

EUROPARC

(Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe)

Activities' Report - Year 2019

Gianfranco Tamburelli

1. Introduction

Europarc facilitates international co-operation in all aspects of protected area management to improve and conserve Europe's shared natural inheritance. The Federation' members represent hundreds of PAs, and various public institutions and environmental NGOs from 40 countries (cf. <http://www.europarc.org/>).

In 2019, Europarc carried out numerous activities, before and after its annual conference, focusing in particular, on small business supporting a sound management of protected areas, sustainable tourism, on transboundary cooperation, and youth involvement in protected area's life.

In particular, before the Conference, the annual *Siggen Seminar* (18-21 March)¹ focused on *Youth Involvement in Parks*. The main outcome of the Seminar was that, on one hand, young people are looking for better access to the outdoor environment, for opportunities to live and start working in their rural protected areas, on the other hand, protected areas have difficulties in involving them due to a different internal order of priorities, and the lack of resources and capacities.

As the 2018 Europarc Youth Manifesto already highlighted, young people are interested on social activities and are willing to contribute to make a change for a better future.² They wish to play a meaningful role in their PAs, but still face difficulties in having their voice heard, in getting recognition and opportunities to act.

2. Main activities carried on by EUROPARC during 2019 relevant for Italy and for CNR

The annual Conference and its workshops - The main 2019 Europarc activities were the above mentioned Siggen Seminar; the general Assembly, the annual Conference and the workshops held

¹ Every year, thanks to the support of the Alfred Toepfer Stiftung F.V.S., Europarc members have the chance to join the Siggen Seminar, a 2-3 day training on a topic relevant for the work of PAs. At the 2019 Seminar, there were 19 participants from 10 countries representing PAs, regional and local authorities, environment NGOs and youth. The works were developed moving from two main questions: What are the needs and expectation of young people? And how can protected areas address them? *Siggen Seminar Report*, Europarc, at https://www.europarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Siggen-Seminar-2019_Report.pdf.

² After the launch of the Youth Manifesto in September 2018, a lot of initiatives have been realized in several countries, particularly in the UK, *Siggen Seminar Report*, Europarc, cit.

from 24 to 27 September; the support given to research and innovation, the promotion of sustainable tourism, and the strengthening of transboundary cooperation between protected areas. All these activities are of great interest, and relevant for Italy and for CNR.

Starting from the annual Conference and related events, they took place in Jūrmala, a resort city partly situated within Ķemeri National Park, the pioneer PA in Latvia (awarded with the European Charter for sustainable tourism). The theme of the Conference (370 participants from 40 countries) was: *Nature on Your Mind - Understanding Our Values*. The Conference and the various parallel workshops were aimed at defining “Green Prescriptions” to address and integrate the role of nature in politics, business, health, arts.

At the General Assembly, the President of the Federation, Ignace Schops, illustrated the activities of the Council; the directorate team and the executive director, Carol Ritchie, provided some highlights about the initiatives and the projects developed. The Chairs of the Europarc Commissions presented an update on their work. The key speakers shared their experiences, the emphasis was on the role of nature in human health, and in the definition of the contents of the “Europarc Green Prescriptions”.

The fourteen workshops provided for a broad analysis of some relevant issues, from sustainable agriculture to parks’ governance to climate change, all looking from a different perspective at the role of protected areas in facing new challenges and offering new opportunities. Among these workshops, of particular interest were that on: *How Parks and PAs Can Realise Their Potential for Contributing to Health and Wellbeing in Our Towns and Cities*. It was introduced by Pete Rawcliffe (Scottish Natural Heritage - UK), and Liesbeth Van Gysege (Regional Landscapes Limburg - BE). Two cases studies were examined: a) *Cumbernauld Living Landscape - The Wild Ways Well Programme* (by Paul Barclay, Senior Project Officer, TCV Scotland), and b) *Finnish National Urban Parks - From Vision to Practice* (by Jukka-Pekka Flander, Senior Adviser, Counsellor of Environment, Ministry of the Environment, Finland).³

³ It is worth to mention that two other workshops were investigating very close issues, that on: *How Can Parks and PAs Use Nature-Based Programmes to Improve the Health and Well-Being of People and Nature?* (introduced by Bridget Finton, Scottish Natural Heritage, and Nele Söber, Estonian Environmental Board), and that on: *How Can Parks and PAs Make and Communicate the Case better to Our Politicians and Policy Makers?* (introduced by Joel Erkkonen, Parks and Wildlife Finland).

