

ROUND TABLE –
Molise Region Interregional meeting 08.06.17
Events Room Giardino Botanico – Capracotta (Isernia)

ORGANISERS

- **Teresa Pastor** – EUROPARC Federation
- **Fernando Pinillos** - EUROPARC Federation

PARTICIPANTS

- **Carmen Ginacola** – Botanical Garden of Capracotta
- **Michele Minotti** – Research Technical staff Man and Biosphere Reserve of Colemeluccio – Montedimezzo.
- **Francisco Cobos** – AMAYA, Agencia de Medio Ambiente y Agua de Andalusia
- **Mélissa Desbois** – ENRx, France
- **Aisté Jurkienė** – EUCC, Lithuania
- **Cristian Ciobanu** – UNESCO Hateg Geoparc, Romania
- **Mihaela Nastase** – ROMSILVA, National Forestry Register, Romania
- **Gabriela Cretu** – Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve.
- **Carmela Serio** – Cooperativa La Ramegna, Oasis Guardaregia – Campochiaro.

CONTENTS:

1. WHY ANDALUSIA, WHO IS THE PROMOTER OF THIS PROJECT, HAS DECIDED TO PROMOTE THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF PROTECTED AREAS?

FRANCISCO COBOS: Andalusia counts with a high number of protected areas and it is **pioneer in Europe in the promotion of socio-economic development** of protected areas, as they count with a **specific organism devoted to this aim**. Their main objective is to fix the local population to the territory.

2. THE DEPOPULATION OF RURAL AREAS IS A TREND IN EUROPE. IS THE MAB CONTRIBUTING TO REVERSE THIS TREND?

CARMEN GIANCOLA: In Molise Region, is too early to see if the MAB is contributing to help in fixing the population to the region as the reserve, despite of being created in 1977, it was expanded in 2015. This new reserve follows a different dynamic and therefore, the consequences of this new delimitation are still unknown. However, there are people interested in working in the MAB, as it is illustrated by the example of two youngsters that studied abroad and came back to the region to continue their professional career. We hope that the people comes back to improve the services of the area.

3. IS THERE A SIMILAR SITUATION IN THE BALTIC COAST?

AISTÉ JURKIENÉ: The situation in the **Baltic coast of Lithuania** is very different. There is **no need to fix the population** to the area since the coastal area is very attractive to them. The main **problem is to delimit the socio-economic activities** in order **to avoid harming nature**. There is a problem of mass tourism in the coastal area, so the objective is to develop other type of tourism and activities.

4. ON THE OTHER HAND, WHAT ARE THE LIMITS OF THE SUSTAINABLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INSIDE PROTECTED AREAS?

CRISTIAN CIOBANU: Each protected area has to set those development limits depending on their own strategy. Furthermore, those **limits will depend on the different strategies that the different zones of the protected areas have**.

FRANCISCO COBOS: The concept of **sustainability implies conservation that lasts in time**, therefore the activities should always grant nature conservation.

MIHAELA NASTASE: Following Cristian's comments, the **limits of socio-economic development will depend on the category of the protected area and on what is inside (species, habitats, or special features).**

MÉLISSA DESBOIS: To ensure sustainability in France, it is important to **work with different stakeholders and make them ambassadors** of their cause. A good example is that of *Gîtes de France*, through which they act as biodiversity ambassadors through fostering the creation of gardens of biodiversity with local vegetables.

GABRIELA CRETU: The types of socio-economic activities in the Danube Delta vary according to the different areas within the Delta. **In the Delta, all the activities need to be licensed by the national park authority.** They have tried to promote sustainable socio-economic development through the **recovery of traditional activities and methods** in the areas of **farming, agriculture, medicinal plant knowledge, harvest and bee-keeping.**

5. ARE THE ACTIVITIES INSIDE PROTECTED AREAS IN YOUR REGION PROFITABLE?

FRANCISCO COBOS: Some activities in Andalusian protected areas are profitable, like **cork production, hunting and sustainable wood production.**

MÉLISSA DESBOIS: Activities are not always profitable in France. Sometimes **it is important to support these activities from public authorities.** NGOs find difficult to support and promote these activities at full time in a context of political and economic crisis.

