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Welcome to the second edition of the European Charter Newsletter!

The Newsletter is published occasionally and accompanies the Website of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, with up-to-date news on the network of Charter Parks. If you wish to communicate your news for a future newsletter, the Charter Website or other EUROPARC publication then please send it to: info@european-charter.org.

Mourne AONB: engaging the private sector in sustainable tourism

In August 2003, the **Mourne Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)** in County Down, Northern Ireland became the first area in the British Isles to be awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas.

Since being awarded the European Charter the Mourne Heritage Trust (management authority for the Mourne AONB) has been steadily increasing its involvement with the tourism private sector. It has also been supporting businesses through a Green Tourism Scheme and study visits to centres of excellence. These efforts will culminate in the launch of a sustainable tourism manual and kicking off a series of private sector forum meetings in the June of 2005.

The Mourne Heritage Trust has been working with the private sector in the park to establish a Pilot Green Tourism Scheme. Based on similar criteria to the European Ecolabel the Green Tourism Pilot Scheme encouraged businesses to consider the environmental impacts of their operations. Nine businesses in Mourne met the required standards and were presented with accreditation in late February.



Supporting Mourne businesses in improving environmental management



Mourne tourism businesses learning about alternative energy and waste management at the Centre for Alternative Technology, Mid-Wales

The Mourne Heritage Trust has also launched its new website at www.mournelive.com. As well as information on MHT's Sustainable Tourism Programme, you can find out about MHT's Biodiversity, Built Heritage and Countryside Management Activities. The site offers the opportunity to explore Mourne using an interactive map and 3D views from Slieve Donard, the area's highest peak.

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Frankenwald: building a network with tourism actors

Implementation of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas has led to a comprehensive networking of all those involved in tourism in the Frankenwald Nature Park. The Nature Park Association and the Frankenwald Tourism Service Center (FTsc) have acted as buttresses to support and foster partnerships between different sectors. Responsibility for projects and sponsorship programmes rests with the Nature Park, whilst the FTsc is the motor for marketing, product development and quality management.

Tourism in Frankenwald is based on the principle of sustainable development. However, although the idea of sustainability remains very much to the fore, in practice it is above all price and service that have to convince the holidaymaker. It is therefore necessary to underpin sustainable products (for example, hiking, biking, nordic walking, regional cuisine, mobility) with targeted and tailored services.

As such hotel and restaurant associations can promote environmentally friendly accommodation and catering services. The initiative only enjoys limited success at present as the average guest does not sufficiently value the commitment made by the enterprise. Far more effective on the market place are initiatives which promote being hiking or cycling friendly. Here transparent criteria promise guests a specific benefit, which they regard as a clear service with extra value and which they will value more and more. In turn this becomes a decision-making factor.

For three years the FTsc has applied these criteria for including businesses in activities aimed at specific target groups. Cooperation with travel operators and the press clearly indicates that when services are orientated towards a particular target group opportunities for professional and successful marketing increase.



Frankenwald Nature Park: hotel with special service for mountainbikers (Photo by Gerhard Eisenschink)

Particularly challenging are the criteria to participate in developing the product called 'Frankenwald Cuisine – Naturally Regional'. The use of agricultural produce from the region is compulsory. In the development of this initiative the FTsc has been active in encouraging contacts and partnerships between gastronomy and agriculture. The provision and sales of regional produce has thereby been substantially increased.

An efficient partnership with regional transport providers serves as the basis for 'Frankenwald mobil'. A network of buses and trains has been established to bring tourists and locals to the tourist centres of the Frankenwald at weekends and on public holidays. Transporting bicycles is free of charge. For the local authorities who finance the scheme it is a form of economic support, which promotes tourism as an economic driving force.

This is also in the interest of businesses in the region. The more attractive Frankenwald is as a holiday destination, the easier it is to attract qualified workers to the region or indeed to keep them. That is why selected businesses from the region are working together in the 'pro Frankenwald' partnership (see www.pro-frankenwald.de) for the Frankenwald and its tourism.

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Eine deutsche Übersetzung dieses Beitrags finden Sie unter www.european-charter.org.

Luberon: consulting local partners and inhabitants on the revision of its charter

The Regional Nature Parks of France work on the basis of a charter (the 'Charte du Parc'), which sets out their missions for a duration of 10 years.