Finally, there was a ceremony for the 2019 edition of the Alfred Toepfer Stiftung (scholarships), award to young professionals wishing to make study trips in European PAs.⁴ The 2019 winners were: Myrthe Fonck (to investigate the full potential of citizen science for nature conservation and to get insight in all the requirements for a successful project); Marie Micol (to explore drivers for and obstacles to integrated landscape management in different cultures and legal contexts); and Matthew Ross, who will focus on education and outreach techniques.

Nature 2000 Management

The third Seminar Dialogue organised by Europarc in close cooperation with the DG Environment was held on 28-29 October 2019. The discussions focused on Natura 2000 management and transboundary cooperation, the role of farmers and tourism business in the rural development of protected areas, and youth.

Transboundary Parks

In 2019, the Transboundary Parks Programme Certificate was awarded to the Binntal Veglia Devero Transboundary Nature Park, which embraces the Parco Naturale Veglia Devero / Protected Areas of Ossola (Italy) and the Landschaftspark Binntal (Switzerland).⁵ On the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall (9 November 1989), the European Transboundary Parks *Declaration* highlighted the need to cooperate across frontiers, which strongly reaffirms the Europarc commitment *for peace, dialogue and nature protection* and the parks availability to support, in the frame of their institutional goals and skills, any initiative aimed at *fostering cooperation between European states within and beyond the European Union*.

Sustainable Tourism

With regard to sustainable tourism, it is worth noting that after the Lisbon Treaty, the EU competence in the tourism sector is to complement, support and coordinate the action of the Member States by encouraging the creation of a favourable context for the development of undertakings; and promoting cooperation, particularly by the exchange of good practice (Article 195).

⁴ The Alfred Toepfer FVS Foundation has awarded travel grants for nature conservation since 2002. These grants are designed to allow young people to travel for study purposes to a European country other than their country of origin. Students and graduates of higher education institutions before the age of 30 are supported, as well as professionals who have been active in a PA for several years and are no older than 35 years old. The Europarc Federation selects the candidates.

⁵ The *Europarc's Programme "Transboundary Parks - Following Nature's Design"* aims to promote and facilitate transboundary cooperation between European PAs. Since the *Basic Standards Evaluation System* was launched in 2003, 23 European PAs have been successfully certified as 10 Transboundary Parks under the Programme.

In November, Europarc organised the Charter Award Ceremony,⁶ annual high-level event to recognise the work of protected areas towards achieving sustainability in tourism. It was hosted by Roby Biwer, Vice-Chair of the Commission on Environment, Climate Change and Energy (ENVE), at the EU Committee of the Regions, and was an opportunity to highlight the role of protected areas as catalysts of rural development through quality tourism. Sixteen Sustainable Destinations were awarded, some of them for the first time, while others, that have implemented the methodology before, have been awarded for the renewal of their commitment.⁷

Among the four new sustainable destinations, there were two Italian protected areas: the Maremma Regional Park, and the Stelvio National Park. Various Italian protected areas were re-awarded: the Monti Sibillini National Park (already awarded in 2002, 2010, 2013); the Appennino Tosco Emiliano National Park; the Pollino National Park; the Alta Murgia National Park; the Marine Protected Area Torre del Cerrano; the Technological and Archaeological Park of Colline Metallifere Grossetane (all them already awarded in 2014).

The Europarc Star Awards

The Charter on Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas' ceremony was also a moment to celebrate the collaborative work between parks and private businesses with the official announcement of the winners of Europarc Star Awards 2019. With these STAR Awards, Europarc seeks to champion and acknowledge the effort and investments made by tourism businesses to be more sustainable and help care and protection of natural and cultural heritage. For this first edition, Europarc invited all current partners to submit their applications and share with the network the actions they are implementing towards working for sustainability.

It is to highlight that the winner in the category of *Innovation* was For Play, partner of Coastal Dunes Regional Park in Italy. *For Play's* mission is to allow visitors to explore the region, while following the principle of sustainable mobility. Equipped with a fleet of colourful electric cars, the

⁶ The *European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in PAs* is a methodology; by implementing this methodology, PAs become an active player in the development of their region, through a strong participatory process with their local community and authorities, aimed to the definition of a sustainable tourism strategy and a 5 years action plan.

“Sustainable tourism might be defined as tourism that respects both local people and the traveller, cultural heritage and the environment”, see Tamburelli, G., *Sustainable Tourism in the EU: Legal Aspects*, Proceedings of the international conference on: *Development of Gastronomic Tourism in Ukraine: Status, Challenges and Opportunities of European Experience Implementation*, Geography and Tourism Journal, Kyiv, September 2019.

