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PE-S-DE (2008) 18

**Group of Specialists
European Diploma of Protected Areas
PE-S-DE**

17-18 March 2008
Room 14, Palais de l'Europe, Strasbourg

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Report

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the Directorate of Culture and
Cultural and Natural Heritage*

The Group of Specialists on the European Diploma of Protected Areas met in Strasbourg on 17 and 18 March 2008.

The competent Committee is invited to :

1. Take note of the meeting report;
2. Consider, with a view to forwarding them to the Committee of Ministers for adoption:
 - The draft Resolution on the award of the European Diploma of Protected Areas to Retezat National Park (Romania) Appendix III
 - The draft Resolutions on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas for the following areas:

Appendix IV	Poloniny National Park (Slovakia)
Appendix V	Bieszczady National Park (Poland)
Appendix VI	Thayatal National Park (Austria)
Appendix VII	Matsalu National Park (Estonia)
Appendix VIII	Tihany Peninsula (Hungary)
Appendix IX	Germano-Luxembourg Nature Park (Germany/Luxembourg)
Appendix X	Kostomuksha Strict Nature Reserve (Russian Federation)
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Appendix XII	Weltenberger Enge Nature Reserve (Germany)
Appendix XIII	Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve (United Kingdom)
Appendix XIV	Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park (Spain)
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Appendix XVIII	Mercantour National Park (France)
Appendix XIX	Maritime Alps Nature Park (Italy)
Appendix XX	Dobrocsky National Nature Reserve (Slovakia)

3. Consider, with a view to forwarding them to the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention for follow-up:
 - The draft Resolutions on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas to Wollmatinger Ried-Untersee-Gnadensee Nature Reserve (Germany) (Appendix XXI)
 - The draft Resolutions on the non-renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas for:
 - Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (Bélarus) (Appendix XXII)
 - Bialowieza National Park (Poland) (Appendix XXIII)

1. Opening of the meeting

The meeting was opened on Monday 17 March by Mr Olivier Biber, Chair of the Group of Specialists, who welcomed the participants, as listed in Appendix I. He shortly reminded the participants what is the European Diploma and its mechanisms, and presented the different items on the agenda.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The Group adopted the draft agenda, as set out in Appendix II. Considering the many items to be discussed the first day of the meeting, the agenda was modified during the meeting : the renewals not subject to an on-the-spot appraisal have been examined by the Group of Specialists the second day of the meeting.

3. Information about the Committee of Ministers' decisions

Mr Eladio Fernandez-Galiano, Head of the Biological Diversity Unit, informed the Group of the changes occurred since the last meeting of the Group of Specialists, in particular the adoption by the Committee of Ministers of the revised regulations of the European Diploma adopted on 20 February 2008 (Resolution ResDip (2008)1) : the main changes concern the Committee responsible for the activities of the European Diploma – which is now the Bern Convention Standing Committee – and the periodicity of the European Diploma (10 years instead of 5 years previously).

4. Application for the European Diploma of Protected Areas: presentation of the candidature, discussion and proposals to the Bern Convention Standing Committee:

Introducing the presentation, the Chair congratulated the park management on the quality of its application file.

a) Central Balkan National Park (Bulgaria) [PE-S-DE (2008) 2 et 2bis]

The application had been sent to the secretariat on 23 March 2007 by the park director, Ms Nela Ratchevitz, with a covering letter from the Bulgarian Ministry for Environment and Water.

The presentation focused on the park's representativeness in terms of biodiversity at European level as well as on tourism and the park's relations with local communities. The park's various fields of action were likewise explained.

The park representative also mentioned the various threats and problems which the park faced, some of which were natural (such as climate change) and some of which were man-made (such as forest fires, illegal hunting and soil erosion).

The group raised questions on the problems to be dealt with, including:

- grazing;
- pressure from tourism;
- development of leisure facilities;
- harvesting and collection of small fruit, mushrooms and berries;
- firefighting and firefighting techniques (the local fire plan)

The group's questions were concerned with pressure from tourism, the resources available to the park in its fields of action, the park's priorities for the future (in terms of management and Natura 2000), and what measures the park was planning to counter any threats to the area.

The question of the park management plan (2000-2010) was also raised as it was shortly to elapse. How far had the park got in preparing the future management plan?

The secretariat pointed out that outstanding natural features, appropriate measures protecting them and an exemplary park-management plan were all relevant for diploma award purposes.

The question of felling and sanitation cutting would have to be borne in mind and looked into by the expert when he made his on-site appraisal.

The secretariat had been sent the full management plan, the relevant legislation and regulations and maps and photographs of the park, and these would be made available to the specialist appointed to make the on-the-spot appraisal.

The application, Bulgaria's first, had the official backing of the Bulgarian Ministry for Environment and Water.

In the light of the information presented the group declared the application admissible and asked for an independent on-the-spot assessment to be arranged, subject to the agreement of the country concerned and of the committee or its Bureau.

In particular, the on-the-spot visit would check on the area's importance and assess the impact of the felling and sanitation cutting carried out in the park.

5. Renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas to 18 Diploma zones.

5.1 Renewals following on-the-spot appraisals

a) Poloniny National Park (Slovakia) [PE-S-DE (2008) 3]

The expert, Mr Hervé Léthier (Switzerland), presented the results of his visit. The European Diploma had been awarded to the park in 1998 and renewed in 2003 because of its biological attributes and its landscape interest as it contained both forests and large areas of grassland in the centre. It was also home to Europe's large carnivores¹.

Stressing the park's European importance, he pinpointed a number of problems relating mainly to forest management and management of hunting. Although 80% of the park was forested, most of the forest was used for commercial purposes (pulp manufacturing) or forest products. As a result, there had been a decline in the number of old stands in favour of commercial wood (for which the maximum age limit was 110 years). In principle, clear-cutting was prohibited but during the on-site visit it had become clear that unauthorised felling had taken place.

The park managers had no control over hunting as it was the responsibility of the forestry office. This meant that it was difficult to measure and monitor the impact of hunting trends. The wolf was not strictly protected and so poaching of the species was on the increase.

The expert said that the park staff were motivated but lacked resources. There had been an increase in staff numbers but there was still no zoologist.

In addition, the park still did not have a management plan, which was the prime requirement for award of the European Diploma.

¹ Bear, wolf, lynx.

He presented his proposal, which, as an absolute requirement, set a one-year time limit for drawing up a management plan. The main emphasis of the suggested requirements was the need for the park to adopt clear ideas and a fresh approach to forestry and hunting management, the importance of setting up a network of interlinked protected areas (covering 5 to 6 % of the park's surface area) and the need to purchase private land.

Having heard the expert's proposals, the group raised the possibility of deferring its decision on renewal since the diploma requirements had not been met. The expert pointed out that the park's European importance was still clear and undeniable and that none of the species it contained was harmful. When the diploma was last renewed, no specific deadlines had been set, but they would be now.

The Chair said that award was conditional on the prerequisites for sound management being guaranteed. The secretariat endorsed that observation. The park authorities must be given a firm signal to introduce concrete measures calculated to improve the situation and protect the zone. Contact will be established with the Slovakian authorities to inform them of the proposals that had been adopted and encourage them to move in this direction.

