

**Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1  
on the revised regulations for the European Diploma for Protected Areas**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008  
at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)<sup>1</sup>*

**Appendix 5: Model plan for annual reports**

**Annual report for the year 2023**

Annual reports should describe the changes that have taken place since the previous year in dynamic terms of management and function and not be limited to basic data. Any new text or map introducing a change in the situation of the area should be attached to the annual report.

State:

Name of the area:

Year and number of years since the award or renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas:

**Central authority concerned:**

Name: Vereinigung Deutsch-Luxemburgischer Naturpark

Address: Ewerhartstr. 14 D-54666 Irrel

Tel: 0049 6525 79 26 100

Fax:

e-mail: [info@naturpark-suedeifel.de](mailto:info@naturpark-suedeifel.de)

www: [www.naturpark-suedeifel.de](http://www.naturpark-suedeifel.de)

**Authority responsible for its management:**

Name:

Address:

Tel:

Fax:

e-mail:

www:

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<sup>1</sup> As amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2014)2 on 2 July 2014 at the 1204th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.  
Internet : <http://www.coe.int/cm>

**1. Conditions:** List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

**a) At the initiative of the states concerned, resume the work of the intergovernmental committee as soon as possible;**

Under the leadership of the Spatial Development Department (DATer) of the Luxembourg Ministry of Housing and the Rhineland-Palatinate Ministry of Climate Action, Environment, Energy and Mobility, a cross-border working group has been entrusted with the task of defining joint medium and long-term development objectives since fall 2020. The political endeavor to strengthen cross-border cooperation and the defined functional area with the objectives are also reflected in Luxembourg's "Pogramme directeur d'aménagement du territoire 2035 (PDAT)". The working group also includes members of the German-Luxembourgish Nature Park, the South Eifel Nature Park as well as representatives of the Luxembourg Nature and & Geopark Mëllerdall and the Our Nature Park. The working group was able to complete a spatial analysis in 2021, on the basis of which recommendations for action were defined for the area in question. The work can be based on the aforementioned spatial analysis of the German-Luxembourgish Nature Park; however, due to the intended cross-thematic orientation of the strategy, the involvement of other stakeholders is also necessary, which is why the working group was expanded to accompany the study and met several times in 2023

**b) In-depth analysis of the mission, medium-term objectives and future structure of the German-Luxembourgish Nature Park;**

In order to implement the recommendations for action in concrete terms, the partners are seeking funding under the next INTERREG VI A program of the Greater Region (2021-2027). In the new programming period, the European funding program will support the implementation of cross-thematic spatial development strategies for so-called cross-border "functional areas" as part of its political objective "A Greater Region that is closer to its citizens".

**c) Establish guidelines and a roadmap for the development of a global management plan for the German-Luxembourg Nature Park, including the nature parks on its territory; develop the management plan before the next renewal of the Europadiploma and secure the necessary funding for its implementation;**

To be eligible for funding under the INTERREG program, a cross-border area defined as a functional area must have a holistic strategy and an administrative structure to implement this strategy. These conditions must be met within two years of the approval of the cooperation program by the European Commission (i.e. by the end of 2024). Therefore, the Interreg A program partners of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the State of Rhineland-Palatinate have registered a corresponding functional area as "Cooperation of the Nature Parks Mëllerdall-Our-Südeifel" in the cooperation program. The working group is being supported by an external service provider to develop a sustainable strategy for the functional area of the Mëllerdall-Our-Südeifel Nature Park Cooperation and to establish a long-term administrative structure. The strategy for the cooperation area was finalized in 2023. The first coordination meetings on the future organizational structure of the cooperation area have already taken place.

**2. Recommendations:** List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. pursue and develop cross-border co-operation and collaboration and explore the best adapted form of transfrontier co-ordination, including the formulation of common mid- and long-term development objectives and the reactivating of an intergovernmental committee, as appropriate;
2. ensure that nature conservation management in the Zweckverband Naturpark Südeifel mirrors the practice and performance of the Luxembourg nature parks;
3. make more extensive use of the European Diploma logo in all information material and brochures, and explain the relevance of the diploma wherever appropriate, first of all in the visitors' centre and on the website.

