



EUROPARC FEDERATION ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Index

President's remarks	1
Strengthen and grow our Network to deliver our vision	4
Increase the human and financial capacity of the network	5
Build the capacity of our organisation and its members	8
Promote greater inclusion and equity within and by our network	10
Strengthen the status of Protected Areas for a stronger more sustainable nature	11
Champion the value and benefits of Protected Areas in response to environmental and societal challenges	12
Develop and nurture cross-sectoral partnerships	14
Enhance the status of nature on land and sea and people's connection to it	16
Improve Protected Areas governance, planning and management effectiveness	17
Involve youth in the work of Protected Areas	20
Inspire everyone to look after Parks	22
Promote sustainable development tools and approaches for people and nature	23
Strengthen the role of Protected Areas in delivering health and well-being	24
Improve visitor management and sustainable tourism	26
Protected Areas role in climate change mitigation and adaptation	28
Strengthen the role of Protected Areas in the transition to a green economy	30
Our European Network	31
EUROPARC Atlantic Isles	32
EUROPARC Central and Eastern Europe	33
EUROPARC Francophone	34
EUROPARC Italy / Federparchi	36
EUROPARC Low Countries	38
EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic	39
EUROPARC Spain	40
Nationale Naturlandschaften e.V. (EUROPARC Germany)	42
Contact us	44



President's remarks

Leadership and Stewardship in a Changing World

2025 marked a year of transition for the EUROPARC Federation – defined by both continuity and change in leadership. One of the most important milestones was to welcome Alberto Arroyo Schnell as our new Director in September. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Alberto and wish him every success as he takes EUROPARC in the years ahead. I truly look forward to our cooperation in the coming years. At the same time, my thanks go to our previous Director, Carol Ritchie, for her immense contribution and long-term dedication to the Federation.

It is impossible to list here all events and activities that EUROPARC has delivered in 2025; therefore, from my personal perspective, let me highlight those of greatest importance.

The vibrancy of our network was fully on display during our Conference in Birštonas, Lithuania. With over 350 participants and a wealth of expert outcomes, the event confirmed that EUROPARC remains a vital pillar for nature conservation in Europe. Our relevance is also growing globally; the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with RedParques (South America) demonstrates that the EUROPARC model serves as a genuine inspiration for other regions around the world. I thank our Lithuanian hosts, the Lithuanian State Service for Protected Areas under the Ministry of Environment, deeply for their excellent work in organising the event.

However, although a major landmark, the Conference should not overshadow everything else. This Annual Report presents the culmination of multiple activities and highlights their quality and contributing to EUROPARC's continuing success.

Whilst we continue to manage large-scale initiatives like LIFE PAME-Europe, NaturaConnect and the European Nature Academy, the true energy of the Federation lies in its people. I want to express my sincere gratitude to the Youth Council for their tireless efforts and to all EUROPARC Sections for their crucial work on the ground throughout the year. Work in these areas is not only the energy keeping us running, but also the backbone of our network, with a focus on future generations.



Michael Hošek, EUROPARC President.

The TransParcNet meeting held in Poland in June, which I was fortunate to attend, deserves special mention. Meeting more than 60 people dedicated to transboundary cooperation is always a boost in today's world!

This brings me to my final remark, prompted by recent global developments. International cooperation and openness have begun to be perceived as weaknesses by major players. Self-centred strategies, competitiveness, and achieving goals purely from a position of strength are, sadly, currently prevailing. However, I hope that this is (unfortunately) just history repeating itself and that we will be able to quickly return to what has enabled us to achieve what we have today – that is no small thing! Together, working through EUROPARC, we evidence and uphold honesty, cooperation, openness, and the search for common ground or solutions instead of provoking conflict.

As the EUROPARC Council and Directorate, we take the current adverse climate very seriously, but we stand ready to evolve and adapt accordingly. I remain firmly convinced that our transparency and moral integrity will always be more beneficial than isolation or acting from a position of power. These are the values that EUROPARC will continue to uphold. By staying true to these principles, we contribute to a more stable world.

Michael Hošek
President
EUROPARC Federation

This Annual Report is aligned with the EUROPARC Strategy, which is driven by the collective aspiration of EUROPARC Members to see a **Sustainable Nature; Valued by People**. The Strategy shapes and guides our efforts to improve and champion the policy and practice of Protected Areas, ensuring that our natural and cultural heritage is protected and enhanced for the benefit of current and future generations. In this collective endeavour, certain activities are delegated to the various arms of the Federation, the Council, Directorate, Sections, Commissions and Task Forces, but underpinned by the participation and work of Members themselves across the Protected Areas of Europe.

COOPERATIVE: we learn and work with each other across Europe to **innovate** Protected Area management through engagement, communication and training.

ENJOYABLE: we create fun and useful networking experiences to **inspire** our members, other organisations and wider society to value Protected Areas.

INCLUSIVE: we actively listen and engage in all aspects of our operations to **inform** our Members, partners and colleagues across sectors.

SUSTAINABLE: we track the impacts that the work of our organisation has on the natural and cultural heritage to **influence** to ensure that the values and benefits of Protected Areas are recognised and integrated in policy.

EXCELLENCE: we embrace continual improvement by providing opportunities to **invest** in our staff, our Members' skills and capacities and our inputs to projects and programmes to bring added value across all areas of our activities.

Across the network, we foster collaboration to generate collective insights and expertise for Protected Areas policy and practice. Through cooperation and being open to continuous development, we stimulate innovation and mutual learning. Our vision of **Sustainable Nature; Valued by People** remains a shared ambition, supported and championed by our Members.

Our actions are underpinned by values and principles to create a positive impact within the EUROPARC network and beyond. Our values and principles define and guide not just *what* we do, but *how* we do it. Our activities and achievements in 2025 were permeated by and promoted through our commitment to **cooperation, enjoyment, inclusivity, sustainability, and excellence.**

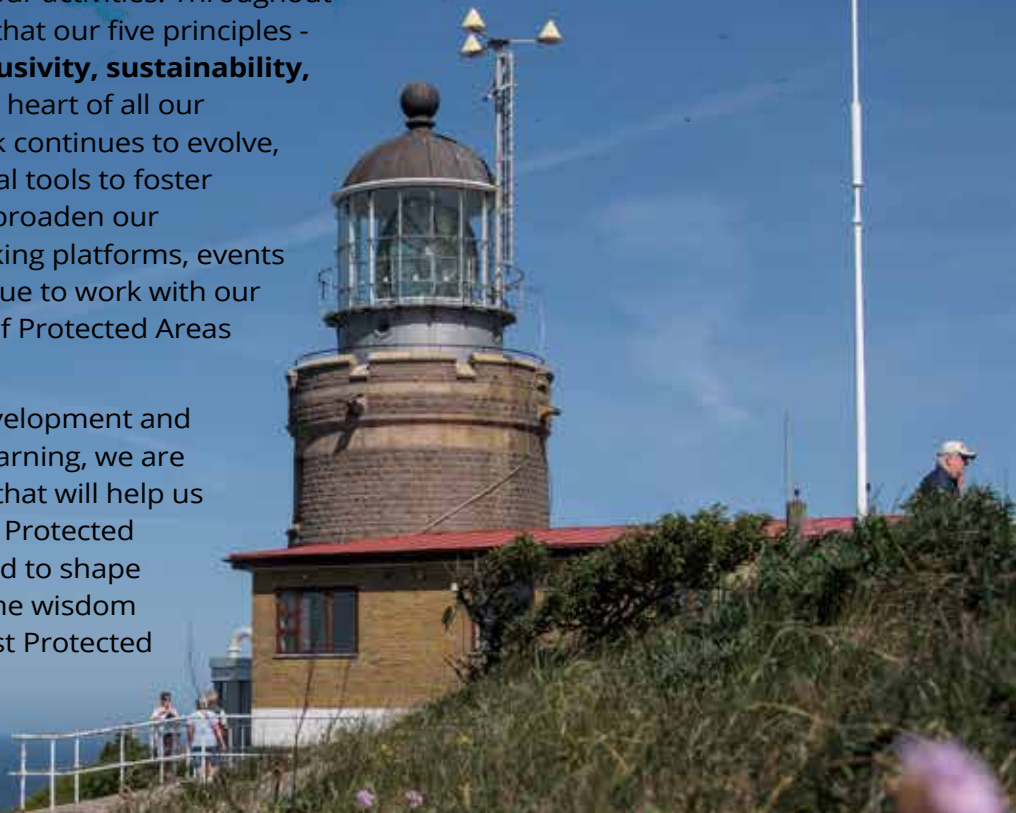




Strengthen and grow our Network to deliver our vision

A thriving, resilient organisation with active and engaged Members is the foundation of our activities. Throughout 2025, EUROPARC has ensured that our five principles - **cooperation, enjoyment, inclusivity, sustainability, and excellence** - remain at the heart of all our operations. As the way we work continues to evolve, EUROPARC has embraced digital tools to foster international cooperation and broaden our outreach. Through our networking platforms, events and online presence, we continue to work with our Members to shape the future of Protected Areas policy and practice.

By encouraging continuous development and fostering a culture of mutual learning, we are inspiring new ways of thinking that will help us collectively navigate the future. Protected Areas deserve to be empowered to shape that future themselves, using the wisdom and potential of Europe's largest Protected Area network.



Increase the human and financial capacity of the network

Our Members and Directorate

In 2025, we welcomed 19 new Members that help us in advancing our vision. To celebrate and further engage our network of 409 members, we maintained the 'Members Spotlight' campaign, sharing members' latest projects and ambitions across the network. During our General Assembly, we proudly honoured members celebrating 10, 20, 30 and 40 years of commitment, followed by personalised e-certificates in recognition of their dedication. Furthermore, a membership consultation was held throughout the year. More information on this particular process can be found on the right.

While we said farewell to 18 Members, we successfully implemented the ODOO CRM system, strengthening our membership management and enabling more targeted communication and promotion across the EUROPARC network.

The Directorate team saw significant changes, with the team continuing to grow and expand, bringing a wealth of new expertise. We welcomed a Finance Support Officer, a long-needed role that has already made a tangible impact to our operations, and a temporary Communications Support Officer, whose contribution to our work was invaluable. They support the ongoing work of streamlining processes and ensuring the Federation runs as efficiently as possible. Get in touch with us! A team overview and contact details can be found at the end of this Report.

New Director

After almost 17 years as the EUROPARC Federation's Executive Director, Carol Ritchie left her position at the Directorate. Following an open call for applications, Alberto Arroyo Schnell started his new position as Director of the EUROPARC Federation in September 2025. Bringing with him many years of experience from WWF and IUCN, Alberto knows how to connect 'the muddy boots' on the ground, to the decision makers in Brussels and beyond. His first working days coincided with the EUROPARC General Assembly and Conference, providing an opportune moment for EUROPARC members to meet Alberto - and vice-versa.

Learn more about the strategy mid-term review in our members' area here.

Members' Consultation

2025 marked the mid-way point for the implementation of the EUROPARC Strategy to 2030. As such, the Federation ran a membership consultation to review progress towards its targets and gather inputs from our members on future priorities. Using an online questionnaire (40 replies), a General Assembly exercise (78 replies) and a conference mini-survey (20 replies), members assessed achievements and emerging needs.

