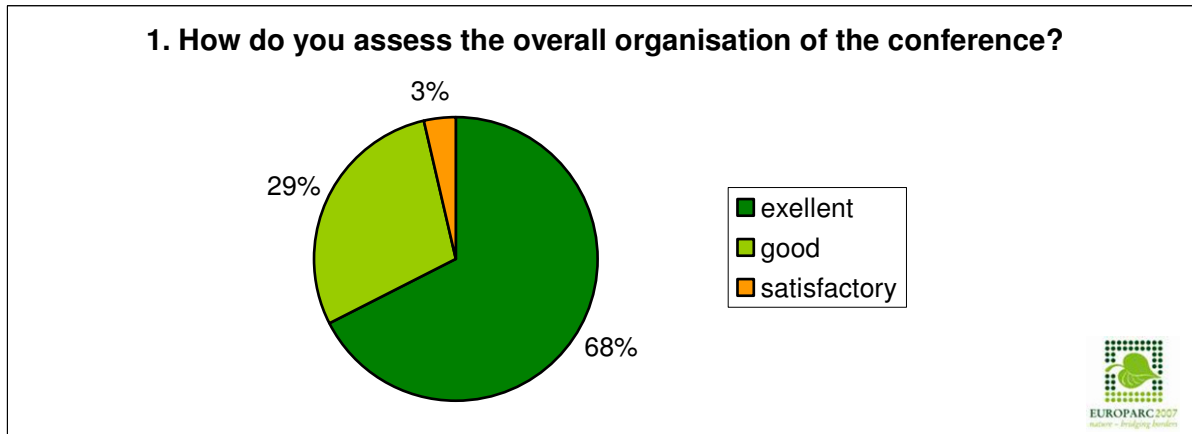


EUROPARC 2007 - Bridging borders

Evaluation of the feed-back questionnaires of the EUROPARC Conference 2007

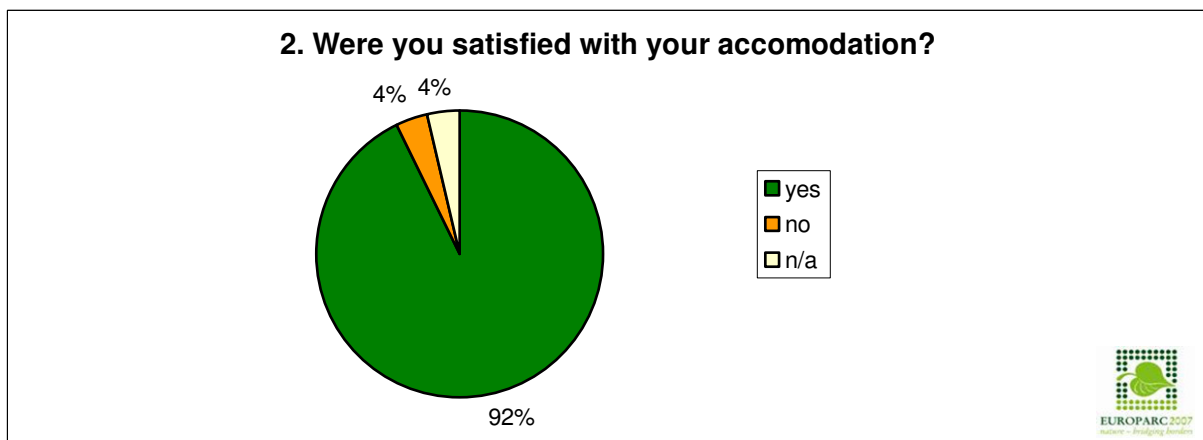


84 feed-back questionnaires were returned to EUROPARC (n=84). Altogether the participants were asked to answer ten questions and were able to give comments on the EUROPARC 2007 conference or suggestions for improving coming conferences.



