



European Ranger Federation

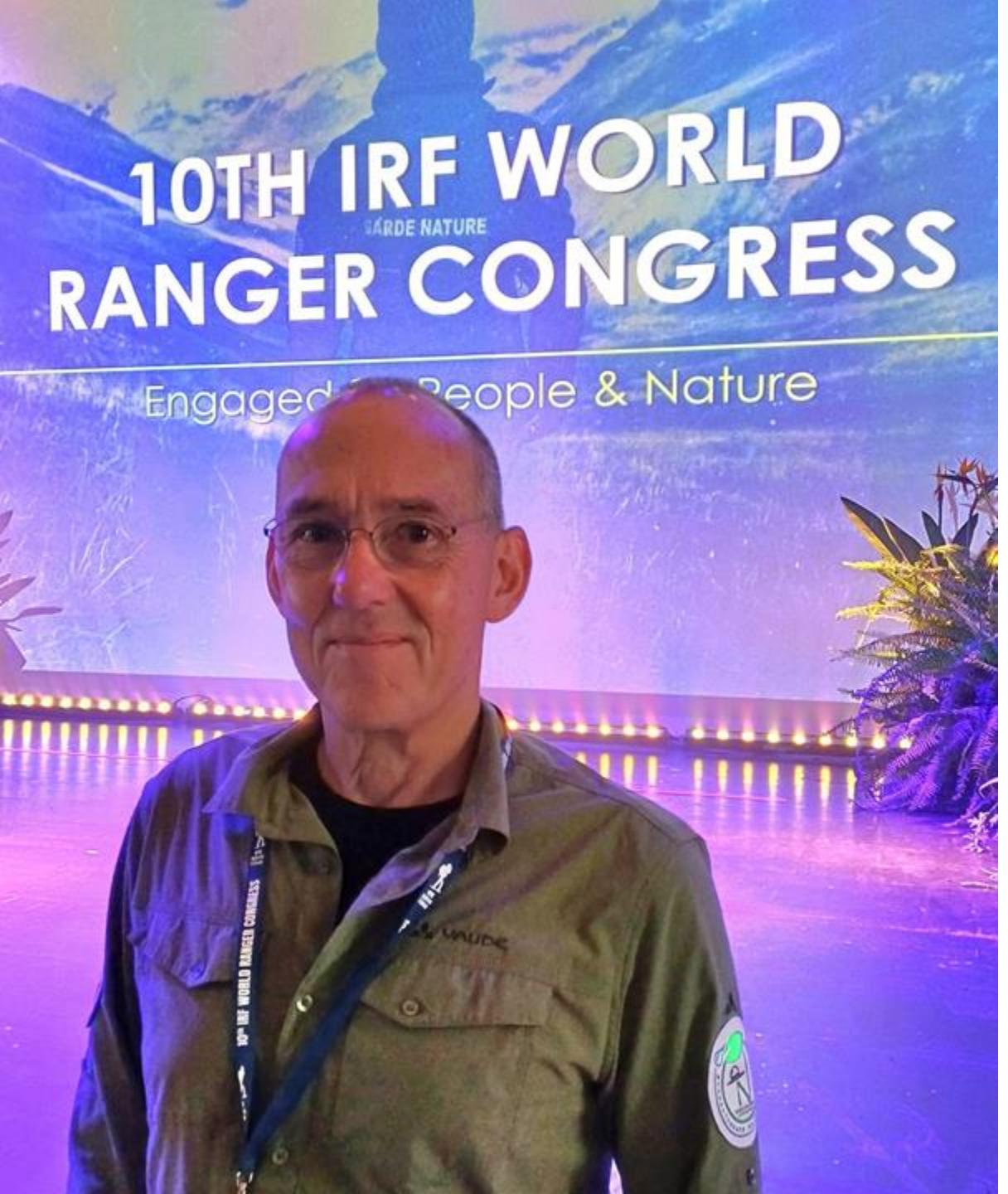
Rangers in Europe



European Rangers:

