



**INTERNATIONAL
RANGER
FEDERATION**

IRF European Meeting; 25th - 28th of November 2015

Black Forest National Park, Germany

Participants:

Thomas Herren, Niklas Göth (Swiss Ranger Association)
Bo Rene Storm (Danish Ranger Association)
Emmanuel Icardo (French Ranger Association)
Branko Stivic (Croatian Ranger Association)
Bob Reid (Scottish Ranger Association & in the name of Countryside Management Association GB)
Florin Halastauan (IRF Europe Representative & in the name of Romanian Ranger Association)
Barbara Mertin (Austrian Ranger Association)
Victor Grishenkov, Oleg Prigoryanu, Alexander Kochergin, Alexey Yakovlev (Russian Ranger Association)
Linda Björk Hallgrimsdottir (Iceland Ranger Association)
Adam Divis (Czech Ranger Association & in the name of Slovakian Ranger Association)
Tünde Ludnai, Sandor Rozsa, Bela Vaczi (Hungarian Rangers)
Przemyslaw Wasiak, Magda Prajsnar, Bartosz Pirga, Maksymilian Broyek (Polish Rangers)
Mario Schmid, Michael Grossmann, Patrick Stader, Frank Grütz (German Ranger Association & in the name of Portuguese Ranger Association) Charly Ebel, Urs Reif, Heidrun Zeus (Black Forest National Park)

Moderation:

Urs Reif (Head of Rangers, Black Forest National Park)

Report:

Friederike Schneider (Black Forest National Park)

2015/11/26

1. Opening Statements

Charly Ebel (Head of Department “Environmental Education and Visitor Guidance”, Black Forest National Park) welcomes the guests with a short introduction and a video about the Black Forest National Park.

Florin Halastauan (IRF Europe Representative & in the name of Romanian Ranger Association) welcomes the guests and gives an introduction. He talks about today’s challenges (economics and finance problems, global movement → refugees, etc.) and – in this context – about the challenges for protected areas. He talks about how

important it is for rangers to share experiences during meetings, to help overcome difficulties.

Florin Halastauan explains that in 2013, the idea of moving forward and to better connect Europe's Rangers was mentioned already and that his idea will be presented today. "The goal is to now implement the idea - develop it and do the "homework". It is now the time to do what has to be done!"

2. Presentation of a proposal to establish an IRF European Ranger Association - Part 1

Frank Grütz (German Ranger Association & in the name of Portuguese Ranger Association) first reads a statement of the head of the Portuguese Ranger Association (about difficulties in the southern part of Europe and the need of a strong structure).

He then gives a presentation about the vision to develop a ranger cooperation across Europe (*see presentation for details*) → "Nature protection doesn't stop at borders – Why should we do so?"

3. Introduction of Participants

After the presentation of the participants it becomes clear that it is not easy to establish a National Ranger Association in every single country.

Florin Halastauan emphasizes how important it is to help with establishing National Ranger Associations. In his opinion, this could be a first large task for the European Ranger Association (which happens to be the topic of the meeting).

4. Presentation of a proposal to establish an IRF European Ranger Association - Part 2

Michael Grossmann (German Ranger Association, Head of Rangers, Bavarian Forest National Park): "Structure and Organization of an European Ranger Association" (*see presentation for details*)

Mario Schmid (German Ranger Association, Bavarian Forest National Park): Ideas of a common European Ranger collaboration on a practical level (*see presentation for details*)

→ **Conclusion after the presentations:** This European Ranger Association must not be an organization separate of the IRF, but shall have its own structure for European Rangers within the IRF.

Florin Halastauan: "We need to be in the same cloud of what IRF is already, we need to work under the same umbrella."

In addition, Florin Halastauan emphasizes one more time that this idea already exists and it is now time to establish it. "Now there are 24 minds improving the idea during this meeting".

5. Discussion – General Topics to be discussed during the Meeting

Topic 1: A European Ranger Association – Benefits and Motivations

Frank Grütz poses the question of what kind of benefits are there for the National Ranger Associations to be members of the European Association.

Answers: some detailed benefits include easier organization of international projects, training, communication, etc., and also the common idea which can have several positive side effects (image, etc.).