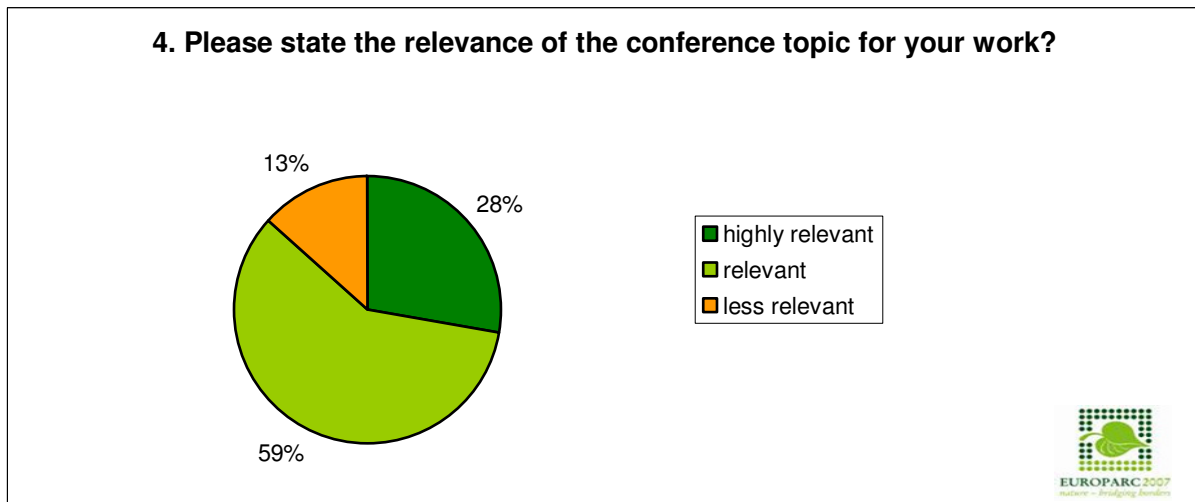
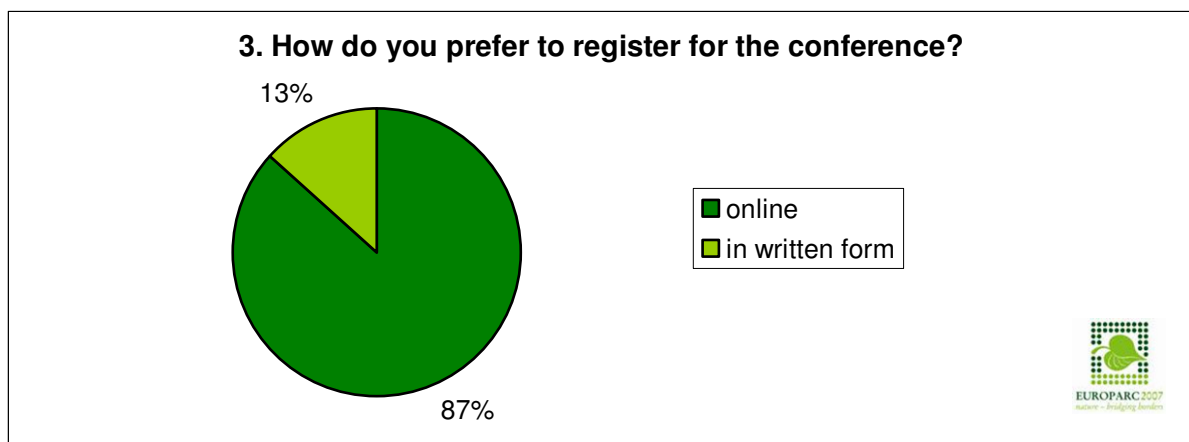
If not, please specify

- No materials have been sent ahead of the conference or made available on the web pages;
- The confirmation of registration came only after personal e-mail to the organizer;
- The post-conference excursion time schedule has changed without contacting the local organizers;
- Technical delegate for the excursion was not able to read the information in advance;
- Insufficient room for lunch on Thursday – very crowded place. More simple food in more pleasant space instead of expensive food in a crowded place would be better;

