



Strasbourg, 19 December 1996

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PE-S-DE (97) 51

**BUREAU OF THE COMMITTEE
FOR THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
IN THE FIELD OF BIOLOGICAL AND LANDSCAPE DIVERSITY**

BU-DBP

Group of specialists - European Diploma

**Swiss National Park
(Switzerland)**

Category A

RENEWAL

*Expert appraisal
by Charles STAUFFER*

Having decided to consider the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Swiss National Park, the Committee of Experts on Protected Areas has entrusted me with the task of carrying out an on-the-spot appraisal in order to compare the present state of the area with the situation when the Diploma was awarded and successively renewed.

The present document sets out the findings of the expert, who was not accompanied by a Secretariat representative.

Resolution (92)16 on the last renewal is reproduced in Appendix I; Appendix II contains the Secretariat's draft Resolution for a possible renewal in 1997.

I. GENERAL

Creation of the National Park

A nature protection committee, chaired by Dr Paul Sarrazin, was set up within the Swiss Society of Natural Sciences in 1906.

Its numerous projects included the setting up of a large nature reserve along the lines of those in the United States.

The area now covered by the park was used by Italian farmers for summer grazing. It appears that problems of a sanitary nature prompted the municipalities owning the land to cancel that agreement.

Dr Carl Schroeder and Dr Stephan Brunies, the latter resident in Engadine, had noticed the exceptional natural wealth and rare beauty of the site.

In order to meet the committee's need for funding, the Swiss League for Nature Protection was set up in 1909. Little by little, the committee was able to rent areas of land and, from 1908, the municipality of Zernez declared itself willing to rent the Val Cluozza for 25 years.

When approached for aid, the Swiss Confederation insisted on negotiating with a legal entity. This enabled the League to have a fixed statute by 1913 and operate as an independent society.

On 25 March 1914, the Lower Engadine Park was created by federal decree, with the Confederation covering the cost of land rental and the League responsible for maintenance.

The Swiss National Park covers an area of 16,870 ha, the last extension being in 1961. The Category A European Diploma was awarded to the park in 1967. It has since been renewed every 5 years, namely in 1972, 1977, 1982, 1987 and 1992. I was responsible for this expert appraisal.

Council of Europe has once again asked me to check that the Swiss National Park satisfies all the requirements linked to its continued holding of the Diploma.

I visited the site on 25 and 26 June 1996, with special instructions to check whether the recommendations set out in Resolution (92) 16 had been acted upon, these being:

1. that a post of deputy director be created by 1993 at the latest;
2. that major work be undertaken without delay on both the park centre itself and the surrounding area in order to welcome an increasing number of visitors, and that ways of controlling the new forms of tourism and leisure be looked at;
3. that research on the ibex be accelerated so that all the information needed for a decision is available as soon as possible; this will mean co-ordinating research with a view to focusing on the park's immediate requirements.

II. REPORT ON THE VISIT

Main points of emphasis

1. Visit to the park centre
2. Trip through the Offenpass area
3. Meeting with the Chairman of the Stelvio Park consortium
4. Meeting with the Chairman of Zernez Council
5. Trip through the Swiss National Park from the Val Dalbatsch to the Val Minger
6. Summing-up meeting

1. Visit to the park centre (inaugurated in 1968)

We were welcomed on the premises of the Swiss National Park by the director, Mr Haller, and made a full inspection of both administrative and technical facilities.

The park centre is built in natural stone, with a basement, ground floor and first floor.

The first floor is entirely reserved for the administration and management of the park. It houses the offices of the director, his deputy and various members of staff, including the management unit. There are 22 staff in total (organigram appended).

The post of deputy director, discussed during the last appraisal, has at last been filled, and the general development of the park's administrative structure complies with the requirements of operating a structure as complex as the Swiss National Park.

Links with the wardens are facilitated by the fact that Mr Negri, a former park warden, shares his working hours between two part-time posts.

The ground floor is devoted to receiving visitors. Together with the basement, it constitutes the area of the building open to the public. It has a projection room and, since 1995, a pushbutton information system, enabling the public and particularly younger visitors to discover all the different aspects of the park. This facility was designed and put together by the park's staff. The ground-floor is above all geared to the distribution of literature and promotional material which, combined with admission fees, form one of the park's main sources of income. The basement, accessible only by a stairway, is used for exhibitions on selected themes, which are either topical (such as the introduction of the bearded vulture) or purely of educational interest. It is entirely windowless and may seem oppressive to some.

The major drawback is that it is cramped and inaccessible to the handicapped. Besides the Offenpass route, the park centre is the only point of contact with the park for the physically handicapped. This point was already mentioned in passing during the last appraisal, with full awareness of all the inherent difficulties. I think that all visitor reception facilities should be on the ground floor and cover a larger area than that available on the different levels at present. The park centre must be a necessary stopping-off point for the majority of visitors, so that they can be informed of all the possibilities open to them in the park and, perhaps above all, on the outskirts of the park.