Overall, feedback shows strong satisfaction with networking, knowledge exchange, youth engagement and key programmes, with 93% willing to recommend membership. Advocacy at EU level is valued, though members request clearer communication on policy impacts. Climate action, sustainable tourism and management effectiveness are key priorities, while funding and stronger EU advocacy emerged as top future needs. The results indicate that members want EUROPARC to remain a strong advocate, practical support hub and trusted platform for cooperation and innovation.

General Assembly

The voices of EUROPARC Members resonate powerfully throughout our work, shaping decisions during the General Assembly where they drive progress and forge our future together. In 2025, the General Assembly was held before the official start of the EUROPARC Conference.

Alberto Arroyo Schnell at the General Assembly in Birštonas, Lithuania. © Vaidas Garla



It was an opportunity for members to receive updates directly from the Council, Directorate, Task Force and Commission leaders, the Section representative, as well as the EUROPARC Youth Council. Furthermore, the membership met the new Director and learned about the results of the membership consultation.

The report of the General Assembly is available in the Members' area of the EUROPARC website.

Learn more about the General Assembly in our members' area [here](#).

Siggen Seminar - Council Meeting

The annual Siggen Seminar was used in 2025 for a meeting of the LIFE PAME-Europe project, as well as for the induction of the new EUROPARC Council.

After their election in October 2024, council members had only met virtually. As such, two days of the Siggen Seminar were dedicated to further support their onboarding. The EUROPARC Directorate Management Team familiarised Council members with the operational and legal functioning of the Federation. Furthermore, the meeting kick-started the process of the search for a new Director of the Federation, as the appointment is a Council responsibility.

Projects

Leading and participating in European projects is essential to implement the EUROPARC Strategy to 2030. Through projects, with the involvement of members, Sections and partners, we seek to innovate, invest, influence and inform actions that generate lasting impacts in our Protected Areas, and for people who live and work in them.

In 2025, we submitted a number of project proposals and prepared the path for new ones to be developed in the course of 2026. Among those: the application for the LIFE NGO Grant 2026, which supports the everyday operations of the Directorate, the Erasmus+ Connect project, focused on active tourism and outdoor sports in Protected Areas, and the SoilsParks project, which aims to engage youth on soil conservation in Protected Areas, as part of a wider Horizon project.

We also strengthened our cooperation with the University of Warwick for the development of learning materials to help assess the social impacts of our Protected Areas.

Learn more about our current projects [here](#).

Learn more about the EUROPARC Council and President [here](#).

Council members in Siggen, Germany. © EUROPARC



Financial Report

An overview of the Federation's income and spending can be found on this page.

BALANCE SHEET		2025	2024
Assets	Total fixed assets	7 155,47	8 060,87
	Total current assets	517 005,04	790 499,02
Total Assets		524 160,51	798 559,89
LIABILITIES			
Profit Reserve		262 781,46	237 003,92
Liabilities	Provisions	62 447,06	59 905,69
	Accounts payable	198 931,99	501 650,28
Total Equity and Liability		524 160,51	798 559,89

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE		2025	2024
Income			
Membership fees		377 714,50	377 178,00
Grants	EC core grant	419 718,40	318 651,80
	Project grants	273 005,96	439 423,09
Other income		187 461,39	158 571,81
Total income		1 257 900,25	1 293 824,70
Simplified Expenditure			
Total Personnel costs		846 546,66	847 596,03
Total Office costs		19 654,88	24 309,06
Total Travel and Subsistence		66 555,83	92 043,51
Total Other direct costs		105 489,02	130 401,44
Total Overhead costs		105 198,51	119 857,82
Total External Assistance/ Professional Fees		88 677,81	82 682,48
Total costs		1 232 122,71	1 296 890,34
Result		25 777,54	-3 065,64

Build the capacity of our organisation and its members

EUROPARC Conference

Connecting nature and people is at the core of EUROPARC's work. Our Conference, taking place every two years, embodies this ethos perfectly.

In 2025, the EUROPARC network travelled to Birštonas in Lithuania. The small town along the Memel River provided the perfect backdrop for this one-of-a-kind gathering.

The event brought together 406 nature professionals to discuss Nature Restoration and the implementation of the EU Nature Restoration Regulation. Through the theme 'Nature for People, People for Nature' nature restoration was approached from three interconnected angles:

- 🌐 Social: How can we restore the relationship between people and nature?
- 🌐 Practical: What needs to happen to restore nature?
- 🌐 Financial: How can we finance these activities?

Together with our Lithuanian hosts, the Lithuanian State Service for Protected Areas under the Ministry of Environment, EUROPARC created a rich programme filled with interaction, nature and cultural elements, with many opportunities for members to showcase their work.

Keynotes and case studies from across Europe showcased what is already happening on the ground, and how Protected Areas can support and drive forward nature restoration. Through workshops, the EUROPARC Market Place, the Inspiration & Innovation Session and an interactive role-playing session, participants were encouraged to actively contribute to the programme and discussions.

***Learn more about the
EUROPARC Conference here.***

*Participants at the EUROPARC Conference.
© Vaidas Garla*

Main topics and takeaways

1. People and Nature – Mutual Dependence.

Human well-being depends on a healthy environment. Nature restoration must include ecological, social, and cultural aspects, strengthening education, emotional connection, and community involvement.

2. From Policy to Action.

Effective restoration requires cross-sector collaboration among communities, businesses, scientists, and youth. Environmental recovery should become a shared social effort.

3. Connecting through Experience and Stories.

To counter nature loss indifference, emotional ties with nature must be renewed through art, storytelling, and direct experience.

4. Innovation and Technology for Nature.

New approaches – from nature credits to satellite data, AI, and “nature guardians” – show that conservation is entering a technology-supported phase.

5. Inclusion and Accessibility for All.

Nature should be open and accessible to everyone, fostering solidarity and shared responsibility for its future.





Field trip at the EUROPARC Conference. © Vaidas Garla



Webinars

EUROPARC webinars are a staple in the wide-array of networking and capacity building offers of the Federation. In 2025, they continued to gather high levels of satisfaction and attendance, making them one of our most popular platforms for experience-sharing.

Over 2000 people registered for our eight webinars, with many more watching the recordings later. Through case studies and expert presentations, they help to develop an understanding of our members' best practices and those of partners across all areas of our activities, as well as the policy context relevant to Protected Areas.

Learn more about the 2025 webinars here.



Protected Areas In-Sight

The EUROPARC Protected Areas In-Sight is another important tool to showcase the excellent work of EUROPARC members.

Following the theme of the EUROPARC Conference, our annual journal dove into Nature Restoration and the role of Protected Areas to answer the following questions:

- 🕒 How can restoration measures be implemented?
- 🕒 How can we ensure adequate financial resources for restoration activities?
- 🕒 How can we ensure broad societal support?

The EUROPARC Directorate collected stories and experiences from members and partners across Europe. The journal takes readers to Ireland, where a new approach to restoration has led to a payment scheme for farmers, and to Lithuania, where Volunteering Days are placing people at the heart of nature restoration.

It also features exclusive insights from DG Environment in an article by Head of Unit Andrea Vettori, alongside updates from our projects - Horizon Europe NaturaConnect, Interreg Euro-MED MPA4Change, and LIFE PAME-Europe - highlighting the capacities and data needed to support nature restoration activities, as well as examples of the successful implementation of the EU Nature Restoration Regulation.

Discover the Protected Areas In-Sight here.

Commissions

EUROPARC Commissions are established by the EUROPARC Council as member-led groups that advance work in specific topic areas linked to our Strategy. EUROPARC Task Forces are also member-led, but are created in response to specific needs and often contribute to EUROPARC programmes. The work of both these groups is presented throughout the Annual Report.

While we started the process to renew our participatory groups for 2026, the work of EUROPARC Commissions and Task Forces continued, contributing to progress on various priority areas of the Federation and to inform and inspire policy and practice for Protected Area management.

The following Commissions and Task Forces were active in 2025:

- ⦿ Fedenatur/Periurban Commission
- ⦿ Healthy Parks Healthy People Europe Commission
- ⦿ Sustainable Tourism Task Force
- ⦿ Transboundary Cooperation Task Force
- ⦿ Nature Regional Landscape Parks Task Force

Learn more about these groups here.

Promote greater inclusion and equity within and by our network

EUROPARC prides itself on being an inclusive network. As such, our work on inclusion and equity does not stand alone: rather, it stretches across our different topic areas of work. In 2025, we were proud to promote work on this topic from across our membership. This includes:

A report on how to create more inclusive tourism in Protected Areas, by Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarship winner Emmanuelle Déon.

Learn more about Emmanuelle's work here.

A report on how Europe's Protected Areas are engaging with refugee and asylum seeker communities, by Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarship winner Hayden Bridgeman.

Learn more about Hayden's work here.

An article highlighting two case studies from EUROPARC members in Italy that are using their engagement in the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism to promote accessibility and sustainability.

Learn more about the case studies here.



In addition, the 'Natura for All: Paths to Health and Connection' Innovation and Inspiration Session at the EUROPARC Conference was dedicated to accessibility and inclusivity in Protected Areas. Four speakers from across Europe took to the stage to showcase what is currently happening on the ground, and what needs to be improved, to ensure Parks across Europe are accessible and enjoyed by all.

Daniel Åberg, Director of Kullaberg Nature Reserve presents during the 'Innovation & Inspiration Session' at the EUROPARC Conference.
© Vaidas Garla



Strengthen the status of Protected Areas for a stronger more sustainable nature

*TransParcNet Meeting 2025 at the
Karkonosze Transboundary Area
(Poland–Czechia).
© Nella Sergejeva*

EUROPARC positively advocates the crucial role that Protected Areas play in addressing the pressing challenges faced by both people and nature. Through our advocacy efforts, we ensure that Parks and Protected Areas receive the recognition and support they deserve. We focus on strengthening the development and implementation of relevant EU and global policies and strategies by asserting the critical roles and functions of Protected Areas and Natura 2000 sites in Member States of the EU and across all of Europe.

By facilitating cross-border and cross-sector collaboration within our network, we highlight the interconnections across issues like climate change, biodiversity, health and sustainable agriculture. This collaborative approach ensures that the importance of Protected Areas is fully acknowledged by policymakers and integrated into broader strategies for environmental and societal well-being.



Champion the value and benefits of Protected Areas in response to environmental and societal challenges

Policy

EUOPARC is an advocate for Protected Areas: as their collective voice, we represent the interests of Protected Areas at different fora in Europe. We bridge policy with practice by bringing insights of Protected Area practitioners to European policy tables.

Our aim is to help policymakers make informed decisions on issues that affect Protected Areas. Furthermore, we showcase how Protected Areas contribute to the implementation of policies. We enriched our policy information on the website with updates, thematic articles and dedicated news. The EUOPARC Policy Advisory Group, about which you can find more information on the next page, continued to actively support and inform this work.