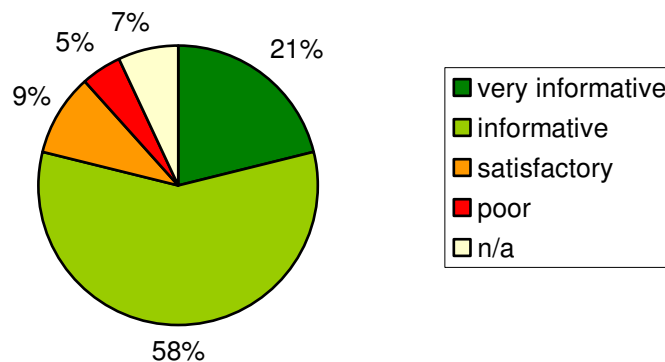


If not, please specify

- Too much smoking areas in the hotel
- Hotel room was very loud
- Receptionist did not understand English.
- The luggage arrived late from Conference Centre late.
- There was no information that the hotel (Hotel Vltava) does not accept credit cards.
- Room in a 4-star hotel was located in the basement of a medieval building. Therefore it was a bit "humid/cellar-like";
- On Friday, excursion-day, time for breakfast was announced for 7.30. It didn't work, we had to wait for coffee and bread and rolls till 7.45;
- Hotel very far from conference hall and city centre; this was not communicated in advance;

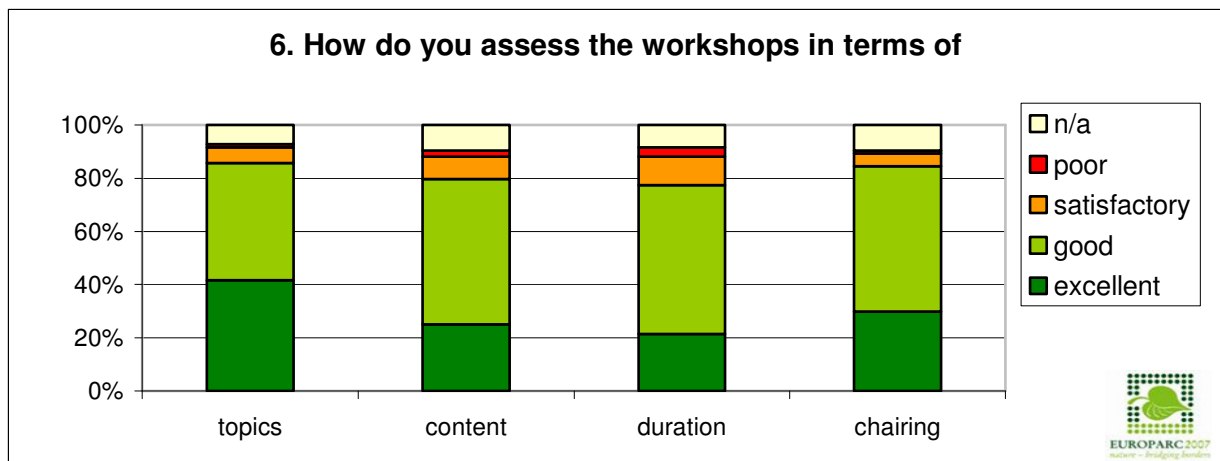


5. How do you assess the keynote sessions on Thursday?



If satisfactory or poor, please indicate reasons:

