



PROTECTED AREAS IN-SIGHT

THE JOURNAL OF THE EUROPARC FEDERATION VOL. 12

Our new future: How ready are we?



Chat

From EUROPARC to Everyone:

Imprint

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Many thanks to all those who have contributed to this edition.

To: **Everyone** ▾

Polls Chat Share Screen Record

Cover photo: Veitenstein © Naturpark Haßberge

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were forced to quickly adapt our work to the new situation. We moved practically all our activities and interactions with members and partners to the online world. The design of this edition tries to reflect that transition - from out in nature into zoom rooms.

Please note that many of the pictures in this edition were taken before Covid-19 regulations were in place.

For more information: www.europarc.org

Ruhlauber forest
© Nationalpark Kellerwald-Edersee





PROTECTED AREAS IN-SIGHT

THE JOURNAL OF THE EUROPARC FEDERATION

The EUROPARC Federation represents Protected Areas and governmental organisations in 41 countries, who themselves manage the green jewels of Europe's land, sea, mountains, forests, rivers and cultural heritage.

Nature knows no boundaries and EUROPARC therefore facilitates international co-operation in all aspects of Protected Area management. Through networking, advancing policy and practice, sharing best practices and developing new solutions to the challenges of Protected Area management, we want to deliver a Sustainable Nature: Valued by People and ensure the value of Protected Areas is recognised at the heart of Europe.



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From EUROPARC to Everyone:

When historians look back at 2020, I wonder what characteristics and trends they will identify. Certainly, 2020 has been the most unusual of years in our lifetimes. We can identify the challenges, impacts, opportunities and effects the 'Year of COVID-19' has brought to bear on us personally and professionally on our parks. Also, we should consider, 'Our New Future. How ready are we?'

One of the early trends I would identify is that of **closure**. As people in many parts of Europe were confined, our parks were devoid of visitors. Across Europe, our parks are based on the values of welcoming and giving people the chance to experience nature in wild places, in order, we hope, that they may come to appreciate, conserve and protect it. However, these closures and confinements, merely reminded people of their need to be connected to nature. The saying is true: *"you don't appreciate what you've got until it's gone"*! The (albeit temporary) separation from nature during COVID, I believe, has reinforced our human need to be in and with nature, both local and further afield.

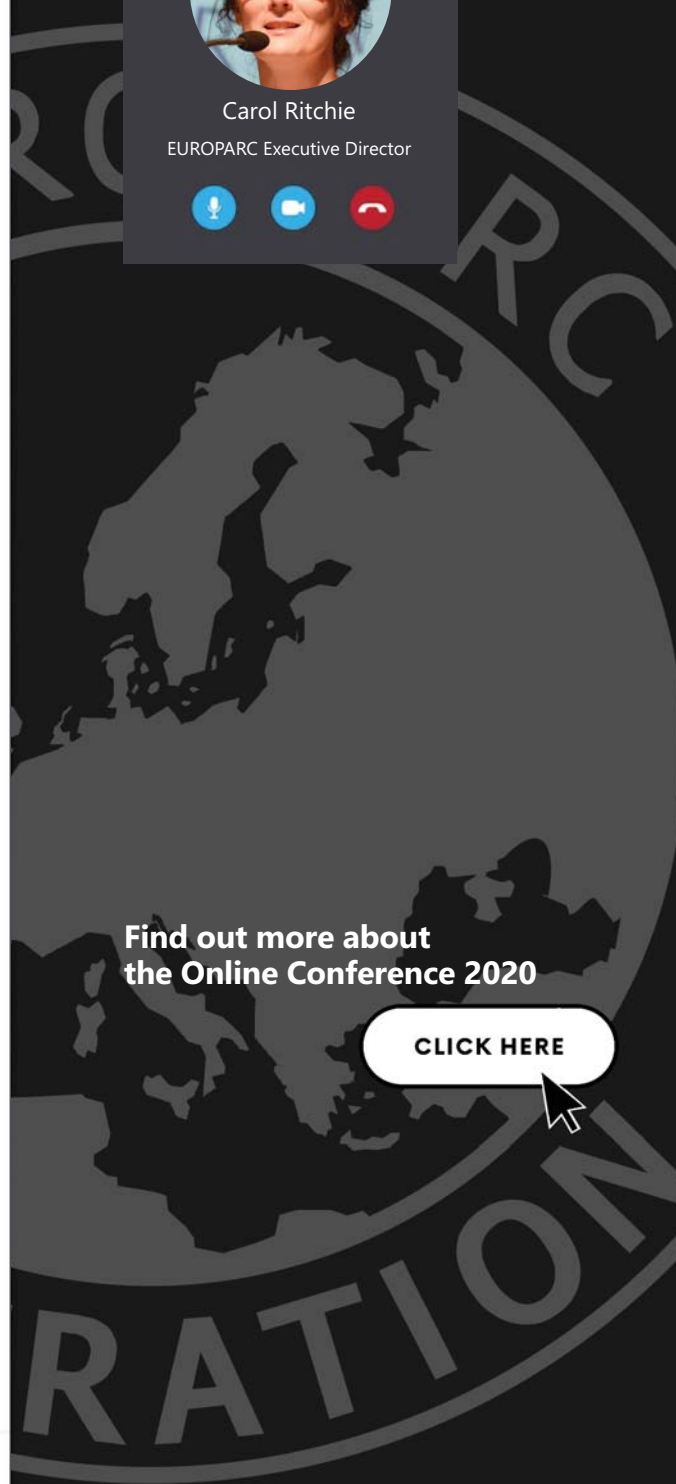
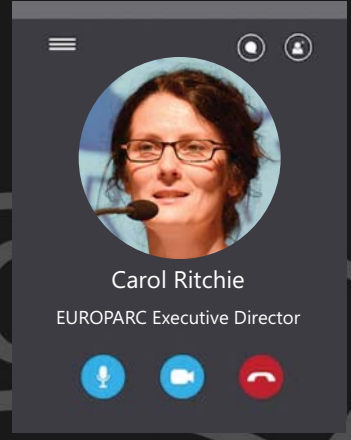
That second trend of **re-connection** was certainly even more evident when people were allowed to be mobile once more. This re-connection to nature, was even more acutely recognised as hugely important to people's physical and mental health. Re-connecting not only offers new opportunities for our parks to reach out to a wider range of our countries' populations, but in addition highlights the needs for investment in the infrastructure and services of our parks. This is clearly necessary to absorb and enable people to safely and harmoniously connect with nature, whilst ensuring our nature remains intact.

Another important trend would be **uncertainty**. The world feels a much more uncertain place and we have all reacted in different ways to that. EUROPARC has endeavoured to ensure that members find support and solace in the unity of our network, especially when change seems to overwhelm. Yet throughout the uncertainty, we found **resilience, innovation and new solutions**. EUROPARC has embraced the change in how we now work with new digital tools, realising that **international cooperation and connection as well as ensuring a place for our youth to be involved, are more important than ever**. Although our new virtual world will never fully replace the bonds we make when face to face, at least digital connectivity has reinforced that, as a family of parks, we stay and stand united.

Change has certainly been the overriding theme of 2020. From the response to COVID-19, to the new EU Strategies. Parks and Protected Areas need to be involved in **discussions about the future of society** and be prepared with solutions to ensure they are part of a safer and more sustainable Europe. These big issues were therefore the main focus of this year's EUROPARC Conference and the discussions spill forth into this edition of our Protected Areas In-Sight. Climate change, new EU policies on biodiversity and agriculture and of course the response to COVID-19 all warrant new skills and capacities from Protected Areas. **Marta Múgica (EUROPARC Spain) reminded us that** *"In these changing times, we must be creative in the role we play in biodiversity conservation, but also in general societal challenges"*. Professor Christian Baumgartner succinctly put it thus, *"we are currently, in VUCA-World: Volatility Uncertainty Complexity & Ambiguity"* but EUROPARC believes *"we can move to where we have Vision, Understanding, Clarity and Agility"* - **let those be the legacy of 2020**. The only way to predict and 'be ready' for the future is to be a part of creating it. So we, the Parks of Europe, can and should be the **Changemakers of the Future** - for the future of our climate, our biodiversity and the health of our Parks and our People.

To: Everyone v Carol Ritchie Executive Director

Editorial



Find out more about the Online Conference 2020



Challenges and opportunities for Protected Areas in the new normal

There are currently numerous challenges for Protected Areas in the 'new normal' and most of them do not relate to COVID-19. The new normal is conditioned by a world that is more complex than ever before.

Until the early 2000s, the tasks of Protected Areas (PAs) were usually clearly defined with nature conservation and environmental protection, environmental education, a little leisure and tourism. But if you ask people today for statements concerning the current development (inside and outside of PAs) – the answers are quite different: trends, dilemmas, change, seeking, confused choice, alternatives – in short: We are living in a VUCA world.

VUCA is an acronym first used in 1987 and based on leadership theories and stands for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity. We live in a world that's constantly changing, becoming more unstable each day, where changes are becoming more unpredictable – and they're getting more and more dramatic and happening faster and faster. As events unfold in completely unexpected ways, it's becoming often impossible to determine cause and effect. Problems and their effects are multi-layered, harder to understand. Decisions are reduced to a mesh of reaction and counter-reaction – and choosing the single correct path is almost impossible. The demands on modern organisations and management are more contradictory and paradoxical than ever. Making decisions requires courage, awareness, and a willingness to make mistakes.

