

## Recognizing the true value of nature

### Rethinking today's subsidies to reflect tomorrow's priorities

The EUROPARC Federation calls upon the European Commission and national governments to realize the importance of and act upon the recommendations made in the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) report on the valuation of ecosystems services.

The final TEEB synthesis was released on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> October at the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties in Nagoya (18 – 19 October 2010). Throughout the meeting discussions centred on the need to put an economic value on the services nature provides, such as fertile soil, the pollination of our crops and flood defences. There is a further need to recognize the economic value of protected areas and their role in supporting and driving local economies. EUROPARC calls for the recognition within the European Commission and by national governments of the clear and substantial role protected areas have in delivering ecosystem services. The environment should sit at the heart of all Commission policies and decisions and be recognized as the main instrument to deliver sustainable economic practices.

The TEEB Report underlines the urgency for policy makers to recognize the need to secure positive support for biodiversity management. "All economic activity and most of human well-being, whether in an urban or non-urban setting, are based on a healthy, functioning environment. Nature's multiple and complex values have direct economic impacts on human well-being and public spending at the local as well as the national level," said Pavan Sukhdev, leader of the TEEB study.

Protected areas can play a major role in achieving sustainable economies by demonstrating best practice. Yet government decisions across Europe have the potential to diminish these natural assets through significant cuts in the management of these protected areas. The lack of investment by governments seriously undermines the ability of protected areas to adequately secure the value of these natural resources, sustain economies and release the ecosystem benefits needed for society.

The EUROPARC Federation calls upon the European Commission and national governments as a matter of urgency to accept the recommendations made in the TEEB Report: to rethink today's subsidies to reflect tomorrow's priorities; to reward unrecognized benefits and penalize uncaptured costs; to share the benefits of conservation and to measure what is managed. Adopting these simple yet effective principles will ensure that ecosystem services delivered by protected areas are available for the long term and thus create sustainable economies that underpin all European communities and the environment they depend upon.

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TEEB (<http://www.teebweb.org/>) is an independent study, led by Pavan Sukhdev, hosted by United Nations Environment Programme with financial support from the European Commission; Germany, UK, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. Mr. Sukhdev also spearheads the Green Economy Initiative of the UN Environment Programme. The TEEB Report for Local and Regional Policy Makers is one of a series of five interconnected reports. A TEEB for citizens website went live in the run-up to Nagoya and the final TEEB synthesis report was released at the CBD COP10 meeting at Nagoya in October 2010.

The EUROPARC Federation ([www.euoparc.org](http://www.euoparc.org)) is committed to the protection and promotion of Europe's protected areas and all they offer. We are the foremost and largest NGO representing European protected areas, uniting national parks, regional parks, nature parks and biosphere reserves in 39 countries, with the common aim of conserving Europe's unique variety of wildlife, habitats and landscapes. President is Mrs Erika Stanciu and Director Miss Carol Ritchie.

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