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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

33rd meeting
Strasbourg, 3-6 December 2013

**Adopted Resolutions on the award and the renewal of the
European Diploma of Protected Areas in 2013**

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Committee of Ministers
Comité des Ministres

**Resolution CM/ResDip(2013)1
on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas
awarded to the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (Belarus)**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 27 March 2013
at the 1166th 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 Res(65)6 instituting the European Diploma for certain protected landscapes, reserves and natural features, as amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1 on the revised regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution Res(97)23 awarding the European Diploma to the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (Belarus) and Resolution ResDip(2002)4 on the renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas awarded to the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (Belarus);

Taking into consideration the expert's report presented at the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma of Protected Areas on 9 and 10 February 2012;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention,

Renews the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park until 30 September 2018;

Attaches the following two conditions to the renewal:

1. the implementation of the new conservation law in the National Park, including the implementation on site of the relevant conservation management plan attached to the new zonation, is completed within a period of three years;
2. any development with possible negative effects on the National Park and its integrity, including the buffer zones, should be subject to an environmental impact assessment and the National Park authorities should be duly consulted;

Attaches the following 11 recommendations to the renewal:

1. continue the move from economically driven to ecologically driven management by reducing the forestry activities in the regulated zones and special habitats in other parts of the National Park, by excluding parcels with old trees in all zones (including the buffer zones) from logging, and by presenting data on harvested wood volumes in the annual reports;
2. working with the Government of Belarus, ensure that the National Park authorities have the responsibility for the management of a. the zones of special significance for specific habitats

outside the strictly protected areas, b. the buffer zones and c. the game zones within the boundaries of the National Park;

3. start discussions between the National Park authorities and the Ministry of Agriculture to compensate an agricultural area of 2 000 ha recently excluded from the National Park, by including abandoned agricultural areas elsewhere – also in the buffer zones – and by promoting a gradual extensification of agricultural activities leading to semi-natural habitats (hayfields and low-intensity, grazed meadows with only moderate or no use of fertilisers);

4. working with the Government of Belarus, increase budgets for both applied ecological research and nature conservation activities in view of the principles of sustainable management either currently present in, or to be included in, the management plan; special attention is needed both within the National Park and its buffer zones for a. hydrological restoration of all wetland (bog and marsh) ecosystems surrounding the forest, b. water and soil quality in river valleys and c. semi-natural traditionally managed or abandoned farmland;

5. reconsider the management of large herbivores with a view to reducing the winter food supply so as to prevent abnormally large population densities (overpopulation), rather than reducing excess numbers by continued or increased hunting practices; this is motivated by aiming to alleviate possible damage to both forestry and agriculture;

6. continue research on the genetic aspects of the bison populations, applying the results to further investigate the restoration of a transboundary migration corridor with Poland;

7. carry out an environmental impact assessment (EIA) concerning mass tourism in the heart of the National Park, including a reappraisal of the boundaries, location and zoning of “Father Frost’s Manor”, and the effects of traffic and pollution, taking into account the increased accessibility of the National Park; in the annual reports state how any concerns demonstrated by the EIA are being addressed in practice;

8. monitor and evaluate the ecological side effects of a. the new bypass road, b. the use of fauna tunnels (eco-tunnels) by various species (such as herpetofauna, badgers and large herbivores), c. the expected regional economic investments, d. the increasing agro-tourism developments and e. the additional recreation initiatives around the outskirts of the National Park; and report annually on the results of the monitoring and evaluation;

9. intensify the monitoring, evaluation and reporting of actual activities such as agriculture (drainage, water quality, use of chemicals), forestry (logging, removal of dead wood, bark beetle effects) and hunting (introduced species, hunting bag statistics), including neighbouring zones outside the National Park, in order to adjust the management plan or to substantiate environmental impact assessments;

10. consider a specific adaptation of the prohibition of all activities in the strictly protected zones so as to control the invasive alien species, thus enabling the control of deer (*Dama dama*) escaped from hunting enclosures and the felling of old red oak (*Quercus rubra*) trees and seedlings that disturb the natural forest ecosystems;

11. prepare a new detailed topographic map (1/50 000) of the National Park and surroundings, indicating the functional zoning (with the buffer zones, game areas, checkpoints, educational trails, etc., all marked) and including the location of the bypass road (with legends in different languages).



