

Strasbourg, 5 April 2018  
[de07e\_2018.doc]

T-PVS/DE (2018) 7

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

---

**Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for  
Protected Areas**

21-22 February 2018  
Strasbourg, Palais de l'Europe, Room 8

**CHECKLIST FOR THE INDEPENDENT EXPERTS CARRYING  
OUT ON-THE-SPOT APPRAISAL VISITS TO PROTECTED  
AREAS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EUROPEAN  
DIPLOMA FOR PROTECTED AREAS**

*Document prepared by the Directorate  
of Democratic Citizenship and Participation*

Independent experts entrusted with carrying out on-the-spot appraisals to applicant areas or Diploma-holding areas with a view to the possible award or renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas should pay specific attention to the following matters which are reflected in the [Appendix 2](#) and [Appendix 3](#) to the revised regulations for the European Diploma for Protected Areas

## **I. EUROPEAN INTEREST**

The independent expert will assess whether the applicant area or the Diploma-holding area is of exceptional European significance and importance for the conservation of biological diversity, the conservation of remarkable natural phenomena or geological or physiographic formations or the conservation of landscape diversity.

The “European interest” can be assessed as follows:

- Areas of particular importance for the conservation of biological diversity in Europe. They may comprise:
  - Remarkable or threatened examples of wild plant or animal communities, as well as areas inhabited by a large number of species;
  - Highly representative samples of types of habitats and plant or animal communities constituting typical examples of the various types of ecosystem in Europe;
  - Habitats in an unfavourable state of conservation;
  - Habitats of endemic species or species in an unfavourable state of conservation, particularly endangered species;
  - Breeding grounds of animals protected under the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (ETS No. 104) and resting and feeding areas for migratory species.
- Areas aimed at conserving remarkable natural phenomena or geological or physiographic formations characteristic of the Earth’s history. These may include:
  - Sites or complexes of major importance for the conservation of significant evidence of the Earth’s history;
  - Noteworthy palaeontological sites;
  - Outstanding examples of geological, geomorphological, volcanic, hydrographic, physiographic or biogeographical phenomena;
  - Particularly grandiose or spectacular examples of protected natural features such as waterfalls, caves, rock formations, glacial cirques or glaciers.
- Areas of particular importance for the conservation of landscape diversity in Europe. These may comprise:
  - Sites or landscapes of outstanding aesthetic or cultural value or of a spectacular nature;
  - Complexes conserved as evidence of the history of the countryside or woodlands in Europe;
  - Country or wooded areas which are cultivated using extensive methods and constitute typical examples of European landscapes.

## **II. CONSERVATION MEASURES**

The essential goal of the protected areas is to preserve biological diversity including ecosystem and landscape diversity. The indicators the independent expert will use for assessing the conservation measures can read:

- Legal protection status
- Boundaries / zoning / buffer zones
- Supervision / warding
- The state of conservation of the main species and their habitats, and the effectiveness of existing protective regulations vis-à-vis internal and external threats
- Land-use planning

### **III. MANAGEMENT**

The European Diploma for Protected Areas is awarded to protected areas which are managed in an exemplary way. The independent expert will assess whether the measures in place for the management of the area are relevant, adapted and whether improvements are to be foreseen. The following matters will guide the evaluation of the management scheme:

- Management plan for the area (general/specific goals, targets/priorities, duration, ...)
- Institutional arrangements (body responsible for the administration and the management of the area)
- Capacities (levels and trends)
  - human (administration, staff, ...)
  - technical (equipments and facilities)
- Financial (budget, levels and trends)
- Research and monitoring programmes
- Natural resources management, including water resource
- Relationship between the body responsible for the area and the other stakeholders (local elected representatives, socio-economic actors, NGOs)
- Public services including waste management
- Use of renewable energy systems

### **IV. USES AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES**

The uses and socio-economic activities within the candidate or Diploma-holding area must not damage potentially or effectively the ecological/social integrity as well as the cultural values of the protected area. The following matters need to be addressed, amongst any others:

- Forestry
- Agriculture
- Grazing / hay cutting
- Quarrying and mining
- Buildings and infrastructures
- Tourism / leisure activities
- Awareness raising / information / education resources and activities
- Car traffic and public access

- Hunting / fishing
- Human occupation
- Cultural heritage

#### **V. CONNECTIVITY OF THE AREA**

- Ecological connectivity with other areas
- Other forms of recognition awarded to the area or certification of protected areas.

#### **In the case of an on-the-spot appraisal visit aiming to assess the opportunity to renew the European Diploma of an area, the independent experts will also:**

- Review the application to the European Diploma submitted by the area (if available)
- Review the reports of the previous on-the-spot appraisal visits
- Review the annual report submitted by the Diploma holding area concerned
- Assess whether the conditions and recommendations which conditioned the award or the previous renewal of the Diploma were fulfilled, partially fulfilled, not fulfilled.
- Consider the document [T-PVS/DE\(2018\)06](#) *Conditions and recommendations attached to the renewal and the award of the European Diploma* when formulating his/her conclusions.