**roles, mandates, training, equipment,
recognition, legal status, protection:**

examples from the European perspective



Michael Grossmann

Studied Forestry

Worked for 33 in the **Bavarian Forest National Park** (in almost every department: forestry, science, info-centers and exhibitions, environmental education - and for the last 11 years as a **Head of the Ranger Team**

Was the **President of the German Foresters Association**

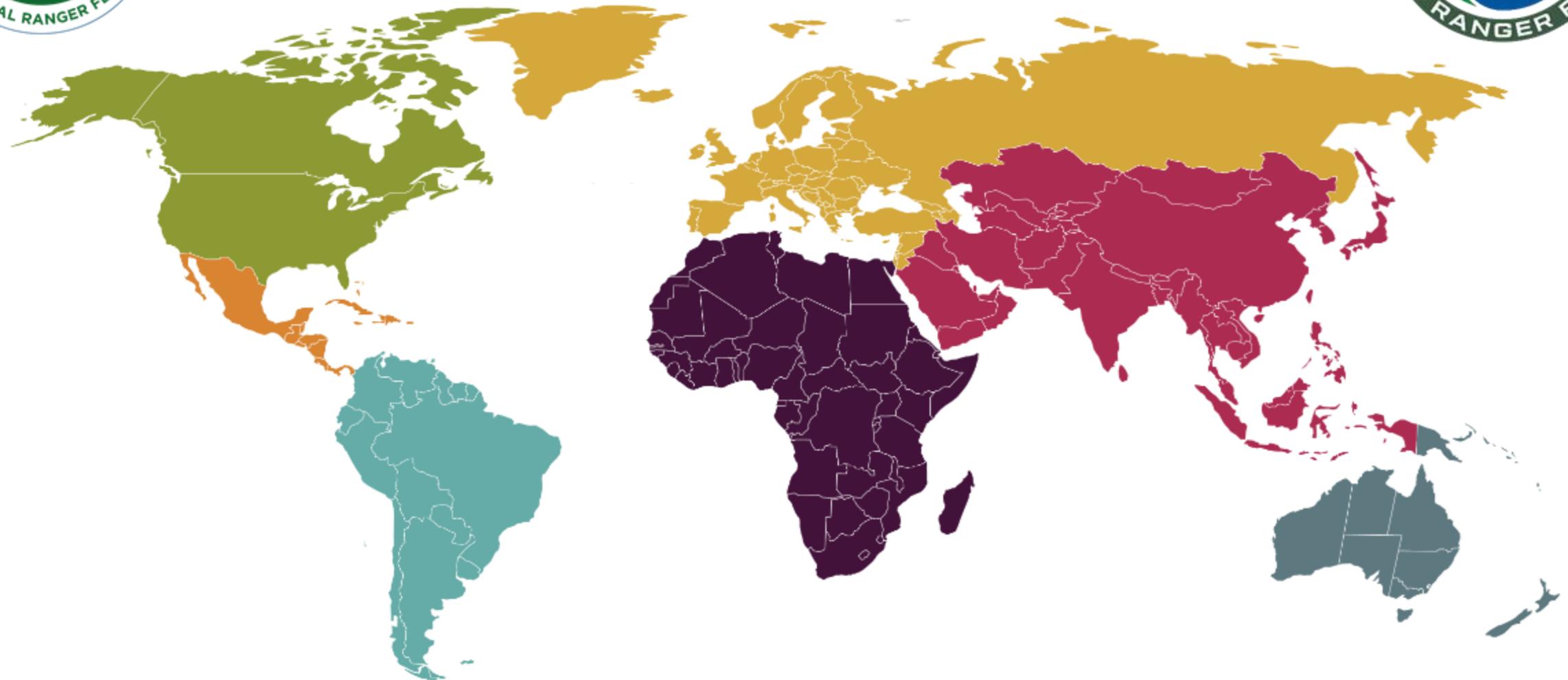
Co-founder of the European Ranger Federation (ERF)