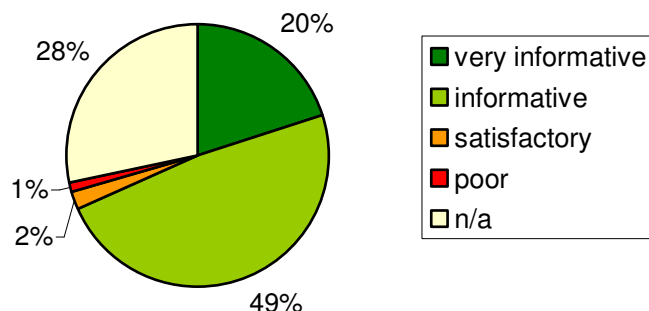
- too little content, too many welcome formulas;
 - use the presence of a representative from the EC to have a discussion;
 - interesting but very little detail and no real inspiration or vision (which is what I was hoping for, I exclude from this Mr Miko's contribution, which was very good.)
 - lack of relevance to my daily work
 - I miss an enthusiastic speaker for a warming up
 - the contributions were interesting but I missed the connecting arch and a conclusion what does it mean for us members?
 - especially the discussion was very boring. People shouldn't give statements, but only ask questions to the panel
 - of course, it was a pity; Mr. Havel could not be there, although it could be expected. Mr. Pokorny's lecture was at the level of a 1st year biology student, so for me, he underestimated this public of professionals.
 - also Mr Karivalo could have said more about criteria etc of transboundary-cooperation. Mr Miko was, as usual, good, although more a scientist than civil servant from Brussels!
 - less informative than I thought they would be. This of course depends on the speakers, but also on the briefing beforehand. I think it is very important for the feeling of the conference to give it a good start. So the quality of the keynote speeches is very important.
 - of course we missed Mr Havel. The speech by Mr Miko was very informative.
 - a suggestion: I would like it to get an overview of the host country's conservation policies, management and protected areas. Just as an introduction to the country. (Erika's slideshow was very nice!)
 - disappointing that Vaclav Havel did not show
 - I'd like to add that unfortunately – as often happen – the conclusions had already been defined... Why is this so in the context of a NGO? Is it really necessary? For whom?
 - too general and superficial, except Pokorný and Miko.
-



If satisfactory or poor, please specify:

- I had impression that the chairing was after some time taken over by some of the workshop participants
 - some people found their English not sufficient or needed help. Subtle differences in language caused difficulties for them, especially the younger ones
 - more time for the workshops on Saturday would have been good
 - topics would be more specific, instead of discussion, again about similar fields. Concrete objectives and actions should be covered by the workshops
 - 2 1/2 hours versus all topics to be covered and discussion and case study does not provide for more than 1 hr discussion involving all participants
 - content was very different with the situation in my country
 - workshops were too long
 - duration: might have been better if divided up over two days with chairs providing feedback from first session, rather than coming to the workshop with reporting back statements already prepared. Some communication was done between workshop participants by e-mail prior to the conference. This was good and maybe this could be developed.
 - chairing: I was conscious of the great efforts of non-native English speakers to chair the workshop. However, native English speakers helped provide the subtleties required for the feedback (resolutions etc.) and I sensed some embarrassment.
 - there was a lot of overlap in the topics, too much! My workshop was informative. What could/should be the result of the workshop?
 - all excellent. My only slight reservation would be that with self-selecting workshop groups it's difficult to ensure a good mix of people with a suitable variety of experience.
 - quite long with no break and at times very academic
 - short time to discuss more detailed topic of the workshop.
 - workshop should be about working with some ideas and bringing real personal experiences based on overall study of working materials. No materials have been sent ahead of the workshop or available on the web pages; very short description was available on the web pages. One could not go into details of original data.
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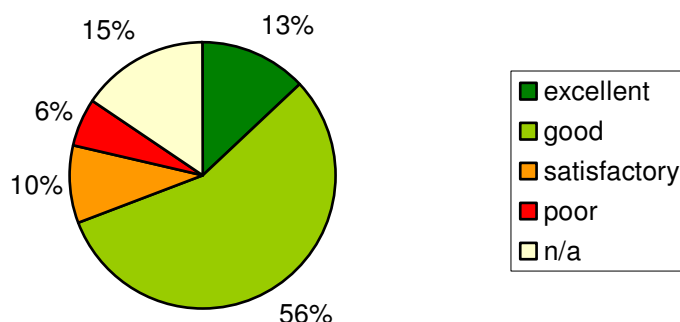
7. How do you assess the EUROPARC Side Meetings?



