

Media release

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Europe's Regional Nature Parks for Biological Diversity and Sustainable Rural Development

The NAAONB has joined representatives of Regional Nature Parks from 20 European states in signing a Declaration entitled "Regional Nature Parks – Working for Europe" which was signed today at the First European Summit of Regional Nature Parks in Brussels.

In the Declaration, representatives from Regional Nature Parks call on the European Union and its Member States to make greater use of the Regional Nature Park Family, which includes AONBs, in implementing an integrated, far-sighted approach for a sustainable rural Europe.

Nicola Notaro, Head of Unit for Nature Protection at the DG Environment, European Commission, and Martin Scheele, Head of Unit for Conception and Consistency of Rural Development at the DG Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission heard how it pays to strengthen Regional Nature Parks, as they are in a prime position to help ensure an implementation of the Nature Directives of the European Union i.e. the Habitats Directive, the Birds Directive and the Water Framework Directive. They also support the European Union and its Member States in achieving their political goals, such as the Biodiversity Strategy and the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

The event also saw the launch of the book "Living Landscapes", which provides information about Europe's Regional Nature Parks and the results of the first comprehensive study on these landscapes.

In her welcome address, Dr. Christiane Paulus, Deputy Director General for Nature Conservation of the German Environment Ministry, praised the ground-breaking work of the project. She commended the idea of cooperating on the parks' regional functions at European level because this opens opportunities for transnational exchange.

Dr. Paulus remarked, "It supports the ideal of a united, common Europe, an important symbol in the current times."

ENDS

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Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

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Editors' Notes

1. The Declaration entitled "Regional Nature Parks – Working for Europe" can be seen [here](#).
2. The book entitled "Living Landscapes", which provides information about Europe's Regional Nature Parks and the results of the first comprehensive study on these parks can be seen [here](#). This book was written within the 'Europe's Nature, Regional, and Landscape Parks' project, undertaken by the Association of German Nature Parks (Verband Deutscher Naturparke, VDN) in cooperation with the Europarc Federation between October 2014 and July 2017. The project was supported by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (Bundesamt für Naturschutz) with funding from the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety.
3. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are some of the UK's most outstanding landscapes and belong to an international Protected Landscape Family. There are 38 AONBs in England and Wales, and a further eight in Northern Ireland. For further information about the AONB Family visit www.landscapesforlife.org.uk
4. The National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) is a charity that provides a strong collective voice for Britain's AONB Family. Its objectives are to promote the conservation and enhancement of AONBs, advance the education, understanding and appreciation by the public of AONBs, and promote the efficiency and effectiveness of those promoting or representing AONBs, other Protected Areas and those areas for which designation might be pursued. It does this by taking a collaborative and partnership based approach to working with our membership and other organisations at a national level to achieve shared goals. For more information see
Web: www.landscapesforlife.org.uk
Twitter: @naaonb @AONBFamily
5. The Verband Deutscher Naturparke (VDN) is the umbrella organisation of German Nature Parks, representing 97 of the 104 nature Parks in Germany. For more information see <http://www.european-parks.org/who-we-are/verband-deutscher-naturparke>

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