Eurosite

Eurosite Annual Report 2021

Content list

1.	Letter from the President	4
2.	Timeline of key activities 2021	5
3.	Implementing the Eurosite Strategy 2021 - 2025	
	Objective 1: Expanding the network's REACH for Europe's nature	
	The Eurosite Twinning Programme	7
	Strategic partnerships	8
	Priority Activity 2: An online platform to allow members to request and receive specialist	
	Objective 2: Increasing the network's RELEVANCE	8
	Working Groups	
	European projects	
	Training, workshops & webinars	
	Objective 3: Strengthening the network's RESILIENCE	21
	Objective 4: Elevating public RECOGNITION for land and nature conservation	21
4.	The Eurosite Network - as of December 2021	24
5.	Report of the treasurer 2021	
	Contact us	

About this Annual Report

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1. Letter from the Eurosite President

Dear reader.

2021 was another extraordinarily successful year for Eurosite. Despite the fact that new waves of Covid-19 strands (Delta, Omicron) continued to disrupt public life around the globe, our revenue grew by almost 30%, we expanded our membership, established three new Eurosite Working Groups, signed new partnership agreements, organised a record-breaking number of training and networking events, and started implementing the new Eurosite Strategy 2021-2025.

2021 was also the first full year under the leadership of our new Director, Harm Schoten, whose performance continued to impress. Harm worked hand in hand with Eurosite's Board to implement a series of important reforms, covering almost every aspect of our organisation: We streamlined the functioning and governance of Eurosite's Working Groups, adopted a Financial Strategy and introduced multi-annual budgeting, increased the salaries of the entire staff, and fully converted the secretariat into a mobile and virtual office. In many ways, we "punched above our weight". We continued to benefit from the dedication and enthusiasm of our staff, including our new addition to the team, Eurosite campaigner Hans von Sonntag, who hit the ground running and implemented Eurosite's first social media campaign #peatlandsmatter together with UNEP's Global Peatlands Initiative during UNFCCC COP26.

Most of our projects continued in 2021: "Development of a European Private Land Conservation Network" (LIFE ELCN), "European Networks for Private Land Conservation" (LIFE ENPLC), Interreg NWE Care-Peat, LIFE "Nardus and Limosa", and the EU LIFE NGO, to name just the bigger ones. A new project started at the end of 2021: "Multi-stakeholder Landscape and Technical Innovation leading to Peatland Ecosystem Restoration" (LIFE MultiPeat), while two projects ended in 2021: E-BIND on the implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives and the Horizon 2020 project "Farmers' Pride" on crops' wild relatives. LIFE ELCN held its final conference online in December 2021, together with the 3rd Global Congress of the International Land Conservation Network (ILCN). Hundreds of participants from 89 countries around the world shared their expertise on a broad range of topics related to private land conservation.

Cooperation with various partners in projects will continue to be an important pillar of Eurosite's work. We made sure to lay the foundation for future activities by submitting no less than 19 applications for funding in 2021. This Herculean effort is paying off, as it increases our capacity to serve our members and to interact with the European and global conservation community.

We are confident that all these activities and developments contribute to reaching our strategic objectives and bring us closer to our vision: A Europe where nature is cared for, protected, restored, and valued by all. We remain mission-driven and - as a networking organisation - keep our principal focus on the needs and interests of our members, who together represent over 5,500 conservation professionals managing more than 18,000,000 ha of natural sites. We thank them for their steadfast support, dedication and interest!

With best wishes,

Tilmann Disselhoff President of Eurosite - the European Land Conservation Network



2. Timeline of key activities 2020

11 January **One Planet Summit** (online)

March Remote sensing webinar series 2021 (online)

18 May European Habitats Forum meeting with DG Environment (online)

3 June Natura 2000 branding at Green Week 2021 (online)

> 17 June Eurosite team day (Netherlands)

8 Julv Extraordinary Annual Meeting (online)

7 September Natural Climate Buffer workshop at the IUCN Congress Dutch Pavillion (France)

11 October Migratory Birds for People Annual Meeting (online)

5 November Care-Peat at the COP26 Peatland Pavillion (United Kingdom)

25-26 January **Climate Adaptation Summit** (online)

20 April Trans-Atlantic webinar on Earth Observation (online)

26 May ILCN/ELCN webinar: Understanding OECMs (online)

8-9 June Coordination Group for Biodiversity and Nature (CGBN) meeting (online)

> 28 June - 1 July Farmer's Pride Final Conference (online)

2 September Peatland round-table: moving beyond peat extraction (online)

> 27-29 September 3rd Natural Climate Buffers study tour (Ireland)

3 November EMPEG workshop: Innovative peatland restoration techniques (online)

12 November

Dialogues on a European Peatlands Initiative Cop26 Peatland Pavillion (United Kingdom)

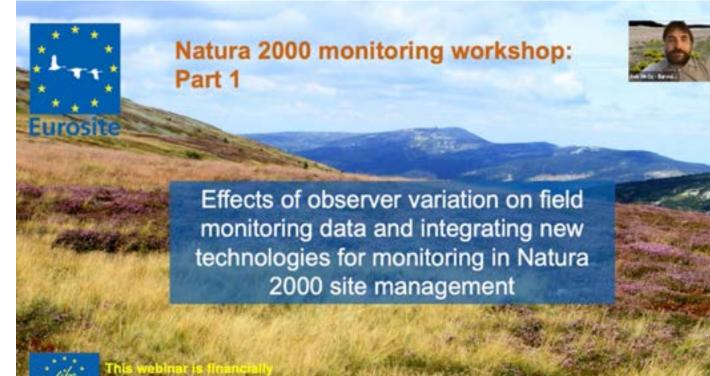
16 November Twinning webinar: Visitors — a burden or a blessing? (online)

> 7 December **Eurosite Annual General Meeting** (online)

15 November 5th Natura 2000 monitoring workshop - part 1 (online)

24 December European Habitats Forum meeting with DG Environment (oline)

> 8-10 December **ILCN/ELCN Global Congress** (online)



3. Implementing the Eurosite Strategy 2021-2025

During this first year of the Eurosite Strategy 2021-2025, in 2021 the following actions were implemented in line with the agreed Eurosite objectives, sometimes in a different way than originally foreseen due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Twinning is in our DNA. Established in 1989, Eurosite evolved out of the European Natural Sites Twinning Programme, which linked 33 sites across Europe since 1987. This programme demonstrated the clear demand for knowledge exchange on practical nature management and two years later in 1989, the Eurosite network was born. Twinning remained a core Eurosite tool for knowledge exchange. Eurosite members interested in twinning are able to take advantage of Eurosite's expertise and services available in the network via the Twinning Programme.

