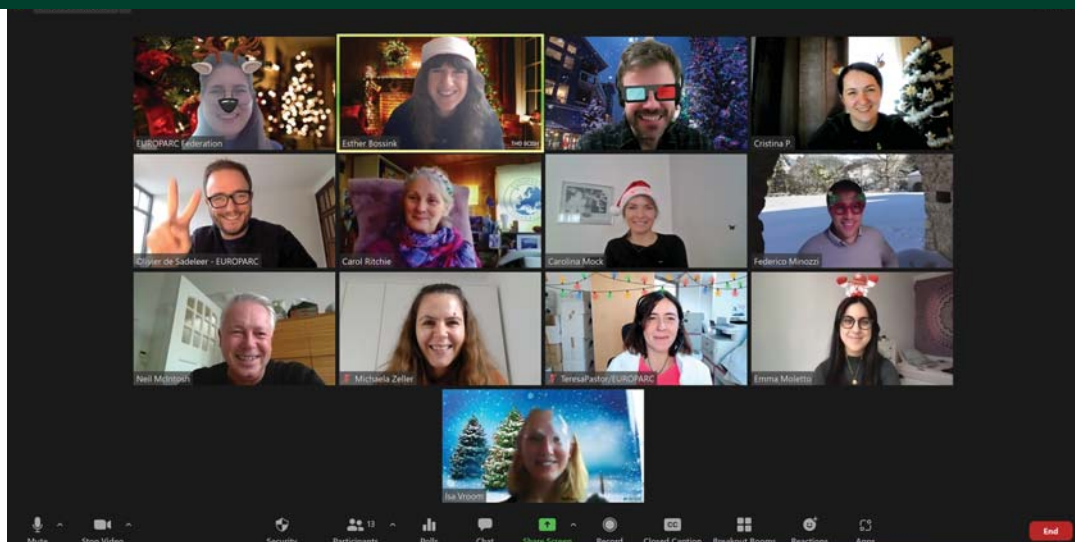
With our active presence in Brussels, EUROPARC continued to play a strong role in EU policy debate and implementation, coordinating involvement and contacts with EU Institutions and working in collaboration with other major partner organisations such as the EHF network, IUCN, WWF, EEB, BirdLife and others. By mobilising our extensive network, EUROPARC shared on multiple occasions first-hand practical management experiences and expertise directly with EU Institutions.

Through our efficient communication systems, we have been able to disseminate information, policy updates and guidelines directly to Protected Area and Natura 2000 managers as well as support and hopefully inspire our members through the online medium.

So, indeed, another challenging year, but one where challenges have been met and progress for Protected Areas in Europe has been advanced with greater recognition and value of the work we do.

Michael Hošek
President

*EUROPARC Team Time,
December 2021*



Managing places for nature
Making nature more connected
Grow the Protected Area network
Inspiring people



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.

Pine tree © Åsnen National Park

Managing places for nature

Protected Areas are better managed through international cooperation.

EUROPARC works closely with the Council of Europe through the Bern Convention. Here we contribute to the development and implementation of relevant nature conservation, policies and strategies in particular with countries outside the EU. EUROPARC ensures that the perspective of Europe's Protected Areas is taken into account. Additionally, we strive for coherence between EU policies and Council of Europe conventions.

EUROPARC also has International NGO participatory status. Within the Conference of International INGOs, we became chair of the new Environment, Climate Change, Heritage and Health – ECCH&H – Committee. This Committee aims to develop an integrated approach between human rights, environment, heritage and health in the Bern, Florence, Aarhus and Faro Conventions.



[Click here to learn more about the committee](#)

Putting Policy into Practice

EUROPARC's Seminar Dialogue 2021

Since 2017 EUROPARC and the Nature Unit of the Director General Environment (DG ENV) annually organise the "Seminar-Dialogue", a chance for Protected Area managers to interact and share ideas and experience with EU policy makers. On the 1st of June 2021, around 50 representatives of EUROPARC members had the chance to meet online with the European Commission (EC). The event focussed on targets, criteria, guidelines, and funds for the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030, as well as the role of Protected Areas in its implementation.

The Commission's presentation detailed the goals for Protected Areas, the commitments of the European Union and Member States, and how conservation objectives and measures can be established and enforced. The Commission also discussed the role of Natura 2000 and other Protected Areas according to national and regional legal frameworks, to reach the target of 30% land and marine Protected Areas. Additionally, we looked closer at the definition of "strict protection".

EUROPARC in turn presented the results of internal consultations on the Protected Area targets and EU Biodiversity Strategy, which EUROPARC fully support. Additionally, we underlined the importance of adequate

resources and capacity building to ensure the right conditions for good management. The Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park, presented a clear example of the successes and challenges of promoting a Park, enlarging its borders, managing strict protection reserves and exchanging with local communities. The Dutch-German Cross Border Nature Park Maas-Swalm-Nette presented their restoration work and the potential it holds as a model for Protected Areas.

In addition, the representative of Director General Agriculture (DG ENV) offered an interesting perspective on the connections between nature conservation and the new Common Agricultural Policy.

The Seminar Dialogue of 2021 helped Parks to learn more details about the new Biodiversity Strategy and other connected policies. At the same time, it was useful for the Commission to better understand important concerns of Parks, especially about the concept behind "strict protection" and about the increase of Protected Areas' surface, which will need enough resources and good management to be effective.

You can download the report and different presentations [here](#)

Making nature more connected

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

New Toolkit on Periurban Parks

Periurban Parks have the dual challenge of preserving biodiversity and hosting large groups of people daily. To support new and existing Periurban Parks, EUROPARC's Periurban Commission published the Toolkit: "Planning and Managing Periurban Parks". It is structured around 5 topics:

- Designing the Park
- Enhancing Biodiversity
- Hosting People
- Communicating and Learning with People – Awareness Raising & Environmental Education
- Working with People – Governance & Partnerships

For each topic, a range of tips, tools, information and inspiration is provided to ensure the area is planned and managed in the most effective way. Although aimed at Periurban Parks, the toolkit gives all Protected Areas the opportunity to learn from the experience of Periurban Parks. It is also a useful tool for policy-makers that want to promote the protection of natural greenspaces in and around cities.

[You can discover the toolkit here.](#)



Cover Periurban Toolkit

Putting Policy into Practice

Following consultations with members, EUROPARC summarised what is needed to make sure the EU Biodiversity Strategy reaches its full potential from the perspective of Europe's Protective Areas. A range of issues were identified including funding, criteria for the identification of areas under legal protection and effective management.

[Our recommendations can be found here.](#)

The EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030 has high ambitions. EUROPARC is willing to actively support the European Commission and Member States to ensure an effective involvement of Protected Areas in the process and contribute to the successful implementation of the strategy.

Large Carnivores

EUROPARC is an active member of the EU Large Carnivores Platform. In this framework, we organised the workshop "Coexistence with Large Carnivores - The Role of Protected Areas". The workshop welcomed 50 participants from 14 countries. It included interventions from the European Commission, the Large Carnivores Platform and case studies from different Protected Areas in Europe.

In smaller groups, participants worked on what exactly the role of Protected Areas should be to promote and lead successful coexistence processes. This includes cooperation with stakeholders, clearer processes for compensation measures for farmers and the alignment of policies and measures amongst regional authorities and Protected Areas.

[You can find all outcomes of the Workshop here.](#)

Grow the Protected Area network



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

The 2-year LIFE Preparatory project, LIFE UrbanGreeningPlans, driven by EUROPARC's Periurban Commission and co-led by Brussels Environment and EUROPARC, started in May 2021.

Through demonstrating and implementing innovative practices, sharing case studies and producing guidelines, the project aims to pave the way for urban areas throughout Europe to include Green Infrastructure, Nature-based Solutions and the promotion of healthy ecosystems in their urban planning.

A workshop to discuss how we can create greener cities was organised as a hybrid event in Brussels in November. The event highlighted that we need to rethink our understanding of a city. Nature can no longer be something found only outside of urban centres. At the same time, there is a heightened importance of keeping the countryside around cities alive. In order for that to happen, accessibility, ecological connectivity and management needs to improve. Additionally, cities will need to be increasingly resilient against extreme climate phenomena. This means that ideally, Green Infrastructure should be prioritised over other planning uses.

[A report with all outcomes and recommendations of the meeting can be found here.](#)

EUROPARC's Periurban Commission also organised the webinar "Urban forestry as a Nature Based Solution to mitigate climate change and reduce pollution" within the framework of the 2021 EU Green Week dedicated to the 'zero pollution' ambition. This webinar explored the innovative Nature-based Solution (NbS) of 'urban forestry'.

163 people attended and learned more about the scientific evidence on benefits, and potential drawbacks, of urban forestry. One of the speakers, Prof. Francesc Baró emphasized that effectiveness of urban forestry as a NbS is always dependent on many factors, as there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Additionally, the planning, implementation and challenges of the ambitious forestry plan set up by the City of Milano to plant 1 Million Trees by 2030 was presented.

[All EUROPARC webinars can be found here.](#)

Marine

On December 21st EUROPARC organised the webinar "Restoring our marine environment to tackle Climate Change", which attracted 97 participants. The webinar aimed to provide our members with existing examples of how restoring the natural capacity of the marine environment can contribute to adapt to climate change whilst maintain the provision of ecosystems services they offer. The session covered two nature restoration projects in two Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas (MPAs): the project LIFE ADAPTABLUES and the LIFE RocPop and ReLife projects.

Connections were made with MedPan, the Mediterranean Network of Marine Protected Areas, through the project LIFE ENABLE, in which both EUROPARC and MedPan are partners. Likewise, EUROPARC participated both online and in presence to different meetings of the Mediterranean MPA Forum and closely followed the process of the Roadmap for Mediterranean MPAs to boost the implementation of the CBD Aichi Target 11 / Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. Through establishing partnerships with external organisations such as MedPan, EUROPARC seeks to expand the competences and connections present in our network.

