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**PE-S-DE (97) 48**

**BUREAU DU COMITÉ**  
**POUR LES ACTIVITÉS DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE**  
**EN MATIÈRE DE DIVERSITÉ BIOLOGIQUE ET PAYSAGÈRE**

**BU-DBP**

**Groupe de spécialistes - Diplôme européen**

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# **Lunebourg Heath Nature Reserve**

**Catégorie B**

**RENEWAL**

*Expert's report*  
*by Prof. A. FROMENT*

### 1. On-the-spot appraisal

The on-the-spot appraisal for renewal of the European Diploma took place on 23-24 June 1996. The expert met:

- Dr E. Juttner, Secretary General of the Verein Naturschutzpark (VNP) Association, and his two colleagues, Mr J. Tönnießen and Mr Lütkepohl;
- the representative of the regional supervisory authority, Mr H. Menneking, and his colleague, Mr B. Van Roeder;
- the Lower Saxony Forestry Board official responsible for the SELHORN district, Dr Mr Hanstein;
- the representative of the Norddeutsche Naturschutzakademie (NSA), Dr J. Prüter.

The expert was wholly satisfied with the way the appraisal was organised, and felt that it was open and constructive.

He was impressed by the excellent spirit of co-operation within the "Management Committee" between the four bodies involved in managing the diploma area: the VNP Association, the supervisory authority, the Board and the Nature Conservation Academy (NSA).

### 2. The question raised by the Group of Specialists on Protected Areas (PE-S-ZP)

At its meeting on 6-8 March 1996, the Group requested that the expert particularly examine the issue of water extraction by the city of Hamburg (*Hamburger Wasserwerke*).

The current situation is one of *status quo*, now that extraction likely to have a negative effect on sensitive areas in the nature reserve has been reduced or stopped completely.

An *ad hoc* working group is responsible for monitoring the situation. The effects of pumping in the north of the diploma area are being studied from a hydro-geological angle by Prof. Dr Hahn (Niedersächsisches Landesamt für Bodenforschung, Abteilung Hydrologie, Hanover); phytosociological surveys are being conducted by the laboratory of Prof. Dr K. Dierßen (Botanisches Institut, Universität Kiel).

### 3. The legal status of the nature reserve

The 1921 statute was amended by temporary provisions which came into force on 28 July 1990. New regulations<sup>1</sup> making the necessary legal provisions were published on 17 June 1993.

Those regulations specify, *inter alia*, the boundaries of the nature reserve, and provide a framework for implementation of the management and development plan (see point 5).

The protected area was increased from 19 970 ha to 23 440 ha.

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<sup>1</sup> Verordnung der Bezirksregierung Lüneburg über das Naturschutzgebiet "Lüneburger Heide" in den Landkreisen Harburg und Soltau-Fallingb.ostel.

#### 4. The red zones

The "Red Zone Committee", chaired by Prof. Plug, has set up a procedure for renewing and developing the land previously used for British Army tank manoeuvres, which was handed back on 7 June 1994.

Rehabilitation work (landscaping, sowing, clearing, etc.) is being carried out by specialised staff, at the expense of the British authorities. A detailed examination was made of the area before the work was begun, in order to identify polluted sites.

Everybody is pleased with the exemplary way in which those operations are being carried out.

The expert spent a full day in the "red zones" in order to investigate the current state of the land and the arrangements made to incorporate it as a functional part of the nature reserve.

The heathland area has now been enlarged by almost 50%, with a greater diversity of habitats. That expansion has also made it possible to set aside a quiet area by judiciously modifying the route followed by public tracks and leaving certain sites to natural succession.

The reclaimed areas (red zones nos. 1 and 2) are directly adjacent to the western extremity of the nature reserve; they cover 2178 ha, of which 1641 belong to the VNP Association.

The 1993 regulations also included in the nature reserve 940 ha situated in the southern part of the red zones (zone no. 3). Much of that area will also be renewed as heathland. The VNP has bought 160 ha in that area to date.

#### 5. Management and development plan

The federal project (*Bundesförderprojekt*) made it possible to develop a "Management and Development Plan" (1995) (*Pflege- und Entwicklungsplan Lunebourger Heide*).

That plan has yet to be approved by the Federal Nature Conservation Institute and the supervisory authority. A major part of it is an analysis of the current state of the flora, vegetation and fauna and the main types of environment (water courses and valleys, still water, peat bogs, heathland, forests, etc.).

The "planning" section compares the current situation with the ideal situation for each environment.

*The expert was impressed by the amount of information which had been gathered, and by the consistently innovative proposals put forward for nature management and development.*

The experience gained from the grazing, reaping, peat-clearance and deliberate burning operations carried out in experimental plots in different types of heathland in various locations is now being used to improve the management of the heath.

A map showing the soil's humus content and the extent of bare sandy areas and grassy and forested areas, both with and without juniper trees, and a detailed typology of categories of heathland should make it possible to adapt and generalise management measures to the whole heathland area.

It should be remembered that specific renewal measures are being directed at the "red zone" heathlands.

Special attention is being given to improving ecological gradients connected to the forest/heathland boundaries. Such work certainly warrants a sustained effort, but can only be undertaken gradually, as it must be incorporated into the medium- and long-term management provisions for the forest areas.

It should be noted that the state-owned parts of the forest are always administered with the same concern for ecological management as the diploma area. A 3rd section of the forest has been given full reserve status.