There are typically **two types of twinning**. The first is the more traditional twinning between organisations or natural sites. The focus of these twinnings could, for example, be on the transfer of knowledge from one site to another, or on the exchanges of staff, volunteers and students. If partners prefer to collaborate on specific research projects or the development of mutually interesting projects, they can also choose a **thematic** twinning. This type of twinning focuses on a specific theme and can involve all kinds of stakeholders, such as site managers, municipalities, local communities, tourist organisations and businesses.

In 2021, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Eurosite Twinning Programme had to be adapted to acknowledge for the fact that most European countries established severe travel restrictions. A new Twinning Agreement was signed between the Dutch KNNV (association for field biology) and the Danube-Carpathian Programme (DCP) in Ukraine. This Twinning, running for two years, aims to implement active conservation measures in the Ukrainian Carpathians to improve the conservation status of selected peatlands, enhance the storage capacity of Carpathian peatlands for water and carbon dioxide, exchange experience and knowledge related to the planning and implementing of nature conservation projects, improve methods of actual conservation, disseminate knowledge about the natural values of the Carpathians among a wider audience, and support the development of ecotourism in Ukraine.

Eurosite continued to support the online, multi-partner, Thematic Twinning initiative on recreation and conservation in a post-lockdown society with the aim to share lessons learnt on current challenges in visitor management by conservation practitioners from Greece, Italy, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Romania and Poland. This Twinning focused on several trends accelerated by the pandemic: a growing interest in natural areas for recreation and tourism, an increased pressure on natural resources at protected sites due to visitors, and the possibility to use recovery funds for improving visitor infrastructure, site maintenance and communication. A Twinning webinar was organised on 15 November, to share lessons learned on 'Conservation and recreation in a post-lockdown society'. Twinning partners would like to continue their cooperation in a permanent working group on Visitor Management, to be established in 2022. Lastly, to create a user-friendly overview of Eurosite Twinnings and the lessons that were drawn from those twinnings. the Twinning section on the Eurosite website was transformed into a wiki-like overview. The section is called 'Twinning experiences and outputs', and contains links to outcomes of the Twinnings of the last five years. Information reflected was gathered via a Twinning survey to all partners that participated in a Twinning in the last five years.

Objective 1: Expanding the network's REACH for Europe's nature

The Eurosite Twinning Programme

Strategic partnerships

As part of the implementation of the first objective of the new Eurosite Strategy- expanding the organisation's Reach - Eurosite has signed a new Friendship Agreement with the European Landowners Organisation. Friendship Agreements set out the terms of reference for cooperation and collaboration between Eurosite and other international organisations and networks with shared strategic objectives. They strengthen Eurosite's profile and leverage the reach by firmly nesting them in the European and global community of conservation practitioners. Other Friendship Agreements are in place with the Migratory Birds for People Network, CEEweb for Biodiversity, and SER Europe.



Objective 2: Increasing the network's RELEVANCE

Working Groups

Eurosite works to facilitate, support, inspire and unite its members in the common goal of caring for Europe's nature. One of Eurosite's main missions is to share ideas and good practice on subjects that are of interest to its members. This is exactly what Eurosite is doing through its working groups on Management Planning, Wetlands and Climate Change, Economics and Ecosystem Services, Remote Sensing, Peatland Restoration and Management, and since this year also on Volunteering and Citizen Science, Agriculture, Biodiversity and Climate Change, and Financial Incentives for Private Land Conservation. The Peatland Restoration and Management Group is part of the Interreg NWE Care-Peat project, whereas the working groups on Volunteering and Citizen Science as well as the one on Financial Incentives for Private Land Conservation are deliverables of the LIFE ENPLC project. Eurosite Working Groups are an integral part of Eurosite's network and constitute an important structure for connecting communities of conservation practitioners on shared thematic priorities. They are informal associations under the auspices of Eurosite's Secretariat. In 2021, the Board has adopted Operating Procedures for Eurosite's Working Groups and an internal Context Note on the horizontal cooperation of the Working Groups and their thematic profiles, possible overlaps, gaps and options for their further development, restructuring and the establishment of additional Working Groups.

Eurosite Management Planning Expert Group (EMPEG)

In 2018 it became clear that the Eurosite site management toolkit needed to be updated. It was decided to do this digitally, and to create an online toolkit were site managers can find information from A to Z concerning management planning. A group was established to realise this task: the Eurosite Management Planning Expert Group. The group had its first live meeting in April 2018, and then met throughout 2018 and 2019 via GoToMeeting and other live meetings. The final product in the form of an online Management Planning Toolkit that can be easily updated when necessary was launched during the Anniversary Annual Meeting in November 2019, in Italy and professionalised throughout 2020 and 2021. In 2021, the EMPEG organised a thematic online workshop on Innovative Peatland Restoration Techniques. The aim of this online workshop was to learn about innovative techniques to restore the hydrology of drained peatlands applied in the Northern Pennines (upland area, England) and on the Welsh-English border where there are lowland bogs and fen habitats.

The toolkit can be found here.



Wetlands and Climate Change Working Group (WCCWG) The WCCWG works to increase the exchange of knowledge on ecosystem-based approaches to adapt to and mitigate global climate change and adapting wetlands to global climate change, to share information on international initiatives on wetlands and climate change, to follow and react to the developments of policy and practice in relation to wetlands and climate change and their effects on the Natura 2000 network, and advocate best possible approaches, and to cooperate on the development of joint projects and identify funding sources. In 2021, the group produced five factsheets on Natural Climate Buffers managed by group members, and organised a Natural Climate Buffers study tour to Ireland, following earlier editions that took place in the Netherlands (2018) and Scotland (2019).



Natural Climate Buffers are areas where natural processes are given space. As a result, they evolve with climate change, adapt to it and can play a vital role in retaining and collecting water (thus preventing the floods or water shortages), tempering heat and reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere



Economics and Ecosystem Services Working Group (EESWG)

The value of ecosystem services is being increasingly talked about. People, businesses and countries take all kinds of ecosystem related 'products' for granted: medicines, clean air and water, CO2 storage, wind- and solar energy, and so on. Eurosite's EESWG helps and supports members to take action on these issues and make ecosystem services work for them. Its goals are to increase the number of protected areas implementing ecosystem services planning and to increase awareness of the economic and environmental benefits of protecting and enhancing ecosystem services. In 2021, the group held an open meeting on ecosystem services of wetlands and their economic potential (e.g. paludiculture), as well as a meeting on a case study of the Bosut Forest Area, on integrating ecosystem services in protected area designation & management. Lastly, the group did preparatory work to submit a project proposal in early 2022.

