

EURO – SITE – MANAGER

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Welcome to the second issue of Euro-Site-Manager! This series of newsletters provides site managers with insights about who's who and what's where in Brussels. Our aim is to bring Brussels and the issues that could affect your work closer to you. Also, we are very keen to hear about issues affecting your work, to share that with your network colleagues and also Brussels-based institutions.

Response to the first issue has been very positive and we hope that these regular newsletters will continue to keep you informed about the European issues and activities of interest to you. In the follow-up to Green Week there is much to report on and several important conferences are being organised in the context of the International Year of Biodiversity, including an EU-level stakeholder conference on “Biodiversity post-2010 - biodiversity in a changing world” under the Belgian Presidency of the EU. Also, the annual LIFE+ fund call for proposals is currently open. Eurosite can support and advise members in the preparation and submission of their proposals for LIFE+ funds.

Understanding and dealing with the complex system of European institutions can sometimes be a little bewildering, which is why in this edition we have also included an “at a glance” guide to key EU Working Groups and Committees that are related to Nature and biodiversity policy. If you would like any more information on a specific Working Group or Committee, please contact the Eurosite Secretariat.

Remember - your feedback matters. Please send any specific comments you have about the issues raised or any general comments and thoughts about Euro-Site-Manager to info@eurosite.org to help us improve the newsletter.

The Eurosite Team.

1. Land Management Inside and Outside Protected Areas

1.1. Managing Wilderness Areas within Natura 2000 Sites

DG Environment is looking to ensure the protection of the last remnants of wilderness that still remain in Europe and organised a conference on 'Wilderness and Large Natural Habitat Areas' during 2009. They are now following up the outcomes of the conference to prepare information for guidelines for the management of wilderness in Natura 2000 sites. This is likely to involve expert meetings to discuss the management of wilderness areas within Natura 2000 sites, and development of guidelines on the issue. How they will take the work on wilderness forward is yet to be decided but the Commission is expected to make a decision by the end of 2010.

1.2 Green Infrastructure

The European Commission is also looking at ways of improving management of land in Europe outside of Natura 2000 sites, to create more space for nature and deliver ecosystem services. They are naming this approach 'Green Infrastructure' which aims to strengthen ecosystems by developing an integrated land management. This is of interest to site managers because it will counter biodiversity loss and fragmentation of the natural environment by helping to connect sites. It will also re-connect habitats and support migrating species, which have been separated by intensive land use, transport routes and urban sprawl.

DG Environment organised a workshop on Green Infrastructure in 2009 in which a number of useful case studies were presented, such as the example of ecological networks in France known as the "trame verte et bleue". DG Environment is now pulling together case-studies and examples of how the green infrastructure concept has been shown to work effectively in practice. If any Eurosite members have any ideas or case studies that could be of interest, then please contact the Eurosite Secretariat : info@eurosite.org. The European Commission's aim is to publish a communication and run a public consultation on Green Infrastructure in 2011 and they are working closely with DG Regional Policy to achieve this. Any case studies will be shared with network colleagues and the European Commission to help inform thinking on this subject.



Photo courtesy of Zoltan Vajda

2. Financing for Protected Areas, Species and Habitats

2.1 EU LIFE+ Fund Call for Proposals and Information Sessions

As we informed members in May, the next annual call for proposals under the EU LIFE+ programme has been launched. All the information concerning applications is available on DG Environment's website at: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/news/newsarchive2010/may/index.htm#call2010>

The timeframe for the application process is as follows:

1st September 2010	Deadline for applicants to submit proposals to the Member States
4th October 2010	Deadline for the Member States to forward proposals to the European Commission
October 2010 – April 2011	Evaluation of proposals
July – August 2011	Signing of grant agreements
1st September 2011	Earliest possible start date of projects

To help potential applicants to decide whether or not to submit a proposal and to avoid common problems, DG Environment is running a series of LIFE+ Information sessions in May and June (see the attached calendar of events). There is one information session in each of the EU Member States.