**1. to continue and develop cross-border cooperation and collaboration and to explore the most appropriate form of cross-border coordination, including the formulation of common medium and long-term development objectives and the reactivation of an intergovernmental committee, where appropriate;**

The existing spatial analysis for the German-Luxembourgish Nature Park will be used to draw up a sustainable strategy for the functional area of cooperation between the Mëlldall-Our-Südeifel Nature Parks and to establish a long-term administrative structure. As already mentioned, the working group will be supported by an external service provider to develop a sustainable strategy for the functional area of cooperation between the Mëlldall-Our-Südeifel Nature Parks and to establish a long-term administrative structure. The strategy for the cooperation area was finalized and adopted in 2023. Initial coordination meetings on the future organizational structure of the cooperation area have already taken place.

**2. to ensure that nature conservation management in the South Eifel Nature Park Association reflects the practice and achievements of Luxembourg's nature parks;**

Concept for linking a regional nature conservation station to the South Eifel Nature Park

The idea of institutionalizing nature conservation management (biotope management and Natura 2000) for the Eifel district of Bitburg-Prüm at the Südeifel Nature Park and thus making it more sustainable and efficient arose around four years ago as part of the creation of the Nature Park Plan 2030 for the Südeifel Nature Park. The neighboring nature parks in Luxembourg were an important source of inspiration. Under the leadership of the responsible ministry, the biological stations in Luxembourg are linked to nature parks wherever they exist, otherwise to comparable institutions. In addition, the Biological Station in Luxembourg is supported by a Natura 2000 coordinator. This idea of the nature park has made it into the coalition agreement in Rhineland-Palatinate. The Southern Eifel Nature Park has again expressed its interest to the Rhineland-Palatinate Ministry of Climate Protection in 2022 and 2023. The official expression of interest procedure on the part of the Rhineland-Palatinate Ministry of Climate Protection was opened in November 2023.

**3. make greater use of the Europadiplom logo in all information materials and brochures and explain the meaning of the diploma in appropriate places, especially in the Visitor Center and on the website.**

The logo of the Europadiplom is displayed and its meaning explained at [www.naturpark-suedeifel.de](http://www.naturpark-suedeifel.de). On the Our Nature Park website, the logo and its meaning can be found under the heading "Exchange across borders".

On the website of the Mëlldall Nature & Geopark, the logo can be found with explanations under the heading "The European Diploma for Protected Areas".

**3. Site Management:** List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

On the night of July 15, 2021, the flood disaster caused extensive damage. Even the wooden bridge over the Irrel waterfalls, which was well-known far beyond Irrel, could not withstand the masses of water and was washed away. Because a central pillar like the old bridge would impede the flow of floodwater, a structure like the old bridge would no longer be eligible for approval today. A suspension bridge, on the other hand, does not require a pillar in the middle and was therefore the only suitable alternative for a bridge with such a span.

The suspension bridge was opened on September 30, 2023, as were the access routes. Now two important tourist hubs, the much-visited Devil's Gorge and the suspension bridge in the Southern Eifel Nature Park, are connected. The Rhineland-Palatinate Ministry of the Interior has provided funding of 1,150,000 euros from the "Aufbauhilfe 2021" special fund for the necessary preliminary investigations, planning, access routes and construction of the suspension bridge

Due to the new suspension bridge, it has become necessary to establish a parking guidance system at the Irrel waterfalls. The new parking guidance system eases the parking situation at the waterfalls. The various options for reaching the suspension bridge are shown on large start boards at Irreler Mitte, Dinopark

Ernzen and in Ferschweiler (Bornstraße). Counting stations have also been set up for the first time in the nature park at the suspension bridge and the Teufelsschlucht gorge. The planned nature park app will also contribute to visitor guidance in the future, for example by only displaying selected hiking trails that are in good condition and, in some cases, trails that are not so heavily used. In this way, the flow of visitors can also be steered. Hiking portals/info boards in the nature park are a further component of this.

More than 200 listeners from Germany and Luxembourg took part in the Nature Park Conference of the Southern Eifel Nature Park in Irrel and via online stream to find out more about the topic of "Natural climate protection and biodiversity". All speakers agreed that climate change and species extinction are two crises that are mutually dependent and exacerbate each other. Climate protection and species conservation must therefore be considered together in the future. Biodiversity is a prerequisite for the resilience of habitats. Because only healthy and strong ecosystems can fulfill the expected contribution to CO2 reduction. Natural climate protection is therefore indispensable alongside technical climate protection. The program was rounded off by a video message from Prof. Dr. Hans-Otto Pörtner, Head of the Integrative Ecophysiology Section at the Alfred Wegener Institute and one of the world's most renowned climate researchers.