Putting Policy into Practice

To support our Marine Protected Area (MPA) members, EUROPARC created a new Marine Policy section in the policy webpages of our website. It includes information on the state of play of policies relevant for MPAs, the status of Europe's MPAs and their involvement in the EU Biodiversity Strategy, other important international policies, as well as available funding for these areas.

You can find it here.

Nature Restoration

EUROPARC was one of 150 European NGOs that called upon the European Commission to include overarching – and ambitious – targets in the EU Nature Restoration Law.

A letter was sent to European Commission Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans and the Environment Commissioner Viginijus Sinkevičius raising concerns about the overall ambition of the EU Nature Restoration Law. The key messages included:

- The upcoming EU nature restoration law needs to include overarching targets to restore at least 15% of the EU's land, river length and sea area by 2030.
- We cannot afford to wait to restore Europe's nature on a large scale.
- Large-scale and targeted nature restoration can create synergies between the responses to the climate and biodiversity crises.

[You can read the full letter here.](#)

LIFE UrbanGreeningPlans project partners in Brussels



Inspiring People

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

European Day of Parks

Europe's Protected Areas are hard at work for us every single day. To celebrate that, EUROPARC organises the European Day of Parks (EDoP) every year on the 24th of May since 1999. Of course, the ongoing pandemic meant face-to-face events could not be organised everywhere, but we managed to celebrate all over Europe nonetheless.

In 2021, we looked at "Parks: The Next Generation". The COVID-19 crisis highlighted once more the importance of green spaces in Europe. As such, EUROPARC is convinced that Parks and Protected Areas need to be involved in discussions about the future, and work hard on efficient solutions to ensure a safer and sustainable Europe.

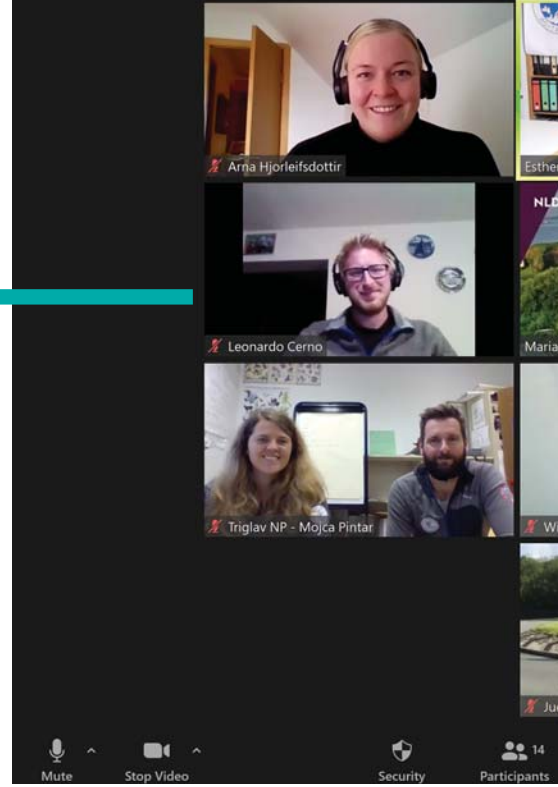
We asked Parks to look at the challenges 2020 posed and how they learned from it. One thing is clear: it's time to refresh and rethink what Parks offer, to adapt to new methods of communication, new infrastructures and new visitors. Of course, the theme also had a literal meaning: involving young people is essential if Parks want to be prepared for an ever-changing future.



To support Parks in getting the word out on all the work they are doing, EUROPARC asked members to send one minute video messages - to which many happily replied. The videos reached almost 35.000 people and got over 10200 views!

It wasn't all digital though: over 80 events were registered on our website. You can find out what was happening across Europe in the Outreach and Dissemination Report.

[Read the report here.](#)



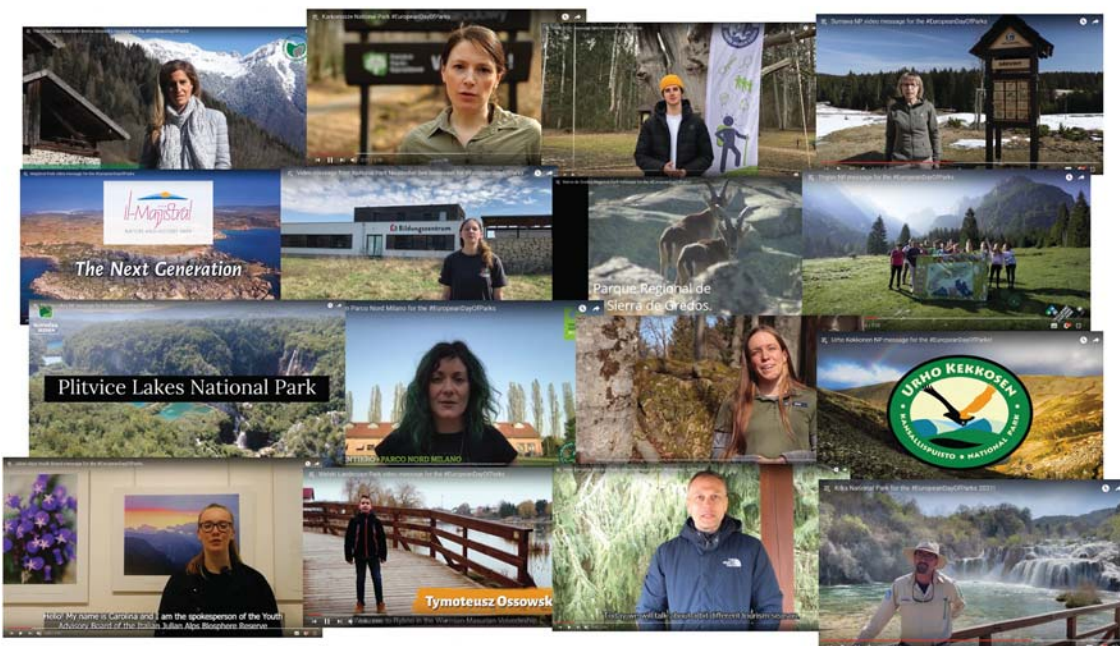
Junior Ranger and Youth+

Organising events and Junior Ranger Camps where young people across Europe could get together continued to be difficult in 2021. However, we wanted to give special attention to our youngsters nonetheless, especially those pushing the EUROPARC Youth Manifesto forward.

The European Day of Parks had a special youth element to it and we received great inputs from young people in Protected Areas. It helped us underline the importance of involving young people in all levels of Protected Area management.

Additionally, we started a new registration process for our Youth Programmes to ensure EUROPARC has the most up to date info on all initiatives in Europe.

[You can find all the information here.](#)



All videos EDoP 2021



Workshop on Youth Participation at the Online EUROPARC Conference



Throughout the year, we also contacted motivated youngsters in Protected Areas to learn more about their experiences. In 2020, Youth+ in Estonia established their own NGO. The Association of Young Conservationist of Estonian National Parks allows these young people (aged 17-22) to gain independence and additional motivation for contributing to nature protection in Estonia. To get to know them better we interviewed member Uku Freiberg.

We also asked Youth Committee member Aidan Cronin some questions about the work they are doing in Loch Lomond National Park. It's a great example of the EUROPARC Youth Manifesto put into action and helps young people to get involved in the National Park's decision making, and develop and learn new skills.

Additionally, a guest article was written by Katy Foxford. It details how Yorkshire Dales National Park is making the EUROPARC Youth Manifesto a reality by directly integrating it into the work of the Protected Area and collaborating with youngsters on topics that are important to them.



Additionally, two articles on youth participation were included in our Protected Areas Insight 2021.

We also organised two workshops focussed on youth participation in Protected Areas. Including one during our online Conference that looked at how Parks can become #StrongerWithYouth by Implementing the EUROPARC Youth Manifesto to include young people. To make sure young people could also attend the Conference, we had a special youth price for everyone under 26.

We ran a second workshop on the future of the Junior Ranger and Youth+ programmes for mentors in December. We worked on potential future projects and presented the new Youth+ Manual. It serves as a starting point for those interested in beginning their own Youth+ programmes.

Aidan Cronin and fellow members of the Loch Lomond Youth Committee

You can find it here.

All of these articles, and many more resources, can be found in the special section of our Knowledge Hub here.

Helping people and organisations learn

Collaborative work
Staff development
Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarships
Training



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.

Reisa National Park
© R. Benonisen

Collaborative work

Bringing people together, creating a stronger network.

Transboundary Parks Programme

The Transboundary Parks Programme is a special verification and certification system that promotes and facilitates cross-border cooperation between European Protected Areas. In 2021 the Käsivarsi Wilderness Area (FI), the Reisa National Park (NO) and the Ráisduottarháldi Protected Landscape (NO), who together compose the Háldi Transboundary Area, received the certification of the Transboundary Park Programme and joined the TransParcNet. Podyjí and Thayatal National Parks (CZ-AU) and Krkonoše and Karkonosze National Parks (CZ-PL) successfully renewed their TransBoundary Parks certification.

The EUROPARC Transboundary Parks Task Force also received two new Co-chairs: Mojca Smolej from Slovenia and Leo Reyrink from The Netherlands.

The Taskforce sent a contribution to the Conference of the Future of Europe stating that the EUROPARC Transboundary Protected Areas are ready to collaborate with the European Institutions for a Green Future for Europe.

[You can read it here.](#)



Verification of Krkonoše and Karkonosze National Parks © Jakub Kašpar

2021 was also the International Year of Peace and Trust. To celebrate, EUROPARC, in collaboration with EUROPARC Spain and EUROPARC Francophone, organised two highly participatory webinars in Spanish and French to explore the cross-border cooperation within these geographical areas.

TransParcNet 2021

Due to the COVID-19 travel restrictions, the TransParcNet Meeting was organised online. The event was addressed to TransParcNet members and some specially invited cross border areas. The meeting looked at the EU Green Deal and how Transboundary Protected Areas can contribute to achieving its goals. What can this new EU approach offer to the cross-border Protected Areas? And what is the contribution that EUROPARC Transboundary Areas can provide to reach the Green Deal's crucial objectives for the whole European continent? The TransParcNet Meeting 2021 addressed these questions and tried to find possible answers.