Remote Sensing Support Group (RSSG)

The RSSG focuses on developing innovative, open tools supporting open access to biodiversity spatial data. In 2021, the group had a busy year in which it organised a webinar series composed of three webinars, as well as a first online part of the 5th Natura 2000 monitoring workshop. The series of webinars focused on different aspects of RS use in nature conservation:

- part 1: Using Earth observations to inform on changes within protected sites
- part 2: Habitat mapping using different RS platforms ٠
- part 3: European EUNIS habitat suitability, probability modelling and mapping, and the European Vegetation Archive (EVA).

Moreover, the group co-organised (together with Aberystwyth University, Wales) a first Remote Sensing Information Exchange Event in October 2021. This event kicked off a new series of in-person regional meetings planned over the next few years. The monitoring workshop part 1 was held in November, and due to Covid_19's Omicron variant took place online. It was a theoretic first part to be succeeded by a practical field workshop in 2022, and focused on the Effects of observer variation on field monitoring data and integrating new technologies for monitoring in Natura 2000 site management (see page 18).



Agriculture, Biodiversity and Climate Change Working Group (ABCWG) A huge share of Europe's land surface, even a large part of Natura 2000 and other protected areas, is used agriculturally. Scientific reports on the state of European nature show that the species and habitats most seriously in decline, are those linked to agricultural landscapes. Eurosite's member organisations have over the past years and decades been doing what they practically can to help stop and reverse this trend. In 2020 various Eurosite members expressed the need for a place to exchange knowledge and experience on biodiversity conservation in relation to agriculture. The ABCWG was therefore established. The group started in 2021 with an intensive and well-attended series of 6 meetings and (closed) virtual workshops on themes like renumerating farmers for public goods, market-based solutions and building trainings for both agricultural and conservation community.

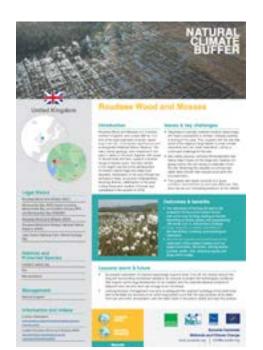
The remaining working groups are described in the section dedicated to the projects they are part of.







Together with our Dutch member Natuurmonumenten and the Natural Climate **Buffer Coalition (Dutch** acronym CNK), Eurosite held a workshop about natural climate buffers as Naturebased Solutions at the IUCN Global Congress in 2021



European projects

At its core, Eurosite facilitates the exchange of knowledge and experience on natural site management. In addition to the working groups and the Twinning Programme, we do so via participation in European projects. Below these projects are described in more detail. In 2021, Eurosite was involved in seven projects.

LIFE European Networks for Private Land Conservation

European Networks for Private Land Conservation (ENPLC) is a four-year project funded by the European Commission's environment and climate action funding instrument LIFE that started in 2020. The project intends to expand the use of private land conservation tools in the European Union, to improve the financial incentives and funding for private land conservation, to foster citizen engagement in private land conservation and to continue the existing networking among organisations and individuals engaged in private land conservation with the aim to establish a



durable governance structures for private land conservation in Europe. It does so via communicating best-practice approaches to private land conservation, including the involvement of volunteers and citizen scientists via the Volunteering and Citizen Science Working Group and the Financial Incentives for Private Land Conservation Working Group. Furthermore, project partners raise public awareness on the relevance of private land for reaching the EU's biodiversity policy targets and showcase successful initiatives in peer-to-peer networks by creating a community of Private Land Conservation Ambassadors who tell their stories to fellow private landowners and decision-makers. The ENPLC project is a followup project of the LIFE ELCN project, and brings together 18 organizations from 11 European countries-Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Portugal, Romania, Spain and the Netherlands. Please see the project website for more information.

European Private Land Conservation Network (LIFE ELCN)

In 2016 a proposal was developed for the Development of a European Private Land Conservation Network (ELCN) and submitted to the LIFE Preparatory Call for Proposals. The proposal was successful and the project began in 2017. Eurosite has the leading role in the networking and project communications. At the Anniversary Annual Meeting in November 2019 in Italy, it was unanimously decided that Eurosite



will become the secretariat for the newly established Network after the project has ended, and that the ELCN will fully merge into Eurosite. Therefore, Eurosite's full name was sinceforth Eurosite - the European Land Conservation Network. Throughout 2021, webinars were regularly organised together with the International Land Conservation Network (ILCN), as well as an ELCN webinar that presented the Resifarms toolkit for farmers and agricultural technicians. The final conference of the LIFE ELCN project took place from 8-10 December 2021 back-to-back as part of the ILCN/ELCN Global Congress. Unfortunately, the conference was held virtually instead of in Barcelona due to the Covid-19 pandemic. More information can be found on the project website.

LIFE Nardus and Limosa

The central objective of the project is the cross-border restoration of meadow-heathland systems that are rich in Nardus grasslands (6230^{*}) with healthy meadow bird populations. The five project areas are the best areas in the Campine region where somewhat nutrient-richer heath systems occur, with a lot of grassland birds. The LIFE project Nardus & Limosa focuses on studying, testing and implementing a P-mining method that takes breeding birds into account. The focus of the project is the restoration of 255 ha of Nardus grasslands (6230*), which are rich in the typical meadow birds. At the same time, as a result of a diverse hydrology, geomorphology, and soil, inland dunes grasslands (2310 and 2330), wet heaths (4010), and to a more limited extent, dry heaths (4030) will be restored in close interdependence with the Nardus grasslands.

Care-Peat

The aim of the Interreg North-West Europe project is to develop new policies and methods for managing and monitoring carbon reduction nterreg from peatlands. The project involves partners from Ireland, the UK, North-West Europe Belgium, France and the Netherlands. Care-Peat funds local peatland Care-Peat restoration and monitoring as well as the development of innovative policies based on the data collected from restoration works. Eurosite's role is to involve nature organisations all over North-West Europe and the rest of the EU by organising activities to show and explain developed strategies and methods. Other project partners are Natuurpunt (lead partner, Belgium), Centre National de La Recherche Scietifique (France), Bureau de Recherches Géologiques et Minières (France), Lancashire Wildlife Trust (UK), Manchester Metropolitan University (UK), National University of Ireland Galway (Ireland), Natuurmonumenten (Netherlands), Université d'Orléans (France). An open partner meeting was organised on 4 and 5 February in Deurne, the Netherlands. More information can be found on the project website.