In the winter period, the staff are more available to deal with school groups.

It should be noted in this connection that there are two decentralised permanent exhibitions, one in the Cluozza refuge on the fauna and flora in the area and also the dinosaur prints found at the nearby site of the Val dal Dianel, and the other at S'chanf providing general information and specific data on bears.

2. The Offenpass peripheral area

We went on a trip through the sector separating off the Offenpass to reach the Chaschlot heights, with their view over the Val Nuglia and Vallatscha valleys. All public access is blocked to this sector, where a golden eagle brood was hatched in 1996. This fabled and majestic bird of prey permanently nests in the park, and the tenure of Mr Haller, one of the European specialists on the species, as director of the Swiss National Park is undeniably a favourable factor.

This brings us to the reintroduction of the bearded vulture, which began in 1991. Despite these semblances of pairing and the transport of materials, no breeding has been reported to date.

The programme is being carried out with equal thoroughness all over the alpine range.

3. Meeting with the Chairman of the Stelvio National Park Consortium (Italy)

Both the expert and the park authorities had contacted the Stelvio National Park authorities with a view to holding a meeting during the two days with one or more representatives. The meeting took place on day one of the appraisal, in Livinio where we received by Mr Annibale Montana (Consortium Chairman).

The Stelvio park covers 134,000 ha located in three provinces. The law of 1993 radically changed the park's organisation. Responsibility for the park which previously lay with the national authorities and more specifically with the national forestry administration now lies with the three provinces in which the park is located. The task has been taken on by the regional forestry departments.

This arrangement has not yet made it possible to re-establish a supra-regional structure, as coherent overall policy is yet to be defined. A consortium, chaired by Mr Montana, ensures that a coherent approach is taken; a director is due to be appointed soon.

Links with the Swiss National Park take the form of joint outings between the staff of the two parks.

Scientific monitoring, mainly of large herbivores, red deer and ibex, provide common ground for the two teams but contact between them is nevertheless rare.

Mr Montana set out his ideas for the park's future. He was particularly keen to create a core zone alongside the neighbouring Swiss National Park and strengthen links.

Mention was also made of the special status of certain Swiss enclaves within Italian territory and the need for closer contact with a view to introducing coherent measures at the exit to the Ponte del Gallo tunnel.

I believe that this encounter, thanks to a "Council of Europe-style" approach, forged links which will grow stronger and greatly benefit nature protection. The two entities have much to gain from closer relations. Not only the monitoring of red deer, ibex and chamois but also projects for birds of prey covering a broader area can only be beneficial to conservation efforts. Further collaboration should be pursued as regards the harmonisation of signposting as well as the form and structure of facilities, as has lately been the case for the Bayerischer Wald and Sumava parks (Pontal Fall seems the ideal place for the first such facility).

4. Meeting with Mr Chasper Buchli, Chairman of Zernez Council

In accordance with the expert's wish to speak to a representative of the local authorities concerned by the park, we met Mr Buchli, a regional councillor who sits in federal bodies, mayor of the municipality of Zernez and also a biologist specialising in red deer.

The municipality's contribution corresponds to 68% of the park's surface area and it has signed a perpetual lease waiving all farming rights over the area conceded. The Mayor thought that the economic spin-offs from the park were considerable and that the inhabitants of the municipality had an interest in maintaining the structure. Consequently, the constraints linked to the park were accepted easily enough.

We described our meeting with Mr Montana and the different matters raised.

I would like to express my gratitude to Mr Buchli for his hospitality and above all for agreeing to devote some of his time to us.

5. From the Val Dalbotsh to the Val Minger

At the express wish of the expert, the 1996 appraisal visit concentrated more particularly on the northern part of the park in order to observe the bottlenecking of the park in this sector.

From car park no. 7, the trail follows the small valley of the Val Dalbotsch, one of the park's most frequented itineraries since part of it forms an easy circuit enabling walkers of any level to reach the heart of the park within a short time. Moreover, it is a nature trail punctuated by signs of excellent quality, which inform the public on the fauna and flora and provide a means of influencing their behaviour.

Constant maintenance of the path helps to minimise the impact of the erosion caused by the frequent passage of walkers; as had been the case on our previous visit to the sector, it was clear that the public fully complies with the rules laid down by the park authorities.

After leaving the path leading back to Stabelchod, the trail rises from the valley floor to the Eda Val Dalbotsch pass. Alternative paths have been worn parallel to the trail in many places by walkers. This is the eternal problem of twisting paths when people take shortcuts (it should also be noted that during our visit part of the trail was covered by the last snowfalls).

