

## **EUROPARC Conference 2010**

Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park,  
Pescasseroli, September 29th - October 2nd 2010

***Living together. Biodiversity and Human Activities.  
A Challenge for the Future of Protected Areas***

### **SIDE MEETING SD3 - Protected Areas and Natura 2000 Network**

**CED PPN** - Politecnico e Università di Torino - Dipartimento Interateneo Territorio

*The proposed meeting should focus on the relationship between Parks and Protected Areas set up by national and regional governments of the whole Europe and Natura 2000 Network set up by European Union (27 countries). The debate may start from the results of a new research, still in progress by CED PPN with the help of EUROPARC, which enlightens such relationship taking into account divergences and overlaps of both systems. The debate on the involved problems will suggest further actions for a better coordination among nature conservation policies at the different levels.*

- 1 – Relevance of Protected Areas (PAs) for biodiversity**  
*Importanza delle Aree Protette (AP) per la biodiversità*
- 2 – Fragmentation and connectivity**  
*Frammentazione e connettività*
- 3 – Relevance of Natura 2000 Network**  
*Importanza della Rete Natura 2000*
- 4 – Need for integration of PAs and Natura 2000 Network**  
*Esigenza di integrazione delle AP con la Rete Natura 2000*
- 5 – Actual separation between PAs and Natura 2000 Network policies**  
*Attuale separazione tra le politiche per le AP e quelle per la Rete Natura 2000*
- 6 – Improving knowledge on PAs and Natura 2000 Network relationship**  
*Sviluppo della conoscenza sui rapporti tra AP e Rete Natura 2000*

In the context of the global campaign against the loss of biodiversity, as it has been confirmed for the Year of Biodiversity 2010, nature Protected Areas (PAs) are generally acknowledged to play a central role, particularly for “in situ” conservation. This is even more true of Europe, where PAs designated by the national or regional governments knew a spectacular growth in the last 50 years, presently covering the 18% of the whole territory (CED PPN 2008), with an increasing social, cultural and economic impact on the regional and local systems.

But, it is well ascertained (IUCN: Durban 2003, Barcellona 2008) that policies based on PAs are often ineffective, both in terms of nature conservation and of benefits for local communities, due the lack of coordination among the involved institutions and their management tools. In fact, the spatial diffusion of PAs has crossed in the last decades a strong diffusion of urban settlements and infrastructures, which has determined a relevant loss of habitats, damages or destruction of ecological linkages. So, the question of connectivity, both inside and outside PAs, has become crucial.

The EEC Directive 92/43 is the most important attempt to face this question, providing a network of Sites – “Natura 2000” – designated on the basis of shared criteria and spread in all European Union Countries (27), covering an important share of the total territory: 11,1% with the SPAs and 13,6% with the SCIs (EU 2008). Obviously, the spatial relevance of Natura 2000 sites and their common criteria of identification confer on it a potential role for designing a pan-european system of nature conservation.

Moving from the recognition (IUCN, Durban 2003) that no park is large enough to be effectively protected from inside, a more integrated policy can be envisaged, where the Natura 2000 Sites, the PAs of national or regional interest, as well as other areas of international interest (Ramsar, UNESCO), could play complementary roles. At the same time, the integration of Natura 2000 with PAs is consistent with the “new paradigms” for PAs proposed by IUCN (2003), particularly for what concerns the role of local communities, co-management, network conception, compact planning by a plurality of institutions at different scale, and, last but not least, role of landscape (it is worth notice that the new paradigms give also room, more and more, to a wider concept of biodiversity, as a part of the bio-cultural diversity, IUCN 2010). It is in this perspective that Natura 2000 can give a substantial advantage to the European system of PAs and vice-versa.

But such consideration should be at least partially rejected if compared with the “actual” state of the relationship between policies concerning respectively the national-regional PAs and the Natura 2000 Sites. To this regard, we must observe that not only the coordination, but also the knowledge and interpretation of the different systems are still inadequate. As a consequence, even the spatial relationship between PAs and Sites is still lacking of basic information. We know that the surface of Natura 2000 Sites is, generally speaking, largely overlapping the surface covered by PAs, but we don’t know to what extent, where and why.

Therefore, there is an evident need for the improvement of research on the relationships between PAs and Natura 2000 which make it possible to evaluate the overall coverage of the European territory, analyse their spatial distribution in face of the territorial structures, dynamics and policies, ascertain the joint effect of both systems in contrasting habitat insularization and fragmentation. Some steps in this direction are currently being taken (CED PPN 2010), aiming at a really systemic approach to nature conservation and sustainable development.