After discussion it was decided to make it an absolute condition of award that the requirements be met within five years, otherwise the diploma would be withdrawn. The group asked to see a preliminary draft within two years.

The Group approved the expert's conclusions. It proposed that the competent Committee should recommend that the Committee of Ministers renew the European Diploma of Protected Areas. To that end, it sent it the draft Resolution set out in Appendix IV.

b) Bieszczady National Park (Poland) [PE-S-DE (2008) 4]

The expert, Mr Hervé L  thier (Switzerland), described the park's strong points (a total ban on hunting in the strictly protected zone, control of tourist movements) and also its weak points (the management plan was yet to be finalised, the strictly protected zones were separated and far apart).

The park representative said that the park set great store by the diploma and that a great effort would be made in the next two years to finalise the management plan. He also described some of the measures that were already planned by the Polish government to satisfy the requirements and the expert's recommendations.

The group questioned the expert on the reasons for the changes in the park's financial resources. Most of the park's budget came from programmes and projects, not from public funds, and this meant that there were certain structural weaknesses in the park's finances.

The Chair asked the expert about the intergovernmental agreement that had been requested the last time the diploma had been renewed. The expert said that co-operation was already working so there was no need to insist on a formal agreement.

The Group approved the expert's conclusions. It proposed that the competent Committee should recommend that the Committee of Ministers renew the European Diploma for five years, subject to one condition and a number of recommendations. To that end, it sent it the draft Resolution set out in Appendix V.

c) Thayatal National Park (Austria) [PE-S-DE (2008) 5]

The expert, Mr Daniel Daske (France), described the features of the park, which was continuous with the Czech Republic's Podiji national park.

He drew attention, among other things, to mapping of outstanding trees and to the Black Stork population.

The major problem was the Vranov dam, which was in Czech territory. Water releases from the dam, which caused variations in flow, daily affected the park. A study was in progress whose results were expected in 2008. There was also a problem of artificial sills on the river, which were due to the presence of unsightly mills.

The group recommended that the secretariat draft a warning letter to the Czech government urging that the Vranov dam issue be addressed and solutions put forward to limit the dam's adverse impact. The secretariat would also ask to be kept informed of the Czech experts' findings and the recommendations made. Any change in the situation could be examined the next time Podiji national park's diploma was due for renewal.

The Group approved the expert's conclusions. It proposed that the competent Committee should recommend that the Committee of Ministers renew the European Diploma of Protected Areas for five years. To that end, it send it the draft Resolution set out in Appendix VI.

d) Matsalu National Park (Estonia) [PE-S-DE (2007) 6]

The expert, Mr Joe Sultana, presented the findings of his visit, together with his draft resolution.

After discussion the park manager agreed to the expert's suggested text and the conditions imposed.

The Group approved the expert's conclusions. It proposed that the competent Committee should recommend that the Committee of Ministers renew the European Diploma of Protected Areas for five years. To that end, it sent it the draft Resolution set out in Appendix VII.

e) Tihany Peninsula (Hungary) [PE-S-DE (2008) 7]

After the presentation the park manager and the ministry representative expressed agreement with the findings of the on-the-spot expert appraisal.

The expert said that he unreservedly advised renewed award of the European Diploma, to which should be attached recommendations as to the few improvements to be made with regard to implementing the management plan and the indications of future action.

The Group approved the expert's conclusions. It proposed that the competent Committee should recommend that the Committee of Ministers renew the European Diploma of Protected Areas for five years. To that end, it sent it the draft Resolution set out in Appendix VIII.

f) Germano-Luxembourg Nature Park (Germany/Luxembourg) [PE-S-DE (2008) 8]

Mr Pierre Galland (Switzerland) began his presentation with a recap on the historical importance of the Germano-Luxembourg park, which had been one of the first parks in Europe based on cross-border co-operation. The park did not currently have a management plan but the present park management were committed to continued promotion of the park's pioneering approach. There is a need to adapt management structures to present-day conditions and re-establish communication and interaction between the two parks..

He went on to present the findings of his visit, which confirmed the progress made with regard, in particular, to windfarm impact, spread of the pearl mussel and work on facilitating passage up and down the River Our.

The main problem was the Vianden dam but the park had no powers in that connection.

The group, supported by the secretariat, talked of the difficulty of contacting the park managers, both on the German and the Luxembourg side. Contact persons should be clearly identified.

After the discussion the group of specialists suggested writing to Germany and Luxembourg encouraging them to step up their cooperation and develop synergy. Updates on developments should be provided in the annual reports.

The Group approved the expert's conclusions. It proposed that the competent Committee should recommend that the Committee of Ministers renew the European Diploma of Protected Areas for five years. To that end, it sent it the draft Resolution set out in Appendix IX.

g) Kostomuksha Strict Nature Reserve (Russian Federation) [PE-S-DE (2008) 9]

Ms Jadwiga Sienkiewicz (Poland) presented the findings of her visit and confirmed the park's outstanding value from the natural and cultural heritage standpoint.

At present the management plan was not a consolidated document, though that prime requirement was about to be met, subject to Finnish agreement and the necessary funding as the management plan came under cross-border co-operation between Russia and Finland. The framework for transfrontier co-operation and the border-crossing arrangements were still to be established. Progress had been made in the education and information spheres. A new visitor centre was being set up.

In conclusion, there had been notable efforts since the last on the-the-spot appraisal and she confirmed that the park management had done its utmost to meet the requirements and recommendations attaching to the previous award renewal.

In the light of the expert's very full report the group concluded that there had been substantial progress which was very encouraging for the future.

The Group approved the expert's conclusions. It proposed that the competent Committee should recommend that the Committee of Ministers renew the European Diploma of Protected Areas for five years. To that end, it sent it the draft Resolution set out in Appendix X.

**h) Tsentralno-Chernozemny Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation)
[PE-S-DE (2008) 10]**

Ms Jadwiga Sienkiewicz (Poland) presented the findings of her visit. She confirmed the European importance of the reserve, particularly the steppe, and its great value in terms of biodiversity.

She also drew attention to the main threats to the area: its remoteness and consequent isolation, poaching, invasive species, and fire.

She described the reserve's activities and sources of revenue. Notable among such sources was the Kurchatov nuclear power plant.

The group raised questions about the preservation of the steppe and the advisability of reintroducing the saiga antelope.

After discussion the group decided to confine itself to recommendations and not to make a condition of finance for operating the park properly.

The Group approved the expert's conclusions. It proposed that the competent Committee should recommend that the Committee of Ministers renew the European Diploma of Protected Areas for five years. To that end, it sent it the draft Resolution set out in Appendix XI.

Following the presentations, the Chair pointed out that the experts' oral accounts should not just repeat what was said in the written reports received by the Group's members before the meeting but expand on them or elaborate on particular points to be discussed.

The Group thanked the representatives of both parks for attending the meeting and invited them to present a report to the next meeting explaining subsequent developments.

5.2 Renewals not subject to an on-the-spot appraisal [PE-S-DE (2008) 12]

The Secretariat representative presented the draft Resolutions prepared in consultation with site managers on the basis of their latest appraisals and annual reports.