⁷ At the moment, the European Charter Network counts with 102 Sustainable Destinations from 15 countries involving a growing number of local tourism businesses as Charter partners, local and regional government authorities, NGOs.

company created a new way to move around the Coastal Dunes Park.⁸ Producing zero emissions and zero noise, the little cars move safely. They are provided with itineraries, allowing visitors to spread and discover historical sites and private areas.

In the category focusing on *Communication of the Park's and the Business' Values*, the winner was Hotel Caminetto, partner of Adamello Brenta Natural Park in Italy. Hotel Caminetto has been considered a model of a sustainable hotel committed to respect the environment and protect natural resources without giving up comfort. The communication policy of Hotel Caminetto aims to make guests fully aware of the culture and nature of the place, so they can better value it.⁹

3. Activities carried on by Gianfranco Tamburelli within the Union during 2019 and impact on the Italian scientific community

During 2019, Gianfranco Tamburelli developed various research and high education activities of interest of Europarc and of the Italian scientific community. In particular, he developed some research on current trends in international environmental law¹⁰, and on transboundary UNESCO biosphere reserves¹¹.

Then, Tamburelli participated, representing the CNR, in the Assembly, in the annual Conference and in other activities held in Cairngorms in September. In particular, he intervened in the workshop on: *How Parks and PAs Can Realise Their Potential for Contributing to Health and Wellbeing in Our Towns and Cities*.

The impact of the CNR participation in Europarc, and of the research carried out by Tamburelli on the Italian scientific community, are related to the dynamic approach and the priority themes

⁸ Since 2014, For Play has been creating opportunities for people to enjoy moving in this new and ecological way, with passion and commitment. From Ostuni their Twizys can reach the whole of the Itria Valley and the Alto Salento.

⁹ The Hotel allows guests to experience a real sustainable holiday, by informing and encouraging them to perform certain actions and practices inside and outside of the facilities. This includes information about waste management, energy consumption, sustainable mobility and appropriate behaviour during walks to see the local flora and fauna.

¹⁰ See *Notes on the Evolution of International Environmental Law. The Situation Today - 2019*, in "Legal Doctrine: International Experience and Practical Implementation in Ukraine", Proceedings of the International Conference held at the Mariupol State University (22.05.2019), and *The Status of Man's Right to the Environment in International Law*, in "Ecological and Legal Status of a Person and a Citizen: Retrospective and Perspective Views: A collection of materials", Proceedings of the Conference held at Taras Shevchenko National University (31.05.2019), ed. by Krasnov M. V, Kovalenko T. O. - Chernivtsi, Kondratiev A.V., Kyiv.

Among other things, Tamburelli also delivered a lecture on: *Environment, and Sustainable Development in the EU Law*, at the Italian Society for International Organizations - SIOI (July 2019) and a lecture on: *The Role of the Italian Ministry of Environment in Implementing International Law*, at Sapienza University of Rome, Faculty of Economics (December 2019).

¹¹ See Kovalenko, T., Tamburelli, G., *Chernobyl: International Cooperation and Environmental Protection: Experience and Perspectives*, in Hungarian Journal of Legal Studies, Acta Juridica Hungarica, 2019.

chosen by Europarc. These range from the researches on climate change and biodiversity conservation, to the definition of models and guidelines for the development of sustainable tourism, to the advancement of knowledge in various fields of law, economic and social sciences.

Thus, the participation in Europarc has been and is important for the development by Tamburelli of research projects and high education activities that place him and the Institute for International Legal Studies (ISGI) in a position of excellence in the fields of international and EU environmental law, of international and EU designations of protected areas, and legal systems for the sustainable management of international and transboundary parks.

Information on the Europarc activities and the activities carried out by Tamburelli in the European Federation context were widespread circulated. At the moment, Tamburelli is carrying out research on the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, and on the reform of the national parks in the Italian draft law on the Green Deal.

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

Since more than 20 years, the participation of the CNR in the activities of Europarc has been continuous, original, proactive. The CNR, always present at the annual meetings and conferences, sometimes promoter of events at European level, is one of the few research institutions members of the Federation. Of such specificity, the Federation has been able to make use on several occasions, in particular with regard to legal - institutional issues concerning international and EU designations and cross border cooperation between PAs.