[You can read the report of the meeting here.](#)

More than 70 participants from 24 countries attended the event. Mrs Jutta Paulus, Member of European Parliament (Greens-EFA, Germany), and Mr Nicolae Ștefănuță, Member of European Parliament (Renew, Romania) also attended and presented.

Moreover, representatives of the DG ENV, DG EAC/ Erasmus+ and DG REGIO/IPA CBC of the European Commission took part in the meeting, as well as representatives of the Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget (COTER) and Commission for Environment, Climate Change and Energy (ENVE) of the Committee of Regions. The "Green Deal Going Local" initiative, which aims at placing local entities at the core of the European Green Deal, was also discussed.

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-NATURA2000.edu concluded in July 2021. All objectives were successfully achieved with results exceeding expectations. Three innovative learning modules for selected priority competence areas were created and delivered. Course modules led to measurable gains in the knowledge and skills required to manage Natura 2000 areas. Competencies in areas such as Natura 2000 policy and planning, biodiversity conservation, awareness and education, communication and collaboration and community-based engagement were comprehensively covered. Through workshops, webinars, interactive online learning materials, video demonstrations, case studies, a virtual Summer School and a new web-based 'hub', the project increased access to a range of information and enabled experience exchanges among a large group of participants. From the independent external evaluation, 96% of the 78 'core' project participants from 19 countries are actively applying their learning to benefit their Natura 2000 sites and Protected Areas across Europe.



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

Also, a range of highly-regarded dissemination activities and intensive media work were produced. Led by EUROPARC, the end of project EC assessment congratulated the whole project team stating that: "... the remarkable LIFE project has successfully established and tested very interesting novel approaches and methods of learning to improve knowledge and capacity amongst Natura 2000 managers on both public and private land, across the EU". The LIFEedu Guidelines for Replicability report can be a valuable reference for other projects engaged in capacity building for Natura 2000 and Protected Area managers. The report provides

replicable and up-scalable capacity building actions. It promotes sustainable professional training and career development for current and future Natura 2000 managers. Some of the main points for future competence-based learning initiatives the need to:

- Develop tools to better understand capacity building needs;
- Deliver training courses using competence-based approaches;
- Broaden the 'tool pool', including the eNatura2000 App, networking and other project deliverables;
- Continue to develop new opportunities emerging from the LIFE e-Natura2000.edu project.

You can find the project outcomes here.



EUROPARC
FEDERATION



ELO
European Landowners' Organisation



Fundación Interuniversitaria
Fernando González Bernáldez
PARA LOS ESPACIOS NATURALES



PROPARC
PENTRU ARII PROTEJATE



Länsstyrelsen
Skåne



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

TESAF

LIFE ENABLE

Building on the success of LIFEedu, EUROPARC led the formation of a consortium of 8 partners and developed a new LIFE Programme project proposal. Submitted in September 2020, LIFE ENABLE was approved and started in August 2021.

This ambitious project will create the European Nature Academy for Blended Learning (ENABLE). Following the kick-off meeting in September 2021, a contract was awarded for the technical development of main tools to be created and used in the project - the Academy's training hub, a MOOC, and the further development of the eNatura2000 App.



With a specific focus on developing the core competencies required by Forest and Marine Natura 2000 and Protected Area managers, LIFE ENABLE will develop and run 10 courses between 2023 and 2024. Work to define the courses and the content started in early 2022. A call for participants will be launched in October 2022 and the training hub will be up-and-running in early 2023.

Learn more about the project here.





Kemer National Park, Kemer-bog trail © Agnese Balandina, Nature Conservation Agency

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

2021 was a big year for EUROPARC webinars! 13 webinars were organised, and we had over 2600 attendees, resulting in an average of 200 participants per session. Webinars were also organised in Spanish, French and German.

EUROPARC Podcast

A new digital communication tool was also tested in 2021: EUROPARC Podcasts "Voices from the Parks". With the Podcasts we aim to look closer at interesting developments amongst our membership and beyond. In 2021 we published three podcasts. We interviewed former EUROPARC president Ignace Schops, EC Policy Officer Sophia Pachini and the 2020 Alfred Toepfer Scholarship winners.



You can listen to all podcasts here.

Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarship

Each year the EUROPARC Federation, with support from the Alfred Toepfer Stiftung, awards three Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarships to promising young conservationists. In 2021 we decided to not open the call for a new scholarship, due to ongoing delays concerning the COVID-19 pandemic. We did take the opportunity to officially announce the 2020 winners: Anna Jennings, Réka Szilágyi and Rosie Corner.

Get to know the 2020 winners:



Anna Jennings works for the Peak District National Park Authority as an Engagement Ranger. Convinced of the positive role of Protected Areas, she focuses on mental health and wellbeing. Since past and current mental health projects in the Peak District were all short term and then stopped due to lack of funding, Anna wants to find a way to maximise the benefits for people and nature in the long term.



Réka Szilágyi works as IT professional at Milvus Group Bird and Nature Protection Association (Targu Mures, Romania). Focussing on the protection and restoration of European vulture species, she wants to gain more knowledge about the work of wildlife rehabilitation centres in different European Protected Areas and study their contribution to the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 and collect knowledge of local and international policies regarding rehabilitation projects comparing them to Romanian legislation.



Rosie Corner has been working as Local Plan Officer within the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. Here she is responsible for assisting the Sustainable Development Manager with delivering the Local Plan. Rosie has a strong interest in spiritual connection to nature and that is what her project focuses on. She wants to visit a range of sacred sites to explore the overlapping concepts which connect Protected Areas and sacred natural sites and answer the question: should all natural protected sites be considered sacred?

Training

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

EUROPARC Council Induction

A new Council was elected during EUROPARC's General Assembly 2021. To prepare them for their new role, most of the newly elected EUROPARC Council got together for the first time ever at "Gut Siggen" in Eastern Germany for their induction.

Here, they received information on the governance, legal, financial and communication aspects of the EUROPARC Federation. It was also decided that Pete Rawcliffe and Marta Mugica would function as Vice Presidents. Of course, there was time for the Council to informally get to know each other as well.

The stay was made possible through the generous support of the Alfred Toepfer Stiftung.

EUROPARC x Gymglish

EUROPARC broke new ground in 2021! We've started a collaboration with the online language learning platform "Gymglish". Those working in conservation know the importance of effective communications. Especially in an international field, good English skills are essential.

Through the partnership with Gymglish, those that sign up will receive a free month of English lessons. Participants that want to continue with their lessons after the trial period can sign up to continue learning. For each person that signs up, EUROPARC will receive a small commission.

[You can learn more about the partnership here.](#)



EUROPARC FEDERATION & gymglish

Fun, short & personalised English lessons delivered straight to your inbox or phone

Exclusive EUROPARC Offer:

One month free trial, sign up now!

Illustration credit: studiotogtok / stories / macrovector / Freepik



The EUROPARC Council in Siggen: From left to right and back to front Michael Hošek, Executive Director Carol Ritchie, Hendrik Oosterveld, Marta Mugica, Leelo Kukk and Stefano Santi.



SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: TRAINING FOR TOMORROW - TRAINER COURSE

A blended learning course delivered by the EUROPARC Federation on behalf of the STTfT project

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

STTfT



Erasmus+ Sustainable Tourism Training for Tomorrow - Train the Trainer Course

EUROPARC led a “blended” learning course on behalf of the STTfT project.

The course, which had 20 participants from across Europe, was supposed to take place both on- and offline. However, due to the ongoing pandemic, it was fully hosted online on EUROPARC’s Moodle channels.

This “Train the Trainer” course, gave participants a chance to be trained in the toolkit that was developed within the project (see page 17) and provided multiplier information and capacity building in sustainable tourism training.

The course offered insights into the psychology behind learning, the qualities a trainer should have, how to effectively communicate as a trainer and how trainers can create Learning Objectives, Assessment and Evaluations.

This would then in turn allow participants to become trainers of the STTfT toolkit themselves and help actively create the sustainable tourism training for tomorrow.

SDGimp - Decision-making support system for implementing the goals for sustainable development in protected areas

EUROPARC had a consulting role in this Erasmus+ project on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that ran from 2018 to 2021.

The project aimed to present the SDGs and show approaches on how to implement them in Protected Areas. For this purpose, a **learning platform** and supplementary materials for the implementation of the SDGs in practice were developed.

EUROPARC also organised a final online workshop that served as a multiplier event. You can find all of the outcomes

[on our website here.](#)

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

In 2021, 16 Protected Areas were awarded with the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas. Despite the ongoing pandemic, all verifications could take place on-site. Three Parks, all coming from Italy, became Sustainable Destinations for the first time: Isola Pantelleria National Park, Ligurian Alps Regional Nature Park and Vesuvio National Park.

With these new additions, the network now has 91 Sustainable Destinations from 15 countries.

You can find them all on this interactive map.

Additionally, the Nordic-Baltic Section awarded their first Sustainable Partner: the Kullagårdens Wårdshus from the Kullaberg Nature Reserve.

EUROPARC also published a podcast interview with Sofia Pachini, former Policy Officer in Nature Protection at the Directorate-General for Environment, about Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas and Natura 2000 sites. In it, Sophia spoke about the importance of tourism for nature conservation and presented an overview of existing European policies and the challenges affecting tourism management in European Parks.

You can listen to it here.



Anna Nilsson, business manager in Höganäs municipality, Peter and Malin Sandström from Kullagårdens Wårdshus and Jimena Castillo, coordinator for Europarc at the County Administrative Board. Photo: Josefine Marklund

STTfT project outcomes

Over the course of 3 years, the Erasmus+ Project "Sustainable Tourism Training for Tomorrow" (STTfT) worked on building the capacity of Protected Area stakeholders in the field of sustainable tourism. Project outcomes include a Training Toolkit and the Recommendations for Policy and Practice report.

