



## **PRESS RELEASE:**

### **EUROPARC Federation – into a new future**

#### **Thomas Hansson elected EUROPARC President**

From Iceland to Ukraine, members of the EUROPARC Federation gathered in the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve, Bad Urach, Germany from 21<sup>st</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> September, to consider the future of the protected area network. At the event members elected Thomas Hansson, from Sweden as their new President to lead them forward during these exciting yet challenging times.

Thomas Hansson works as a Consultant Senior Advisor at Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. He takes over the Presidential reins from Erika Stanciu (Romania), who stepped down in 2011 after six years in the post. Thomas has been President of the Nordic-Baltic section of the Federation for the last three years. He therefore brings his experience in leading a multi-national regional body to the wider European stage. His new role as EUROPARC President is generously backed by the Swedish Environment Agency.

On his election Thomas said, "I feel very honoured to have been elected as President for the largest European network of protected areas. I will be leading a strong and ambitious council and we will continue to make the Federation more visible in the context of European nature conservation".

The following five council members were also elected alongside the new President: Marian Jäger-Wolgens (NL), Giampiero Sammuri (IT), Rolands Auzins (LV), Gabor Szilagyi (HU) and Ignace Schops (BE). They will be joined by Dominique Leveque (FR). This experienced and international team will represent the interests of the EUROPARC Federation. Together they will further the mission of the Federation: to promote good practice in the management of protected areas; facilitate the establishment of new protected areas; raise the profile of protected areas as a vital means of safeguarding many of the continent's most valuable natural heritage assets; to increase support for their future protection; and to influence the future development of public policies and programmes, especially with the European Union, to the benefit of protected areas' objectives.

With the strong decision of the EUROPARC Federation members at the general assembly to seek a merger with Eurosite, the new council will have a complex, yet exciting challenge ahead to create a new, united network.

The Federations strength is the collective expertise of its members, who bring innovation and solutions to the challenges of nature protection and sustainable development. The new President Thomas Hansson stressed the role of the entire membership saying "It is also important to me that the members are proud of the work of the organisation. The council and I, together with the directorate and the members will have to develop our effectiveness, to further raise our professionalism in nature conservation management and last but not least we have to continuously strengthen our ecological education and nature interpretation".

-----  
**Pictures and further information available from:**

**Morwenna Parkyn, Communications Officer, [m.parkyn@europarc.org](mailto:m.parkyn@europarc.org)**

**EUROPARC Federation, Waffnergasse 6, 93047 Regensburg, Germany**

**Direct line: +49 (0)941 599 35 98-3, Office tel: +49 (0)941 599 35 98-0**

EUROPARC Federation, Waffnergasse 6, 93047 Regensburg, Germany

E-mail: [office@europarc.org](mailto:office@europarc.org), Tel: 0049 (0)8552 961 021, Mobile: 0049 (0)176 810 57827

[www.europarc.org](http://www.europarc.org)