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T-PVS/DE (2017) 17

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

37th meeting
Strasbourg, 5-8 December 2017

REPORT

**ON THE SPOT EXPERT APPRAISAL OF THE
KHOSROV FOREST STATE RESERVE (ARMENIA)**

23-25 May 2017

*Document prepared
by Mr Hervé Lethier (Switzerland)*

BACKGROUND

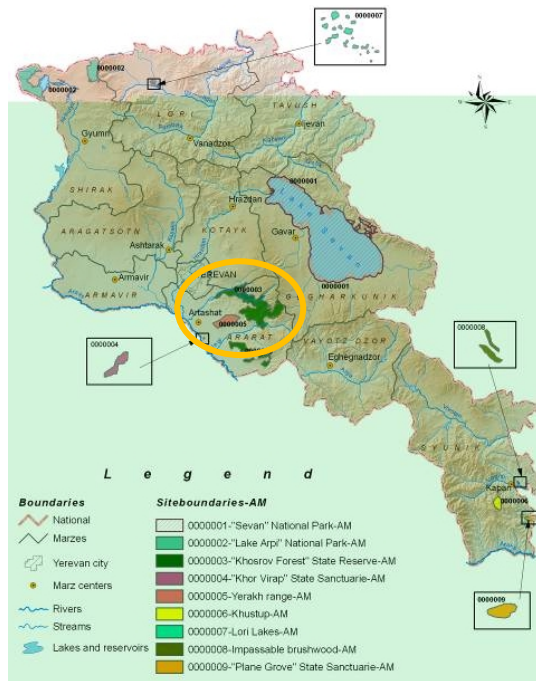
The mission aimed to assess the opportunity to renew the European Diploma of the **Khosrov Forest State Reserve**.

The field visit took place from 23 to 25 May 2017 (**Annex 1**) with a conclusive meeting in Erevan on 29. The visit lasted 3 days and focussed on visiting the area and meeting with local experts and officials.

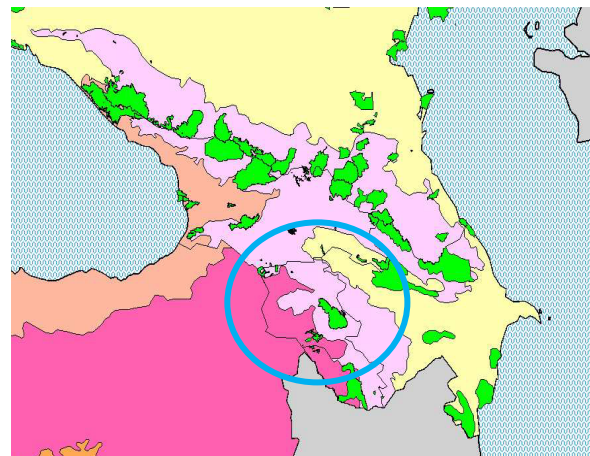
This assessment was based on the Regulations of the European Diploma of Protected areas (**Rés. (98)29, annex 3**), according to the Council of Europe requirements¹.

INTRODUCTION²

The Khosrov Forest State Reserve is located in the central part of Southern Armenia, at 70 km in the South East of Erevan, in the districts of Garni, Kakavaberd, Khosrov, Khachadzor and Urts (**Map 1**).



Map 1 – Location of the diploma holding area (Source: Khosrov Forest State Reserve administration).



Map 2 – Biogeographical location of the diploma holding area in the Pan-European regions (Source: Emerald web site)

The Khosrov State Nature Reserve is one of the eldest protected areas in the world, founded in the 4th century by Khosrov Kotak, King of Armenia who gave it his name; it was used as ground game for the royal family over the years; more recently it was a military camp.

This area was designated “State Reserve” in September 1958³ and covers around 23 213 ha, stretching from 900 m to 2 500 m above the sea level; it hosts oak (*Quercus macranthera*) and juniperus (*Juniperus polycarpus*) forests, as well as mountain ecosystems and spreads from semi-desert lowlands to sub-alpine meadows; it includes also wetlands of international importance.

At the crossroad between two floristic provinces, the Alpine and Anatolian provinces (**Map 2**), the Khosrov State Nature Reserve is a unique mosaic of diverse landscapes and natural/semi-natural habitats where many rare and endangered flora and fauna species are met, some of them being endemic from Eastern Europe and/or listed on the annexes 4 and 6 to the Bern Convention; this reserve is also an officially nominated candidate Emerald site⁴.