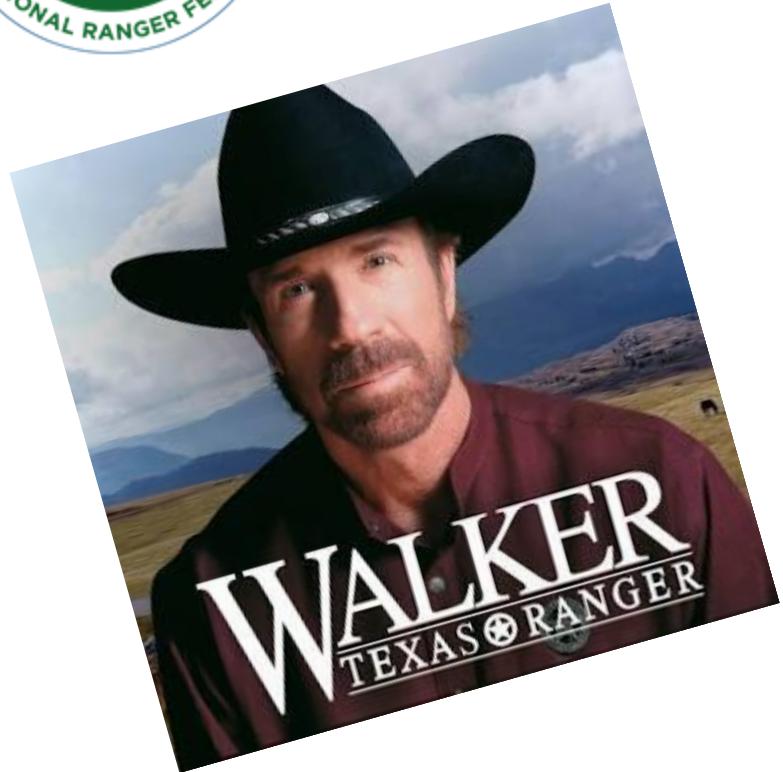
Now - ERF Council and Fundraising support





European Ranger Federation as regional Member of International Ranger Federation





Who or what are Rangers NOT?





The Milestones of Rangers' History



- establishment of the first world National Park - Yellowstone National Park in the USA in **1872** →
first Rangers appeared
BUT they had mostly the *duties of policemen or soldiers* ("wilderness guards with weapons")
- during the last 150 years the administrations of Protected Areas around the world recognised that they have to change of approach:
not just through strong law enforcement, but through acceptance!
- modern Rangers are **building a bridge between Protected Areas and Local Communities** through education, raising awareness, nature interpretation



EXAMPLE:

Bavarian Forest National Park!







Rangers in Europe (Continent)



- Approximately 25.000 Rangers in Europe
- 10.000 Members in National Ranger Associations among them





European Ranger Federation, News



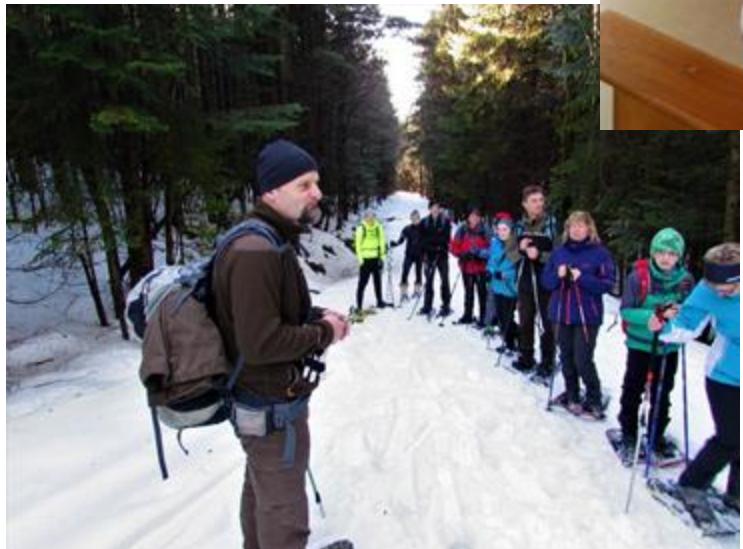
Rangers and their duties – around the world



- **Informing** the public (storytelling)
- Protecting nature reserves - **Patrol Activity**
- **Integrating volunteers** (including **Junior Ranger Programs**)
- **Monitoring** - Research work, at least as an assistant
- Renaturation and reintroduction projects for endangered species
- **Environmental Education**
- **Resolving human-wilderness conflicts**
- **Motivating people** to take action
- **Networking** and international cooperation
- **Fire Fighting**
- First Response and **First Aid**



Rangers and their duties – around the world





Rangers and their Jobs – around the world





European Ranger Federation, News





Rangering without Borders - Common Initiatives





How are Rangers organised and employed in different European countries \ regions?