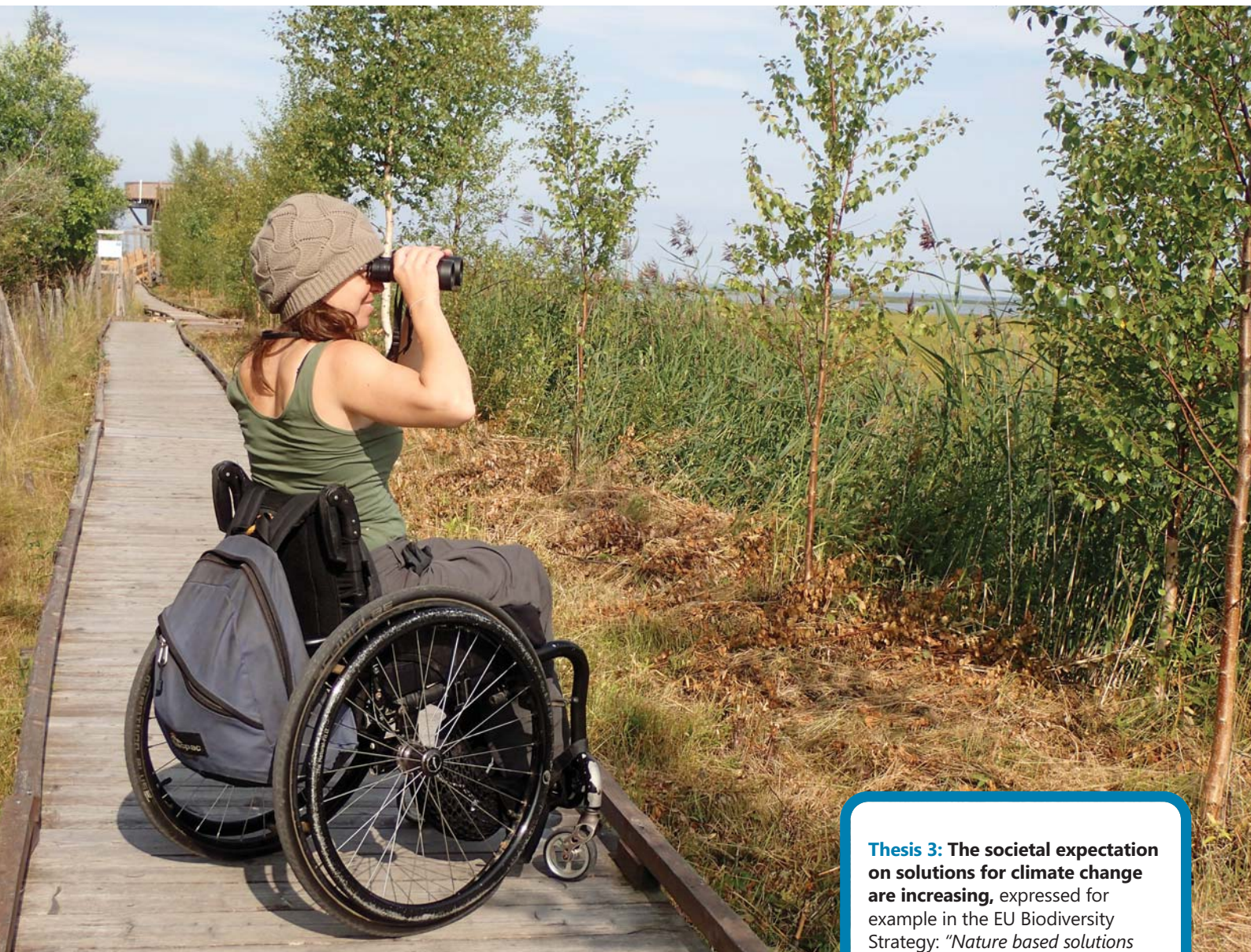
What's needed today – if you work in any development area, as Protected Areas do – is to be a VUCA facilitator. Trying to change the meaning of VUCA to Vision, Understanding, Clarity and Agility. Huge tasks for often small PA's administrations and teams.

Society is subject to trends and megatrends in its actions. Policymakers take these and the new mega-drivers – climate change, globalisation 4.0, new pandemics and others on board and formulate complex and demanding policies and strategies such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the different Climate Treaties and the EU Biodiversity Strategy.

These all generate new facts and requirements that Protected Areas are confronted with. This article attempts to summarise the most important of these challenges in 10 theses:



Branching Out project Scotland
© Lorne Gill/SNH

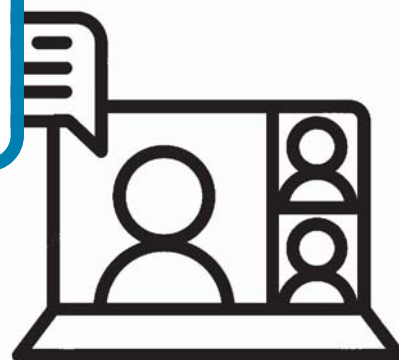


Barrier-free path to Virkkula bird tower in Liminganlahti
© Sasa Dolinsek

Thesis 1: The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 'Bringing nature back into our lives' is a very powerful document, which foresees the *"Transforming at least 30% of Europe's lands and seas into effectively managed protected areas"*. This, the EU Green Deal as well as the UN decade 2021-2030 on Ecosystem Restoration, show increasing political demand. The implementation of those strategies will present Protected Areas with enormous management challenges, including the need for new skills such as participation methods, to realise that implementation.

Thesis 2: Economic Pressure on PAs is increasing: Deforestation and the search for mineral resources in PAs indicates this pressure - from Romania to the Amazon and the USA. The protection status alone is not (everywhere) sufficient for effective long-term preservation of these areas. Protected Area managers must express international political solidarity and develop better strategies and tools to support each other beyond borders.

Thesis 3: The societal expectation on solutions for climate change are increasing, expressed for example in the EU Biodiversity Strategy: *"Nature based solutions such as protecting biodiversity and restoring ecosystems are an excellent means of countering the effects of climate change and a very cost-effective use of resources."* PAs need strategies that can adapt to climate change and compensate for climate change impacts elsewhere.



Thesis 4: The European Green Deal and Paris Agreement aim for the **EU to be climate-neutral by 2050** – that is an economy with net-zero greenhouse gas emissions. Even PAs are contributing to climate change and need to rethink all their activities and infrastructure such as buildings, mobility, supplies and offers. Even if the impact is relatively small, PAs need to serve as role-models to the wider community.

Thesis 5: The societal pressure after COVID-19 is increasing:

More people search for 'undisturbed' areas for leisure and holidays. This search in combination with social media like Instagram will always create new hot-spots with tremendous speed. Traditional forms of visitor management are not sufficient anymore, new flexible instruments that react quickly to new developments are needed.

Thesis 6: Unsustainable forms of tourism such as cruises and Alpine winter sports are also declining

due to climate change and COVID-19. New trends such as health tourism are on the increase, going beyond the simple stay, towards concrete treatments in nature. Forest bathing for example, originally coming from Japan in the 1950s, is today an important new health product. PAs need to accept that they are important touristic stakeholders and fully implement sustainable tourism in their destinations.

Thesis 7: We face an aging

society with an increasing number of people with mobility restrictions or other special needs. At the other end of the age pyramid, bringing young people with migration background, closer to nature and ecosystems is also a major integration challenge. PAs need to find ways to fulfil the claim that "*national parks and other PAs are open to all and offer experience-oriented offers for different target groups*". At the moment it is hardly fulfilled.

Thesis 8: COVID-19 has given the final push for digitalization both in classrooms and in leisure.

Environmental education in PAs is rather conservative, many areas have not made the step from nature education to implementing principles of education for sustainable development. Many of the PAs have a focus only on children and schools. PAs are actors of education for sustainable development and need to integrate the trend to digitalisation into their educational offers.

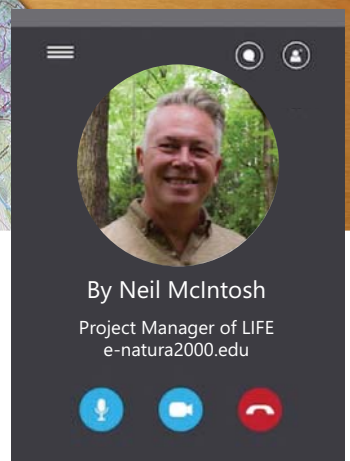
Thesis 10: Authenticity and 'regions' have become increasingly important

in the mindset of larger parts of society, being considered 'healthy and authentic'. This new emphasis should be used to build consistent images of PAs as well as better implementation (and funding) of their objectives.

Thesis 9: The EU 'Farm to Fork' Strategy aims for more sustainable agriculture,

food industry and societal behaviour. PAs, having an integrated approach to land management, are both key actors in promoting this new European strategy, but could also be key beneficiaries of the respective EU Policies, programs and actions.

PAs should and can become real engines of sustainable regional development, which should be the desirable 'new normal'.



A year in the LIFE of LIFEedu!

In the first half of 2020, three core competence courses were delivered as part of the LIFEe-Natura2000.edu preparatory project. 78 Natura 2000 managers from 19 countries, with various levels of experience and different backgrounds, completed the online elements of their courses.

At the start of the year, little did we know what lay ahead! In the space of 6 months, things which had previously been 'taken for granted' changed: people's daily lives and work were turned upside down.

However, if ever there was a time to do online learning, this was it! Not only were all three courses successfully delivered by EUROPARC, FUNGOBE and ProPark, project participants actively expressed their appreciation for the courses and the online contacts.

For project partners and participants alike, the experience gains from the project are certain to leave a lasting legacy. The need for and value of the online (net-) working and practical capacity building for nature managers have demonstrated that blended learning is here to stay.

The following reflects some feedback from LIFEedu's participants.

"All the digital documents, presentations, references, videos have been very useful and I am already sharing and using them as a working material for other projects, teaching, and sharing."

"The training will allow me to be a better teacher model for my students."

COVID-19

One participant said that LIFEedu "has been a very positive distraction!" He was "grateful for the focus the webinars and tasks have given, taking me away from intense periods of work and scale of change I've experienced as a result of Covid-19 disruption."

The "flexibility and desire to align the whole content with the situation we are still facing (COVID-19)" has been particularly appreciated. That said, distance learning clearly proved to be tough for some and challenging to maintain motivation. A preference for face-to-face interaction remains: it is a familiar environment and one where some in the project said they could exercise their skills better. However, online learning has also been recognised as a new and worthwhile experience, especially given the loss of face-to-face networking.



Filming of Nature for People, © ProPark Foundation, Romania

“My wife asked if I was doing another online Masters!”

Networking

In the words of one participant, *“it has been a privilege to learn with a group of like-minded and committed communicators”*. He said he has learned and re-learned a great deal and enjoyed listening to and learning from different perspectives.

Another said she had applied to be part of LIFEedu not only to improve her skills, but also to get to know other professionals from around Europe. *“Being at the very beginning of my career, the learning has been ‘a great accelerator in the European dimension of an area I am also still exploring locally and nationally.’”*

Perhaps most significant is that the project has created meaningful personal networks. One participant said that he valued the opportunity to share and learn from others. For many, the main value of LIFEedu and the LIFE Programme has been that it creates the possibility to exchange and become *“a team force for future projects related to Natura 2000”* conservation and participatory actions.

Course content – Moodles, modules & learning tools

Although quite long and intensive, the time given to support the participants has been genuinely appreciated. Other comments about the courses and how they were structured and paced include:

- Incredibly organized modules, clear and friendly tools;
- Useful and valuable information, presented by competent and inspiring experts and delivered by friendly and well-prepared organisers;
- Very interesting, very high level! The course got better and better from one module to the next.

“For many years I did not do any real training in my work. I spend most of my time implementing projects and projects and projects... How silly not to invest in communication competencies all those years!”

Applying the learning!

Project participants have also been active in disseminating LIFEedu content and learning materials with their colleagues and in other projects. This has enabled the project to generate a significant multiplier effect.

Several participants reported that the course material, communication models and case studies have changed the way in which they work and especially their approach to communication tasks about Natura 2000. Specifically, participants say they are a lot more confident co-working with communication specialists who support the management teams.