*However, the expert fears that this exemplary policy may change with the forthcoming retirement of the forestry engineer responsible, Dr Hanstein.*

#### **8. Information and education**

This aspect has developed a great deal since our last visit. Regular guided tours are offered. Leaflets, brochures and educational routes are made available to the public.

The *Naturschutzakademie* (NSA) plays a vital educational role, in particular by receiving school groups.

The Management Committee has taken the initiative of organising a monthly page on the nature reserve in the local newspapers.

Following the example of the latest developments in the Harz National Park, it is becoming imperative to ensure better surveillance of the diploma area while improving information and education provisions. Rangers (*Naturwacht*) should be given training, in particular to explain the specific features of the heath and the measures taken to protect it. It is recommended that such training be carried out by the NSA.

*An explicit recommendation should be made with regard to forming such a corps.*

*In particular, he wished to stress the following dynamic aspects:*

- *opening up and interconnecting isolated heathland areas;*
- *upgrading the forest-heath boundaries (for ecological and landscape reasons);*
- *restoring water courses and associated wetland biotopes to their natural state;*
- *controlling the hydrology of the peat bogs by creating buffer zones;*
- *managing the heath on an ecosystemic basis, that is, taking account of heather's growth cycle.*

Moreover, historical and cultural aspects connected with the heath's former rural economy have not been neglected. Historic crop varieties grown by traditional methods as part of the VNP's "Landscape Preservation Farm" (*Landschaftspflegehof*) are particularly noteworthy, as is the relationship which has been re-established between traditional agriculture and the heath by using heather humus as organic fertiliser for fields.

#### **6. Federal project "Lunebourger Heide"**

The funds obtained as part of the Programme for the Establishment and Maintenance of Natural Areas and Landscapes Regarded as being Worthy of Federal Protection amount to 24 million DM for the 1991-1999 period. Most of that budget will be used to purchase land (22 million DM); 2 million DM were allocated to drawing up the management and development plan.

The Land of Niedersachsen is contributing 15%, and the VNP Association 10%. The table below gives a breakdown of the land purchased by the VNP Association between 1991 and 1995 as part of the federal project.

This active land acquisition policy makes it possible to implement the proposals made in the management and development plan.

*The project represents a particularly significant advance in consolidating, strengthening and developing the quality of the natural environments and biodiversity in the protected area.*

	Forests (ha)	Meadows (ha)	Peat bogs and heathland (ha)	Fields (ha)	Tracks (ha)	Total (ha)
1991	28,75.59	9,42.29	29,21.98			
1992	229,14.21	14,95.40	3,34.53	61,26.23	0,62.07	67,39.86
1993	76,90.08	42,96.51	2,43.08			309,32.44
1994	55,97.40	17,50.25	7,49.85	29,02.25	0,08.95	122,29.67
1995	65,84.16	18,28.91	166,07.54	6,63.10		256,83.71
	456,61.44	103,13.36	209,01.98	96,91.58	0,71.02	866,39.38

#### **7. Management of heathland and forests**

**APPENDIX I**

**RESOLUTION (92) 13**

**ON THE RENEWAL OF THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA  
AWARDED TO THE LÜNEBURG HEATH NATURE RESERVE  
(Germany)**

*(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 Lüneburg Heath Nature Reserve;

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 Lüneburg Heath Nature Reserve in Category B until 25 October 1997;

Attaches to the renewal the following condition: that all oil or gas exploitation continues to be prohibited within the nature reserve;

Attaches to the renewal the following recommendations :

1. that prospecting be restricted as much as possible, since the systematic grid probes entailed would cause inevitable damage to both flora and fauna;
2. that the level in the water table continues to be closely monitored and an attempt made to establish a link between an observed drop and the extraction of ground water;
3. that the utmost be done to complete successfully the federal project "Lüneburger Heide", bearing in mind its great importance for the future of the reserve; this project provides amongst other things the acquisition of private land within the reserve to incorporate it into the general management and the drawing up of a new overall management plan;
4. that the regeneration of natural forests, the ecological planning of the forest-heath boundary and the improvement of the connection system between biotopes be pursued;
5. the necessary measures should be taken to step up "information-education" activities, in particular the opening of a new information centre at Wilsede at the heart of the reserve and the organisation of guided walks.

**APPENDIX II**

**DRAFT RESOLUTION (97) ...**

**ON THE RENEWAL OF THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA  
AWARDED TO THE LUNEBOURG HEATH NATURE RESERVE  
(Germany)**

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 Lunebourg Heath Nature Reserve in Category B,

Renews the European Diploma awarded to Lunebourg Heath Nature Reserve until 25 October 2002;

Renews the condition attached to the previous renewal (1992): that all oil or gas exploitation continue to be prohibited within the nature reserve;

Attaches to the renewal the following recommendations:

1. that the effective implementation of the management and development plan be encouraged by making the necessary financial means available to those responsible for management;
2. that the implementation of the federal project "Lunebourger Heide" be continued;
3. that the "red zone" rehabilitation measures be extended to the 960 ha situated in the southern part (zone no. 3);
4. that training and education work be expanded, and in particular that the establishment of a corps of "rangers" be made a priority;
5. that the objective of developing an additional information centre in Wilsede in the heart of the nature reserve be maintained.