

**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)¹*

Appendix 5: Model plan for annual reports

Annual report for the year 2021

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: Federal Republic of Germany, Free State of Bavaria

Name of the area: "Weltenburger Enge" Nature Reserve

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

Central authority concerned:

Name: Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Umwelt und Verbraucherschutz
(Bavarian State Ministry of the Environment and Consumer Protection)

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Authority responsible for its management:

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¹ As amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2014)2 on 2 July 2014 at the 1204th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.

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.

1. conduct an expertise on legal options to stop or at least regulate disembarking of private boats on the right bank of the Danube between the Weltenburger landing place and river kilometre 2416, and to ban overnight camping and campfires in the whole European Diploma area. Report to the Council of Europe by 2020 at the latest;

As stated in last year's report, since the spring of 2020 the Government of Lower Bavaria has been working on the merger and streamlining of the "Weltenburger Enge" and "Hirschberg und Altmühlleiten" Nature Reserve Ordinances. During the period from 09.11.21 up to and including 15.12.2021 the draft of the new "Weltenburger Enge" and "Hirschberg und Altmühlleiten" Nature Reserve Ordinance, including maps, is now available for public inspection. In the draft ordinance it is planned to prohibit boat landing and walking on the right bank of the river by means of designated trails in the newly defined core area of the Nature Reserve. Bans are also to be adopted on "putting up tents, overnight camping, barbecues, campfires, making noise or using sound reproducing devices". In this way, the Government of Lower Bavaria sees the condition specified by the Council of Europe as fully implemented and met.

Any concerns, suggestions and comments relating to the draft ordinance on the future "Weltenburger Enge, Hirschberg und Altmühlleiten" Nature Reserve can be submitted by associations, expert bodies and the public until 21.01.2022.

2. extend, wherever ecologically and touristically worthwhile and as soon as possible, the stricter regulations of the decree on the Nature Reserve Hirschberg und Altmuehlleiten to the area of the Nature Reserve Weltenburger Enge to make the rules more comprehensible for visitors and supervision more effective, and to underline the unity of both sites as an ecological entity;

During the period from 09.11.21 up to and including 15.12.2021 the draft ordinance on the new "Weltenburger Enge, Hirschberg und Altmühlleiten" Nature Reserve, including maps, is available for public inspection. It will, for instance, extend the stricter criteria for the "Hirschberg und Altmühlleiten" Nature Reserve to the entire area of the planned nature reserve, thus implementing the condition of the Council of Europe.

3. take more responsibility for the preservation of the archaeological monument Keltenwall (Celtic wall) and stop further damage and erosion through visitor management or appropriate installations to limit hiking and mountain-biking on the monument, in co-operation with the government agency for monument conservation;

In the draft ordinance for the new "Weltenburger Enge, Hirschberg und Altmühlleiten" Nature Reserve, cycling off suitable paths (as shown in the maps of the protected area) will be prohibited in the future. Cycling on the Keltenwand (Celtic wall) will thus be prohibited by decree in future, thus ensuring better protection of the Celtic wall.

One task of the administrative agency for the National Natural Monument 'Weltenburger Enge' (which is currently being set up) will be the corresponding adjustment and updating of the existing visitor channelling and signposting concept. The placing of information boards and the installation of barriers at the Celtic wall will be carried out in coordination with the responsible county archaeologist at the County Chief Executive Office in Kelheim. The success of the measure is to be monitored in the coming years by the county archaeologist and the administrative agency.

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. achieve, as soon as possible, the formal extension of the European Diploma area to 934 hectares, change the name to "Weltenburger Enge, Hirschberg und Altmuehlleiten" and adapt as soon as possible all signposts, brochures, maps and leaflets to the new area. Prepare and adopt, by 2020, an overall management plan in addition to the existing Natura 2000 management plan;

In our view, this recommendation can best be implemented once the two nature reserves have been merged. Due to current developments, considerations for a general management plan for the new Nature Reserve have been put on hold.

The leaflets on the Nature Reserve or on hiking in the Nature Reserve already cover the whole area.

2. assess the effects of wave disturbances, caused by larger boats, on the river bank and on selected and relevant species, especially fish, freshwater molluscs and dragonflies;

A FFH compatibility assessment study was commissioned by the Vereinigte Schifffahrtsunternehmen Kelheim (Kelheim shipping companies) and completed in December 2020 on conventional passenger shipping in the Weltenburger Enge. The study concludes that the shipping operations project has already been conceived in such a way that the planned navigation restrictions can be seen as harm-reducing per se and therefore no further measures for limiting any damage are planned. Impacts resulting from the planned operations do not indicate any significant detrimental effects relating to the FFH protected species "fish".

For the vessel "MS Renate" with jet propulsion an extra assessment will be prepared.

