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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**

35<sup>th</sup> meeting  
Strasbourg, 1-4 December 2015

**Adopted Resolutions concerning the  
European Diploma for Protected Areas in 2015**

*Document prepared  
by the Directorate of Democratic Governance*

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COMMITTEE  
OF MINISTERS  
COMITÉ  
DES MINISTRES



**Resolution CM/ResDip(2015)1  
on the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas  
to the Vashlovani Protected Areas (Georgia)**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 3 June 2015  
at the 1229th 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 Res(65)6 instituting the European Diploma for certain protected landscapes, reserves and natural features, as amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1 on the revised regulations for the European Diploma for Protected Areas;

Taking into consideration the expert's report presented at the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas on 13 March 2015;

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

Solemnly awards the European Diploma for Protected Areas to the Vashlovani Protected Areas (Georgia) which include five areas: the Vashlovani Strict Nature Reserve, the Vashlovani National Park, the Alazani Riparian Forest Natural Monument, the Takhti-Tepa Natural Monument and the Eagle Canyon Natural Monument; recognises the European significance of these areas which have remarkable landscapes; exceptional geological features; rich and diverse flora and fauna, including rare species; and ecosystems of particular importance for European biodiversity;

Places the aforesaid areas under the patronage of the Council of Europe until 3 June 2020;

Attaches the following two conditions to the award:

1. by the end of 2015, remove the shelters located on the immediate border of the Vashlovani Strict Nature Reserve, and rigorously enforce the existing regulation for grazing in the reserve;
2. accelerate the drafting process of a comprehensive sustainable grazing management plan, taking into account the socio-economic context and the effects of grazing, positive and negative, on the long-term conservation of the features of the Vashlovani Protected Areas; this plan will have clear objectives, a time frame for implementation and indicators of progress, and will address the matter of dismantlement and relocation of grazing equipment and activities outside the strict nature protection areas and the restoration of degraded zones of the Vashlovani National Park. A draft will be submitted to the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma by the end of 2016, with alternative grazing areas located at a reasonable distance from the borders of the zones where these activities are forbidden; the State Party is also urged to enforce the existing regulation on grazing in the whole Diploma area, without delay, and to limit grazing activities to the carrying capacity for the Vashlovani Protected Areas (to be determined);

Attaches the following seven recommendations to the award:

1. develop and fund an operational and comprehensive monitoring programme of the Diploma area; this programme should be focused on the specific natural and landscape features of the Diploma area and the anthropogenic pressures on it;
2. prepare and implement a programme to maintain and renovate field equipment and the infrastructure for tourists and visitors;

3. pursue, update and complement inventories and mapping of species and habitats (distribution, abundance, state of conservation and tendencies), taking into account the Emerald Network's standards and requirements;
4. secure the Vashlovani Protected Areas core budget, from internal sources preferably, and provide funding to ensure that the 2013-19 management plan is fully implemented;
5. start the process of drafting the next management plan in a timely manner, so that the whole award period of the European Diploma for the Vashlovani Protected Areas is covered;
6. improve further the expertise and skills of the staff members, especially in the field of ecology and the knowledge and monitoring of species;
7. continue and develop cross-border co-operation for the protection of large carnivores.



**Resolution CM/ResDip(2015)2  
on the renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas  
to the National Park Weerribben-Wieden (Netherlands)**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 3 June 2015  
at the 1229th 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 Res(65)6 instituting the European Diploma for certain protected landscapes, reserves and natural features, as amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1 on the revised regulations for the European Diploma for Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution Res(95)20 on the award of the European Diploma to the De Weerribben Nature Reserve (Netherlands);

Having regard to Resolution CM/ResDip(2010)8 on the renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas awarded to the De Weerribben Nature Reserve (Netherlands) and to its extension to the De Wieden Nature Reserve (Netherlands);

Taking note of the Government of the Netherlands' wish for a joint European Diploma to the National Park Weerribben-Wieden when renewing the diploma in 2015;

Taking into consideration the expert's report presented at the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas on 13 March 2015;

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

Renews the European Diploma for Protected Areas awarded to the De Weerribben Nature Reserve and to its extension to the De Wieden Nature Reserve, jointly presented under the name "National Park Weerribben-Wieden", until 3 June 2020;

Attaches the following condition to the renewal:

1. urge the responsible authorities to adopt the joint Natura 2000 management plan, by the end of 2016, as an official and binding document which will be considered as covering the requirements of the European Diploma;

Attaches the following eight recommendations to the renewal:

1. implement a monitoring programme to evaluate the effects of the new connection between De Weerribben and De Wieden, the construction of which was finished by the end of 2014, at least on important and/or endangered species, considering the exemplary role of the project;

2. monitor the further development of fish stocks, with an emphasis on eels, to strengthen the ecological function of the reserves and natural reproduction in line with Natura 2000 requirements;

3. limit the impact of fishing by defining a maximum number of licenses or limiting the catch; define methods to avoid secondary catches of otter or other species; and ensure the further development of a management plan for fish stocks covering all species, as requested in the previous resolution on the renewal of the European Diploma;
4. carefully observe the development of boating on the Kalenberger Gracht and set limits (for example a maximum number and/or size of boats) or provide for measures in case of increasing numbers of larger boats;
5. continue with the designation of adjoining areas as extensions of, or buffer zones to, the protected areas, especially to the north (Rottige Meente) and south-east (Staphorster Veld), and create a connection between the two separate parts of De Wieden Nature Reserve between the Zuideindiger Wiede and the Bovenwiede;
6. review contracts with business owners and landowners with regard to habitat management, and especially the duration of these contracts, to ensure that management can be directed by the responsible authorities and to prevent long-term and irredeemable contracts through which the reserve authorities have limited leverage;
7. observe possible threats which may occur due to the intensification of agriculture, changes in water management or construction of wind farms;
8. secure adequate funds to convert the Ossenzijl information centre, at least in part, into an educational centre geared towards young people.