



*In a hurry? Go straight to the underlined passages, which is where you as a member are asked to take action.*

## Minutes:

### EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic Section member meeting

**Bad Urach, Germany. September 21, 2011.**

#### Participants

Rolands Auzins	Nature Conservation Agency, Latvia
Annette Buck	Thy National Park, Denmark
Thomas Hansson	EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic Section
Juris Jatnieks	Nature Conservation Agency, Latvia
Jakob H. Jensen	Nature Agency, Denmark
Liisa Kajala	Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services, Finland
Leelo Kukk	Environmental Board, Estonia
Lena Malmström	EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic Section
Ib Nord Nielsen	Thy National Park, Denmark
Yrjö Norokorpi	Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services, Finland
Catharina Oksen	Maribo Lakes national Park/Guldborgsund Municipality, Denmark
Klaas van Ommeren	Dovrefjell Council, Norway
Mika Leth Pedersen	Mols Bjerger National Park, Denmark
Erling Post	Mols Bjerger National Park, Denmark
Andris Sirovs	Nature Conservation Agency, Latvia
Bjarni Serup	Outdoor Council, Denmark
Bo Skaarup	Mols Bjerger National Park, Denmark
Anna von Sydow	Swedish environmental Protection Agency, Sweden
Nele Söber	Environmental Board, Estonia
Jan-Inge Tobiasson	Västmanland County Administrative Board, Sweden
Rauno Väisänen	Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services, Finland
Jan Woollhead	Region Zealand, Denmark

- 1) Welcome by Section President Thomas Hansson.** In addition to the Nordic – Baltic section members, we were also pleased to welcome participants from Mols Bjerger National Park (DK) who intend to become members next year, and the Danish Outdoor Council.
- 2) The minutes from last meeting** (Members Assembly, Kristianstad Vattenrike Biosphere Reserve, February 3, 2011) were approved.

### 3) **Members and membership.**

The information sent out by the secretariat does not seem to get thoroughly disseminated within the member organisations. Members are therefore encouraged to submit names of additional contact persons. To some extent, it is also possible to specify what kind of information should be sent to which person.

We also discussed if the sections of EUROPARC should become members of the Federation – an issue which has been brought up on several occasions by other sections. As far as the Nordic-Baltic Section is concerned, the bottom line is that we would need to have legal status (which the section does not). Thus, becoming a member is not relevant at this point in time.

We are very pleased to welcome two new members to the section: Nature Reserve Kullaberg (SE) and Pasvik-Inari Trilateral Park (NO).

### 4) **News from our members** (brief recaps from the members present)

**Latvian** nature protection is going through changes. The country's former six regions have been amalgamated into 4. There are also more projects running than before. And further changes are expected due to new parliament and new government that have recently come into place.

**Estonian** members feel that they now have the governments support, two years down the road from their last reform. There was a court case this spring, where it was concluded that the nature protection rules go against the constitution. Now the big question is what kind of legal acts are in place to make rules for nature protection areas.

**Finland** has been through 3-4 very difficult years, and better days are finally here. Nature protection has governmental support. Metsähallitus, obviously one key player, feel that they are in a good position and back into business. Several new national parks are coming into place.

In **Norway** major changes have taken place in the years since 2000. There have been 5 try-out models for national park governance running simultaneously. EUROPARC member Dovrefjell has done very well in this process ("Best in test"), since they have been working along the lines of their model since many years. However, for those to whom the new governance scheme is new, the learning curve is quite steep.

In **Sweden**, no new national parks have been opened since 2009, but last week there was a 150x enlargement of Hamra NP. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency works together with local governments in the national parks and Lapponia in particular, where the entire World Heritage area should be under local governance. The SwEPA has been called upon by the national government to facilitate commercial activities (mainly nature tourism) in national parks. Furthermore, a new identity and entrance project will create a new brand for the Swedish national parks.

**Denmark** aims to have five national parks established within the next few years. Three of them – Thy, Mols Bjerge and the Wadden Sea are already in place. The inauguration of the 4<sup>th</sup>, River Skjern, scheduled for this summer passed, was unfortunately postponed. A new government and minister of the environment have just been elected this same week.

### 5) **News from the secretariat**, Lena Malmström.

Among the most important events that the secretariat has been involved with since the Members Assembly in Kristianstad (9-10 February) are:

- Nature Tourism Conference 2011 & spring seminar, Riga, 21-24 March
- Health WG meeting, Edinburgh 28-30 March
- Ecosystem Services in Protected Area Management seminar, Kristianstad 3-5 March
- Frisk i naturen/Health workshop, Oslo 9-10 May
- Methodological Framework for Implementing Charter Part II in the Baltic Sea Region – development of a proposal together with the Parks & Benefits project and EUROPARC Federation.

- Letter of support for the continued discussions of a merger between EUROPARC - Eurosite (September 2011, approved by all members)

Still to come this year is the seminar Labour of love – Volunteering for Parks in Tikkurila Finland (5-7 October); the final meeting of the Parks & Benefits project (10-14 October); meeting of the sections of EUROPARC Federation (early November); plus evaluations, reports and the final handing over of the secretariat to Estonia.

