

TASK FORCE TRANSBOUNDARY PARKS

Report 2022

by

Leo Reyriink and Mojca Smolej co-chairs of the Task Force

Support: Stefania Petrosillo, EUROPARC Directorate

The report 2022 of the Task Force Transboundary Parks (TFTP) was written by the co-chairs of the Task Force in close cooperation with Stefania Petrosillo of the EUROPARC Directorate to inform the Council about the relevant activities of the Task Force in 2022.

A final draft was sent to the members of the Task Force for their comments and additional activities, after that the report was finished.

All the activities in 2022 were done in relation to the purpose, strategy and membership (see below) of the Task Force as described in the Terms of Reference.

Background

The Terms of Reference for the TFTP of the federation were finalized in February 2022 by the members of the Task Force and approved by the Council.

- Purpose (excerpt Terms of Reference of the Task Force Transboundary Parks)

The Task Force Transboundary Parks is a working group formed to support the EUROPARC Directorate and the EUROPARC Transboundary Steering and Evaluation Committee (STEC) in providing strategic and critical guidance of the Transboundary Parks Program and in the animation of the TransParcNet. Our purpose is also to create opportunities to promote and enlarge the program and to increase its visibility towards European and international organizations. To advise and involve other cross-border areas in Europe who are not yet working transboundary and to promote the Transboundary certification.

- Links to Strategy (excerpt Terms of Reference of the Task Force Transboundary Parks)

The Transboundary Parks Program (Following Natures Design) is one of the successful and mature programs of the Europarc Federation to be continued and further developed according to the strategic goals of the Europarc Federation Through the Transboundary Parks Program all of the four defined Strategic Goals of the Federation are supported with special reference to the transboundary cooperation of Protected Areas in Europe.

- ***Membership (excerpt Terms of Reference of the Task Force Transboundary Parks)***

Members of the Task Force are members of the TransParcNet, and are representatives of certified Transboundary Parks (TBPAs) after the Transboundary Parks program or experienced verifiers (both always member of the EUROPARC Federation).

- *All the certified Transboundary Parks are permanent invited to be member of the Task Force Transboundary Parks.*
- *No external members outside the EUROPARC Federation are involved within the Task Force.*
- *The chair(s) are elected by the members of the Task Force.*
- *All work is done on a voluntary basis.*

Activities 2022

1. Current members of the Task Force Transboundary Parks (November 2022):

- André Claassen, Maas-Swalm-Nette Cross Border Nature Park, Netherlands/Germany
 - Daniele Piazza, Veglia Devero Park - Ossola, Italy
 - David Freudl, Thayatal National Park, Austria
 - Jakub Kaspar, Krkonoše National Park, Czech Republic
 - Leo Reyrink, co-chair, verifier, Germany
 - Mojca Smolej, co-chair, Triglav National Park, Slovenia
 - Riina Tervo, Inari-Vätsäri Wilderness Park, Finland
 - Rolands Auzins, verifier, Latvia
 - Stefano Santi, Council member Europarc Federation, Italy
 - Stefania Petrosillo, EUROPARC directorate, Brussels-BE
 - Tiia Kalske, Ovre-Pasvik National Park, Norway
 - Ulf Zimmermann, Saxon Bohemian Suisse National Park, Germany
- Special role: Tit Potočnik Triglav National Park (Slovenia) supporting the Task Force in the Balkan Parks involvement

2 Meetings of the Task Force Transboundary Parks

In 2022 the following meetings of the TFTP were organised:

- 25th of January: online meeting

Topics: Relevance of the Europarc strategy for the TFTP, workshops TB during conferences and preparation for the European Citizens Prize.

- 28th of June: during the TransParcNet meeting 2022 in Binntal Veglia Devero Transboundary Park.

Topics: Plan for future webinars, TB program news, enlargement of the Network, information from the directorate on Borders Forum, IUCN WCPA Transboundary Working Group, Committee of Regions, etc.