On different administrative levels:

- Regional rangers
- County rangers
- City / rural rangers
- Private (freelance) rangers
(*for ex. Rewilding projects*)
- under Governmental Agencies
- under Public-private partnerships
- Protected Areas rangers →

In every category of Protected Areas there are Rangers:

(paid mostly by state money)

- National Park rangers
- Nature Park rangers
- Nature Reserves rangers
- Natura 2000 rangers
-



Rangers in large Landscape Protected Areas or Nature Parks



- High Level of Responsibility and multitasking
- Very low staff density (nearly impossible without Volunteer Rangers)
- Less contacts to administrations
- High standard of training required, especially in the case of communication
- But also in self protection





Competencies for Natura 2000 Site-managers (from EUROPARC conference 2019)



“Technical or specialist knowledge is not enough”

Effective Natura 2000 management requires:

- Know-how to develop & apply participatory processes
- Ability to engage local communities
- Consideration of socio-economic contexts
- Willingness to think synergistically
- Exceptional communication skills

Core competencies specifically required by Natura 2000 site managers include:

- Biodiversity conservation,
- policy, planning & project management know-how
- Confident working with local communities & respect for local cultures
- Abilities to communicate, collaborate & include & raise awareness to promote Natura 2000 & priorities for nature



SUMMARY:

**Protected Areas cannot survive
or be efficient enough
without Rangers!**

**Successful protected areas bring welfare to local communities,
and Rangers are the Bridge between Local Communities and Nature**



Unique Role of Rangers



- **practical** nature conservationists
- **wide overview** about nature conservation topics + **storytelling abilities** (transfer knowledge on eye-level to different target groups!)
- **communication with local communities** and their **integration** into nature conservation work
- **"ground" policy-makers and influencers**: talk directly to different groups of people and stakeholders - **drive forward the implementation of environmental legislation / Protected Areas rules**
- Rangers are **in the field** all the time and are **best observers and data-collectors**, first witnesses of changes - and so the first responders to them
- Rangers are the **Face and Ambassadors of Protected Areas** and the goals of regional sustainable development



Equipment for Rangers



- Equipment adapted to **all weather conditions** (also shoes, backpack)
- Nationwide **uniform with badges** indicating protected areas and ranger associations (this encourages viewers to seek information on the Internet)
- **Binoculars** and High-quality **monitoring set** (e.g., DNA preservation)
- Handy — **GPS, good photo** quality
- **Ranger Apps** (WhatsApp Groups, SMART, EarthRanger, etc.)
- **Body Camera**
- **Satellite phone** in remote, dangerous areas with no cell reception
- **First Aid Set**

