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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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**EXPERT ANALYSIS OF ANNUAL REPORTS SUBMITTED BY THE
EUROPEAN DIPLOMA AREAS IN 2015**

*Document prepared
by the Directorate of Democratic Governance*

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1. ARMENIA - KHOSROV FOREST RESERVE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2013)2 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 10 July 2013 attaches two conditions and six recommendations to the award of the European Diploma to the Khosrov Foerst Reserve.

Analysis by the Secretariat

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing the conditions and recommendations.

The report briefly describes the measures taken to address the conditions and recommendations. It is commendable that condition no. 1 appears to have been fulfilled with the ban on public motor traffic except for emergencies and management purposes. In addition, the management plan for 2015 onward is in the discussion phase.

EDPA visibility

No information

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing the conditions and recommendations. The Group to request information on the concrete measures taken to implement condition no. 1 attached to the award. The Group to request updates on the adoption of a new management plan for 2015 onwards. The Group to encourage the use of the EDPA logo in the Reserve and to report information on its use in the course of 2016.

2. AUSTRIA - KRIMML WATERFALLS NATURAL SITE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)7 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 June 2012 attaches eight recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Krimml Waterfalls Natural Site.

Analysis by I. Ivanenko, Member of the Group

General observations

The implementation of the recommendations is ongoing.

The elaboration of the management plan for the National Park Hohe Tauern with consideration of the Krimml Waterfalls integration is in progress.

Implementation of the appropriate measures in order to preserve the natural beauty of the natural monument continues.

The potential impact on the natural monument is always examined rigorously within all nature conservation law administrative procedures taking place in the region of Krimml Waterfalls.

The site administration pays attention to the visitor management, particularly to ensure that visitors only use the existing paths. Individual parts of the footpaths and their abbreviations have been dismantled, fenced and revegetated. Many visitors had taken part in the excursions guided by the well-trained rangers of the Hohe Tauern National Park.

The area of Krimml Waterfalls and the Krimml Valley are included in some scientific research projects of the Hohe Tauern National Park.

The cooperation with local stakeholders is very well maintained - with the Austrian Alpine Association, the land owners, the community and the tourist office.

Issues identified

The healing effect of Krimml Waterfalls has been scientifically proven by the Paracelsus Medical University in Salzburg. On June 9, the waterfalls were officially recognised as a natural cure by the province of Salzburg.

Other remarks

Heavy precipitation into the glacier regions led to floods in 2014. The entire “Wasserfallboden” was flooded and the Krimml Ache made its streambed accordingly. Initial protective measures were implemented cautiously and ensured compatibility with nature needs by the end of the winter.

EDPA visibility

On the occasion of the celebration the 50th anniversary of the EDPA, a booklet and an exhibition was created by the Council of Europe. The Krimml Waterfalls were described as one of the most significant natural phenomena in Europe.

Suggested action

The Group to encourage pursuing the efforts made to avoid the spread of light pollution.

3. AUSTRIA - THAYATAL NATIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)17 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 June 2012 attaches five recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Thayatal National Park.

Analysis by I. Ivanenko, Member of the Group

General observations

There is progress in implementing all the recommendations.

The current flow regime of the Thaya River is already fulfilling part of the requirements of the Podyji National Park Administration in the Czech Republic neighbourhood.

The bilateral project mentioned in the last report concerning artificial sills across the Thaya improvement was completed.

The new study concerning fish ecology and fishing in the river Thaya/Dyje mentioned in the last report will be part of a common bilateral INTERREG project which will start in 2016.

In 2015 we have finished a study concerning the occurrence of white-tailed eagle in the National Park. Czech and Austrian ornithologists also found a nest of Peregrine falcon at one of the rocks in the Western part of National Park.

The programs for pupils and for groups include special nature-education offers which are connected to the visit of Kaja Castle ruins.. In 2015 a new exhibition about the history of the Thaya-bridge was opened.

Issues identified

The bilateral cooperation with Czech colleagues from Podyji is extremely fruitful and suits the aims of both national parks creation.

Other remarks

The Council of Europe’s exceptional visit (Michael Usher and Tatiana State-Mason) to Thayatal and Podyjí NP took place between 15th and 17th of September 2014. The results and recommendations were presented on the web-site.

EDPA visibility

The European Diploma logo is used in the National Park brochures, in the current visitor programme and on the welcome sign at the visitor center. It can also be found on the main page of their website www.np-thayatal.at with a link to the European Diploma. There is also a short description of the European Diploma on Thayatal website.

Suggested action(s)

The Group to recall on further actions to implement the recommendations of the Council of Europe following the exceptional visit (2014).