If satisfactory or poor, please specify:

- I was chairing NNP Side-Meeting with a turn of only 2 persons;

8. How do you assess the General Assembly?



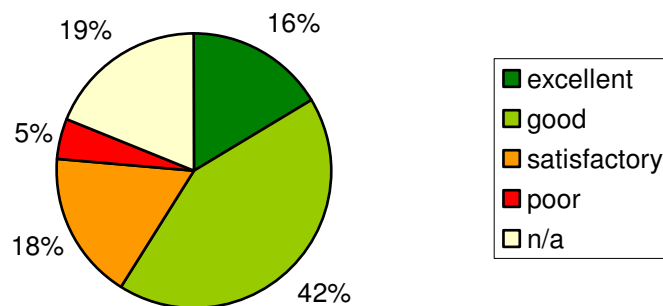
If satisfactory or poor, please specify:

- the film at the end, though interesting, was too tiring after a long day
- members were leaving the hall during Assembly
- less democratic rules
- it was not always clear which decisions were made
- I think that the way the representative of the Bavarian Forest tried to break into the agenda of the general assembly showed that the council reacted not completely adequate to this. With the assistance of former president Michael Starret the agenda to back on track again, but it indicated that a governance review might be helpful to further EUROPARC aims
- better than the last years, because a better atmosphere of discussion and participation of the members. But the financial report dissatisfied me - no details, no explanations. Would be useful to show it on the screen during the explanation.
- too much time was devoted to the problem of moving the EUROPARC Federation headquarters, this point was not prepared enough for general discussion and quite

strong internal conflicts emerged, discussion was time-consuming and might have made some delegates disappointed or puzzled.

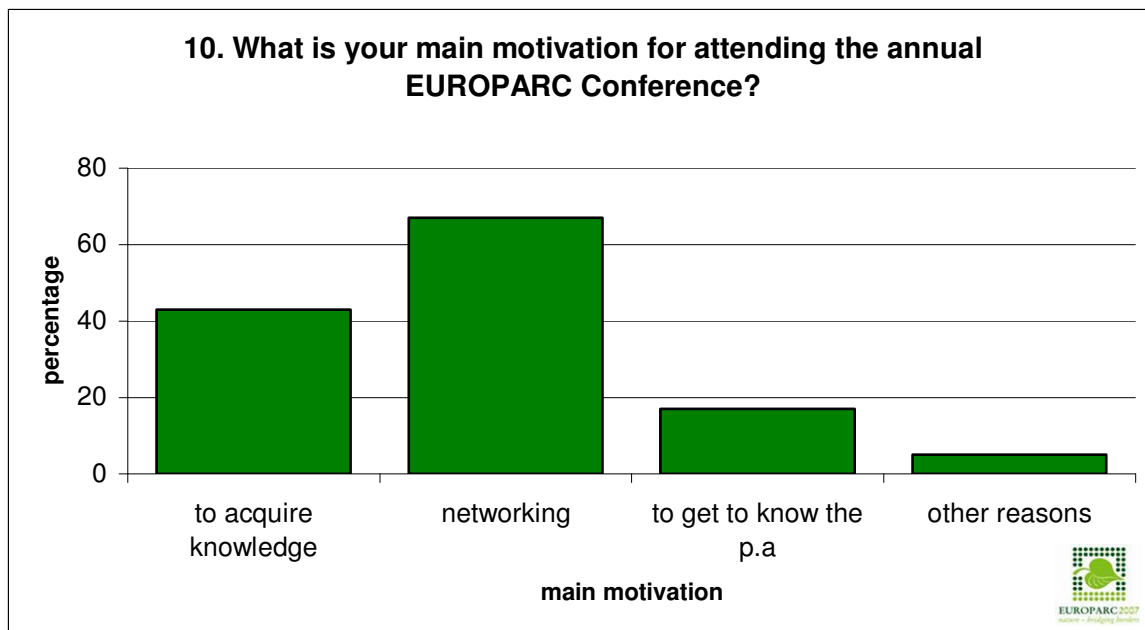
- the reporting is very good; however, it will never be easy to conduct a good GA. This is due to the loose relationship between the members and their representatives and the board. Only doing more things together will help. Perhaps it is an idea to ask members who are involved with the various projects reported upon, to give a short comment during the GA. This then will show that active membership is possible and gives results.
- it took a short time, with not much information.