At the same time, the learning is being applied to the stakeholder engagement and consultation work required in the production of management plans. One participant reported that he was better able to lead and support colleagues with this work as a result of the course.

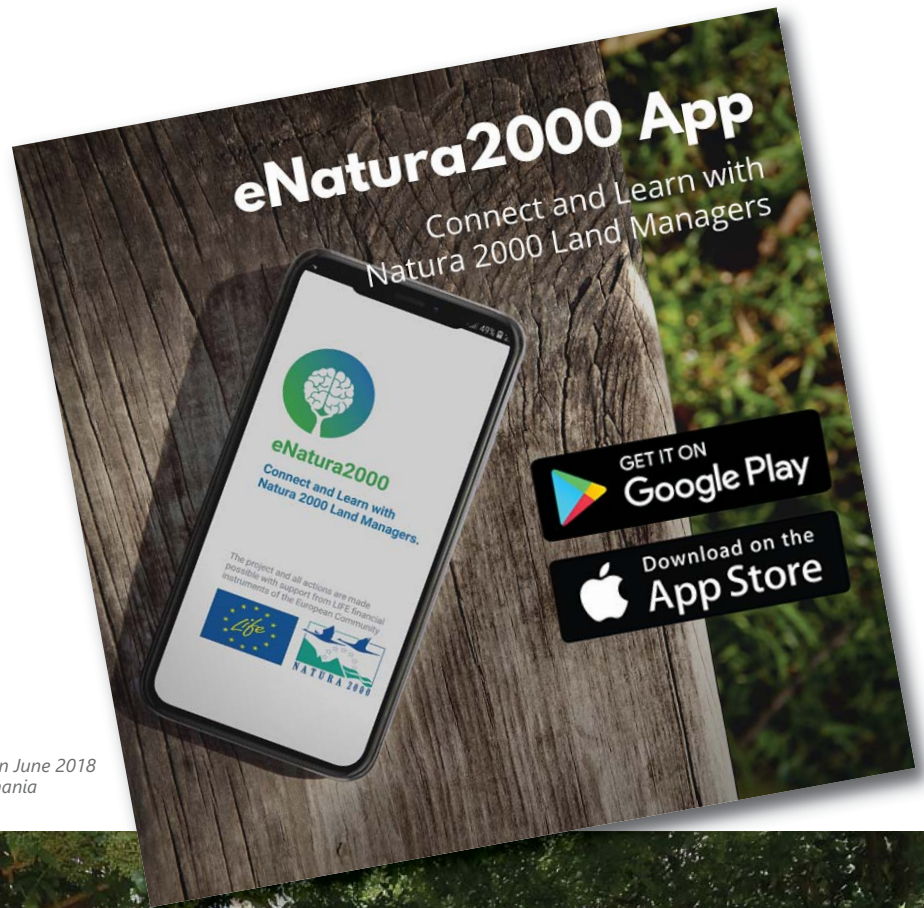
The courses also achieved a significant multiplier effect. As one participant said: *“the plan is to share the learnings and this whole experience with the rest of my colleagues (19 in total) during a presentation followed by a workshop”*. In general, almost all participants have been keen to report and share their experiences from the project with their colleagues and line managers.

Focus on the future

Interestingly, several participants said that LIFEedu helped them to understand that it is not necessary to focus on "all the negative aspects from the past, but rather on what we would like to achieve in the future". This can only be good to help support more effective problem solving and stronger implementation of Natura 2000 at local levels.

The project underlined other important aspects of communications. For example, one participant said that she now knows better "how to more effectively link information with an appropriate communication tool in terms of purpose and stakeholders' understanding".

LIFE e-Natura2000.edu Project Team at Kick-off meeting in June 2018
Filming of Nature for People, © ProPark Foundation, Romania



Competent for the future?

Global perspectives on meeting the needs for Protected Area capacity



By Mike Appleton
Director of Protected Area Management, Global Wildlife Conservation; Vice Chair for Capacity Development, IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas.

Microphone, Video, End Call

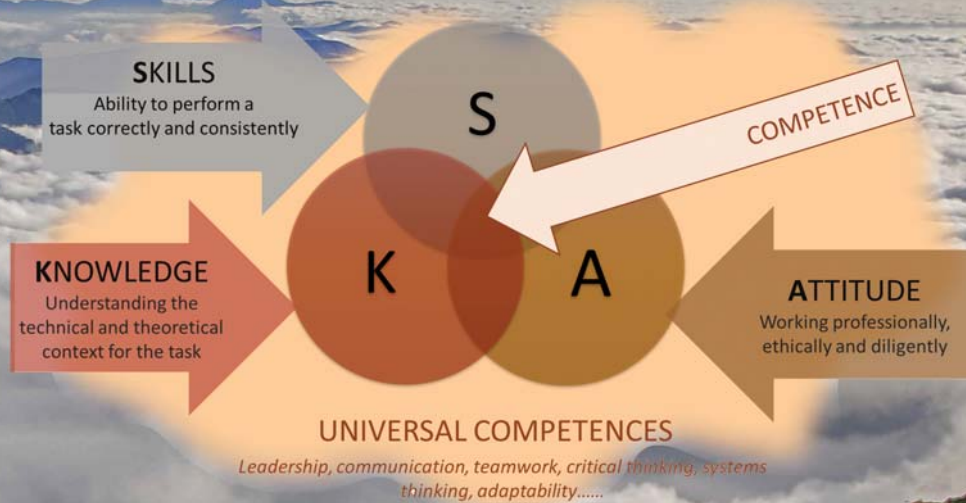
The expansion of the world's Protected Area (PA) network to 15% of its land and 7% of its seas has been a great success. There is a growing wealth of experience and guidance on Protected Area management, but still barely a third of PAs are considered to be

effectively managed. Sites have only a fraction of the trained experts, managers and rangers needed, and while PA staff are generally highly dedicated, most are badly paid, have poor working conditions and are inadequately trained and equipped. Too many sites lack even the basic equipment and infrastructure for staff to do the job asked of them.

It is likely that in 2021, the Convention on Biological Diversity will agree a new target of 30% coverage by protected and conserved areas; the minimum we need to save the world's biodiversity, wild places and the life support systems. But if we do not start addressing the capacity needs associated with such an expansion, we are risking creating a world of ineffective 'paper parks'.

We know what it takes to manage a Protected Area well. Sites need to be located to maximize their conservation impact. Governance needs to be inclusive, fair and transparent. Management and monitoring need to be rationally planned and well led. Adequate investment is essential. But in the end, none of this will make a lasting difference without effective, competent, committed and well-supported people.

So what makes an effective Protected Area worker? A proven way to understand this is to think in terms of competence; the combination of skills, knowledge and attitude, expressed in the context of 'universal competences' (see EUROPARC's LIFE e-Natura2000.edu project on page 9).



- Identify capacity development priorities based on real needs.
- Design and assess learning programmes that prepare people for the realities of Protected Area work.
- Set standards for improving performance.
- Diversify and raise the profile of professional PA practices, so that PA management is valued as much as other public service professions.

The challenge of reaching 30% of the planet conserved by 2030 is not going to be met simply by scaling up what we are doing already. We need to think about new and different types of protected and conserved areas that function alongside 'traditional' networks (in Europe the Natura 2000 network has been pioneering this). We need to recognise territories under indigenous and community stewardship as vital parts of the solution. And we need to diversify the Protected Area profession, enabling a much wider range of practitioners to be acknowledged. The competence approach has a major role to play in these changes.

proven performance rather than educational attainment and can therefore be acquired and recognised in numerous ways, not just in the classroom or on training courses. This means that anyone can be assessed and certified as competent, irrespective of their personal background, education, location or position in an organisation.

There is a growing interest in competence-based approaches around the world, including Europe, especially since the 2016 publication of The IUCN WCPA Global Register of Competences for Protected Area Practitioners, details 300 competences for all aspects of PA management for staff from directors to rangers. This and other similar frameworks are increasingly being used to:

- Prepare detailed job descriptions and organisational structures so that staff are clear about what is expected of them.

A lot of PA training and learning is still delivered and assessed through academic education and short courses. But capacity building is much more than training. Formal courses will always have a vital role to play, but they are expensive and not accessible to the vast majority of Protected Area staff. The competence approach is rather different. The skills, knowledge and attitudes required are defined by sector practitioners, not just experts and educationalists. Competence is based on

Stronger with youth: creating a park Youth Board

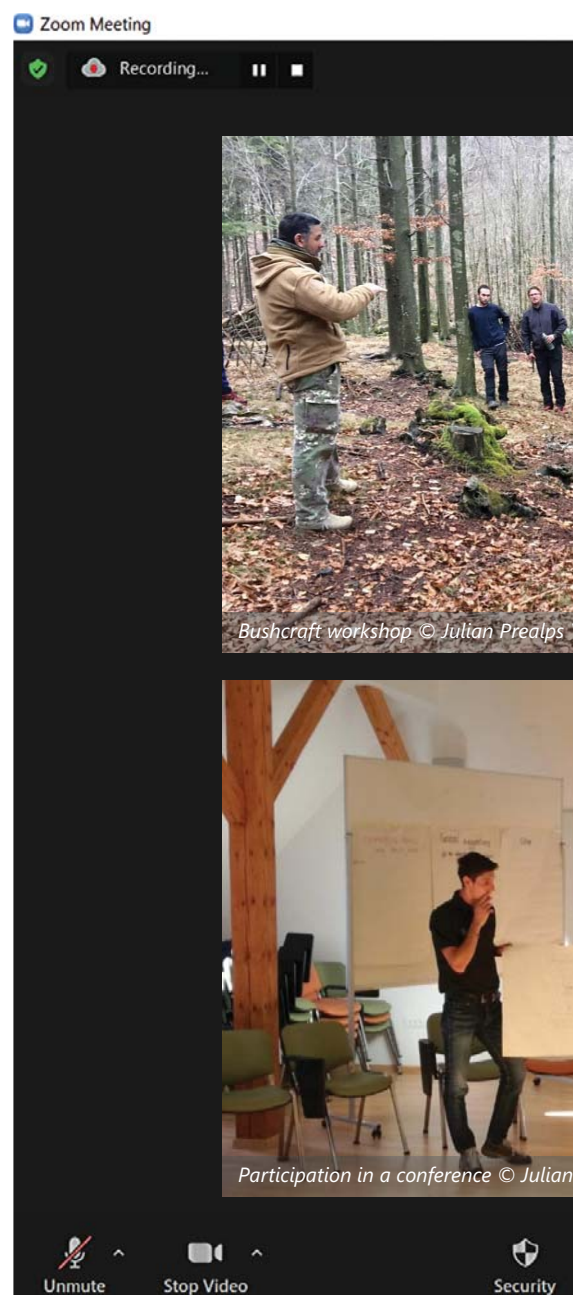
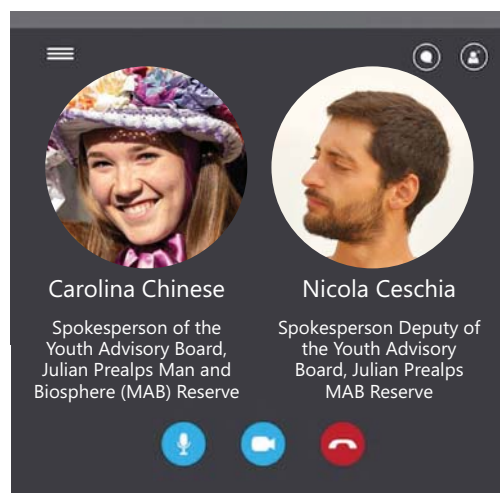
The Youth Advisory Board of the Julian Prealps Nature Park was born in 2018. It now includes 27 youngsters from 16 to 30 years old, all living in the eleven municipalities of the region.