3. consider a harmonisation of information boards and a better planning of their distribution across the area and add the European Diploma logo at least to those boards containing information on natural and cultural highlights within the European Diploma area. This includes the information point at the boat landing in Kelheim. Immediately add information about the role of the European Diploma on information boards, at least those at the main access routes;

For the National Natural Monument and for the new Nature Reserve „Weltenburger Enge, Hirschberg und Altmühlleiten“ all information boards and the visitor channelling concept will be updated after conclusion of the protected area procedure and, where necessary, supplemented with information on the role of the European Diploma. This task will be assumed by the administrative agency of the National Natural Monument Weltenburger Enge.

Already in 2020 the European Diploma logo was added to all protected area information boards, where required. Whenever boards have to be replaced, the logo along with the brief information will be directly taken up in the layout.

Reference is made to the European Diploma area in publications and on the information platform at the Kelheim boat landing point (incl. European Diploma flag Weltenburger Enge from March to end of October).

4. increase and conduct more efficient control of illegal mountain-biking off the official mountain-bike routes;

In the protected area, there are already now only combined footpaths and cycle paths that can be used by mountain bikers as well.

With the new Protected Area Ordinance for the „Weltenburger Enge, Hirschberg und Altmühlleiten“ Nature Reserve, cycling off suitable paths shown on the protected area maps is to be prohibited. Only existing roads and paths, especially forest tracks, will be designated as suitable paths for cycling.

On the initiative of the town of Kelheim another very constructive round table on "off-track mounting biking" took place in the autumn of 2021. The talks are to be continued. The results of the round table are to be integrated in the visitor channelling concept.

Since the summer of 2021 a nature conservation ranger (on a voluntary basis from the nature conservation agency) has again been in action in the protected area. Moreover, since 01.10.2021 and 01.11.2021, a male ranger and a female ranger - funded up until the end of 2023 through the REACT-EU programme of the European Social Fund – have been in action as contact partners for visitors and users of the protected area, as full-time employees of the administrative agency of the National Natural Monument. The aim is to curb mountain biking on unsuitable paths, in particular by providing direct information for visitors, organising information events in the area and carrying out control rounds.

5. carefully examine the opening of official viewing points taking into consideration the natural value of the specific site, and close down a number of uncontrolled and unsafe spots;

The draft of the new Nature Reserve Ordinance provides for a core area with designated trails in the "Weltenburger Enge, Hirschberg und Altmühlleiten". The core area is to include essentially the area of the National Natural Monument and the entire right bank of the Danube of the existing nature reserve. In the core

area, any leaving of the freely accessible roads, paths or spots shown on the protected area maps is to be prohibited in the future. The traditional viewing points (view to Weltenburg Monastery, view to the Römerwand, Wieser Kreuz look-out point, and look-out point at the Befreiungshalle) are to remain accessible and be clearly signposted and marked in the future.

In order to protect the rock outcroppings, during the holiday season this year, as a “provisional” visitor guidance measure, information signs (Please don’t walk here! Please don’t walk on rock outcroppings and rough grasslands to protect endangered species and preserve sensitive vegetation! Thank you!) have been placed at critical spots and checked regularly. By means of visitor information measures carried out by the rangers (addressing visitors on the spot, distributing information leaflets, etc.) it is intended to discourage any leaving of paths and places at the highly frequented sites in the protected area.

6. put an emphasis on the natural succession of forests and the development of more natural forest reserves in the total area and avoid clear cuts of any size. Minimise commercial exploitation of forests and stop the use of heavy machinery in forestry management. Thoroughly assess any intervention in the forest around the Befreiungshalle and refrain from any forest management that cannot be considered ecological;

Since 2020, 1079 hectares of forest have been permanently placed under protection as natural forest, as “Beech Forests in the Southern Franconian Alb”, cf. announcement of the Bavarian State Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Forestry on the natural forests in Bavaria pursuant to Art. 12a para. 2 of the Bavarian Forest Act“ (BayWaldG) of 2 December 2020 (BayMBl. No. 695). The two Nature Reserves “Weltenburger Enge und Hirschberg” and “Altmühlleiten” are part of these forest areas which are not to be used for forest farming with immediate effect. (<https://www.stmelf.bayern.de/wald/lebensraum-wald/234954/index.php>)

For the forest areas administered by the Bavarian Administration of State-owned Palaces, Parks and Lakes, a management plan or concept for landscaping measures was commissioned, which was coordinated with the higher Nature Conservation Authority of the Government of Lower Bavaria in February 2021. Priority is being awarded to the preservation of monuments while considering nature conservation aspects as well.

7. recognise the need for professional, on-site supervision of the area, including fieldwork by professional and permanent staff, and envisage an increase in capacity of permanent supervision staff;

In addition to the female nature park ranger employed by the Altmühlal Nature Reserve, a further male ranger and female ranger - funded by REACT-EU of the European Social Fund – have been hired by the new administrative agency of the National Nature Monument since 01.10.2021 and 01.11.2021 respectively. The project manager for the National Natural Monument Weltenburger Enge took over the direction of the administrative agency on 01.11.2021. It is aimed to seek a successor for the project management position.

