

EUROPARC Federation Report to Council 1st February 2013

Title:

Report from Finance subgroup

Summary:

EUROPARC Finances

Recommendations:

- ❖ To do a brainstorming discussion during the meeting.

6. EUROPARC Finances

Report from Finance subgroup

What are the main issues in EUROPARC Finances reflexion?

It is hard to make a discussion about the EUROPARC finances without a clear view for the future. Finances are an operational aspect of the life of an organisation. It can limit what we want to do, but cannot dictate what we should do. That is a strategy discussion. We are at the edge of a major decision/change when merging with Eurosite. This will determine in a large scale our strategy for the future.

In the meantime, life goes on and we need to discuss our finances and look at it with a broader view and start an open discussion on solutions. We should put all options on the table and decide which ones we want to discuss further deep, to work with and to test.

These 3 pages are just **“Some food for thought”**. Enjoy, reflect and let's hope we will have a good brainstorm in Porto.

1. We are an organisation of members from all over Europe, mainly public bodies but also increasing number of private organizations.

In the past years, there have been new members coming and few leaving, besides those being strike off.

Number of strike off can increase due to financial crisis in Europe and can become a pattern after these two past years of increasing non-paying members.

Striking off a member has an immediate consequence in membership of some of the networks we manage, namely European Charter and TransParcNet.

- *Do we need a change in our rules of striking off, stopping the risk of losing strength in our networks? What kind of change?*
- *Do we need new policy/rules for the members that want to leave (before being strike off)? What kind of change?*
- *Do we need a policy for raising new members? Is there any specific target we want to touch? What kind of policy? Who can manage this?*
- *Is it relevant to think about individual membership as an important target?*

2. Members pay a membership fee an expect/get a set of services provided by EUROPARC

Satisfied members are paying members

- *Should we be more “services” oriented or “policy making” oriented?*
- *What are the “things” we do that we can call “services provided to members”?*
- *How members value the services we provide?*
- *Do we have a clear idea of what are the priority services for members? Can we explore the idea of different members need different services? Grading members according to the services they access (which in real terms already exist via European Charter and Transparcnet?)*

- *What could be the minimum level of services provided for the members they actually are willing to pay for?*

Services are provided by a staff from Directorate

- *What is the minimum staff to provide the minimum services expected?*
- *Can we also consider that EUROPARC is indirectly providing services by EUROPARC Consulting services and by Sections' work? Should we use this fact in our communication to members in terms of services provided?*

There is work (not services) also provided by volunteer work from members (organised in Working Groups and other informal ways)

- *Can we use this opportunity into a more "service oriented" approach? Do we want to do it? And communicate it has a service provided to members?*
- *Are there other forms of volunteering we should use? Mentoring? Exchange? Volunteer expertise?*

Projects can also provide the opportunity to provide services to members.

Should we target our effort and run projects by ourselves or be mainly partners of projects led by members?

Should we look for a more "members oriented" project funding strategy?

3. Fees from members are the main income of EUROPARC

If we risk having a decreasing income from membership fees, what are the alternatives?

Funds from projects are not an income, they are a fund for specific provision of services and do not originate a surplus/profit. The recompensation from EUROPARC Consulting is not a real income. It is a payment due to services provided in the name of EUROPARC

- *What is the most favourable solution to the system? Who does what? Should EUROPARC Consulting change its targets in terms of clients and services provided?*

Other income opportunities are selling material (merchandising, printed material, etc.)

- *Can we increase our income by increasing merchandising material? What kind of material? What would be the target? Our members? Participants in our events? What are the opportunities to sell? When and how?*

Sponsoring is also a possibility

- *Should we have a policy on this? Should we assume it and look for it? What kind of events and what kind of sponsors?*

Donations are also possible.

- *Can we have a policy in order to stimulate this possibility? Could we become a kind of National Trust structure, supporting direct actions of Nature Conservation in members?*

Are there any other ways to get income?