E-BIND (Evidence-Based Improvements in the Nature Directives)

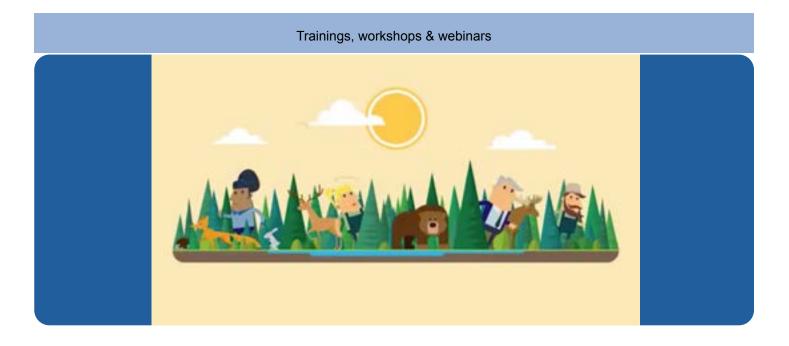
The objective of the 'Evidence-Based Improvements in the Nature Directives' is to advise the European Commission, Member State authorities and other stakeholders on the better use of scientific knowledge and scientific networks in support of the implementation of the nature directives. This project has mobilised the scientific community in support of better and more effective implementation of the EU nature legislation. The two key aspects of this are to make better use of scientific knowledge and scientific networks and to mobilise the scientific community; both in support of the outcome of the Fitness Check - which requires better and more effective implementation of the EU nature legislation. The lead partner is Wageningen Environmental Research. The handbooks that were developed as part of E-BIND are available here.

LIFE MultiPeat

Fully titled Multi-stakeholder Landscape and Technical Innovation leading to Peatland Ecosystem Restoration, MultiPeat aims to optimise the hydrological system of degraded peatlands of a wide range of types across 5 countries: Poland (PL), Germany (GE), Belgium (BE), Netherlands (NL) and Ireland (IE) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and recover the optimal conditions to restart their sequestering functions, all under the precondition of overcoming obstacles in multi-stakeholder landscapes. MultiPeat will assess the climate impact of the restoration measures by quantifying the GHG emissions, calculating the current annual GHG budgets and the potential savings in the future.







Remote sensing webinar series

This second series of webinars provided by the Eurosite Remote Sensing Support Group focused on 'Roles of satellite images in biodiversity conservation' and involves speakers from the UK, the Netherlands and Spain. These webinars in particular focused on the needs of nature conservation practitioners. The aim of the webinars was to increase the accessibility of remote sensing technologies for biodiversity conservation. The series counts three webinars in total.

part 1: Using Earth observations to inform on changes within protected sites

For many years, Earth observations have provided substantive opportunities for informing on changes within protected areas, with many focusing on specific elements (e.g., flooding from rainfall, vegetation damage through fires). This webinar provided an overview of a new approach to describing change that is relevant both at the ground level and remotely, considered the full range of natural events and processes and human activities that might be taking place over a landscape across varying time frames and directly links to policy and land management.

part 2: Habitat mapping using different RS platforms

The objective of this seminar will be showing a number of works designed for monitoring the area of occupancy (AOO) of habitat types across regional to nationwide scales that allow collecting suitable estimates for both monitoring and management actions.

<u>Part 3</u>: European EUNIS habitat suitability, probability modelling and mapping, and the European Vegetation Archive (EVA).

EUNIS stands for European Nature Information System, a classification that comprises all European habitats, even including habitats without vegetation like caves or constructed, industrial and other artificial habitats. It is the most important classification for the European commission to define, map and monitor European ecosystems. As wall to wall maps for EUNIS habitat types are not available, the work discussed in the webinar uses, amongst others, vegetation plot data as observation data and climate, soil, topographic, remote sensed Essential Biodiversity Variables as predictors in Maxent model.

All webinars are available on the Eurosite YouTube channel

Earth Observation for Conservation Policy and Practice: Trans-Atlantic Perspectives

Related to the topic of the remote sensing webinar series was the webinar on Trans-Atlantic perspectives on earth observation for conservation policy and practice. In light of recent commitments by the European Union and the United States to conserve 30% of lands and waters by 2030, Eurosite, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the International Land Conservation Network at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy (ILCN) together organised a webinar exploring trans-Atlantic perspectives on the potential of Earth Observation for conservation policy and practice towards the 30×30 goal.

Earth Observation (EO) is a powerful suite of technologies that can help to inform and ensure the effectiveness of biodiversity conservation efforts. Access to EO data and tools, the development of new data processing platforms, and increasing interest in the application of these technologies to achieve ambitious global conservation targets is creating an exciting enabling environment for policymakers, practitioners, and the scientific community to leverage EO in their work. This session brought together leaders and project representatives from the United States and the European Union to share perspectives on the policy context and examples of how EO is being used to support conservation policy and action. Speakers from the European Commission, the IUCN's enviroLENS project, Eurosite – ELCN, Esri, Earth League International and the Lincoln Institute's Center for Geospatial Solutions shared presentations and participated, alongside other experts, in a Q&A with the audience. The recording is available on the Eurosite YouTube channel.

ILCN/ELCN webinar: Understanding OECMs

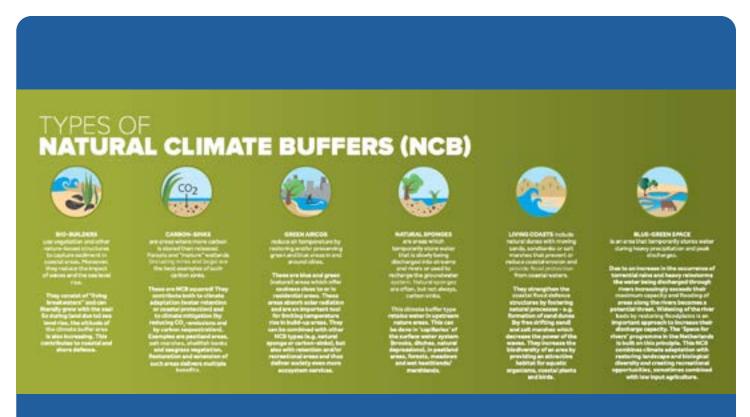
A webinar on Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) was organised in May 2021. OECMS are a conservation designation for areas that are achieving the effective in-situ conservation of biodiversity outside of protected areas. In the lead up to the 15th Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity, countries and organisations around the world are discussing how to interpret and apply OECM criteria, assess and identify OECMs in their national contexts, and develop laws, policies and processes to recognise and record OECMs. In this context, raising awareness among the global private and civic land conservation community on OECMs and how they differ and complement protected areas, including Privately Protected Areas, is increasingly important. This webinar introduced and provided background on OECMs, their role and importance for achieving targets such as conserving 30% of Earth's land and waters by 2030, and the key opportunities and challenges they present in advancing biodiversity conservation goals. The recording is available on the Eurosite YouTube channel.