Thomas Herren asks what the different problems in different countries could be. He furthermore calls into question if a European Ranger Association could be the solution.

Do the rangers need something like this? It was certainly easy to build such a structure, but is it purposeful?

Michael Grossmann suggests to briefly speak about the sense of the meeting and asks the about ways of supporting Europe's rangers.

Tünde Ludnei mentions the advantages of professional marketing which is really important to demonstrate what the Rangers are doing! "Everybody is in need of good rangers and the rangers should show that to the people who have money!"

Florin Halastauan emphasizes that there is already a lot of motivation and this should be used to improve the professional standard of rangers in Europe and around the world. IRF was established to provide the possibility of learning from each other, to connect and to improve working standards. Now there is motivation to stronger connect rangers around Europe and around the world.

Conclusion: Benefits and Motivations:

→ Better networking → new ideas for environmental issues

Due to the fact that networking costs money, a structure to fundraise and organize is necessary → It will be much easier to get funding once there is a stable structure.

→ Also a proper structure helps to work together on a European level.

A big question generally is: What is our purpose as Rangers in Europe and in the world?

Information on the chart:

Financial Support	Ranger Image	Marketing and Lobbying
Ranger Standards	= key for Money Management	
	= Key for successful Association → more active members	Information and Motivation Program for Rangers
	Better Image → more sponsoring	

Chart: Motivation

Topic 2: Structure/ Organization

Barbara Mertin emphasizes the importance of keeping the structure and organization as simple as possible (Rangers are easygoing people).

Florin Halastauan points out that everybody working for the IRF is a volunteer and that it is difficult to be present all time. Thus, different people for different tasks are necessary.

Furthermore, Florin Halastauan and Bob Reid suggest building a structure from the bottom up and to first strengthen the national associations. Also Frank Grütz proposes to take country associations into responsibility for their country and the whole structure.

In response to Niklas Göth's question what if there is no national association Florin Halastauan suggests creating them.

Tünde Ludnai asks if the European Ranger Association will be open for all (also single persons) or only for associations.

Bob Reid answers that it would be open for everyone.

Topic 3: The Ranger Trust which exists already in the UK and Fundraising

Florin Halastauan explains that the European Ranger Trust should be something easy which allows applying an easy handling (applying for projects, etc.) Furthermore, he comments on the good foundation (also in a fundraising aspect) of the existing trust which could be used for the idea of the European Ranger Association. Using this foundation could be easier than creating a new one. He says that the existing Ranger Trust is registered in the UK and that this trust is mainly based on fundraising. The name "UK Trust" stems from the fact that it is registered in the UK, however it can be easily changed.

Bob Reid says, that anyone in the world could register in the UK Trust and that the UK is suitable because of its very good systems.

Furthermore, Bob lists the difficulties of a European standard for ranger training, due to cultural differences and different languages in countries. In addition, he remarks that training programs need requirements, but that there is the opportunity for development with the IRF. This idea already exists since 1995/6.

Urs Reif asks if there will be the possibility to get a new structure into this UK Trust.

Whereupon Bob Reid answers that this will be possible generally, but one may have to discuss about certain details.

Urs Reif asks all participants about their opinion of joining the existing trust or whether it would be better to create a new one.

Florin Halastauan recommends to use this existing trust for the purpose of the European Ranger Association. If it's easy to change a few things, in his opinion, it would be the best solution.

Bob Reid repeats that also the settings in the UK are good to use for a trust.

Urs Reif says that it would be important to have more information about the trust.

Bob Reid agrees to check it and to get more information about the existing trust in the UK.

Everybody agrees to join in the existing trust if possible. If not – as a second step – a “Plan B” needs to be prepared.

Topic 4: Further Brainstorming – Lobbying

Some requirements:

- good trainers to give seminars
- building something that works, simple and effective
- good strong structure
- Points or topics which make the European Ranger Association work well; it's necessary to talk about structure and money. This association should offer partnerships with the government (Adam Divis)
- Support of European rangers. Many rangers don't have the funds to travel → money to pay them. Then they can be present which is very important (Florin Halastauan)

Additionally, Przemyslaw Wasiak explains that in some areas, the rangers would like to become more open to people, and to have a more friendly image. For this, the European Ranger Association would be a good way forward.