Having heard the Secretariat's explanations regarding the content of the drafts and comments from the areas' managers, the Group was in favour of renewing the European Diplomas awarded to the following areas:

Weltenburger Enge Nature Reserve (Germany)
 Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve (United Kingdom)
 Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park (Spain)
 Store Mosse National Park (Sweden)
 Bullerö and Långvisskär Nature Reserves (Sweden)
 Montecristo Island Nature Reserve (Italy)
 Mercantour National Park (France)
 Maritime Alps Nature Park (Italy)
 Dobročský National Nature Reserve (Slovakia)

To that end, it sent the competent Committee the draft Resolutions set out in Appendices XII–XX.

The group decided that an on-the-spot visit was necessary for the Wollmatinger Ried-Untersee-Gnadensee Nature Reserve (Germany) on account of the western bypass (B33) construction project to assure that direct threat to the reserve will be avoided. The group recommended organising a visit in the next few months and presenting the findings specifically relevant to award renewal at the next meeting of the Group of Specialists.

To that end, it sent the competent Committee the draft Resolution set out in Appendices XXI.

6. Candidature and 2007 renewals to be re-examined, at the request of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention:

6.1 Candidature of Retezat National Park (Romania) [PE-S-DE (2007) 2]

Mr Mircea Verghelet reported on progress since the on-the-spot visit, in particular with regard to the prerequisites which had been set for a diploma award when the application had been examined in 2007.

At the group's request the expert commented on the efforts which had been made. The park management was congratulated on the great progress achieved in the space of a year. The prerequisites had been met but the expert advised retaining the recommendations relating in particular to the road and hydroelectricity.

The Group approved the expert's conclusions. It proposed that the competent Committee should recommend that the Committee of Ministers award the European Diploma and, to that end, send it the draft resolution set out in Appendix III.

6.2 Renewal of Belovezskaya Pushcha National Park (Belarus)

The park representatives reported on the current situation and the resources made available for meeting the requirement concerning the management plan.

After thanking the park representatives for attending the meeting, the expert pointed out that the document which they had submitted was a summary of the management plan rather than the outcome of an independent peer revision as requested.

He requested that a detailed programme be submitted for implementing the management plan. An on-the-spot check would be necessary. In conclusion he recommended non-renewal of the European Diploma award on account of the inadequacy of the guarantees offered by Belarus.

After hearing the exchange of views between the group of specialists, the secretariat and the park representatives, the group decided to inform the Bureau that monitoring of the area was necessary and that the diploma award should not be renewed until the following condition had been met:

- draw up and implement a 10-year management plan including a peer study of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha national park and adjacent zones of internationally recognised natural importance, regard being had, among other things, to the conclusions of the Forest of Hope appeal.

As soon as that condition had been met, Belarus should inform the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention or its Bureau. The secretariat undertook to work closely with the park representatives on finalising the management plan.

The Group, having taken note of discussions and propositions from different sides, decided to send to the competent Committee the draft resolution set out in Appendix XXII and recommend that the European Diploma should not be renewed until the conditions are completed.

6.3 Renewal of Bialowieza National Park (Poland)

Further to the park representative's remarks the expert said that, in the light of the decision concerning Belarus, conditional non-renewal was also advisable in the present case as strong encouragement to the Polish government to complete finalisation of the management plan. The area was threatened by ill-advised forestry practices which had serious implications for the future. A strong signal to the Polish government was necessary.

The group pointed out that there had recently been a change of government in Poland and that an eye should be kept on how much support the new government gave to the park.

After discussion the group recommended that the secretariat write to request European Union support for Poland for the measures which effective, long-term management of the area required.

The Group, having taken note of discussions and propositions from different sides, decided to send to the competent Committee the draft resolution set out in Appendix XXIII and recommend that the European Diploma should not be renewed until the conditions are completed.

7. Annual reports

The secretariat had received 67 annual reports. The two annual reports missing at the meeting date were those for Port-Cros national park (France) and Fair Isle (United Kingdom). Both reports were expected in the next few days and had missed the deadline because of organisational changes at both areas.

The secretariat representative listed the areas requiring close monitoring:

– Boschplaat nature reserve: the annual report mentioned increased use of motor vehicles on the beach and difficulty in limiting their impact. It was decided that the secretariat would contact the coordinator responsible for the diploma areas in the Netherlands to arrange for a check on the situation;

– Siebengebirge nature reserve: following several letters received from a Königswinter resident, Mr Jörg Pauly, concerning development and renovation work inside the protected area, the secretariat had contacted the reserve management, which had responded by providing copious documentation explaining the projects which were under way. Mr Oliver Schall, who had likewise contacted the management, explained that currently work to convert the reserve into a national park is going on. This project carried out in accordance with the association in charge of managing the reserve would have the positive result of improving the protected area and overall enhancement of the award-winning site. The project was being conducted within the required legal framework and public consultations had been held. Mr Pauly was one of the project's opponents.

The group of specialists concluded that the area should not be regarded as under threat. The secretariat would inform Mr Pauly of the group's conclusion. In particular reconstruction works at Kloster Heisterbach are no reason of concern, in the contrary they will contribute to enhance the importance of this historical and cultural site. However, Mr Schall also announced that the association which managed the reserve wished to have the secretariat's support concerning a plan to build a telecommunications tower inside the reserve. It was agreed that the secretariat would draft a letter stating that an alternative outside the European Diploma area should be selected as location for the mast;

– the Wachau protected landscape: the secretariat had received a letter from the Arbeitskreis Wachau association in charge of the area, informing it of a project to use the Danube as a training area for heavy motor equipment. As the area was one of those due for award renewal in 2009, it was agreed that the secretariat would arrange to be sent up-to-date information on the project and make sure that the project was not a major threat;

– the Bile Karpaty / White Carpathians protected landscape: the annual report referred to serious problems preventing the management from meeting the recommendations for the European Diploma. The area was one of those due for award renewal in 2010. As time was rather short, it was suggested that the secretariat arrange an on-the-spot visit preliminary to renewal, subject to approval by the group of specialists at its next meeting (2009).

8. Renewals due in 2009

In accordance with the procedure for simplifying visits prior to renewal and bearing in mind the information provided in those reports that were available, the Group discussed and approved the Secretariat's proposals for on-the-spot appraisals to be organised at the following sites in 2008:

- Cretan White Mountains National Park (Greece)
- Wurzacher Ried Nature Reserve (Germany)

- Teide National Park (Spain)
- Oka National Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation) / Teberda National Reserve (Russian Federation)
- “De Oostvaardersplassen” Nature Reserve (Netherlands)
- Triglav National Park (Slovenia)
- Naardermeer Nature Reserve (Netherlands)

It was decided that no on-the-spot appraisals will be organised for the following areas:

- Minsmere Nature Reserve (United Kingdom)
- Purbeck Heritage Coast (United Kingdom)
- Wachau Protected Landscape (Austria)

9. Other business

The Chair noted that not all the group members were present (the first day: 4 members out of 6, the second day: 3 members out of 6) and expressed deep regret at this. The group questioned how areas could be monitored in the context of the new rules, under which diplomas would be renewed every ten years. In the context of automatic renewal in particular, ways would have to be found to keep in contact with park managers and pay heed to their concerns. The Chair asked for the next meeting agenda to contain an item on the arrangements for applying the new rules.