Natural Climate Buffers

Already touched upon on page 10 of this Annual Report, the Natural Climate Buffers concept has been an important and recurring theme throughout 2021. Natural Climate Buffers were first defined in 2007, in a study commissioned by our member Natuurmonumenten, de Waddenvereniging, Birdlife Netherlands and Ark Nature - "Natuurlijke klimaatbuffers voor een klimaatbestendiger Nederland" (lit. Natural climate buffers for a more climate-proof Netherlands). The definition and typology developed in this study formed a basis for today's definition, as presented by the Dutch Coalition for Natural Climate Buffers.



Natural Climate Buffer workshop at the IUCN Congress Dutch Pavilion

Held once every four years, the IUCN World Conservation Congress brings together several thousand leaders and decision-makers from government, civil society, indigenous peoples, business, and academia, with the goal of conserving the environment and harnessing the solutions nature offers to global challenges. Together with our Dutch member Natuurmonumenten and the Natural Climate Buffer Coalition (Dutch acronym CNK), Eurosite held a workshop about natural climate buffers at the IUCN Global Congress in Marseille, where the NCB concept was introduced. The workshop participants concluded that authorities should adopt these nature-based solutions as the first scenario for climate adaptation and mitigation measures, which can only be realised if authorities and enterprises transfer from sectoral to integral thinking. This is slowly becoming policy in some countries, but is not common practice yet. This was a frequently recurring conclusion at the IUCN congress, where mainstreaming nature-based solutions was one of the main topics.

3rd Natural Climate Buffers study tour

From 27-29 September, a group of 19 international site managers and 58 Irish stakeholders gathered for the third edition of the Natural Climate Buffers study tour which this time took place in Ireland. Organised by Eurosite, hosted by the Community Wetlands Forum and supported by Eurosite member the National Parks and Wildlife Services as well as the Environmental Protection Agency, the group visited four sites were Natural Climate Buffers are implemented. The tour showcased the strides being taken by Ireland to mitigate climate change via Nature-based Solutions at four key Natural Climate Buffer sites: Clara Bog, Scohaboy Bog, Cabragh Wetlands, and Abbeyleix Bog. The factsheets of these NCBs are presented on page 10 of this report. Where the group visited the Cabragh Wetlands and Scohaboy Bog on Monday, and Clara Bog and Abbeyleix Bog on Tuesday, on the morning of Wednesday 29 September, a workshop took place to reflect on knowledge and information gathered during the first two days of the tour. Participants were divided into break-out groups discussing how to break the cycle of merely talking and identifying barriers regarding Nature-based Solutions towards taking implementation action. For this purpose, attendees were asked to read a paper by the ENCA and EPA Networks on recommendations for overcoming barriers to mainstreaming the delivery of Naturebased Solutions in advance. We were honoured to have the Irish Minister of State for Heritage & Electoral Reform Malcolm Noonan as well as the Minister of State in the Department of Agriculture Pippa Hackett with us throughout the complete workshop. What many international participants found equally inspiring however was the engagement of the large amount of volunteers at the visited sites who, together with other local stakeholders such as farmers and scientists, ensure the sites are restored and taken care off.

A video highlighting the essence of the tour is available on <u>the Eurosite YouTube channel</u>, and an elaborate workshop report is available on <u>the Eurosite website</u>.





"Through Eurosite, and the network that it has across various European countries, we come together, share our experiences, have an argument or two, and learn a lot more about the problems we need to solve." – Shane Mc Guinness, Community Wetlands Forum, Ireland





Online workshop: Innovative Peatland Restoration Techniques

As part of Eurosite's mission to share knowledge and experiences in natural site management among European natural site managers, the Eurosite Management Planning Expert Group (EMPEG) organised a webinar on peatland restoration techniques on 3 November 2021. The aim of this online workshop was to learn about innovative techniques to restore the hydrology of drained peatlands applied in the Northern Pennines (upland area, England) and on the Welsh-English border where there are lowland bogs and fen habitats. The workshop looked at challenges at a technical level. Despite being drained, peatlands are most often difficult to access with heavy machinery, causing many projects to struggle determining the best feasible techniques, materials and machinery to stop drainage. Participants learned how in two restoration projects in the United Kingdom these technical challenges have been approached. The first site the workshop 'visited' is the North Pennines where it was demonstrated how the Pennine PeatLIFE project dealt with blocking drainage channels and gullies in an upland peatland. The second 'site visit' was to a heavily damaged lowland raised bog located on the Welsh and English border. The site is restored as part of the BogLIFE project, aiming to restore Britain's third-largest lowland raised bog within the Fenn's, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses and Wem Moss NNRs.

A recording is available on the Eurosite YouTube channel.

5th Natura 2000 monitoring workshop - part 1

On 15 November 2021 the first part of the 5th Natura 2000 monitoring workshop took place virtually and focused on the effects of observer variation on field monitoring data and integrating new technologies for monitoring in Natura 2000 site management. The workshop illustrated which aspects of our traditional methods of data collection provide the most reliable data and which can be improved by integrating new technologies. Speakers demonstrated how we can complement traditional field data with data from new technologies and Earth observation and provide timely feedback into the management of Natura 2000 sites. Furthermore, the workshop explored the potential for incorporating a) satellite data, e.g. from Sentinels 1 and 2 and from higher resolution platforms such as RapidEye, and b) drone data, including LiDAR, hyperspectral and multispectral data. We also looked at the potential advantages of using phone apps to augment field data collection and aid the interpretation of remote images. In 2022, the second part of the Natura 2000 workshop will take place in Croatia, focusing on the more practical use of these new technologies in the field.

A recording is available on the Eurosite YouTube channel.

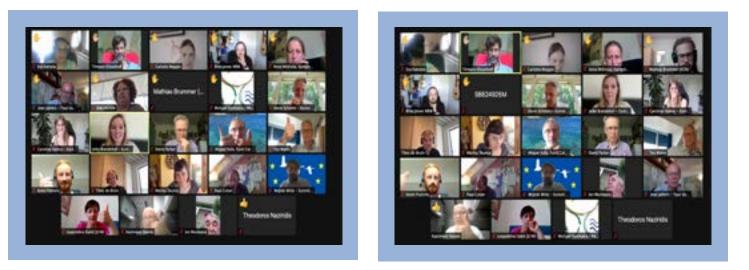




Eurosite Annual General Meetings

Eurosite prepared an Extraordinary General Meeting in July 2021 to approve a change of the Association Statutes which was needed for three reasons: 1) to be able to apply for the ANBI status at the Dutch Tax Services as a non-profit organisation, 2) to align with the new Dutch 'Management and Supervision of Legal Entities Act' which enters into force in 2021 and 3) to be able to still hold online (general) meetings after the pandemic period. The changes in statutes were prepared in cooperation with our Notary and approved by AGM. In 2021 Eurosite successfully applied for the ANBI status at the Dutch Tax Services.