One of the main outcomes of the STTfT project was the free online learning platform. Here, users can learn more about key training needs that are currently experienced by professionals working on sustainable tourism in Protected Areas. The platform provides **9 learning modules in 4 languages** (English, French, Italian and Spanish), based on the key topics of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism. Additionally, to complement this online training platform, a **Training Toolkit** was developed.

Finally, the 'Recommendation for Policy and Practice' report provides a summary of the outputs, insights and lessons learned throughout the project. The report serves as recommendations for practitioners and policy-makers, that can then build on the project's deliverables to continue to develop skills for sustainable tourism in European Protected Areas and beyond.

You can find all of these outputs on the EUROPARC website here.



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



Sustainable agriculture in and around Protected Areas

Promoting nature friendly agricultural practices across Europe.

Agriculture is the most important sector in rural areas, which is why EUROPARC is actively involved in supporting dialogue and partnership between Protected Area managers and farmers. In the 2021 webinar on agriculture "Protected Areas and Conventional Agriculture: opportunities and challenges for cooperation" we looked closer at the relationships within the agroindustry in Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands and the challenges posed by balancing nature protection and socio-economic development, whilst looking for win-win situations, poses. Over 140 participants attended the webinar. You can find the outcomes and a recording

[here.](#)

During the EUROPARC Conference 2021, the participants of the workshop on Sustainable Agriculture tried to answer the following questions: "How do we achieve nature inclusive agriculture? How do we reach an alliance with farmers?" and "What contributions can we expect from, and offer to the new Common Agriculture Policy, the Farm to Fork Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy"?

The workshop underlined that healthy landscapes and healthy natural resources are necessary for sustainable food production. The EU Green Deal states the importance of building a new green economy: to achieve that, agriculture and Protected Area managers can and should be allied, together with consumers. The workshop also stressed the need for Protected Areas to be active in the creation of the CAP national strategy plans. A case study on Biodiverse farming in Schiermonnikoog National Park was presented by The Zwart Schiermonnikoog National Park (NL) to stimulate the discussions.



Putting Policy into Practice

2021 saw the end of the long process to adopt the new European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Before it was finalised, EUROPARC, together with 41 other NGO's and civil society organisations sent a joint letter to the negotiators of the "super trilogue" to urge them to bring the CAP in line with the EU Green Deal. The letter states the needs for: that farmers to be empowered to adopt climate-, nature-, people-, and animal-friendly farming practices; principles, objectives and targets of the Green Deal to be incorporated into the CAP; and the 'do no harm' principle to be implemented into the CAP through strong environmental and social conditionality and safeguards. The entire letter can be found on our website.

[Read it here.](#)

Additionally, in the new Position Paper "Protected Areas as laboratories for Sustainable Agriculture. The role of Protected Areas in implementing the EU Green Deal & EU Agricultural Policies", developed with the support of the EUROPARC Commission for Agriculture and Protected Areas, EUROPARC underlines how crucial rural Protected Areas are for the establishment of new and real eco-friendly agriculture.

[You can read it here.](#)

EUROPARC also published recommendations for the National Strategic Plans, that each Member State is required to prepare in the framework of the new CAP. You can read "the Role of Protected Areas and Natura 2000 sites, in the National Strategic Plans of the European Common Agricultural Policy – EUROPARC RECOMMENDATIONS 2021" on our website.

[Check it out here.](#)



© Cascais Ambiente



Strictly connected with sustainable agriculture is the Farm to Fork Strategy. That is why in 2021 EUROPARC continued to be part of the European Food Policy Coalition, and dialogue with the European Parliament. We were encouraged to see that the European Parliament resolution on the Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system emphasised the need to ensure coherence between the Farm to Fork Strategy and the objectives of the European Green Deal. It also especially mentioned the contribution of Natura 2000 and Marine Protected Areas for healthy food production in Europe.



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 2020, the Healthy Parks Healthy People Europe Programme (HPHPe) was officially launched. We continued to build upon this work in 2021.

In January during the webinar "Nature is Good Medicine: practical steps for implementing a Healthy Parks Healthy People approach", EUROPARC and the HPHPe Commission launched the toolkit accompanying the programme.

The toolkit aims to help those responsible for the management of Parks and Protected Areas to realise the potential of their sites as natural health centres in practice. Ways to implement the four key elements of the toolkit – Making the case; Building partnerships; Developing capacity & practice; and Connecting people & nature – were explored using presentations and case studies from England, Scotland and Finland. Additionally, the HPHPe Check List, which annexes the toolkit, provides a step-by-step guide on how to implement the programme. Discover the toolkit [here](#).



During the online EUROPARC Conference, we also had a special workshop on health, where we looked at the impact of COVID-19 on Park's health. It shone a light on social prescriptions as a tool to help develop partnerships with the health sector.

Branching Out Project Scotland (UK) © Lorne Gill, SNH





SEE Project meeting in Serbia



SEE Project meeting in Portugal

Outdoor Sports

The ERASMUS+ SEE - Sustainability and Environmental Education in Outdoor Sports project started with the webinar "Outdoor Sports – Engaging with or using nature?", organised by EUROPARC. It was followed by a survey conducted amongst our members on the perceived impacts different types of outdoor sports have on Protected Areas.

With the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, two 'live' exchange meetings were again possible. They served as opportunities to discuss different methods to educate participants about responsible practices to minimize impacts on the natural environment. In addition, participants also discussed how planning and good preparation for any outdoor activity are essential in order to avoid environmental impacts and accidents.

The first meeting was in Tara National Park – Serbia and had a special focus on Hiking and Mountaineering. The second one took place in Viana do Castelo - Portugal and focussed on surfing and kayaking. Both meetings looked specifically at how education for outdoor sports can help stimulate better behaviour in natural areas and minimise impacts on the natural area. The meetings also provided a renewed opportunity to promote the 10 Good Principles of Outdoor Sports.



Find the 10 Good Principles here!



ENOS
European Network of Outdoor Sports



Climate Change

Supporting Protected Areas on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

© Myrthe Fonck, PWN

Natur'Adapt – A dynamic, collective learning process for Climate Change Adaptation

The LIFE Natur'Adapt project seeks to integrate climate change adaptation in Protected Area management practices across Europe. To do so, the project partners are developing a methodology based on field experience, best practices and a peer-to-peer support community.

Over the last year, the project enabled 6 pilot sites in France to embark on a climate change adaptation process and to formalise it through their vulnerability diagnosis and their adaptation plans. The project also allowed the 6 sites to:

- Increase the skills of managers and change their ways of working (by means of different time and space scales, increased work with stakeholders, etc.) and develop their vision of the Protected Area's role and that of the manager;
- Raise awareness amongst the staff of the management team and local stakeholders of the interrelated issues for nature conservation and climate change adaptation;
- Launch local interest on the subject, favouring adaptation, the consolidating role of the Protected Area and the future implementation of the adaptation plan.

The project is now testing if these impacts could also be achieved if the Natur'Adapt approach is implemented in other sites. This real-life test started last June in 15 sites in France and Belgium. The experimentation on the 6 pilot sites has inspired other Protected Areas in France and Europe: 32 candidates have volunteered for the test phase and many managers have joined the Natur'Adapt community.

The EUROPARC Task Force also organised a number of online workshops and webinars and published articles on the EUROPARC website. It also held an ongoing constructive dialogue with the European Commission Policy officers.



EUROPARCs Climate Change Task Force.

Climate Change is on the political agenda, at all levels. Research and experience show that Protected Areas have a central role to play in the transition towards a nature-inclusive and climate-resilient society. They safeguard biodiversity and natural processes that are also essential to support the adaptive capacity of ecosystems and communities outside Protected Areas.

The EUROPARC Task Force on Climate Change has released a discussion paper on "Protected Areas and the European Strategies for Climate Change Adaptation and Biodiversity". It presents suggestions that aim at keeping a dialogue going. Together we seek to bridge the gap, in policies and on the ground practices, between climate change adaptation and nature conservation communities.

You can read the policy paper here.

Policy Work

As the climate and biodiversity crises become more urgent, leading organisations in charge of some of the largest tracts of Protected Landscapes and Marine Environments across the world have come together for the first time to call on world leaders to support their work to battle Climate Change and Biodiversity loss. Orchestrated by National Parks UK, as host nation for COP26, the statement has been signed by EUROPARC together with, amongst others, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)/ World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), US National Parks Service and Parks and Wildlife Finland.

You can read it here.



Future topics

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

New EUROPARC Strategy

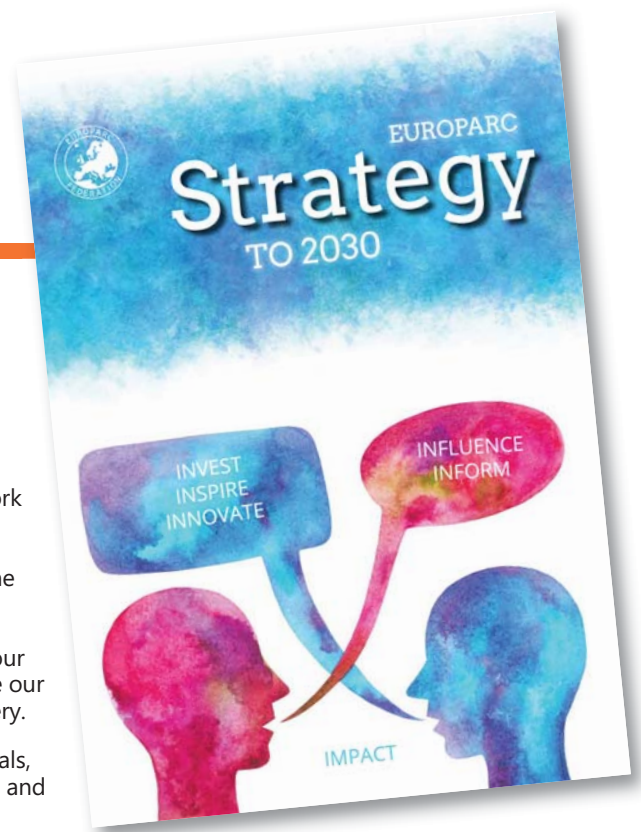
The EUROPARC membership voted on and accepted the new Strategy to 2030 during the online General Assembly.