Since the summer of 2021, the lower Nature Conservation Agency has again commissioned a nature conservation ranger on a voluntary basis to oversee the area.

8. assess the technical possibilities and financial support for restoration of the Klösterl cultural monument.

Measures for preserving the important cultural monument are generally welcome.

The Klösterl is privately owned. Responsibility for maintenance of the monument lies with the owner.

The preservation of this cultural monument cannot be financed from nature conservation funds, for budgetary reasons alone.

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.

The administrative agency of the National Natural Monument, which is currently being set up, is, after completion of the procedure for merging the “Weltenburger Enge und Hirschberg” and “Altmühlleiten” protected areas, responsible for the National Natural Monument and the directly adjacent protected area.

Since 01.10.2021 and 01.11.2021 respectively, a male and female ranger - funded by REACT-EU of the European Social Fund up until the end of 2023 – have been employed by the new administrative agency of the

National Natural Monument. This funding results in further support through the so-called residual costs flat rate which can be used to finance the activities and actions of the rangers.

The project manager for the National Natural Monument Weltenburger Enge took over the direction of the administrative agency on 01.11.2021. It is planned to seek a successor for the project management position.

In the first half of 2022 the Government of Lower Bavaria is to rent property for the administrative agency in the immediate vicinity of the protected area. Incoming offers are currently being examined. A decision in favour of an offer is to be made as soon as possible.

In the current budget 2021 of the Bavarian State Ministry of the Environment and Consumer Protection (StMUV) a separate Chapter 1218 "National Natural Monument Weltenburger Enge" has been created for the setting up and for the duties of the new administrative agency. All in all, sufficient funds are available for these tasks. It is expected that the budget funds will be carried over to the coming year.

Difficulties have been encountered in finding a permanent solution for a property in which the administrative agency, including a nature experience and visitor centre, can be set up on a long term basis.

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.

The boundaries of the two existing nature reserves remain largely unchanged once the merger has taken place. Only a few adjustments involving small areas will be made to the boundaries: this mainly concerns the exclusion of the existing *Waldfriedhof* cemetery area of the town Kelheim and small, mostly technical boundary corrections for the adaption to field boundaries.

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.

Owing to the Covid pandemic, the guided tours and events of the annual Weltenburger Enge programme were cancelled up to the end of May. Events from June onwards were held with a limited number of participants. The interest in guided hikes/walks was very high again.

Successful broods of peregrine falcons, eagle owls and jackdaws were confirmed in the area within the framework of the rock breeding monitoring.

In October 2021 the Bavarian Environment Agency (LfU) carried out stocking of zingel at the gravel bank near the Weltenburg Monastery. The stocking was with about 14 000 fish that were bred and reared in a hatchery. In order to be able to stabilise the stock in coming years, the stocking measure is to be continued for about 5 years. The success of the measure will be followed up via monitoring on the part of the LfU.

The Water Management Agency of Landshut updated the signposting of the boat landing points (left bank of the Danube) after consultation with the area warden and the tourism association of the district of Kelheim.

The high leisure/usage pressure on and along the Danube continues. Impacts can still be seen in all areas of the protection area. During particularly busy times, additional nature conservation rangers (volunteers of the lower Nature Conservation Agency) were out giving advice and providing information on the protected area. Inspections were carried out by the water police. Verifiable violations were reported to the authorities.

This year, water permits for *Zillenfahrten* (barge trips) in the area of the nature reserve were renewed. A nature conservation association has filed a lawsuit against these decisions.

The permit or nature conservation exemption for the Kelheim passenger shipping is currently being renewed. To this end, coordination talks have been held with the parties involved.

Applications have also been made for new water permits for raft trips on the Danube as far as Stausacker. The raft landing stage at Stausacker is located in the Weltenburger Enge Nature Reserve.

The climbing concept is currently being revised.

The long dry periods of recent years have caused noticeable damage to beech forests, especially on the south-facing slopes of the European Diploma area. This meant that traffic safety measures had to be commissioned by the Bavarian State Forest Administration in summer 2021, in the area of the Klösterl. The entire measure was accompanied by a species protection expert. A species protection exemption was granted for the work.

During the flood events in July and September 2021 passenger shipping was suspended.

On 26 and 27 August 2021 it was possible for Mr. Brunner, as representative of the Council of Europe, to carry out the midterm Visitation – which had been postponed in 2020 due to Covid.

In the area of the access road to the Befreiungshalle, small areas of rock had to be cleared in mid-October (traffic safety measure).

In the autumn of 2021 the tree trunks left from the felling measure in 2019/2020 were removed.

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

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