The group also discussed the follow-up to the annual reports by the park managers and questioned whether the secretariat would be able to respond to all the questions they raised. Would it not be preferable to require reports to be sent every two years?

The secretariat announced a voluntary contribution from Switzerland for the European Diploma work. The contribution would be used, in part, to help Belarus finalise the management plan for the Belovezhskaya Pushcha national park. The secretariat would report in due course on activities carried out with the help of the contribution.

The secretariat also announced that a collaborative platform (Internet site) was shortly to be launched in order to facilitate communications between the secretariat and the award-winning areas and promote communication within the network of areas. The site, access to which would be subject to authentication, would allow consultation of documents and offer a shared diary and a discussion forum. The group warmly welcomed the announcement.

The secretariat gave an update on current applications.

10. Date of the next meeting

The secretariat would announce in due course the date of the next meeting, to take place in 2009. The group asked to be informed of the selected date as soon as possible.

Appendix I**SPECIALISTS / SPECIALISTES****FINLAND / FINLANDE *apologies / excusée***

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Appendix II

Agenda

MONDAY 17 MARCH

CANDIDATURE AND 2008 RENEWALS

1. Opening of the meeting by the Secretariat.
2. Adoption of the agenda [Draft agenda PE-S-DE (2008) 1] E/F
3. Information on the decisions of the Committee of Ministers having an impact on the European Diploma
4. Application for the European Diploma of Protected Areas:
 - Central Balkan National Park (Bulgaria) [PE-S-DE (2008) 2] E
5. Renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas to 18 awarded areas: [PE-S-DE (2008) 11] E/F
 - 5.1 Areas in which an on-the-spot appraisal has been carried out: presentation of appraisal reports, discussion and proposals to the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention:
 - Poloniny National Park (Slovakia) [PE-S-DE (2008) 3] E/F
 - Bieszczady National Park (Poland) [PE-S-DE (2008) 4] E/F
 - Thayatal National Park (Austria) [PE-S-DE (2008) 5] E/F
 - Matsalu National Park (Estonia) [PE-S-DE (2008) 6] E
 - Tihany Peninsula (Hungary) [PE-S-DE (2008) 7] E
 - Germano-Luxembourg Nature Park (Germany/Luxembourg) [PE-S-DE (2008) 8] F
 - Kostomuksha Strict Nature Reserve (Russian Federation) [PE-S-DE (2008) 9] E
 - Tsentralno-Chernozemny Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation) [PE-S-DE (2008) 10] E
 - 5.2 Zones in which no on-the-spot appraisal has been carried out: presentation by the Secretariat of the Draft Resolutions, discussion and proposals to the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention [PE-S-DE (2008) 12] E/F
 - Wollmatinger Ried-Untersee-Gnadensee Nature Reserve (Germany)
 - Weltenburger Enge Nature Reserve (Germany)
 - Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve (United Kingdom)
 - Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park (Spain)
 - Store Mosse National Park (Sweden)
 - Bullerö and Långvissskär Nature Reserves (Sweden)
 - Montecristo Island Nature Reserve (Italy)
 - Mercantour National Park (France)

- Maritime Alps Nature Park (Italy)
 - Dobročský National Nature Reserve (Slovakia)
6. Candidature and 2007 renewals to be re-examined, at the request of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention:
- Candidature of Retezat National Park (Romania)
[PE-S-DE (2007) 2] E
 - Renewal of Białowieża National Park (Poland)
[PE-S-DE (2007) 6] and annual report 2007 E
 - Renewal of Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (Belarus)
[PE-S-DE (2007) 5] and annual report 2007 E

TUESDAY 18 MARCH

ANNUAL REPORTS AND 2008 ACTIVITIES

1. Annual reports:
- overview of annual reports and
 - discussion of reports needing special attention [PE-S-DE (2008) 13] bil.
2. Renewals foreseen in 2008 and proposals of the Secretariat concerning on-the-spot appraisals to be undertaken: [PE-S-DE (2008) 14] bil.
- Cretan White Mountains National Park (Greece)
 - Minsmere Nature Reserve (United Kingdom)
 - Purbeck Heritage Coast (United Kingdom)
 - Wurzacher Ried Nature Reserve (Germany)
 - Teide National Park (Spain)
 - Wachau Protected Landscape (Austria)
 - Oka National Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation)
 - Teberda National Reserve (Russian Federation)
 - “De Oostvaardersplassen” Nature Reserve (Netherlands)
 - Triglav National Park (Slovenia)
 - Naardermeer Nature Reserve (Netherlands)

3. 2008 Activities

4. Date of the next meeting

Appendix III

**Draft Resolution ResDip(2008)...
on the award of the European Diploma of Protected Areas
to the Retezat National Park (Romania)**

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 ResDip(2008)1 on the revised Regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention;

Taking into consideration the expert's report presented at the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma of Protected Areas (PE-S-DE(2007)2) on 8 and 9 February 2007 and the decision of the Group of Specialists concerning the park's candidature on 17 March 2008;

Having noted the agreement of the Government of Romania;

After deliberation,

Solemnly awards the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Retezat National Park, recognising the European significance of the park which has remarkable landscapes, very diverse habitats and a high biodiversity, large areas of very interesting and significant virgin or semi-virgin forests of different types, long-term protection, limited existing impacts, limited threats from outside and a good management plan and organisation;

Places the aforesaid area under the patronage of the Council of Europe until 2013;

Attaches the following condition to the award:

– ensure that no further hydro-power project will take place in the park and minimise the impact of the two projects under way;

Attaches the following recommendations to the award:

1. reduce the impact of the road under construction on the south-eastern boundary of the park;
2. further increase information on the park and its assets in the visitor centres as well as in the park itself;
3. be more involved in spatial planning to encourage a better integration of new buildings in the vicinity of the park;
4. find ways of continuing to support regional development, for example along the lines of the current small grant programme;
5. pursue and increase evaluation and monitoring of the pastoral activities;
6. closely monitor forest rehabilitation to make sure that the new owners are fully aware of the rules set out in the forest management plan.

Appendix IV

Draft Resolution DipRes(2008)... on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to the Poloniny National Park (Slovakia)

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 ResDip(2008)1 on the revised Regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution (98) 26 awarding the European Diploma to the Poloniny National Park (Slovakia);

Taking into consideration the expert's report presented at the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma of Protected Areas on 17 and 18 March 2008;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention;

Renews the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to the Poloniny National Park until 18 September 2013;

Attaches the following conditions to the renewal:

- finalise and adopt the management plan for the park within two years of the renewal;
- start work on devising a new blueprint for forestry and hunting management in the diploma-holding area, taking greater account of the biological imperatives dictated by its European significance, within one year of the renewal. The national authorities shall supply a strategic plan for the sustainable development of the woodland during the next period of validity of the diploma and inform the group of specialists of the diploma each year of the progress made. This blueprint shall include revision of the current hunting allocation in the diploma-holding area, ensuring that the functional units each cover a surface area of 3 000 to 4 000 hectares, consistent with the biology of large herbivores;
- create a functional network of protected areas during the next period of validity, meeting international standards in this area and complying with the national Law on Nature and Landscape Protection (notably sections 28 and 30);
- pursue the steps taken to purchase private forests and draw up a future purchasing plan with specific objectives, indicating the funding to be assigned to this purpose each year;
- set up a scientific programme inventorying and monitoring the large carnivore populations in the diploma-holding area; the national authorities shall submit the scientific protocol for that programme for opinion to the group of specialists of the diploma within one year of the renewal;