We continued to be an active member of several European Commission Expert Groups, allowing us to strengthen our cooperation with the European Commission (Directorate-General for Environment in particular). Among them are the EU Biodiversity Platform and its subgroups, such as the Expert Group on the Birds and Habitats Directives (NADEG), the Marine Expert Group (MEG), the new group on Nature Restoration Regulation and the EU Platform on Coexistence between people and large carnivores.

In these fora we had the opportunity to raise the voice of Protected Areas, especially on the following themes:

- Implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy and its Protected Area targets, including designation and management effectiveness of Protected Areas;
- Nature Restoration Regulation and the role of Protected Areas - including Natura 2000 - for its implementation;
- Implementation of the Nature Directives, especially Natura 2000 management;
- Coexistence with Large Carnivores in Protected Areas.

Learn more about our policy work here.

Policy Advisory Group

The EUROPARC Policy Advisory Group (PAG) is formed by policy experts from EUROPARC Members. The PAG enhances the capacity of the Directorate in the development of policy and EUROPARC policy positions by providing advice, insights and expertise across different policy areas, connecting them with Protected Area management practices. In 2025, the PAG was asked to provide their advice on, e.g. the EC guidance documents on Natura 2000 and climate change and Natura 2000 and tourism, as well as on the Roadmap towards Nature Credits and the EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034. Their inputs helped inform EUROPARC's position on these topics. Additionally, the PAG was asked to give their ideas on the policy briefs produced by the MPA4Change project.

Learn more about the Policy Advisory Group [here](#).

Dialogue with European Institutions

EUROPARC participated in expert working groups of the Bern Convention under the Council of Europe. We continued to give advice on indicators work for the Convention's Strategic Plan, especially regarding Protected Areas and particularly on management effectiveness. Additionally, EUROPARC participated in the Council of Europe's Landscape Convention's 25-year celebration in Florence, Italy, represented by Council member Lidia Bai. Here, EUROPARC highlighted the essential role that Protected Areas play in shaping sustainable landscapes across Europe.

Learn more about the Landscape Convention meeting [here](#).

Learn more about our dialogue with European institutions [here](#).



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONFERENCE DES ONG DU
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



EU Nature Restoration Regulation

The impact of the EU Nature Restoration Regulation, when implemented well, will be monumental. As Protected Areas are anticipated to be the focus until 2030, EUROPARC participates actively in the EU Nature Restoration Regulation Expert Group of the European Commission. Here we provided feedback on the format for the national restoration plans. In the framework of the European Habitats Forum (EHF), EUROPARC takes part in the preparatory meetings before the Expert Group meetings to exchange and provide joint views on the meeting topics. The EHF remains an important platform, particularly on EU policy discussions.

Learn more about the Nature Restoration Regulation [here](#).

Coexistence with Large Carnivores

EUROPARC has been a long-standing member of the EU Platform for Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores, and this work continued in 2025. In this framework, we promoted a number of Protected Area good practices and examples from within our network, showing ways to facilitate dialogue among stakeholders and to facilitate coexistence through damage prevention measures.

Furthermore, to raise knowledge and awareness among young people and Rangers from our Protected Areas, we contributed to the development and piloting of a thematic role play game on coexistence, which was tested at the International Junior Ranger Camp 2025.

Learn more about the game [here](#).

Together for EU Tourism

Tourism is a core topic for Protected Area managers, and as such for EUROPARC. We maintained an active role in EU tourism policy discussions, notably through continued engagement in the Together for EU Tourism (T4T) Expert Group, which provides a key European platform for advancing tourism-related policies. In this context, EUROPARC has fostered close collaboration with representatives of the European Commission (particularly from DG MOVE and DG ENV), promoting the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism and advancing issues related to tourism in Protected Areas, especially in light of the forthcoming EU Sustainable Tourism Strategy expected in 2026.

Learn more about the expert group [here](#).

Develop and nurture cross-sectoral partnerships

Transboundary Programme

The Transboundary (TB) Programme embodies the Federation's belief that nature knows no borders. In 2025, it remained one of our most valued initiatives, with its annual workplan successfully delivered.

Coordination activities ensure the Programme remains effective, with updated TB Guidelines, including a flexible one-year certification extension, and two Task Force meetings that resulted in continuity, renewed co-chairing, and clear communication planning. The programme also supported three re-evaluations and strengthened youth engagement through the first-ever Transboundary Youth Camp in the Julian Alps: this resulted in high interest on EUROPARC's Youth Instagram account. It was an excellent opportunity to introduce the Programme to a new generation of nature managers.

Externally, the Programme's visibility grew through EU policy engagement, the delivery of TransParcNet 2025, and a strong presence at the EUROPARC Conference. Outreach activities further expanded the pipeline of future initiatives, reinforcing EUROPARC's role as a trusted partner for emerging transboundary cooperation across Europe.

Finally, to mention some excellent numbers - the Transboundary Community on Facebook grew by 127% in just one year!



Join the community here.

Learn more about the TB award winners here.

*TransParcNet Meeting 2025 at the
Karkonosze Transboundary Area
(Poland–Czechia).
© Nella Sergejeva*

TransParcNet 2025

The TransParcNet Meeting 2025, held from 9 to 12 June in the Karkonosze Transboundary Area (Poland–Czechia), brought together leaders, practitioners, and policymakers from over 20 European countries. For this edition, the event focussed on managing overtourism in shared landscapes.

The programme combined inspiring plenaries, practical workshops, and dynamic field excursions, including hikes in the mountains, which sparked active discussions on sustainable visitor management. Innovative tools like the Landscape Character Assessment and data-driven approaches were shared to balance conservation and visitor pressures. New transboundary partners from North Macedonia–Kosovo, Hungary–Croatia and Poland–Germany were welcomed, reinforcing cooperation across borders.

Learn more about the event here.

***Learn more about the
TransParcNet here.***





Signing of the declaration of commitment between EUROPARC and RedParques in Birštonas, Lithuania. © Vaidas Garla

Partnership agreements

At the EUROPARC Conference 2025 in Birštonas, Lithuania, EUROPARC and RedParques, the Latin American network of Protected Areas, shook hands and signed a declaration of commitment, which aims to connect Protected Areas across oceans. In the declaration of commitment, EUROPARC and RedParques agreed to formalise the collaboration with the preparation of a Memorandum of Understanding and an accompanying work plan. This is a logical step as both of our organisations work on strengthening the management of Protected Areas, and share common objectives for biodiversity conservation, sustainable development and capacity building. The themes for collaboration include:

- 🌐 Capacity development and knowledge management.
- 🌐 Communication, awareness-raising, and public participation.
- 🌐 Policy dialogue and international cooperation

This was made possible thanks to the support of the Italian Development Cooperation Agency (AICS) and the EU programme AMAZONÍA+. We also thank Federparchi and EUROPARC Spain for their active support and engagement.

Within Europe, we are collaborating with both Rewilding Europe and the European Network of Outdoor Sports, with whom we have Memoranda of Understanding and undertake joint work. The work with Rewilding Europe was highlighted through a joint workshop at the EUROPARC Conference.

Furthermore, we are also in the process of transferring our partnership agreement with the International Ranger Federation to the European Ranger Federation, aiming to support joint work, especially regarding the Junior Ranger programme.



Learn more about RedParques [here](#).



Learn more about ENOS [here](#).



Learn more about Rewilding and Protected Areas [here](#).



Enhance the status of nature on land and sea and people's connection to it

EUROPARC is committed to fostering a society where equitable access to and enjoyment of nature are recognised as fundamental values. We support initiatives that help people deepen their connection to nature in sustainable ways, ensuring that future generations can enjoy its benefits. Our network encourages professionals working in Protected Areas to continuously improve their practices, embrace inclusivity - especially among youth - and inspire active participation in this vital effort.

By strengthening this bond between people and nature, we foster a sense of shared responsibility and care for Europe's natural heritage. The enhancement of governance frameworks and management structures are key elements to enhance broader connections.





LIFE PAME-Europe Advisory Board meeting in Helsinki, Finland. © EUROPARC

Improve Protected Areas governance, planning and management effectiveness

LIFE PAME-Europe

Europe's Protected Areas are precious strongholds for nature and people: our biodiversity, landscapes, economies, cultures, well-being and communities depend on them. That is why it is essential to manage these spaces effectively and know that what we are doing works.

Led by EUROPARC, the LIFE PAME-Europe project runs from 2024 to 2028. It aims to develop and test the 'PAME-Europe Framework', a coordinating approach to evaluate and self-assess management effectiveness in Protected Areas across Europe.

In 2025, the process to select 45 pilot Protected Areas was undertaken. 90 applications were received. Working with the project Selection Panel, an analysis of the 47 selected pilot Protected Areas is in the box on the right. This increased number reflects the high quality of the applications received.

90 applications were received between October and November 2025. Of these, 76 came from countries in the EU and 14 outside. This evidences the high interest in the LIFE PAME-Europe project.

Of the 47 selected pilot sites, 37 come from within the EU and 10 beyond. One of the selection criteria was to be as inclusive as possible.

9 of the selected sites are Transboundary. The majority are designated Natura 2000 sites; also, several sites are designated under World Heritage, Biosphere, Ramsar, Geopark & Emerald Network terms.



Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or CINEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



LIFE PAME-Europe
Management Effectiveness
for Protected Areas in Europe

Throughout 2026, the pilot Protected Areas will apply, test and evaluate the first version of the PAME-Europe Framework together with a tool (to be developed by the European Environment Agency (EEA)). Based on their experience and feedback, the aim will be to produce a final tested version by 2028, which can be widely used as an 'enabling framework', not a new methodology, to comprehensively assess Protected Area Management Effectiveness in Europe.

Learn more about the project here.

Siggen Seminar

As the LIFE PAME-Europe project aims to build on the best of what already exists, the project is supported by an Advisory Board to assist project partners in this process.

Made up of experts on the topic of Protected Area Management Effectiveness Evaluation, they help ensure that the PAME-Europe Framework will be of true benefit to Protected Area Management Authorities and National Agencies in charge of reporting.

The 2025 Siggen Seminar provided the first opportunity for these external Advisors to get together face-to-face and kick-start the thinking about what the PAME-Europe Framework should – and should not – entail. Some of the main outcomes of the rich discussions include:

- ⦿ The strength of the project is that it should build a common European framework to make Management Effectiveness data comparable.
- ⦿ The Framework needs to work with existing national systems — no one-size-fits-all approach.
- ⦿ The Framework is designed to support managers.
- ⦿ The Framework needs to be useful at the site, national and EU level.
- ⦿ The Framework should recognise that management quality and biodiversity outcomes are linked, but not the same.

Learn more about the Siggen Seminar here.



Horizon Europe NaturaConnect

EUROPARC is proudly part of the Horizon Europe NaturaConnect project, especially focussing on the project's communication and capacity building activities, and ensuring the products produced are of relevance to those managing nature.