With regard to the cost deriving from the CNR involvement in EUROPARC, we can observe that the annual registration fee is € 660, and it is required the attendance by one representative to the annual general assembly and conference, which usually last four / five days and which have place in a European PA. The cost of the CNR's participation in the Federation therefore, is rather limited.

The benefits - already highlighted - are significant. Participation in Europarc is in fact one of the tools that allow CNR to remain at the forefront of knowledge and research on: *a) trends and issues concerning international and EU designations of PAs, and transboundary parks; b) EU and national regulations concerning development of sustainable activities in PAs (also in the context of the Green Deal); c) the new social and legal needs related to the governance of PAs.*

Participation in the Europarc activities also allows the maintaining and strengthening of a broad network of foreign partners, with which new issues and new challenges are continuously monitored and explored.

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

Within Europarc, CNR often share positions and initiatives with the Italian Federation of Parks. To improve the Italian attendance and involvement in Europarc, the definition of a MoU with Federparchi would be opportune. The MoU should provide a clear framework for the development of research, advanced training, institutional consulting, also establishing regular consultation procedures between the two organizations.

The CNR, together with Federparchi, might launch the setting - on a European scale - of guidelines, and the elaboration of a strategy to develop coordinated scientific research on the role of PAs in modern societies, characterized by - among other things - new needs of adaptation to climate change, resilience of the economic, societal and health systems.

It seems opportune also to develop regular exchanges of views and collaboration with the representatives of CNR in some other international organizations. In this regard, we would like to underline the usefulness of meetings such as that promoted by the CNR's European and International Relations Unit and held (via skype) by the CNR's representatives at the International Union for Conservation of Nature - IUCN, Loretta Gratani, the European Forest Institute - EFI, Giorgio Matteucci, the European Plant Science Organization - EPSO, Carlo Calfapietra, and at Europarc.

Tamburelli highlighted the main sectors of the Europarc activity: management of ecosystems and natural resources, participation of local communities in the governance of PAs, sustainable tourism, cross-border cooperation between parks, professional training and environmental education. He proposed the following as possible topics of common interest: *a)* the conservation of biological diversity in situ, *b)* the impact of climate change on protected ecosystems, *c)* the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on access to genetic resources, *d)* the use of new technologies for agriculture sustainable. These highly complex and topical issues have also various legal and institutional implications, analysed with some continuity in workshops organized within Europarc and by the WCEL - World Commission on Environmental Law of the IUCN.

6. Italian experts with important roles within the Federation

Italian representatives and experts have important roles in the Federation. Enzo Lavarra is one of the six elected members of the EUROPARC Council. The President of Federparchi, Giampiero Sammuri (who in the past was a member of the Council) has participated in many conferences and assemblies and is an influential member of the European Federation. Federico Minozzi, who is working for the European Federation since a long time, is the managing director of Europarc; two of the other staff members are Italian: Brigida Napolitano (membership), and Stefania Petrosillo (policies officer).

In addition, it has been already highlighted the successful involvement of numerous Italian stakeholders in the Europarc activities, as testified by the Charter on Sustainable Tourism awards obtained by eight Italian PAs, the Star Awards obtained by two Italian enterprises, and the Transboundary Cooperation certificate obtained by an Italian Natural Park.

7. Conclusions

Europarc is committed, as highlighted above, in numerous activities aimed not only to the conservation of biodiversity, but also to the improvement of health, and the quality of life of the communities living in the PAs territories and in surrounding areas. The Federation has also definitely endorsed in its activities the objectives of sustainable development as set forth in the UN Agenda 2030.

In this perspective, it is worth to note that at the moment in Italy there are some proposal to introduce a “Green Deal” Law, amending - among other things - the *1991 Framework Law on PAs*. The ISGI of the CNR is monitoring these new draft laws, and continues its researches in particular on transboundary UNESCO biosphere reserves, sustainable tourism in PAs, and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on international environmental law.

In 2020, the Europarc Conference will take place in Neusiedler See - Seewinkel National Park (27-30 October), hosted by the Austrian Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism. After the analysis at the 2019 Conference on the value of nature across multiple sectors of society, the theme of the 2020 Conference will be: *Communicating in the 21st Century? Question your mindset!* Various workshops will provide excellent opportunities for multidisciplinary analysis of some current priority issues and will help to develop ideas starting from two basic questions: a) How PAs are speaking to their audiences? b) Can PAs use technology to better reach out people’s understanding and encourage respect for nature?

Rome, 15 June 2020



Gianfranco Tamburelli

Research Project on:
Environment and Development Cooperation in International and EU Law