The Southern Eifel Nature Park has started to establish permanent, long-term partnerships with daycare centers and schools, initially as part of a LEADER project that was completed on 30.06.2023. Cooperation is now taking place in the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) project in the nature parks, which was approved in July 2023. The Southern Eifel Nature Park supports daycare centers and schools in their activities in the area of nature and the environment. In part, this involves cooperation with the Eifel-Naturparken Nordeifel and Vulkaneifel nature parks and with all Rhineland-Palatinate nature parks in the model project "ESD in the nature parks". The focus is on the creation of teaching modules, further training for lecturers and further training for teachers and educators. The Daleiden daycare center was certified as a "Nature Park Daycare Center" in April 2023. Neuerburg primary and secondary school was certified as a "Nature Park School" in May 2023, Langsur elementary school was certified as a "Nature Park School" in June 2022 and Ralingen elementary school has been a certified "Nature Park School" since May 2022.

The South Eifel Nature Park's orchard office also offered several events in 2023, including three fruit tree pruning courses and a planting course. For the period 2023/24, funding of up to 80 percent was made available for new planting and pruning measures from the nature park's action program. In 2023, applications were submitted for the pruning care of 471 fruit trees and 185 applications were submitted for new plantings.

The 10th anniversary of the NaturWanderPark delux was celebrated in 2023. "The NaturWanderPark is characterized by its quality as a premium hiking offer with certified routes, but especially by its cross-border character between Luxembourg and Germany. The origins of the NaturWanderPark lie in the development of the Nat'OUR routes, themed circular tours within the framework of INTERREG III 2003-2007. In the subsequent INTERREG IV, 2010 to 2012, existing routes were certified and some new routes were developed. In addition, the construction of bridges at strategic locations was co-financed. High-profile walking tours were organized by the responsible regional tourism authorities during the anniversary.

As part of the joint project "D'Naturparken zu Lëtzebuerg - (een) Insekteräich" by the three Luxembourg nature parks to protect and promote the insect world, numerous measures, campaigns and nature-oriented redesigns of areas have been implemented. Since this year, an insect adventure trail with interactive stations that provide information about the abilities and special features of insects has been delighting visitors on a circular route of around 3 km in the municipality of Wintrange, in the north of the Our Nature Park. Project-related monitoring is also carried out every two years using a trap system. In total, the Our Nature Park spent around €580,000 on the implementation in 2023. The project is financed by the Environmental Fund of the Luxembourg Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Sustainable Development.

In the Mëllerdall Nature & Geopark, expenditure on implementation amounted to around € 170,000. The conversions were mainly carried out in urban areas. This primarily involved extensification of grassland in the villages of the Nature & Geopark and the Echternach industrial zone. Overall, it can be stated that the acceptance of nature conservation measures in urban areas is increasing and that interest in nesting aids and shelters (insects, swallows, swifts, bats) is high.

The "École du Goût" taste school also found its place in Brandenburg in 2023. Construction work was completed at the beginning of the year and the inauguration of the buildings with guests took place at the beginning of May. The École du Goût of the nature parks is an interdisciplinary project in the field of nutrition and consumer education and offers people of all ages access to a healthy and sustainable food culture.

As part of the watercourse partnership (50% project management position at the Our Nature Park), the following projects were implemented in 2023 to raise awareness among stakeholders and the public: Organization of a water rally suitable for families, active participation in meetings of the regional Nature Pact team and regular participation for a citizen science project in a working group of the University of Luxembourg on the WaterLynx and SustainLux platforms.

With regard to research programs, action plans and watercourse management, the following work was carried out last year: Assessment of watercourses and proposed measures to improve the biological, ecological, physico-chemical & hydromorphological water quality, coordination of a preliminary study and the development and submission of a renaturation project to remove obstacles to river continuity and renaturation of the Tandelerbaach stream, Collaboration in the organization of the colloquium of the "Luxembourg Watercourse Partnerships", work for a study to analyse and digitize the historical watercourses in the area of the Our Nature Park, as well as the identification of anthropogenic interventions and watercourse straightening/changes. Total expenditure in 2023 amounted to €47,513. The Mëllerdall Nature & Geopark submitted a project application for the improvement and creation of small still waters in 2023. The project was approved at the turn of the year and the Nature & Geopark will therefore have funds available in this area in the future. In addition to the improvement of existing ponds and the creation of new ones, the aim is also to improve the surroundings of the stillwaters and improve the migration opportunities for amphibian species. The project is based on the monitoring results of the last 10 years for the great crested newt and corresponding potential studies. The Natura2000 areas of the Nature & Geopark are hotspots for this European protected species.