¹ Convocation DG-II IO/MH/tb dated 17 May 2017.

² Most information given in introduction is taken from the appraisal report for the award of the European Diploma to the Khosrov State Nature Reserve (T-PVS/DE (2013) 6).

³ Governmental Decree n°P-341, dated 13 September 1958.

⁴ AM0000001 (28 402,10 ha).

For more details, please refer to the application document⁵ and to the appraisal report for the award of the European Diploma to the Khosrov Forest State Reserve⁶.

1. EUROPEAN INTEREST

1.1 BIOLOGICAL INTEREST

The European Diploma was awarded to the Khosrov Forest State Reserve for its biological and landscape heritage; this reserve contains typical examples of diverse and highly representative ecological communities as well as many species and natural habitats of European interest.

Amongst the most iconic fauna species present in this Diploma holding area, *Panthera pardus*, *Ursus arctos syriacus*, *Felis chaus*, *Felis libyca*, *Capra aegagrus*, *Ovis orientalis Gmelini* and *Macrovipera lebetina* can be met there; more than 20 species of raptors are also breeding in this area, as well as the very rare and endangered *Oxuyra leucocephala* and the small rare fish *Aburnoïdes pipunctatus*, all of them listed in Appendix III to the Bern Convention.

The Diploma holding area hosts also many rare flora species, some being specific to the geologic context, such as *Inula aucherana* and *Adiantum capillus veneris*, and/or typical from semi-desert and steppic ecosystems such as *Stipa* ssp, and *Astragalus* ssp, or mountain areas such as *Phleum pratense* and *Hordeum bulbosum*, most listed in Appendix II to the Bern Convention.

According to the most recent information provided to the expert, all those species and habitats are still met in the Diploma holding area; the expert has observed personally most iconic species during his field visit and the leopard has been seen very recently in the reserve by a ranger.

Furthermore, based on the most recent data available⁷ and according to the results of the monitoring programme carried by WWF Armenia⁸, it seems that the state of conservation of the iconic fauna species mentioned here above have improved⁹ and that no species have disappeared - or have seen its state of conservation degraded - since the award of the European Diploma to the reserve in 2013.

The expert met five brown bears, one lynx and many goats and raptors during his short field visit; surprisingly, he has only seen very few wolf (*Canis lupus*) signs on the ground.

During his discussions with the reserve administration and specialists, the expert learnt that the wolf follows the sheep flocks along the year which could partly explain that wolf signs are currently rare in the Diploma holding area; he also learnt that the Armenian authorities encourage the destruction of wolves and give rewards for it.

Furthermore, there should not be a national inventory and monitoring of that species which is listed in Appendix II to the Bern Convention. According to the Convention, art. 6, “*Each Contracting Party shall take appropriate and necessary legislative and administrative measures to ensure the special protection of the wild fauna species specified in Appendix II*”. In accordance with art. 9 of the Convention, should be prohibited “*all forms of deliberate capture and keeping and deliberate killing*”.

The current state of conservation of the wolf in Armenia seems not known and its legal regime of destruction based on financial incentives could be incompatible with the obligations and commitments of the State party regarding the Bern Convention.

The diploma holding area still comprises representative elements of biological heritage of European significance.

However, the Armenian authorities should be invited to assess the state of conservation of the wolf (*Canis lupus*) both at national level and in the Diploma holding area, and to adapt the current legal regime of protection accordingly; it is strongly recommended that a “Wolf concept” is elaborated, providing a general legal and administrative framework for the

⁵ T-PVS/DE (2012) 5.

⁶ T-PVS/DE (2013) 6.

⁷ Co. pers. WWF Armenia.

⁸ By camera trapping, field visits, scat collect and direct observations,

⁹ There would be 100-150 Syrian brown bear, 15/17 Caucasian lynx, up to 700 Bezoar goat and frequent signs of Caucasian leopard in the diploma holding area.

management of that species, in line with the Bern Convention and the regulation of the European Diploma for protected areas.

The Armenian authorities should be urged to report on that matter to the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention.

1.2 LANDSCAPE INTEREST

The diversity, aesthetic and integrity of the landscape have not changed significantly since the award of the European Diploma, as far as it was possible for the expert to assess the current situation, in a very short field visit.