Each park's charter is drawn up locally with the various local partners whether they are public (regional and local authorities, the state) or private (specialised local associations, representatives of the various local branches of the economy). The councils which accompany the life of a regional nature park (in the case of Luberon: council of associations, scientific council, development council) also participate in this process.

In past years, the **Parc Naturel Régional du Luberon** consulted widely those concerned by the activities of the park or who wanted to be involved in the life of their area.

The revision of the charter involves an evaluation of the actions foreseen and carried out in the previous decade and of the proposals for the future text which will settle the general framework of the parks' missions for the next 10 years. Launched at the Fête du Parc last October, the consultation procedure for the Charter reached its peak in spring 2005. This time, the park of Luberon has been innovative in that it has decided to consult stakeholders in the various sectors with which it works.

For tourism, consultative meetings have been held with private stakeholders and institutional partners enabling a more detailed explanation of the second part of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism, which will engage them more directly in the Charter process.

The Parc du Luberon has also undertaken to consult local people by inviting them to organise meetings at home to listen to them speaking about "their" Luberon, about the park, about their concerns and about the projects for which they are ready to commit to.

Although exhausting the consultation was highly educative; many local people responded to the park's call with some 500 people expressing their opinions on the park to the park. Presentation of the results, rich in information for the park's staff and elected representatives, will start shortly in the four areas of the park.

The next Fête du Parc in October will be followed by a public survey in the villages. This will precede the final decisions which will settle the boundaries of the park and its new missions for the next ten years.

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Conseil syndical du 29 mars 2005

Qu'entend t-on par « Parc du Luberon » ?

1. Un territoire : son périmètre, son image
2. Un projet pour ce territoire : une vision et des objectifs pour l'avenir (la charte)
3. Une institution : le syndicat mixte de gestion, ses statuts, ses administrateurs, ses techniciens, ses partenaires

Presentation of the consultation to the « Conseil Syndical » of the Park

Peneda Gerês: involving local stakeholders in its sustainable tourism development strategy

Referring to the European Charter principles, the **Peneda Gerês National Park** (PNPG), has been supporting various kind of tourism activities and services, that better adjust to the typical characteristics and to the sensibility of this protected area.

The main purpose was to involve the local stakeholders in a sustainable tourism development strategy, in order to maintain the sustainability of this sector and to achieve the real participation of the tourism managers and local inhabitants.

As a reference, PNPG can point to the "World-wide Day Without Cars" in the "Albergaria Wood", organised by the PNPG with the contribution of local managers and government.

This initiative has been realized in the Environment World-wide Day with the purpose to promote alternative means of transport (bicycles, horses, coaches, walking), in one of the most sensitive areas of National Park: the Biogenetic Reserve, "Palheiros" and "Albergaria" Wood.



People horse riding during the "World-wide Day Without Cars"

...and preparing the second part of the Charter

Two years after the official adhesion to the Charter, the PNPG and ADERE-Peneda Gerês (representative entity of various tourism agents in the area of the PNPG) are expecting, in this second phase, to consolidate the interest and participation of tourism managers and other local stakeholders.

The second phase of the Charter will be based on the methodology that is being developed in the scope of an EQUAL project¹ with the following partners: ICN/PNPG (Instituto da Conservação da Natureza/Parque Nacional da Peneda-Gerês, IDARN (Instituto para o Desenvolvimento Agrário da Região Norte), ADERE-Peneda-Gerês, DRAEDM (Direcção Regional de Agricultura de Entre Douro e Minho), CORANE (Associação para o Desenvolvimento dos Concelhos da Raia Nordestina) and PROBASTO (Associação de Desenvolvimento Rural de Basto).

The purpose is to define the adhesion conditions for tourism companies; that will be settled on standards of quality and environment management. The final result will be the creation of a logo of certification for all the adherents' entities.

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¹ Designation: "Parques Com Vida", DP Identification: PT-2004-275 www.equal.pt or www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equal

Syöte: cooperating with tourism enterprises

Syöte National Park was established in 2000. During these few years that the park has existed, many steps have been taken forward in the field of nature tourism in the area.

