EUROSITE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

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LETTER FROM THE EUROSITE PRESIDENT

Dear reader,

Repetition is an essential comedic device. So should we laugh about the fact that I could repeat my foreword from the 2022 Annual Report almost word by word in the 2023 edition? The joke feels bitter. None of the issues that occupied our minds then became invalid in 2023. Our world is still in a bad and worsening state. What can we do? What should we do?

For a long time, Eurosite has taken pride in being a network of experts in natural site management and nature conservation – hence our byline "Connecting Competence in Conservation". The term "-site" in our name refers to our very special expertise. (To outsiders, the word "site" is not self-explanatory. Even members of our own community don't always understand it. If you don't know that the European network of protected areas "Natura 2000" calls its reserves "sites", you probably miss the reference).

Surprisingly, we have given far less attention to the more intuitive part of our name: "Euro-". Somehow, we have always taken for granted that Europe is our geographic scope. We have never given much thought to what it means that we are a "European" network – as opposed to – say – an international or regional network. I think we should change that. Europe is much more than just a geographic denomination. It is an idea. The "European project" after the second world held the promise of peace, prosperity, and progress. All activities in our network, on a meta-level, contribute to these values. By bringing people together from different backgrounds and countries, by fostering civil discourse, and by tackling common problems and challenges, our work is in direct connection with the European idea.

In a time of resurging nationalism and reactionary anti-environmental politics, reasserting ourselves of our European values feels like the necessary antidote. We are learning the hard way that sometimes it takes determination to defend freedom. Let's use the spirit that animated the founders of Eurosite – to create a European community of professionals who care about nature, who appreciate our common heritage and who want to work together to preserve and restore it.

I'm glad to say that Eurosite is well equipped to face the challenges of our times. In 2023, we continued to grow in meaningful ways. Most importantly for me, we became younger! The 2023 General Assembly elected outstanding early-career professionals to the Board, and the secretariat added talented young staff members. I hope that we kickstarted a process of rejuvenation that will continue in the next years. This is our very own challenge: to attract the next generation of European conservation professionals to our network. If we manage that, we can continue to do our part so that the European idea lives on.

Tilmann Disselhoff
President of Eurosite - the European Land Conservation Network

TIME LINE OF EVENTS

January

25

Webinar -Virtual Event
Webinar: Cross-boundary donations for private land conservation in the EU

February

23

Webinar -Virtual Event
Webinar: The role of grazing in natural land management

March

08

Training - Aalst, Netherlands
Training course on creating wetlands near cities

08

Webinar -Virtual Event
Russia's aggression against Ukraine and its consequences for people and nature

30

Webinar -Virtual Event
Wadden Sea Tourism Radar webinar

May

09-11

Study Tour -Netherlands
The Eurosite Grazing Study Tour 2023: visiting nature in The Netherlands

17

Webinar - Virtual Event
The use of fire as a land management tool

26

Workshop -Brussels, BE
Workshop on voluntary labels for nature conservation on private land

June

06

Workshop - Berlin, Germany
Workshop on Conservation Easements

September

20 — **Workshop - Tata, Hungary**
Multi-Stakeholder Workshop on Peatland Management

07 — **Webinar - Virtual Event**
Webinar on: The importance of extensive grazing for biodiversity

08 — **Fieldtrip - Netherlands**
Field twinning – P-mining for grassland restoration LIFE Nardus & Limosa

08 — **Workshop - Kastoria, Greece**
LIFE ATIAS workshop

19 — **Conference-Antwerp, Belgium**
Power to the Peatlands: European peatlands conference

21 — **Webinar - Virtual Event**
DANUBEPARKS - recreation and visitors

27-29 — **Study Tour - Poland**
Grazing Study Tour: Experiences in Poland

28 — **Workshop - Pampilhosa da Serra , Portugal**
LIFE ENPLC workshop

November

07-09 — **Conference - Amiens, France**
Eurosite Annual Meeting 2023

15 — **Webinar - Virtual Event**
National Peatland Strategies And Peatland Restoration Opportunities For Climate Action