All natural and cultural values of the Diploma holding area awarded in 2013 seem to be still there: the Khosrov Forest State Reserve is slowly recovering from ancient anthropogenic pressures and it is easy and spectacular to see the natural processes going on, in the old settlements.

The Khosrov Forest State Reserve is a strict reserve where only few limited and sustainable uses and activities are allowed; in the absence of opened roads and other facilities, its access is uneasy, preserving its landscape assets, values and integrity.

The Diploma holding area still comprises a highly valuable cultural and natural landscape of European significance and importance, typical from this part of Europe.

2. MANAGEMENT

2.1 PLANNING

A 2009-2014 management plan was adopted and implemented.

A new plan is in preparation for the 2018-2022 period; it will be completed by the end of 2017; WWF Armenia was contracted by the Armenian authorities to elaborate this new plan. This plan will be organized in 5 main programmatic chapters: administration, protection, science and monitoring, visitors, education and awareness.

After discussion with the reserve officials and WWF staff, it was agreed that this plan should meet the following requirements:

- be based on a 10-year Vision, responding to the period for renewal of the European Diploma;
- be adopted for 5 years;
- include a logical framework meeting the international standards as well as a budget and financial attachments;
- address the European Diploma and the EMERALD process in specific paragraphs;
- develop a tourism strategy for the area with clear objectives, goals and targets, fully compatible with the preservation of the European interest of the Khosrov Forest State Reserve and sustaining its integrity;
- detail a monitoring process built upon conservation and performance indicators;
- contain a training programme for the staff to enhance the human capacities.

The expert also recommended submitting the draft management plan for comments to the Group of specialists of the European Diploma, prior to its adoption.

The Armenian authorities should be acknowledged for their efforts and invited to complete the adoption process of that new plan by the end of 2017, before the next session of the Group of Specialists and the possible renewal of the European Diploma.

2.2 PROTECTION AND ZONING

The Khosrov Forest State Reserve is a strictly protected area (IUCN category I a)¹⁰ under the existing law and decrees; this legal status fully meets the European Diploma regulation and guarantees a high level of protection for this area.

A draft law on the protection of the nature is under discussion in the Parliament; this regulation should hopefully not change this legal regime and should maintain the Diploma holding area, which is very ecologically sensitive, in its current strict regime of protection.

There is no specific zoning in the Diploma holding area, but only four administrative districts which do not interfere with the protection regime of the area.

Most uses and activities are forbidden within the Diploma holding area; only those compatible with the maintenance of its ecological and landscape features and characteristics, can be allowed, under strict restrictions.

No modification has been brought to the borders and regime of the Diploma holding area since the award of the Diploma.

The new management plan will clarify pending issues related to the borders of the “*Khor Virap*” and “*Goravan sands*” sanctuaries and their preservation.

A discussion was opened during the expert mission on the three following matters.

2.2.1 establishment of a buffer zone

The 2009-2014 Action plan referred to the existence of a buffer zone (Action Plan – A1.3, A5.1 and 2, A9.5) and several maps provided by the Armenian authorities, seemed also to confirm that a buffer zone did exist around the Khosrov Forest State Reserve. Unfortunately, this point has never been clarified up to now and it seems that this buffer zone was never actually established. That point was raised in 2012 during the previous appraisal mission¹¹.

It was agreed by the parties that the establishment of a buffer zone would facilitate the preservation and management of the Diploma holding area; according to the on-going process for the preparation of the next management plan, this buffer zone should be set up as soon as possible as it would contribute to improve the current situation regarding the grazing activities and the local illegal occupations.

The Armenian authorities should commit (1) to establish a buffer zone with clear borders, legal regime and regulation around the Diploma holding area as soon as possible, and (2) to elaborate a specific management regime for grazing and hunting in this zone.

It is also recommended that this project is submitted for comments to the Group of Specialists for comments, prior to its final adoption.

