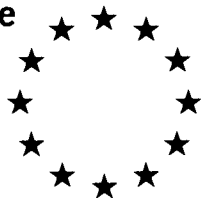


Council of Europe  
Conseil de l'Europe



Strasbourg, 13 January 1997  
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**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**

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# **Carpathian Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine)**

**ON-THE-SPOT APPRAISAL  
with a view to awarding the European Diploma**

*Expert appraisal  
by Mario F. BROGGI  
(Liechtenstein)*

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## **Application of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine) for the European Diploma**

### **Terms of reference**

At its meeting from 6 to 8 March 1996, the Group of Specialists on Protected Areas confirmed its agreement for awarding a European Diploma and suggested that an on-the-spot appraisal be carried out. The author of this report, in the company of Dr Jean-Pierre Ribaut of the Environment Conservation and Management Division, was entrusted with the task of preparing an in-depth analysis of the conservation and management of the region.

The appraisal was conducted from 3 to 9 September 1996. The expert had already been to several of the biosphere reserves (for example Stuzhytsa and the Ugolsko-Schirokoluzhansky massif) in 1994 on a tour by Swiss and Austrian researchers.

### **Implementation of the terms of reference**

3 September 1996

Travel to Kyiv. Meeting with two persons who were to accompany us throughout the trip, Ms Vira Davydok of the Ministry for Environmental Protection and Nuclear Safety of Ukraine (Department of International Relations) and Dr Leonid Protsenko of the Centre for Implementation of International Ecological Programmes "Intereccentre", and with Dr Vasiliy A. Kostyushin, National Ecological Centre of Ukraine. Visit to the botanical garden of the University of Kyiv (whose director is Mr Vasil Kupystyn). Travel to Mukachevo by night train (Transcarpathian).

4 September 1996

We met with Mr Ivan P. Negrja, the representative of the environmental authorities of the Transcarpathian region, Dr Fedir D. Hamor, director of the Carpathian biosphere reserve, and the mayor of Mukachevo. Journey to Rakhiv, with visit to Dolyna Nartsysiv ("Narcissus Valley") and the Kuziysky reserve.

5 September 1996

Introductory information on the structures of the biosphere reserve and visit to the open-air museum (under construction), discussions with biosphere reserve officials: the director, Dr. Fedir Hamor, Mr Yaroslav Dovhanich, Mr Vasil Chumak, Mr Vasil Antosyak, Mr Bohdan Hodovanets, Mr Evhen Lyashenko and Mr Vasil Pokinchereda, all members of the biosphere reserve research team.

6 September

Meeting with Rakhiv District President, Mr Mikhaylo O. Daskalyuk, followed by a trip to the Chornohirsky region (4,677 hectares, in large part covered by virgin forest and with a very varied vegetation ranging from beech groves to high spruce forests), where the highest elevation is 2061 m. We were accompanied by Mr Dmitro Kurin, manager of the Chornogviskiy department, and Mr Ivan Voloshchuck, correspondent of the magazine "Green Carpathian".

7 September 1996

Travel to Ivano-Frankivsk and meeting with the environmental authorities. Return to Kyiv by night train.

8 September 1996

Meeting with Vice-Minister for the Environment, Dr Yaroslav Movchan; meeting with Dr Vyacheslaw I. Oleschenko, principal adviser of the legal department of the office of the Head of State; discussion with representatives of NGOs, in particular with the director of the Institute of Ecology, Dr Volodymir I. Maltsev, and with the film-maker Mr Vladimir Kuznetsov.

9 September 1996

Another meeting with Vice-Minister Movchan and journey home.

We extend at this juncture our most sincere thanks for their assistance and hospitality to all these persons and to those who accompanied us but have not been mentioned by name. We were very impressed by their commitment to the environment despite the difficult economic situation.

### **Assessment of European interest**

On the natural values of the site, see doc. PE-S-ZP (96) 54.

The Transcarpathian Oblast, in which the biosphere reserves are located, is part of the Carpathian region. Forests cover approximately 70 % of its surface area, and more than one million cubic metres of timber are logged annually. About 20 % of the surface area is in valleys, the rest being mountainous. Meadows, on which heifers and sheep graze, account for some 100,000 hectares.

