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**T-PVS/DE (2016) 8**

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**GROUP OF SPECIALISTS ON THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA FOR PROTECTED AREAS**

7 March 2016  
Strasbourg, Palais de l'Europe, Room 11

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**DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE RENEWAL  
OF THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA FOR PROTECTED AREAS  
TO BIALOWIEŻA NATIONAL PARK (POLAND)**

*Document prepared by the Directorate  
of Democratic Governance*

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## **Draft Resolution on the renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas awarded to Białowieża National Park (Poland)**

### **CM Documents**

CM(2016)

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...Meeting, ....2016  
Sustainable Development

### **Standing Committee to the Bern Convention Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas (T-PVS/DE)**

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#### **Draft Resolution CM/ResDip(2016) ... on the renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas awarded to Białowieża National Park (Poland)**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on ... 2016 at the ... meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.a of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Having regard to Resolution (65) 6 instituting the European Diploma, as amended by Resolution (98) 29 on the Regulations for the European Diploma for Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution (97) 20 awarding the European Diploma to Białowieża National Park;

Having regard to Resolution ResDIP(2002) 3 on the renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas awarded to Białowieża National Park;

Taking into consideration the expert's report drafted following an on-the-spot appraisal on 16-18 September 2015, as recommended by the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas at its meeting on 13 March 2015, and presented at the meeting of the Group of Specialists on 7 March 2016;

Renews the European Diploma for Protected Areas awarded to Białowieża National Park until ... 2026;

Attaches the following conditions to the renewal:

1. Draw up a peer-reviewed 20-year management plan for Białowieża National Park by the end of 2017 in coordination with the planned Natura 2000 management plan for the whole area of the Białowieża forest;
2. Continue the close cooperation between the forest and conservation authorities in view of achieving coherent and coordinated management of the whole forest area, which will permit the maintenance and improvement of the ecological characteristics of the Białowieża forest, including in particular present and future old growth stands, which shall be excluded from harvesting, including salvage logging and sanitary felling;
3. Wildlife, including in particular the bison population of the Białowieża forest, but also populations of other larger wide-ranging animals like wolves, is managed by Białowieża National Park.

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

1. The management of the whole Natura 2000 zone should focus on forest conservation;
2. Existing forestry policy and practices be reviewed with a view to maximising biodiversity outside protected areas as well as by (1) maintaining the ban on cutting down old trees (more than 100 years old) and (2) significantly increasing the volume of dead wood by ceasing marketing wood from sanitation felling and protected reserves; all data with regard to the characteristics of trees felled within the Białowieża forest complex (species, age, amount of sanitation felling and commercial exploitation) be communicated to the Council of Europe every year and analysed in order to improve conservation measures;
3. Consider proposing the whole area of Natura 2000 as a European Diploma area, where the National Park and the old-growth stands would receive a high level of protection and the rest of the forest area and the adjacent pastures and meadows would play the role of a large buffer zone including functional corridors between the National Park and nature reserves outside the National Park, as this would permit a coherent management of the whole area;
4. Town planning be critically reviewed with a view to preventing the fragmentation and disappearance of buffer zones;
5. Tourist access to fully protected areas be kept under control; kayaking and other aquatic leisure activities on the Narewka and Hwoźna rivers should remain strictly prohibited;
6. Education and training activities be further stepped up so as to support the redistribution of jobs, with a shift away from the forestry sector towards the conservation and sustainable eco-tourism sector, thereby increasing the number of interesting local jobs for young people;
7. Seek contacts with relevant Belarus authorities with the aim of exploring ways and means to: (a) avoid further depletion of the water table thus ensuring the protection of the forest from drought; (b) allow animal dispersion and migration across the border; and (c) improve cooperation in the conservation, science and tourism sectors.