2.2.2 expansion of the territory of the reserve

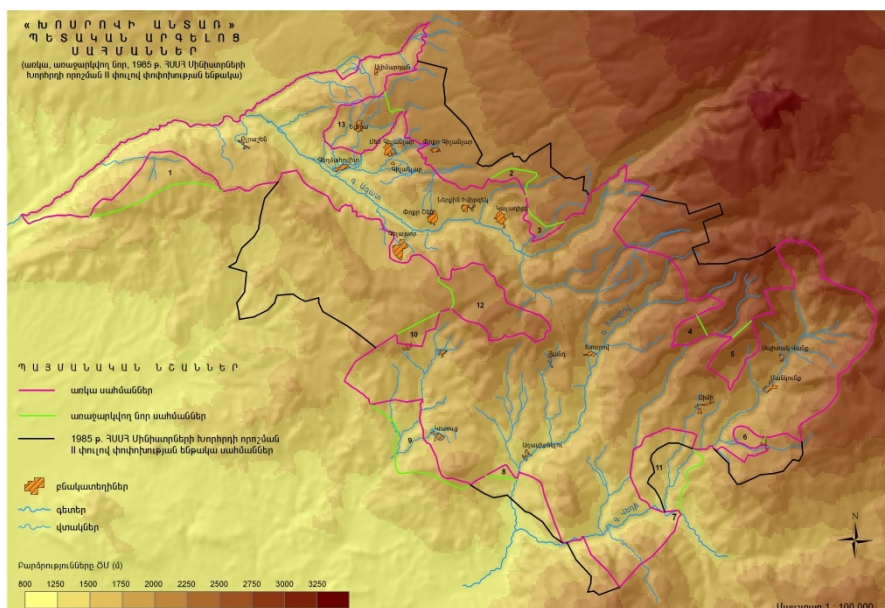
The existing reserve does not guarantee the long-term preservation of some iconic species like mouflon, goat and leopard; some species would need a larger protected territory in order to sustain their viable population.

An expansion project was elaborated in the past but had never been yet completed (**Map 3, black line**). Furthermore, a series of small enclaves surround the border of the Diploma holding area (**Map 3, yellow lines**) which make the conservation of the reserve not easy.

It was agreed during the discussions that those enclaves should be removed in order to facilitate and strengthen the long term preservation of the European interest of the Diploma holding area; it was also agreed that the expansion of the reserve should be assessed.

¹⁰MD n°P-341, 13 September 1958.

¹¹ See the 2012 expert report and the condition recommended by the expert regarding that issue.



Map 3 – Existing enclaves and project of expansion of the Khosrov Forest State Reserve
(Source : Khosrov Forest State Reserve administration).

The Armenian authorities should commit (1) to remove the existing enclaves around the Diploma holding area as soon as possible and (2) to carry out a study on the expansion of this area in order to strengthen the preservation of its natural features that contribute to build its European significance.

2.2.3 removal of two remaining settlements

A few people are still living, part or full time, in two small settlements situated inside the Diploma holding area; according to a governmental decision, those families should have left those two ancient villages for long but this decision has never been enforced, although these persons have been compensated.

The Armenian authorities should be invited to enforce the decision to remove the two settlements remaining inside the Diploma holding area.

2.3 CAPACITIES

2.3.1 administration and human capacities

The Khosrov Forest State Reserve is placed under the authority the Ministry of Nature Protection (MNP) of the Republic of Armenia and managed by the “*Biological Resource Management Agency*” founded in 2002¹².

No significant change has occurred since the award of the European Diploma. At the time of the mission, the Diploma holding area was managed by the Khosrov Forest State Reserve administration which comprised 76 staff members - compared to 77 in 2013 - distributed according to **Table 1**.

The human capacities devoted to the reserve management are however rather low; the staff works with limited technical and financial conditions; support and incentives should be found to upgrade their skills and strengthen their interest in work.

The Armenian authorities should be encouraged to improve the working conditions of the staff and to define a training programme particularly in the field of scientific tourism.

¹² Resolution N1236 of August 8, 2002, of the Government of Armenia.