During the Syöte Life-project (1999-2002) that was administered by Metsähallitus (Finnish Forest and Park Service), permanent cooperation with local tourism enterprises began. The Syöte Area Nature Tourism Plan (2001) and the Management and Land Use Plan for the Syöte National Park (2003) were drafted in consultation with local tourism entrepreneurs and other local actors. These plans contain the main outlines to be followed in the management of the park over the next 10 years, as well as the strategy for sustainable tourism and the action plan. The Syöte Nature Guide Booklet (2002) was published to serve as a tool for tourism entrepreneurs. It contains useful information of the area's nature and historical background and presents the natural and historical places in the park which are suitable for nature tourism.



*A wilderness hut in the Syöte National Park "winter wonderland".
(Photo by Urpo Kouva)*

The importance of sustainable use of nature is well understood in the area. The goal of the New Syöte Project (2001-2003) administered by the Municipality of Pudasjärvi, was to achieve a programme agreement defining the tourism-related development of the area. One of the most significant outcomes of the project was that all the central actors of the area, including the local entrepreneurs, agreed that the most important values in Syöte are nature and sustainable development.

Today cooperation between Metsähallitus and local tourism entrepreneurs is continuous and regular. Metsähallitus arranges 1-2 training and information events for entrepreneurs each year to present topical matters and exchange views on the development of sustainable tourism in Syöte.

The entrepreneurs are being supported in their work by offering high standard service facilities in the park. Also new products for nature tourism are being developed, such as products associated with traditional forms of work. Metsähallitus has already restored an old croft in the park to serve as a tourist attraction.

More information: http://www.metsa.fi/natural/national_parks/syote/index.htm

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Scarpe-Escout: organising a workshop on solar energy

On the 12 May, the **Parc Naturel Régional de Scarpe-Escout** and ADEME (Agency for Environment and Control of Energy) is organising a workshop on solar energy for tourist businesses. The programme includes a conference and two visits in Scarpe-Escout. The aim is to spread information on the use of renewable resources, to demonstrate exemplary sites on the territory and to create links between the operators and ADEME. This agency supports local structures called "Espaces Info Energie", that disseminate technical information, give advice on financial means to people that have a project. This workshop is part of the communication programme in the Nord Pas de Calais Region, led by ADEME and the Conseil Régional, on renewable resources (solar, organic and heat from the soil) based on conferences and visits. You will find the whole programme in this site:

<http://www.zenith-internet.com/ademe/html/progamme.htm>

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Du Vexin français: making places accessible for everybody

Having worked with the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas since 2001, the **Parc Naturel Régional du Vexin français**, is keen to highlight its work on increasing the accessibility of places of interest on its territory to all those who want to visit it.

With the goal of developing its tourism products and meeting expectations of both tourism businesses and people with disabilities, a member of the park's staff has undertaken a training course for the 'Tourism and Disability' label. He will have responsibility for an audit, using a framework for assessment, of the improvements already finished or to be undertaken in order to meet the needs of people with different disabilities.

Working within the framework set out by the national tourism policy and the state-regional plan for the Ile de France, this label was first used at the end of 2002 at the equestrian centre in Auvers-sur-Oise, whose accommodation is now accessible to people with different types of disability. It was further implemented in relation to leisure activities in 2003 (paintball for people in wheelchairs), and in 2004 at the agricultural museum in Sagy (one of the park's ecomuseums) and the absinth museum in Auvers-sur-Oise, which are now adapted to the needs of people with mental disabilities.



Pictograms which clarify the accessibility of a site for persons with special needs

The label is not just about providing reliable, descriptive and objective information on the accessibility of attractions and tourist facilities, through taking into account the needs of different disabilities, but also about developing a service for tourists which is integrated into the wider tourism product offered by the park.

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Le textes concernant les parcs du Luberon, de Scarpe-Escaut et du Vexin sont disponibles en français sur le site web :
www.european-charter.org

The Cairngorms: developing a brand

The **Cairngorms National Park Authority** (CNPA) together with partners has been focusing on finalising its Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan for submission to EUROPARC. It has been decided to produce a summary booklet of the Strategy and Action Plan which including summary information from the Cairngorms Visitor Survey 03/04 for wide circulation to all tourism enterprises throughout the park area.

The CNPA has also led the development of a Cairngorms brand, a visual identity for the park area that is separate to the park Authority logo. Use of the brand by tourism enterprises will be decided by a Brand Management Committee involving members of the community, local businesses, VisitScotland and Park Board Members.