Throughout 2025, NaturaConnect continued its ambitions to design a coherent and resilient Trans-European Nature Network (TEN-N) and to assist EU Member States in achieving targets of the Biodiversity Strategy. By using spatial prioritisation methods, the project identifies top priorities that maximise conservation benefits on a pan-European scale. The main achievements of 2025 include:

- ⦿ Mapping of multi-functional ecological corridors, including terrestrial, riparian and freshwater habitat connectivity, based on data for over 1,000 species and 200 habitat types. These efforts resulted in variants of spatial configurations of European ecological corridors.
- ⦿ A series of webinars on various topics related to our work, including green and blue infrastructure, financing nature conservation and feedback sessions on the preliminary outputs of pan-European prioritisation work.

LIFE PAME-Europe Project Partners and Advisory Board members in Siggen, Germany. © EUROPARC





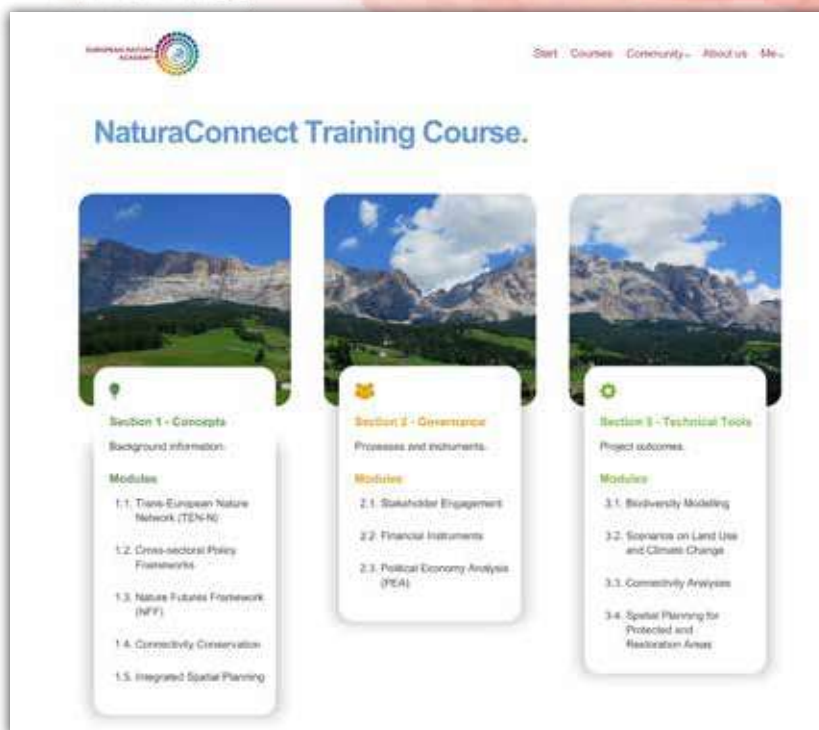
NaturaConnect Annual Consortium Meeting in Leipzig, Germany.
© NaturaConnect

- Provision of an overview of Europe's ecosystem services, highlighting both current conditions and potential future changes in land use and climate. This resulted in the report about current and future natural capital and ecosystem services.
- Development of high-resolution (1km²) distribution maps for species and habitats across Europe. Using advanced Species Distribution Models (SDMs) and Habitat Distribution Models (HDMs). The project produced maps covering plants, vertebrates, invertebrates, and all EUNIS Level 3 habitats.
- Continuous growth of the NaturaConnect Learning Platform, led by EUROPARC. The capacity-building hub gathers materials and activities developed within the project. A range of modules are already available to be discovered!

Learn more about the project here.

Discover all project outputs here.

Explore the Learning Platform here.



NaturaConnect training modules launched in 2025:

- The **Financial Instruments module** outlines the costs and funding options available for implementing the TEN-N. It covers both private finance mechanisms and EU public instruments, and provides summaries, factsheets, and practical examples demonstrating their applications.
- The **Political Economy Analysis (PEA) module** introduces this tool to improve environmental governance and conservation with the example of the Danube-Carpathian region.
- The **Accounting for Climate Change tutorial** is part of the Scenarios on Land Use and Climate Change module. It explains how to calculate different metrics of climatic risk and assess the level of climate exposure. It includes a usage note on climate metrics for conservation planning.



NaturaConnect receives funding under the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement number 101000429



Participants of the International Junior Ranger Camp 2025 at Casentinesi Forest National Park, Italy. © EUROPARC

Involve youth in the work of Protected Areas

Youth Actions

EUROPARC is a strong advocate for youth-inclusivity in Protected Area management. Throughout 2025, a range of activities supported this work.

The International Junior Ranger Camp was hosted by the Casentinesi Forest National Park in Italy. It brought together 16 teams with 33 Junior Rangers representing 19 different Protected Areas across 12 Countries. Apart from activities for the Junior Rangers, the programme also always includes a workshop for the mentors. In 2025, this resulted in a practical guide for the hosting park to start its own programme: this has also been shared with other Protected Areas, considering the Junior Ranger programme.

EUROPARC focused on promoting the Junior Ranger and Youth+ Programmes to French-speaking Protected Areas by hosting introductory webinars in French together with the French network of regional parks and MAB France.

Another focus in 2025 was involving youth in our work on coexistence with large carnivores. Working with Adelphi, the secretariat for EU Platform for Coexistence between People and Large Carnivores, we published mini videos on the various large carnivores on the EUROPARC Youth social media channels and helped them run the role-playing game at the international Junior Ranger Camp.

Lastly, we have increased our offers for networking between programmes by hosting a spring and autumn e-networking meeting and by starting a joint Junior Ranger mentor WhatsApp community with the European Ranger Federation.

Learn more about EUROPARC Youth Programmes [here](#).



EUROPARC Youth Council

2025 was the second and final year of the first cohort of the EUROPARC Youth Council. This year, they ran two online events for young people, actively promoted the European Youth in Parks Day, and took on many roles during the EUROPARC Conference in Lithuania, including running a workshop, reporting on social media, hosting a stand at the marketplace and co-planning and executing the final plenary session. The Youth Council has also strengthened EUROPARC Section activities and promoted more youth inclusion in their work, as well as through the Youth representative on the EUROPARC Council. Finally, they were active in promoting the applications for the next cohort, and five members volunteered to run a peer-to-peer selection process. In December, the new Youth Council stepped into their role and were onboarded by the previous cohort.



Learn more about the Youth Council [here](#).

*Youth Council at the EUROPARC Conference.
© EUROPARC Youth Council*



European Youth in Parks Day

In 2025, EUROPARC coordinated the second edition of the European Youth in Parks Day (EYiP) celebration, which took place on the 15th September. This event highlights the importance of young people in Protected Areas, celebrates their active engagement, and promotes awareness of responsible stewardship of nature among the next generation.

For 2025, the EUROPARC Youth Council chose the topic of "Youth Restore Nature" and mobilised Youth+ groups across Europe to participate. There were three main ways to participate: 22 EUROPARC members participated in the Youth Advocacy activities, 14 participated in Youth Activation activities, and 6 participated in Youth Leadership activities. In total, 486 young people participated in events linked to EYiP day!

*Winner of the European Youth in Parks Day Photo Competition:
Junior Rangers of the Foundation Conservation Carpathia.
© EUROPARC Youth Council*



Learn more about European Youth in Parks Day [here](#).

Inspire everyone to look after Parks

European Day of Parks

The European Day of Parks remains the most important awareness-raising event for Parks and Protected Areas in Europe, taking place annually on the 24th of May. With over 200 events taking place in 20 countries, the 2025 edition was once again a smashing success!

Under the theme 'Together for Nature', the European Day of Parks brought together our network and the wider Protected Area community. The goal was to increase awareness on the importance of partnership working for nature conservation. This theme underscored that Protected Areas are more than just designated spaces on a map: they are dynamic ecosystems where every plant, animal and person plays a pivotal role.



All of these efforts paid off:

200 events registered on the EUOPARC website

7,000 visits to the official EDoP Page

20,000 visitors on our Instagram page on the 24th of May

1,000 views of the official EDoP Guidelines for Parks

To support the promotion, EUOPARC Federation created guidelines for Parks, a special Social Media Pack, the official banner in 18 different languages, as well as a promotional video in five languages.

Learn more about the EDoP 2025 here.

SOCIAT Training Course

A good relation between a Protected Area and its community is essential if we want to inspire everyone to look after Parks. That is why EUOPARC and the University of Warwick launched the SOCIAT Training Course in 2025, hosted by the European Nature Academy (ENA).

This self-paced online course is organised into four modules enabling participants to utilise the SOCIAT - Social Impact Assessment Tool for Nature Protection and Restoration projects.

The SOCIAT tool is a structured questionnaire grounded in conservation social science, environmental sociology, and behavioural science. It provides evidence-based insights for conservation practitioners, helping them align nature conservation goals with community needs, while actively engaging communities in the process and strengthening the relationship between people and nature.



Explore the training course here.



Promote sustainable development tools and approaches for people and nature

*Interreg Europe GREENHEALTH
meeting at Kullaberg Nature
Reserve, Sweden.
© Océane Bailly*

EUROPARC is dedicated to empowering Parks and Protected Areas across Europe to become change-makers for the future, benefiting our climate, biodiversity and public health. The values that underpin our organisation drive tangible improvements in management practices, stimulate investment and contribute to the realisation of our vision: Sustainable Nature, Valued by People. Through these efforts, we are paving the way for a more sustainable and harmonious relationship between people and nature, ensuring long-term benefits for all.



Strengthen the role of Protected Areas in delivering health and well-being

Healthy Parks Healthy People Europe Commission

EUROPARC's Healthy Parks Healthy People Europe (HPHPe) Commission is essential in driving our work on nature and health.

In 2025, the HPHPe Commission continued its support for Protected Areas to develop better health outcomes for people. The contribution within the IUCN WCPA Health and Well-Being Specialist Group bore fruits with the publication of the IUCN WCPA Technical Note Utilizing Protected and Conserved Areas for Human Health and Well-being: A Technical and Methodological Framework, which was published in March 2025.

Read the technical note here.

The Commission also organised the EUROPARC webinar "Magical Places, Magical Numbers - Quantifying the Health and Wellbeing Benefits From Green Spaces". It explored two case studies from Finland and Scotland, examining the economic strategies and tools enabling park managers to gain insights into how their National Parks and Protected Areas contribute to health outcomes. The case studies make a compelling case for increased investment in these areas from a health standpoint.

Watch the webinar here.

Pete Rawcliffe, the HPHPe Commission Chair, delivered an input at the 3rd Meeting of the Taula de Salut i Natura de Catalunya (Catalan Health and Nature Table) on 7 and 8 November 2025. The event took place in Tortosa and was attended by more than 130 participants dedicated to sharing knowledge, experiences and strategies to link people's health with the environment. Concepts such as One Health, social prescription, urban renaturalisation and collaborative work marked the conference, showing the relevance of the interaction between health and nature in the Catalan context.

Finally, the Commission continued to serve as Technical Advisor for the consortium of the IE GREENHEALTH project, on which more information can be found below.

Learn more about HPHPe here.



