

**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 2022

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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Management of the nature reserve:

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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.
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.

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 Weltenburg 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;

The merger of the nature reserves "Weltenburger Enge" and "Hirschberg und Altmühlleiten" has now been completed with the coming into force of the new Nature Reserve Ordinance "Weltenburger Enge, Hirschberg und Altmühlleiten" on 05.11.2022 - (see Condition 2). According to § 4 par. 2 no. 4 it is now forbidden to camp, stay overnight or make fires in the entire area. Moreover, in the newly introduced core area of the nature reserve, a rule of keeping to roads and tracks will apply in the future according to § 4 par. 3. Only areas in the core area that are explicitly marked on the maps appended to the Ordinance may be entered. This means, among other things, that walking is prohibited on the right bank between the Weltenburg landing place and river kilometre 2416, and also on further parts of the left bank. As it was intended ever since work on the new Nature Reserve Ordinance started, to include the contents of this condition in the new Ordinance, an expert opinion on this issue was not commissioned. The condition as formulated by the Council of Europe has thus been met in full.

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;

The merger of the nature reserves "Weltenburger Enge" and "Hirschberg und Altmühlleiten" to form the Nature Reserve "Weltenburger Enge, Hirschberg und Altmühlleiten" has been completed and the new Nature Reserve Ordinance came into force on November 5, 2022. Essentially, the respective stricter regulations were extended to cover the entire area and reworded where necessary. The condition as formulated by the Council of Europe is thus fulfilled.

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;

The Nature Reserve Ordinance, which has been in force since 5.11.2022, also explicitly indicates, in addition to a core area with a rule of keeping to roads and tracks (see above), the roads and tracks suitable for cycling in the maps appended to the said Ordinance. Accordingly, walking on the southern end of the Celtic wall which is inside the core area, is prohibited. The entire length of the Celtic wall is also marked as unsuitable for cycling. On this basis, in the spring of 2023 there is to be a channelling of visitors with prohibition and information signs, as well as barriers that prevent bicycles from entering. These measures on the Celtic wall will be implemented in agreement with the responsible district archaeologist at the Landratsamt Kehlheim (Kelheim County Chief Executive Office). The success of the measures will be monitored in the coming years by the district archaeology department and the administrative agency. The condition as formulated by the Council of Europe is thus fulfilled.

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;

See also Condition 2. Notification and application by Mr. Seidenschwarz to the Council of Europe

The formal extension of the European Diploma for the new Nature Reserve "Weltenburger Enge, Hirschberg und Altmühlleiten" to cover 934 hectares was applied for by e-mail dated 07.12.2022. In addition to the Natura 2000 management plan, a comprehensive Ecological Development Concept for the Danube from 2016 is already on file, which we still consider to be well-founded. We therefore do not consider the preparation of a further general management plan to be a pressing issue at this time. The leaflets on the nature reserve and on hiking in the nature reserve already relate to the entire 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;

The FFH compatibility assessment commissioned by the shipping companies and carried out by "ezb - TB Zauner GmbH", dated December 2020, has been submitted and has been reviewed by the authorities in charge - see the 2020 Report. The assessment for the vessel "MS Renate" (with jet propulsion) has not yet been completed. Further studies on the development of stocks of individual fish species will be carried out, irrespective of the shipping issue, by the Bavarian Environment Agency in cooperation with the fisheries, and can thus be taken into account for the continued management of the area, if required.

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;

Currently, all publications such as brochures, leaflets, information boards and signs in the protected area are being revised by the administrative agency at the Regional Government of Lower Bavaria, which is currently being set up, and will be gradually replaced in the course of 2023. Information on the European Diploma is being added.

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

According to § 4 par. 2 no. 1 of the new Nature Reserve Ordinance, no further cycle routes or mountain bike trails will be tolerated other than the trails designated as suitable for cycling. Controls will be carried out by the rangers on site. At critical points, attention is to be drawn to these prohibitions by way of signs or barriers. Moreover, digital guidance is to be implemented by the digital ranger by way of removing trails in various apps and maps, as well as in social media. It is also to be expected that the mountain bike guidance concept pursued by the town of Kelheim in the county district, will lead to a redirection to other less sensitive areas.

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;

Due to the designated core area of the nature reserve and the associated rule of keeping to roads and tracks, only areas that can be considered official viewing points may be entered. Entering most of the rock outcroppings will thus be prohibited in the future. The viewing points to be designated are to be secured by erecting barriers and fences. The protection of the rock outcroppings will, for the time being, be maintained using the existing information boards and by the rangers addressing the visitors directly. Information is to be made available on sensitive rock outcroppings by way of information boards and access restriction signs which have been updated for the nature reserve and also by digital means, and access is to be regulated using prohibition signs and also fences, where necessary.

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;

Commercial exploitation of the state forests in the area of the nature reserve is prohibited on the one hand by the new Nature Reserve Ordinance and is only permitted in private forests under certain restrictions. Even when they are natural forests the state forest areas are classified according to the Bavarian Forest Act as wilding areas.

In private forests non-exploitation is eligible for financial support through the Bavarian Contact-Based Conservation Programme for forests. For forest areas managed by the Bavarian Administration of State-owned Palaces and Lakes, a management concept for landscaping measures was commissioned and agreed on with the higher Nature Conservation Authority of the Government of Lower Bavaria in February 2021. Priority is awarded to the preservation of monuments while, at the same time, giving attention to nature conservation aspects.

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;

At present, 5 people are already working for the administrative agency which is currently being set up. In particular, 2 rangers are regularly active in the reserve informing visitors and overseeing the observation of the Nature Reserve Ordinance.

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. The responsibility for maintenance of the monument lies with the owner.

- 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.