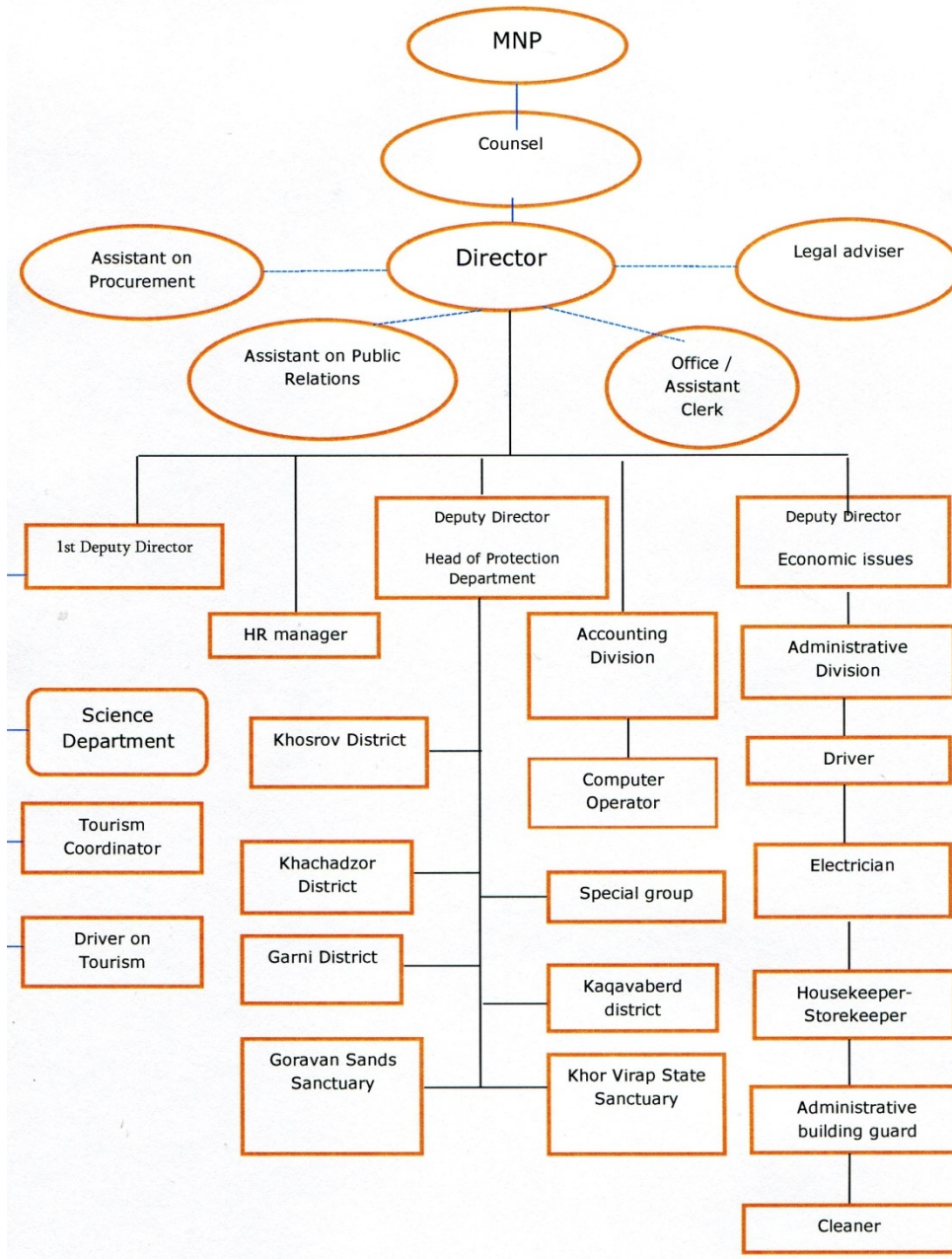


Table 1 – Khosrov Forest State Reserve administration (Source: Khosrov Forest State Reserve administration).

2.3.2 equipment and facilities

The Khosrov Forest State Reserve administration has limited technical means and the staff does its best to fulfil his tasks.

Two visitor centres are located at the main entrances of the Diploma holding area and there is a small museum at the headquarters of the reserve administration. An eco-training centre was under construction during the appraisal mission in 2012; the construction of this centre is completed. It is managed by the zoological park of Erevan which collaborates sometimes with the reserve administration.

Despite the efforts made with the support of the international donors, these means do not yet fully meet international requirements and standards; efforts should be made in particular to improve the signalization and marking of the reserve/sanctuaries borders as well as along the four grazing routes which cross the Diploma holding area.

The Armenian authorities and the reserve administration should be congratulated for their efforts in developing those facilities and they should be commended to pursue and strengthen them in the future, and with donor support.

2.3.3 financial capacities

The budget of the Diploma holding area has increased tendentially over the five last years but with a small negative inflexion since 2016 (**Table 2**). The contribution of the Armenian authorities was around 200 000 Euros in 2017 – compared to 140 000 Euros in 2012).