After the pass, the trail descends into the Val Plaona. As it lies outside the park, extensive grazing is practised in this valley. The alpine grass is exploited as far as the park's vegetation. Apart from this detail, there was nothing to indicate that we had left the park. We reached the Val Minter via the Sur il Foss pass. This latter valley is more exposed to the north, cooler and therefore greener.

With the Val Trupchun and Fuorn inch Scheva, it is the third point of concentration of red deer.

The deer population has been brought under control as a result of pressure from forestland owners, who complain of damage to the forest areas outside the park, where these ungulates take refuge during the winter.

A degree of population control has been made possible by changing hunting season dates. Most of the planned culls have been made in this way (decreed hunting programmes).

Between Eda Val dal Botsch and Sur il Foss, which is the pass providing access to Val Minger, the trail follows the valley bottom of the Val Pvauna. This area is not included within the park for administrative reasons, since the municipality owning this off-limits sector did not give its agreement either when the park was created or when it was successively enlarged. The scarcity of farmland is doubtless the reason for its refusal. It may be noted in passing that the Swiss National Park does not incorporate a peripheral zone, providing the traditional buffer between the inner core and the boundary. One day, the authorities will have to consider the advisability of creating such a zone.

Subject to certain conditions, a peripheral zone of this kind could maintain its agricultural, forestry and grazing functions but also participate in park life by operating as a facility receiving members of the public and enabling them to experience close contact with a relatively unspoilt nature.

There are no special comments to make on the Val Minger; at the end of the valley there is a road leading to Sur Charl, where a large installation takes water from the Clemgia waterfall for electricity production. This is not the only one of its kind in the park; in fact there are considerably larger installations that completely alter the hydraulic system of the Spöl waterfall, which empties into the river Inn at Zernez. On the Italian side, for example, substantial volumes of water are dammed: part of the water is diverted to the Pô valley while most is used to produce electricity in two successive installations on the Swiss side. The sediment accumulated at the bottom of the dams has to be cleared periodically. The result of this exercise is to release a huge amount of alluvial deposits into the water course in a short space of time. Regular monitoring has made it possible to take this phenomenon into account. Nevertheless, the problem remains.

6. Summing-up meeting

To conclude the appraisal, we spent part of the second day discussing all the matters broached. The dialogue was fruitful and above all very open, indicating a desire for sincere and honest co-operation with the expert.

Notwithstanding the changes in the park's directorship in the space of five years, a fresh driving force is clearly in place, although the scale of the achievements of the previous years should not be underestimated. The foundations of change laid by Mr Robbin, the appointment of a deputy director and, finally, the drawing up of a proper organigram (see Appendix III) give the new director means of support which he could not do without.

III. CONCLUSION

The Swiss National Park pursues its course, accomplishing the necessary tasks on its way. Today, as it did five years ago, it meets the criteria for the renewal of the Category A European Diploma. All the requisites are in place for a new five-year period.

Draft Resolution

The draft resolution seeks to emphasise four particular points:

1. the absence of a peripheral zone, principally at the edge of the narrowest sectors of the park;
2. the coherence of protection measures along the boundaries shared with the Stelvio park;
3. the upgrading of signposting along the Offenpass route;
4. indepth consideration of how the services provided to park centre visitors could be improved.

It makes the renewal subject to the following recommendations:

1. that the possibility of establishing a peripheral zone be studied;
2. that the necessary steps be taken to ensure coherent levels of protection at the meeting point of the two parks;
3. that the signposting (park entrance) along the Offenpass route be brought into line with current norms;
4. that the authorities consider how the park centre might be altered in order to improve the presentation of attractive exhibits and, above all, make them accessible to the physically handicapped.

APPENDIX I

RESOLUTION (92) 16

**ON THE RENEWAL OF THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA
AWARDED TO THE SWISS NATIONAL PARK**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 18 May 1992
at the 476th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.a of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Having regard to Resolution (65) 6 instituting the European Diploma;

Having regard to Resolution (67) 23 awarding the European Diploma to the Swiss National Park;

Having regard to the proposals of the Steering Committee for the Conservation and Management of the Environment and Natural Habitats (CDPE);

Renews the European Diploma, awarded to the Swiss National Park in Category A until 27 October 1997;

Attaches to the renewal the following recommendations:

1. that a post of deputy director be created by 1993 at the latest;
2. that major work be undertaken without delay on both the park centre itself and the surrounding area in order to welcome an increasing number of visitors, and that ways of controlling the new forms of tourism and leisure be looked at;
3. that research on the ibex be accelerated so that all the information needed for a decision is available as soon as possible; this will mean co-ordinating research with a view to focusing on the park's immediate requirements.

APPENDIX II

DRAFT RESOLUTION (97)..