Barbara Mertin adds the use of getting to know how work of rangers is done in other countries, how the structures and how the law enforcements are. “People need to know us, but we need to know ourselves first”.

6. Discussion – Structure

Urs Reif explains the different ways to set up a structure and requests to speak and decide about it.

Frank Grütz notes the possibility to improve the system after ERA is settled for few years.

Bob Reid proposes an organization with five officers (or chairmen). Together with the European president and special topics they work on.

Florin Halastauan is in favor of an “Executive Manager” and explains how important it will be to pay this person to cover at least some costs. As a positive effect, a financial compensation would push the person to feel responsible.

Thomas Herren mentions that the before proposed secretary should be separated from the Executive Manager. Frank Grütz would like to even cancel it.

Michael Grossmann asks for more places on the board and advocates the idea of a council with members of the national associations. In his opinion this would bring more input.

Also Urs Reif recommends such a council and mentions that the council could belong to the ranger association but would not be a strict part of the board.

Somebody asks if the European Ranger Association should have somebody who understands law. Frank Grütz and Florin Halastauan confirm that there should be a lawyer. Florin Halastauan mentions that somebody (preferably with special knowledge of European laws) could be hired for this (on demand).

Further notes:

- The Executive Manager and the officers are the working board
- Together with the European Representative there will be six people in this new association
- It is agreed upon that the organization is dependent on its people and that the head of the organization is a very important position which should be owned by a proper character/personality.
- Writing a letter of agreement is important
- In advance of all elections, five officers working voluntarily until the election takes place

Results of Discussion:

As a result of the discussion about structure, the following can be summarized:

As a proper structure for this association in Europe an organizational scheme was created:

All **heads of the particular National Ranger Associations** and also single Rangers (without an association) elect the members of the **executive committee** at the European Ranger Congress every three years.

This committee consists of an **Executive Manager** (head of the office) and four **chairmen/officers** with different fields of responsibility (**see 2.**)

The **European Representative** of the IRF – also the **head of the executive committee** – is elected at the WRC (World Ranger Congress) every three years (at present: Florin Halastauan).

On top of the hierarchical structure stands the **president of the IRF** (at present: Sean Willmore).

This President is also elected at the WRC.

As a further proceed Urs Reif suggests to discuss the main topics: jobs for the officers, the election and – most importantly – the setting of a timetable.

7. Discussion – Timetable Jobs, Election

Urs Reif asks if everybody is ok with the structure (of five officers) and the further discussion about the election, jobs and a timetable. Everyone agrees.

7.1 Timetable

Urs Reif emphasizes the importance of getting information about the existing trust and to write the letter of Agreement as a first step. The letter should be signed by the participants of the particular associations as soon as possible.

Everybody agrees that after this meeting a common sense proposal about structure is needful and that a clear plan about the future is necessary.

Florin Halastauan also underlines the need of a good letter which can be sent to each National Ranger Association. Furthermore, he says that this letter has to be written prior to the congress in Denver in spring 2016. In his opinion it will be an important push for everybody to answer quickly.

Bob Reid suggests to write/send the letter of agreement and to get information about the trust at the same time.

Florin Halastauan proposes to draft the letter during the meeting as a “Letter of Agreement” to be signed by all participants.

Everyone agrees and it is determined, that this letter should contain all the most important information and results of this meeting.

Conclusion:

- End of **December 2015**: Sending information to all Heads of the European National Ranger Associations: **Letter of Agreement**. To be **signed before** the end of **January 2016**

- **January 2016: Nominating candidates** for the position of the **European Representative**
- Until **WRC 2016**: Looking for voluntary chairmen/officers
- Until **WRC 2016**: Deciding on the **host-country** for the European Ranger Congress 2017
- **WRC 2016: Election** of the **IRF European Representative**
- European Ranger Congress **2017: Election** of an **Executive Manager** and four **chairmen/officers** for the executive committee of the ERA

7.2 Jobs and Projects

Starting with the discussion about the jobs of the five officers, the following tasks were mentioned:

- communication
- Fundraising
- Project development
- Training
- Finances
- Profile work (Ranger Image)
- Environmental Education
- Wildlife and biological diversity → Nature conservation
- Organization of the office → Secretary

Further Brainstorming results in the following points:

- Networking is very important
- Need of an IRF/EU database (Rangerwiki → account for information), data and information from associations → need of a computer specialist
- Facebook → need of a communication person
- twin projects
- Partnerships
- Europe Interpretation
- Annual meetings
- Excursions and exchange programs
- Need of getting money for the next European Conference (2017)
- European Seminar
- Choosing of a country to host the next European Conference
- Partnership with government?