2.2 Stakeholder Conference on Financing Natura 2000 - 15th and 16th July 2010

DG Environment is organising a two day stakeholder conference on 'Financing Natura 2000 – Investing in Europe's Green Infrastructure' in Brussels on the 15th and 16th July. The conference will feed into the review of Natura 2000 financing which the Commission is currently undertaking and aims to exchange experience and ideas concerning the following questions:

- Why is it important to invest in Natura 2000?
- What are the costs associated with protected areas?
- How does this investment provide paybacks?
- Does the current financing system work?
- What innovative financing systems exist?
- What are the options for the future?

Conference participation is restricted to invited participants. However, Eurosite will share feedback on the conference with our members.

3. Biodiversity Vision, Targets and Monitoring

3.1 Consultation on the EU Biodiversity Vision and Target

A stakeholder consultation on the new EU biodiversity vision, target and sub-targets took place in a special meeting during Green Week on the 3rd June. The aim was to involve stakeholders in developing the EU's post 2010 biodiversity strategy, which, it is hoped, will be adopted by the end of the year.

3.2 Improving the Monitoring and Reporting of Habitats and Species under the Birds and Habitats Directives

Article 17 of the Habitats Directive requires that the Member States report every six years on the conservation status of all habitats and species and the conservation measures being taken to implement the Directive. The most recent report was published by the Commission in 2009 which provides baseline information on the status of all species and habitats at EU level. However, several Member States failed to provide information of an adequate quality for this report so the European Commission is taking action to ensure that better quality information is provided in the next reporting round. It has therefore set up an Expert Working group on Reporting under the Nature Directives, which also has a number of sub-groups looking at different issues related to improve monitoring and reporting procedures. Experts from NGOs and other relevant stakeholder groups are welcome to join these sub-groups. If you are interested, please contact the Eurosite Secretariat for more information: info@eurosite.org. More information on this and the other European Commission working groups related to nature and biodiversity issues is given in the attached fact-sheet.



Photo courtesy of DDBRA

3.3 Conference Under the EU Belgian Presidency: “Biodiversity post-2010 - biodiversity in a changing world”

The Belgian regional and federal governments, together with the European Commission and IUCN are organising a conference on the 8th and 9th September in Gent, Belgium on the future of biodiversity called “Biodiversity post-2010 - biodiversity in a changing world”.

This EU level stakeholder conference aims to reflect and discuss the current state of biodiversity, challenges for biodiversity conservation and the proposed post 2010 vision and targets, as well as highlight options for implementation and result in a policy message for COP 10. It will focus on three main areas: biodiversity in an urbanizing Europe; ecosystem services - valuation of natural goods and services; and, vision and targets for biodiversity post-2010 implementation. Eurosite will be present at this conference and members are welcome to participate. For more information and to register to attend, please visit: <http://www.lne.be/en/2010-eu-presidency/events/bio-diversity-post-2010>

4. European Environmental Agency Reports

The European Environment Agency (EEA) was established under a 1990 EU regulation with the aim of providing sound, independent information on the environment to those involved in developing, adopting, implementing and evaluating environmental policy as well as to other interested stakeholders and the public. It currently provides environmental information on 32 European countries, including some non-EU countries. The EEA has recently published a number of reports which are of particular interest to site managers:

4.1 Mediterranean Coastal Wetlands

The EEA has published a new technical report on ‘Ecosystem accounting and the cost of biodiversity losses — the case of coastal Mediterranean wetlands’. The report focuses on the use of land and ecosystem accounting techniques to describe and monitor biodiversity loss in Mediterranean coastal wetlands. The report is available to download for free at: <http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/ecosystem-accounting-and-the-cost>. More information on Mediterranean wetlands will be presented in the Eurosite annual conference in September by Jean Jalbert, Director General of the Tour du Valat in France, a research centre dedicated to the conservation of Mediterranean wetlands.