Our Board took shape following the adoption of the *“Revised European Chart of the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life”* by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on 21st May 2003. It was also some months before the creation of the EUROPARC Youth Manifesto, sharing the same values and motivations, which are at the heart of the Regulation of the Youth Advisory Board – a sort of constitution that guides us during our activities. In the two years since formation, our goals and ideas have never changed, but now our role has become more important. In fact, as our board grew bigger, we are now an official part of the Man and Biosphere (MAB) Reserve management authority.

We believe that youth are the key for the future challenges and that they need to be involved in the realities of rural areas: a citizen who is aware of the place he lives in, of its natural and cultural heritage and of its difficulties, is likely to take an active part in the promotion and defence of the area. With this in mind, we joined EUROPARC’s Junior Ranger programme, designed for young people from 12 to 18 years old, who can then continue volunteering by joining the Youth Advisory Board.

Another important point is the continuous learning. As a council, we organize conferences about various topics including global warming and its effects in our region, workshops in bush-craft or stone balancing. During our events, we always give space to sharing thoughts, experiences and reflections. All this keeps our minds active and open towards new possibilities, ideas and inspirations.

However, we are conscious that our Nature Park is just a tiny strip in our enormous Earth. In fact our motto is: *“Act local, think global”*. We believe that locking ourselves in our 'garden' cannot be the solution to the big challenges that the future holds for us. Regional, national and international cooperation are essential elements to preserve, enhance and promote the natural and cultural heritage, not only of our region, but of all Europe. So, as a council and a MAB Reserve, our biggest aim is to create a transboundary Biosphere Reserve of the Julian Alps, giving birth to **the first Youth Transboundary Board** and reinforcing cooperation with our Slovenian youth neighbours. In the past, we have already worked with them on some projects such as Junior Rangers or ‘Youth at the Top’ – a day during which participants from Alpine Protected Areas climb to the top of a mountain in their territory as a form of active citizenship.



This year, due to the pandemic, we couldn't do most of the activities that we had planned. However, we took part in different online workshops and webinars, so we had the opportunity to share our experience as an Advisory Board. One of these online meetings was part of the EUROPARC Online Conference, where we could share our experience of involving young generations in the life and management of rural areas.

"We are confident that initiatives similar to ours will grow, because youngsters can and want to do something concrete for their planet. We are ready to battle for a fair, inclusive, green and sustainable future."



EUROPARC Online 2020: Conference workshops outcomes

During the EUROPARC Online Conference 2020, we tried to look into the future of Protected Areas and find out whether we are ready for what it holds. An important aspect in facing all the known and unknown upcoming challenges, is **capacity building**. That is why, throughout this year's Conference and in this issue of Protected Areas In-Sight, we put so much emphasis on learning from each other, developing our skills, knowledge and new tools... in short, improving together.

This process of learning was especially important in the interactive Workshops, during which the Conference delegates were invited to discuss a number of topics relevant for Protected Areas management – from Natura 2000, Youth or Agriculture to Marine environment, Sustainable Tourism and Climate Change. In this article, you can read short summaries and main take-away messages from the workshop discussions, and maybe even find inspiration for tackling the challenges of your Protected Area.

Workshop #1

How can Protected Areas complete the Natura 2000 network?

What do we anticipate?

- Integrate Europe's Protected Areas as part of a cohesive network of ecologically connected natural sites.
- Enable 'nature managers', who work across a variety of nature protection and management specialisms, to develop their professional skills.

What can Protected Areas do?

- Build collaborative and constructive relationships with local stakeholders.
- Education and outreach: interpretation of natural, cultural and historical features to ensure visitors' and locals' understanding about the value of PAs.



Wild cat
© VDN/Maik Elbers

What practical competencies, capacity building tools and training programmes will be helpful for PA staff?

- Networking events and tools to promote and enable knowledge and information exchange.
- Communication skills, stakeholder engagement and governance approaches.
- Practical support and advice for project development, planning and management.

How can EUROPARC help?

- Networking events and practical capacity building initiatives linked to policy priorities to improve the effectiveness of PA management practices.
- Increase the capacities of PAs on organisational level – include knowledge exchange and stimulation of new, collaborative project based ideas.
- Create more new, high quality, online networking opportunities.

Workshop #2

Agriculture in parks: how can we communicate to farmers, with farmers, for farmers?

What do we anticipate?

- More funds and larger share of lands for agri-eco-friendly practices.

What can Protected Areas do?

- Support farmers in transition toward sustainable practices, promotion, tools and equipment;

- Create a long-term trust relation with farmers based on dialogue and include them in decision making processes;
- Contacts with "CAP Farm Advisers Services" in order to increase their environmental awareness and collaboration.

What practical competencies do Protected Area staff need to meet these priorities?

- Agronomy and ecology knowledge;
- Capacity to create agricultural promotional events involving both Protected Area managers and farmers;
- Skills to monitor farming impacts to the biodiversity.

How can EUROPARC help?

- Provide tools adapted to the different needs, easy to use by the staff and corresponding with the realities on the ground;
- Lobby and advocacy in Brussels with EU institutions;
- Organize visits of Members of European Parliament in Protected Areas.

Agriculture at Natural Regional Park Scarpe-Escout © Samuel Dhote



Workshop #3

Why do Marine Protected Areas merit special attention?

What do we anticipate?

- Three levels of action arising from the new Biodiversity Strategy:
 - Designation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs);
 - Management of MPAs;
 - Effective management of MPAs.
- Increased funding to enable immediate enforcement measures.

What can Protected Areas do?

- Rewild big mammals and top predators, as their populations have decreased and they play a crucial role for functioning ecosystems;
- Designate ecological corridors, set specific actions and legislation frameworks for transboundary and ecologically connected areas, as this is not only stated in the Biodiversity Strategy but also a known need to protect mobile species.

What practical competencies and capacity building tools will be helpful?

- Training for MPA managers and stakeholders in conflict resolution;

- Manage stakeholders 'expectations, provide opportunity to sit together and establish a dialogue;
- Develop communication tools and active learning methodologies.

Photo: © Pixabay



Pause/Stop Recording



Closed Caption



Breakout Rooms



Spanish



Reactions

End



Workshop #4

Stronger with Youth - how do we plan together for 2030?

What do we anticipate?

- Make nature conservation sector more accessible and attractive to young people;
- Increased diversity of nature professionals;
- Creative solutions for young people by young people.

Photo: Developing new skills at International Youth Camp © Federico Minozzi



What can Protected Areas do?

- Make youth/nature initiatives accessible also in urban areas;
- Environmental education, awareness-raising, creating and promoting new opportunities via cooperation with local schools and universities;
- Create attractive outdoor activities for young communities, explore promotion via influencers.

What practical competencies and capacity building tools will be helpful?

- Use of relevant communication channels and adaptability to new ones;
- Change of mindset - think about how to involve youth in any projects/activities before getting started and make this an automatic process.

How can EUROPARC help?

- Promote and make use of existing initiatives such as Junior Ranger, Youth+ and Youth Manifesto that focus on involving youth and environmental education;
- Come up with new ways to engage with young people in covid times;
- Monitor what young people want and expect from parks (via surveys or online portals) to better answer their needs – EUROPARC could create a uniform survey for members.

Workshop #5

Sustainable tourism: are we ready for ecotourism as the new future?

What practical competencies do Protected Areas need to adapt to the new situation?

- Creative and innovative thinking for both visitor centres and managers to be prepared for potential future crisis;
- Effective communication and social abilities to better understand people, training to avoid potential inter-personal conflicts, use of IT to disseminate information in real time;
- Learn to manage new audiences (especially domestic visitors) and find out what are their needs.

What competencies are needed for the front line services (usually private companies)?

- High standard common image of the sustainable businesses and the park itself – support of front line

services by park authorities with information about the park, as the businesses need to be educated on the whole destination;

- Need to learn how to address people with special needs;
- Environmental and heritage interpretation for guiding companies.

Planting activity © Delta Polet



What do we need to change in PA Governance and management?

- Limit the maximum number of visitors, mainly to the hotspots;
- Improve communication;
- With increased influx of visitors, management should prioritise and focus on sustainability before tourist services.



Unmute



Stop Video



Security



Participants



Polls



Chat

2



Share Screen

Workshop #6

Climate Change: how can Protected Areas adapt to climate change?

What needs to be taken into account in PAs management practices?

- Further accepting uncertainty as a given factor when planning;
- Bridging global climate change trends with local specificities;
- Involving communities from the early stages of the planning exercise to co-design win-win solutions in and out of the area.

What challenges and opportunities arise for Protected Areas?

- Climate change is yet another pressure on already fragile ecosystems;
- It adds complexity and uncertainty, and requires new competencies;
- Climate change also offers common ground to work together with various stakeholders and improve the implementation of nature conservation measures in and around Protected Areas.

What types of capacity building tools and training will be helpful?

- Guidance or methodologies on how to integrate climate change in PA management plans – these should support the realisation of climate change vulnerability assessments and the design of adaptation plans and measures;
- Knowledge and expertise to understand past, present and future climates and their effects on conservation features such as species and habitats;
- Development of peer-to-peer support and participatory approaches through networking opportunities and exchanges of best practices.



Climate demonstration
© Dominic Wunderlich

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Pause/Stop Recording



Closed Caption



Breakout Rooms



Spanish



Reactions

End

EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030

The Role of Protected Areas to 'Bring nature back into our lives'

Protected Areas are a key element of any strategy for protecting and restoring nature and biodiversity, while also contributing to people's livelihoods, particularly at the local level. Well-managed Protected Areas provide us with essential ecosystem services, recreational activities and protection from the impacts of natural disasters. These kinds of services have been valued up to 300 billion euro per year for the EU-wide network of Protected Areas, Natura 2000.