The Eurosite Annual General Meeting was supposed to be held in Barcelona, Spain, on 7 December 2021. Just a few weeks before, a new Covid-19 variant broke out (Omicron), preventing the event from happening in-person. It was therefore held virtually.



Third Global Congress of the International Land Conservation Network (ILCN) and Final Conference of the LIFE project Development of a European Land Conservation Network (ELCN) The Annual General Meeting 2021 was held back-to-back with the 3rd Global Congress of the International Land Conservation Network (ILCN) and the final conference of the LIFE project

International Land Conservation Network (ILCN) and the final conference of the LIFE project "Development of a European Private Land Conservation Network – LIFE ELCN", generally hosted by our member Fundació Catalunya la Pedrera from 8-10 December 2021 and attended by more than 900 participants from all around the world. Among the speakers were many representatives from the Eurosite Board, staff and membership: Jorg Andreas Kruger, President of NABU, Tilmann Disselhoff, Eurosite Board President and Harm Schoten, Eurosite Director. During the conference Miquel Rafa, Director of Fundació Catalunya la Pedrera accepted a Conservation Visionary Award on behalf of the people of Catalonia, who have protected nearly 32% of their province's territory. Targets such as protecting 30% of lands by 2030 can only be reached by taking a collaborative and inclusive approach that leverages and builds on the capacity of a range of land stewards - landowners, communities, and civic organizations, among others - to undertake voluntary, durable, and effective land conservation action. Inspired by the beautiful Catalonian landscape, and using the digital tools available to bring together an ever growing community still facing the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, participants joined in continuing to learn from and support one another in advancing the private and civic land conservation movement. Outcomes of the congress include:

- Increased knowledge of the diversity of tools and strategies being used around the world to protect and steward private land for the long-term;
- Greater understanding of strategies that can be used to advance private and civic land conservation in specific country contexts;
- Establishment of productive and actionable relationships among practitioners from around the world, leading to continued knowledge exchange, sharing of expertise, and sense of global community;
- Recognition and elevation of the role and importance of private and civic land conservation in achieving national and international protected area and biodiversity conservation goals, particularly in the context of post-2020 agenda-setting.

Recordings of the Congress and a full workshop report are available on the dedicated event page.



Eurosite - Connecting Competence in Conservation @Eurosite · 9 Dec 2021

3 things to do for Private Land Conservation, says @angelosalsi1 @LIFEprogramme @ ILCN/ELCN Global Congress:

Think creatively on how to finance PLC

Motivate landowners

Strengthen our organisations, involve stakeholders & use available tools to protect private lands



Objective 3: Strengthening the network's RESILIENCE

To strengthen the Eurosite brand in 2021, we have continued to implement the Membership Retention and Recruitment Strategies and developed a retention analysis with a very positive result! Over 2021 the retention rate of organisational members was 100%, 91% for associate members, and 90% for individual members. Overall, there was an increase in number of members and representation of European countries in the Eurosite network (see chapter 4).

Furthermore, Eurosite was successful in securing (multi-annual) funding from different (mainly EU) funding streams. In 2021, we received funding from Horizon 2020, Interreg North-West Europe, and LIFE (EU NGO Funding, LIFE Preparatory project). Eurosite has submitted nineteen project proposals for funding. In addition to these proposals, we prepared, and are currently preparing several new funding proposals under various EU and national funding schemes with submission dates in 2022. Looking forward, Eurosite is actively pursuing talks with several member organisations to form project consortia for new project applications in 2022.

To create a new Eurosite Strategy 2021-2025, a task and finish group was set up in 2020. This group created a new Eurosite Strategy, identifying Eurosite's priority objectives for organisational development until 2025. Since the start of 2021, the Board, Council, and Secretariat have been working hard to start implementing the new Strategy. Its implementation required several organisational changes, for which Tasks and Finish Groups have been set up on topics such as finances and communication. The strategy describes Eurosite's priorities for the next five years. As is visible in the structure of this report, it lays out the four central objectives for the development of our network – REACH, RELEVANCE, RESILIENCE and RECOGNITION – and identifies, for each of these objectives, the activities necessary for their implementation. It also provides measurable indicators for the input, output, outcome and impact of these activities, enabling us to assess how successful we have been in implementing this strategy.

Despite the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, 2021 was a successful starting year on the implementation of the Eurosite 2021-2025 Strategy. Eurosite's membership slightly increased, new service contracts were signed which contributed to a diversification of income sources, and new strategic partnerships were established.

Objective 4: Elevating public RECOGNITION for land and nature conservation

Eurosite advocates for political support for land and nature conservation at the European level and raises awareness for the importance of practical site-based conservation. We need the support of the public and of decision makers if we want to ensure a proper implementation of nature conservation legislation and policy from supranational to local level. It is therefore essential that Eurosite dedicates time and resources to advocating for more and better land and nature conservation in Europe. Through our website, social media and monthly eNewsletter we have shared the latest information about funding and site management, as well as updates on legislative changes and developments in European environmental policy. In 2021, we have contributed towards this objective via active participation in advocacy activities and events at European and even global levels.

European Habitats Forum

Eurosite, as a member of the European Habitats Forum has participated in the two annual EHF meetings with DG Environment in 2021, in which the most relevant current policy developments were discussed. The meetings were preceded by a series of shorter internal EHF meetings to ensure EHF members are kept informed of the rapid developments in the sector.

Natura 2000 branding & Green Week 2021

In aiming to promote the benefits of Natura 2000 to society, a branding campaign was kicked-off in 2017. A functional, searchable website database is online. It is a database of products and stories concerning successful partnerships, demonstrating the socio-economic benefits the Natura 2000 sites provide for local stakeholders. The products that are promoted all have a clear link to Natura 2000 sites and there is a mutual benefit for both the Natura 2000 site and the product and its producer.

Eurosite has presented the Natura 2000 branding initiative at the 2021 Green Week, in the session 'The Natura 2000 logo for goods and services - supporting a healthy, clean environment and local economies, where the Commission presented a new logo developed for goods and services produced in Natura 2000 areas. Since then, Eurosite has supported the Commission in explaining to interested parties how they should encourage their national authorities to sign the license agreement for use of the Natura 2000 logo for goods and services within the Member State. Eurosite also took part in the session 'Natura 2000 logo for goods and services – supporting nature and people for a sustainable recovery' at the 19th European Week for Regions and Cities, and has promoted the Natura 2000 branding initiative at other events and on its communication channels.

