

CNR - NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL OF ITALY

ANNUAL REPORT

EUROPARC 2016

1. In 2016 EUROPARC (Federation of Nature and National Parks) carried out numerous activities, before and after its annual general assembly and conference. The CNR participated in some of the research and the events realized.

In general, we might consider the various EUROPARC activities in relation to the following four Strategy themes: 1. *Working For Nature*, 2. *Helping People and Organisations Learn*, 3. *Promoting Sustainability: Role of Protected Areas in Sustainability*, 4. *Working Together-Building our Organisation*.¹

With regard to Strategy Theme 1 (*working for nature*), EUROPARC continued to contribute to the 'large carnivores and human interaction' platform, as well as to policy areas such as green infrastructure and wilderness.

In relation to Strategy Theme 2 (*helping people and organisations learn*), the Communications Toolkit was launched and has proved to be a great success, providing members with a model to develop new toolkits in other topic areas.

Passing to Strategy Theme 3 (*promoting sustainability: role of PAs in sustainability*), the *Charter for Sustainable Tourism in PAs* has received much international interest. The principles and key topics of the Charter have been renewed in order to bring it up to date. The Federation has begun to focus on the development of the communications about the Charter to promote the 146 sustainable destination in 16 countries, and the many thousands of tourism business which are park partners.

Finally, with regard to Strategy Theme 4 (*working together-building our organisation*), EUROPARC reached in May a friendly agreement with Fedenatur² to integrate and strengthen the PA network. This has taken a great deal of internal structural work, but now EUROPARC has

¹ EUROPARC *Federation Strategy 2015-2021*, at http://www.europarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/EUROPARC-Strategy-draft_FINAL_web_EN.pdf.

² Fedenatur is the European Federation of Metropolitan and Periurban Natural and Rural Areas. Since 1995, the Federation enables experience exchanges between periurban site managers on a European scale (<http://www.fedenatur.org/en>).

grown into the biggest PAs network in Europe (combining the respective memberships, the network covers 40% of NATURA 2000 sites, marine and terrestrial). For this reason, the Federation is in high demand from the EU and other organisations for comment and advice.

2. EUROPARC also actively participated in various international conferences and events, among which, in particular, the IUCN World Conservation Congress on: *Planet at the Crossroads*, which was held at the Hawai'i from 1st to 10th September.

In this regard, it is worth to mention the 'preparatory' Conference on the same theme organized by the Institute for international Legal Studies (ISGI) of the CNR and the Master on "Environmental Law" of the Sapienza University of Rome. At the Conference, held at the Faculty of Law (Aula Calasso) of the Sapienza University on 7th April,³ Gianfranco Tamburelli, the current CNR representative at EUROPARC, gave a speech on: *Environmental Law at the Crossroads*.⁴

Among the other speakers, there were Maria Carmela Giarratano (Director General of the Directorate-General for Nature and Sea Protection of the Italian Ministry of Environment and Protection of Land and Sea), Enrico Brugnoli (Director of the CNR Department on Earth System, Science and Environmental Technologies),⁵ Giampiero Sammuri (President of Federparchi - the Italian Federation of Parks and Nature Reserves),⁶ and Stefano Laporta (General Director of ISPRA - the Italian National Institute for Environmental Protection and Research).⁷

3. Following the request from members of more opportunities to be involved with the Federation, and as a result of the new priorities in the Strategy, EUROPARC reformed its working groups and created four commissions. In this way, the Federation aims to develop activities close to the needs of the membership. The new commissions are the following:

- Natura 2000 Management - The aim is to develop an expert and communication platform especially for site managers, including those within existing PAs, to share their experiences and good practice examples. The commission is expected to facilitate the circulation of new ideas on how implementation of the EU directives can be achieved at the site level.

- Health and Protected Areas - Considering the role of PAs and agencies in this area, and the Federation involvement on this theme, the commission should develop some practical measures to help managers in the implementation of programmes.

³ <https://www.cnr.it/it/evento/14454/planet-at-the-crossroads>.

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MBFGiKj8e-E&feature=youtu.be>.

⁵ http://www.isgi.cnr.it/?page_id=3080.

⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PX_6TsD0irk&feature=youtu.be.

⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3Pn-62T8ac&feature=youtu.be>.

▪ Periurban / Fedenatur - Following the integration of Fedenatur into EUROPARC, the task of this commission is to bring together the experiences of the two organizations. The aim is to maintain and develop the excellent work already undertaken and build a new strategy and programme of work for periurban parks, identifying the priorities and seeking to share solutions across the network.