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

4.2 Land Use Patterns Across Europe

The EEA has also undertaken a study on ‘Land in Europe: prices, taxes and use patterns’. The study has found that the trends in land use change across Europe give cause for concern in relation to the achievement of environmental goals, such as the EU Water Framework Directive and Natura 2000 network. The report is available on their website at: http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/land-in-europe?utm_campaign=land-in-europe&utm_medium=email&utm_source=EEASubscriptions. (N.B. A workshop discussing the links between EU water and nature legislation is being held in Brussels, 17 to 18 June 2010).

4.3 Ten Messages for 2010

As 2010 is the International Year for Biodiversity, the EEA is publishing a number of ‘messages’ for 2010 throughout the year. The messages take the form of short reports which give an assessment of a specific ecosystem or issue related to biodiversity in Europe. So far, the following messages have been produced and are available for download on their website: biodiversity and climate change, protected areas, freshwater ecosystems, marine ecosystems and forest ecosystems. The following messages will be produced later in the year: urban ecosystems, agricultural ecosystems, mountain ecosystems, coastal ecosystems and biodiversity heritage. More detailed information on the published and upcoming messages can be found at: <http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/10-messages-for-2010>

4.4 Using CAP Funds to Benefit Biodiversity

The EEA has produced a technical report on whether the EU is achieving its objective of using CAP funds to prevent the abandonment of High Nature Value (HNV) farmland as an important action to halt biodiversity loss in agricultural habitats. The report looks at the extent to which CAP funds are benefiting HNV farmland systems. The report is available to download from their website at: <http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/distribution-and-targeting-of-the-cap-budget-from-a-biodiversity-perspective>

As part of a separate development, Eurosite has been invited to be part of a consortium to tender for a DG AGRI project. Eurosite's role would be to gather case studies and evidence from experts in five member states. We'll be looking at practical case studies which aim to reconcile environmental, rural development and agricultural priorities.

5. Agriculture

5.1 New EU Label for Organic Products

DG Agriculture has published a new logo to be used on products which fully comply with EU standards for organic farming, which will become mandatory from the 1st July 2010. The new logo comprises 12 stars in the shape of a leaf against a green flag and aims to help consumers in the EU to be sure about the products they are purchasing. A number of criteria must be applied when using the logo, for example, a product must not contain any GMO's and at least 95% of the ingredients of agricultural origin must come from organic sources. Many site managers have close working relationships with farmers. This information could be useful when working with farmers who are already using organic farming methods or considering changing to them. For more information on the new logo and the guidelines for its use, please consult the organic farming website established by DG Agriculture: <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic>

The new European logo for organic products
"Euro-Leaf"



6. Linking Climate Change, Soil and Biodiversity

6.1 Conference on Soil, Climate Change and Biodiversity

DG Environment recently published a report on the importance of soil biodiversity called 'Soil biodiversity: functions, threats and tools for policy makers', which is available to download at: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/biodiversity.htm>. This follows a report that was also published by DG Environment in 2009 on the important contribution that soil makes to climate change mitigation.

In September 2010, DG Environment will be co-organising a high level conference on the linkages between soil, climate change and biodiversity, in partnership with DG Climate Action and the Joint Research Centre. The conference will take place in Brussels on the 23rd and 24th September. Further information will be forthcoming via DG Environment's website.

“At a Glance” Guide to EU Working Groups and Committees Related to Nature and Biodiversity Policy

When lobbying or seeking to influence EU policy and legislation, it is important to interact with the three main EU institutions: the Council, Parliament and Commission. However, from the outside, it is often difficult to understand how they work or know how to engage with them, as the policy-making machine is very complex. Several working groups and committees exist which are particularly relevant to the development and implementation of EU biodiversity policies and legislation. Some information about these groups is available on public websites, however, not all of the information is available online and can be difficult to find. We have therefore summarised the most relevant information in this fact-sheet, to make it easily available to Eurosite members. If you want more specific information on a particular issue or working group, please contact the Eurosite Secretariat: info@eurosite.org.