9. How do you assess the 'Boulevard of Experiences' as a tool to promote contacts among members and to enhance the exchange of knowledge and experience?



If satisfactory or poor, please give reasons:









- did not really feel the presence of the boulevard, it should be stressed somehow
 - the panels were standing really close together; nobody went inside the tunnel during the breaks. It does not make sense to have the Boulevard of Experience parallel to side meetings, because nobody comes to the B.o.E. then and also the people who present posters went to attend the Side-meeting.
 - not very much information in it
 - a lot of text, less experiences
 - the presented posters were good, but there were too little of them.
 - the traditional poster style is very dense with information; there was not enough space or opportunity to meet the people 'behind' the posters.
 - I found it not satisfactory to organize Boulevard of Experiences and Side Meetings in the same time. There are so many transports to other interesting programme during the conference that it is not possible to go through all posters in coffee-breaks, lunch-breaks etc. It should be given separate time for uncontrolled informal discussion in front of posters.
 - no very clearly laid out
 - there should have been some tables adjacent to the posters; and it should be an event nearer the start of the conference
-



Comments

- 👍 You have done great work. Just keep it that way
- 👍 Your work is excellent do continue this way!
- 👍 Special notion for Helena from AIMS who was exceptionally helpful and effective
- 👍 Singing and dancing session
- 👍 This is one of the best organised conferences I have attended.
- 👍 Particularly good was the fact the sufficient time was allocated for the workshops
- 👍 I have attended 10 previous conferences and I think this was the best organized I've ever experienced. The format for the workshops I thought particularly effective, it focussed minds. Well done
- 👍 Czeský Krumlov was an ideal venue for the conference –presenting “in situ” both natural and cultural values of this historical town and its surroundings, with several protected areas of different character relatively close to the town.
- 👍 The venue and arrangements were excellent. This one is a model for future conferences. I liked the table format for the main theatre and the proximity of buffet style lunches allowing comfortable networking opportunities while being seated. Short introductory key note speeches were very well received. Mixed nearby hotel accommodation of varying prices was a good feature.
- 👍 THANK YOU to all organisers
- 👍 This was my first and I really enjoyed it. The setting will be hard to match.
- 👍 Very well organised in a beautiful venue with excellent trips and good chances to share social contacts. Many thanks.
- 👍 Very well organised and chaired event, a credit to Europarc and an excellent location. Topics good, speakers good. The HQ debates were a major distraction on the last day and should have been “resolved” before the event. General Assembly is not the place to have a debate of this type. Governance review’s a good idea. Very important point. Europarc is NOT a nature conservation organisation but a lobby organization for

Nature Conservation bodies. Too that end we should build our business systems around influence and advocacy not “being in a protected area”.

-  Too much paper! Need of recycling bin.
 -  In post-conference activities too much food. Lunch was huge. It would have been better to have less food, especially Knödel and more vegetables. The guide was excellent.
 -  There was no time in the Conference agenda for section meetings. Should be included
 -  Technical equipment must be fixed / checked well in advance. For the 1st hour of our workshop we could not use the PowerPoint, 2nd the workshop room was full of technicians disturbing the workshop
 -  The food was excellent but not when you're vegetarian. So pay attention for them for the coming conference
 -  I miss democratic process in the organisation
 -  Maybe the moderator of keynote speeches was not the right person. I know it is a hard job, but the person should be chosen really carefully.
 -  To be positive: the places where the conference took place were wonderful, the excursions were excellent and one could see a lot of organizational work behind – thank you! Please, take my comments in a pro-active way!
-