4. AUSTRIA - WACHAU PROTECTED LANDSCAPE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2009)11 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 October 2009 attaches one condition and eight recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Wachau Protected Landscape.

Analysis by I. Ivanenko, Member of the Group

General observations

The outdoor visitor center of the Nature Park, result of a Leader project including EU funding, was opened on October 4th 2015 to ensure that the existence of the Jauerling protected zone would continue to be guaranteed.

The recently granted LIFE+ project “Alluvial Forest Wilderness Wachau (Auenwildnis Wachau)” has started on January 1st, 2015. All measures taken in connection with the Danube waterway are conducted by via Donabe, the state-owned company in charge of the Austrian Danube. All measures concerning dry land issues, such as an inventory of the black poplar or the re-settlement attempts of the white-tailed eagle, are conducted by the nature protection manager.

The private enterprise (since January 1st, 2015) Lower Austrian Jetty Holding is interested in becoming a partner of the future site management and is actively participating in the planning of the future World Heritage Management Plan, and therefore cooperate with strict standards on the river tourism implementation issue.

Concerning the refurbishment of the Spitz quarry the works have not started yet, due to some discussions about the size of the necessary additional exploitation to stabilize the quarry and some special habitats around the quarry affected. This delay was also caused by the sad fact that the Lower Austrian Environment Attorney surprisingly died last year and therefore discussions had to be started again with his successor.

To protect the Wachau against flooding the Austrian and Lower Austrian authorities have set aside more finances to create flood protection systems in the remaining unprotected villages of the area. Also in this case, it is the local municipalities who are in charge of drafting these plans. In Dürnstein/Loiben, the system is about to be finished.

Issues identified

The implementation of some of the recommendations still depends on private enterprises or local municipalities, there is successful advancement for all of them.

Other remarks

No changes concerning the Recommendations 3, 6, 7 of the last year’s report.

EDPA visibility

No information in the report.

Suggested action

The Group to stress the need to continue the efforts on the progress concerning the Recommendations 3, 6, 7.

5. BELARUS - BELOVEZHSKAYA PUSHCHA NATIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2013)1 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 27 March 2013 attaches two conditions and eleven recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park.

Analysis by I. Ivanenko, Member of the Group

General observations

Subject to relevant conditions, conducting any types of infrastructure works inside a national park and within its buffer zones, except for construction in the settlements is only possible after the realisation of an environmental impact assessment with participation of the national park administration.

New environmental legislation (Regulation of National Park) was approved and adopted in 2012. No changes were made since that time.

In accordance with the recommendations:

To turn from the economically driven to environmentally driven management by reducing the forestry activities, removing the timber not conducted in strictly protected areas (57 Th. ha) and the especially protected areas outside the strict protection (5 Th. ha).

The coordination with the government and permanent monitoring of the resources management conducted by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

To reduce the risks of interactions with agricultural activities, the district authorities organised the transfer of former agricultural land bordering the protected territory to the national park management. The authorities guaranteed the exclusion of these new areas from active economic use.

The realization of nature protection measures in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha is planned.

So far, the winter feeding of ungulates has only been conducted in the peripheral areas of the National Park, mainly in the economically active zone.

The genetic researches on the bison population in the national park were carried on.

Permanent monitoring of the quantity of visitors to the “Father Frost’s Manor” was developed in order to reduce their impact on the environment. There was 20% less visitors in 2015 compared to 2014.

The monitoring of the water quality in the lakes is done continuously and provided by the District inspection of natural resources and environmental protection. The monitoring of forestry, forest dynamic and wildlife is provided by the specialized departments of the National Park.

The study on the impact of the prohibition of all activities in the strictly protected zones to control the invasive alien species is conducted by the National Park in the cooperation with the National Academy of Science.

The national cartographic agency carried out a data actualization in order to prepare a new national park tourist map scale of 1: 100,000.

Issues identified

The National Park is facing the problem of increasing financial resources for recommended activities in two domains; that of applied ecological research, as well as nature conservation activities.

Other remarks

Management plan of the National Park for the next 5 years was actualized during this year.

EDPA visibility

No information available.

Suggested action

The Group to emphasise a need to provide a larger number of activities to reinforce the recommendations that have been put forward.

6. BELARUS - BEREZINSKY STATE BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2010)6 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 September 2010 attaches one condition and five recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the

Berezinsky State Biosphere Reserve.

Analysis by I. Ivanenko, Member of the Group

General observations

Subject to relevant conditions, protection regime of the biosphere reserve is carried out in accordance with the current nature protection laws.

In accordance with recommendations:

At the expense of funds of the Union State of Russia and Belarus a multi-year project was launched in the Reserve on the following topic: "To develop a pilot geo-information system (GIS) of satellite monitoring of marshes for the purpose of their protection and restoration under intensive anthropogenic impact".