EUROPARC's strategy is based on the extensive consultation with members and is a mechanism to bring clarity to the purpose of our organisation and to enable us to discover "imaginative" means to achieve our mission and vision.

Naturally, the strategy takes a "big-picture-view" of the Federation, showing the areas we will work across.

Through the implementation of this strategy, EUROPARC will further seek to align both the work of the Federation and that of its members to European and international policy. Now, with the spotlight more and more prominently on nature and the importance of Protected Areas, our Strategy to 2030 wants to ensure our work is fit for purpose and delivery.

It focusses around 4 strategic goals, all with their own unique themes and outcomes.



[You can read the new strategy here.](#)

Bergsetbreen in National Park Jostedalbreen © Vegard Aasen



Working Together – building our organisation

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



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

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

General Assembly 2021

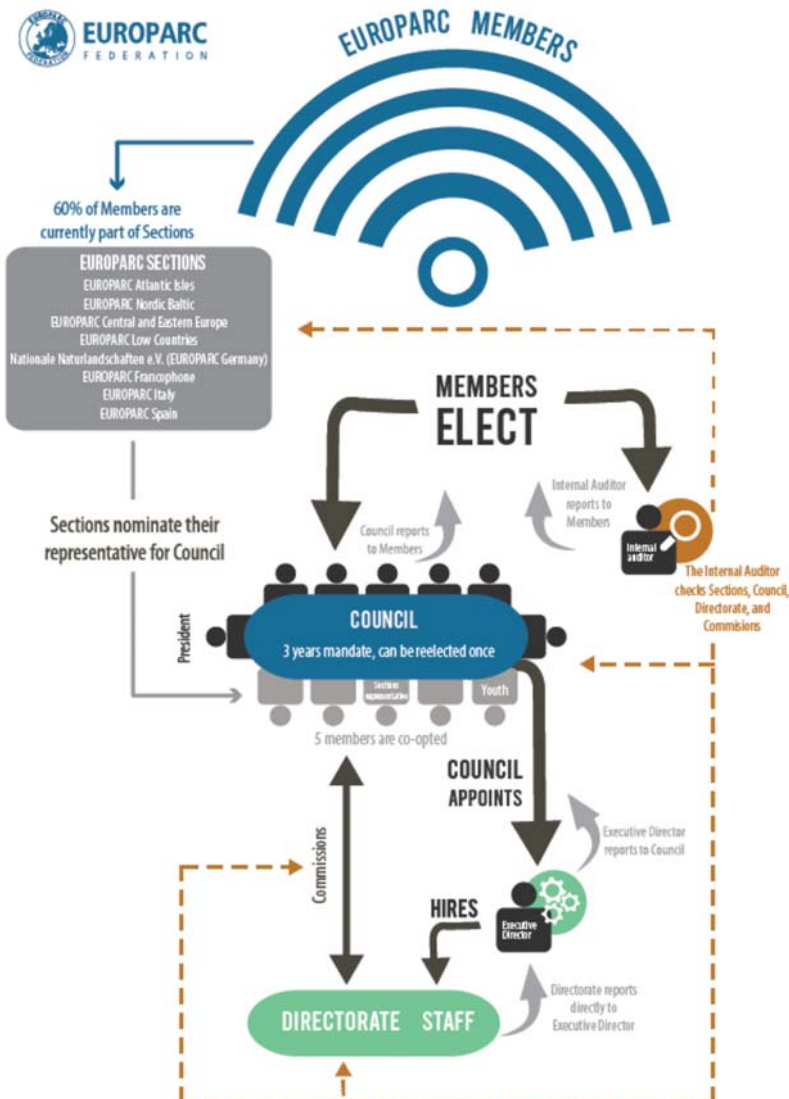
In 2021, our General Assembly once again took place online. One of the most important things our membership could vote upon was the new EUROPARC Council.

Additionally, the General Assembly also concluded the development of the new EUROPARC Strategy. After a large membership consultation and different opportunities for our members to review the document, the EUROPARC network officially agreed with its implementation during the General Assembly. The Treasurer Report, Directorate Report and the Internal Auditor's report were also presented to the membership. You can read the different reports of the General Assembly on our website.

[Find the reports here.](#)



EUROPARC Governance Structure



New EUROPARC Council

After 4 years, and for some even longer, of service to EUROPARC, the mandate of our Council came to an end. In 2021 elections were held and 10 excellent candidates were up for the role of EUROPARC President or Council Member.

During our General Assembly, it was up to the EUROPARC membership to decide who they wanted to steer the work of the Federation in the upcoming years. Through online voting, the newly elected Council consists of:

Michael Hosek (President), Marta Mugica, Pete Rawcliffe, Dominique Lévêque, Leelo Kukk, Hendrik Oosterveld and Stefano Santi. The newly elected Council then co-opted Nikos Pangas as Periurban Representative, Sonja Miller as Section representative, Paulo Castro as Treasurer and Michael Jungmeier as Internal Auditor.

A call was also opened for the new Youth Representative, and we are delighted to confirm that, Leonardo Cerno will take on this role.

[You can get to know the EUROPARC Council here.](#)

People Power – human resources

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

Directorate

EUROPARC's team is spread out all throughout Europe. Through bi-weekly team meetings we manage to stay up to date with all the different projects everyone is involved in. Some staff changes took place. Michaela Kozminova, Communication and Membership Officer, left the Federation, but we expanded our team with Sandra Grego, Project Officer and Communications Assistant for LIFE ENABLE, Carolina Mock, Finance and Membership Officer and Martina Scherer as Bookkeeper.

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 Commission on Health and Protected Areas on page 22, the work of the "Protected Areas and Sustainable Agriculture Commission" on page 19 and the "Periurban Commission" on page 7.

EUROPARC Sections

- 
- Nordic-Baltic
 - Atlantic Isles
 - Central and Eastern Europe
 - Low Countries
 - Germany (Nationale Naturlandschaften e.V.)
 - Francophone
 - Italy (Federparchi)
 - Spain
 - Members - no section

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, there are many benefits to being a EUROPARC member.

In December 2021, EUROPARC had 397 members from 35 countries. We had 4 resignations and gained 25 members from 11 countries: Austria, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden.

Financial Report

Balance Sheet

	2021	2020
Assets		
Assets		
Total fixed assets	6 723,03	3 704,85
Total current assets	459 985,35	338 139,06
Total Assets	466 708,38	341 843,91
Liabilities		
Profit Reserve	201 672,81	195 890,24
Liabilities		
Provisions	27 861,40	26 459,94
Accounts payable	237 174,17	119 493,73
Total Equity and Liability	466 708,38	341 843,91

Income and Expenditure

	2021	2020
Income		
Membership fees	346 506,32	353 259,12
Grants		
EC core grant	164 309,39	169 848,13
Project grants	237 993,40	191 515,02
Other income	123 949,10	142 796,68
Total Income	872 758,21	857 418,95
Simplified Expenditure		
Total Personnel costs	595 094,43	579 405,36
Total Office costs	27 946,76	28 050,62
Total Travel and Subsistence	14 621,04	17 835,21
Total Other direct costs	93 936,40	96 580,31
Total Overhead costs	56 805,32	51 738,85
Total External Assistance/ Professional Fees	78 571,69	76 293,24
Total costs	866 975,64	849 903,59
Result	5 782,57	7 515,36

Talking and listening

Developing smarter communications.

Parks in the Spotlight – Powered by People; Inspired by Nature

Every year, the EUROPARC Conference provides a chance for Protected Area professionals to gather, discuss, network and learn. After a successful “first try” at an online Conference in 2020, we further developed the format in 2021. In two half days, we explored how things are achieved on the ground in Protected Areas, and what more is needed to enable Parks and Protected Areas to fulfil their potential and meet the current challenges.

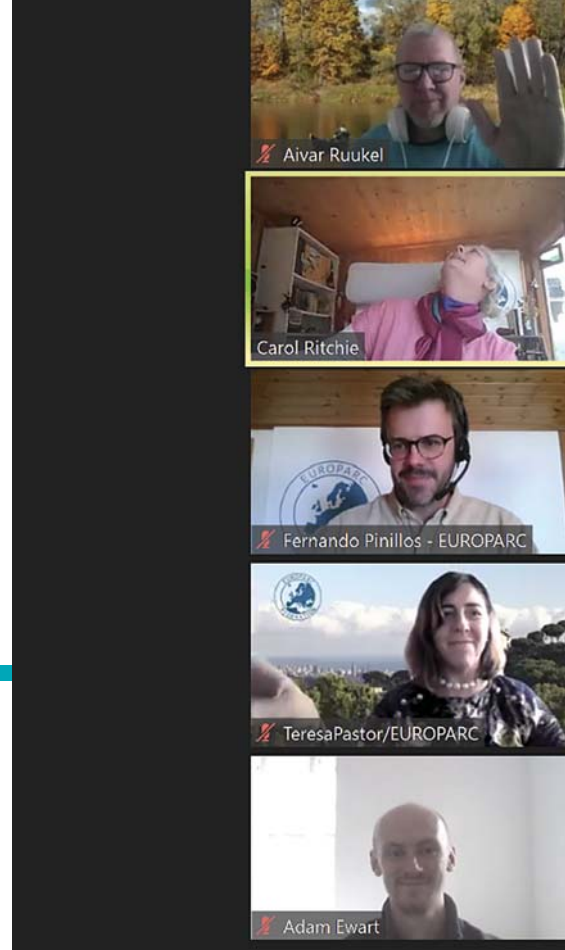
The Conference looked at the practical management that turns political and societal topics – such as climate change, biodiversity restoration, health, tourism and economy (especially post covid), capacity building, technology, the role of youth and agriculture – into reality.

Keynotes were delivered by Ladislav Miko (European Commission), Dr. George Holmes (University of Leeds) and Frans Schepers (Rewilding Europe). They inspired our thinking and helped us work on solutions during our 10 different interactive workshops.