1. European Council

The European Council comprises representatives of the governments of all the EU Member States, and the EU Heads of State meet together twice every six months. Of most relevance for biodiversity related issues is the **EU Environment Council** which involves regular meetings between all the Ministers of Environment across the EU. Other EU Councils are also highly relevant, especially the EU Council for Agriculture and Fisheries.

The **EU Presidency** is held by the Member States on a rotating basis, changing every six months. Often the EU Presidency will organise a meeting of the **EU Nature Directors** (i.e. the heads of government departments or agencies responsible for nature conservation) to share their views on current policy issues. NGOs are sometimes invited to all or part of these meetings via the European Habitats Forum, of which Eurosite is a member.

2. European Parliament

The Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) work on a range of different issues through different committees. Of most relevance to work on site management and protected areas, is the European Parliament **Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety**. A number of other Committees are also highly relevant, such as the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Affairs and the Committee on Fisheries. Once prepared, reports produced by the Committee are passed on for decisions and amendments in the main European Parliament plenary sessions.

3. European Commission

The European Commission is responsible for proposing and drafting new policy initiatives or legislation. It is divided into a number of Directorate Generals (DGs), including **DG Environment**. A number of other DG's are also important for biodiversity issues, for example, DG Agriculture, DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, DG Climate Action, DG Regional Policy and DG Energy.

The DGs are sub-divided further into a number of Directorates and Units. Directorate B within DG Environment deals with Nature and Biodiversity, as shown below:

Structure of DG Environment (June 2010)
Commissioner for DG Environment - Janez Potočnik
Director-General for DG Environment - Karl Falkenberg
Directorate A: Legal Affairs and Cohesion
Directorate B: Nature (Director: Ladislav Miko)
Unit B.1: Agriculture, Forests and Soil (Head of Unit: Michael Hamell)
Unit B.2: Biodiversity (Head of Unit: François Wakenhut)
Unit B.3: Natura 2000 (Head of Unit: Stefan Leiner)
Directorate C: Industry
Directorate D: Water, Chemicals and Biotechnology
Directorate E: International Affairs
Directorate F: Strategy
Shared Resources Directorate: HR, Admin, Finance and IT

4. Relevant European Commission Working Groups

The Coordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature (CGBN)

Chairs: This group is co-chaired by the Heads of Units B2 and B3, François Wakenhut and Stefan Leiner respectively.

Representatives: The group comprises representatives from all the EU Member State governments as well as other stakeholders such as NGOs, forestry, agriculture, fisheries and research. Eurosite is represented on the group via the European Habitats Forum

Mandate: To discuss the development and implementation of EU biodiversity policies and nature legislation.

A number of other working groups report to the CGBN including:

Working Group on the Management of Natura 2000

Chair: Stefan Leiner (Unit B.3)

Representatives: EU Member States and many stakeholders including NGOs. Eurosite has a seat on this group

Mandate: To facilitate the exchange of experiences and promotion of good practice in relation to the management of Natura 2000 sites and to assist the EC in developing guidance on specific management issues.

Ad hoc Working Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change

Chair: Karin Zaunberger (Unit B.2)

Representatives: DG Climate Action, EU Member States and many stakeholders including NGOs, researchers and scientists

Mandate: To gather knowledge on the climate change-biodiversity interface with a view to developing a framework biodiversity and climate change policy for post 2010. This includes issues relating to Natura 2000, ecological connectivity and the role of biodiversity and ecosystem services in combating climate change.

Non-Energy Extractive Industries Working Group

Chair: Unit B.3

Representatives: Member States representatives, experts, stakeholder and NGOs established under the CGBN.

Mandate: To prepare guidance on non-energy extractive industries and Natura 2000.