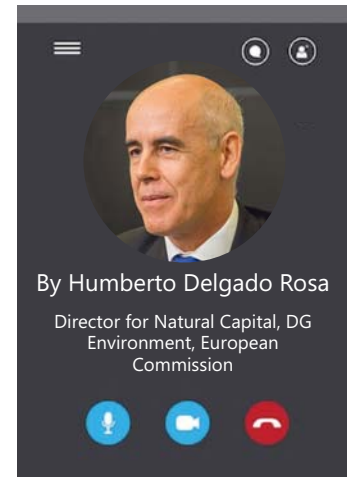
Today, with close to 28 000 individual sites, Natura 2000 covers more than 18% of the European land surface of the EU27, and ca. 9% of marine waters. While Natura 2000 is almost complete on land, there are still major designation gaps at sea. Moreover, even though important progress was achieved in establishing conservation objectives and measures, there are still many gaps in this respect.

EU target for Protected Areas under the Biodiversity Strategy

Scientific evidence has provided compelling demonstration that nature needs more space to thrive both globally and in the EU. In addition, a number of

threatened or endemic species and habitats are not protected under the EU Nature Directives.

Therefore, in the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 published in May 2020, the Commission proposed an ambitious target to include at least 30% of the EU land and sea area in Protected Areas that are well managed and have clear conservation objectives and measures. Furthermore, at least one third of these areas (i.e. 10% of the EU land and sea) should be strictly protected. By 2030, these Protected Areas should form a coherent Trans-European Nature Network composed of Natura 2000 and of Protected Areas designated under national schemes. The Strategy also invites



The feasibility of hydrological restoration of acidic mires and peat-bogs has been successfully demonstrated in many LIFE projects. © Frank Vassen



A beech forest in a Natura 2000 site in Belgium. Such old forests are important for both biodiversity, and for capturing and storing carbon. © Frank Vassen



the Commission and Member States to examine how and to what extent other effective area-based conservation measures, as defined under the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as urban greening, can contribute to the EU 2030 nature protection targets.

The target requires further clarifications on what types of areas, management regimes and legal protection status can be counted, and what effort is required by each Member State. There is already a wealth of scientific information, such as EU and national red lists of species and habitats, Key Biodiversity Areas, Important Bird Areas, etc., that could help identify areas with highest potential for biodiversity, in particular for terrestrial ecosystems, including in the EU outermost regions.

The Commission recently issued a first draft of its Guidance to Member States on criteria for additional designations. This was discussed with Member States and stakeholders in the meeting of the Expert Group on the Nature Directives on 22 October 2020, to collect their views and comments, in view of a final agreement on the Guidance in 2021.

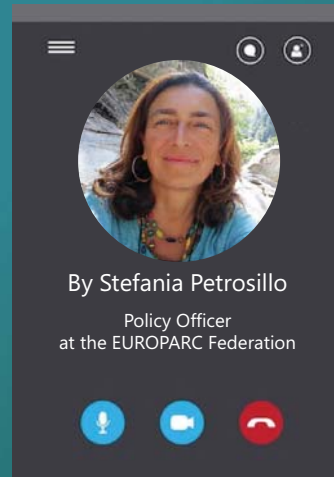
The guidance reiterates the need to implement existing legal obligations by completing any remaining Natura 2000 site designation gaps and improving the management effectiveness of existing sites.

The document provides a first definition of strict protection and suggests that the 30%/10% Protected Area targets for 2030 could be broken down according to biogeographical regions and sea basins. It also identifies the need to improve our understanding of which of the current national Protected Areas (in addition to Natura 2000) can be counted towards the target.

Current available data on Protected Area coverage, indicates that most efforts for additional designations might need to focus on additional marine and strictly Protected Areas. To achieve the marine component of the target, it is urgent to step up marine species and habitat inventories to help identify the most suitable areas to be added.

The Commission will continue and intensify its dialogue with Member States and stakeholders on how to implement the Protected Area target, including through the EU Biogeographical process, bringing together regularly national and regional authorities, NGOs and land users to discuss the implementation of the targets, and trigger transnational cooperation and coherent action across borders. A peer review of the progress towards the target, namely with regard to designations of new Protected Areas, will take place in order to maximise efforts for the timely achievement of the targets by 2030, as stated in the EU Biodiversity Strategy.

What is the Farm to Fork Strategy and why is it important for Protected Areas?



Published in May 2020 by the European Commission, the Farm to Fork Strategy (F2F) is at the heart of the European Green Deal, aiming to make food systems fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly, and to rethink the whole food value chain in order to improve its sustainability at each step, from production to consumption.

Published on the same day as the Biodiversity Strategy, F2F reflects the complementarity between biodiversity and agriculture.

To reach its goals (summarised in the graphic), this strategy proposes some concrete targets very important for the landscape:

- Reduce by 50% the overall use of – and risk from – chemical pesticides by 2030 and reduce by 50% the use of more hazardous pesticides by 2030.
- To bring back at least 10% of agricultural areas under high-diversity landscape features.
- 25% of the EU’s agricultural land must be organic farm by 2030.

People are also an essential part of the F2F Strategy. The Strategy is built on the desire for a partnership between all the actors, improving in particular the status of farmers and fishermen in the food value chain.



The ambitions and the implementation of the F2F Strategy is of particular interest to European Protected Areas. **Sustainable agriculture and sustainable fishery within Protected Areas can be a model to provide safe, nutritious and high quality products.** Protected Areas can play an important role in the implementation of the EU Farm to Fork Strategy.

EUROPARC strongly believes in the possibility of a **win-win alliance between biodiversity conservation and sustainable agriculture and fishery sectors.** Favouring those partnerships contributes to improving the status of farmers and fishermen, by rewarding their effort to include nature conservation in their practices and by promoting local, nutritious and sustainable products.

The Farm to Fork Strategy recognises the **inextricable links between healthy people, healthy societies and a healthy planet.** The key mission of Protected Areas is to ensure healthy habitats: these are essential components required for delivery of the F2F Strategy.



Find out more about the Strategy:

[CLICK HERE](#)

“Health is animals, plants and human health. These are so close that we cannot look at the health perspective only from one side”

(Stella Kyriakides, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety)

THE FIRST FARM TO FORK CONFERENCE

One of the first commitments of the EU Commission for the implementation of the Farm to Fork Strategy is public discussion and stakeholder involvement. For this reason, **the first Farm to Fork Conference took place on 15 and 16 October.**

The two-day Conference involved different stakeholders ranging from policy makers to consumer representatives. All participants agreed that it will take all stakeholders across all sectors to move towards more sustainable food systems. This is necessary to adapt to and mitigate climate change and also reverse biodiversity decline. The debates emphasised the need for funds to make such changes in agriculture, the

role of innovation and technology, clarifying what a fair price for consumers entails and whether consumers are willing to change consumption patterns. All aspects were openly debated.

THE POSITION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

On 19 October 2020, the Council of the European Union adopted a set of conclusions on the Farm to Fork Strategy, **endorsing the goal of developing a European sustainable food system**, from production to consumption. The conclusions include a two-fold political message from the Member States:

1. Ensure sufficient and affordable food while contributing to EU climate neutrality by 2050

2. Ensure a fair income and strong support for primary producers.

The main issue remains the need for coherence with the Common Agriculture Policy.

Farm to Fork’s objectives and aspirational targets are, until now, not legally binding. Therefore, they can be considered only as recommendations for the CAP National Strategic Plans that the Member States will need to prepare in the framework of the new CAP. To reinforce this point, the Member States called for higher flexibility to prepare their CAP strategic plans.

The same week, the Council, voting for CAP, diluted the environmental and social ambitions from the Commission’s 2018 proposal, creating a situation where the CAP is now, not in line with the European Green Deal, Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies. This debate still has a long course to run!

“The unanimous decision reached is a crucial signal and a clear commitment to a sustainable and economically viable agri-food sector. For the first time, the entire food system is taken into account as a whole – from producers to consumers. It is a solid starting point and we are looking forward to working all together the coming years towards a truly sustainable and fair food system in Europe and beyond.”

(Julia Klöckner, Federal Minister for Food and Agriculture of Germany)



Vegetable growing © Pixabay



Rye field © Pixabay



Sheep transhumance in France © Samuel Dhote



Helping nature adapt to climate change, or is it the other way around?



Field experience and research tell us that it is urgent to tackle nature and climate breakdown. These two silent and existential crises are developing at unprecedented speed on a global scale. It is also widely accepted that human society's behaviours are exerting an overwhelming destructive force on the natural world.

Although bleak, this acknowledgement also holds reasons for optimism as solutions¹ to both crises overlap. They both call for better integrated land management, well implemented protection and more restoration to develop large and well-connected natural ecosystems. Protected Areas have a central role to play.

Nature in its diversity, complexity and abundance must be recognised by governing authorities and major economic actors as the absolute and inalienable foundation for life on Earth. Protected Areas are 'the jewels in the crown', a network of exemplary places. They are natural solutions upon which we can sustainably build resistant and resilient territories and human communities in the face of climate change.

There is room for optimism

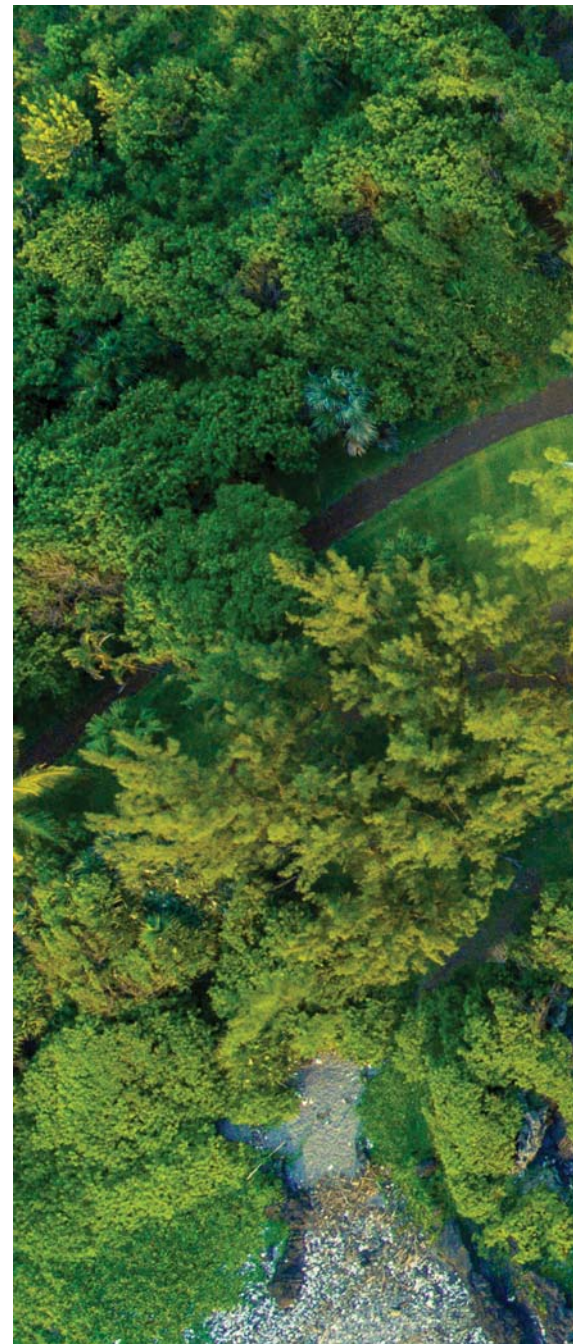
The problems and their solutions can be viewed as being connected, in a complex tangle.