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Armenian Drachme	71 845,5	79 247,5	77 535	77 535	77 535
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
State budget	79 134 600	99 038 700	120 897 100	121 136 100	117 242 100
External sources	43 100 000	50 137 550	64 200 000	56 650 000	56 781 400
Internal sources (tourism)	588 800	335 000	669 000	2 334 300	345 000
TOTAL	122 823 400	149 511 250	185 766 100	180 120 400	174 023 845

Table 2 – Budget of the Diploma holding area (period 2013-2017)
(Source: Khosrov Forest State Reserve administration).

More than two third of the Reserve budget come from the State contribution and only very little from tourism activities.

The Armenian authorities should be acknowledged for the increased part of their contribution to the annual budget of the Diploma holding area; They should be encouraged to pursue their efforts to provide the area with a sustainable budget and in line with the international standards required from a protected area of European interest awarded with the Diploma.

2.4 USES AND SOCIOECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Most uses and activities not be compatible with the long-term preservation of the features of the diploma holding area, are strictly forbidden.

Several specific matters were addressed for the award of the European Diploma; the current situation is as follows.

2.4.1 water systems and facilities

A water supply station exists inside the reserve, on the river Azat, in the North-Western part of the Khosrov Forest State Reserve; this station provides water to the Garni population, a small village close to the Diploma holding area.

The expert did not re-visit this area; however, after discussions with the Khosrov Forest State Reserve officials, it seems that no new facility and no extension of the existing one have been developed, the situation being the same as in 2012¹³.

The Armenian authorities should be commended for their efforts for not developing water supplies and new equipment in the Diploma holding area; they should be invited to continue to monitor the potential effects of the water pumping on the ecological character of the Diploma holding area.

2.4.2 car traffic and public access

The situation has not changed since the last appraisal and the award of the European Diploma to the area.

¹³ See also the 2015 and 2016 annual reports.

The existing gravel roads can only be used for safety/emergency reasons and for management activities. This was a condition attached to the award of the European Diploma and this condition is regarded to be fulfilled, according to the information provided to the expert.

Public access is also limited on the 5 existing trails; those trails are opened only to groups of maximum 10 visitors, accompanied by a guide from the reserve.

The Armenian authorities should be acknowledged for their efforts for minimizing car traffic and public access to the Diploma holding area so as to preserve its integrity and natural values.

2.4.3 grazing

Grazing remains a matter of concern; four “*transit routes*” for sheep, cross the Diploma holding area and problems are still met with the local communities with regards to grazing.

This issue will be partly addressed in the next management plan which is being prepared; it should also be addressed by means of the three main measures already recommended above:

- the expansion of the Diploma holding area and the inclusion of a series of critical enclaves that fringe the existing borders;
- the establishment of a buffer zone with a specific land use regulation and management; the management regime of this zone should aim to strengthen the protection of the Diploma holding area;
- the removal of the 2 remaining settlements located near the border of the Diploma holding area.

In addition to those measures, it is recommended to reiterate the 2013 resolution awarding the European Diploma to the Khosrov Forest State Reserve, and urging the Armenian authorities to enforce strictly the prohibition of grazing in the Diploma holding area in the future as well as minimizing transit of livestock on and nearby its territory; reduction in the number of transit routes as well as their transfer in less sensitive areas, should be assessed.

2.4.4 tourism

Tourism development in the Diploma holding area is a strategic objective for the Armenian authorities and the reserve administration in the future.

The Khosrov Forest State Reserve has very specific assets to develop sustainable tourism to the extent that these activities do not exceed the carrying capacity of the area, are fully compatible with its environmental sensitivity and meet all requirements of the European Diploma regulation.

The Diploma holding area will never host mass tourism and its “*niche*” should be carefully defined; the scientific and ecological tourism – and cultural tourism to certain areas - would likely be the best adapted to the natural assets and sensitivity of this area.

This issue should be further studied in detail during the on-going process of preparation of the next management plan; a business model for tourism should be set up at this occasion, based on fair and reasonable goals and targets, meeting the above requirements.

A sustainable tourism strategy should be elaborated as part of the next management plan.

In 2012, the Khosrov Forest State Reserve administration signed an agreement with the “PAN parks” organization, aiming to certify the Diploma holding area as PAN park protected site. However, this process has not been completed and the Pan Park foundation is in liquidation¹⁴.