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

1. give the management of the diploma-holding area greater responsibility for forestry and hunting matters and involve it in the corresponding decision-making process;
2. consider the signature of a simplified agreement between the bodies directly responsible for managing the protected areas on the borders of the three neighbouring countries (Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine), based on the programming of joint activities;

3. pursue efforts to upgrade human resources, in particular by taking on more technical staff and wardens, and very substantially step up funding, at least doubling the annual ratio per hectare for the period of validity of the diploma;
4. give full protection to wolves and ban shooting them throughout the area of the national park;
5. strongly consider the designation of a hunting district within the park as a strict cynegetic reserve;
6. pursue the efforts to restore buildings in the traditional regional style; the park might devise a charter of architectural rules for local authorities;
7. start experimenting with the selective felling of beech forest in a state-owned woodland unit; the national authorities shall inform the group of specialists of the diploma each year of the progress made.

Appendix V

Draft Resolution ResDip(2008)... on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to the Bieszczady National Park (Poland)

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 ResDip(2008)1 on the revised Regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution (98) 27 awarding the European Diploma to the Bieszczady National Park (Poland);

Taking into consideration the expert's report presented at the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma of Protected Areas on 17 and 18 March 2008;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention;

Renews the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to the Bieszczady National Park until 18 September 2013;

Attaches the following condition to the renewal:

– the government concerned shall undertake to adopt a management plan for the diploma-holding area, within no more than two years of the renewal of the period of validity;

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

1. extend the perimeter of the diploma-holding area by including in the park the territory currently separating its two cores;
2. implement a programme to study and monitor the status and development of large predators throughout the Bieszczady National Park and the three neighbouring parks of Cisniansko-Wetlinski, Dolina Sanu and Nadsanski; recruit for the purpose a zoologist who will report on this programme to the diploma-holding area's scientific team;
3. step up co-operation between the management of the Bieszczady National Park and the municipalities with a view to forging a common vision and setting common objectives for spatial planning and development, taking account of the biological and landscape significance and sensitive nature of the sites;
4. draw on the activities and expertise of the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians, particularly for the application of its articles on conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity (4), spatial planning (5) and forestry (7);
5. consider strengthening co-operation between the bodies directly responsible for managing the protected areas on the borders of the three neighbouring countries (Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine), based on the programming of joint activities.

Appendix VI

Draft Resolution ResDip(2008)... on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Thayatal National Park (Austria)

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 ResDip(2008)1 on the revised Regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution (2003) 16 awarding the European Diploma to the Thayatal National Park (Austria);

Taking into consideration the expert's report presented at the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma of Protected Areas on 17 and 18 March 2008;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention;

Renews the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Thayatal National Park until 28 May 2013;

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

1. as soon as the results of the study on the ecology of the Thaya River and how it is affected by the Vranov Dam operations are received, the Thayatal National Park, as well as the Podyji National Park in the Czech Republic, should undertake to translate the proposed measures into action. The ideal flow rate of 2.4 cubic metres per second already set by the Czech experts must be achieved;
2. in view of the four or five artificial sills across the Thaya, consider renaturalisation work to recreate rocky rapids over a longer stretch of the river. In terms of priority, the sill immediately upstream is most in need of improvement;
3. ensure that transfrontier projects and activities involving both the Thayatal and Podyji national parks are increasing in scope and are well funded and intensified, particularly with a view to taking essential measures on the impact of the Vranov Dam;
4. given the spontaneous establishment in the park of new species such as the otter and beaver and the current study on the wild cat, there is a need to document the presence of roving animals as fully as possible and consider the full potential of the park's habitats;
5. develop the use of the Kaja Castle ruins in the park's education programmes as an example of how historical monuments can be incorporated into education on the environment.

Appendix VII

Draft Resolution ResDip(2008)... on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Matsalu National Park (Estonia)

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 ResDip(2008)1 on the revised Regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution (2003) 17 awarding the European Diploma to the Matsalu Nature Reserve (Estonia);

Taking into consideration the expert's report presented at the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma of Protected Areas on 17 and 18 March 2008;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention;

Renews the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Matsalu National Park (new name) until 28 May 2013;

Attaches the following conditions to the renewal:

- the ongoing land reform process shall not in any way change the present characteristics of the national park or be detrimental to the park's biodiversity;
- maintenance of the meadows, particularly the coastal ones, shall continue to be given high priority;
- the national park's management shall have the necessary funds to continue its monitoring, enforcement and environmental education activities;
- private open land shall not be developed in any way that would be incompatible with the aims of the park;

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

1. co-operation with farmers should continue, and where possible increase, particularly in the form of support for traditional uses like grazing or mowing;
2. the national park's management should continue to play a social role to help the local people within the park's boundaries develop activities compatible with the aims of the park, such as bird-watching, handicrafts and restoration of the historical heritage;
3. potential external threats from industry, agriculture, tourism and development should be continuously monitored and a buffer zone in which hunting is prohibited should be established around the national park;
4. continue the programme for the elimination of alien species;
5. reinforce the programme of scientific studies.

Appendix VIII

Draft Resolution ResDip(2008)... on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the volcanic phenomena of the Tihany Peninsula (Hungary)

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 ResDip(2008)1 on the revised Regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution (2003) 18 awarding the European Diploma to the volcanic phenomena of the Tihany Peninsula (Hungary);

Taking into consideration the expert's report presented at the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma of Protected Areas on 17 and 18 March 2008;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention;

Renews the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the volcanic phenomena of the Tihany Peninsula until 28 May 2013;

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

1. translate the management plan into more detailed and practical measures;
2. strongly enforce the ban on new buildings on the site;
3. pursue the planning and construction of the visitor centre near Lake Belső;
4. continue to manage and control visitor pressure;
5. keep the balance between closed forested areas and open areas (meadows with hedges and bushes);
6. encourage farming and wine-growing practices consistent with the conservation of natural and landscape assets;
7. encourage the transfer of management rights on fishing in Lake Belső to the Balaton Uplands National Park;
8. encourage the transfer of state properties to the Balaton Upland National Park and pursue the acquisition of private land;
9. continue to control invasive species such as the *Ailanthus*;
10. develop co-ordinated management with nearby protected areas such as the reed beds on the shore of Lake Balaton and the Külső and Felső marshes.