On the one hand, climate change directly threatens biodiversity hotspots and Protected Areas. Neighbouring areas also face important climate risks: their adaptation will certainly lead to increased pressures on natural systems and possibly Protected Areas.

On the other hand, Protected Areas are a natural solution to climate change. Indeed, developing large and well-connected healthy ecosystems along the anthropogenic continuum will help to alleviate the negative and severe effects of climate change, while supporting sustainable communities.

As adaptation is required both within and beyond the boundaries of Protected Areas, an unexpected opportunity arises: Protected Area managers and local stakeholders have a common problem. At local level, nature conservation professionals and their local communities can collaborate to solve - on the ground and in policies - both climate and nature crises with the urgency, the focus and the means necessary.

¹ The solutions discussed in this article should be used as a complementary approach to a rapid and comprehensive decarbonisation of industrial economies as well as an overall reduction of the economy's footprint on land, habitats and natural resources.



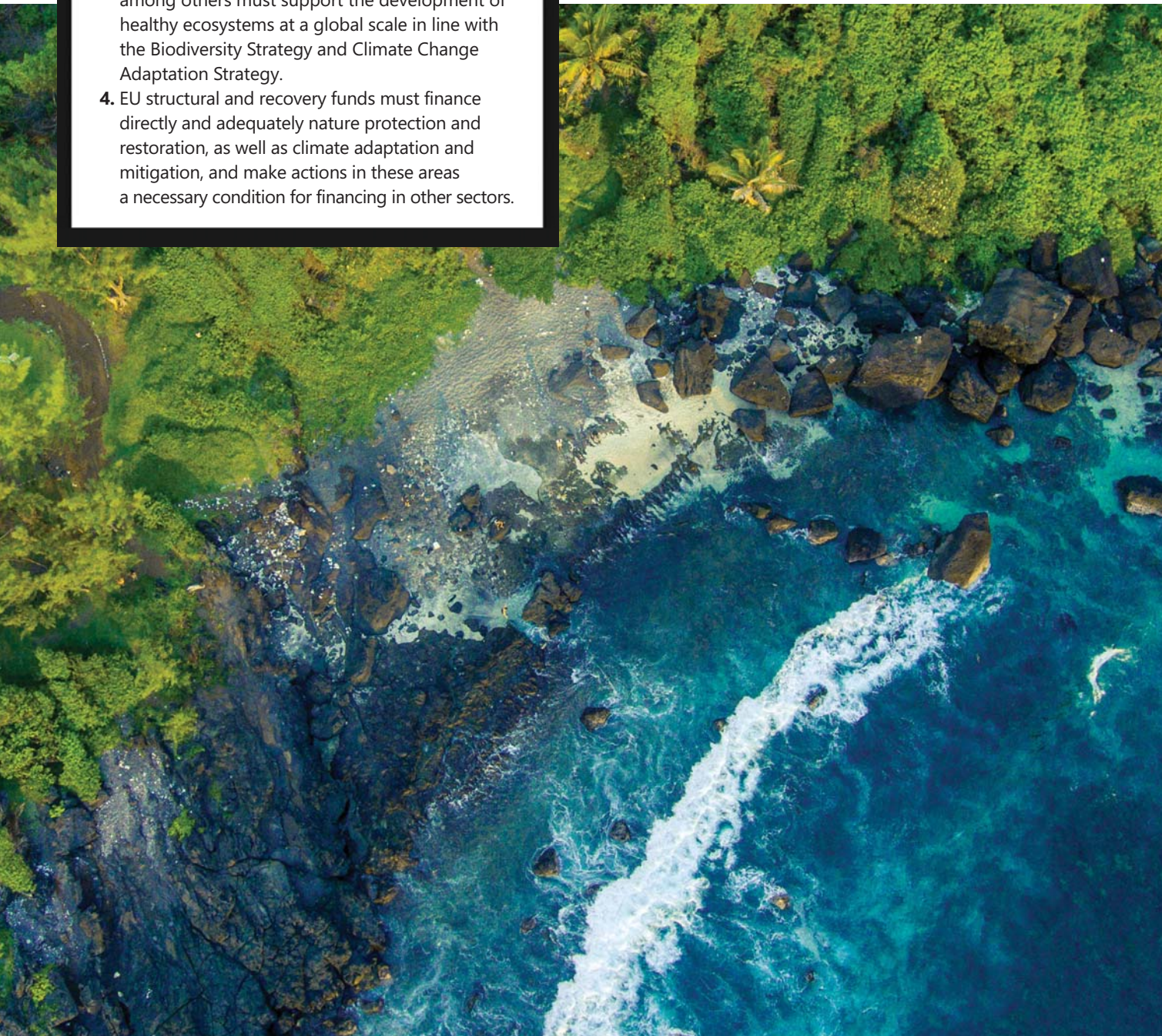
Coastline
© DJI

Chat

From EUROPARC to Everyone:

4 ideas towards more consistency for EU policies and strategies

1. EU Climate Change Adaptation Strategy must explicitly recognise that natural areas provide irreplaceable functions and services that alleviate severe climate event impacts if they are large and connected enough.
2. The EU Biodiversity Strategy must recognise climate change resistance and resilience as well as ecological continuity as key principles for the designation of new Protected Areas to reach the 30% objective.
3. The EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) & Forest Strategy among others must support the development of healthy ecosystems at a global scale in line with the Biodiversity Strategy and Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.
4. EU structural and recovery funds must finance directly and adequately nature protection and restoration, as well as climate adaptation and mitigation, and make actions in these areas a necessary condition for financing in other sectors.



Yes, but how?

It is necessary to develop long-term, large-scale, integrated land use planning that incorporates nature protection and recovery, as well as climate change adaptation and mitigation with multiple benefits in mind. The EU priority Action Framework already covers this partly, but a more systematic, analytical and holistic approach is required from Member States, regional and local governments. Together with greater policy consistency, a more holistic approach would provide a foundation for long-term environmental stability and sustainable development to communities and their economy.

Experienced Protected Area managers know that qualitative implementation is key to success and this requires support and resources. Looking at what could be done next, four complementary ideas can be proposed at this stage:

1. Assess climate change vulnerability at multiple geopolitical scales

The first step necessary for holistic land management and policy integration is to assess climate change vulnerability of social and natural systems (socio-ecosystems) at different geopolitical scales (EU, biogeographic regions, Member States, regions etc.). The results will enable co-designed, balanced and coordinated environment (land use) management plans and implementation of measures across all sectors on public and private lands.

2. Integrate contributions to global changes into all key policies

If we accept that nature and climate are the foundation of life, and in the spirit of the EU Green Deal, nature protection and restoration as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation must be included in all EU key strategies, structural funds and recovery plans. The quality of ecological structures and functions, including biochemical cycles, must become "key performance indicators" for governing authorities, alongside social and economic ones.

3. Involve nature conservation professionals in land use governance

Protected Areas networks can help to implement these solutions: they provide scientific knowledge, expertise and experience on how natural systems work,

and what they need to function properly. They can also propose innovative or experimental citizen-based land management approaches to better secure benefits for people and nature.

The mandate of Protected Area managers should evolve to include an advisory role to decision makers on how to solve socio-environmental problems such as implementing nature-based solutions or adapting to climate change at local and regional levels.

4. Develop a more dynamic and inclusive culture in our community of nature conservation professionals

Climate change uncertainties call for Protected Area managers, nature conservation experts and policymakers to develop a mindset and a framework that are dynamic and inclusive. Experience shows that working together with peers and local communities, including policymakers, in an inclusive and cooperative fashion is fruitful and efficient in terms of achieving conservation or restoration goals. It also increases the motivation to adapt to new conditions.

Concretely, this cultural shift can be supported by tailored capacity building programmes, training and exchanges and by involving a greater diversity of profiles in Protected Area management teams to include people with social and political skills.



This article was written by Olivier de Sadeleer, EUROPARC, and reflects the expert views of the EUROPARC Task Force on Climate Change at the moment of publication. Discover who is on the task force here: <https://bit.ly/CCtaskforce>

This article has been developed in the framework of LIFE NaturAdapt, a 5-year project financially supported by:





Chat

From EUROPARC to Everyone:

A manual on climate change adaptation in Protected Areas is available

The EUROPARC Federation and Sections are deeply engaged in developing tools to integrate climate change in Protected Area management planning.

EUROPARC-SPAIN recently published *"Manual 13: Protected areas in the face of global change. Climate change adaptation in planning and management"* in Spanish and English.

It aims at helping managers in the field by offering guidance for major types of ecosystems. Using this methodology, managers should be able to perform climate change vulnerability assessment and develop adaptation plans for Protected Areas.

View

Chat

From EUROPARC to Everyone:

Learnings from the field on climate change adaptation

Five French nature reserves shared the experience gained during the LIFE Natur'Adapt experiment. Each Protected Area tested a common methodology and shared their experience. Project managers highlighted the following learning points:

1. Accept uncertainty as a given when planning;
2. Bridge global climate change trends with local geo-ecological specificities;
3. Develop systemic large-scale vulnerability assessment and management planning as climate change affects major natural cycles such as water or carbon;
4. Involve communities from the early stages of vulnerability assessment and planning exercise to co-design win-win solutions inside and outside the Protected Area.

Climate change is yet another pressure on already fragile or degraded ecosystems. It adds complexity and uncertainty and requires new approaches and competencies.

To: Everyone ▾

on Breakout Rooms Spanish Reactions End

Photo: Youth climate protests © Callum Shaw

Adapting to the COVID-19 reality

Due to the COVID crisis, health is a topic that is currently on everyone's mind: more than ever, the importance of nature is underlined. With nowhere else to go, people turned to nature to re-energize and relax. Even though renewed appreciation of nature is a positive side effect of the pandemic, it poses some practical management challenges to parks, on top of existing ones such as climate change. Here, three European parks managers share their stories.



Record visitor numbers on Mt. Sněžka and in the Krkonoše National Park © Jakub Kašpar

Neusiedler See-Seewinkel National Park



Dehydrated soda pools, National Park Neusiedler See © A.Cimadom



desalinate and risk disappearing. That's why we need to take measures to protect our natural heritage now.