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Committee of Ministers
Comité des Ministres

**Resolution CM/ResDip(2013)2
on the award of the European Diploma of Protected Areas
to the Khosrov Forest Reserve (Armenia)**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 10 July 2013
at the 1176th 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 Res(65)6 on the European Diploma for certain protected landscapes, reserves and natural features, as amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1 on the revised regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention;

Taking into consideration the expert's report presented at the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma of Protected Areas on 26 March 2013;

Having noted the agreement of the Government of Armenia,

Solemnly awards the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Khosrov Forest Reserve (Armenia), recognising the European significance of the reserve which has remarkable landscapes, very diverse habitats and a rich biodiversity, large areas of very interesting and significant virgin or semi-virgin forests of different types, and benefitting from long-term protection and a good management plan and organisation;

Places the aforesaid area under the patronage of the Council of Europe until 10 July 2018;

Attaches the following two conditions to the award:

1. the Armenian authorities should take the necessary action to ensure that the existing water resources facilities will not be expanded within the area and that they will stay fully compatible with the preservation of the European interest of the area; and
2. public motor vehicle traffic, including for transportation of tourists, will be strictly forbidden on the existing gravel roads within the area except for management purposes and in case of emergencies;

Attaches the following six recommendations, for the Forest Reserve Authorities, to the award:

1. to develop appropriate efforts for preventing and minimising illegal activities, including poaching of large mammals within the reserve;

2. to develop and implement awareness and training activities for local people, visitors and members of the staff of the reserve, particularly in relation to the management of litter and other waste;
3. to implement the sustainable tourism strategy fully and to monitor related activities;
4. to pursue inventories and mapping of species and habitats, not only in the Emerald Network but preferably on the whole territory of the reserve;
5. with the Armenian authorities, to guarantee the budget of the reserve; and
6. to renew the management plan for 2015 onwards, including a grazing plan and updating the socio-economic activities within the reserve.



**Resolution CM/ResDip(2013)3
on the award of the European Diploma of Protected Areas
to the Burren Region (Ireland)**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 10 July 2013
at the 1176th 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 Res(65)6 instituting the European Diploma for certain protected landscapes, reserves and natural features, as amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1 on the revised regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention;

Taking into consideration the expert's report presented at the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma of Protected Areas on 26 March 2013;

Having noted the agreement of the Government of Ireland;

Having noted the impressive partnership that exists between the Irish national authorities, the local authorities of Counties Clare and Galway, the farmers of the Burren Region and the community of people living and working in the Burren Region,

Solemnly awards the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Burren Region (Ireland), recognising the European significance of the park, which is the largest limestone landscape in Europe, with a very rich biodiversity and with unique archaeological, geological, historical and cultural value, and benefitting from sufficient legal regulations conserving the natural and cultural marvels of the Burren;

Places the aforesaid area under the patronage of the Council of Europe until 10 July 2018;

Attaches the following two conditions to the award:

1. the Irish authorities should ensure the budget for the maintenance and development of the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme;
2. the national and local authorities should prevent possible negative environmental damage from the surrounding areas of the Burren Region;

Attaches the following six recommendations, for the national and local authorities and the Burren Region community, to the award:

1. to encourage the participation of more farmers in the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme;
2. to plan subsequent steps in the second phase of European Union funding of the BurrenLIFE project through the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme;
3. to stimulate the further development of the Burren Community Charter;
4. to stimulate further development of sustainable ecotourism and practice in the Burren Region;
5. to discourage mass tourism in the Burren Region which does not accord with the principles of sustainable development; and
6. to encourage volunteers to participate in the sustainable management of the Burren Region.



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Committee of Ministers
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**Resolution CM/ResDip(2013)4
on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas
awarded to the Retezat National Park (Romania)**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 10 July 2013
at the 1176th 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 Res(65)6 on the European Diploma for certain protected landscapes, reserves and natural features, as amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1 on the revised regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)2 on the award of the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Retezat National Park (Romania);

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention;

Taking into consideration the expert's report presented at the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma of Protected Areas on 26 March 2013,

Renews the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Retezat National Park until 2 July 2023;

Attaches the following six recommendations to the renewal:

1. the Romanian authorities should secure a sufficient budget for the national park and allocate the funds early enough in the year to ensure favourable working conditions for the staff, the completion and maintenance of the park's infrastructure, more information for visitors and the improvement of tourist facilities;
2. the competent Romanian authorities should work together to harmonise the different national and international designations in order to achieve efficient joint management and to implement joint scientific research and monitoring programmes;
3. the management plan should be approved as soon as possible, and at least an executive summary should be translated into either English or French;
4. the park, in close collaboration with the mountain rescue services Salvamont, should maintain or renew, when necessary, the tourist infrastructure (trail marking, information signs, etc.); a particular effort should be made to solve the problems of the toilets in the camping areas and near the huts;
5. the park should maintain pressure on local communities to prevent construction of inappropriate buildings either in the park or in its immediate vicinity; and

6. the park rangers should monitor the pastures in order to identify early possible changes due to over grazing and/or under grazing; before the next evaluation, the park should carry out a new study on the pastures; the changes in terms of species composition, erosion, etc., should be analysed in relation to the type and amount of grazing.