▪ Sustainable Agriculture - With this commission, working with the agricultural community, EUROPARC wants to explore the feasibility of a *Charter for Sustainable Agriculture*. Parks and PAs can represent ideal territories where to promote sustainable agricultural practices and products favouring regional rural development, biodiversity, and preservation of the landscape.

The CNR will follow the activities of these new commissions, whose work definitely is of interest of several institutes and departments.

4. In June 2016, the EUROPARC Council members gathered in the Cinque Terre National Park to discuss the latest developments of the Federation. In the same period Tamburelli published an article on: *EUROPARC Conference 2015: Protected Areas in a Changing World. CNR Participation in the Activity of the Federation*,⁸ noting that Federparchi has become increasingly influential within EUROPARC, and that in recent years CNR and Federparchi - overcome certain divergences relating to the organization of collaboration between Italian members - have basically shared positions and initiatives within the European Federation.

Therefore, to improve the involvement of the CNR in future activities of EUROPARC, Tamburelli proposes the definition of an agreement with Federparchi on the development of research, monitoring, advanced training, institutional consulting, also establishing regular consultation procedures.⁹

⁸ *Gazzetta Ambiente*, 1. 2016.

⁹ According to Tamburelli, among the first initiatives to be implemented in agreement with Federparchi. should be the setting - on a European scale - of guidelines, a program of development / promotion of coordinated scientific research on the role of PAs in a phase of acceleration of the dynamics of environmental change, economic, political and social.

5. In October 2016, during a four-day event, the EUROPARC Conference hosted over 300 participants from 36 European countries at *Parc Jura Vaudois*, in Switzerland. The objective of the Conference was to provide an adequate framework for PAs professionals to exchange experiences on different topics regarding parks management in Europe.

Under the theme “We Are Parks”, the Conference explored the role that people play in the creation and management of a park, and focused, in particular, on the aspects of the Swiss experience relevant to the other countries. The bottom-up democratic model of parks in Switzerland gives in fact the opportunity to consider how communities can participate in the governance of parks.

The keynote speakers of the first plenary session of the conference (Dominique Bourg - Inger Andersen - Carlos De Oliveira Romao - Hans Romang - Olivier Feller) came from a variety of international institutions and offered relevant global and strategic perspectives for participants. Once again the world of PAs proved to be ready to meet the needs of our time.

Nine tutorials explored in short sessions some specific topics such as wetland management, fund raising strategies, peri-urban parks, marine PAs, biosphere reserves. Tamburelli participated in the discussion concerning PAs with various international and / or European designations (*we are multiple labels*).

Fifteen workshops allowed the participants to discuss in depth different topics, as sustainable tourism, agriculture in PAs, health, Natura 2000 management, communication, volunteering programmes, funding mechanisms, youth involvement, climate change, with case studies.

Nine fieldtrips organised by the guests gave to delegates the chance to discover the surroundings of the *Parc Jura Vaudois* and learn more about the worldwide famous watch industry that exists in this region of Switzerland, whilst others explored the red spruces forest, which have been used for centuries to build musical instruments, or the links between agriculture, biodiversity, local knowledge and food; etc..

Finally, the Market Place gathered about 50 stands from all over Europe, where information about different PAs and projects were available, together with some of the best delicacies and drinks from our members’ regions.

5a. Following the General Assembly, the EUROPARC Federation and its Sections signed an important *Partnership Agreement*. The objective of this Agreement is to strengthen the existing collaboration. Federation and Sections commit to actively contribute to the implementation of the EUROPARC goals, priorities and strategy. Together, they want to ensure that EUROPARC is the strong and united voice for all nature and landscape PAs.

As EUROPARC has grown and developed as a network, no doubt it is time to renew how the organisation works, ensuring that it remains relevant to European issues. It is also important that it effectively serves its members.

5b. Annually EUROPARC gives the Alfred Toepfer Medal, a prestigious award commemorating the figure of a founder of the Federation, to those who have distinguished themselves for actions in favour of nature and biodiversity conservation. This year the Medal was awarded to Giuseppe Antoci, President of the Nebrodi Regional Park since October 2013.¹⁰

As Sammuri underlined at the opening the award ceremony,¹¹ since Antoci was appointed as President of the Nebrodi Regional Park his commitment has been to guarantee the utmost administrative regularity of the park's activities, fighting the local mafia system. In March 2015, he adopted a specific legality protocol with the Messina Prefecture which includes the anti-mafia certification (*i.e.* a check that there are no mafia infiltration in the farms management) for all the pastures in the park territory. The “Antoci’s protocol”, recognized as a successful model, has been then signed by all Prefects and by the President of the Region and extended to all the island. Because of his daily commitment against the mafia, Antoci received many threats and for this reason he is under protection since December 2014. The night between 17th and 18th May 2016 he was victim of an attack by the local mafia, but thanks to the State Police he miraculously survived.