All-in-all, 2020 has been a very special year. Once again, it has taught us how important Protected Areas are: this year, in particular, for public health and for each of us, for our physical as well as mental health and wellbeing.

Obligation to remain on the marked trails, National Park Neusiedler See © Barbara Masin

COVID-19: a new opportunity?

In 2020, the Covid-19 travel restrictions made it nearly impossible for guests from abroad to visit the National Park. However, there was an increase in overnight stays in the region. More and more domestic tourists and locals discovered the Protected Area to enjoy nature and relax in the Neusiedler See - Seewinkel National Park. Our 25 years of experience, hiking and biking trails aiming to keep visitors on the marked routes, guided tours, as well as recommendations for individual visitors, helped us manage the large number of guests.

Facing the drought

Needless to say, COVID-19 is far from being the only challenge affecting our park. Due to climate change, more than a century of building drainage and irrigation systems meets the new – no longer deniable – reality of drought. While precipitation in winter and spring is decreasing, evaporation is increasing as a consequence of longer, hotter and windy summers. Less water surface and falling groundwater levels have a negative impact on the sensitive wetland water balance. Sodic ponds lose their connectivity to the groundwater,



Krkonoše National Park



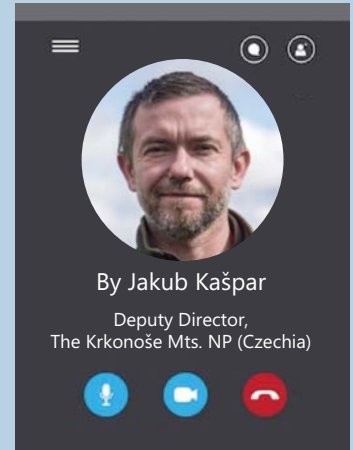
During the spring coronavirus (first) wave, the Czech Republic adopted specific anti-epidemic measures, including a ban on cross-border travels. Between March 12 and June 13 2020, the Czech-Polish border was closed. That strongly affected the Krkonoše Mts. since the range is situated exactly in the border area.

In March and April, traveling was also limited inside the country – people were strictly recommended to stay at home. In the National Park area, some municipalities and tourist resorts even decided to close their parking lots for the public, while mayors issued appeals for weekend

visitors not to come. Therefore, early spring in the mountains was very quiet and even in June, when in-country travelling was allowed again, our National Park only reached 60% of usual June numbers (compared with 2018 and 2019).

In summer, however, the situation changed dramatically. The Krkonoše Mts. National Park faced up to 45% higher numbers of visits in July as compared to 2018 and 2019.

The highest rush affected Mt. Sněžka in particular, the highest point of the Czech Republic and also of the neighbouring



Polish region of Lower Silesia. The top of this mountain faced the strongest 'invasion' on September 12 (after the summer holidays!) with about 11.500 visitors on that day!

While spring was a chance for nature to take some rest from the visitors, summer was an absolute overload on the most popular spots and trails, especially in the highest parts of the mountains: these are also the most sensitive locations for rare arcto-alpine tundra biotopes.

We are still adapting. Let's see what the second coronavirus wave will mean for the winter tourist season ... which is usually even higher than the summer one!

VISITORS IN KULLABERG 2018 – 2020 (JANUARY 1st – AUGUST 19th)

GENERAL PEDESTRIANS



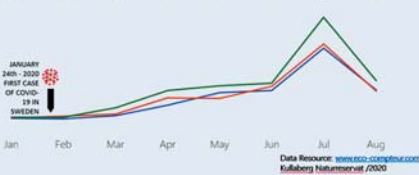
— Pedestrians 2018
— Pedestrians 2019
— Pedestrians 2020



GENERAL VEHICLES



— Vehicles 2018
— Vehicles 2019
— Vehicles 2020

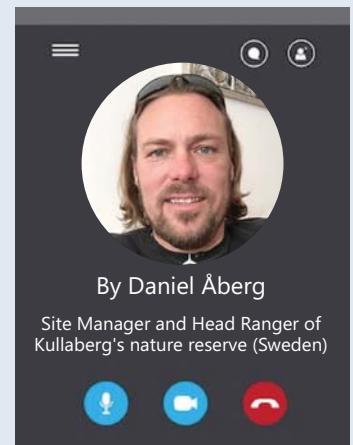


Kullaberg Nature Reserve

What helped us cope with a huge increase in visitor numbers in such a short time? The trails and nature spots as such didn't present an issue – there is enough space there. The most pressing

Kullaberg nature reserve is one of the most visited Protected Areas in Sweden: this is also one of our biggest challenges. Although the reserve is just a little peninsula of 1,300 square hectares, this year in summer we could easily count two thousand cars and five thousand visitors in one day.

issue was rather that we didn't have enough facilities to accommodate so many people. However, we had previously built a new recreational area, which enabled us to quickly place some extra trash cans and put in place extra cleaning services etc. Luckily, we also got staff support from the



municipality who provided us with about 20 young people who had lost their jobs in elderly care because of Covid-19. They helped with tasks like collecting garbage, directing cars and so on – this was essential, given the high influx of tourists.

In conclusion, what helped us to adapt relatively quickly was, without a doubt, our long-term strategy. Obviously, nobody predicted a pandemic and the crowds that suddenly visited our park: but the fact that we have been preparing for a constant increase of tourist numbers over the last couple of years, definitely made it easier.

© Kullaberg Nature Reserve



Marine conservation: learning together on the path to recovery



Acknowledging that the Aichi targets stated in the Convention on Biological Diversity were insufficient to protect nature and reverse biodiversity decline, new commitments affecting all European Member States have been set. The publication of the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy has yielded a set of measures and tight deadlines that will oblige us to develop a coordinated and rapid response, and require inputs from governments and individual citizens. In ten years' time, the responses generated must lead us to the path to recovery for nature, people and economies.

Evidence shows that the extent of Protected Areas worldwide is not enough to stop the current biodiversity decline. However, more than just being a matter of numbers, the interconnectedness and size of Protected Areas has proven to be insufficient to efficiently protect nature. **Bigger and better connected Protected Areas are needed.** And, if this is necessary on land, it becomes critical in seas, where the current extension of Marine Protected Areas is less than half of those on land.

According to the Biodiversity Strategy 2030 and the latest EU-27 statistics, an additional 19% of sea surface from the current 11% must be protected and effectively managed in the following ten years. From it, one third must be strictly protected with specific definition and indicators to measure protection levels arriving in 2021.

The challenge extends beyond the increase of protection and includes **a set of measures lined up to restore nature.** Measures aim to revert the deterioration in conservation trends, improve and maintain the status of at least one third of habitats and species, and to reduce to a half the number of native species threatened by alien ones. Specific marine measures aim to protect spawning grounds and nursery areas, very much needed to bring new life into the oceans. Additional measures aim to regulate fishing activities in order to avoid extraction above sustainable levels and to deploy less damaging fishing gear to stop the deterioration of the seabed and reduce species by-catch. Also, mechanisms to ensure that full

implementation and enforcement of EU environmental legislation is achieved and to support stakeholder dialogue and participatory governance will be put into place.

It is this specific multi-stakeholder involvement, together with the practical management implications of more than doubling the extension of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Europe, that require us to stop and analyse the consequences of what will be required to implement the strategy. More than ever, integrated management approaches involving all the actors that, in one way or the other depend on marine ecosystems, are needed: in turn, these approaches require existing management capacities and competencies to be strengthened and new ones to be developed in order to empower Europe's nature managers and to be able to do their work effectively. Effective integrated management requires capacities that will allow MPAs' staff to establish more efficient participatory processes and to better manage conflicts that may increasingly arise with the expansion of MPAs: essentially, the work of MPA managers need to be supported with specific training to develop capacities to better communicate, enable dialogue and effectively share knowledge. In short, investment in capacity building and practical management training is required now in order to ensure that MPA managers are able to learn and walk together to build the path to recovery.



*Brijuni National
Park Croatia*

Capacity building, a key tool for the efficient management of the Marine Protected Areas in Spain

By LIFE IP INTEMARES team. Biodiversity Foundation from the Ministry of Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge.



Currently, Spain has nearly 300 Protected Areas, of which 272 are included in the Natura 2000 Network. Spanish protected marine surface has reached 12% and is heading towards attaining the 30% protection target in 2030, a goal of the Climate and Environmental Emergency Declaration approved by the Spanish Government in January 2020 and the European Union's 2030 new Biodiversity Strategy.

These objectives underpin the **LIFE INTEMARES integrated project**. The project is coordinated by the Biodiversity Foundation of the Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge, in association with a diverse and unique partnership of managers, marine scientists, NGOs and representatives from the fisheries sector. It benefits from the financial contribution of the European Union's LIFE programme.

inclusive models in the management of Marine Protected Areas. Training topics addressed include governance, applied management, education and awareness, communication and information, and cross-cutting skills such as entrepreneurship in the marine Natura 2000 Network. To date, more than 13,000 people from Public Administrations have been trained, including the Marine Civil Guard, the Navy and marine environment managers.

A new approach to the management of the marine environment is required to achieve sustainable oceans and the protection of marine biodiversity. This starts with the need to increase scientific knowledge about the marine environment's values and functioning, to address governance issues, integrate managers and ocean users and to **fulfil training and capacity building needs that ensure adequate conservation and efficient management.**

In order to train users of Marine Protected Areas, a **comprehensive training programme has been launched based on a Capacity Building Strategy** for all types of stakeholders. The programme has been developed with the participation of more than 290 people who have contributed to identifying the specific training needs that will allow us to move towards more

With 4 years to go before the end of the project in 2024 and still many objectives to be attained, INTEMARES is on track to set the basis for a new management model pursued in line with European and international ocean policies. Capacity building is one of the main pillars to reach this aim.



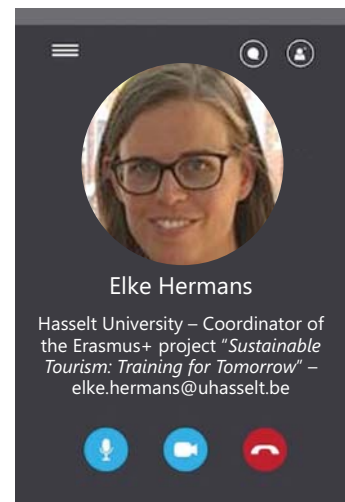
Training for the Spanish Army © LIFE INTEMARES



El Centre de la Platja
Espai d'educació ambiental i d'informació del litoral de Barcelona

Workshop for developing the capacity building strategy, Barcelona March 2018 © LIFE INTEMARES

Sustainable Tourism: Training for Tomorrow



Bike tour in Corte di Giarola © Esperta srl

Importance of Sustainable Tourism and Training

Protected areas (PAs) have an important role in tourism, both as places of visitation and recreation, and as net contributors to regional and national economies. At the same time, it is widely recognised that one of the biggest challenges is the sustainable conservation and management of the natural resources that support it.

