



Pescasseroli Declaration 2010

**On the occasion of the EUROPARC Federation's 2010 conference, September 29th- October 2nd
in the Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park Italy**

2010 is the International year of Biodiversity. Protected areas are the keystones in the preservation of Europe's nature and biodiversity and models of sustainable development.

WE, THE EUROPARC FEDERATION, THEREFORE CALL UPON NATIONAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

- to recognise and reflect in their policies, programmes and resource allocations the need to ensure biodiversity is maintained and ecosystem services secured for the future natural health and economic wealth of Europe.
- to use the skills and experience built up in Protected Areas to pilot innovative approaches to integrated land use and sustainable rural development;
- to integrate relevant public policies that will enable Protected Areas to better fulfil their role as management models with long established community engagement .

Knowing that protected areas are embedded in cultural and national identities and the biodiversity held within them is our fundamental life support system, the EUROPARC Federation urges appropriate investment in Europe's protected areas to secure the ecosystem services of the future.

Protected areas¹ represent Europe's last natural assets. They cover 25% of the EU land mass and half of all Natura 2000 sites are contained within nationally designated sites. Through their effective management they play a significant role in climate change mitigation, store valuable water supplies, protect soils and agriculture and maintain healthy ecosystems. Importantly they sustain local economies, provide recreation health and well being resources and inspire national and local pride.

And almost a quarter of the European population some 125 Million people are affected directly by Europe's protected areas², with the entire population dependant on the ecosystem services they produce.

Without these fundamental ecosystem services Europe would be much the poorer.

Yet government decisions across Europe have the potential to diminish these natural assets through significant cuts in the management of these protected areas. The lack of investment by governments seriously undercuts the ability of protected areas to adequately secure the value of these natural resources, sustain economies and release the ecosystem benefits needed for society.

These decisions by governments, contradict much of the current finding and political debate that are working towards a new strategy to conserve biodiversity; such as,

¹ "A protected area is a clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values" (IUCN). The European network is essentially composed of National Parks, Regional Parks, Nature Reserves, Marine Reserves, Biosphere Reserves Landscape Protected Areas and the Natura 2000 Sites.

² Figure derived from municipalities having their land totally or partially in a protected area. Roberto Gambino - Parks of Europe, ETS Pisa, 2008



- The TEEB report³ which underlined the urgency for policy makers to recognize the need to secure positive support for biodiversity management as “All economic activity and most of human well-being, whether in an urban or non-urban setting, are based on a healthy, functioning environment. Nature’s multiple and complex values have direct economic impacts on human well-being and public spending at a local and well as national level”

and also,

- The G8 Environment Ministers⁴ declaration through the Carta di Siracusa that “ The multiple challenges that the world faces today are an unmistakable indication that we need to strengthen our efforts to conserve and sustainably manage biodiversity and natural resources.”

And further the agreement of

- The Council of European Union⁵ on a headline target of “halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020, and restoring them in so far as feasible.”..... reaffirming that “Protected areas and ecological networks are a cornerstone of efforts to preserve biodiversity STRESS the need to fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives, to speed up the completion of the Natura 2000 Network, both on land and at sea, and to put in place adequate finance.”And “UNDERSCORES the necessity of stepping up efforts to integrate biodiversity into the development and implementation of other policies... in particular those national and EU policies related to natural resources management, such as agriculture, forestry fisheries...tourism, spatial planning...”

The Council of the European Union further recently stressed “the important contribution of biodiversity as a driving force to combat the economic crisis, to promote job creation and to generate long-term, economic benefits” and “as significant economic loss arises due to the unsustainable use of biodiversity, timely and proper programmes and actions, aimed at strengthening the resilience of ecosystems, must be taken.”

Severe budget cuts (up to 50%) in 2011, for protected areas across many European countries are anticipated. These actions taken at national levels in public spending settlements, reflect a regressive step and risk the valuable work in managing biodiversity, ensuring sustainable development and delivering ecosystem services, that protected areas have built up over past decades.

The EUROPARC Federation believes that Europe’s protected areas have led the way towards sustainable development and conservation of biodiversity. However they can only maximise their contribution if they are adequately recognized, resourced and operate within a supportive framework of public policy, both national and international, with specialized and well trained staff.

The EUROPARC Federation

³ TEEB is an independent study, led by Pavan Sukhdev, hosted by United Nations Environment Programme with financial support from the European Commission; Germany, UK, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. Mr. Sukhdev also spearheads the Green Economy Initiative of the UN Environment Programme. The TEEB for Local and Regional Policy Makers report is one of a series of five interconnected reports. These include the Report on Ecological and Economic Foundations, TEEB for Policy Makers and TEEB for Business. A TEEB website for citizens goes live in the lead up to Nagoya and the final TEEB synthesis report will be released at the CBD COP10 meeting at Nagoya in October 2010.

⁴ In accordance with Environment Ministers of Australia, Brasil, Cina, Czech Republic, Egipt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Republic of Corea, South Africa and Sweede

⁵ DG I 1A EN, Council of the European Union - Brussels, 16 March 2010 - 7536/10