**on the renewal of the European Diploma
awarded to the Swiss National Park**

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15a of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Having regard to Resolution (65) 6 instituting the European Diploma;

Having regard to Resolution (67) 23 awarding the European Diploma to the Swiss National Park;

Having regard to the proposals of the Bureau of the Committee for the activities of the Council of Europe in the field of biological and landscape diversity (BU-DBP);

Renews the European Diploma awarded to the Swiss National Park until 27 October 2002;

Attaches to the renewal the following recommendations:

1. that the possibility of establishing a peripheral zone be studied;
2. that the necessary steps be taken to ensure coherent levels of protection at the meeting point of the two parks;
3. that the signposting (park entrance) along the Offenpass route be brought into line with current norms;
4. that the authorities consider how the park centre might be altered in order to improve the presentation of attractive exhibits and, above all, make them accessible to the physically handicapped.

ENPK

WNPk

Rechnungsführung

Sekretariat

Direktor SNP

HALLER

Geschäftsleitung

Sekretariat

Telefon, Korrespondenz

Bereich
GESAMTFÜHRUNGDirekt-Unterstellte
Bereichsleiter, Sekretariat

Verantwortungsbereich
Strategische Führung *
Leitbild, Leitlinien
Programm
Budget/Rechnung
Geschäftsbericht

Operative Führung
Geschäftsleitungs-Rapporte
Spez. Rapporte Parkwächter

Personal
Betriebskonzept*
Anstellungen, Einstufung
Weiterbildung
spez. Fragen

Infrastruktur SNP*
Gesamtkonzept
Gebäude (Investitionen/
Renovationen)

Sachbearbeitung
ENPK
- Präsident ENPK
- Plenum
- Liegenschaften-Ausschuss
- Arbeitsgruppen
- Subkommissionen

Kontakte
Repräsentanz SNP im In- und
Ausland
SANW, WNPk
SBN, zielverwandte nat. und
internat. Organisationen
EDI; BUWAL; N + L, Forstdirektion
weitere Bundesämter
Kt. GR; Region; Gemeinden
Nationalparke
Kontakte zu Fördervereinen

Bereich
ADMINISTRATION
NEGRİDirekt-Unterstellte
keineVerantwortungsbereich
Archive SNP/ENPK

Sachbearbeitung
Rechnungswesen
Versicherungswesen
Personalbüro
Archiv Direktion
Archiv Administration

Kontakte
Bundesarchiv
BUWAL/Personalberater
EVK, div. Versicherungen
GKB
Eidg. Finanzkontrolle

Bereich
BETRIEB
NEGRİDirekt-Unterstellte
Parkwächter

Verantwortungsbereich
Parkwächter
Dienstbetrieb
Grundausbildung
Sondereinsätze

Infrastruktur SNP
Gebäude (Unterhalt/Betrieb)
- Nationalparkhaus
- Cluozza
- weitere Gebäude
Material
Wegnetz

Sachbearbeitung
Archiv Betrieb
Spezialaufgaben D-SNP

Kontakte
Kantonales Jagd- und
Fischereiinspektorat (Region)
Kantonspolizei (Region)
Festungswacht (Region)
Grenzschutz (Region)
Lieferanten
Unternehmer
BAW

Bereich
INFORMATION
LOZZADirekt-Unterstellte
NPH-MitarbeiterInnen

**Verantwortungsbereich/
Sachbearbeitung**
NPH, Cluozza und weitere
Informationsstützpunkte
Auskunfts-/Verkaufsstelle
Ausstellungen, Anlässe
Info-Material SNP

Öffentlichkeitsarbeit
Konzepte
Infos im Park, Nationalparkhaus,
Cluozza, weiteren Infostützpunkten
Lehrpfade
Medienkontakte

Umsetzung Forschung
Cratschla
Zürcher Tage
wissenschaft. Publikationen/Referate
Populärwissenschaft. Publikationen

Sammlungen (Fotos, Exponate)
Archiv Information

Sponsoring

Kontakte
Medien
Verkehrsvereine
SBN, SVS, zielverwandte Org.

Bereich
FORSCHUNG
FILLI UR NgrDirekt-Unterstellte
Praktikantinnen und
Praktikanten

Verantwortungsbereich
Koordination Forschung im Feld
Forschungsprojekte SNP
Wiss. Auswertung SNP-Daten
EDV-Infrastruktur

Sachbearbeitung
Forschung
Auswertungen
wissenschaft. Publikationen
Bibliothek
Archiv Forschung

Sekretär ENPK
WNPk (Mitglied GL)

Kontakte
ENPK als Sekretär
WNPk (Mitglied GL)
Forschungsinstitute
Universitäten
nat. und internat. Forschungs-
programme

Fachstellen Nationalparke