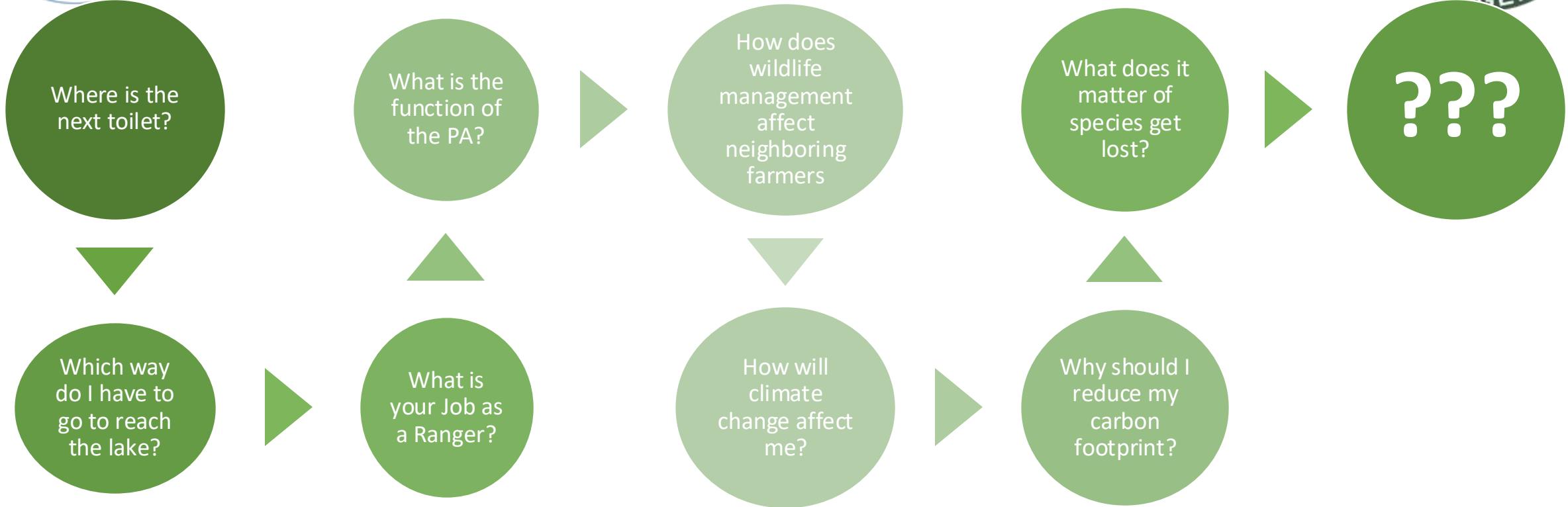




Image of
Rangers!



...but the variety of tasks for Rangers is a big challenge





Sometimes too much...