Monitoring has been continued to assess the impact of the M3 road concerning the death of large mammals and the effectiveness of the existing road crossings for amphibians.

Action plan for the conservation and sustainable use of bisons' micropopulation for the years 2015 - 2019 was created. The network of photo-traps usage in the places of bisons' migration has been expanded in order to track their numbers and identify potential threats to their population in the Berezinsky. The outcomes of the appropriate scientific research are being implemented.

Tourism development is controlled effectively based on scientific research. One-day excursions into the wildlife were conducted under the guidance and supervision of the research department staff.

"Biological diversity, biological and forest resources in terms of climate change and development of innovative environmental technology" are research topics that have been accepted for development and included in the work plan for 2016 - 2020 as a part of the state program.

Issues identified

A number of scientific studies of importance for the implementation of the recommendations were completed within the reporting period. In order to improve the protection of the natural systems and to conduct the scientific research, a full range of activities has been performed in accordance with the State program for the development of the system of specially protected natural territories of the Republic of Belarus for 2015-2019.

Other remarks

An action plan for a five-year period 2015 -2019 was developed as part of the management plan of the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve.

During the reporting period new jobs were created, increasing the staff number of the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve by 49 people, which is also extremely important in a social perspective.

EDPA visibility

The Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve extensively uses the logo of the European diploma. The logo and a brief information about the European Diploma are displayed on the official website of the protected area (<http://www.berezinsky.by/>) in the sections "Partners" and "General information", as well as a link to the website of the Council of Europe. The original copy of the European Diploma awarded to the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve in 1995 can be seen in the Museum of nature conservation history, which is located in the visitor center.

An international scientific and practical conference "Prospects for conservation and sustainable use of natural systems of protected areas", dedicated to the 90th anniversary of the Reserve and the 20th anniversary of the assignment to the European Diploma of Protected Areas was held.

Suggested action

The Group to make further notes on expansion of boundaries of the biosphere Reserve (within the MAB program) by increasing the transition zone (a zone of cooperation) as agreed with the International

Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IACBR) of UNESCO.

7. BULGARIA - CENTRAL BALKAN NATIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2009)1 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 October 2009 attaches three conditions and five recommendations to the award of the European Diploma awarded to the Central Balkan National Park.

Analysis by the Secretariat

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing all conditions and recommendations.

Remarks

The renewal of the European Diploma to the park has been suspended since 2014, pending the official adoption of a new management plan. The management plan has not been officially adopted, yet; some progress was however made and by the beginning of 2015 it should be submitted for consideration to the Supreme Expert Environmental Council at the Ministry of Environment and Water.

In 2015, the Group decided to postpone the renewal of the European Diploma until the management plan is officially adopted and asked the authorities to report on the issue.

The updated management plan is being finalised and its adoption was expected by the end of February 2016. There will be no significant changes in comparison with the previous management plan, including in the management of the livestock grazing. At the same time, grazing-related norms and regimes would be well detailed in the management plan. After its adoption, the management plan will be translated into English and forwarded to the Secretariat.

The park's management team expects the renewal of the EDPA in 2016.

EDPA visibility

The EDPA logo was used in all presentations, new brochures and leaflets.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing the conditions and recommendations, particularly the finalisation of the park's management plan. The Group to request a translated copy of the management plan upon its adoption.

8. CZECH REPUBLIC - KARLŠTEJN NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2010)5 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 September 2010 on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to the Karlštejn National Nature Reserve (Czech Republic) attaches six recommendation.

Analysis by I. Ivanenko, Member of the Group

General observations

Goat and sheep grazing management, shrub and tree removal on dry calcareous grasslands and forest steppe localities continued in the extent of previous years.

Removal of non-native tree species (Norway spruce – 1.38 hectares, Black Pine – 0.44 hectares and European larch – 0.35 hectares) and their exchange for broad-leaved species (beech, oak, and lime) also continued.

The study on the project of a visitor center is in progress. Management plan for Karlštejn-Koda Site of Community Interest has been created.

In 2015, the budget of the Administration, including the budget for active management of target species and habitats, was provided in a regular extent in accordance to the needs and capabilities of the office.

Issues identified

Administration office became a part of the Regional Office for Central Bohemia of the Nature Conservation Agency. The financial budget remained at the same level.

Other remarks

Management budget is fixed for a one-year period and does not allow long term financing.

EDPA visibility

Focus should be put on a broader use of the European Diploma logo. A request has been sent to the webmaster of the Nature Reserve official website to display the logo together with a link to the Council of Europe's website. A sticker with the logo will be ordered as soon as possible.

Suggested action

The Group to propose to push for further educational activities launched by the Administration of the Karlštejn National Nature Reserve.