**Healthy Parks
Healthy People**
EUROPE



*Interreg Europe GREENHEALTH meeting at Kullaberg Nature Reserve, Sweden.
© Océane Bailly*

Interreg Europe GREENHEALTH

The Interreg Europe GREENHEALTH project - aiming to create linkages between health and environmental policies and incorporate human health initiatives into Protected Area programmes - is led by the Murcia Region, General Directorate of the Natural Environment, Spain, and aided by EUROPARC as the advisory

partner for communication, capacity building and engagement. The HPHPe Commission actively supported the initiative, contributing insights during two inter-regional learning workshops and the first peer-review of the project.

In 2025, the project's focus was on selecting the Good Practices to be exported/imported from one regional context to another. The aim is to improve policies contributing to both biodiversity conservation and health and wellbeing. With success, the first policy improvements were reported in 2025.

EUROPARC also had the opportunity to host an Interreg Youth Volunteer for six months to support project dissemination efforts.

In addition, Kullaberg Nature Reserve representatives, as GREENHEALTH partners and EF members, held a session during the EUROPARC Conference on the topic of 'Nature for All: Paths to Health and Connection'.

Learn more about the project here.

Periurban Commission

Since EUROPARC's 2017 merger with Fedenatur, the representative body of European Periurban Parks, the EUROPARC Periurban Commission has been driving forward the specific agenda of Protected Areas in the vicinity of urban areas.

In 2025, the Periurban Commission continued the work from the previous year by focusing on the carrying capacity of Periurban Parks. In June, the webinar 'Hosting Large Events in Periurban Parks - Essential Strategies to Reduce Environmental Impacts' was organised. The webinar focused on four case studies from Belgium, France and Germany.

The Commission also organised a workshop during the EUROPARC Conference in Lithuania, which focussed on rethinking nature restoration in Periurban Parks.

Watch the webinar here.



*Interreg Europe GREENHEALTH meeting at Kullaberg Nature Reserve, Sweden.
© Océane Bailly*

**Interreg
Europe**



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

GREENHEALTH



ECST Awards Ceremony at the European Parliament in Brussels. © Athila Struys

Improve visitor management and sustainable tourism

European Charter for Sustainable Tourism

For 25 years, the EUROPARC Programme 'European Charter for Sustainable Tourism' (ECST) has been instrumental for the development of tourism offers in and around Protected Areas that are 'Good for People, and Good for Nature'.

In 2025, the Programme and its network continued to grow. 24 applications for verification were received, including six new candidates and 18 re-evaluations. Applications were submitted by Protected Areas in Estonia, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Latvia, and the Netherlands, as well as one Transboundary Area between Italy and Slovenia. Independent on-site verification visits and desk-based re-evaluations were carried out between April and the end of June.

The award ceremony for the Parks took place in the European Parliament in Brussels. We were honoured to be hosted by MEP Giuseppe Antoci, who was awarded the Alfred Toepfer Medal in 2016 for his extraordinary courage in defending nature against organised crime. He emphasised that initiatives, such as the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism, demonstrate Europe's capacity and responsibility to advance sustainable tourism, safeguard biodiversity and support resilient local communities.

Learn more about the awards ceremony here.

The newly awarded Parks are:

- ☉ Antola Regional Natural Park, Italy
- ☉ Emilia Western Parks, Italy
- ☉ Gauja National Park, Latvia
- ☉ Monti Lucretili Natural Regional Park, Italy
- ☉ Serralada Litoral Park, Catalonia, Spain
- ☉ Weerribben-Wieden National Park, the Netherlands



ECST Awards Ceremony at the European Parliament in Brussels. © Athila Struys

Our work on sustainable tourism in 2025 also included a webinar on regenerative tourism entitled 'Regenerative Tourism: What is this new approach about?'. It was delivered as part of the EUOPARC webinar series to explore the concept of regenerative tourism and how it goes beyond traditional sustainability by aiming for net-positive outcomes for nature and local communities.

Furthermore, we were happy to promote the following ECST case studies from activities in Italian Parks:

- ☉ Accessibility and Wellness for All: Vesuvius National Park Leads Inclusive, Sustainable Tourism. Vesuvius National Park promotes inclusive tourism by improving accessibility for visitors with disabilities through adapted trails, services and wellness experiences. The initiative integrates social inclusion with environmental protection, aligning tourism development with sustainability principles.
- ☉ "Restaurants of the Biosphere" – A Network for Sustainable Catering: The "Restaurants of the Biosphere" initiative links local restaurants with biosphere reserves to promote regional products, sustainable gastronomy and environmental awareness. By encouraging local sourcing and responsible practices, the network supports local economies while preserving cultural and natural heritage.



Learn more about the case studies here.

Outdoor Sports

Outdoor Sports are booming and so are their impacts on Protected Areas. EUOPARC has an active Memorandum of Understanding with the European

Network of Outdoor Sports (ENOS) that helps create activities that support cooperation between Outdoor Sport providers and Protected Area Managers.

In 2025, our work focussed on the launch of the first iteration of our Joint Award with ENOS. EUOPARC took the lead in promoting the Award. The 2025 winner was the Climate Project: Sphagnum Planting, delivered by the British Mountaineering Council together with the Peak District National Park, with the Moors for the Future Partnership in the UK. They were awarded at the EUOPARC Conference in Lithuania.

Learn more about the winners here.



*CONNECT project first pilot event in Páirc Náisiúnta na Mara, Ciarraí.
© Leave no Trace Ireland*

CONNECT project

The ERASMUS+ CONNECT project aims to build stronger collaborations between Protected Area management authorities and the outdoor sports sector. The project runs from 2025 to 2027 and includes partners such as ENOS, Mid-Sweden University, Leave no Trace Ireland, IMBA Europe, the European Hikers Association, and Surfrider Europe.

The project started with a kick-off in Lyon where plans were made for in-depth research into the keys to success for a good collaboration between the two sectors. This research will be supported by five pilot sites across different countries and different habitats. These sites will host kick-off events to co-create collaboration plans for each Protected Area. The scientific and real-world experiences will be collected and developed into a guidance to be shared with the EUOPARC network in 2027.

Learn more about the project here.



Team of the BMC Volunteers. © Alice Learey

Protected Areas role in climate change mitigation and adaptation

MPA4Change

During the last two years and until its closure in March 2026, EUROPARC was part of the Interreg Euro-MED MPA4Change project, which has endeavoured to scale up climate resilience in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) of the Mediterranean region.

This knowledge transfer initiative capitalises on a decade of experience and aims to transfer a validated set of Climate Change Adaptation Toolkits to MPAs with the objective of creating a more climate-resilient Mediterranean Sea.

EUROPARC, as the partner in charge of the communications and the policy and advocacy activities, has played a central role in achieving the project objectives, delivering key messages and producing strategic outputs.

EUROPARC has contributed to the MPA4Change Training Programme on Climate Change adaptation in MPAs both by supporting the delivery of four hybrid workshops across the Mediterranean region and by releasing a new online training course through the European Nature Academy. This online course, which is also available at DAN Europe's e-learning platform, provides an entry point for building the capacities of MPA managers to use and implement the MPA4Change toolkits.

Learn more about the project here.

Explore the training course here.



MPA4Change at the EUROPARC Conference. © Vaidas Garla

Furthermore, we have produced a policy brief that has significantly contributed to highlighting the role that MPAs can play as nature-based solutions to tackle climate impacts and advocated for the integration of the MPA4Change Toolkits in regional policies. Additionally, EUROPARC produced a second policy brief recommending the 100MPA MedAlliance as the operational framework to scale up climate resilience in MPAs after the project's closure.

Finally, we have conducted dedicated communication actions to present the project, its policy briefs and key recommendations at key events such as the Third United Nations Oceans Conference in Nice and the COP24, El Cairo. The project concluded with a dedicated Online Policy Bootcamp to exchange insights and strategies for accelerating climate adaptation across Mediterranean MPAs.

Learn more about the 100MPA MedAlliance here.



*NRL Taskforce Workshop at
the EUROPARC Conference.
© Vaidas Garla*

Climate Change Adaptation in Europe's Living Landscapes

EUROPARC's Nature Regional Landscape (NRL) Parks Task Force continued its efforts in landscape preservation and sustainable regional development.

In 2025, the Task Force focused on knowledge exchange and mutual learning, particularly on climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, and financial constraints. Two case studies were shared by the Swiss Park Network and are available on the EUROPARC website: one is a joint Climate Mission Statement, uniting 20 Swiss Parks to strengthen climate action across these protected spaces; another inspiring initiative is the Clientis Randenbus in Schaffhausen, a collaborative mobility project reducing car traffic and promoting sustainable tourism, showcasing practical climate solutions.



The NRL Taskforce was also well-represented at the EUROPARC Conference, where they organised a stand at the marketplace and a workshop. The workshop focussed on finding solutions to reconcile growing land use demands with conservation and restoration priorities.

Learn more about the case studies here.

Learn more about the Task Force here.



Schaffhauserland Tourismus. © Serena Keiser



TransParcNet Meeting 2025 at the Karkonosze Transboundary Area (Poland–Czechia). © Mauro Casalbon

Strengthen the role of Protected Areas in the transition to a green economy

Biodiversity funding and financing

The proposal for the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) – also known as the EU Budget – was published by the European Commission in July 2025. The proposal outlines how the EU will spend its money over the years 2028–2034.

EUROPARC analysed the proposal and provided feedback, taking into account the perspectives and priority needs of our members.

Among others, we stressed the need to ensure adequate funding for nature conservation and restoration, giving priority and recognising the role of Protected Areas. We emphasised the role and importance of the LIFE Programme, the EU's flagship fund for financing biodiversity conservation and climate action. We underlined our concern for the unexpected and unwelcome exclusion of the LIFE Programme in the EU MFF proposal. The work on promoting funding for nature conservation and restoration in the EU Budget remains one of our top priorities in 2026 and requires everybody to be involved.

Learn more about our position here.

Learn more about other threats to conservation in Europe.



Our European Network

Throughout its history, EUROPARC Federation has proudly fostered collaboration by supporting the establishment of regional and national Sections. EUROPARC Sections play a vital role in advancing the Federation's mission, working closely to implement its strategic goals while addressing the unique priorities and characteristics of their respective regions. Discover how these networks drive impactful change across Europe's protected landscapes.



- ⊙ EUROPARC Atlantic Isles
- ⊙ EUROPARC Central and Eastern Europe
- ⊙ EUROPARC Francophone
- ⊙ EUROPARC Italy / Federparchi
- ⊙ EUROPARC Low Countries
- ⊙ EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic
- ⊙ EUROPARC Spain
- ⊙ Nationale Naturlandschaften e. V. (EUROPARC Germany)

*Representatives of the Sections
at the EUROPARC Conference 2025.
© Vaidas Garla*

europarc.org/sections



Section meeting at the EUROPARC Conference. © EUROPARC Atlantic Isles

EUROPARC Atlantic Isles

The EUROPARC Atlantic Isles (EAI) Section unites Protected Areas across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and the Republic of Ireland. It promotes good practice in Protected Area management and training through networking, ensuring the continued relationship with the wider European network of protected landscapes. The EAI aligns with EUROPARC's goals while tailoring initiatives to its unique coastal and island landscapes.