- 5th of October: Informal meeting by the participating members at the Europarc conference in Argelès sur Mer. With the special participation of Jessica Micklem-Kolenić from the EUROPARC directorate and the Council member Leonardo Cerno. Topics: Update about the program, Report of the Stefano Santi visit in Brussels, Youth involvement in the program.

3 TransParcNet Meeting

The TransParcNet Meeting 2022 was held in “Binntal Veglia Devero Transboundary Park” from June 28th to July 1st. It was hosted by the Binntal Landschaftspark (CH) along with Ente di gestione delle Aree Protette dell’Ossola (IT) and was the first live TransParcNet Meeting since the COVID pandemic.

Theme of the meeting **PARKS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE: Ways to a closer involvement and to better identification of people with their parks.**

More than 30 people from 15 different organisations participated in the meeting.

Soledad Luna from the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat in Wilhelmshafen, Germany (CWSS) explained the cross border cooperation experiences of the Common Secretariat, as a best practice in trilateral transnational cooperation (Netherlands, Germany and Denmark) for the protection of the marine and coastal areas of the Wadden Sea.

The full report of the meeting is published on the website:

<https://www.europarc.org/nature/transboundary-cooperation/transparcnet/transparcnet-2022/>.

The Maas-Schwalm-Nette Cross Border Nature Park will host the TransParcNet meeting in 2023 in the border region Limburg (Netherlands) and Schwalm-Nette in Germany. The topic is: **Cross border cooperation in prevention and management of fires and other natural disasters.**

4 Enlargement of the *TransParcNet* network

- During the EUROPARC Conference 2022 in Neusiedlersee the **Háldi Transboundary Area**, composed by the Reisa National Park, Ráisduottarháldi Landscape Protected Area (NO) and Käsivarsi Wilderness Area (FI), were awarded as a Transboundary Park after the TB program and welcomed as a new member of the TransParcNet. After the conference the representatives of these regions were informed by the co-chairs about the work of the TFTP. The representatives further spent some days with meetings and excursions hosted by the Triglav National Park.

- Before the EUROPARC conference in France, co-chair Leo Reyrink and Tit Potočnik, director of the Triglav National Park accompanied by Stefania Petrosillo of the directorate visited in Llavorsi on the 2nd and 3rd of October the **Parc Natural de l'Alt Pirineu** in Spain, part of the “**Three Nations Park of Pyrenees**” (the Alt Pirineu Natural Park in Catalonia, the Regional Natural Park of the Pyrenees Ariégoises in France and the Sorteny Valley and Comapedrosa Valley Natural Parks in Andorra), to know their experience and to discuss about their possible entry in the TransParcNet. The discussion continued also during the Conference in France, with a meeting between the director of the Catalan park, a representative of the French park, some members of the task force and the Council member Stefano Santi.

- During the conference in France the **European Nature Park of Scarpe Escaut Plains** was welcomed as a new member of the TransParcNet.

- The following parks were rewarded after the Transboundary Parks program for their transboundary commitment to renew the transboundary certificates:
 - Maas-Swalm-Nette Nature Park on the border of Germany and the Netherlands;
 - Neusiedler See – Seewinkel & Fertő-Hanság National Parks in Austria and Hungary.
 - Saxon-Bohemian Switzerland between Germany and the Czech Republic;