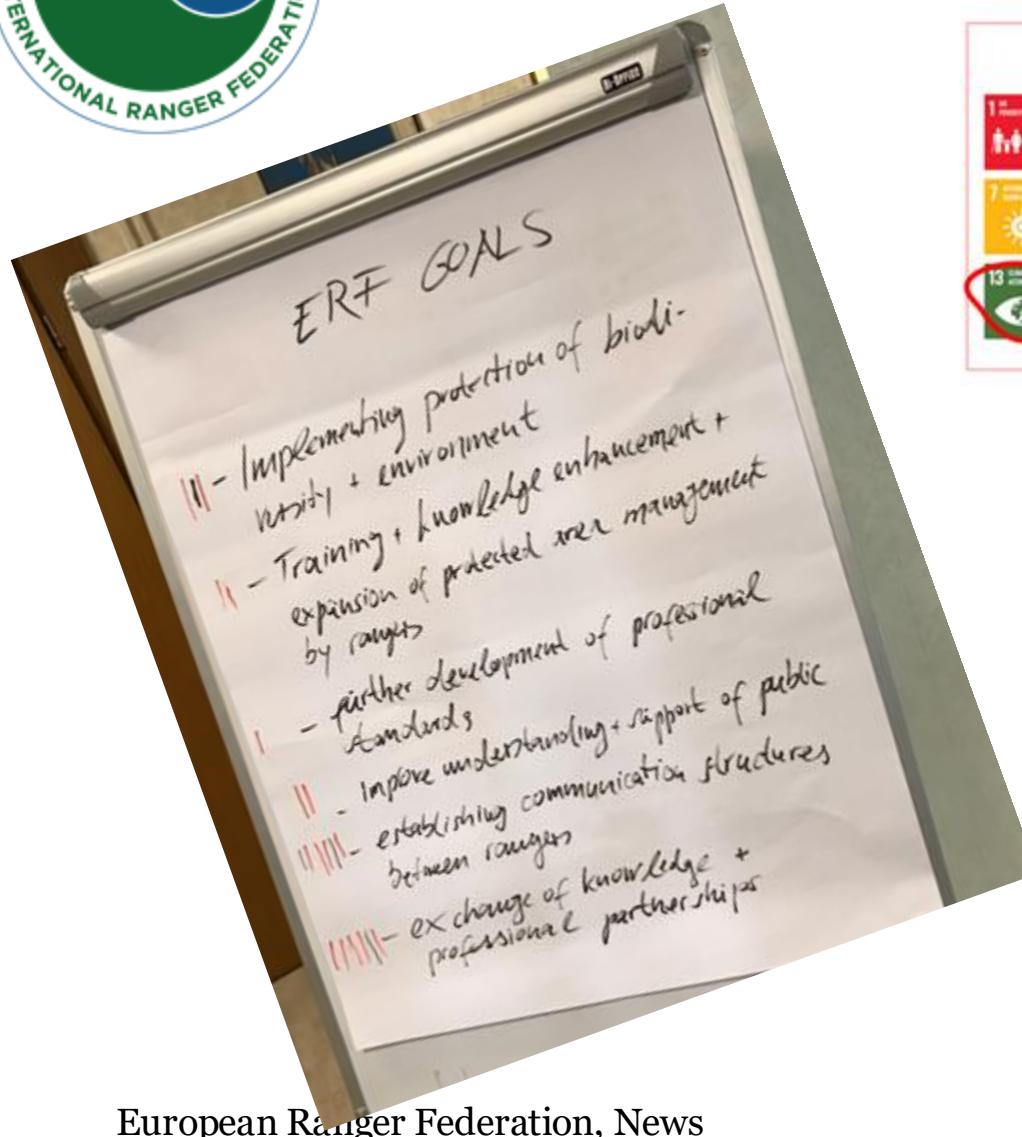
<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/43/11/44/431144b2688295b87c5096c5cdf7003c.jpg>