Working Group on Invasive Alien Species

Chair: Unit B.2

Representatives: Scientists and experts from Member States and relevant stakeholder groups

Mandate: To advise the Commission on the development of EU action and policy on Invasive Alien Species

In addition to the CGBN there are the Habitats and Ornis Committees:

Habitats Committee

Chair: Unit B.3

Representatives: EU Member State representatives only

Mandate: The Committee was established as a requirement of Article 20 of the Habitats Directive to assist the EC in implementing the Habitats Directive and also gives an opinion on the LIFE projects to be funded.

Ornis (Birds) Committee

Chair: Unit B.3

Representatives: EU Member State representatives only

Mandate: The Committee was established to assist the EC in implementing the Birds Directive.

Other working groups report to the Habitats and Ornis Committees including:

Working Group on Estuaries, Coastal Zones and Ports

Chair: Unit B.3

Representatives: Member States representatives, experts, stakeholders and NGOs

Mandate: Expert Group established under the Habitats Committee to advise and develop guidance on further supporting the implementation of the Habitats and Birds Directives in estuaries and coastal zones.

Expert Group on Reporting under the Nature Directives

Chair: Unit B.3

Representatives: EU Member States and many stakeholders including NGOs. Eurosite is represented on the group via a representative from the European Habitats Forum

Mandate: Group set up to deal with the reporting requirements of the Habitats and Birds Directives

The Expert Group on Reporting oversees a number of sub-groups that are developing the following 'work-packages':

WP1: Review of the Article 17 reporting format and guidelines

WP2: Align/synchronise progress reporting under the two Directives

WP3: Natura 2000 and conservation status

WP4: Revision of Natura 2000 dataflow

WP5: Habides (Habitats and Birds Directive Derogation System)

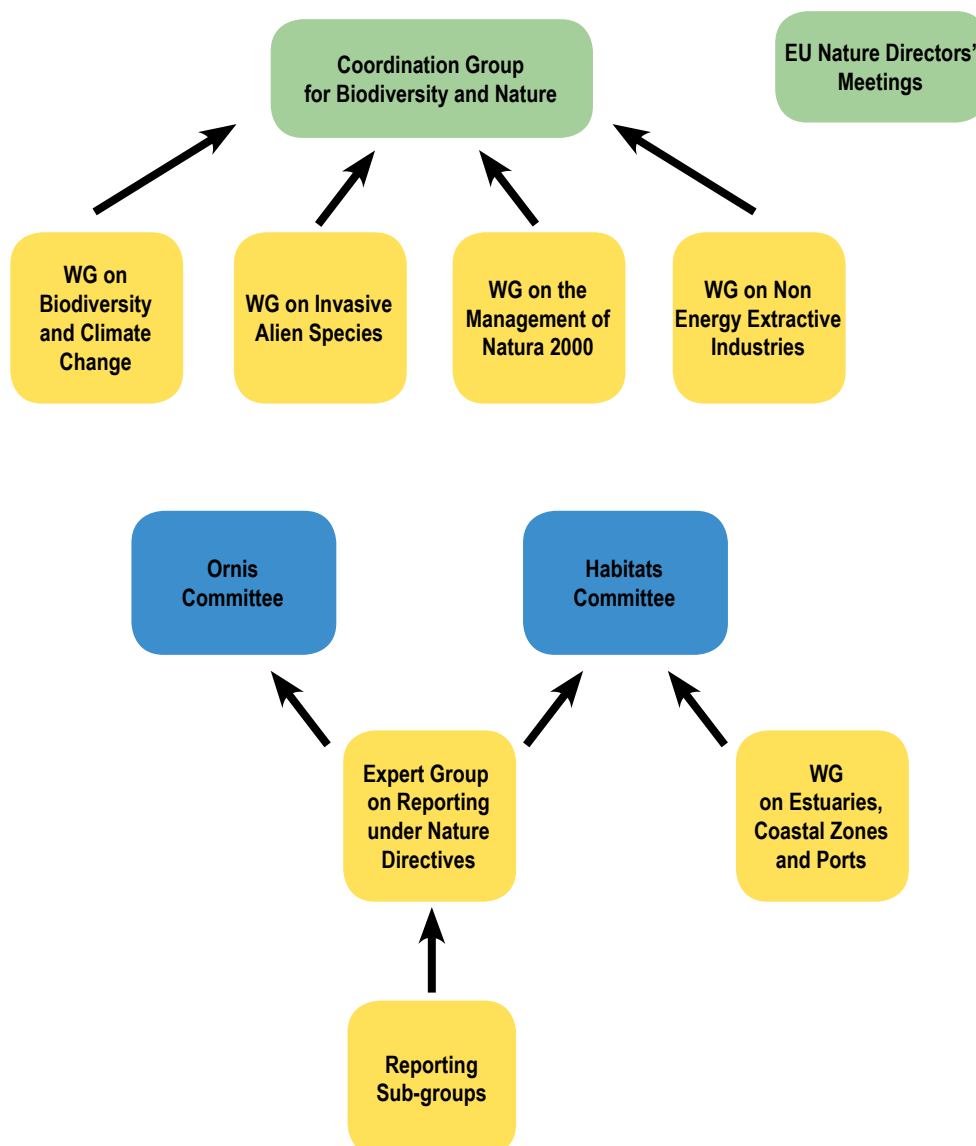
WP6: Notification of compensatory measures under Article 6.4 (Habitats Directive)

