



**Ente Parco Regionale  
Migliarino San Rossore  
Massaciuccoli**



## **PISA DECLARATION**

### **ANTICIPATION AND INNOVATION TO PROTECT OUR NATURE AND PRESERVE OUR FUTURE**

The Workshop “Protected Areas in Europe: the next 50 years”, organised by the Council of Europe with the sponsorship of the Ministry of Environment of Italy and of the Tuscany Region, and in cooperation with EUROPARC Federation, was held in the Regional Park of Migliarino, San Rossore and Massaciuccoli (Pisa, Italy), on 21 – 22 May 2015. The event was organised to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the European Diploma for Protected Areas and the International Day for Biological Diversity. It was attended by around 100 participants from 26 countries representing various stakeholders, including managers of areas which have been awarded the European Diploma for Protected Areas (EDPA), national and local authorities and nature conservation NGOs. Participants collectively committed to continue to protect our Nature and preserve our Future

Since its establishment by the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers in 1965, the European Diploma for Protected Areas has promoted the sustainable use of our natural resources, underlining humankind's role in the conservation of a common natural and cultural heritage, and improving human well-being through the wide array of ecological goods and services that the Diploma-holding areas do provide. The awarded areas also function as models of best practice and sustainable management of protected areas.

Recognising that the European Diploma areas are of more than merely regional or national importance, the participants acknowledge the exceptional character of the EDPA network in preserving Europe’s biological, geological and landscape richness and diversity, as well as its contribution to the promotion of ecological ideals and principles, encompassing the values of human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy.

Composed of 73 Diploma-holding areas (in May 2015) representing a range of exceptional natural sites, the EDPA Network has reached an uncontested level of maturity and exemplarity thanks to the outstanding work of the EDPAs’ managers and authorities.

However, societal and technological changes, together with existing and new challenges threatening biological diversity, require innovative and specific responses. Therefore the participants to the Workshop highlight the benefits of more regular meetings to preserve the cohesion of the network, to share and transfer experiences on best practices and challenges, and to increase the anticipation capacity of the European Diploma areas, notably in the context of climate change. They also commit to use the EDPA network to trial innovative nature conservation management and to demonstrate novel approaches, working with communities to find creative and mutually beneficial nature-based solutions. By setting and raising standards, monitoring impacts and adapting techniques the EDPA network will be bold in preparing protected areas for the future.

The participants call on responsible governments, national and local authorities, local communities, nature conservation NGOs, and the Council of Europe, to ensure that the European Diploma for Protected Areas continues to receive the necessary political and financial support for the further development of its network, particularly in the countries that have not yet submitted applications, and in co-ordination with other existing networks.



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More detailed recommendations will be submitted to the 35<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention to be held in Strasbourg on 1 – 4 December 2015 for possible adoption.

These include, inter alia, the following needs:

- to develop dedicated communication strategies on the European Diploma areas, their intrinsic value, and the benefits they provide, including by making use of innovative IT resources to reach and influence the political level, local communities, and media professionals;
- To take traditional knowledge into account and devise mechanisms for the participatory management of protected areas, including by strengthening cooperation with the private sector and promoting the green economy;
- To adapt existing management and regulations to the most pressing threats, including climate change and invasive alien species, so as to ensure that protected areas in Europe form an interconnected network of functionally related ecosystems. In this respect, the concept of “naturalness” should be further developed, taking also into account the interdependencies with the surrounding environment;
- To devote more attention to the marine and fresh-water ecosystems in order to ensure that they are also well represented in the network;
- To make use of innovative and collaborative management techniques to scale-up EDPAs attractiveness and efficiency, prevent/reduce conflicts with the local communities, and improve their reactivity to the threats to biological diversity;
- To involve the local communities actively in the conservation and development of protected areas.

At the same time, the participants in the Workshop express their warm thanks to the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea, the Tuscany Region, the Mayor of Pisa, the Director of the Regional Park of Migliarino, San Rossore and Massaciuccoli and all the staff, for their invitation and generous hospitality.

*Done in the Regional Park of Migliarino, San Rossore and Massaciuccoli (Pisa), Italy, 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2015*