Intensive logging of the Transcarpathian region began later in the eastern than in the western part. As recently as the beginning of the twentieth century, the region still had impressive expanses of virgin forests, consisting of beech, fir and spruce. In 1913, the Stuzhitsa reserve was created in eastern Beskide, the first protected area on record. Over time, similar protection has been extended to other regions. In 1992, there were no fewer than six reserves, covering a total area of 38,930 ha. The central areas (21,879 ha in all) are 90% wooded, mostly virgin and natural forests. This region has the largest virgin beech groves in Europe in terms of surface area. It is of considerable interest from a natural science point of view, because in other parts of Europe, either such forests do not exist or are

remnants of very limited dimensions. Ukraine is therefore a treasure trove for research on virgin forest, and data can be gathered there that is of enormous value for promoting a nature-oriented forest management. The large surface areas of these forests also support all the inhabitants of the ecosystem, including large predators (bears, wolves, lynxes). Hence, the reserve is unquestionably of European interest.

### **Conservation and management of biosphere reserves**

The total protected surface area of the biosphere reserves amounts to 38,930 ha, with the central areas accounting for 21,879 ha, the buffer zones 8,949 ha and development zones 8,071 ha. The relatively mountainous terrain is made up of five massifs (Chornohirsky, Maramarosky, Kuzyi, Ugolsko-Shirokoluzhansky and Dolyna Nartsysiv in the foothills, and the Stuzhitsa regional nature park). Recently, a volcanic area near the river Tissa was added, an expanse of 650 ha of steppes and beech groves. The diversity of the plant cover in the Carpathian biosphere reserve is enormous, ranging from oak and beech forests to mixed beech, fir and spruce forests, to high spruce forests and alpine meadows.

The authority responsible for managing the Carpathian biosphere reserves has a staff of 203, including 12 persons involved in administrative work, 40 in conservation, 12 researchers and 9 technicians. The annual budget of this body stands at USD 450 000, with staff costs accounting for 40 % of the total. Its headquarters are in Rakhiv, a town in which a small information centre has been set up and the building of an open-air museum begun (construction has been halted for budgetary reasons).

The reserves are organised in four units, which are in turn divided into sub-units (10-12), making 43 regional units in all with forest surface areas of between 500 and 600 ha, each under the supervision of a forester. Certain remote parts have check points along the mandatory routes which also offer basic lodging. In the central areas, on the other hand, no form of logging is permitted, and tourists are not allowed in. The area can only be visited for research purposes. However, a nature-oriented tourism is possible in the buffer and development zones. A number of problems persist in connection with grazing rights, hunting, intensive logging and gas pipelines. Livestock grazing puts pressure on the upper forest limit, hunting and logging disturb animals and their movements, and slopes have begun to erode under the impact of excavation work for gas pipelines. To date, there has only been partial research on the movement of polluted air masses.

Ecological monitoring has relatively good support, especially over long periods. The study of natural processes and interactions is of the greatest interest for the international research community. In this area, several research programmes are under way, in particular with the universities of Lviv and Uzhgorod and with the Ukraine scientific academy. Since 1991, experience has been pooled in the framework of the Carpathian International Association for protected areas and national parks, an organisation whose members include Polish, Romanian, Slovak, Hungarian and Czech institutions. A research cooperation agreement has even been signed with the Tatra national park in Slovakia.

Considerable attention is given to information and training in the environmental field. An information centre is being set up in Dolyna Nartsysiv, where youth camps are also organised. The open-air museum being built is equipped with a diorama, and it should also be possible to observe live animals there.

### **The future of biosphere reserves**

In general, biosphere reserves can be regarded as representative fragments, occupying a large surface area, of the natural and traditional landscapes of a region. Most of the surface area is legally protected. Within the reserves, model concepts for conservation, maintenance and development are elaborated and put into practice in cooperation with the population living there. The programme seeks to take account of nature's vulnerability and the requirements of human activities. This is a search for harmony between human beings and nature rather than nature conservation. The development of biosphere reserves pursues a goal that includes not only nature conservation but also the economic, social, cultural and ethical aspects of historical landscapes. This is why biosphere reserves are to a large extent inhabited and utilised. An effort is made to maintain and develop forms of utilisation which make economic sense and are conducive to sustainable development. The inhabitants are enlisted to promote ecologically sound management and regional development of the biosphere reserve.

The concept of "biosphere reserve" should therefore be understood as a representative landscape ranging from central areas completely shielded from any form of exploitation to development areas open to a wide variety of uses.

Despite the unfavourable economic situation, it is surprising that the Carpathian biosphere reserves have such an elaborate organisation for protecting the central areas, especially as the maintenance and development areas are very small.

The entire Rakhiv district, for example, might be ideal for creating a biosphere reserve. A very mountainous region in Ukraine, it is located in the centre of the Carpathian massif. Some 68 % of its surface area is wooded. One third of Ukraine's flora is found there, as is half of its endangered flora and fauna. The lower-lying parts of the district are densely populated and have industries which cause enormous pollution but today are in serious difficulty (for example a cellulose plant that causes considerable water pollution).