5 Workshops and seminars

- During the EUROPARC conference in Austria the Binntal Veglia Devero Transboundary Park presented their cross border activities as a case study in the 13th Mind Factory: **Sustainable Agriculture. Communicating with farmers and the public to protect the landscape.**
- Pavel Becka and Leo Reyrink of the TFTP gave presentations during the online seminar: **Waldpolitik als Modell der Zukunft? Die tschechisch-bayerischer Zusammenarbeit im europäischen Kontext.** The seminar was hosted by the Georg-von-Vollmar-Akademie e.V. in Kochel am See Germany. The presentations were dealing with the local and European perspectives of forests and transboundary cooperation.
- On the 7th of September 2022, an online meeting took place for the exchange of information and experiences in fighting cross border forest wildfires in NP Saxon-Bohemian Switzerland and Cross Border Nature Park Maas-Swalm-Nette (preparation for meeting of directorate with EC on Fire prevention and management in Parks / case studies).
- On 28th of September 2022, the webinar **Transboundary cooperation to protect marine nature: opportunities and challenges, The Pelagos Sanctuary's experience (Italy, Monaco, France)**, took place. The secretary of the Pelagos Sanctuary was very interested to share its experience and to know more about TB program. Inside the big area, there are several cross border MPAs that could be potentially involved in the EUROPARC TB Program.
- During the Conference in October in France co-chair Leo Reyrink of the TFTP in cooperation with Stefania Petrosillo was leader of the workshop 6: ***Climate knows no borders***. The results are published in the report of the Conference.
- On the 27th of October the co-chair Leo Reyrink gave a presentation in Essen (Belgium) about the work of the EUROPARC Federation, the Transboundary program and his experiences in the cross border cooperation in Maas-Swalm-Nette. The title of the presentation was: **Benchmarking with Basic Standards of the EUROPARC Transboundary Parks.** The seminar was hosted by the Flemish Park Buro of the Flemish government in Belgium. Participants were potential nature and national parks regions who are soliciting in a tender for a formal status as nature/national park in Flanders.

6 Projects and Working Groups

- Internal new Terms of references for the Working groups Projects, Communication, and Natura2000&TB has been elaborated and approved by the co-chairs.
- A restricted working group “ad hoc” has been reactivated (and enlarged with the participation of Jessica Micklem-Kolenić) to work on the preparation of a new proposal for January 2023 of the project NATURE AND YOUTH WITHOUT BORDERS, for the Valdesian Italian Funds 8x1000, already presented in 2020. Members of the group: Leonardo Cerno, Stefano Santi, Stefania Petrosillo, Jessica Micklem-Kolenić, Daniele Piazza, Francesca Visintin RI-EGB.
- The Working Group Project has been summoned for a meeting in January 2023 to work on a Interreg Europe proposal to present in 2023, following the preparatory work and identification of the needs already done by the WG in 2021.

7 Other activities

- After the theoretical online education of verifiers in 2021, in 2022 Mojca Smolej was successfully trained as a **verifier** during the certification and verification procedures of the Re-evaluation of Saxon-Bohemian Switzerland.
- 21st and 22nd June 2022, Stefania Petrosillo attended the second edition of the **Borders Forum** organised by the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT), establishing, on behalf of EUROPARC and the Task Force, many new contacts with EU institutions representatives and potential new cross border areas. The Report is available.
- Following the contacts established during the Border Forum (see below) The Council member and member of the Task Force Stefano Santi, supported by Stefania Petrosillo, organised a **mission in Brussels** to meet several EU representatives from DG REGIO, CoR, and ECHO, in order to present the programme and identify possible collaborations. The mission has been very positive. In particular the new contacts with DG ECHO have opened new possible dialogue with the European Commission about natural disaster prevention and management. The Report of the mission is available.
- Being the only EGCT of the network, the Scarpe Escaut Plains European Park took part in the **12th EGTC Platform meeting** on 24th and 25th November 2022 in the Czech Republic on behalf of the TransParcNet. The report is not available yet.
- As representative of EUROPARC and on behalf of the Task Force, Stefania Petrosillo took part in the **event at the European Parliament and at the Committee of Regions** on 09.12.2022 *Événement de clôture du projet Interreg PnEPSE – Objectif 2025*, organised by Scarpe Escaut Plains European Park to celebrate the conclusion of the project that supported its candidature as Transboundary Park.

Mojca Smolej, Bled (Slovenia) / Leo Reyrink, Düsseldorf (Germany).

14th December 2022