In 2025, the programme of timely and thought-provoking webinars continued and EAI remained active within the EUROPARC network, contributing to regular Section meetings.

Over 40 EAI Section member representatives attended the EUROPARC Conference in Birštonas, Lithuania. Amongst them were our team of youth representatives and Youth Council members, who made excellent contributions and brought great energy and enthusiasm to the event, as well as the presenters from the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Ireland. They delivered a varied selection of topics, including:

- 🕒 **Shifting Baseline Syndrome:** Margaux Pierrel highlighted how the loss of expertise, familiarity and historical data changes our perception of nature. She encouraged awareness of this shift and offered ways to reconnect through memory, knowledge and direct experience.
- 🕒 **Taking a Multigenerational Approach to Nature:** Patrick McConigley shared insights from Glenveagh National Park, where efforts focus on restoring native woodlands and addressing issues such as overgrazing and invasive species. He emphasised long-term learning and creative engagement with youth.
- 🕒 **Working Together for Nature - Meet the 2024 Natura 2000 Award-winning Project, "Wild Atlantic Nature":** Derek McLoughlin presented LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature, demonstrating how integrated national and EU policies, together with stakeholders, can drive effective nature restoration.

- 🕒 **Cross-border collaboration related to climate change mitigation:** Christian Christodoulou-Davies, Project Manager for 30x30 and Nature Networks at NatureScot, and Danielle Rooke, Senior Policy Advisor, 30x30 and Landscape Designations at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), showed how flexible, locally led conservation complements formal Protected Areas by examining Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) and 30x30 targets in the UK.

2025/26 UK – France Study Visit Bursary

EUROPARC Atlantic Isles, in collaboration with the *Fédération des Parcs Naturels Régionaux* in France, provides an opportunity for young professionals working in protected landscapes in the UK or France to learn from other Protected Areas by providing a bursary to fund a study visit in 2026.

The bursary is a personal initiative of Phil Holden from the Shropshire Hills National Landscape team. In September 2025, he raised £2,000 through his incredible 1,000-mile bike ride across France, which stretched from Saint-Malo to Nice. On his way, he passed through 14 Parcs Naturels Régionaux. Phil's inspiration for the fundraising came from hosting earlier study visits under the former Alfred Toepfer Young Natural Heritage Scholarship initiative which was run by EUROPARC Federation. EUROPARC Atlantic Isles is holding the funds and administering the bursary. Phil doubled the amount of money he was planning to raise, creating two bursary opportunities instead of the one originally planned. We sincerely thank Phil for his efforts!

Learn more about the Federation des Parcs Naturels Régionaux in France [here](#).

Looking Ahead

EAI will continue to offer learning opportunities for members through webinars, site visits and mentoring.

2025 was an important transitional year for EAI, as part-time Section Coordinator Anita Prosser, who has been involved with EUROPARC since 1989, retired in June. Deb Brookes has taken over the role, bringing Sustainable and Regenerative Tourism experience to the section. Deb is immersing herself in EAI and the EUROPARC family, building on the work already done, as well as looking at new opportunities for EAI's members. She is particularly keen to develop a Young Professional network and mentoring scheme that encourages collaboration across all of our Protected Areas.

Three new excellent and experienced trustees have joined EAI's board: Paul Leadbitter, Peatland Programme Manager from North Pennines National Landscape; Anna Jones, Inclusion, Diversity and Governance Excellence

Strategic Lead for Tirweddau Cymru Landscapes Wales (TCLW); and, Ioan Gwilym, Head of Communications at Eryri National Park Authority. We are grateful for the contributions from all of our board members and would like to thank those who have stepped down for all of their contributions to the network.

EUROPARC Atlantic Isles has now started the implementation of the new three-year strategy, running from 2026 to 2028.

Learn more about the EAI 2026-28 Strategy here.



EUROPARC

Atlantic Isles

Learn more about the Atlantic Isles Section here.

EUROPARC Central and Eastern Europe

The EUROPARC Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) Section unites Protected Areas across Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. It promotes transboundary cooperation through communication and experience sharing, and ensures the integration of Natura 2000 sites into national systems. The CEE Section aligns with EUROPARC's goals while tailoring initiatives to a region rich in ancient forests and large carnivore habitats.

The CEE members actively participated in both online and in-person meetings throughout 2025, ensuring continuous cooperation and professional exchange despite geographical distances. These regular interactions helped strengthen regional collaboration and maintain the Section's visibility within the wider network.

Section members made significant contributions to the celebration of the European Day of Parks by organising a diverse range of engaging events and initiatives for local communities and visitors. These included interactive thematic walks, expert-led guided excursions, photo tours focusing on natural heritage, birdwatching activities led by specialists, and a variety of outdoor environmental education programmes for different age groups. Through these initiatives, members promoted awareness of Protected Areas and highlighted the importance of nature conservation and sustainable management practices across the region.

The Section was also strongly represented at the EUROPARC General Assembly and the EUROPARC Conference held in Lithuania. Members actively

contributed to professional discussions and knowledge exchange, reinforcing the voice and perspectives of Central and Eastern Europe within the broader European network.

Looking Ahead

The UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Management of Conservation Areas, based at the University of Applied Sciences Carinthia in Austria, organised and hosted an online coordination meeting to revitalise the Section's activities and prepare for the transition of the Presidency. Beyond reconnecting and renewing professional relationships within the Section, participants discussed planned activities for 2026. As part of this, the Section has also initiated preparations for an in-person meeting to be held in Autumn 2026. The Section would like to express its sincere appreciation to our colleagues at the UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Management of Conservation Areas for their active engagement and commitment to strengthening cooperation within the network. Its role in hosting and facilitating dialogue has made a valuable contribution to revitalising the Section's activities and fostering a collaborative and forward-looking spirit among members.



EUROPARC

Central and Eastern Europe

Learn more about the Central and Eastern Europe Section here.

EUROPARC Francophone

The EUROPARC Francophone Section unites Protected Areas across France, Switzerland, Luxembourg, and Wallonia. It promotes innovative approaches to the sustainable development of rural and Periurban areas, and ensures coordination around long-term integrative and participative territory projects. The Francophone Section aligns with EUROPARC's goals while tailoring initiatives from alpine ranges to coastlines, encompassing vast rural landscapes.

The consolidation of a formal office for the Francophone Section proved complex due to the diversity of national contexts and the varying capacity of members to engage. Rather than creating a rigid structure, the priority was to establish a collective dynamic based on flexible, cooperative and responsive operation. This approach made it possible to adapt to members' realities while ensuring continuity and coherence in the Section's activities.

During the year, the Section strengthened its position within the wider network by fostering a genuine sense of belonging among French-speaking members and promoting regular thematic exchanges. These efforts enhanced its visibility, legitimacy, and contribution to the Federation's overall objectives, marking an important step forward in its integration and recognition. Two major developments mark this period:

- ⊗ The election of Sabrina Caire of the Luberon Regional Nature Park to the EUROPARC Council.
- ⊗ The participation of Marjorie Jouen of the Jacques Delors Institute in the EUROPARC Policy Advisory Group strengthening the expertise and visibility of French-speaking positions in European debates.



The Francophone Section actively participated in the working group dedicated to restructuring the role of the Sections within EUROPARC, to clarify their mandate, their operating methods, and their relationship with the central governance of the network. This participation resulted in several presentations at EUROPARC events, including the EUROPARC Conference, four videoconference meetings, bringing together between 15 and 25 participants, and two face-to-face meetings in France:

- ⊗ During the European Seminar on Gardens and Landscapes – International Colloquium „Europe's landscapes and gardens: what European policies for garden and landscape heritage?“ at the Maison Jean Monnet, Bazoches-sur-Guyonne;
- ⊗ On the occasion of the European Day of Parks on the 24th of May, the proposal to establish a Working Group dedicated to European natural grasslands was launched in the Haut Languedoc Regional Nature Park. The event was attended by João Cardoso de Melo from the EUROPARC Council.

These activities made it possible to identify common priority themes (youth, health, sustainable tourism, natural grasslands, and cross-border cooperation), strengthen the flow of information on major European policies (Nature Restoration Law, Biodiversity Strategy 2030, CAP reforms), and support the emergence of joint projects, in particular the Interreg PRIVALAN project (France–Belgium) on light pollution: and in addition, the proposal to create a „Natural Grasslands“ Working Group within the EUROPARC network.





Joint signing for the European Day of Parks.
© Midi Libre

Monitoring and support for the development of European projects

Active monitoring of the Interreg Europe, Interreg Euro-MED, LIFE, and Erasmus+ programmes has resulted in project ideas focused on shared forest management, natural grassland preservation, and cross-border cooperation. This lays the foundations for structured support to help French-speaking managers access European funding and calling for stronger links with EUROPARC's Transboundary Working Group. Among the calls relayed, two initiatives particularly mobilised the Section:

A webinar in French on the Junior Ranger programme was also organised, promoting the sharing of experiences between French-speaking Parks and strengthening the youth dimension of the network.

Coordination tools and European advocacy

To facilitate exchanges, the Section established several coordination tools, including a highly active WhatsApp group for rapid information sharing and consultation and a shared online space centralising resources, strategic documents and feedback. Furthermore, coordinated policy work was established in Brussels together with the OFB's VIA office, the *Volontaire International en Administration*, a position based in Brussels on behalf of the French Biodiversity Agency (*Office Français de la Biodiversité*), notably in charge of monitoring developments in European policies. In this framework, the Francophone Section drafted a warning letter to several French ministers on the risks of reducing or abolishing the LIFE Programme and participated in meetings with the Ministry for Ecological Transition to convey the needs of Protected Areas. These actions strengthened the visibility of French positions at the European level and reinforced the Section's credibility as a structured and legitimate advocacy interlocutor.



- ⊗ French Federation of Conservancies of Natural Areas (*Fédération des Conservatoires d'Espaces Naturels - FCEN*) call for projects on twinning Protected Area managers, which selected six winners including a tripartite cooperation between PNR Pyrénées Ariégeoises, Comminges, and Val d'Aran for the project "Pyrenean hazel grouse and ibex: cross-border cooperation and joint management for Pyrenean biodiversity";
- ⊗ Erasmus+ project on cross-border outdoor workshops, selecting the pairs Scarpe-Escaut × Plaines de l'Escaut and Vanoise National Park × Gran Paradiso National Park, involving several partner universities, with the final submission scheduled for March 2026.

2025 marked the continued growth of the EUROPARC Francophone Section, reflected in both its collective momentum and its increasing influence at the European level. Institutional advances, the strengthening of collaborative working tools, and the emergence of concrete projects testify to a now solid and structured positioning. The Section is thus establishing itself as a space for strategic exchanges, a lever for cross-border cooperation, and a credible player in European advocacy for Protected Areas.



EUROPARC
FRANCOPHONE SECTION

Learn more about the Francophone Section [here](#).



Interreg Europe GREENHEALTH meeting at Kullaberg Nature Reserve, Sweden. © Océane Bailly

EUROPARC Italy / Federparchi

The EUROPARC Italy / Federparchi Section unites the country's diverse terrestrial and marine Protected Areas. It promotes sustainable tourism strategies and the benefits of ecosystem services, and ensures the maintenance and development of good practice and traditional cultures. Federparchi aligns with EUROPARC's goals while tailoring initiatives to leverage Italy's rich biodiversity and cultural heritage.