3. IMPLEMENTING THE EUROSITE STRATEGY 2021-2025 SUMMARY OF HIGHLIGHTS IN 2023

Eurosite is a **rather unique organisation** - it provides networking, capacity building, training, information, advocacy, and awareness-raising services for conservation practitioners all over Europe. Eurosite is especially proud of its latest achievements on its way to fulfil its four objectives:

- Strengthening the network's **RESILIENCE** - Eurosite is a healthy organisation with the human and financial resources necessary to deliver the Strategy and fulfil the expectations of its members;
- Expanding the network's **REACH** for Europe's nature – Eurosite is recognised as a vital, active, and growing networking organisation with adequate geographic, thematic, disciplinary and institutional coverage;
- Increasing the network's **RELEVANCE** – Eurosite is recognised as a leading facilitator of access to all relevant resources related to practical site management and land conservation;
- Raising public **RECOGNITION** of 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.

Ad 1. RESILIENCE

In 2023 Eurosite improved its RESILIENCE by expanding the Secretariat with two **new employees**. There had long been a desire to strengthen Eurosite's finance unit, prompted by the growth in annual turnover and the number of projects. It was also possible to hire a new project officer with experience in Brussels, with the intention of strengthening Eurosite's knowledge and policy activities. An important step was taken with '**Eurosite for you**', the new and modern Terms of Employment for secretariat staff, in force from 1 January 2024.

To become more financially resilient, Eurosite needs to increase its budget share of unrestricted revenue and build up a financial reserve. Revenue was improved by **diversifying income streams** through funding from the European Climate Initiative (EUKI) of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, and from Climate Catalyst (private funding). A modest positive result in 2023 gave the opportunity to take the required minimum step in building up a financial reserve, although the challenge remains.

In 2023, Eurosite further improved its new and **revamped website** to enhance its functionality and user experience. In line with the new Communication Strategy 2021-2025, all types of communication within the Eurosite network now focus on continuous **campaign telling stories**, using activities to gather attention for Eurosite as the umbrella organisation for the professional nature conservation community in Europe. Since 2020, the Eurosite website saw an increase of 60% in visitors. In 2023, Eurosite dispatched 24 email newsletters, achieving an open rate of 39% and an impressive click rate of 5%, indicating the quality of content. Still, there is room for improvement.

The 34th Eurosite Annual Meeting in November 2023 in Amiens, France, was the **best-attended Eurosite event** in at least the last 15 years, maybe longer. Almost 120 people from more than 20 countries participated in the 3-day gathering. In the spirit of European cultural plurality, our hosts Fédération Conservatoire d'espaces Naturels, l'Office Français de la Biodiversité and Conservatoire du littoral had organised simultaneous translation from French to English – and the translators did an admirable job. Six thematic workshops were held during the Annual Meeting and three thematic field tours were organised to peatland, coastal and rural areas.

Ad 2. REACH

For more than three decades Eurosite connects competence in conservation. In 2023 Eurosite has expanded its REACH by gaining **3 new organisational members** and now represents 84 members from 26 European countries (December 2023). We were exceptionally happy to welcome our first member from Slovakia: BROZ, a young and passionate NGO leading in Natura 2000 conservation and nature restoration in the country. The appeal of Eurosite's activities to new target groups, such as private landowners and farmer organisations willing to contribute to biodiversity restoration on their land, was demonstrated by two new organisations joining the network: Green Restoration Ireland and Fundatia Adept from Romania. An old tradition was restored: during the Annual Meeting, these new members were presented with the well-known wooden Eurosite plate.

In 2023 **two new strategic partnerships** were prepared (one of them signed early 2024), with Rewilding Europe and Wetlands International Europe. There is a high degree of complementarity between the missions and objectives of both organisations and Eurosite, and cooperation will start in 2024 by organising trainings on rewilding and protected area management, and by collaborative advocating for European cooperation for peatland conservation and restoration.