CARMEN GIANCOLA: There are profitable activities such as **white truffle harvest. It is a good market but needs to be managed, and this requires help from the administration.** Also, the production of **cheese** is an important activity in the region. It is needed **to put into value the territory and the landscape, not only for the tourists but also for the locals.**

6. YOUNG PEOPLE ARE THE FIRST ONES TO ABANDON THE RURAL AREAS AND MOVE TO LARGE CITIES. HOW DO YOU INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN PROTECTED AREAS IN YOUR REGION?

GABRIELA CRETU: We organize activities in **environmental education** as the way to create awareness among young people. However, the public institution does not involve young people in the creation of green jobs.

MIHAELA NASTASE: The main activity for involving young people is related to **forest management**. We allocate budget for this but **most of the work is done by volunteers, as they cannot be hired**.

CRISTIAN CIOBANU: Some protected areas do not have communities inside, so it depends on the type of protected area. If you do have young people, then you **need to create a context, something interesting for them**. For example, Geopark works in re-connecting people to their place, creating the **sense of belonging to the area**. Our approach is personal; we want to teach them to follow their passions and dare to be different by **promoting life quality instead of high salaries**. This way, we can encourage youngsters to move back to rural areas. On the other hand, it is difficult to find good professionals and team players on local level, so we also have to train them to become quality future employees. This way we are investing in what could be the future park staff. We already hired four former volunteers and others work in tourism facilities. Working long term with the same volunteers is very beneficial for the protected area.

MIHAELA NASTASE: Young people are involved in protected areas **temporarily only**. After a short period of time they leave because they get no revenue for the work they do, and they have other priorities.

CRISTIAN CIOBANU: For me there is no problem if volunteers leave after a period of time, as they also need to start leaving their own life. **The volunteering period is very beneficial for them, leaves a mark and they will disseminate what they have learned**.

FRANCISCO COBOS: Green economy will be the next revolution, as technology has been in the recent years. In fact, clients and investors are already looking for green companies. Therefore, more green jobs will be created locally and young people will remain in the rural areas.

MÉLISSA DESBOIS: Agrees with the importance of creating a context and to understand nature. In France they proposed to create this context by approaching nature to young people. The government has reached an agreement with educational institutions to promote programmes to discover nature.

AISTÉ JURKIENÉ: In Lithuania, sea plains are important ecosystems and very susceptible to disappear due to the growth of vegetation and forests. For this reason, goats and sheeps are brought by shepherds in the sea plains to graze the vegetation and maintain the sea plains. Following this, some people from the cities that want a change in their lives abandon their urban lives to go to the sea plains and work as shepherds. This could be an economic alternative, but these people cannot get economic revenue for this work as they are no considered as “real shepherds”.

CARMEN GINACOLA: Prefers to speak about **passionate people** than of volunteers. We can involve young people through rural development funds (EAFRD). Young people could propose to do a project and get funding through the aforementioned mechanisms, so this will allow them to stay in the region.

CARMELA SERIO: They developed an educational programme “**guide for a day**” through which young people can experienced what life as a guide can be. This is considered as a good way to attract people to work in the rural areas. However, some of these vocational training programmes have to be funded by the own families.

7. WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE IN YOUR REGION TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

GABRIELA CRETU: Improve the legislation and listen to the population needs.

CRISTIAN CIOBANU: With enough money, they will carry out the strategy of propose and fund projects for young people so they could stay in the area.

FRANCISCO COBOS: I will promote payment for ecosystem services.

MÉLISSA DESBOIS: Involve companies in sponsoring green jobs and share a common strategy.

AISTÉ JURKIENÉ: Promote ecosystems services and traditional jobs like amber extraction.

CARMEN GINACOLA: Train people to be citizens of the reserve and, after the training, involve them in projects; for example, the fund raising trough crowdfunding mechanisms for flowerbed creation.

MIHAELA NASTASE: Proposes restricting conflicts between protected area management authorities and local communities derived from the establishment of restricted activities in protected areas.