9. CZECH REPUBLIC - PODYJÍ NATIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2010)4 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 September 2010 attaches eight recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Podyjí National Park.

Analysis by I. Ivanenko, Member of the Group

General observations

The operator of hydroelectric power station in Vranov and Podyjí National Park Administration signed an agreement on flow regime in Dyje river. Podyji National Park Administration afterwards issued a statement approving the permission of water usage on basis of this agreement.

The Management plan was approved on June 28, 2012 for the time period 2012-2020. The measures set in the Management plan are being implemented.

According to the current Management plan (2012-2020), the Dyje river in the national park will not be able to be used for water sports.

Podyji and Thayatal National parks Administrations are preparing common funding application for INTERREG program.

The project to plant trees and restore old roads in agriculture landscape was prepared in coordination with one municipality and Podyji National Park Administration. It will be implemented in 2016 and 2017.

The agriculture firm, which did not respect the regulations on usage of chemicals on fields in buffer zone, is now prosecuted.

The construction of sewer systems in the last three villages of the buffer zone without sewer system is almost finished.

Issues identified

Natural disturbance caused by glazed frost in December 2014 was used for the succession of natural communities. Glazed frost broke the forests trees on area of 20 ha. Some disturbed areas are even more than 1 ha large. The disturbed areas are kept open for natural development.

Other remarks

Around 40 ha of forest were reserved for recovery of coppice forests. The first coppice forest has been already created on 0.4 ha of land.

EDPA visibility

The European Diploma logo was used in Podyji National Park publications (for example:

http://www.nppodyji.cz/uploads/002015/maliri_2015.pdf) and on the homepage of its website (<http://www.nppodyji.cz/>). The logo is also present on information boards and shelters (almost thirty signs around Podyji National Park). The European Diploma flag was flying over Podyji National Park HQ in Znojmo for almost a year.

Suggested action

The Group to request an important activation of the fish migration research.

10. ESTONIA - MATSALU NATIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)16 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 June 2012 attaches four conditions and five recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Matsalu National Park.

Analysis by I. Ivanenko, Member of the Group

General observations

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress made on the implementation of all the conditions and recommendations.

Freeconsultations are provided to the (new) farmers who also have the opportunity to apply for the rent of state lands for meadow management..

The management plan was endorsed. The national park's management continues to play a social role to help the local people within the park's boundaries to develop activities compatible with the aims of the park. Its Environmental Board still has a strong social role. The co-operation with the NGO Terra Maritima has been very effective and as a result Matsalu national park will receive the award of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas at the Award Ceremony, which will take place at the beginning of December.

As every year, different cultural heritage related workshops and seminars were arranged. The Matsalu National Park Council was formed in January. This has already enabled the park management to discuss several important issues with reserve's stakeholders (including local residents).

Two institutions – Environmental Board and The Environmental Inspectorate, do the monitoring of potential external threats from industry, agriculture, tourism and development. The non-hunting buffer zone around the reserve was not established yet but the specific dates for hunting and list of species that are allowed to hunt are listed in the protection rules.

Elimination of alien species is a part of the management plan of Matsalu National Park. A significant agreement with local hunters was achieved last year – they voluntarily agreed to visit small islands every year and clean them from small predators including Raccoon Dogs and Minks.

One of the most important scientific studies that begun in 2015 is about monitoring and gathering information about the main predators for ground-nesting birds' nests on coastal meadows.

Issues identified

The Golden Jackal who was first found in Matsalu National Park few years ago is no longer regarded as an alien species. The animal has now been found in other Baltic countries such as Denmark and Belarus, and therefore is considered to have spread there naturally. The Ministry of Environment is now proceeding with amendments for hunting regulations in order to regulate the hunting of Golden Jackal.

Other remarks

The Matsalu Nature Film Festival is growing bigger every year and brings together not only local and foreign nature film enthusiasts but also bird watchers and nature photographers.

EDPA visibility

The European Diploma logo was added to all the new information boards set up around the National Park.

The poster that was made about Matsalu National Park for the 50th anniversary of the European Diploma of Protected Areas has been displayed in the Nature Centre's auditorium, where it can be seen by all auditorium visitors.

The information about the award is also presented in Matsalu e-guide (<http://www.matsalu.ee/teejuht/>). The text in e-guide is currently only available in Estonian, but there is a wish to translate it in other major languages. The logo with necessary information will also be presented in new Matsalu National Park's brochure.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome progress in the implementation of all the recommendations and to request further implementation of the management plan, which was endorsed at the beginning of the year 2015.