Ad 3. RELEVANCE

Eurosite's RELEVANCE is also growing steadily, widely due to the consistent endeavour of the Eurosite working groups. The now **nine working groups** have been very active, organising series of training workshops, meetings, and webinars in 2023.

Natuurmonumenten, Staatsbosbeheer, Eurosite and the Polish Society for the Coast joined forces and organised two three-days in-person **grazing study tours 2023**, bringing together in the Netherlands 45 delegates from 11 countries, and in Poland 26 delegates from 8 countries. The tours were preceded by online webinars with more than 100 participants from across Europe. The main theme of the tours was natural grazing, highlighting three perspectives: economical, ecological and social. The tours included visits to different nature reserves, each with unique insights.

The Eurosite Remote Sensing Support Group focuses on developing innovative, open, remote sensing tools and technologies supporting open access to biodiversity spatial data. In 2023 the group organised two well-received in-person workshops for national government authorities and site managers, on **"Information systems for nature conservation"**, one in Poland (28 participants) and one in Croatia (20 participants).

Ad 4. RECOGNITION

Eurosite is very well RECOGNIZED at European level. Eurosite facilitates site managers, (pubic and private) landowners and farmers to play a vital role in implementing global, EU and national policies to upscale conservation and restoration of protected areas, and beyond. A key goal for the coming years is to grow Eurosite's impact on policy support and implementation, and to let the constructive relationships Eurosite is building benefit deployed EU policies. In 2023 the **Conservation Landowners Coalition (CLC)** – an initiative of ELO and Eurosite - reaffirmed its support of the legislative proposal by the European Commission for an EU Nature Restoration Regulation by publishing a joint position in an open letter.

In 2023 the Eurosite Board adopted the new **Eurosite Advocacy Strategy 2023-2025**. Eurosite's advocacy objectives are linked to our strategic goals:

- to shape the regulatory and political framework necessary for upscaling, accelerating and improving peatland restoration as natural carbon sinks and important habitats across Europe;
- to increase the availability of innovative tools for farmers and private landowners to protect and restore nature on their properties in the long term and to increase the land's health for next generations;
- to increase public and private funding for site-based conservation and restoration.

War on Ukraine

In 2023, again, Eurosite's Council member Bohdan Prots, CEO of the Danube Carpathian Programme, together with other speakers living and working in Ukraine, reported in a special Eurosite webinar what the war meant for people and nature. Eurosite keeps in close contact with our Ukrainian contacts and regularly updates its members on the **situation in Ukraine**. Eurosite is also supporting our Ukrainian member in funding applications under the new MATRA programme of the Dutch government, about strengthening local communities, fighting corruption and introducing democratic participation through community-based conservation action.

THE EUROSITE NETWORK - AS OF DECEMBER 2023

Belgium

- Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO)
- Natuurpunt

Croatia

- Geonatura Ltd. Consultancy in Nature Protection
- Public Instutution NATURA VIVA for the management of protected natural resources in the Country of Karlovan
- OIKON Ltd.

Cyprus

- Terra Cypria, the Cyprus Conservation Foundation

Czech Republic

- The Krkonoše Mountains National Park

France

- Fédération des Conservatoires d'espaces naturels
- Office Français de la Biodiversité
- Conservatoire du Littoral
- Tour du Valat – Institute de recherche pour la conservation des zones humides méditerranéennes

Germany

- Naturschutzbund (NABU) Deutschland v.E.