Conclusion:

The different jobs of the officers were discussed and divided into groups. These groups were given to four different offices (Office 1, Office 2, ...)

Office 1: Communication, Profile, Ranger Image, etc.

Office 2: Finances, Fundraising, Sponsorship

Office 3: Project Development

Office 4: Training, Environmental Education, Nature Conservation, Biological Diversity & Wildlife

Project ideas for the particular offices were discussed:

Office 1: Image-Campaign, Ranger-Video-Project, Ranger & Law, Networking, IRF-EU-Ranger-Database (Dataflow from Associations, Spreading of Information, Exchange Platform, Ranger Dictionary), Facebook

Office 2: Sponsoring of Participants WRC 2016, European Ranger Congress 2017 (The decision which country will host has to be made by summer 2016)

Office 3: Group Building, International Partnerships, World-Ranger-Day, Twinning Project, Projects to establish new National Ranger Associations (support & advice)

Office 4: Field Trips, Exchange Programs, Train the Trainer, Ranger Mentoring, and Connections to Europe Interpretation

7.3 Election

Florin Halastauan speaks about an election where all European rangers from national associations have to vote. Furthermore, he explains how important it is to present the structure – created at the meeting – at the next congress.

Urs Reif summarizes that good communication will be necessary to spread information to the national associations. In turn, this information will be the base for the associations to nominate a (one) person for the board.

8. Discussion – Name for the European Ranger Association

After a short discussion if the name is connected with the legal status, the following names are nominated:

- Europe Trust (Frank Grütz)
- Europe Ranger Trust (Thomas Herren)
- ERF-Trust or ERT (Charly Ebel)
- IRF-Europe (Mario Schmid)
- IRf'E (Florin Halastauan)
- ERA (→ It is more an association than a federation)

After the nomination, everyone has the possibility to vote for a name with two points.

Result: (It's a new) ERA (European Ranger Association)

2015/11/27

Further Plans

Google Group

Florin Halastauan will set up a Google Group for ERA (good for a communication) and takes the responsibility for it.

- ➔ All projects will shift to the Google Calendar in the Google Group
- ➔ The Google Group will be something different than the database

Database

Florin Halastauan explains the need of a proper person for creating a database.

Urs Reif replies that it could be started simply with one of the officers. In his opinion, a huge database is a lot of work. He thinks that somebody who is ok with setting up a first database is needed first.

Bob Reid emphasizes that the information for the database should come from the associations and that this information should be part of the letter of agreement.

Urs Reif comments that if the associations agree to join in the ERA they accept to provide information the same time. Furthermore, he recommends to find somebody for the database until the officers will be elected. He asks if anyone of the participants wants to do it.

- ➔ Emmanuel Icardo agrees to do it.

Money

Bob Reid explains that the UK is a good place to have a bank account for the trust.

Bo Rene Storm asks if members need to pay for an ERA membership.

Niklas Göth answers that the single rangers pay their national ranger association and the national association then pays for ERA.

Florin Halastauan remarks that also donations would be possible.

First Activities

Mario Schmid recommends to start with (a) small activity(ies) e.g. some training, field trips or activities on the world ranger day(s). “So that everybody does the same this day! We should start something real! Now we are here; now we can decide; now, we can do!”

Linda Björk Hallgrímdóttir consents that on world ranger day something common should be done.

Mario Schmid proposes to make a video clip. It could be one about the ranger’s work. 30sec in English + 30 sec in mother tongues → this video could be showed on the “World Ranger Day” which could be done everywhere. “It is easy to do and it is a message.” Furthermore, Mario Schmid offers to do it and to be responsible for the organization of the video clip (collect everything).