The Armenian authorities should be urged to establish and implement a fair and reasonable sustainable tourism strategy as part of the next management plan, preventing negative potential impacts of tourism in the Diploma holding area and aiming to uphold its European interest as well as to preserve its full ecological integrity.

¹⁴ See <http://www.panparks.org/2015/10/pan-parks-foundation-for-europes-wilderness/>.

2.4.5 other uses and activities

Two main issues were raised in 2012.

- *litter and waste*: litter and waste deposits are not allowed within the nominated area. The expert did not have the possibility to visit all the sensitive points of the reserve; however, he did not observe litter during his field visit, which might mean that the situation has improved since 2012.

The Armenian authorities should be commended for their efforts on addressing this issue and should be strongly encouraged to cooperate further with the local communities to address it further in the future, through the next management plan.

- *Hunting/fishing and poaching*: hunting and fishing are strictly forbidden in the Diploma holding area; poaching is however mentioned in various sources in the literature and the expert had found clear and recent signs of poaching in the area, during his 2012 field visit. According to the information provided to the expert during his mission, poaching would no longer be a problem; only 2 cases of illegal activities would have been registered in 2016¹⁵. Furthermore, the behavior and attitude of wildlife in the field and the relative ease of observing it, lead to assume that poaching, if it exists, is rather low.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONDITIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 CONDITIONS ATTACHED TO THE AWARD

Condition 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 be fully compatible with the preservation of the European interest of the area

This condition is considered as fully implemented.

Condition 2: public motor vehicle traffic, including transport of tourists, will be strictly forbidden on the existing gravel roads within the area except for management purposes and in case of emergencies

This condition is also considered as fully implemented.

3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS ATTACHED TO THE AWARD DECISION

Recommendation 1: to develop appropriate efforts for preventing and minimizing illegal activities, including poaching of large mammals within the nominated site

This recommendation is considered as implemented; efforts have been made by the reserve administration for preventing poaching and illegal activities and the current administration seems to pay serious attention to this matter.

Recommendation 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

This recommendation is also considered as implemented; this matter however requires continuous efforts and should be addressed in the future management plan with a specific programme of activities to be carried out in close cooperation with all local stakeholders.

Recommendation 3: to implement the sustainable tourism strategy fully and to monitor related activities.

Tourism in the reserve remains a low-impact activity; the next management plan should offer the opportunity to reflect more strategically on the development of such activities within the limits of the carrying capacity of the Diploma holding area and in optimizing the natural and cultural assets of the reserve.

¹⁵ Illegal logging.

A specialized and scientific tourism seems the most appropriate to this context.

Recommendation 4: to pursue inventories and mapping of species and habitats, not only in the future Emerald network sites but, preferably on the whole territory of the reserve

This recommendation is also considered as implemented; a continuous monitoring programme of large mammals and indicative flora species (*Juniperus* sp) is carried out by WWF-Armenia, in collaboration with the reserve administration and the Erevan State University and the Humoldt University (Germany). This programme has provided reliable data on the state of conservation of the key species in the reserve during the last years and will be pursued in the future.

This monitoring has led to research works and the publication of scientific reports and articles, providing an estimation of the population size of the key targeted and threatened species as well as an evaluation of the nature resource management and conservation policy. It will facilitate the elaboration of the next management plan.

Recommendation 5: with the Armenian authorities, to guarantee the budget of the reserve

This recommendation is considered as implemented as well; the budget of the reserve has increased significantly over the past five years, although it has decreased since two years.

This recommendation should be reiterated so that the reserve will have a secured and more adapted budget in the future.

Recommendation 6: to renew the management plan for 2015 onwards, including a grazing plan and updating the socio-economic activities within the reserve

This last recommendation cannot be regarded as implemented; however, the process is now going on and a new plan for the period 2018-2020 should be adopted by the end of 2017, according to the reserve timeframe.

This plan should meet a series of criteria (see **Condition 1 here below**) and be accompanied by a series of concrete measures to be taken as soon as possible, including the expansion of the reserve, the resorption of the existing enclaves and the establishment of a buffer zone (see **Condition 2 here below**).