DURUM WHEAT PASTA

Organic durum wheat flour pasta from Lago di Penne and Laguna di Orbetello nature reserves, Italy



Beeswax candles from National Park Barranco Río Dulce, Spain





Eurosite at COP26

The very first Peatland Pavilion ever, held at the Climate Summit COP26 in Glasgow, was a success! Eurosite supported the organisation of two well-attended on-site events at the COP26: the Interreg Care-Peat event with the Peatland Restoration Management Group (PRMG) on 5 November 2021, and 'Dialogues towards a European Peatlands Initiative' hosted by the Irish Government on 12 November 2021, the final day of COP 26.

Open meeting of the INTERREG Care-Peat Peatland Restoration and Management Group

The hybrid, open meeting of PRMG members with COP26 participants and an online audience focused on peatland restoration projects from various countries, answering the following questions: what has been achieved so far, what are major roadblocks for upscaling peatland restoration, what needs to be done politically to support work on the ground?

slogues towards a European Peatlands Initiative III, 12 November, 12:00 - 14:00



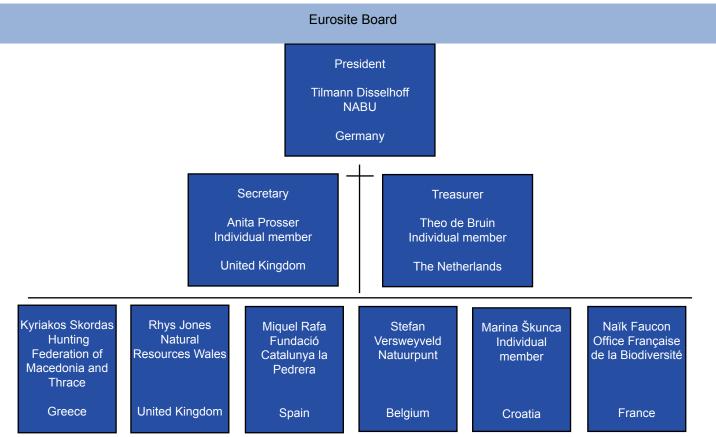
Dialogues towards a European Peatlands Initiative We were delighted to have representatives from national governments all over Europe participating. Peat areas in Europe are very diverse, but the challenges in different countries are often similar with regard to land management, land use, hydrology, policy, finance and communication. In the words of Harm Schoten, Eurosite Director: "We want to share knowledge and although there is good indepth knowlegde on the recovery of peatlands, much of this knowlegde remains on a national level". The event was closed by Dianna Kopansky from the UN Global Peatlands Initiative. Our take-away message contained the following points: policy and decision makers should be aware that conservation comes first. Unsustainable use of peatlands must be phased out. Upscaling of peatland conservation and restoration in Europe is urgently needed to meet global objectives. Bureaucracy on restoration planning should be avoided. Development of agricultural schemes aimed at rewetting of farmland on peat acknowledges the efforts done by farmers. Maintained by new business models and carbon credits schemes. Community engagement is crucial. A European Peatlands Initiative could support public and stakeholder involvement and raise awareness.

Peatland campaigns

To solidify the above message in awareness raising, we took part in two global campaigns in 2021. The Global Peat Press Project (GP3) campaign brought together international partners to highlight the importance of peatlands as vulnerable but valuable ecosystems. It is a coordinated media campaign from our member North Pennines AONB Partnership, the Global Peatlands Initiative (GPI) and Eurosite to promote the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030). In a second campaign we partnered with the GPI in a social media outreach effort to increase the awareness of the public and decision-makers for the urgency to protect, restore, and sustainably manage peatlands as indispensable ecosystems in the fight against climate emergency and biodiversity extinction under the slogan: Peatlands must be wet! More information on both campaigns is available here and here.



4. The Eurosite Network - as of December 2021



On behalf of all members of the network, our grateful thanks are extended to them for their service on the Board.

	Eurosite Council	
Kevin Feytons	Natuurpunt	Belgium
Lefkios Sergides	Terra Cypria — the Cyprus Conservation Foundation	Cyprus
Stanislav Brezina	The Krkonoše Mountains National Park	Czech Republic
Christophe Lépine	Fédéraion Conservatoires d'espaces Naturels	France
Eva Katrana	Thermaikos Gulf Management Authority	Greece
Carlotta Maggio	WWF Oasi	Italy
Debbie Kamphuis	Staatsbosbeheer	Netherlands
Patrick Nuvelstijn	Natuurmonumenten	Netherlands
Kazimierz Rabski	Society for the Coast (EUCC Poland)	Poland
Liliana Ivancenco	Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority	Romania
Xavier Escuté	Foundation Catalunya-La Pedrera	Spain
Bohdan Prots	Danube-Carpathian Programme	Ukraine
Nick Edwards	Natural Resources Wales	United Kingdom

- Belgium
- Instituut Natuur- en Bosonderzoek (INBO)
- Natuurpunt

Croatia

- Geonatura Ltd.
- Public Institution NATURA VIVA for the management of protected natural resources in the County of Karlovac

Cyprus

- Terra Cypria, the Cyprus Conservation Foundation

Czech Republic

- The Krkonoše Mountains National Park

France

- Office Francaise de la Biodiversité
- Fédération Conservatoires d'Espaces Naturels - Parc Naturel Régional des Marais du Cotentin et du Bessin
- Tour du Valat Institute de recherce pour la conservation des zones humides méditerranéennes

Germany

- Naturschutzbund Deutschland (NABU)

Greece

- Thermaikos Gulf Protected Areas Management Authoritv
- Hunting Federation of Macedonia & Thrace (KOMĂTH)
- Lake Kerkini Management Authority
- Management Body of Mt. Aenos National Park
- Management Body of Samaria (White Mountains) National Park

Hungary

- Ministry of Agriculture

Ireland

- National Parks and Wildlife Service

Italv

- WWF Oasi

Luxemboura

- Ministère du Développement Durable, département de l'environnement

Netherlands

- Brabants Landschap
- Dutch Montagu's Harrier Foundation
- Nature.house
- Natuurmonumenten
- Provincie Drenthe
- Provincie Noord-Holland
- Staatsbosbeheer

Eurosite Members

Poland

- Kampinos National Park
- Society for the Coast (EUCC-Poland)

Romania

- Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority (DDBRA)

Spain

- 3eData Ingeniería Ambiental
 Fundació Catalunya la Pedrera
- Ministry of Territory and Sustainability
- (Government of Catalonia)
- Xarxa de Custòdia del Térritori (XCT)

Turkey

- Doğa Koruma Merkezi Vakfı (DKM) - Nature Conservation Centre

Ukraine

- Danube-Carpathian Programme

United Kingdom

- Forestry and Land Scotland Natural England
- Natural Resources Wales
- North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural
- **Beauty Partnership**
- Ulster Wildlife Trust