Appendix IX

Draft Resolution ResDip(2008)... on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Germano-Luxembourg Nature Park (Germany/Luxembourg)

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 ResDip(2008)1 on the revised Regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution (73) 33 awarding the European Diploma to the Germano-Luxembourg Nature Park (Germany/Luxembourg);

Taking into consideration the expert's report presented at the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma of Protected Areas on 17 and 18 March 2008;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention;

Renews the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Germano/Luxembourg Nature Park until 25 October 2013;

Attaches the following conditions to the renewal:

- at the initiative of the states concerned, resume the work of the intergovernmental committee as soon as possible;
- engage an in-depth analysis of the mission, the medium-term objectives and future structure of the Germano-Luxembourg Nature Park;
- define specifications and a road map for the implementation of a global management plan for the Germano-Luxembourg Nature Park incorporating those of the nature parks on its territory; prepare the management plan before the next renewal of the European Diploma falls due and ensure the funding required for its implementation;

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

1. maintain and step up consultation and collaboration between the parties concerned by the Our and Sure basins, focusing on relations between the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg and the Rhineland-Palatinate *Land*;
2. pursue public awareness-raising and information activities;
3. encourage the swift creation of the Müllerthal-Kleine Luxemburger Schweiz nature park and incorporate it as far as possible in the Germano-Luxembourg Nature Park;
4. find a solution allowing aquatic fauna to pass or circumnavigate the obstacle of the Vianden hydroelectric dam;
5. maintain vigilance with regard to leisure and sporting pursuits (camping, rock-climbing, canoeing, etc.).

Appendix X

Draft Resolution ResDip (2008)... on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to the Kostomuksha Strict Nature Reserve (Russian Federation)

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 ResDip(2008)1 on the revised Regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution (98) 24 awarding the European Diploma to the Kostomuksha Strict Nature Reserve (Russian Federation);

Taking into consideration the expert's report presented at the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma of Protected Areas on 17 and 18 March 2008;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention;

Renews the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Kostomuksha Strict Nature Reserve until 18 September 2013;

Attaches the following conditions to the renewal:

- as the Kostomuksha Strict Nature Reserve has no buffer zone and the woodland north-east of the reserve has been given to logging companies, create a 200- to 300-metre wide protective zone where no felling is allowed along the boundary of the diploma area, especially the north and east boundaries of Kostomuksha Strict Nature Reserve;
- support the reserve in its efforts to create a system for remitting part of the money due for the water intake from the reserve. The clear water taken for municipal purposes amounts to 8 to 9 million cubic metres per year and Kostomuksha Strict Nature Reserve does not receive any compensation. Compensation in the form of subsidies for nature conservation should be granted to the reserve;

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

1. continue work on optimising the Kostomuksha Strict Nature Reserve area, which could be expanded by incorporating unmanaged woodland along the state border and adjacent to the south and west boundaries of the reserve, including parts of the Kamennoye and Minozero lakes. In exchange for the forest tracts along the state border (sections 4 to 14 and 27 to 29), the reserve could give the local authorities the woodland adjacent to the motorway and railway as land suitable for the development of road and rail services;
2. provide sufficient resources to ensure the proper functioning of the reserve. Financial support is needed to carry out fundamental research and strengthen environmental education activities. Special funds are needed to publish a special jubilee edition to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Kostomuksha Strict Nature Reserve, and to build new tourist paths in the reserve.

Appendix XI

Draft Resolution ResDip(2008)... on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to the Tsentralno-Chernozemny Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation)

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 ResDip(2008)1 on the revised Regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution (98) 25 awarding the European Diploma to the Tsentralno-Chernozemny Biosphere Reserve (Russian Federation);

Taking into consideration the expert's report presented at the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma of Protected Areas on 17 and 18 March 2008;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention;

Renews the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Tsentralno-Chernozemny Biosphere Reserve until 18 September 2013;

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

1. provide sufficient resources to ensure proper functioning of the reserve. Financial support is needed to carry out basic research and establish infrastructure for the development of ecological education, as well as for strengthening the Tsentralno-Chernozemny Biosphere Reserve protection capacity;
2. carry on systematic efforts to extend all the Reserve territories, especially their buffer zones and to establish and/or restore ecological corridors between these territories;
3. continue efforts to search for new valuable steppe territories which could be joined to Tsentralno-Chernozemny Biosphere Reserve or constitute stepping stones or ecological corridors between the existing territories of the reserve;
4. encourage further co-operation projects with international participation – such as the “Yaroslavna” project – in the sphere of nature and landscape conservation and sustainable development;
5. continue work on the optimisation of territory of the Belogorye Biosphere Reserve. This reserve might be expanded through incorporation of new steppe ecosystems, which would strengthen the interest of the diploma-holding area. Possibly consider the extension of the European Diploma to the Belogorye Reserve.

Appendix XII**Draft Resolution ResDip (2008)...
on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas
awarded to the Weltenburger Enge Nature Reserve (Germany)**

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 ResDip(2008)1 on the revised Regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution (78) 21 awarding the European Diploma to the Weltenburger Enge Nature Reserve (Germany);

Taking into consideration the different reports sent to the secretariat by the managers of the diploma-holding area;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention;

Renews the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Weltenburger Enge Nature Reserve until 2 March 2018;

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

1. devise and implement maintenance procedures to control the increasing growth of bushes on outcropping rocks, resulting in a reduction of the extent of xerothermic rock locations and the adapted species inhabiting them;
2. maintain strict control over boat traffic, particularly on the right bank of the Danube where numerous private boating tourists land on the exposed gravel banks during the summer months, when water levels are low;
3. monitor the effects of boat traffic on the aquatic fauna;
4. encourage the extensive use of fields and meadows, particularly by farmers and private owners;
5. conduct regular audits of management effectiveness for biodiversity conservation and tourist control in the reserve.

Appendix XIII

**Draft Resolution ResDip (2008)...
on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas
awarded to the Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve (United Kingdom)**

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 ResDip(2008)1 on the revised Regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution (83) 7 awarding the European Diploma to the Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve (United Kingdom);

Taking into consideration the different reports sent to the secretariat by the managers of the diploma-holding area;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention;

Renews the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve until 25 May 2018;

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

1. set up and implement the new-style reserve plan and organise the required prior public consultation;
2. continue to maintain the native tree/shrub gene bank, as well as the tree nursery, to guarantee the genetic origins of trees planted in the reserve;
3. following the results of the fieldwork for site condition monitoring of upland features of interest, adapt the current deer management to limit trampling impacts from deer on dry heaths;
4. monitor the evolution of the American mink (*Mustela vison*) population and its propagation within the area;
5. continue to limit the development of recreational facilities in the core area of the reserve and maintain the existing facilities to the present standard; if possible, investigate ways to improve the standards of visitor facilities;
6. improve car park facilities for hill-walkers in Glen Torridon;
7. continue to integrate and implement safety measures in management of the area, particularly checking visitor facilities for hazards and revising the reserve's fire plan.

Appendix XIV**Draft Resolution ResDip(2008)...
on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas
awarded to the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park (Spain)**

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 ResDip(2008)1 on the revised Regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution (88) 9 awarding the European Diploma to the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park (Spain);

Taking into consideration the different reports sent to the secretariat by the managers of the diploma-holding area;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention;

Renews the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park until 13 June 2018;

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

1. implement the national park's management plan in accordance with the land use and management plan (PRUG) drawn up in 2004 and Law No. 5/2007 of 3 April on the Network of National Parks;
2. finalise the feasibility study on moving the Pineta Valley municipal campsite and examine the available options;
3. pursue the scheme to make the Añisclo Canyon open to pedestrians;
4. in collaboration with the Pyrenees National Park (France), implement the co-operation measures set out in the Agreement on joint activities of the two national parks;
5. study the proposal to extend the park and organise the consultation study.