CONCLUSION

Referring to the art. 9, § 5.a of Res. (98) 29 of the Committee of the Ministers, it is recommended to renew the European Diploma to the Khosrov Forest State Reserve for 10 years, with the following 2 conditions and 3 recommendations:

1. PRE-CONDITIONS

By the end of January 2018 and as agreed during the expert mission:

Pre-condition 1: a new 5-year management plan will be prepared and adopted; this plan should contain:

- a 10-year vision for conservation of the natural values of the area;
- a detailed logical framework meeting the international standards and containing strategic aims, goals and targets, an estimated budget and timeframe for its full implementation;
- a strategic approach for the development of a sustainable tourism compatible with the carrying capacity of the Khosrov Forest State Reserve and preserving its integrity as a strict protected area;
- a long-term monitoring system based at least on performance and conservation indicators.

The draft management plan should be submitted to the Secretariat of the Bern Convention prior to its adoption.

Pre-condition 2: the Armenian authorities should engage a political and administrative process aiming to sustain the preservation of the European interest of the area by means of the following measures:

- expanding the territory of the reserve to preserve at best the state of conservation of the key species (large carnivores and herbivores);
- removing the existing enclaves (11 enclaves, see **Map 3**) along the border of the Khosrov Forest State Reserve;
- establishing a buffer zone with clear limits and regime, minimizing hunting and grazing potential impacts on the reserve; this buffer zone should also address the issue of the “*transit routes*” that cross the reserve, and contribute to minimize their general impacts on the natural assets of the diploma holding area.

The Armenian authorities are invited to present the timetable of this process and its practical implementation modalities to the Secretariat of the Bern Convention by the end of January 2018.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: the legal regime of strict protected area should be maintained and sustained for the Khosrov Forest State Reserve, in the future law on the protection of nature currently under discussion in the Parliament;

Recommendation 2: an awareness and training programme for local people, visitors and members of the staff of the reserve should be developed and funded in the new management plan, particularly in relation to (1) the management of litter and other wastes, and (2) the development of sustainable tourism;

Recommendation 3: Khosrov Forest State Reserve administration capacities should be sustained and guaranteed in the future, with the support of the Armenian authorities and external donors; specific incentives should also be provided to the staff to foster their interest on preservation of the reserve and its values.

Recommendation 4: the Armenian authorities are invited to assess the state of conservation of the wolf (*Canis lupus*), both at national level and in the Diploma holding area, and to adapt its current legal and administrative regime of protection accordingly; it is strongly recommended that a “Wolf concept” is elaborated by the State party, providing a general legal and administrative framework for the management of that species in Armenia, in line with the Bern Convention and the regulation of the European Diploma for Protected Areas.

The Armenian authorities should be urged to report on that matter to the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention.

Annex 1

PROGRAM OF THE MISSION
23-25 and 29 May 2017

22.05	St Cergue/Geneva/Erevan (plane) Night in Erevan
23.05.	Ministry of Nature Protection of RA
9:30-10:30	Official admission in the Ministry of Nature Protection Welcoming speech: Khachik Hakobyan, Deputy Minister CoE response: Hervé Lethier, expert Participants` <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Bioresources Management Agency, representatives of the departments of the Ministry of Nature Protection • World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) • Transboundary Joint Secretariat (TJS) • Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF) Foundation for the Preservation for Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC). • GIZ consultant (A.Gevorgyan)
10:30	Departure from Yerevan (car)
12:00-17:30 Including coffee-brake, dinner	Meeting in the Khosrov Forest State Reserve: Opening speech` Director of the Khosrov Forest State Reserve Scope of the mission and presentation of the renewal process: Hervé Lethier, expert Presentations by WWF (management and monitoring) Discussions Participants : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientific department of the Khosrov Forest State Reserve • World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) • Transboundary Joint Secretariat (TJS) • Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF) • Representatives from neighbouring communities (absent) • Representatives from Environmental NGO's (absent)
24.05.	Field visit of the Khosrov Forest State Reserve, office work
10:00-17:00	Participants : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herve Lethier – expert • Rangers of the Khosrov Forest State Reserve
25-28.05.	Initial meeting on 25 cancelled and postponed to 29 May in Erevan Field visit
29.05.	Collect of information Further discussions Conclusive session Introduction speech: Khachik Hakobyan, Deputy Minister CoE presentation: Hervé Lethier, expert Discussions

	<p>Participants :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• representatives of the departments of the Ministry of Nature Protection• World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)• Transboundary Joint Secretariat (TJS)• Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF)• Foundation for the Preservation for Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC).• GIZ consultant (A.Gevorgyan) <p>End of the mission</p>
30.05	<p>Departure Erevan Arrival Geneva/St Cergue</p>