Individual members

- Brady Mattsson, Austria
- Anton Gazenbeek, Belgium
- Stefan Avramov, Bulgaria
- Edin Lugić, Croatia
 Marina Skunca, Croatia
- Dunja Delić, Croatia
- Artemis Yiordamli, Cyprus
- Nicole Nowicki, France
- Jean Richer, France
- André Große-Stoltenberg, Germany
- Hans von Sonntag, Germany
- Dimitris Poursanidis. Greece
- Aysegul Cil, Netherlands
- Ben Delbaere, Netherlands
- Irene Bouwma, Netherlands
- Roelof Heringa, Netherlands - Hans Hofland, Netherlands
- Michiel Jorissen, Netherlands
- Nel Sangers, Netherlands - Jan Veenstra, Netherlands
- Henk Zingstra, Netherlands Theo de Bruin, Netherlands
- Tijana Nikolic, Serbia
- Kazimierz Rabski, Poland
- Nona Ardeleanu, Romania
- Jovita García Collado, Spain
- Jonathan Minchin, Spain
- Jude Nunga, Sweden
- Anita Prosser, United Kingdom
- Phil Eckersley, United Kingdom
- David Parker, United Kingdom
- Bernie Fleming, United Kingdom
- Clive Hurford, United Kingdom
- Roger Catchpole, United Kingdom

5. Report of the Treasurer 2021 ¹

Eurosite is a service network organisation: based on the needs of our members, site managers across Europe, our core activities are organising workshops, study tours and trainings for the exchange of knowledge and experience. In order to give direction to our organisation in the coming years, we adopted our financial strategy 2021-2025 in early 2021. A translation of Eurosite's strategic objectives into financial resources. Increasing resilience by finding new and other sources of income is one of the spearheads.

In the last guarter of 2020, we were able to recruit Harm Schoten as Director as per the start of 2021, and expanded staff capacity by employing an additional project officer and expanding contract hours for other staff members. This laid the foundation for a good and fruitful year.

Eurosite's employees and the affiliated members put a lot of work and energy into organising meetings, a growing number of working groups and actively participating in EU projects. And with success! In financial terms, the past year went exceptionally well, as the figures in this annual report confirm, and the first steps have been taken to further build up our target financial reserve. In addition, the surplus result has been allocated to a special provision to build up and strengthen the capacity of Eurosite's Secretariat, the so-called Organisational Capacity Building Provision.

In consultation with staff, the Board and the accountant, improved monitoring of Eurosite's income and expenditure has been established. This allows for timely action to be taken when unexpected fluctuations in the cashflow, such as deferred payments for projects, occur.

The ANBI status was successfully applied for in 2021 and granted. It offers the possibility of also being eligible for donations and other non-business contributions.

With the return of former members, the arrival of new members, the diversification of sources of income, successful applications for funds, the implementation of very interesting projects, and the commitment and dedication of the affiliated members and the staff, I foresee 2022 to be another great, special, and inspiring year.

Theo de Bruin,

Eurosite Treasurer

Table 1: Balance as of 31 December 2021

	31-12-2021	31-12-2020		31-12-2021	31-12-2020
ASSETS			EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Fixed assets			Equity		
			Association capital	€19,270	€7,270
Tangible fixed assets					
Furniture and office equipment	€5,506	€6,077	Provisions	€19,501	-
			Current liabilities		
			Trade creditors	€5,702	€2,427
Current assets			Taxes and social securities	€5,395	€4,295
			Accruals and deferred income	€134,056	€117,281
Receivables, pre-payments, and accrued income					
Trade receivables	€24,570	€2,341			
Taxes and social securities	€344	€766			
Prepayments and accrued income	€109,009	€93,437			
Cash at banks and in hand	€44,495	€28,652			
TOTAL ASSETS	€183,924	€131,273	TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	€183,924	€131,273

The amounts in this Treasurer's report are derived from the report regarding Eurosite's financial statements of the year 2021, prepared by NH I Schalks. The report, including an independent auditor's report, is available upon request.

Table 2: Profit and loss account for the year 2021²

	20)21	20	20
Sum of revenues				
Grants		€182,539		€155,572
Membership fees and registration fees		€73,546		€82,147
Co-financing from member organisations		€4,934		€460
Other revenues		€77,319		€4,321
Other revenues previous years		€4,036		€12,408
		€342,373		€254,907
Expenses				
Costs related to grants	€279,177		€230,570	
Costs of sub-contracted work & other external charges	€14,242		-	
Non-allocated wages and salaries	€2,556		€11,518	
Amortisation and depreciation	€1,230		€844	
Other operating expenses	€32,900		€11,346	
		€330,105		€254,278
Balance of revenues and expenses		€12,268		€629
Financial income and expenses		- €268		- €114
RESULT		€12,000		€515

Proposed resolutions 2021:

As Treasurer, I would like to ask the Eurosite members to consider the following resolutions for the financial year 2021 and to carry them unanimously during the Annual General Meeting on Cyprus, in November 2022:

Resolution n° 1

The Eurosite Council, having listened to the reading of the Financial Report of the annual accounts for the financial year ended upon 31 December 2021, approves the report of the annual accounts of the financial year which states a result of 12,000 Euro. On 31 December 2021, Eurosite therefore has a reserve of 19,270 and a provision of €19,501 Euro. In consequence, the General Assembly discharges without reserve the Administrative Council of its responsibility in the execution of its mandate for the financial year that has been closed.

Resolution n° 2

The General Assembly confers all powers to the bearer of a copy or an extract of the present record of its decision in order to carry out all legal formalities

1

Expenses have been allocated to grants / projects according to the appropriate regulations. The other expenses categories (non-allocated wages and salaries, amortisation and depreciation, and other operating expenses) represent the net

² general expenses after the allocation to grants / projects.

Contact us

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http://www.eurosite.org

Please note that Eurosite staff is mainly working from their homes. You can therefore not visit us without an appointment.

Keep up to date about Eurosite:

Register for Eurosite's eNewsletter at:	http://eepurl.com/U7SP1
Come and join us at our network events:	http://www.eurosite.org/events
Follow us on LinkedIn:	https://www.linkedin.com/company/eurosite-org
Like us on Facebook:	https://www.facebook.com/eurosite.org
Follow us on Twitter:	http://twitter.com/eurosite



Eurosite is working to create a Europe where nature is cared for, protected, restored and valued by all.

We do this by providing practitioners with opportunities to network and exchange experience on practical nature management. We are a network of site managers, non-governmental and governmental organisations, individuals and organisations committed to our vision. Our members are based across Europe, from the Atlantic islands to the Black Sea; and from Scandinavia to the Mediterranean.

Interested in what we do? Take a look at

in the second a member.

Together we can make a difference.