Appendix XV

Draft Resolution ResDip(2008)... on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to the Store Mosse National Park (Sweden)

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 ResDip(2008)1 on the revised Regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution (88) 11 awarding the European Diploma to the Store Mosse National Park (Sweden);

Taking into consideration the different reports sent to the secretariat by the managers of the diploma-holding area;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention;

Renews the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Store Mosse National Park until 13 June 2018;

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

1. pursue the hydrological survey of the national park and complete the management plan on the basis of the results obtained;
2. study the impact and causes of the changing inflow of water to Lakes Håradsösjön and Kävsjön, and see if it has any influence on birdlife;
3. monitor the situation of bark beetles (*Ips typographus*) in the spruce forest surrounding the national park, using the same methods as in other protected areas. If necessary, consider further action to be undertaken with landowners around the European Diploma/national park area;
4. promote scientific research in the park more actively, for example by repeating the bird count done in 1972 or investigating the increased density of pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) in some areas;
5. pursue the work on extending the protected area, with the aim of covering the entire hydrological system that affects the park.

Appendix XVI**Draft Resolution ResDip(2008)...
on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas
awarded to the Bullerö and Långviksskär Nature Reserves (Sweden)**

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 ResDip(2008)1 on the revised Regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution (88) 12 awarding the European Diploma to the Bullerö and Långviksskär Nature Reserves (Sweden);

Taking into consideration the different reports sent to the secretariat by the managers of the diploma-holding areas;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention;

Renews the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Bullerö and Långviksskär Nature Reserves until 12 June 2018;

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

1. study the possibility of giving the Bullerö area national park status in the future and consequently update the management plans of the two reserves;
2. assess the proliferation of (toxic) algae in the archipelago in summer and take appropriate measures to reduce their impact;
3. continue to control the sources of disturbance in the reserves, particularly in the bird sanctuaries;
4. pursue the efforts to limit the population of American mink (*Mustela vison*).

Appendix XVII

Draft Resolution ResDip(2008)... on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Montecristo Island Nature Reserve (Italy)

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 ResDip(2008)1 on the revised Regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution (88) 10 awarding the European Diploma to the Montecristo Island Nature Reserve (Italy);

Taking into consideration the different reports sent to the secretariat by the managers of the diploma-holding area;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention;

Renews the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Montecristo Island Nature Reserve until 12 June 2018;

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

1. in co-operation with the Tuscan Archipelago National Park, finalise and implement the Territorial Information System (TIS) for the planning of management initiatives;
2. under the TIS, map the vegetation types present in the reserve, and in particular quantify the spread and distribution of *Ailanthus* populations on the island with a view to control measures;
3. limit the spread of *Ailanthus* as far as possible through selective systems and explore the possibility of eradicating it;
4. pursue efforts to regenerate the population of oak trees by monitoring and conducting regular checks on their development;
5. maintain the island's goat population at its current level and take steps to protect the other components of the ecosystem which are under particular threat from the goat population;
6. continue to apply the quota of 1 000 visitors a year recommended when the European Diploma was awarded and pursue the feasibility study on setting up a remote surveillance system; maintain arrangements for supervising groups of visitors;
7. pursue discussion and investigations with a view to replacing the diesel generator and using renewable energy sources on the island;
8. gain more in-depth knowledge of the flora and fauna;
9. inform the Secretariat of the progress made in securing approval of the reserve's management plan by the Tuscan regional authorities.

Appendix XVIII**Draft Resolution ResDip(2008)...
on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas
to the Mercantour National Park (France)**

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 ResDip(2008)1 on the revised Regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution (93) 21 awarding the European Diploma to the Mercantour National Park (France);

Taking into consideration the different reports sent to the secretariat by the managers of the diploma-holding area;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention;

Renews the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Mercantour National Park until 3 May 2018;

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

1. as part of the tasks entrusted to it under the Law No. 2006-436 of 14 April on National Parks, National Marine Parks and Regional Natural Parks, including contributing to the policy of protecting the natural, cultural and landscape heritage and developing initiatives aimed at gaining knowledge of and monitoring that heritage, pursue the fundamental research programme to assess the impact of predation by wolves on wild ungulates, in co-operation with the different partners concerned;
2. draw up the charter provided for by the Law of 14 April 2006 on national parks, stipulating the protection objectives in the park's core area and the development aims of the "peripheral zone", now known as the "inclusion area" of the park;
3. maintain the investment of financial and human resources in scientific knowledge and support for research, *inter alia* capitalising on the data yielded by the different research programmes by networking them and streamlining the existing databases and their use;
4. promote the implementation of projects in partnership with local municipalities and stakeholders;
5. pursue co-operation with the Maritime Alps Nature Park (Italy) with a view to establishing a transfrontier protected area.

Appendix XIX

Draft Resolution ResDip(2008)... on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to the Maritime Alps Nature Park (Italy)

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 ResDip(2008)1 on the Regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution (93) 20 awarding the European Diploma to the Argentera Nature Park (Italy);

Taking into consideration the different reports sent to the secretariat by the managers of the diploma-holding area;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention;

Renews the European Diploma of Protected Areas, awarded to the Maritime Alps Nature Park (new name) until 3 May 2013;

Attaches the following conditions to this renewal:

- following the environmental impact studies carried out in the framework of the project to build a micro-hydroelectric power plant in the Meris Valley, keep watch over possible further development of the project and, if the project is to go ahead, the Council of Europe Secretariat must be immediately informed and no decision taken before a special on-the-spot appraisal has been carried out;
- the same condition for the project concerning the piping of hot spa water from Terme di Valdieri down the valley;

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

1. pursue co-operation efforts to secure financial support for research work on biodiversity protection and sustainable development;
2. examine the opportunity to ensure the protection and the management of the park's adjacent areas, in particular the territory of the municipality of Vinadio and the special nature reserve of Phoenician Juniper, by setting up a "contiguous area" in accordance with the national law on protected areas (Law of 6 December 1991, n. 394) ; and step up, as far as possible, a territorial management project for the area;
3. organise information and awareness-raising activities for local stakeholders, particularly on sustainable tourism. Development projects, even those located outside the park boundary, should be avoided if they have a potentially negative impact on the protected area, since the priority is conservation and sustainable tourism throughout the whole area;
4. pursue co-operation with Mercantour National Park (France) in order to set up a transfrontier protected area.

Appendix XX**Draft Resolution ResDip(2008)...
on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas
awarded to the Dobročský National Nature Reserve (Slovakia)**

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 ResDip(2008)1 on the revised Regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution (98) 28 awarding the European Diploma to the Dobročský National Nature Reserve (Slovakia);

Taking into consideration the different reports sent to the secretariat by the managers of the diploma-holding area;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention;

Renews the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Dobročský National Nature Reserve until 18 September 2013;

Attaches the following condition to the renewal:

- pursue the process of transforming anthropogenic forests into semi-natural forests, mainly in the buffer zone of the Dobročský National Nature Reserve, in compliance with the management plan;

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

1. promote awareness-raising activities, mainly:
 - updating the exhibition on the Dobročský National Nature Reserve in the Pred Skalickou cottage;
 - in co-operation with the forestry authorities, installing the information point on the Dobročský National Nature Reserve in the Forestry Museum in the Vydrovská Valley, near Čierny Balog;
2. implement other activities listed in the management plan, particularly research and monitoring.