Tünde Ludnei adds that **she knows somebody who could help** with this and offers her help to Mario Schmid. Whereupon it is decided that Mario Schmid and Tünde Ludnei are a working group for the video project (until May 2015) and will write an email regarding to what is required: format etc.

Sandor Rozsa recommends to have a professional for an image film and asks if **maybe there would be a possibility to have an outdoor outfitter for some sponsoring of such a film.**

Mario Schmid agrees with Sandor Rozsa that that could be the next step.

Urs Reif summarizes the following:

First practical idea: Video-project one minute (also Junior Rangers) until May 1st to show on the “World Ranger Day”. Mario Schmid and Tünde Ludnei will collect ideas and will coordinate the project.

As a next step a professional image film could be produced.

Information on the charts:

Networking	Video-Project
World Ranger Day	Train the Trainer
Twining Project	International Partnerships
Excursion	IRF/EU Database
Participant of US Congress	

Chart: Ideas of a common Image Campaign

Mentoring Countries	Member Association	Mentoring Ideas
Poland	Germany	Motivation Letter/ Mail, Invitation to Meetings, ERA Foyer , Image Campaign, IRF/EU Database
Norway, Finland	Denmark = Mentor	
Netherlands	Germany	
Austria	Swiss Ranger	
Slovakia, Serbia, Balkan Region	Croatia	
Latria, Estonia	Existing, Lithuania	
Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Italy	G8	

Chart: Mentoring

Other

Bob Reid has the idea of creating a banner. This could be made quickly without a lot of funding and would be efficient.

Whereupon Florin Halastauan points to the necessity of having a logo.

Tünde Ludnai proposes to think about a ranger exchange in the form of a contest. The award for the winners of the contest would be to go to other countries/areas → For this, only protected areas which provides lodging (food and logistics) would be necessary.

→ One decides that Tünde Ludnei will work out the idea and send the project details to Florin Halastauan.

Niklas Göth promotes the idea and emphasizes that more exchange would be very important.

Michael Grossmann notes that each year one national association could organize a field trip for all the others.

Thomas Herren adds for consideration that it is difficult for some countries to attend such a trip.

The short discussion results in the following points:

- It could be a voluntary field trip, every association could offer one and put it on the calendar
- Neighbourhood countries could attend easily → all parts of Europe should be integrated

As a last question before closing the meeting, Urs Reif asks for someone who could join the preliminary board to take some tasks to support the beginning.

→ Florin Halastauan will do both tasks: European Representative and Executive Manager for the next time.

After a group picture is taken, the meeting then ends with the acknowledgements and goodbyes.

IRF (International Ranger Federation)

President: Sean Wilmore

Elected at WRC (World
Ranger Congress)



ERA (European Ranger Association)

(IRF Europe Representative: Florin Halastauan)

Elected at WRC (World
Ranger Congress)

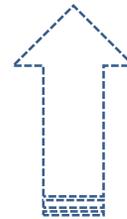


Executive Manager
(Head of Office)

4 Chairmen / Officers
(with different Jobs)

1. Communication
2. Finance
3. Project Development
4. Training (Env.-Edu., Nature cons., etc.)

Election of executive committee



Heads of National Associations
And single Rangers without Association

Jobs for the Officers:

Office 1: Communication, Profile, Ranger-Image

Office 2: Fundraising, Finances

Office 3: Project Development

Office 4: Training, Environmental Education, Nature Conservation, Biological Diversity, Wildlife

Current Project Ideas:

Office 1: Image-Campaign, Ranger-Video-Project, Ranger-&-law, Networking, IRF-EU-Ranger-Database (Dataflow from Associations , spreading of information, exchange platform, ranger dictionary), facebook

Office 2: Sponsoring of participants WRC 2016, European Ranger Congress 2017 (which Country? → Decision until Summer 2016)

Office 3: Cluster building, International Partnerships, World-Ranger-Day, Twinning project, Projects to found new Associations (support, advice)

Office 4: Field Trips, Exchange Programs, Train the Trainer, Ranger-Mentoring, Connections to Europe Interpretation