**6) News from our working groups.**

Neither Lasse Lovén, chair of the Sustainable Tourism Working Group, or Matti Tapaninen, Chair of the Working Group on Health and Protected Areas were present at the meeting. Lena Malmström could report that the STWG has been instrumental in the technical review of the proposed *Methodological Framework for Implementing Charter Part II in the Baltic Sea Region* – a document that has been developed by the Nordic-Baltic Section together with the Parks & Benefits project on sustainable tourism. //The methodology was accepted by the EUROPARC Council meeting the same day (September 21<sup>st</sup>).// In the next year, the STWG will work on the harmonisation of existing Charter II-methodologies within the Federation. (Many sections have their own.)

The Working group on Health and Protected areas have been contributing to a proposal for a project run by Metsähallitus and Oulu region, with the intention to submit an application to the EU Northern Periphery Programme. As it turned out, other issues were in focus for that programme in this application round. Now, the project partners and WG consider how to move forward.

**7) Plans for 2012.**

- The new section secretariat 2012-14: Leelo Kukk made a presentation of the Estonian Environmental Board, Keskkonnaamet, that will host the secretariat in the next presidency period. The future President, Kaja Lotman, could not be present at the meeting, but had sent a video greeting to the section – [the video clip is available here](#). The future secretariat was presented by Nele Söber who will be the coordinator. The Environmental Investment Fund will provide financial support for the coordinator and travels.
- Kaja Lotman was formally elected as the Section President 2012-14.
- Your input is important! If you have ideas on seminars, activities etc, please send them to [lena.malmstrom@naturvardsverket.se](mailto:lena.malmstrom@naturvardsverket.se). (as the new secretariat will not be in place until January 1<sup>st</sup>).

**8) EUROPARC Federation General Assembly and elections**

*The potential merger between EUROPARC and Eurosite.* The Nordic-Baltic section has sent a letter to support such a merger. As have the Atlantic Isles section.

Thomas Hansson, who has been a member of the joint committee during the last year, answered questions regarding the reasons behind a merger. They are mainly 1.) *practical* – today, some organisations need to be members of two organisations. There are also two administrations. 2) *financial* – Eurosite and EUROPARC are currently competing for the same NGO funds.

The question of what a new organisation would be named was raised (members feel that, by now, the name EUROPARC is well-established and should be maintained, if possible). It was pointed out that a name discussion is something which will have to be part of a merger process.

The final decision about a merger will be taken at *next year's* general assembly.

The meeting also discussed the proceedings at the election of a new president and council, which will also take place at the general Assembly.

9) **Gala dinner.** All sections have been asked to contribute when the German section will celebrate their anniversary. All N-B members were encouraged to join a “långdans”, prepared by Thomas.

10) **Members' input to the Federation.** All members were encouraged to continuously bring their ideas and thoughts on what they want to work on.

11) **Report from Council by council member Rolands Auzins.**

The role of the sections should be clarified in the statutes.

Gabor Szilaguyi currently acts as the Federations interim treasurer and will present the Federations financial report at the GA.

Cornelia Ehlers has resigned from her post at the Directorate office.

There are currently two project proposals pending.

Payments have been very good for the N-B section in 2011. Still someone who has not paid.

With regards to the Federation's financial status, it was said that the Federation could continue its work for at least another year, even without the EU NGO grant, on condition that there are good projects. Plus, the EUROPARC consulting contributes money.

12) **Other**

**Jan Woolhead, Region Zealand (DK):** There will be a European seminar about rangers and youth, organised by EUROPARC in cooperation with the International Ranger Federation. It will take place during the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of November in the Danish Region Zealand. Each country gets a slot for 2 participants.

**Jan-Inge Tobiasson, Västmanland County Administrative Board (SE):** Together with a number of other Swedish counties, Västmanland County is preparing a project proposal focussing on pine forest on glacial deposits or western taiga (depending on the geographical delineation of the project) or basiphilous pine forest, including the appropriate associated species.

Attention will be paid to eg. restoration and management, information, facilities and the use of nature areas by local communities. The project should start in 2014-15. Anyone who is interested in becoming a project partner is welcome to contact Jan-Inge ([jan-inge.tobiasson@lansstyrelsen.se](mailto:jan-inge.tobiasson@lansstyrelsen.se)) or the section secretariat.

13) **The next section meeting, which is the Members Assembly, will be held in Estonia, on March 7<sup>th</sup>.** This is the anniversary Eerik Kumari\*, considered the founding father of Estonian nature protection. Save the date!

14) **End of meeting.**

Notes by Lena Malmström

\* **Eerik Kumari** (1912—1984, born **Erik Mathias Sits**) was a doctor of biology, the founder of ornithology and nature conservation in Estonia, the learned director of the Institute of Zoology and Botany at the Estonian Academy of Sciences during 1952-1977. He was the president of the Estonian Naturalists' Society in 1954–1964.

The Eerik Kumari Award was established in 1989 in his name to honor those who have excelled in bioscience in Estonia.

*From Wikipedia 2011-10-19: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eerik\\_Kumari](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eerik_Kumari)*