Suggestions

- to create a session for NGOs involved in areas with national parks & protected areas
- conference organisation should be more environmentally friendly! Why serving milk for coffee in little plastic pots? Why not using recycling paper?
- you should think about strategies to lower the costs in order to attract more young people. A suggestion: Let the participants choose, whether they want to attend the dinners and the excursions and provide an accommodation in a hostel, too, where one can cook for oneself. Or give the opportunity to help in the organisation and get a discount for that. Because I think it is very important to bring not only the directors and heads of the Protected Areas together but also some of the staff and more people from NGOs.
- leave some space in the agenda for visiting town. Only possibility to visit Český Krumlov during day time was not to attend workshop or side-meeting, but that is not the idea of the Conference.
- free the bear at the castle
- it should be possible to pay the accommodation in advance integrating transaction fees
- as chair of wetland group I'm still struggling with more continuity in the way this group operates and I wonder if the council would be willing to put in budget for a second annual meeting apart from the side meeting combined with the annual EUROPARC meeting.
- budget of the coming year should be discussed in the annual conference. For example budget 2008 at the conference 2007!
- I would propose: less luxury events, more possibilities to meet and discuss the issues concerning the Federation. The members should be more involved in the process of developing a really effective "too-kit2 to bring EUROPARC Federation with all their members into the public awareness and into the space of politicians and stakeholders of the EU (That will not happen in Grafenau or worse Bayerisch Eisenstein)
- I would like to know more about the EUROPARC Consulting. What are the tasks of that structure, which benefits, we, the members?

- taking into account that we are dealing with nature conservation, I am sure that the participants of coming conferences would not object to more modest organisation, accommodation and services to reduce overall costs and ecological footprint of the conference.
- a minority of people did not have proper clothes and footwear for the excursion and so we had to curtail the walk, despite the clear guidance in the programme.
- when we stay in such a beautiful town, it would be fine to have half a day off to look at the buildings and museum and shops
- I think that it is important to focus on more political aspects of protected areas in Europe. Especially on items related to common policies for protected areas, Natura 2000 and the policy of the EU.
- it will be useful to discuss and develop tools (administrative, financial and legislative) on the level of the EU.
- seek for more synergy with the other European umbrella's, especially with Eurosite. There must be once a year a conference on European level about nature conservation and management. This should be the place to meet other colleagues, and where clearly formulate our message to the European politics. So, it must be on a place easy accessible for politicians (MEP's), but also of interest for Brussels people.
- monitoring: building of usable, practicable and long-during kinds and methods of monitoring, which are able for demonstration the results, when "nature can be free in its development"
- getting more influence in land-use-planning
- please do focus much more on the exchange of basis information about protected areas and nature conservation in the different countries. In fact, this should be basic knowledge, available before & during the conference.
- please reserve one day for (plenary) sessions about nature conservation and protected areas in different countries.
- try to find a working form to come into contact with colleagues from other countries. The workshops were tot static; we need a more interactive form.
- if participants arrive with own cars – needed more information about car parking. (In this conference we pay the penalty to local police because hotel reception can't explain the situation.)
- the organizers must plan the possibility to change the excursion day, if the weather forecast promises to better weather for another day.
- it could be cheaper to have more PA people from the Eastern European countries at the meeting!
- the conference could more prepare a comprehensive policy for PA's in Europe: What to lobby for in Brussels or elsewhere?
- it might be good to have a future conference theme on tourism and/or outdoor recreation in protected areas. I was struck by the rather defensive conservation stance and lack of people focus in some of the protected areas represented at the meeting, and although opposition to intensive tourism developments (e.g. for downhill skiing) may be perfectly understandable, I got the impression that some colleagues had a similarly cautious attitude towards low impact informal recreation. This kind of activity can result in highly visible economic benefit and can generate a very effective lobby (in the form of outdoor recreation bodies) in support of PA objectives, without significant adverse impacts on the sites concerned.
- less workshops
- the workshops should leave more room for discussion,
- the conclusions should really be drawn from the meeting, and not predefined.
- It would not be improper if the chairman were to refer to the Assembly: "different opinions emerged on one – several – almost all the topics we were discussing ."
- working with other landscape management systems – Geoparks, Pan Parks etc