In 2025, Federparchi focused on aligning Italian Protected Areas with the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, implementing the Nature Restoration Law, and promoting the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST). As the representative body for Italian Parks, Federparchi acted as a bridge between local management needs and European policy-making.

Throughout the year, Federparchi successfully leveraged its membership in the EUROPARC Federation to elevate the profile of Italian Protected Areas. By adopting European standards for tourism and conservation, and by actively participating in the continental dialogue, Federparchi ensures that the „Italian model“ of integrated park management (balancing nature and culture) remains a cornerstone of European environmental policy.

The flagship event of Spring was the European Day of Parks on May 24, celebrating the anniversary of Europe's first National Parks. Under the theme „Together for Nature“, Federparchi emphasised the necessity of cross-border cooperation and public-private partnerships. Regional highlights were:

- 📍 **Lombardy:** Federparchi Lombardia coordinated initiatives focused on urban biodiversity and climate resilience, particularly in metropolitan parks like Parco Nord Milano.
- 📍 **Lazio:** Through RomaNatura, several events were organised to highlight the link between human health and nature, promoting the „Natura in Campo“ brand for sustainable local products.
- 📍 **Tuscany:** The Arcipelago Toscano National Park hosted educational treks and marine conservation workshops, emphasising the connectivity between island ecosystems.

 **Federparchi**
FEDERAZIONE ITALIANA PARCHI E RISERVE NATURALI



Learn more about the Italian Section here.

A significant delegation from Federparchi attended the EUROPARC Conference 2025 in Birštonas, Lithuania. Italian Parks contributed as case studies on integrating sustainable agriculture within Protected Areas. Moreover, Italian representatives participated in technical workshops regarding the implementation of the EU Nature Restoration Law, sharing strategies for wetland recovery and forest management. Finally, special sessions celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Ramsar Convention, with Federparchi highlighting the vital role of Italian wetlands in the Mediterranean migratory route.

European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST)

The ECST remains the primary tool for awarding sustainable tourism in Italian Parks. 2025 was a year of significant growth and exchange.

- ⊗ **Renewals:** The Arcipelago Toscano National Park moved forward with its Action Plan for 2026-2030, successfully completing stakeholder forums and advancing into Phase III (collaboration with travel agencies).
- ⊗ **New Candidates:** The Calabria Regional Marine Parks Authority officially launched its path toward ECST accreditation, holding its inaugural forum in April 2025.
- ⊗ **Training:** Federparchi organised several webinars in collaboration with EUROPARC experts to help Park managers monitor the socio-economic impact of sustainable tourism.

Youth Engagement and Education

Federparchi continued to promote EUROPARC's youth programmes:

- ⊗ **EUROPARC Youth Council:** Italian representatives contributed to the final stages of the 2023-2025 mandate, advocating for better job opportunities for young professionals in rural and Protected Areas.
- ⊗ **Junior Rangers:** Following EUROPARC guidelines, numerous Italian Parks, such as the Appennino Tosco-Emiliano, organised summer camps, fostering a new generation of „Nature Ambassadors“ through international exchanges. Furthermore, Parco Nazionale Foreste Casentinesi hosted EUROPARC's 2025 International Junior Ranger Camp.

Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy

In June 2025, the CAI (Italian Alpine Club) renewed the “In Cammino nei Parchi” (Walking in the Parks) initiative, promoting responsible hiking and supporting the maintenance of the national trail network.

Furthermore, Federparchi supported the EUROPARC-led project *LIFE PAME-Europe*, encouraging Italian sites to apply to become a Pilot Site within the project to pilot the PAME-Europe Framework for evaluating management effectiveness.

International Junior Ranger Camp 2025 at Casentinesi Forest National Park, Italy. © Jessica Micklem-Kolenic



EUROPARC Low Countries

The EUROPARC Low Countries Section unites Protected Areas across Belgium and the Netherlands. It promotes activities focusing on ecosystem services and the need for new financial sources. The Low Countries Section aligns with EUROPARC's goals while tailoring initiatives to a region characterised by high population density and intensive land use.

During the EUROPARC Conference 2025 in Birštonas, Lithuania, more than 20 participants from the Low Countries came together for a face-to-face meeting. Gijs de Kruijff (the Netherlands) and Ignace Schops (Belgium) took the opportunity to highlight the purpose and value of the Section. The Conference provided a valuable opportunity to meet with representatives of several Belgian National Parks that have been established since 2023. The meeting also served as a good starting point to revitalise the Low Countries Section. It was agreed to organise structural online meetings and a yearly face-to-face event.

The year started with some uncertainty for Dutch National Parks, due to announced government budget cuts affecting nature conservation and park management. Through strong cooperation and joint advocacy efforts at the national level, these cuts were successfully mitigated, underlining the importance of collective action and a shared voice within EUROPARC.

On the European Day of Parks, the Dutch National Parks organised a biodiversity count, which resulted in excellent public engagement. Nearly 7,000 observers contributed more than 135,000 observations, recording almost 5,000 different species in and around the National Parks. Across the country, visitors could participate in special activities, strengthening the connection between people, nature and Protected Areas.

The Low Countries Section is proud that Weerribben-Wieden National Park was awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST). During the award ceremony in Brussels, the Park shared valuable insights about its sustainable mobility programme, including the development of shared e-bike hubs. This is the first ECST Park in the Low Countries in several years and can hopefully support and inspire other Parks in their process towards sustainable tourism.

In addition, a group of Parks from the Low Countries jointly participated in a study trip to Thy National Park and Mols Bjerger National Park, Denmark. During this visit, participants explored innovative approaches to visitor management, education and sustainable tourism, and exchanged experiences with Danish colleagues. The trip proved to be both inspiring and enjoyable, while further strengthening personal connections and cooperation between the Parks.

Finally, we are very pleased with the representation of Erine de Man from National Park de Alde Feanen with the new mandate of the EUROPARC Youth Council.



*Low Countries Section at EUROPARC Conference.
© Vaidas Garla*



***Learn more about the
Low Countries Section [here](#).***

*European Charter for Sustainable Tourism Award
Ceremony in Brussels. © EUROPARC*



*Nordic-Baltic Section meeting at the EUROPARC Conference.
© Kullaberg Nature Reserve*

EUOPARC Nordic-Baltic

The EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic Section unites Protected Areas authorities and organisations from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Iceland. It provides a platform for cooperation, knowledge exchange and joint reflection on shared challenges related to nature conservation, sustainable tourism and visitor management. The Nordic-Baltic Section aligns with EUROPARC's goals while tailoring initiatives to a region of vast boreal forests, Arctic tundra, and coastal ecosystems.

In 2025, the Section continued to operate under a shared leadership model, with Sweden and Norway jointly supporting the role of President and Coordinator. While the traditional rotation of leadership roles has normally been based on a two-year mandate, continuity has been prioritised in recent years due to limited external funding and changing organisational capacities across member countries.

A key moment of the year was the Nordic-Baltic Section meeting held during the EUROPARC Conference 2025 in Birštonas, Lithuania. Representatives from across the region gathered to reflect on the current state of the Section, its role within the wider Federation, and future priorities. The meeting also included a moment of remembrance for Lasse Love, whose long-standing commitment to Protected Areas in the Nordic-Baltic region was acknowledged with gratitude and respect.

Discussions during the meeting highlighted several shared challenges. In recent years, the Section has operated without dedicated funding, limiting activities mainly to coordination, informal exchange and participation in the EUROPARC Conference. At the same time, the importance of the Section has grown, particularly as tourism pressures in Protected Areas have increased significantly across the region, notably in Iceland and northern Finland. Members emphasised the need for stronger cooperation on sustainable tourism, visitor management and balancing conservation with public access.

Looking Ahead

Updates from the EUROPARC Council underlined that the Federation is currently undergoing a period of renewal, including new leadership and exploration of future funding models. This was seen as an opportunity for Sections to take a more active role within the Federation, contribute strategically to European discussions and develop joint initiatives that reflect regional priorities.

As a result of the meeting, it was agreed that a structured follow-up process is needed. A digital meeting will be convened to discuss how to strengthen the Nordic-Baltic Section, clarify its contribution to the EUROPARC Federation and develop a Work Plan for 2025–2027. Key topics include identifying a clear rotation model for leadership, exploring new funding opportunities, ensuring continuity and visibility, and supporting member countries in assessing their capacity to take on coordination roles.

Despite limited resources, the Nordic-Baltic Section continues to function as an important forum for dialogue and collaboration. There is a shared ambition to strengthen the Section as a unified Nordic-Baltic voice within EUROPARC, contributing practical experience from northern and Baltic Protected Areas to European policy discussions and cooperative projects in the years ahead.



Learn more about the Nordic-Baltic Section here.

EUROPARC Spain

The EUROPARC Spain Section was established in 1993 and is currently composed of 25 public administrations directly responsible for the planning and management of Protected Areas in Spain. It promotes more sustainable, equitable and supportive management ensuring sustainable tourism, research and the improvement of professional skills. The Section aligns with EUROPARC's goals while tailoring initiatives to harmonise regional autonomy with national and European strategies.

Thanks to the support of Fundación Fernando Gonzalez Bernaldez (FUNGLOBE), named after the pioneer professor in Terrestrial Ecology, the Section has a staff of 10 people who provide network services to all members in response to the work plan approved by the General Assembly and the direction of the elected Council. During 2025, several projects were developed, some coordinated by FUNGLOBE with the participation of several members and other partners:



Assembly of members. © EUROPARC Spain



Living Landscape: Sierra Norte de Guadalajara Nature Park

During 2024 and 2025, a project was developed to boost the local economy in this rural area by promoting the ecosystem services associated with a forest mosaic that is more resilient to climate change. One of the key actions was supporting 10 local initiatives, as well as the FSC accreditation of a private forest.



LIFE Stewardship

This project's primary objective is to promote land stewardship as a means of advancing nature conservation, fostering innovation and collaboration among administrations, landowners, companies, NGOs, and other stakeholders. FUNGLOBE is one of the partners contributing its expertise in capacity building and networking through EUROPARC Spain.

Learn more about the project here.

LIFE RedBosques_Clima project

After 4 years of intense activity, the final event of the project took place in November, presenting the main results and contributions of LIFE RedBosques_Clima. The project aimed to promote greater adaptive capacity to climate change in forests by promoting forest management with conservation objectives (promoting maturity, increasing heterogeneity and biodiversity) under the umbrella of the concept of "Ecosystem-based Adaptation".



Final event Sierra Norte.
© EUROPARC Spain.

“Our Protected Areas” campaign

EUROPARC Spain is promoting the campaign “Our Protected Areas”, which includes the series “Protected Lives” with a total of 42 episodes produced and disseminated until 2025.

Explore the videos here.