WP7: Develop vision for the presentation and access to data

Representatives and experts from relevant stakeholder groups and NGOs are welcome to contact the European Commission if they are interested to join one of these sub-groups.

At various times, ad hoc working groups are created on a temporary basis to look at specific issues in more detail - for example, the marine expert group, which was created to assist with the designation of marine Natura 2000 sites.

"At A Glance" Diagram of Working Groups and Committees



European Agenda - Forthcoming Meetings and Events of Interest in 2010

N.B. For all events connected to the International Year of Biodiversity, search the calendar at: www.countdown2010.net

June

Throughout the month : **LIFE+ information sessions for potential applicants**

Open to all pre-registered participants.

Organised by DG ENV

- 7 **Denmark:** Auditoriet, Roskilde
- 7 **Italy:** Sala congressi dell'ISPRA (ex APAT), Rome
- 11 **Greece:** Amphitheatre "Athina 9.84", Technopolis – Gazi, Athens
- 11 **UK:** Kingsway Hall Hotel, London
- 14 **Austria:** EU Representation, Vienna
- 15 **Spain:** EC Representation, Madrid
- 30 **Cyprus:** Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, Nicosia

7 (week of 7 June)

EP Sustainable Development intergroup meeting on "Forest Fires"

EP intergroup meeting, open to pre-registered participants, at European Parliament, Brussels

Organised by IUCN and EBCD

17 - 18 EU Council meeting

Heads of State meeting in Brussels

Organised by the EU Presidency

17 - 18 Workshop on Biodiversity and Water

Representation of North-Rhine-Westphalia to the EU, Brussels

Organised by representation of NRW to the EU and DG ENV

21 EU Environment Council

EU Environment Ministers' meeting in Brussels

Organised by the EU Presidency

21 European Commission Natura 2000 Management Group

EC Technical Working Group meeting in Brussels

Organised by DG ENV

21 - 23 European Parliament Environment Committee

EP Committee meeting at European Parliament, Brussels

Organised by the European Parliament

22 European Commission Co-ordination Group on Biodiversity

EC Technical Working Group meeting in Brussels

Organised by DG ENV

July

- 5 **(week of 5 July)**
EP Sustainable Development intergroup meeting on “Water and Biodiversity”
EP intergroup meeting, open to pre-registered participants, at European Parliament, Strasbourg
Organised by IUCN and EBCD
- 13 - 15 **European Parliament Environment Committee**
EP Committee meeting at European Parliament, Brussels
Organised by the European Parliament
- 15 - 16 **Stakeholder Event on Financing Natura 2000**
Stakeholder conference with invited participants, location tbc
Organised by DG ENV
- 31 **Closing date for the EU consultation on the Green Paper ‘Forest Protection and Information in the EU: Preparing forests for climate change’.**
Website: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/consultations/forests_en.htm
Organised by DG ENV