CNPA will be taking a stand at the key Scottish tourist trade show in April, to raise awareness about the new park, what is on offer for the visitor and also to launch the new brand. Tourism enterprises have been encouraged to join the stand to promote the park area together. Finally, a new Visitor Guide, Countryside Events leaflet, Walking Festival leaflet and Public Transport Explorer Timetable booklet are currently being produced.

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Loch Lomond and The Trossachs: promoting local produce

A study of local producers in and around the national park area was completed recently and has thrown up some interesting findings and ideas. The Lomond & Rural Stirling LEADER+ Programme commissioned the study to consider the viability and practicality of setting up an outlet to offer residents and visitors year round access to local produce. The study involved drawing up a database of local food and drink and art and craft producers, consulting in depth with the producers and other organisations and looking at similar projects elsewhere in Scotland and England. These are just some of the findings:

- Total product range is limited and most food and drink producers already have markets
- There is a gulf, largely due to lack of information, between local food and drink producers and retail outlets and attractions
- There is support for moves to better promote local produce
- Existing outlets such as hotels, restaurants and B&Bs are seeking to source more niche and Local produce
- Craft producers were receptive to ideas involving joint working

While the consultants felt that a single outlet would not be feasible, they identified opportunities to work with local producers to increase both the range of produce and their outlets by improving sales through existing local outlets. One recommendation in particular is for a local trade directory and the National Park Authority is exploring funding options with partners to get this up and running by next summer. Others avenues to explore include developing local branding, local road shows, celebrity endorsements, food trails, business seminars and web marketing.

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For further information on this project and also on training initiatives being developed by the Park, you can visit the website: <http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/html/home.htm> and download its official magazine (doc pdf, december 2004, p 6,7)

Broads Authority: working toward Charter status

The **Broads Authority** in Eastern England, which is seeking accreditation for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, has appointed The Tourism Company to deliver a tourism strategy and a five year action plan for the Broads, Britain's largest protected wetland.

A strategy and action plan is a priority objective of the Broad's Plan 2004 and is necessary to meet the requirements of the European Charter. It will be developed according to the guidance set out by Europarc and in close collaboration with local stakeholders.

The Broads Authority has played an active role in the promotion and management of tourism and recreation since its creation in 1989. Successive Broads Plans have set out key policies and objectives, and the Authority has won national and international acclaim for its approach. As far back as 1991, the Authority was instrumental in the publication of 'Loving Them To Death' a seminal document in the development of the concept of sustainable tourism in Europe, and in April 2004 the Authority was awarded Beacon Council status by the Government, in the category 'Promoting Sustainable Tourism'.

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EUROPARC, BfN and TUI: bringing the Charter Network together

On 5 February 2005, the EUROPARC Federation and the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), together with TUI, held a day of events on the theme of 'Sustainable Tourism Development in Large Protected Areas' at the 2005 Reisepavillon, the world's largest trade fair for sustainable tourism, which is held annually in Hannover, Germany. The aim was to exchange new approaches and opportunities for environmentally friendly and socially responsible tourism in the framework of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas. The day finished with a press reception hosted by TUI at which representatives of EUROPARC, BfN and TUI were able to continue networking with colleagues from European protected areas, the media and interested members of the public.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

EUROPARC Annual Conference

The 2005 conference of the **EUROPARC Federation** will take place during the European Nature Conservation Conference which is being held in Apeldoorn, Netherlands, from 21 - 25 September. The conference includes a workshop on tourism and Protected Areas and a meeting of Charter Parks Network.



Forest of Bowland AONB: organising a conference for its partners

On 24th May 2005 the **Forest of Bowland AONB** is celebrating the completion of its Sustainable Tourism Strategy. The conference aims to officially launch the strategy and a new website. Guest speaker Barry Ferguson from Mourne AONB in Northern Ireland will talk about the positive benefits to tourism enterprises and the Mourne area that the Charter has brought. A lively afternoon programme will showcase local produce and include a demonstration of the new Forest of Bowland AONB website.

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Les Cévennes: preparing a seminar on sustainable tourism in France

On the occasion of the annual sustainable development week in France, the **Cévennes National Park** together with ODIT France, the Pays Viganais, and the Association Cévennes Ecourisme is organising a seminar on sustainable tourism. It will be held in Le Vigan, Département du Gard, from 30 May - 2 June.