11. FINLAND – EKENÄS NATIONAL PARK

General observations

The management plan was finalized according to the conditions. It is in place, but the eventual enlargement of the park will possibly change the situation soon. The marine parts of the park were finally monitored more thoroughly, which will enable more proper management of these parts.

Issues identified

The implementation of the new management plan must be monitored. The regularity of the evaluations of its efficiency must also be followed. The inventory of the marine habitats within the park is essential, and the results will be hopefully included in the revision of the management plan.

EDPA visibility

The diploma and logo can be seen in Ekenäs Visitor centre. The logo is also on the information boards at the national park and in the national park leaflet/brochure. The logo is also on national parks and visitor centres webpages (Finnish, Swedish and English pages) (<http://www.luontoon.fi/tammisaarensaaristo> and <http://www.luontoon.fi/tammisaarenluontokeskus>)

The visibility has then been improved, but it could still be better.

Suggested action

Identify more actions which would increase the public awareness of the EDPA.

12. FINLAND - SEITSEMINEN NATIONAL PARK

General observations

New master plan was in place 2014, and the need for an updated management plan was judged as low, and thus none was started. The ISO-14001 certification scheme was in place, and will be evaluated regularly. Evaluation of recreational facilities, customer service and restoration work was evaluated in September 2015.

Issues identified

As with Ekenäs NP, the regularity of management effectiveness evaluations maybe unsatisfactory and follow-up is recommended. Scientific work, and cooperation seems well on the way and successful.

EDPA visibility

Unclear whether any EDPA-visibility has been improved in the park.

Suggested action

Identify more actions which would increase the public awareness of the EDPA-, and ask the NP-services to make clear what has been done regarding the visibility.

13. FRANCE - ECRINS NATIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2010)14 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 September 2010 attaches ten recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Ecrins National Park.

Analysis by B. Petrucci, member of the Group (reporting in French language), and M. Colantoni

The annual report describes the successful actions in the implementation of the recommendations. However there is no information about the use of the logo or other EDPA visibility information.

In 2014-2015 seven new municipalities have applied to join the Charter of the National Park des Ecrins.

The Park Authority has made available its innovative tools for data management "wildlife" and "flora", which allow for a much more efficient data search. The park has also published this information on the web used by several national parks.

Issue

In this year of "COP-21" the Ecrins National Park has had the second largest glaciers decline since the monitoring was carried out. The relevant monitoring data are available on the internet and will be published in a scientific journal.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the work on the implementation of the recommendations.

For 2016, the Group to recommend keeping under observation the conditions of the glaciers and to continue raising awareness on climate change, and asks for EDPA visibility information (use of EDPA logo).

In addition, it is important to continue to promote development projects and land management as well as the development of various forms of recreational and sports activities, given the very positive feedback received in 2015.

14. FRANCE – CAMARGUE NATIONAL RESERVE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2011)5 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 6 July 2011 attaches one condition and seven recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Camargue National Reserve.

Analysis by the Secretariat

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing the condition and the recommendations.

Remarks

In 2015, the Group asked the authorities to report on the evaluation of the implementation of the management plan for 2011-2015 and on the drafting and adoption of the management plan for 2016-2020.

In 2015, the evaluation of the management plan for 2011-2015 was conducted. The preparation of a new management plan for 2016-2011 is underway. It will include information on adaptation to climate change.

The National Reserve pursued the implementation of the recommendation, which was hindered by the lack of financial resources, particularly when it comes to reviving cooperation with other deltatic sites.

EDPA visibility

The EDPA logo is displayed at the reception of the Reserve, a booklet about the EDPA and stickers with the EDPA logo are available, e-mail signatures include the EDPA logo.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing the conditions and recommendations, particularly with a view to adopting a management plan for 2016-2020. The Group to request a copy of the management plan upon its adoption.

15. FRANCE - MERCANTOUR NATIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)17 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 2 July 2008 attaches five recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Mercantour National Park.

Analysis by B. Petrucci, member of the Group (reporting in French language), and M. Colantoni

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress made in the implementation of all the recommendations. However there is no information about the use of the logo or other EDPA visibility information.

With regards to wildlife, the Mercantour National Park has undertaken various activities, including: participation in the wolf-lynx Network; the development and distribution of computer application "wolf" for the implementation of the "wolf monitoring" protocol; winter monitoring of the presence of wolves; participation in the "CanOvis" project to learn about the sheep-wolf interactions.

With regards to the Park Charter, the Park informs that it was approved by decree dated December 2012. The Charter sets protection goals for the heart of the park and specifies the terms of the special rules to apply to it.

It further defines guidelines for the adhesion zone and specifies the modalities to implement the negotiation and partnership.

In a global context of reduced resources the park is constantly and actively looking for external funds.

Some conventions are in the final development stage. They allow the park to continue the implementation of projects in partnership with local municipalities and stakeholders.