We also opened the stage for participants of the Conference during our “Speakers’ Corner”. 9 different speakers received a 5-minute slot to present their work, idea or project.

You can find all information including workshop presentations and our Conference Report

[on our website here.](#)



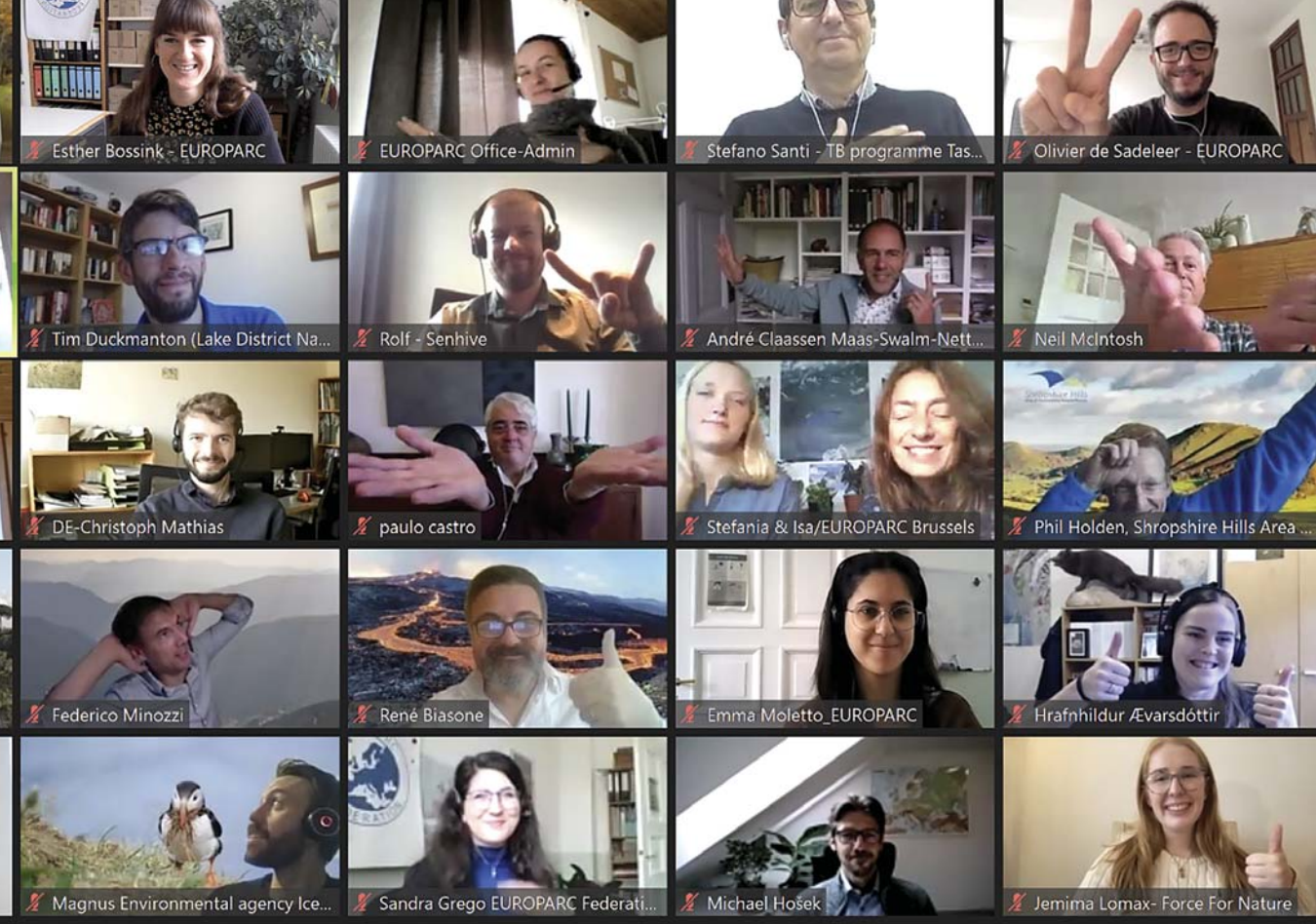
Participants of the EUROPARC Conference.

EUROPARC’s online presence

EUROPARC continues to be very active on social media. Through our Facebook account, we reached over 170,000 accounts and in December of 2021 we had over 8800 followers. Our tweets throughout the year had over 410,000 impressions and our follower count rose to 3655 in December. Our Instagram account experienced massive growth. Throughout the year we almost doubled our followers, amounting to 1160 followers in December and a total of 26,506 accounts reached during the year.

One of the most effective ways of reaching people however, is still through email. That is why we send out at least 10 newsletters a year to over 6200 people. Special thematic emails also went out for the European Day of Parks, webinars and the EUROPARC Conference.

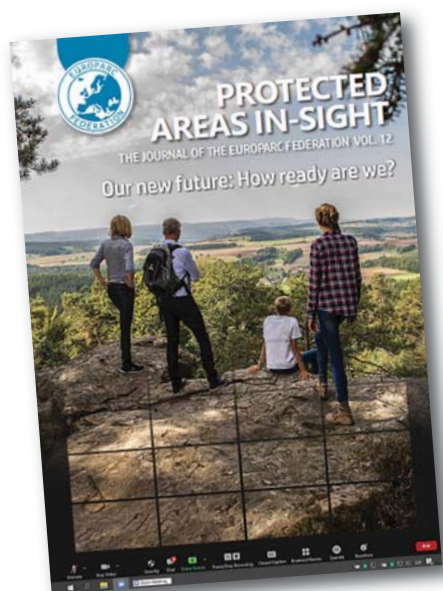
Our website is also regularly and continuously updated: it is a valuable information resource, with many case studies, webinars and interesting articles. Just last year, 33 case studies on a wide range of topics were added! We have also updated the webpages on EUROPARC’s Policy work: here you can find a lot of information to orient yourself in the complex Brussels environment.



Protected Areas In-Sight

Every year, the EUROPARC journal 'Protected Areas In-Sight' brings our members the highlights of our annual Conference. It includes best practice examples on a wide range of topics, relevant for all nature and Protected Area professionals. Following the theme of the 2021 Online Conference, the 13th edition looked at different ways Parks can deal with the spotlight they are under. In it you can find an article by Rewilding Europe, engaged youngsters in Scotland and the Netherlands and a section dedicated to the 20-year anniversary of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism. It is available in English, French and German.

[You can read it here.](#)



Events EUROPARC attended

Between 30 November and 1 December 2021, LIFE ENABLE partner MedPAN organised the 3rd edition of the Forum of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the Mediterranean. At their invitation, Neil McIntosh from the EUROPARC Directorate attended in person. This important hybrid event was designed to finalise the Post-2020 Roadmap for Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas. The Forum brought together close to 700 participants from 36 countries including over 220 in-person participants in Monaco.

Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean place 8.33% (209,303 km²) under protected status: almost all of this area (97.33%) is located in European Union Member States' waters. However, many sites are not managed and do not have sufficient regulation and resources to preserve them adequately and generate benefits for the marine environment as well as sustain the livelihoods of local communities. EUROPARC presented LIFE ENABLE to highlight the importance of and urgent need for increased capacity building to improve effective marine management. This will be an area of focus in LIFE ENABLE's tailor-made blended learning courses.

Executive Director Carol Ritchie spoke during the IUCN WCPA "Vital Sites: People and Parks; the pathways to social and ecological recovery" online event. The event looked at ways in which we can harness the increasing recognition of the value of Parks and Protected Areas for human health and well-being, social cohesion and recovery, economic benefits as well as achieving conservation outcomes.

On 27 May 2021, EUROPARC presented Periurban Parks as the most suitable Nature-based Solution (NbS) for liveable cities at the European Conference on Climate Change Adaptation 2021 (ECCA2021) organised by JPI CLIMATE along with EC DG RTD.

The webinar was structured around four topics: (1) the policy support framework, (2) the knowledge base, (3) the applications and (4) the way ahead for NbS for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in Europe. It provided presentations and discussions with key experts on different aspects of NbS and offered the opportunity to participants for interact with them.

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. These articles are written by the Sections themselves.

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

2021 was still an unusual year because of the COVID-19 crisis. However, the members of the section have adapted a lot during these hard times to the new circumstances, we must say, it is very hard to keep people from different countries, speaking different languages together without face-to-face meeting and activities.

During last year section members focused on their "local" work mostly, however in some cases work was done within the Transboundary cooperation or work within TransParcNet online meetings. Members also took part in the climate change adaptation programmes with interest or in the sustainable tourism programme. The section was represented at wide range of online meetings and workshops.

European Day of Parks is one of the most important and most beautiful series of programmes all over Europe. The Section was very active this year again: guided trips, bike and canoe tours, trekking tours, photo contests, art contests, bird ringing and educational lectures at schools.

The Section actively took part at the General Assembly and the annual EUROPARC Conference. Both online events were very useful and inspiring for the members. We are very proud of the new president originated from our section. Good luck to him and all the new council!

Dedication of active section members is still very difficult for the CEE Section. We really hope that 2022 is going to be a little bit more normal, and we will have the chance to meet in person. It will be really important for us, because the presidency of the section should be handed over, which means new challenges for the whole section.

EUROPARC Atlantic Isles

Yet another interesting year when we all spent our lives working and communicating through our computer screens. This had some positive results as more people were able to access and share in events enabling the reach of our work to go further. We all still miss meeting people face to face and being able to go out and see real live projects. We hope that in 2022 we will finally be able to do this.

Activities

EAI continued to develop its programme of webinars and excitingly joined up with the Nordic Baltic section to deliver 4 webinars together.