Support to the ECST

Spain’s contribution to the development of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST) involves 29 protected natural areas across 10 autonomous communities and 611 member organisations, representing approximately half of all member organisations in Europe. In addition, 24 travel agencies operating in protected areas are involved. The EUROPARC Spain Office provides monitoring and support to all the stakeholders involved in CETS.

Looking Ahead

The main challenge for the coming years is the full involvement of all members in the development of the “Programme 2030, Global Change and Protected Areas: living territories of conservation for human well-being”.

One of the project’s main outputs is the *Manual for Climate Risk Assessment and Forest Adaptation to Drought: Nature-Based Solutions for Forest Adaptation to Climate Change*. This publication brings together existing scientific knowledge on forest characteristics linked to climate vulnerability, proposes a method for assessing drought risk, outlines forest management strategies to strengthen adaptive capacity, and includes three case studies.



Learn more about the project here.

Capacity building: Master’s degree and other training initiatives

The 25th edition of the Master Programme in Protected Natural Areas was completed in the second half of 2025. This marks 25 uninterrupted years of a training and exchange project that began in 2001 with an initial postgraduate course, which soon became a Master’s programme. 31 people participated in the 2025 edition.

In 2025, the School of Protected Areas was launched, offering a wide range of short courses specialising in subjects such as communication, climate change, sustainable tourism, and environmental restoration

**ESCUELA
DE /ÁREAS
PROTEGIDAS/**



Learn more about the project here.



Learn more about the Spanish Section here.





Participants of the first workshop of the 'Further Developing Protected Areas' project in Bonn. © Stiftung Nationale Naturlandschaften

Nationale Naturlandschaften e. V. (EUROPARC Germany)

The German Section, as the national umbrella organisation Nationale Naturlandschaften e. V. (NNL e. V.) together with the Verband Deutscher Naturparke e. V. (Association of German Nature Parks), represents the National Natural Landscapes (NNL) of Germany: the alliance of 16 National Parks, 18 Biosphere Reserves, 104 Nature Parks and 3 Wilderness Areas. NNL e. V. aligns with EUROPARC's goals while tailoring initiatives to biodiversity conservation, climate protection, sustainable development, experiences in nature, and environmental education.

Double anniversary event 'Naturally valuable: National Natural Landscapes – Yesterday. Today. Tomorrow.'

25 years of Socio-Economic Value of National Natural Landscapes

With approximately 700 million visitor days annually, Germany's 141 NNLs are premier destinations for recreation and tourism. Data shows that 70% of the German population visits an NNL at least once every two years. For years, the Socio-Economic Monitoring (SÖM) initiative has provided vital data on the significance of these protected spaces for tourism, fostering local acceptance and providing essential insights for both regional and federal authorities.

Economically, tourism in the 141 Protected Areas generates €14 billion in annual revenue for the regions, often driven specifically by their protected status. Beyond direct spending, a representative survey highlights the profound public appreciation for these areas, with citizens valuing the protection of these landscapes at approximately €40 billion.

These figures, which are the result of many years of research, were presented at the anniversary event 'Naturally valuable: National natural landscapes – yesterday, today, tomorrow' on 24 June 2025. For 25 years, the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) has been supporting socio-economic research on tourism in national natural landscapes, funded by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Protection, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN). The studies aim to record and analyse the economic effects generated by tourism in the regions.

20 years of NNL – shaping a future worth living

In addition to presenting these findings, the double anniversary event also celebrated the 20th anniversary of NNL. Peter Südbek, Chairman of the Board of NNL e.V., summarises the integrating role and future viability of NNL: „The Alliance of National Natural Landscapes brings together Germany's large Protected Areas under one umbrella and is indispensable for better networking the various sites and for supporting cooperation and synergies. It successfully contributes to making the diverse services our areas provide for nature, people and the region visible and to consolidating their importance in society. We work in an integrated manner for the benefit of people and nature – both ecologically and economically – and thus shape a future worth living“.

*Peter Südbek, Chairman of the Board of NNL e.V. speaking at the the anniversary event at the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Protection, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN).
© BMUKN/Peter-Paul Weiler.*

Looking ahead: continuing the good work & communication activities

NNL's role in addressing nature conservation, climate protection and sustainability is more crucial than ever. Covering one-third of Germany's total area, the NNL significantly contributes to fulfilling both national and international environmental commitments. However, the public perception of our work is often unsatisfactory. To address this, 2025 was the starting point for rolling out our multi-level communication activities. The aim is to increase awareness and strengthen recognition of the NNL's role in politics and society, while clearly communicating the value of our work. We provide posters, postcards or social-media post-templates. A total of >130 Instagram posts and >138,000 participants at approximately 170 events were counted.

Underlining our connection to the wider EUROPARC network, we were excited to welcome EUROPARC President Michael Hošek and Directorate Staff member Esther Bossink to our yearly strategy workshop to discuss our communication strategy and the communication efforts to underline the benefits Protected Areas bring to the wider society.

Commencement of operations of the Stiftung Nationale Naturlandschaften

In 2024, we, together with the Verband Deutscher Naturparke e.V. (VDN e.V.), established the Stiftung Nationale Naturlandschaften (National Natural Landscapes Foundation) as a non-profit LLC. This federal service and networking hub coordinates nature conservation, natural climate protection and sustainable development. It also fosters education for sustainable development, civic engagement, sustainable tourism and regional development.

Since 2025, the Foundation has implemented the 'Further Developing Protected Areas' project for the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation to support the national Action Plan for Protected Areas. The Action Plan for Protected Areas aims to support the federal states and Protected Area stakeholders in implementing EU Protected Area targets, further developing the German network of Protected Areas and implementing the qualitative and quantitative requirements for these protected spaces.

The project is targeted at the entire Protected Area landscape in Germany. The focus is not on new designations, but on strengthening the resilience of existing areas through a series of conferences, a study on optimising funding conditions and the development of a guidebook on best practice examples for shaping park-people-relationships linked to acceptance of Protected Areas. In addition, target group-specific benefits of Protected Areas are being examined to increase social appreciation. The project thus serves the national implementation of global and European biodiversity goals and also ties in with the Socio-Economic Monitoring (SÖM) results.

Strengthening the European Network

By aligning our projects, initiatives and national strategies with the EUROPARC Federation's overarching goals, we ensure that our work contributes to a resilient network of European Protected Areas. A key example of this synergy is our active role in the LIFE PAME-Europe project (focussed on Protected Area Management Effectiveness). NNL e. V. facilitates the exchange of

expertise on management quality across borders. We are also very happy to have Michelle Herrmann, Rachel O'Shea and Yannick Mehne, all with connections to German NNLs, in the EUROPARC Youth Council.

Ultimately, our efforts in Germany serve to strengthen the collective European voice for nature conservation, proving that well-managed Protected Areas are essential for the continent's biodiversity, climate goals, and social cohesion.



**Nationale
Naturlandschaften**



Learn more about the German Section here.

Contact us

The Council

President

Michael Hošek - michael.hosek@integracons.com

Elected members of the Council

Vice president

Marta Múgica - Vice President - marta.mugica@redeuroparc.org

Matti Tapaninen - Vice President - matti.tapaninen@metsa.fi

Elliott Lorimer - elliot.lorimer@yorkshiredales.org.uk

João Cardoso de Melo - joao.melo@cascaisambiente.pt
(Treasurer)

Lidia Bai - athenelb@gmail.com

Sabrina Caire - sabrina.caire@yahoo.com

Co-opted members of council

Periurban representative

Nikos Pangas - npangas@philodassiki.org

Section Representative

Sonja Miller (former)

Tim Duckmanton - tim.duckmanton@lakedistrict.gov.uk

Specialist Advisor

Myrthe Fonck - myrthe.fonck@pwn.nl

Youth Representative

Michelle Herrmann - mn.herrmann@gmx.de

Internal Auditor

James Stuart (2023 - 2025)

Kari Lahti (2025 - current) - Kari.Lahti@syke.fi

EUROPARC Sections

EUROPARC Atlantic Isles

Deb Brookes - deb@europarc-ai.org

www.europarc-ai.org

EUROPARC Central and Eastern Europe

Szilvia Góri - goriszilvia@hnp.hu

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

EUROPARC Francophone

Clara Fontana - cfontana@parcs-naturels-regionaux.fr

www.europarc.org/europarc-france

EUROPARC Italy / Federparchi

Corrado Teofili - corrado.teofili@federparchi.it

www.federparchi.it

EUROPARC Low Countries

Sharon Jagt - sharon.jagt@npweerrribbenwieden.nl

www.europarc.org/europarc-low-countries

EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic

Daniel Åberg - daniel.berg@lansstyrelsen.se

www.europarc-nb.org

EUROPARC Spain

Marta Múgica - marta.mugica@redeuroparc.org

www.redeuroparc.org

Nationale Naturlandschaften e.V. (EUROPARC Germany)

Sonja Miller (former)

Mira Franzen - mira.franzen@nationale-naturlandschaften.de

https://nationale-naturlandschaften.de

The EUROPARC Directorate

EUROPARC Headquarters

Waffnergasse 6, 93047 Regensburg, Germany

Tel.: +49 (0) 941 599 35 98-0

Executive Director

Carol Ritchie (former)

Alberto Arroyo Schnell - alberto.arroyo.schnell@europarc.org

Head of Policy and Projects

Federico Minozzi - federico.minozzi@europarc.org

Policy Development Manager

Sanna-Kaisa Juvonen - sanna.kaisa.juvonen@europarc.org

Project Manager NaturaConnect

Marit Schnepf - marit.schnepf@europarc.org

Project Developer

Simone Prestes Dürrnagel

simone.prestes.duerrnagel@europarc.org

Project Manager: Youth, Outdoor Sports, Communication

Jessica Micklem-Kolenić - jessica.micklem@europarc.org

Policy and Project Manager - Sustainable Tourism Manager

Teresa Pastor - teresa.pastor@europarc.org

Senior Officer: Membership and Transboundary Programme

Nella Sergejeva - nella.sergejeva@europarc.org

Head of Capacity Building and Communications - Project Manager LIFE PAME-Europe

Neil McIntosh - neil.mcintosh@europarc.org

Communications and Operations Manager

Esther Bossink - esther.bossink@europarc.org

Communications and IT Officer

Fernando Pinillos - fernando.pinillos@europarc.org

Project Manager: Communication, Capacity Building and Digital Engagement

Sandra Grego - sandra.grego@europarc.org

Project Manager Interreg Europe GREENHEALTH

Anna Castelli - anna.castelli@europarc.org

Communications Support Officer

Moniek Zwiers (former)

Finance and Administration Manager

Adelina Nagy (now on maternity leave)

Administration Officer

Pia Krämer - pia.kraemer@europarc.org

Finance Support Officer

Lakshmy Ramanan - lakshmy.ramanan@europarc.org

Bookkeepers

Katrin Varnhagen

Anton Ogorcov - anton.ogorcov@europarc.org



*Cover page: TransParcNet Karkonosze Transboundary Area (Poland–Czechia).
© Sandra-Grego*

Field trip at EUROPARC Conference. © Vaidas Garla

*Back page: International Junior Ranger Camp 2025 at Casentinesi
Forest National Park, Italy. © Gry Mørk*

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