With regard to the co-operation with the Maritime Alps Nature Park (Italy) for the establishment of a transboundary protected area, a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) (the "European Park Maritime Alps / Mercantour") was created in May 2013 to operate in the territory of France and Italy. The European Park has been promoting the nomination of the site to the UNESCO World Heritage list and it has been finalizing its 2015-2020 action plan.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress made in the implementation of all recommendations.

The Group to ask for an update on the process of the nomination of the transboundary UNESCO World Heritage Site and for EDPA visibility information (use of EDPA logo).

16. FRANCE - PORT-CROS NATIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)8 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 June 2012 attaches eleven recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Port-Cros National Park.

Analysis by B. Petrucci, member of the Group (reporting in French language), and M. Colantoni

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations.

The Charter of the national park was approved and published by Decree in December 2015.

It has several proposals for regulatory measures relating to the integrated control of marine fisheries and collection of mushrooms or fruit.

There are reports of marine management measures adopted for the island of Porquerolles.

The Scientific Council of the Park has held a workshop and a study on the economic carrying capacity to evaluate the impact of recreational activities.

The National Park website was completely renovated. A webpage with information about the European diploma (with the logo) was also created. This webpage will further be developed in 2016.

Signs for visitors are put in place.

Monitoring and control of invasive alien species have produced good results.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing all recommendations. For 2016, the Group to recommend to continue the accession process of the coastal municipalities to the Chart to set the new perimeter of the park, and to continue the monitoring and control of invasive alien species.

17. FRANCE - VANOISE NATIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2011)13 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 6 July 2011 attaches one condition and six recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Vanoise National Park.

Analysis by the Secretariat

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing the condition and the recommendations.

Remarks

In 2015, the Group asked the authorities to report on the official adoption of the Chart of the park.

The Chart of the Park was signed in April 2015. However, 27 areas out of the 29 areas concerned refused to join the Charter. Consequently the territory of the park was reduced, from 2000 km² to 741 km² whereas the core area remained unchanged.

The park experienced further budget cuts, which led to a decrease in its operational and staffing lines. The budget was reduced by 53% compared to 2010.

Significant efforts were made to welcome persons with disabilities.

The park has pursued the monitoring of mountain lakes and grasslands and intends to extend it to the “twinned” Diploma area Gran Paradiso National Park (Italy).

In September 2015, wolf hunt was approved outside the park’s core area.

EDPA visibility

The EDPA logo is used on the website, leaflets, the park’s newsletter and letterheads.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing the condition and the recommendations, particularly the adoption of the Charter of the park, the cooperation with the “twinned” Diploma area Gran Paradiso National Park (Italy) and the development of facilities for persons with disabilities. The Group to note that special attention is needed with regard to wolf management.

18. GEORGIA - VASHLOVANI PROTECTED AREAS

Resolution CM/ResDip(2015)1 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 3 June 2015 attaches 2 conditions and 7 recommendations to the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas to the Vashlovani Protected Areas.

Analysis by I. Ivanenko, Member of the Group

General observations

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress made on the implementation of all the conditions and recommendations.

The demarcation of Vashlovani Protected Areas has been held and the shelters were cut out of the borders of Vashlovani Strict Nature Reserve. Existing regulation for grazing in the reserve is rigorously enforced- there are no cases of grazing there. To accelerate the drafting process of a comprehensive sustainable grazing management plan, taking into account the socio-economic context and the effects of grazing on the long-term conservation of the features of the Vashlovani Protected Areas, the following activities took place:

EU/UNDP funded project “Sustainable Management of Pastures in Georgia to Demonstrate Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Benefits and Dividends for Local Communities” is being implemented for the purpose of rehabilitating pastures in Vashlovani PAs and developing sustainable grazing practices. Draft of the pasture management plan is ready for future discussion.

In accordance with recommendations:

To develop and fund an operational and comprehensive monitoring programme of the Diploma area, 4 sites have been chosen and fenced as an exclusive experience in order to conduct long-term observation on anthropogenic pressures. The methodology has been developed, the first phase of sampling carried out and the second phase is under way.

To prepare and implement a programme to maintain and renovate field equipment and the infrastructure for tourists and visitors, a 10-year plan has been developed with the help of Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF) and is being implemented step by step.

CNF funds and state budget both finances are allocated to implement the 2016-19. Plan.

Management plans are prepared to operate during 6 years. It is currently the third year of the actual management plan. Drafting of the next management plan will start in timely manner.

To improve further the expertise and skills of the staff members, especially in the field of ecology and the knowledge and monitoring of species according to the CNF, research and management plan are planned.

Cross-border co-operation for the protection of large carnivores is implemented in a regular basis.