In 2021 we delivered the following webinars:

- Introduction to beavers
- Co-operative perspective on Irish Peatlands
- Profitable peatlands
- Demonstrating UAV use
- Private Sector Funding for Peatland restoration

In Partnership with Nordic Baltic Section

- Assessing social impacts
- Managing waste in Protected areas
- Impacts of COVID-19 on the desire of more of the public to access nature and the outdoors Part 2
- Impacts of COVID-19 on the desire of more of the public to access nature and the outdoors Part 1

This year we also organised our first online member's event. Spread over a period of two weeks we covered 4 key themes

- Climate Change
- Nature Restoration
- Future of Farming
- Post COVID-19era and access to protected landscapes

We tried to make the event varied and interesting and showed films especially produced for the event, discussions, some presentations and for the finale a high-level debate with high-profile individuals. EAI provided an interactive website where members could upload and share their own materials such as films, toolkits, reports, and project ideas.

We received great feedback and are planning to repeat the process this year.

During this period, we had over 1500 participants involved from across the UK and the rest of Europe.

The membership of EAI goes from strength to strength despite some of the financial challenges and we have 44 members from a range of different types of organisations involved in protected Landscape management

Again, the Erasmus study tour programme was put on hold but in the later part of the year we spent time recruiting and planning the trips for 2022 which hopefully will be able to go ahead

Participation in the Network

EAI played an active role in the workings of the EUROPARC network contributing to the renewal of the EUROPARC strategy and attending sections meetings. Many members participated in EUROPARC online conference and contributed presentations and case studies. We have regular meetings between the two coordinators of EA and Nordic Baltic section.

The Future

We are hoping that we can become more active in 2022. EAI is in the process of developing a new strategic plan that will reflect some themes of the Federation strategy. We plan to still have our members event online as it means more people can be involved but we will also organise site visits to compliment the themes of the online events. We continue to work with the Nordic Baltic section and are hoping to have a more ambitious programme with a potential joint study tour.

Members of the board and section are aiming to participate in both EUROPARC Conferences.



EUROPARC
Atlantic Isles

Zoom Meeting You are viewing Plaines Scarpe-Escout (France ...'s screen View Options

Recording

Une longue histoire de rapprochement transfrontalier

1968 : création du premier parc naturel régional français en Scarpe-Escout

1996 : création du Parc naturel des Plaines de l'Escaut (B)

2006 : Elaboration du diagnostic de territoire transfrontalier

2010 - 2022 : Charte à dimension transfrontalière (F)

2013 - 2020: Plan de gestion (B)

2021 : création du Groupement Européen Plaines Scarpe-Escout

1983 : Protocole d'accord entre Wallonie et Nord-Pas de Calais pour un parc naturel supra-frontalier

1991 : Premier projet INTERREG dans le territoire de la Scarpe et de l'Escaut

2008 : Signature d'une convention de partenariat entre les deux parcs

2008 : Assemblée plénière des élus du transfrontalier

Le transfrontalier est-il un « plus » ?

Actes de la journée du 2 décembre 2011

PLAINES SCARPE

Interreg France-Wallonie-Vlaanderen

Unmute Stop Video Security Participants 35 Chat Share Screen Record Closed Caption Breakout Rooms Reactions Apps

IT 15:35 28/09/2021

Matthieu Cruège

EUROPARC Stefania Petrosillo

Plaines Scarpe-Escout (France ...

Daniele Piazza, Ossola Prote...

Francophone Section



Key activities in 2021

The year 2021 was still marked by the global pandemic which continued to hamper the smooth running of the French Section - now Francophone Section. However, this did not prevent the working group from formalizing a major evolution: the opening to other French-speaking members of the network, with the new name "Section Francophone" (and its new logo). The Section has thus welcomed the Network of Swiss, Luxembourg and Walloon Parks and, more recently, certain French peri-urban parks (since the merger between EUROPARC and FEDENATUR).

Contribution on the issues of coastal parks and Natura 2000:

At the request of the Committee of the Regions of the EU, the Francophone Section was able to bring up the issues of Francophone Parks for the protection of coastal and marine areas.

We also participated in the Natura 2000 Thematic Commission with the drafting of a note on the European Strategy for Biodiversity. A. Philippeau, our representative in this Commission, participated in a round table on the European biodiversity strategy (March 16) and in the Seminar Dialogue (June 1) organized by the European Commission and Europarc on protected areas.

Organization of webinars:

In 2021, the Francophone Section co-organized two seminars (in May in French and in September in English) on climate and carbon issues.

A third webinar was also organized on September 28, 2021 on cross-border cooperation, this exchange was very rich and brought together different actors of cross-border cooperation in French-speaking Europe but also outside the European continent (West Africa, Brazil ...). This enabled the various participants to identify the obstacles and levers of these cooperations and to highlight the EUROPARC network cross-border program.

Participation in the renewal of the EUROPARC multiannual strategy:

On May 26, a workshop was organized to identify the contributions of the French-speaking members to the new EUROPARC strategy (objectives, strong points, weak points). A report on the members' experiences with the network was circulated in June. In summary, the Francophone Section recommends a restructuring of the governance for more clarity and a better integration of the members. For the Section, it is important to revitalize EUROPARC by bringing its members closer together and by demonstrating its usefulness through better coordination and cooperation between the levels of governance, or perhaps a new flagship project!

Participation in the General Assembly:

Last but not least, we participated in the EUROPARC's General Assembly by supporting the candidacy of Dominique Lévêque, President of the PNR Montagne de Reims. Dominique was elected to the EUROPARC Council.



EUROPARC
FRANCOPHONE SECTION



Participants of the MAB Youth Forum 2021 - active together for more youth participation
© Saskia Schutter.

German section - Nationale Naturlandschaften e. V.

Nationale
Naturlandschaften



The German umbrella organisation "Nationale Naturlandschaften e. V." (in English: *National Natural Landscapes*) promotes the preservation and development of national landscapes through various projects and programmes. In 2021, one of the main areas of focus of the association's work was organising the MAB Youth Forum and, related to this, strengthening the participation of young people in biosphere reserves. Also in 2021, revised quality criteria and standards were published to ensure continuous quality assurance in Germany's national parks. In addition, a new alliance of the two umbrella associations, Nationale Naturlandschaften e. V. (NNL e. V.) and the Verband Deutscher Naturparke e. V. (VDN e. V.) (in English: *the Association of German Nature Parks*), meant that it was possible to extensively further develop the umbrella brand "National Natural Landscapes". This brand has existed since 2005 and now brings together Germany's national parks, biosphere reserves, nature parks and wilderness areas more strongly than ever before.

"Let's get involved" – young adults call for more young people to get involved in biosphere reserves at the 2021 MAB Youth Forum

The second German-speaking MAB Youth Forum was held in the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve from 24 to 27 September 2021. The programme included an eclectic mix of panel discussions, workshops, trips, campfires and music. Young experts from youth networks organised by the youths themselves shared their knowledge with the participants about getting involved and networking. In the future, "MAB Youth" aims to become an active youth network in biosphere reserves in German-speaking countries. The participants worked hard to compile demands and calls for greater participation by young people in biosphere reserves. The

"parti*fest" (= participation + manifesto) that was developed was circulated to all biosphere reserves in Germany with the aim of getting young people more involved.

Publication of version 2.0 of the quality criteria and standards for Germany's national parks

The effectiveness of the management of a protected area can be assessed against predefined standards describing the respective ideal state. With this in mind, quality criteria and standards, dating back to 2008, have been revised and further developed in preparation for the renewed evaluation of all German national parks (2021 to 2024). The aim was to improve the internal consistency of the quality set which is made up of fields of action, criteria and standards. New topics such as environmental management and sustainable procurement, accessibility, inclusion and participation were also taken into account. The new quality set will remain adaptable so that evaluations can be compared in the future.

The quality criteria and standards that were coordinated with all project participants were approved by the Federal/State Working Group on Nature Conservation, Landscape Management and Recreation (LANA) in March 2021. The publication is available in German and English.

The MAB Youth Forum and the processing of the quality criteria and standards were encouraged and technically supported by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) with funds provided by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV).

National Natural Landscapes – establishment of a nationwide brand identity to improve awareness and recognition of Germany's large-scale protected areas

Over the last two years, the umbrella brand "National Natural Landscapes" has been fundamentally revised in terms of its content and visual appearance. The result is a new brand image with a striking new design – featuring an accessible type face and fresh colours, without forgetting its origins. A common brand core has also been developed together with all National Natural Landscapes, with the aim of making their unique selling points and common features as well as their relevance and benefits for nature and society more tangible.

The fact that the two umbrella associations, NNL e. V. and VDN e. V., have been united under one roof since November 2021 has certainly played an important role in strengthening the brand's identity throughout Germany. The close cooperation of the two associations promotes identification of all National Natural Landscapes with the newly developed contents and the revised brand image. As these important developments are being supported by all National Natural Landscapes, the topics of nature conservation, climate protection and sustainability, as the basis of a future worth living, can be embedded into society even more clearly and progressively in the future. National Natural Landscapes are getting themselves fit for the future – with joy, fascination and confidence!

The project was promoted by the Federal Foundation for the Environment (DBU).

Find out more about Nationale Naturlandschaften e. V. here

Federparchi-EUROPARC Italy

Federparchi-Europarc Italia – 2021 Annual Report

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 Europarc Federation and since then it changed its name as "Federparchi – Europarc Italia. 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 2021 it counts more than 160 members.

Activities 2021

As during the previous year, in 2021 Federparchi Europarc Italia activities have focused on giving support to the Italian protected areas to manage efficaciously, effectively, and safely their targets according to emergency due to Covid-19.

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 much before than before the start of pandemic. All the staff had already connections with main server by remote personal computer so, with emergency, the Italian section had no problem in doing its jobs as during the 2020.

Regarding the Part 1 and Part 2 of the **European Charter for Sustainable Tourism**, Federparchi supported new protected areas within the network and organized some webinars on methodology and implementation.

On January 2021 webinars to promote ECST Part 3 for the Italian parks that already got Part 2 were organized. The scheme for ECST Part 3 was adopted by Federparchi in 2020 and in February 2021 EUROPARC Federation approved the dossier edited by Federparchi about the methodology for the implementation of the Part 3 of the European Sustainable Tourism Charter in protected areas in Italy.