All the Members of the Federation shared the opinion that the results he is achieving demonstrate how PAs can play a crucial role not only for the conservation of biodiversity, but also for ensuring a legal defence especially in those territories in which the local communities are victims along with the environment and landscape values.

¹⁰ The Sicilian natural heritage is protected by the newborn Pantelleria National Park, 5 Regional Parks, 5 Marine PAs and 70 Nature Reserves. The Nebrodi Regional Park with its 86.000 hectares is the largest regional park in Italy, only five national parks are larger than it.

¹¹ See Federparchi *Newsletter*, October - November 2016.

5c. At the EUROPARC Conference, the Krkonoše National Park (Czech Republic) and Karkonosze National Park (Poland), together with Oulanka National Park (Finland) and Paanajärvi National Park (Russia) were re-awarded with the Transboundary Parks Programme Certificate.

5d. The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in PAs is a practical management tool that enables PAs to develop tourism sustainably, by working together with all local stakeholders. The core element of the Charter is the partnerships established to develop a common sustainable tourism strategy and action plan for the territory, over a period of five years.

On 7th December, to celebrate the work of PAs and their engagement in sustainable tourism management, EUROPARC Federation organized the Charter Award Ceremony for the year 2016 at the European Parliament: 19 Sustainable Destinations were awarded the *European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in PAs*. Among them, 11 have committed for the first time to the principles of the Charter¹² and 8 have renewed their commitment. The Charter Network, which has been growing over the past 20 years, counts now 157 Sustainable Destinations in 19 European countries.

6. Various important events are planned for 2017. Among the most important:

- The Siggen Seminar will be devoted to: *Sustainable Agriculture in PAs* (from 10th to 13th March). Many of PAs in Europe work alongside the farming community. In this Seminar EUROPARC wants to build new partnerships and develop a framework to enable more sustainable agricultural practices, working closer to the management of the PAs. The Federation wants to know and share good practices with all PAs managers from across Europe.

- The European Day of Parks, 24th May 2017. The theme for the celebration day across Europe will be: *Changing Climate, Changing Parks*, and EUROPARC wants to raise awareness on

¹² The EUROPARC Federation was delighted to welcome for the first time two Parks from Greece and award the first transboundary region - the Julian Alps Ecoregion, that encompasses Triglav National Park in Slovenia and Prealpi Giulie Nature Park in Italy. Stefano Santi, Director of Prealpi Giulie Nature Park (Italy) acknowledged, “the Charter is a flagship for the whole transboundary region. It expresses a genuine European spirit of respect for nature and brotherhood among people of different countries and represents an extraordinary chance to promote the breath-taking world of the Julian Alps and its unique biodiversity and cultural heritage” (<http://www.europarc.org/news/2016/12/19-sustainable-destinations-awarded-brussels/>).

the impact of climate change on parks, but also on how parks and people can contribute to mitigate the effects of climate change.

- The TransParcNet Meeting will be held at the Transboundary area Ecoregion Julian Alps in Trenta, Slovenia (from 6th to 9th June 2017). The Triglav National Park (SL) and Prealpi Giulie Nature Park will be working intensively to organize this event in the beautiful alpine region.

- The EUROPARC Conference 2017 (from 6th to 10th September) will be organised in the Magic Mountains (or “Montanhas Mágicas”, in Portuguese). The theme will be: *New Voices, New Visions, New Values - for People and Nature in Europe*. ▪ The General Assembly, which will also be held in Portugal (6th September), will elect the representatives for the EUROPARC Council and the President (nominations for Council positions and President will open in March).

The CNR intends to give its contribution in all these main events. The ISGI will, in particular, update research on the implementation at national level of the UNESCO designations of world heritage sites and biosphere reserves.

As often observed by experts and managers, *research is an essential part of innovation linked to the territory and the Italian research in environmental and ecological is among the most interesting from the point of view of the operating results of PAs and biodiversity in general*; ¹³ the CNR has always been and will remain in the forefront of this research.

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¹³ *I Parchi incontrano la Scienza. Tutta l'eccellenza della ricerca nelle Aree protette italiane*, Press release - Conference on: *La Natura dell'Italia. Biodiversità e Aree protette: la Green Economy per il rilancio del Paese* (Rome, Sapienza University, December 2013), http://www.minambiente.it/sites/default/files/archivio/allegati/natura_italia/1203parchi%26scienza.pdf.