As part of the implementation of the Natura 2000 management plans, work on the project at the former state quarry in Merkholtz was completed in the Our Nature Park in 2023 and the project was officially inaugurated. As part of this awareness-raising project, various information boards were erected on site to explain to visitors the Natura 2000 area of Kiischpelt, the history of the former state quarry and the special nature conservation significance of this area today. In addition to the display boards, two audio stations were also installed, which make it possible to experience various topics relating to the former state quarry in Merkholtz in an innovative way by means of professionally prepared audio clips. In addition to the practical environmental education measures on site, a comprehensive website ([www.merkholtz.lu](http://www.merkholtz.lu)) was also created on which various aspects of the project can be discovered interactively. A total of € 276,000 was invested in this Natura 2000 awareness-raising project. The budget for this was provided in part by the Luxembourg Ministry of the Environment and the Road Administration.

Another project that was completed in 2023 was the "Éislek Pad" listening tour in the municipality of Winrange. This is the first Natura 2000 listening tour in Luxembourg and was developed taking into account the criteria for quality hiking trails. The official promotion of the listening tour will begin at the start of the hiking season in spring 2024. The costs for the full implementation of the project amounted to €43,000. The budget for this was provided proportionally by the Our Nature Park, Natura 2000 COPIL Éislek and the Ministry of Tourism.

In 2023, two scythe workshops were again organized in the Our Nature Park as part of the Natura 2000 awareness-raising mission. As in previous years, these courses met with great interest and were fully booked within a very short time.

Other topics that will continue to accompany the Our Nature Park in its future work are tangible nature conservation, light pollution, climate protection, soft tourism and environmental education.

As part of the implementation of the Natura 2000 management plans, eyelash bat monitoring was carried out in the Mëllerdall Nature & Geopark. It should be emphasized that the studies were carried out in collaboration with various farmers in their livestock stables. No colony could be detected, but a significant colony could be detected on the German side. The green broom moss transplants that have taken place in the past will continue to be monitored. According to the current status, the transplants are predominantly vital.

As part of the Natur2000 connects project, an internet platform was created ([www.kierfchen.lu](http://www.kierfchen.lu)). This platform serves to network all interested parties in the field of orchards. The primary aim, however, is to bring fruit owners and those who are looking for fruit together. In addition, services and materials can be offered or searched for via the platform (bee sites, harvesting machines, etc.). In 2023, the first intensive course "Bongerten" (meadow orchards) was completed and a second course began. The multi-day course, spread over the winter months, covers all aspects of orchards such as planting, pruning, product processing, pomology and tree diseases. The demand for this course is very high and aims to counteract the shortage of skilled workers and build skills in the amateur sector.

The Mëllerdall Nature & Geopark activity brochure also continues to be very popular. The courses offered include pruning courses for young and old trees, dry stone wall courses, workshops on insect-friendly design of home gardens, guided hikes and much more.

After the inauguration of the first "Geopad" at the "Hëlt" geotope in Rosport, a thematic hiking trail around the creation of the local cultural landscape with its terraced vineyards and orchards on this geologically extremely interesting hill, the second "Geopad" was opened at the "Haupeschaach" geotope in 2023 -Halerbaach" in Beaufort. This path leads around the topics of water and geology. Further themed trails are planned in the future to raise awareness among the population and visitors about the region's special natural and cultural heritage. In addition, a visitor guidance system is currently being planned, which, in addition to guidance, will also create awareness among visitors of the special values should help to better distribute large flows of visitors and avoid overloads.

**4. Boundaries:** Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes.

**5. Other information:** List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

No changes.

The following sections of the form should only be filled in if your area is in the year before a renewal of its European Diploma for Protected Areas, i.e. year 4 after the award of the European Diploma or year 9 after its renewal.

**6. Natural heritage (general abiotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – State of conservation**

- 6.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated
- 6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes
- 6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds

**7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context**

- 7.1. Cultural heritage
  - 7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage
- 7.2. Socio-economic context
  - 7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context

**8. Education and scientific interest**

- 8.1. Visitors – Information policy
  - 8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.)
  - 8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)
  - 8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)
- 8.2. Scientific research
  - 8.2.1. Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, etc.; identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention, etc.)
  - 8.2.2. Scientific publications

**9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)**

- 9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations
- 9.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.)
- 9.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve)

**10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)**

- 10.1. Improvements made
  - 10.1.1. Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna
  - 10.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime)
  - 10.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)
  - 10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities)
  - 10.1.5. Waste management
  - 10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems
- 10.2. Management
  - 10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made
  - 10.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made
  - 10.2.3. Internal policing measures
  - 10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action

**11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas**