

EUROPARC

Activities' Report - Year 2023

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1. Introduction

EUROPARC is the organization for Europe's protected areas. It brings together national, regional, and natural parks and biosphere reserves in 38 nations, with the common goal of protecting Europe's unique variety of wildlife, habitats and landscapes. The EUROPARC Federation brings together a wide range of organizations and individuals committed to the policy and practice of managing parks and protected areas throughout Europe. In its 27 years of existence it has done much to spread "good practice" and to promote a common feeling in the protected areas network. At the EUROPARC General Assembly in 1999 in Zakopane, Poland, a strategy document was approved by EUROPARC Federation members, providing a framework outline for the future development of the Federation. While the strategy focuses on the organization and mode of operation of the Federation, in the background the purpose is to enable the Federation to play as important a role as possible in capturing the vision of an adequate, efficient and well-managed network of protected areas in Europe to conserve entirely the continent's landscape and biological diversity.

2. Main activities carried on by EUROPARC during 2023 relevant for Italy and for CNR

In 2023, EUROPARC carried out several technical-scientific dissemination activities through webinars with the support of ongoing projects, a complete view of the topics can be had on the EUROPARC website (<https://www.europarc.org/europarc-webinars/previous-webinars/>). These activities were interesting, as they allow contextualizing the role of protected areas in European environmental policies, such as the Green Deal and EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030. Participation in some of these initiatives gave insights into what the role of scientific research might be, in relation to the activities carried out within the different institutes of the CNR. During the annual meeting titled "TRIBUTE TO OUR LANDSCAPE, WHERE NATURE AND PEOPLE MEET IN HARMONY," important current developments in health, climate, sustainable economy and the major transitions ahead were discussed. On this occasion, the "DECLARATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE" was presented. EUROPARC, as the representative of European parks, has taken a strong stand against climate change, biodiversity loss and habitat degradation. In a joint effort, it is urging policymakers to invest in parks to help maximize their potential benefits for both nature and people. The Parks Climate Declaration underscores the urgency of immediate action to address the changes now underway. In this context, the role of research organizations, and especially the CNR, which has decades of experience on this topic, in terms of monitoring impacts on different ecosystems and nature-based solutions is crucial.

3. Activities carried on by Delegate within the Union during 2023 and impact on the Italian scientific community

Exchange of information on EUROPARC activities with CNR colleagues. During 2023 there was a strong collaboration between CNR and FEDERPARCHI, the Italian section of EUROPARC and the association of Italian natural protected area. The collaborative activities were aimed at drafting the cascading call (BAC) "Call for Protected Areas and Park Authorities" under the NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY FUTURE CENTER (NBFC). With a budget of 10 million euros, the call was aimed at promoting the monitoring, conservation, restoration and enhancement of biodiversity in Parks and Marine Areas. The projects also had as an additional objective to stimulate the active participation of citizens, stakeholders in implementing targeted initiatives to improve the sustainability of socio-economic activities. This activity led to the funding of 57 project proposals. The great synergy created between National Parks, reserves and the CNR within NBFC should also be emphasized. In fact, many activities are carried out within protected areas and cover a variety of aspects ranging from the study of post-fire dynamics, native populations of forest and animal species.

4. Evaluation of the participation in terms of benefits and membership cost

The annual fee is small and has a very high potential return in terms of scientific and lobbying activities for technical/political projects and activities in the field of biodiversity protection, climate change and sustainability.

5. Evaluation of Italians' attendance and how to improve interest and involvement

In EUROPARC the Italian presence is very active and considered, even with prominent roles in the association's governing bodies. In addition, the CNR, promoter of NBFC, which brings together 2,000 researchers, thanks to the 2 cascading calls on protected areas (in addition to the one funded there is a second one under evaluation) will be able to connect scientific activities within Italian protected areas and thus interface with EUROPARC and other international stakeholders with a coordinating role.

6. Italian experts with important roles within the Union or within related Commissions and Programs (if known)

Dr. Stefano Santi, director of the Julian Pre-Alps Park, who also holds the position of deputy head of the Transboundary Cooperation Task force section, was elected to the EUROPARC board as a member. In addition, Leonardo Cerno, guide of the Julian Pre-Alps Park, is the youth representative on the EUROPARC board. In addition, there are Italian experts on various committees, such as:

- Riccardo Gini, Parco Nord Milano, on the Peri-urban Parks Commission;
- Anna Castelli, on the Healthy Parks Healthy People commission;
- Corrado Teofili (Federparchi), Guido Calvi (Adamello Park), Maria Pia Sparla (Parco Agricolo Sud Milano) in the Sustainable Agriculture in Protected Areas Commission;
- Daniele Piazza (Alpe Veglia and Alpe Devero Natural Park) and Stefania Petrosillo (EUROPARC) in the Transboundary Cooperation Task Force;
- Fabrizio Santini (Colline Metallifere National Park) in the European Charter of Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (ECST).

7. If Union with CNR Commission, short summary about the 2023 CNR Commission activities

Not relevant

8. Notes (if any)

9. Conclusions

CNR's participation in EUROPARC and its activities is certainly relevant and has many potential returns for the organization and its researchers. Membership is an opportunity to export in Europe the experience, created through NBFC, of strong collaboration between scientists and park managers to address climate change and biodiversity loss along the road to ecological transition.

Signature

Place and date