Appendix XXI

Draft Resolution on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to the Wollmatinger Ried-Untersee-Gnadensee Nature Reserve (Germany)

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 for certain protected landscapes, reserves and natural features, as amended by Resolution ResDip(2008)1 on the Regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution (68) 34 awarding the European Diploma to the Wollmatinger Ried-Untersee-Gnadensee Nature Reserve (Germany);

Taking into consideration the regular reports transmitted to the Secretariat by the officials in charge of the site;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention;

Renews the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Wollmatinger Ried-Untersee-Gnadensee Nature Reserve (Germany) until 28 November 2013;

Attaches the following condition to the renewal:

– The natural self-dynamic development of the protected area is one of its main values, in particular in the shallow water and the changing water zone. In order to preserve this self-dynamic development, nothing shall be done that can disturb the natural erosion and sedimentation.

Attaches the following recommendations to the renewal:

1. continue to examine the possibility to extend the protected zone including the entire Ermatingen basin, in order to secure the significance of the NSG Wollmatinger Ried-Untersee-Gnadensee as a water fowl habitat;
2. make sure that the construction of the new Westtangente road near Konstanz – which application is currently under way – and of the B33-new will not increase the isolation of the protected area and will observe all necessary environmental standards;
3. keep on controlling fishing and boating activities in the Schlauch and Reichenau Dam areas to limit possible disturbance, in particular for water fowl. In particular, the accessibility of the protected shallow water zone may not be improved;
4. Considering the plans to restore the bottom depth of the Bruckgraben which forms the border of the nature reserve to the Island of Reichenau, take suitable precautions to prevent resulting intensified boat traffic;
5. continue to implement measures in order to control the invasive new populations, in particular the Canada golden rod (*Solidago canadensis*) and the late golden rod (*Solidago gigantea*).
6. Find new premises for the NABU Nature Conservation Center in order to guarantee the qualified maintenance of the protected area.

7. Continue to control and reduce disturbance due to low-flying helicopters and hot air balloons.

Appendix XXII

Resolution on the non-renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (Belarus)

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 of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution (97) 23 awarding the European Diploma to Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (Belarus);

Taking into consideration the expert's report submitted to the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma of Protected Areas at its meeting on 8 and 9 February 2007 and the decision of the Group of Specialists in this regard on 17 March 2008;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee,

Decides not to renew the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park until the following condition has been satisfied:

– that a peer-reviewed ten-year management plan for Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park, including adjacent areas of internationally recognised natural importance, with due regard to the conclusions of the “Forest of Hope” appeal be prepared and implemented;

Also recommends that:

1. existing forestry policy and practices be reviewed with a view to maximising biodiversity, in particular by considering a ban on felling old trees and providing for a significant increase in the volume of dead wood in all old-growth forest stands;
2. monitoring and applied research on the ecology of old-growth forests and the external impact of the drying out of peat-bogs and marshes be boosted and co-ordinated with a view to integrated management and habitat restoration;
3. core areas of the park's wilderness protection zone be further enlarged, that functional ecological corridors be established between fragments of old-growth forest and that the policy of acquiring ecologically sensitive marshes and peat-bogs around the park be stepped up;
4. research be undertaken regarding the possibility of removing parts of the artificial barrier inside the main areas (world heritage sites), so that bison and other large mammals have total freedom to spread out beyond the barriers;
5. efforts to monitor compliance with the total hunting ban inside the national park (except for the culling of sick herbivores) be stepped up, and that wolves be afforded full protection; tally figures should be submitted for the Shereshevo hunting reserve;
6. a critique be undertaken regarding the hydrological and ecological impact of lake deepening on features of natural interest, and that the advisability of fishing (and restocking) be reviewed; in addition, disturbances incompatible with the zone resulting from active water sports (such as water skiing) should be strictly avoided;

7. an environmental impact assessment be carried out in respect of mass tourism in the very heart of the national park, including a reappraisal of the boundaries, location and zoning of “Father Frost’s Manor”;

8. a bilateral conservation agreement between the competent Polish and Belarus ministries be ratified by the end of 2008, confirming the necessary principles and budgets for cross-border co-operation between the Białowieża and Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Parks with regard to priorities for research, management, tourism and education, coupled with ecologically healthy forest management, bearing in mind the “Forest of Hope” appeal, the conclusions of the 2000 Kamenyuki Conference and the recommendations of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee;

Invites the Belarus authorities to keep the competent committee informed of subsequent developments.

Appendix XXIII

Resolution on the non-renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Białowieża National Park (Poland)

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 of Protected Areas;

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

Taking into consideration the expert's report submitted to the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma of Protected Areas at its meeting on 8 and 9 February 2007 and the decision of the Group of Specialists in this regard on 17 March 2008;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee,

Decides not to renew the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to Białowieża National Park until the following conditions have been satisfied:

1. draw up a peer-reviewed ten-year management plan for the national park by the end of 2009;
2. have all primeval forest stands and functional corridors linking the various reserves designated part of the Białowieża forest and afforded full protection;

Also recommends that:

1. national park regulations and forest management rules be revised to require districts (counties) located within the state forest and the Voivodship Nature Conservation Officer to work with national park management, the scientific council and independent experts, and that public consultation be undertaken in relation to planned activities in all protected areas;
2. existing forestry policy and practices be reviewed with a view to maximising biodiversity outside protected areas as well by maintaining the ban on cutting down old trees (more than 100 years old) and significantly increasing the volume of dead wood by ceasing to market wood from sanitation felling and protected reserves; that all data with regard to the characteristics of trees felled within the Białowieża forest complex (species, age, amount of sanitation felling and commercial exploitation) are communicated to the Council of Europe every year and analysed, in order to improve conservation measures;
3. education and training activities be 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;
4. tourist access to fully protected areas be restricted to pre-2006 levels; this means critically reviewing the use of the existing narrow-gauge railway line, including rebuilt "railway stations", in accordance with the national park's admission capacity; kayaking and other aquatic leisure activities on the Narewka and Hwoźna rivers should remain strictly prohibited;
5. town planning be critically reviewed with a view to preventing the disappearance (as a result of urbanisation) of areas serving as buffer zones for the park and of historic rural landscapes, and guarding against the negative impact of any increase in cross-border motor vehicle traffic within the national park;

6. legislative decisions be taken to give Białowieża National Park authorities the necessary rights and resources to manage the free movement of European bison throughout the Białowieża forest, and that efforts be made to co-operate with a view to opening a large mammal corridor in the border fence between Poland and Belarus, inside the world heritage site;

7. a bilateral conservation agreement between the competent Polish and Belarus ministries be ratified by the end of 2008, confirming the necessary principles for cross-border co-operation between the Białowieża and Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Parks with regard to priorities for research, management, tourism and education, coupled with ecologically healthy forest management, bearing in mind the “Forest of Hope” appeal, the conclusions of the 2000 Kamenyuki Conference and the recommendations of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee;

Invites the Polish authorities to keep the competent committee informed of subsequent developments.