Greece

- Hunting Federation of Macedonia & Thrace (KOMATH)
- Lake Kerkini Management Authority
- Management Body of Mount Aenos National Park
- Management Body of Samaria National Park-Western Crete
- Thermaikos Gulf Protected Areas Management Authority

Hungary

- Ministry of Agriculture

Ireland

- National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Green Restoration Ireland Cooperative Society Ltd.
- Community Wetlands Forum

Italy

- WWF Italy

Luxembourg

- 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

Poland

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

Romania

- Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority (DDBRA)
- Fundatia ADEPT

Slovakia

- BROZ - Bratislavské regionálne ochranárske združenie

Spain

- 3edata ingeniéria Ambiental
- Fundació Catalunya La Pedrera
- Ministry of Territory and Sustainability (Government of Catalonia)
- Xarxa per a la Conservació de la Natura (XCN)

Turkey

- Turkish Nature Conservation Centre (DKM)

Ukraine

- Danube Carpathian Programme

United Kingdom

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

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Member	Country
Brady Mattsson	Austria
Anton Gazenbeek	Belgium
Stefan Avramov	Bulgaria
Edin Lugić	Croatia
Marina Škunca	Croatia
Artemis Yiordamli	Cyprus
Mesfin Gebremikael	Denmark
Guy Siri	France
Nicole Nowicki	France
André Große-Stoltenberg	Germany
Hans von Sonntag	Germany
Christine Bajohr	Germany
Melina Addis	Germany
Dimitris Poursanidis	Greece
Jude Hongla Bahanag Nunga	Ireland
Kazimierz Rabski	Poland
Nona Ardeleanu	Romania
Tijana Nikolic	Serbia
Jure Čuš	Slovenia
Jonathan Minchin	Spain

Member	Country
Jonas Grahn	Sweden
Elena Sobakina	Switzerland
Ben Delbaere	Netherlands
Hans Hofland	Netherlands
Henk Zingstra	Netherlands
Irene Bouwma	Netherlands
Jan Veenstra	Netherlands
Michiel Jorissen	Netherlands
Nel Sangers	Netherlands
Roelof Heringa	Netherlands
Theo de Bruin	Netherlands
Martijn Stevens	Netherlands
Theo van der Sluis	Netherlands
Paul Vertegaal	Netherlands
Anita Prosser	United Kingdom
Bernard Fleming	United Kingdom
Clive Hurford	United Kingdom
David Parker	United Kingdom
Philip Eckersley	United Kingdom
Roger Catchpole	United Kingdom

Member breakdown

member organisations	34
associate organisational members	11
associate individual members	39
Total memberships	**84**
Number of Countries	26
Number of EU countries	22

BOARD MEMBERS

President

Tilmann Disseldorf
NABU
Germany

Secretary

Lisa Ernoul
Tour du Valat
France

Treasurer

Theo de Bruin
the Netherlands

Melina Addix
Germany

Lander Wantens
Natuurpunt
Belgium

Naïk Faucon
Office Française de la Biodiversité
France

Miquel Rafa
Fundació Catalunya la Pedrera
Spain

Kyriakos Skordas
Hunting Federation of Macedonia and Thrace
Greece

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Kevin Feytons, Natuurpunt, Belgium

Koulla Michael Terra Cypria, the Cyprus Conservation Foundation, Cyprus

Carlotta Maggio, WWF Italy Foundation, Italy

Patrick Nuvelstijn, Vereniging Natuurmonumenten, the Netherlands

Mathias Brummer, Xarxa per a la Conservació de la Natura (XCN), Spain

Bohdan Prots (BP), Danube Carpathian Programme, Ukraine

Liliana Ivanenco (LI), Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, Romania

Christophe Lépine, National Federation of Conservatoires d'Espaces Naturels, France

Kazimierz Rabski (KR), Society for The Coast (EUCC-Poland Poland

Viera Horáková, Krkonoše Mountains National Park, Czech Republic

Jennifer Krämer, NABU, Germany

Michaela Kalivodová, Bratislavské regionálne ochranárske združenie (BROZ), Slovakia

Yıldıray Lise, DKM Nature Conservation Centre, Turkey

Note: There are remaining vacancies for which members can send in nominations for appointment during the 2024 Annual General Assembly: Croatia, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal, and the United Kingdom.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

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.