Rangers supporting global goals





The important roles of Rangers



The many roles of rangers

See [Stolton et al. \(2023\)](#)



Convention on Biological Diversity

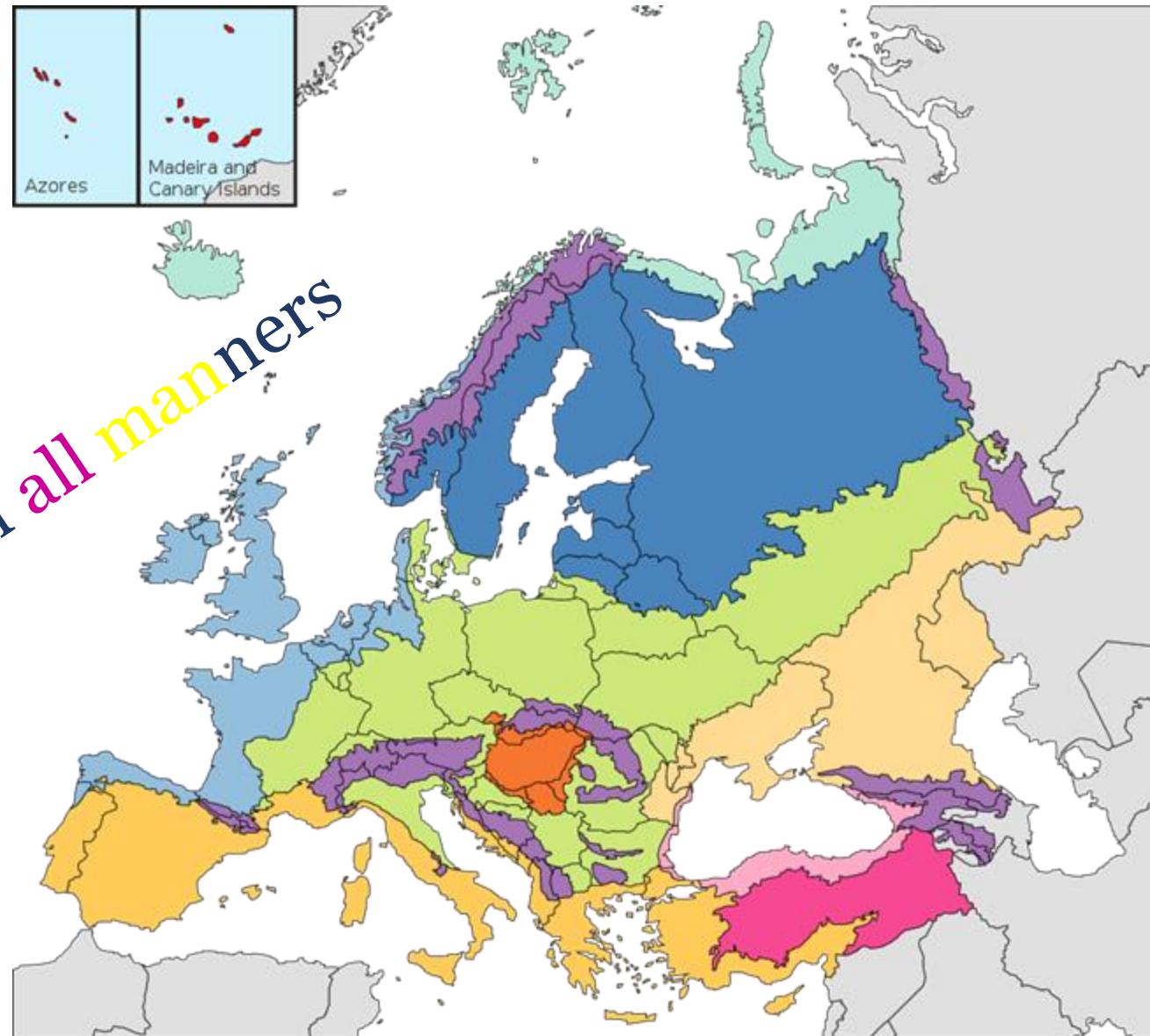




Europe's Biogeographical Regions



Diversity in all manners



Biogeographical regions of Europe

- Arctic
- Boreal
- Atlantic
- Continental
- Alpine
- Pannonian
- Mediterranean
- Macaronesian
- Steppic
- Black Sea
- Anatolian

After a map by the European Environmental Agency: www.eea.eu.int





The European Ranger Federation





The ERF Team - The Board



President



Florin Halastauan (Romania)

Financial Officer



José Maria Jiménez Cañete (Spain)

Project Officer



Vitor Casalinho (Portugal)

Vice-President



Lars Scharfe (Germany)

Secretary



Maria Gurscaia (Moldova)

Training Officer



Borja Diaz (Spain)

Press Office



Wiebke Bomas (Germany)

Administrative Officer



The ERF Team - The Council



Urs Reif, Germany (ERF Training Officer 2020-2021, ERF President 2021-2025)



Ilan Yeger, Israel (ERF Vice-President 2022-2025)



Ian Brooker , UK (ERF Vice-President 2020-2022)



Roger Cole, UK (ERF Vice-President 2017-2020)
European Ranger Federation, News



Michael Großmann, Germany (ERF Training Officer 2021-2022, ERF Financial Officer 2022-2025, ERF Fundraising volunteer 2025 to present)³¹



ERF Initiatives to support Rangers on the continent:

- Trainings (F2F, Webinars)
- Workshops
- European Congresses
- Support National Ranger Associations
- Support individual Rangers under pressure
- Networking (other NGO's, especially International Ranger Federation initiatives)



Romanian ranger training: conservation requires support of locals





Twinning Projects/Partnerships

- Exchanges
- Skill transfer
- Equipment transfer
- Financial support
- Trainings/Workshops



Twinning Project Germany-Israel



Partnership Germany-El Salvador





Main contents of our Training Strategy for 2026 - 2028



- Complex Topics of Biodiversity
- Safety and efficiency in ranger work
- Conflict management, Psychological Resilience & Mental Health
- Environmental Education, Nature Interpretation & Storytelling
- Protection of Landscapes and their Natural & Cultural Heritage
- Driving forward ERF's network partners & ERF's special projects



ERF's Vision 2030



General Vision

***“Connecting Europe's Rangers
to empower them in their work
for Planetary Health
and
make their voices heard
as Voice of Nature”***