After completion of the procedure for merging the protected areas "Weltenburger Enge und Hirschberg" and "Altmühlleiten", the administrative agency of the National Natural Monument, which is currently being set up, is responsible for the National Natural Monument and related tasks concerning the directly adjoining nature reserve. So far the positions of director of the administrative agency and head of the environmental education department have been staffed. Additional positions are planned. In October 2022 it was possible to find temporary premises for the offices in Kelheim, which will be available until July 2023. A decision is to be made by July 2023 on other medium and long-term premises for the administration.

Starting from the annual report 2022, the director of the administrative agency of the National Natural Monument, Mr. Hartmut Friedl (Government of Lower Bavaria) takes over the role of contact partner for the European Diploma area from the Landratsamt Kelheim.

In March 2022, the very experienced nature reserve manager, Franziska Jäger, moved to the administrative agency of the National Natural Monument where she has become head of the environmental education unit. This will ensure the continuation of the environmental education work which has been very successful and can be developed further. It will also be possible for her to pass on her experience as area manager to the rangers at the administrative agency.

In the current 2022 budget of the Bavarian State Ministry of the Environment and Consumer Protection (StMUV), a separate chapter 1218 "Weltenburger Enge National Natural Monument" for setting up the new administrative agency and for its duties has been created and adequately funded.

At the Kelheim Forestry Authority, the district forester responsible for the area has changed. The new contact person is Richard Vogel.

- 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 have remained largely unchanged after the merger. Only a few minor adjustments involving small areas have been made to the boundaries. These mainly concern the exclusion of the existing Waldfriedhof cemetery area of the town of Kelheim and small, mostly technical boundary corrections for the adaptation to field boundaries.

By application of 07.12.2022 the StMUV has requested the extension of the European Diploma to the entire area of the merged nature reserve. A map of the updated area can be found in the appendix to the new Nature Reserve Ordinance (see attachment).

- 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 spring of 2022, however, since April 2022 they could be carried out on a largely normal scale. For the first time, the event programme was drawn up in cooperation between the district of Kelheim (Landschaftspflegeverband VöF e.V (landscape conservation association)) and the Government of Lower Bavaria (administrative agency of the National Natural Monument). The interest in guided hikes and nature experience was very high.

Successful broods of peregrine falcons and jackdaws were confirmed in the area within the scope of rock breeding monitoring. No breeding success could be proven for the eagle owl.

In October 2021 the Bavarian Environment Agency (LfU) carried out stocking of zingel at the gravel bank near the Weltenburg Monastery. The stocking involved 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. In 2022, stocking was carried out at several places on the Danube upstream of the protected area. The success of the measure is being followed up via monitoring on the part of the LfU.

Within the framework of studies carried out in key reserves, in 2022 the Bayerische Landesanstalt für Wald und Forstwirtschaft (Bavarian State Institute of Forestry) carried out a species survey and mapping of species from various groups of species (vegetation, wood fungi, birds, snails, ground beetles and xylobiont beetles) in the protected area,.

High leisure/usage pressure on and along the Danube continues. Apart from the rangers who have been active since Oct. 2021, additional nature conservation wardens (volunteers from the lower Nature Conservation Authority) were also out in action giving advice and providing information on the protected area at particularly busy times for visitors. Controls were carried out by the water police. Verifiable violations were reported to the authorities.

During the low water conditions in July and August 2022 passenger shipping was suspended.

New water permits were also issued in May 2022 for raft trips on the Danube up to Stauacker. These are valid until the end of 2026. The raft landing place at Stauacker is located in the Weltenburger Enge Nature Reserve. A complaint has been filed against these decisions on behalf of the Ziegler fishery.

The climbing concept is currently being revised, among other things to include the framework conditions imposed by the new Nature Reserve Ordinance.

The long dry phases of recent years have led to visible damage to the beech forests, especially on the south-facing slopes of the European Diploma area. As a consequence, in March 2022 traffic safety measures had to be commissioned by the Bavarian State Forest Administration in the area of Klostertalstrasse, along the Harthofsteig, at the access to the Lange Wand, as well as along the entire section between the Wipfelsfurt and Kelheim. The works were accompanied by a species protection expert. A species protection exemption was granted for these works.

In March 2022, in the area of the access road to the Befreiungshalle, rocks had to be cleared again and secured (traffic safety measure). As part of the remediation work, a detour route through the protected area was required for employees and for hourly shuttle buses for visitors to the Befreiungshalle.

In August, traffic safety measures were carried out along the Danube by the Landshut Water Management Administration.

In September 2022, the Stadwerke Kelheim (public utility corporation) rerouted the overhead power lines to underground lines up to the "Klösterl". This required an exemption from the prohibitions laid out in the ordinances of the National Natural Monument and the Nature Reserve.

In July and September, events (triathlon, canoe races) were carried out by the Canoe Club Kelheim in the protected area in agreement with the lower and higher Nature Conservation Authorities.

In March 2022, the floating pontoons at the landing place in Weltenburg were replaced by Steibl Personenschiffahrt Kelheim GmbH.

In July, the Kelheim Fire Department conducted a practice exercise on a forest fire above the Lange Wand.

In the exhibition on the Weltenburger Enge at the monastery in Weltenburg, exhibits have been replaced and rehabilitation works carried out.

The rock outcropping monitoring at permanent monitoring sites was continued by Dipl. Biol. C. Linhard on behalf of the Landschaftspflegeverband Kelheim VöF e.V., which was financed by the Government of Lower Bavaria.

In October 2022, extensive maintenance work to preserve the rock cropping vegetation was commissioned by the Landschaftspflegeverband Kelheim VöF e.V. and financed by the Government of Lower Bavaria.

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