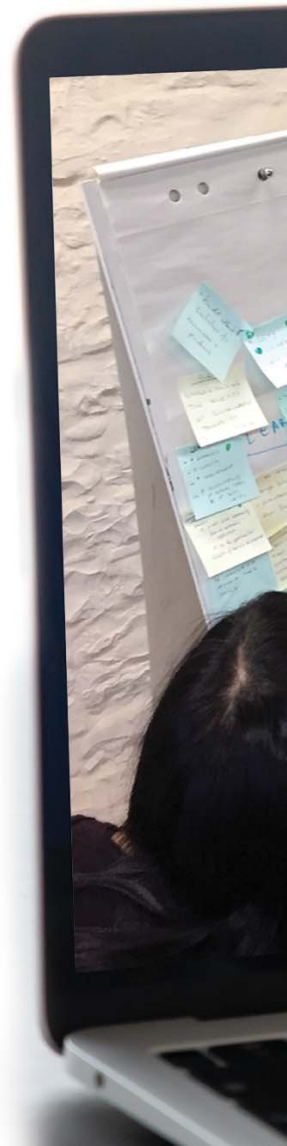
In 1995, EUROPARC Federation set up the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, a practical management tool that enables PAs to develop tourism sustainably in partnership with local stakeholders. One of the key topics in this charter deals with providing training and capacity building. By means of our Erasmus+ project we aim to contribute to this goal by enabling everyone with an interest in sustainable tourism in Protected Areas, to generate knowledge, tools and inspiration on this matter.

“The project aims to jointly develop a European standard for Sustainable Tourism Training for protected areas.”

Current and future challenges of PA professionals

One of the first tasks in our Erasmus+ project was a training needs analysis to identify key training needs of practitioners promoting or developing sustainable tourism in Protected Areas (PA). We carried out a systematic literature review to identify 22 key knowledge and skills areas for sustainable tourism. Next, we did a survey among PA stakeholders in Europe (PA staff, businesses and the public sector) to assess their perceptions of (1) the level of importance and (2) their level of personal knowledge about these key skill areas. [Click here to find more information.](#)

To identify which knowledge and skills areas current and future training programmes should address, a training gap analysis was performed.



Taking into account the levels of importance assigned by respondents, along with the level of knowledge they felt themselves to have, the following three skills gap areas were identified:

- tools for monitoring tourism impacts on the environment, economy and communities,
- methods to define and measure sustainable tourism indicators,
- knowledge of national and international initiatives, networks and specialist groups that support professionals developing sustainable tourism and recreation in and around Protected Areas.

Apart from content, the medium that is used for training purposes is also key. Especially in these times, online platforms offer a useful way for self-professionalisation as well as blended training. Within our project, we created a free, online platform that bundles relevant (theoretical as well as practical) information and insights on the topic of sustainable tourism in Protected Areas.

Project kick of meeting in 2018 © ERASMUS Sttft

The online platform: www.sustainabletourismtraining.eu

Our platform offers 9 modules in 4 languages (English, French, Italian and Spanish). Each module deals with a specific topic:

- 1) Protecting valuable landscapes, biodiversity and cultural heritage
- 2) Supporting conservation through tourism
- 3) Reducing carbon footprint, pollution and wasteful resource use
- 4) Providing safe access, quality facilities and special experiences of the Protected Area, available to all visitors
- 5) Effectively communicating the area to visitors
- 6) Ensuring social cohesion
- 7) Strengthening prosperity in the local community
- 8) Monitoring tourism performance and impacts
- 9) Communicating actions and engaging with the Charter

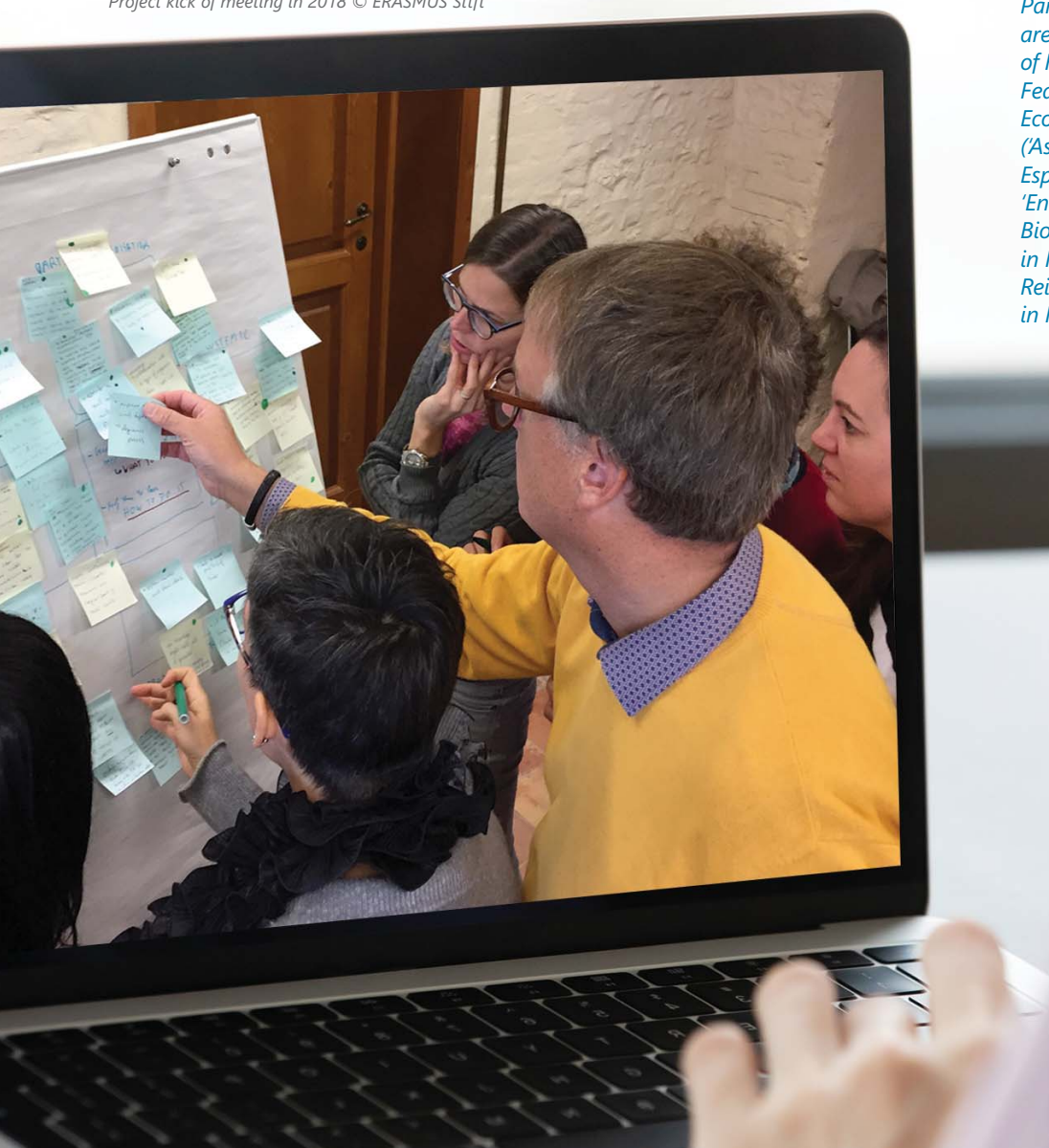


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Each module consists of a short video introducing the topic, key information, links to related video material and follow-up resources, various inspiring European case studies on the topic, and a quiz to assess your knowledge (when successful, you receive a certificate).

We hope you'll enjoy the material on sustainable tourism in Protected Areas.

Partners involved in the Erasmus+ project are Hasselt University in Belgium, University of Hull in the United Kingdom, Europarc Federation, the Network of Ecotourism Professionals in Spain (Asociacion de Ecoturismo en Espana); and 2 protected areas: 'Ente di Gestione per i Parchi e la Biodiversità Emilia Occidentale' in Italy and 'Montagne de Reims Nature Regional Park' in France.



Healthy Parks Healthy People Europe Programme



A walk in the Marchiennes forest, Natural Regional Park Scarpe Escaut
©Samuel Dhote

We invite all our members to take part in this new EUROPARC Programme

This June, with the first COVID wave just behind us – EUROPARC launched its Healthy Parks Healthy People Europe Programme. It built on the innovative practice gathered by the Health and Protected Areas Commission (now: Healthy Parks Healthy People Commission) over several years. More than ever, health has moved to the centre of public debate and a plenitude of studies confirm that being out in nature has positive health benefits. Through the Healthy Parks Healthy People Europe Programme EUROPARC seeks to improve the cooperation between Protected Areas and the health sector, as we believe that the sustainable nature of Europe's parks and Protected Areas are key assets for health and well-being.

“We want happier and healthier people, connected to nature-rich parks and Protected Areas.”

Join us to create a network of Healthy Parks and Healthy People!

The programme, seeks to support parks and Protected Areas at the national, regional and local level to deliver better outcomes for the health of people and nature. It builds on 4 pillars, 4 objectives and actions that provide a strategic framework within which to work. A toolkit and case studies built on real time, real life experience will give ideas and practical solutions that will enable park and health sectors to embark on a partnership, to gain the most health benefits for their community whilst ensuring resilient spaces for nature to thrive.

The Pillars & Objectives upon which the programme is built are:

- **Making the case:** raise awareness and understanding of nature-based health interventions in Parks and Protected Areas
- **Building partnerships:** establish broad based platform at regional, national and European level that bring together a plenitude of sectors
- **Developing capacity and practice:** promote best practice, build capacity and develop the evidence base on nature-based health interventions in Parks and Protected Areas
- **Connect people and nature:** improve well-being and grow stronger pro-nature attitudes and behaviours in more people.

The actions

- 1 Champion HPHPe in national and European policy and practice
- 2 Encourage the majority of EUROPARC Federation members to adapt the HPHPe programme
- 3 Establish a HPHPe platform of health and Protected Areas experts
- 4 Support partnerships developed by EUROPARC at the national and regional level across Europe
- 5 Publish and promote a HPHPe toolkit and case studies for Parks and Protected Area staff
- 6 Deliver HPHPe workshop, online seminars and study visits to build knowledge and capacity
- 7 Promote a “nature for all” approach to help attract new audiences to Parks and Protected Areas and help reduce health inequalities
- 8 Establish a HPHPe project to develop and share good practice in the use of “5 Ways to Well-being” in Parks and Protected Areas

A new updated toolkit to support the HPHPe programme will be launched soon but there are plenty of inspiring case studies and tips on the EUROPARC website.

[CLICK HERE](#)

You can find all information on the programme here:



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WHERE NATURE AND PEOPLE MEET IN HARMONY

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For updates, visit www.europarc2021.nl

www.europarc.org