The region has remarkable features: located in the geographical centre of Europe, and straddling the borders with Romania and Hungary, it possesses many mineral water springs, its medicinal plants are renowned, and its population has interesting ethnic traits. All these natural and cultural aspects ensure that the region meets the basic conditions for a sustainable economy. To achieve this, regional economic circuits must be developed and more must be offered to promote cultural and nature tourism. It should be possible to award labels not only to local products but to landscapes as well. At the current time, it is important, given the serious deterioration in the economic situation, to encourage these areas to set out along the right path. In this connection, designation as a UNESCO biosphere reserve and the award of the European Diploma would be most appropriate.

### **Conclusions**

In the light of his on-the-spot visit, the many discussions he has had and the numerous documents and studies he has consulted, the expert supports in full the application of Ukraine to be awarded the European Diploma for the Carpathian biosphere reserve. He agrees with the points enumerated in the application in support of the reserve's European interest.

Bearing in mind the current situation, the expert believes that the following **conditions** should be met:

1. Provision should be made for sufficient resources to ensure the smooth functioning of the reserve and the continuation of scientific research.
2. Any privatisation measures should on no account have a negative impact on the status of the reserve and its surrounding area.

Bearing in mind the current situation, the expert believes that the following **recommendations** should be made:

1. Consolidate and step up public education and information efforts (open-air museum).
2. Extend to model regions the innovative biosphere reserve policies being applied in maintenance and development zones with a view to putting sustainable development into practice. The Rakhiv district is particularly well-suited to serve as a model region.
3. Promote, through the creation of appropriate corridors, the interconnection of the various protected sites in the eastern part.
4. Invite institutions involved in environmental research, and particularly in research on virgin forests, to make their wealth of experience known, including at international level. To this end, it is proposed that joint research programmes involving western and central European research institutions be conducted on a more regular basis.
5. Promote international cooperation on nature and landscape protection within the Carpathians themselves.

Appendix: Map of the Carpathian biosphere reserves

Schaan, 6 November 1996

### COMMENTS BY THE SECRETARIAT

The representative of the Secretariat approves the content of the expert's appraisal. He would simply stress that, as in the case of the sites of Teberda (Russia) and Berezinsky (Belarus), this once again concerns a forest complex unique in Europe, untouched by human hand and of absolutely exceptional biological diversity. To cite just one figure, the area is home to more than 2,600 species of flowering plants!

The reserve is made up of six distinct and somewhat scattered massifs. By way of comparison, the Hautes Fagnes nature reserve (Belgium) is also fragmented to a certain, but infinitely less marked, extent. In the case under consideration, this would not appear to pose any problem, because each site is managed and supervised independently.

Some 40 % of an annual budget of the order of USD 500 000 is allocated to paying the salaries of the 203 persons working for the reserve but is in fact insufficient, and salary payments are several months behind. This is also the case in other branches of the public sector. The attitude of those affected is surprising: they simply accept that they have no choice but to continue working.

Following a discussion with the parties concerned, the expert and the Secretariat propose that the European Diploma be awarded in Category A, in the following manner and subject to certain conditions and recommendations (cf. the draft resolution).



APPENDIX I

DRAFT RESOLUTION (97) ...

**on the award of the European Diploma  
to the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve**

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

Having regard to Resolution (65) 5 instituting the European Diploma;

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);

Having noted the agreement of the Government of Ukraine;

Having deliberated,

Solemnly awards the European Diploma to the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve, in accordance with the Regulations for the European Diploma (Resolution (91) 16);

Places the said area under the auspices of the Council of Europe until ...;

Attaches the following conditions to the award:

1. Sufficient resources (material and financial) to be provided to permit the proper functioning of the reserve and the pursuit of scientific research;
2. Any privatisation measures taken to have no negative impact on the status of the reserve and its surrounding areas;
3. All use of firearms to be prohibited in the reserve;

Attaches the following recommendations to the award:

1. Public education and information efforts (open-air museum) to be stepped up;
2. The innovation that the biosphere reserve represents in buffer zones and settled areas to be extended to model regions with a view to putting sustainable development into practice. The Rakhiv district is particularly suited to serve as a model region;
3. Interconnection of the various protected sites to be promoted in the eastern part through the creation of suitable corridors;

4. Institutions involved in environmental research, and particularly in research on virgin forests to be invited to make their wealth of experience known, including at international level. To this end it is proposed that joint research programmes involving western and central European research institutions be conducted on a more regular basis;
5. International cooperation on nature and landscape protection to be promoted within the Carpathians themselves;
6. Care to be taken to coordinate the management of the various areas within the reserve.