September

- 7 - 9 **Conference: ‘High Nature Value grasslands: securing the ecosystem services of European farming post 2013’**
Open to pre-registered participants. Sibiu, Romania
EFNCP, in partnership with Fundația ADEPT and Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu
- 8 - 9 **Conference: “Biodiversity post-2010 - biodiversity in a changing world”**
Belgian EU Presidency conference, Gent, Belgium
Organised by the Flemish region
- 13 - 16 **Eurosite Annual Conference 2010: “The Challenge of Managing Sites in a Changing Environment’**
Dunblane, Scotland
Organised by Eurosite and Scottish Natural Heritage
- 23 - 24 **High Level Conference: “Soil, Climate Change and Biodiversity - where do we stand?”**
High level conference in Brussels
Organised by DG ENV, DG Climate Action and Joint Research Centre
- 27 **(week of 27 September)**
EP Sustainable Development intergroup meeting on “EU Forest Strategy”
EP intergroup meeting, open to pre-registered participants, at European Parliament, Brussels
Organised by IUCN and EBCD
- 27 - 29 **European Parliament Environment Committee**
EP Committee meeting at European Parliament, Brussels
Organised by the European Parliament
- 29 **(until 2 October)**
Conference ‘Living together. Biodiversity and Human Activities: A Challenge for the Future of Protected Areas’
Open to all pre-registered, paying participants. Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park in Italy
Organised by EUROPARC

October

date tbc European Commission Natura 2000 Management Group

EC Technical Working Group meeting in Brussels
Organised by DG ENV

4 - 5 European Parliament Environment Committee

EP Committee meeting at European Parliament, Brussels
Organised by the European Parliament

18 - 29 CBD COP10

CBD Conference of the Parties in Nagoya, Japan
Organised by CBD

27 - 29 European Parliament Environment Committee

EP Committee meeting at European Parliament, Brussels
Organised by the European Parliament

November

date tbc EU Nature Directors meeting

Meeting restricted to EU Nature Directors and invited stakeholders, location tbc
Organised by Belgian Presidency

6 (week of 6 November)

EP Sustainable Development intergroup meeting on “Invasive Alien Species”

EP intergroup meeting, open to pre-registered participants, at European Parliament, Brussels
Organised by IUCN and EBCD

9 European Parliament Environment Committee

EP Committee meeting at European Parliament, Brussels
Organised by the European Parliament

18 European Commission Co-ordination Group on Biodiversity

EC Technical Working Group meeting in Brussels
Organised by DG ENV

29 (week of 29 November)

EP Sustainable Development intergroup meeting on “Enhancing the Coherence of Natura 2000”

EP intergroup meeting, open to pre-registered participants, at European Parliament, Brussels
Organised by IUCN and EBCD

29 (+ 1 December)

European Parliament Environment Committee

EP Committee meeting at European Parliament, Brussels
Organised by the European Parliament

December

1 (+ 29 November)

European Parliament Environment Committee

EP Committee meeting at European Parliament, Brussels
Organised by the European Parliament

13 (week of 13 December)

EP Sustainable Development intergroup meeting on “Promoting Sustainable Agriculture”

EP intergroup meeting, open to pre-registered participants, at European Parliament, Strasbourg
Organised by IUCN and EBCD

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Eurosite

Luijbenstraat 3

5211 BR 's-Hertogenbosch

The Netherlands

info@eurosite.org

www.eurosite.org