In February Federparchi participated to a meeting about "Parks in the new European cohesion policy 2021-2027". The meeting was promoted by Europarc with the patronage of the European Parliament

and ANCI. Ignace Schops, then president of EUROPARC, opened the discussion. Speakers for Federparchi were Enzo Lavarra, Luca Bianchi, director SVIMEZ; Andrea Cozzolino, MEP and FESR-Fc rapporteur and the Federparchi vice president Agostino Agostinelli.

In March, Federparchi co-organized and participated in a web meeting, promoted by EUROPARC, on the role of parks in the Common Agricultural Policy (PAC) the meeting: "The role of parks in the Community Agricultural Policy" was sponsored by the European Commission with the patronage of the European Commission's representative office in Italy. Agostino Agostinelli, vice president of Federparchi, Enzo Lavarra, board of EUROPARC, Paolo De Castro, European parliamentarian, Antonio Parenti, head of EU representation, Donato Pentassuglia, President of the State-Regions Agriculture Commission, and others took the floor.

Federparchi in May and June 2021 promoted among the Italian Protected Areas Network the EUROPARC ECST Star Awards.

During the summer and on the occasion of World Tourism Day Federparchi declared its support for the implementation and dissemination of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, presenting it as a prestigious international certification which, based on rigorous standards and a complex and demanding path, certifies the quality of the tourist offer in Italian parks. In this day Federparchi highlighted also that Italy is the country with the largest number of protected areas that have received the ECST, being 44 certified areas, including 21 National Parks.

Moreover, Federparchi promoted the online EUROPARC Conference held in October, which was joined by the President and many Italian EUROPARC members.

The EUROPARC Conference has also been important for the election of the EUROPARC Board. Federparchi actively supported the Italian protected areas during the election process, promoting all the candidates and giving protected areas all the information useful for knowing the candidates and then for voting them. Later on, Federparchi promoted, among the Italian youngsters living in Parks the possibility and opportunity to join the Europarc Board as youth representative; eventually one Italian candidate, Leonardo Cerno, was elected and it is a great success for Italy and Federparchi as well.

Just at the end of the year Federparchi received and spread another wonderful news: Three new Protected Areas are admitted in the prestigious network of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism Protected Areas and three other Parks obtained a positive renew of the certification. Italy is hence confirmed, in 2021, as the European country with the largest number of parks that have obtained the CETS Certification by the EUROPARC Federation. Even though, due to the pandemic, the usual ceremony for awarding certificates did not take place in Brussels this year at the European Parliament; all the Parks will be awarded during the next year. The following protected areas obtained the Charter for the first time: Regional Natural Park of the Ligurian Alps; Pantelleria Island National Park; Vesuvius National Park. The three confirmed with certification are: Cinque Terre National Park; Casentinesi Forest National Park, Monte Falterona and Campigna, Tuscan Archipelago National Park.

During 2021, Federparchi increased also the production and dissemination of Communication products and 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 website and its social media

Regional Natural Park of the Ligurian Alps, Statua del Redentore - Monte Saccarello © Gabriele Cristiani





Hoge Kempen National Park

Low Countries Section

“Due to the Covid 19 restrictions, the section has only had 2 Zoom encounters. The first as a consultation on the drafting of the new strategy for the EUROPARC Federation and the second meeting was devoted to formulating a response to the June draft of the strategy. The section generally approved the strategy. We formulated a number of questions about clarification and some additions to the content.

In the Netherlands, the renewal of the Parks system is progressing. Parks have started working on the basis of the renewed standard with the financial support of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality. In collaboration with many stakeholders, the National Parks Bureau has drawn up a Guideline for the “Standard for National Park Area Designation” and an education and communication strategy has been developed.

In Belgium, a new policy for National Parks and National Landscape Parks is being developed. To add to the success of the only National Park in Belgium (Hoge Kempen National Park), at least 3 more National Parks and 3 Landscape Parks will be officially designated in 2023.

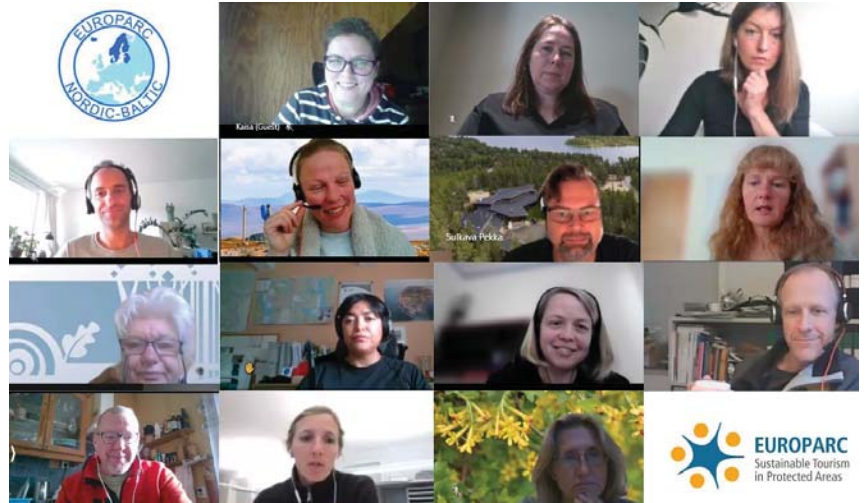
In autumn the Low Countries section has welcomed a new president, Mr. Michiel Rijsberman (Nationaal Park Nieuwland). He will take over the lead from Hendrik Oosterveld who is now representing the EUROPARC Federation as an elected council member (October 5th, 2021).



EUROPARC
Low Countries



NBS Charter meeting 2021



EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency took over the coordination of the Nordic-Baltic Section for 2021-23. Activities of the Section in 2021 were still affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. We had to refrain from meeting each other in person and instead continued with digital ways of communication doing the best we can to make this year interesting and productive despite the circumstances.

The EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic members participated in the EUROPARC Strategy consultation process and Seminar Dialogue with European Commission's Nature Unit of Directorate General Environment (DG ENV) on the Biodiversity Strategy 2030, on 1 June 2021.

The Members' Assembly took place on 15 June 2021. 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 to the first year of the pandemic: people had flocked to the national parks in big numbers, including many first-time visitors, resulting in overcrowding and unsuitable behaviour.

To facilitate capacity building and networking in the context of limitations caused by the pandemic, the Section launched a collaboration scheme with EUROPARC Atlantic Isles Section. We organised a series of joint webinars aimed at providing learning opportunities to our members through involvement of the leading experts in the field of protected areas management. Four joint webinars were organised with about 200 representatives of NBS member organisations participating during the webinars or watching the recordings. Recordings are available here:

Looking at solutions of overcrowding in certain areas, particularly managing car parking and use of hot spots on Vimeo

Impacts of COVID-19 on the desire of more of the public to access nature and the outdoors. Part 2 on Vimeo

Managing Waste in protected Areas

Assessing social impacts of European Protected Areas

The Section made significant progress in promoting the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST). We established Sustainable Tourism Focal Point and organised several meetings aiming to create synergy and improve communication between 9 Charter awarded Protected Areas within NBS. The Section successfully launched the work with local tourism businesses through ECTS Part II. A Joint Task Force, comprising of 2 Section representatives and 1 EUROPARC representative, was created and reviewed nominations for ECST Part II within NBS thus serving as an independent evaluation committee. By the end of 2021, Charter Part II was awarded to the first company in NBS region (Kullagårdens Wårdshus, Kullaberg Nature Reserve, Sweden).

A Members' Meeting scheduled for December 2021 was cancelled due to the Section President being on sick leave. We hope to resume Section Members' meetings in 2022.

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 and it is possible to ensure we continue interaction within our membership through webinars: however, this cannot serve as a proper equivalent to in person interaction and we therefore do look forward to being able to meet face-to-face again in 2022.

NBS meeting June 2021



Charter PartII award



ANUARIO2020 @EUROPARC-España

EUROPARC Spain 2021



The Spanish Section of EUROPARC is composed by 26 members in 2021, all public administrations responsible for planning and management of protected areas. Thanks to the legal support of FUNGOBE, the Section has a Technical Office where a staff of 10 people catalyzes a network of thousands of people.

Key activities in 2021

Yearbook 2020

Yearbook 2020 – the state of Protected Areas in Spain has been published. Along with updated information, the book documents different experiences on climate change and human well-being.

Communication Campaign "Our Protected Natural Areas"

Global Nature Foundation, together with EUROPARC Spain and other partners, launched this campaign at the end of 2021. Through a series of short videos, the aim is to highlight the territories and the people living in protected areas (available on social media, with English subtitles).

Marine protected areas

Several webinars focused on the management of marine protected areas have been organized, in collaboration with Marilles Foundation.



Sustainable tourism and carrying capacity

Different projects of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism have been supported, such as the accreditation of tourism companies in Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve.

A study at Picos de Europa National Park was carried out to support management decisions.

Sustainable forest management

A new LIFE project, Nature-based solutions to improve adaptation of forests to climate change (Red Bosques CLIMA web) started at the end of 2021.

Climate Change

Two Spanish protected areas (Garajonay National Park and Sierra Espuña Regional Park) participated in the CO-ADAPTACION project aiming to promote collaborative knowledge to accelerate adaptation to climate change.

Connectivity

The PROCONECTA project ended offering a connectivity toolkit and 10 examples of green infrastructure planning.

Training

EUROPARC Spain participated in the 21st edition of the Master Degree on protected areas managed by FUNGOBE. Several courses of climate change adaptation and communication were developed online.

The study trip took place in the Biosphere Reserve Mariñas Coruñesas y Terras do Mandeo (Galicia).



Master2021, © Nora Martínez

Successes and challenges

The organization's main challenge for 2022 is to develop the new Strategic 2030 Program which will include 4 main topics: conservation and restoration of nature, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, cooperation with sectoral policies, and social and economic benefits of conservation. It is essential and urgent to share with society the fundamental role of protected areas for our health and well-being.

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