Other remarks

There have been no changes either in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments nor in relation to staff and finances. The borders were not changed as well.

Issues identified

After receiving the Diploma, the interest towards Vashlovani Protected areas has increased. Ministry pays more attention to the area and is pleased with this fact.

Famous German Television Deutsche Welle expressed an interest towards Vashlovani Protected Areas and prepared a video about it.

EDPA visibility

The logo was used in the promotional brochure about Vashlovani Protected Areas which was distributed at national and regional levels.

The logo was used in the 2016 wall calendars which were distributed in governmental as well as international organizations operating in Georgia.

Suggested action

The Group to note sufficient progress in implementing all the recommendations and to suggest enforcing the issues of management plan.

19. GERMANY – BAYERISCHER WALD NATIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2011)4 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 6 July 2011 attaches six recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Bayerischer Wald National Park.

Analysis by the Secretariat

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing all the recommendations.

Remarks

Further to an on-the-spot appraisal in 2015, the Group decided to add a condition on the necessity, prior to any wind park authorisation, of an environmental assessment that guarantees that the natural values having led to the designation of the park as European Diploma for Protected Areas will be not significantly affected. The Group asked the park to report on the one condition and five recommendations reflected in its Opinion adopted following the exceptional on-the-spot appraisal. The Standing Committee at its 35th meeting in December 2015 called upon the Party concerned to take in due consideration the recommendations by the Group.

In 2015, the policy of non-intervention in the nature processes was pursued. In 2015, the area of the non-intervention nature zone in the extension area of the park was increased by 1,914 ha. The non-intervention nature zone covers 66.5 % of the whole park. The proposal of the park's administration to develop 75 % of the park's area as a non-intervention zone by 2027 has been supported by the municipalities in the park.

Two of the local communities in the region that are affected by the wind turbine plans (Frauenau and Spiegelau) have instigated citizen surveys and resolutions by the municipal parliaments, under which the wind power plans were not to be further pursued. The town of Zwiesel has decided to take court action against the regional parliament's establishment of priority area 42 for wind power.

Cooperation with Šumava National Park and local communities has enhanced.

EDPA visibility

The EDPA logo is present on the website and printed publications. The certificate of the renewal of the EDPA to the area is displayed in the visitor's centre.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing the condition and the recommendations of Resolution CM/ResDip(2011)4, particularly the extension of the non-intervention nature zone. The Group to invite the park to report on the one condition and five recommendations relating to wind-energy developments as reflected in its Opinion adopted following the exceptional on-the-spot visit.

20. GERMANY - BERCHTESGADEN NATIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2010)7 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 September 2010 attaches nine recommendations

Analysis by R. Érdiné Dr. Szekeres, Member of the Group

General observations

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing all the recommendations.

Remarks

The management plan has not been done yet. It was supposed to be ready by 2012. The main reason of this delay results from multiple staff changes during the last years. It has to be noted however that some parts of the plan have already been drafted.

Transformation of spruce forests into mixed forests maintains game browsing at an acceptable level. Due to the intensive control on bark beetle population in the bark beetle management zone, the infestation has been maintained on a low level since 2012. From a total of 4870 m³ of timber cut in the national park in 2015, approx. 4000 m³ were classified as breeding material for the bark beetle, 3200 m³ thereof were debarked and left on forest site. The high proportion of debarked wood, left on the poor sites, is necessary due to sustainable site fertility and for deadwood restricted organisms.

Regulation of game within the management zone of the National Park is of great importance to enable the rejuvenation of close to natural forest types and conversion of unnatural spruce forests. Therefore, game control will be still enforced in the following years.

A new approach for the updating of the forest development plan was created in 2015. The bark beetle dynamic as driver for the forest conversation will be focused in management planning. A lot of nature protection topic will be also integrated into the plan, such as the enhancement of habitats of protected species. In addition, the know-how of the staff will be better included.

Since September 2014 there is a common agreement with the federal police, which has its training center at Kühroint in the National Park. The agreement –specifies that both partners have to respect and support the work of each other. The National Park encourages the police to use its center in a compatible way with nature protection.

The strong cooperation between the protected areas authorities and the relevant stakeholders of the region (especially the German Alpine Club) which was build up during the last years, highly participates to the conservation of alpine biodiversity.

In 2014 fourteen territorial couples of Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*, L.) have been monitored in the observation area of Biosphere Reserve Berchtesgadener Land and surrounding mountain regions. Seven feldged youngs have been documented. A lot of visitors attended guided tours related to the environment. Probability of golden eagle sightings during the guided tours increased up to 95 %.