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Mercantour: organising an international meeting

The **Mercantour National Park** is organising an international conference on "The Challenges of Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas" as well as the 5th international meeting of the Alpine Network in Nice from 1 - 3 December 2005. Participants will consider a wide range of tourism related subjects during plenary sessions and workshops. One session will be dedicated to the European Charter. Members of the Charter Network are welcome to participate.

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The Charter: who does what?

Here is a short outline of the role of the different players involved in managing the Charter:

The **EUROPARC Federation** has overall responsibility for the Charter, and manages the day-to-day coordination, development and planning, as well as communication and networking, from its offices in Grafenau (D).

EUROPARC Consulting GmbH manages and oversees the evaluation process. It contracts **verifiers** to carry out a 2 day on-site inspection. All the verifiers have been involved in the Charter since it began and are experts in the field of protected areas and tourism.

The **EUROPARC Evaluation Committee** is chaired by Patrizia Rossi (I) of Parco Naturale Alpi Marittime. Other members are Richard Denman (GB), Michael Iwand (D), Josep Maria Prats (E) and Manfred Pils (A). The committee considers the park's full application together with the verifier's report.

Registration process

Protected areas are required to register as candidate Charter Parks with the EUROPARC Federation when they start to implement the Charter. This should normally be at least a year before submission of the full application. They are then entered onto EUROPARC's Charter Parks database and sent the current Charter application documents and kept informed of new developments. Registration carries a fee of € 500. Protected areas joining the Charter are required to be a member of EUROPARC.

Detailed information is available at www.european-charter.org.

Part 2 of the Charter

The EUROPARC Federation is in the process of drawing up a framework for parks across Europe to implement the second part of the Charter, working with tourism enterprises. Thank you to everybody who has submitted comments on this. More details will be made available in due course.

Internet forum

A sustainable tourism forum has been set up in the members' area of the EUROPARC website. We hope this will be a very useful way for everybody to exchange information and ideas.

Who are the Charter Parks?

Charter Parks as at May 2005

- [Hohe Tauern National Park \(A\)](#)
- [Steinhuder Meer Nature Park \(D\)](#)
- [Frankenwald Nature Park \(D\)](#)
- [Zona Volcanica de la Garrotxa Nature Park \(E\)](#)
- [Luberon Regional Nature Park \(F\)](#)
- [Vexin Français Regional Nature Park \(F\)](#)
- [Alpi Marittime Nature Park \(I\)](#)
- [Insel Usedom Nature Park \(D\)](#)
- [Les Cévennes National Park \(F\)](#)
- [Marais du Cotentin et du Bessin Regional Nature Park \(F\)](#)
- [Monti Sibillini National Park \(I\)](#)
- [Peneda-Gerês National Park \(P\)](#)
- [Serra da San Mamede Nature Park \(P\)](#)
- [Vercors Regional Nature Park \(F\)](#)
- [Pilat Regional Nature Park \(F\)](#)
- [Scarpe-Escaut Regional Nature Park \(F\)](#)
- [Mourne Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty \(UK\)](#)
- [Sierras de Cazorla, Segura y las Villas Nature Park \(E\)](#)
- [Alcornocales Nature Park \(E\)](#)
- [Sierra de Grazalema Nature Park \(E\)](#)
- [Sierra de Aracena and Picos de Aroche Nature Park \(E\)](#)
- [Sierra Nevada National / Nature Parks \(E\)](#)
- [Syöte National Park \(FIN\)](#)

Candidate Charter Parks

- [Alsace Région \(F\)](#) – Réserves naturelles de la Bande Rhénane
- [Forest of Bowland AONB \(UK\)](#)
- [Naturpark Pfälzerwald \(D\)](#)
- [Harz and Hochharz National Parks \(D\)](#)
- [Cairngorms National Park \(UK\)](#)
- [Boucles de la Seine Regional Nature Park \(F\)](#)
- [Livradois-Forez Nature Park \(F\)](#)
- [Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park \(UK\)](#)
- [Mercantour National Park \(F\)](#)
- [Adamello Brenta Nature Park \(I\)](#)
- [The Broads Authority \(UK\)](#)
- [Avesnois Regional Nature Park \(F\)](#)
- [Doñana National and Nature Parks \(E\)](#)
- [Brecon Beacons National Park \(UK\)](#)
- [Riserva Naturale Monte Rufeno \(I\)](#)

EUROPARC Charter Parks Newsletter

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