2023 was another successful year for Eurosite. Eurosite's membership network welcomed new organisational members, and new service contracts were implemented, which contributed to a diversification of income sources. Eurosite organised an impressive list of well-attended and highly appreciated events, such as webinars, conferences and training workshops, either virtual, hybrid or in-person. Several projects continued in 2023. The EU LIFE NGO Funding 2023 as part of our Framework Partnership Agreement for 2022 – 2024 greatly supported the implementation of the Eurosite Strategy 2021 – 2025. Four inspiring projects were successfully completed in 2023, seven new projects were granted and started in 2023: Erasmus+ TUNE IT Nature Benefits: from Theory to Practice, LIFE Orchids, LIFE Harwin, LIFE PeatPals, LIFE B4B, Biodiversa+ SPEAR and Horizon MOSAIC, a project working to understand and influence how land across Europe is managed. The 34th Eurosite Annual Meeting in Amiens, France, was the best-attended Eurosite event in at least the last 15 years, maybe longer. Almost 120 people from more than 20 countries participated in the 3-day gathering. Last but not least, two new friendship agreements were prepared between Eurosite and Rewilding Europe, and Eurosite and Wetlands International Europe.

The increase in income from project grants and service contracts provided a healthy cash flow and enabled Eurosite to fund the positions of a new Finance Officer and a new Project Officer in the Secretariat.

With 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 2024 to be another great, special, and inspiring year.

Theo de Bruin, Eurosite Treasurer

Proposed resolutions 2023:
As Treasurer, I would like to ask the Eurosite members to consider the following resolutions for the financial year 2023 and to carry them unanimously during the Annual General Meeting in Durham, United Kingdom, in October 2024:

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 2023, approves the report of the annual accounts of the financial year which states a result of 2,337 Euro. On 31 December 2023, Eurosite therefore has a reserve of 25,224 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.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Table 1. Balance as of 31 December 2023

ASSETS	31/12/2023	31/12/2022	EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	31/12/2023	31/12/2022
Fixed assets			**Long term funds**		
Tangible fixed assets			Association capital	€ 25.224	€ 22.887
Furniture and office equipment	€4.061	€6.347	Provisions	€ 0	€ 0
Current assets					
Receivables, prepayments, and accrued income			**Current liabilities**		
Trade receivables	€21.145	€2.584	Trade creditors	€ 79.333	€ 10.505
Taxes and social securities	€1.456	€1.036	Taxes and social securities	€ 8.364	€ 7.492
Prepayments and accrued income	€208.733	€105.600	Accruals and deferred income	€ 254.811	€ 620.089
Cash at banks and in hand	€132.337	€545.406			
TOTAL ASSETS	€367.732	€660.973	TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	€367.732	€660.973

The amounts in this Treasurer's report are derived from Eurosite's financial statements of the year 2023, prepared by NH | Schalks.
The report, including an independent auditor's report, is available upon request.

Table 2. Profit and loss acount for the year 2023

	2023		2022	
Sum of revenues				
Grants		€ 243.475		€ 198.952
Membership fees and registration fees		€ 100.834		€ 85.433
Co-financing from members / third parties		€ 1.948		€ 12.670
Other revenues		€ 242.171		€ 78.807
Other revenues previous years		€ 337		€ 884
		€ 588.765		**€ 376.747**
Sum of expenses				
Costs related to grants	€ 565.113		€ 357.370	
Costs of sub-contracted work & other external charges	€ 0		€ 4.463	
Non-allocated wages and salaries	€ 15.126		€ 4.365	
Amortisation and depreciation	€ 2.286		€ 2.295	
Other operating expenses	€ 3.003		€ 3.700	
		€ 585.528		**€ 372.193**
Balance of revenues and expenses		€ 3.237		€ 4.554
Financial income and expenses		-€ 900		-€ 937
RESULT		€ 2.337		€ 3.617

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 general expenses after the allocation to grants / projects.