

# COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR THE CONSERVATION OF  
NATURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Select Committee of Experts - European Diploma

Krimml Falls

(Austria)

On-the-spot appraisal

by

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### General points

The validity of the European Diploma for the Krimml Falls will expire in 1982. In accordance with the regulations in force (Resolution (73) 4 of the Committee of Ministers of 19 January 1973), before any decision is taken to renew the Diploma again, an appraisal has to be carried out by an independent specialist accompanied by a representative from the Secretariat of the Council of Europe. The Secretariat, in a letter of 21 May 1980, asked me to carry out this survey, in accordance with the following terms of reference:

- a. study the present condition of the site and see whether it was unchanged, improved or had deteriorated since the date of the previous renewal;
- b. analyse the state of conservation of the flora, fauna and landscape (increase or decline of species);
- c. look into the improvements (physical and legislative) completed or in progress;
- d. study the impact of the public on the flora, fauna and landscape and make proposals for improving the situation;
- e. examine the financial resources available for the management of the area.

Mr P Baum of the Environment and Natural Resources Division of the Secretariat of the Council of Europe took part in the visit, which complied with the arrangements indicated in the Council of Europe's letter dated 21 May 1981. The different points in the terms of reference were duly dealt with and discussed in detail with the officials in charge of conservation in the area concerned.

The appraisal is also based on the annual reports and other documents published to date.

### Introduction

I visited the site on 17 and 18 June 1980; MM K Breiteneder, J Fischer-Colbrie and H Kremser, representing the government of the Land Salzburg and of the district authority of Zell am See were also present.

The on-the-spot appraisal organised by the Austrians, and the discussions focussed mainly on the practicability of the Gerlosstrasse above the Trattenköpfl and Schönangerl, the planned road from Schönangerl into the Krimml Achental valley and the existing road along the Falls.

#### 1. Observations

The building of the road between the Gerlosstrasse and Schönangerl is going ahead. The route and width of the existing Achental mountain road have been well maintained; however, the recommendations and proposals in the second report for the renewal of the Diploma (CE/Nat/DE (77) 3) of 22 December 1976, in the letter of 30 May 1978 from the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to the Permanent Representative of Austria about the renewal of the Diploma and in my additional report to the Land Salzburg administration, dated 9 November 1977, have for the most part been disregarded.

In the first place, the authorities concerned have failed to submit to the Council of Europe the project for the Krimml-Achental road, together with the above-mentioned additional report and a map showing the route finally agreed upon, for approval.

The following points are equally regrettable, in my view:

- the intention of abandoning the construction of a tunnel when the road between the Gerlosstrasse and Schönangerl has been built;
- neglecting to keep to the stipulated road width in parts;
- plans for only sectional asphaltting at the moment;
- the lack of clearly defined regulations concerning a strictly limited road use in the future (among others the possibility of doing away with access permits), which suggests that large numbers of sightseers might in future visit the site in motor cars.

The following are also thought to be particularly disquieting:

- present doubts as to the authorities which are to be responsible in future for the Krimml Falls (administration of the Land Salzburg, as has been the case so far, or the district authority of Zell am See);
- the absence of any compulsory sanitation and re-development scheme for the Schönangerl hotel and of any project for removing refuse and waste water as well as for laying electricity and telephone cables within the area of the Krimml Falls site;
- the toleration of unauthorised tourist facilities (kiosks, potato chip stands) in the vicinity of the Richter monument which might lead to the construction of other illegal fixtures;
- extensive clear cutting of woodland between the access road to the Falls and the S.A.F.E. building;
- the failure to submit documents urgently requested on 18 June 1980 for drawing up a report, in particular:
  - . information on the building of the new road
  - . an evaluation of measures taken on the basis of the recommendations and proposals formulated at the time of the report on the second renewal of the European Diploma (CE/Nat/DE (77) 3 of 22 December 1976)
  - . information on the local flora and fauna (in the area of the Falls and the Achental valley). Cartography of vegetation
  - . an inventory of legal, administrative and financial resources available for protecting the Falls and the Achental valley: present situation, improvements already carried out, deterioration, proposals
  - . other proposals.

In the circumstances, there is no point in making a further, more detailed appraisal, which would probably be disregarded.

## 2. Proposals

For the reasons listed above, the following proposals are submitted to the Council of Europe:

1. The renewal of the Diploma should be held over until the Austrian Government pledges its readiness to comply with the conditions and obligations set out in the three documents mentioned under point 1 (Observations);
2. At the same time, an undertaking should be given that conservation of the Krimml Falls and the Achenal Valley will remain the responsibility of the Land Salzburg administration, with no delegation of responsibility to the district authority. It is important to avoid any conflict between vital conservation interests and other less important local interests.

We are aware, however, that from a legal point of view, not all areas listed in the report (eg areas below the new road between the Gerlosstrasse and Schönangerl or the Achenal valley) are affected by the renewal of the Diploma. Nevertheless, they should be regarded as a "material unit" and accordingly connected with the site; this means that the conditions set out in the above-mentioned three documents must be fulfilled if the Krimml Falls are to be effectively and lastingly protected in European terms. I should also like to submit the following supplementary proposal to the Council of Europe for consideration:

3. Authority for the building of a new road in the area covered by the Diploma should be withheld until such time as proposals 1 and 2 are complied with.

We are relying on the understanding of the Austrian Government, the government of Land Salzburg and of the Austrian population in this matter and hope that the Diploma for the Krimml Falls will eventually be renewed for the third time.