Berchtesgaden National Park is aware of its responsibility in the management of large carnivores and in the education of the public concerning their return. Berchtesgaden National Park will be working on those topics in close cooperation with local livestock farmers as well as with the authority (Landesamt für Umwelt).

From its opening in May 2013 to November 2015, the central information center “*Haus der Berge*” in Berchtesgaden has had about 520.000 visitors. This huge number of visitors is not only the result of the attractiveness of the exhibition “Vertical Wilderness” but is also due to the utilization of the building as a meeting place for the public.

EDPA visibility (use of EDPA logo)

The Berchtesgaden National Park uses the European Diploma logo on its website. It is also presented in their new National Park brochure.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing all the recommendations.

21. GERMANY - LÜNEBURG HEATH NATURE RESERVE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)5 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 June 2012 attaches thirteen recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Lüneburg Heath Nature Reserve.

Analysis by the Secretariat

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing all the recommendations.

Remarks

In 2015, the Group asked the authorities to report on the developments related to the windmill zoning for Volkwardingen Wind Park, which would spoil the unique landscape of Lüneburger Heide (Natura 2000). The Group welcomed a court decision of 2014 removing the zoning for Volkwardingen Wind Park.

In 2015, the authorities reported that despite the court decision, the regional planning authority (*Landkreis Heidekreis*) was still working on a zone for wind energy in Volkwardingen.

The authorities ask the Council of Europe to help them in protecting this unique biodiversity site. They claim that Volkwardingen Wind Park would also block an important migration corridor for Black grouse and Black stork and will destroy an important habitat for bats, in particular Red kites (*Milvus milvus*). The species would be disturbed by drones which forced them to leave from the proposed project site.

It appears that an impact study of the “Lüneburger Heide” has been conducted. The authorities claim that the results of the impact study are altogether defective and incomplete. They ask for a full assessment of environmental effects of the windmill project in accordance with 92/43/EWG Habitats Directive.

EDPA visibility

The European Diploma’s logo will be used on the webpage.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing the recommendations. The Group to express concern over the allegedly ongoing windmill zoning for Volkwardingen Wind Park despite the court decision of 2014 to remove it. The Group to ask the authorities to report on the issue and to keep it under review. The Group to highlight the possibility of submitting a complaint under the case-file system of the Bern Convention, using an online complaint form: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/bern-convention/monitoring>.

22. GERMANY – SIEBENGEIRGE NATURE RESERVE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2011)10 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 6 July 2011 attaches 1 condition and 7 recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma.

Analysis by R. Érdiné Dr. Szekeres, Member of the Group

General observations

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing all the recommendations.

Remarks

In 2014 there were some concerns regarding plans to establish a Factory Outlet Centre at Königswinter. There were interventions of the Council of Europe. The project has meanwhile been cancelled.

After a two-year preparation with partners, the management plan for the Siebengebirge Nature Reserve (4.850 ha) has been successfully presented to the Council on June 17, 2015 within the requested tree-year-period.

A Large Scale Conservation Project was launched. It is a national programme (14.6 million € for a ten-year period 2013 - 2023) designed to promote natural landscapes of national importance that provide outstanding habitats for protected animal and plant species. For the Siebengebirge-Sieg-Bonn Area the planning phase has nearly been completed and the implementation has already started in two areas.

On the basis of the Nature Park Plan several sessions have taken place during the last months. The District Manager Rhein-Sieg, Bonn, Königswinter, Bad Honnef and Sankt Augustin have already consented to contribute 60.000 € per year. Siebengebirge area has got other considerable financial support as well.

EDPA visibility

The European Diploma logo is used on website, in exhibitions, special posters and various flyers.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing all the recommendations. The Group to request the authorities to report in 2016 on the development of the construction status of the wind energy plant and to submit an impact assessment for that.

23. GERMANY- WOLLMATINGER RIED UNTERSEE-GNADENSEE NATURE RESERVE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2009)2 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 October 2009 attaches 6 recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Wollmatinger Ried Untersee-Gnadensee Nature Reserve

Analysis by R. Érdiné Dr. Szekeres, Member of the Group

General observations

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing all the recommendations.

Remarks

In 2014 report, competing uses (water sports, angling, aviation) were reported which still continued to cause problems in the core areas of the nature reserve. The recommendations 1 – 4 refer to the professional fishing activities in the reserve. In order to investigate and to document the potential disturbance in the shallow water zones of the nature reserves on the Bodensee-Untersee, the Freiburg Government Headquarters upon the request of the German Ministry established a „Round Table” where 3 meetings were held since December 2014.

These meetings were attended by representatives of the Nature Protection and Fishery Administration in Baden-Württemberg, the state fishery association, ornithologists, the fishery management, the waterways police, and locally acting professional fishermen from Germany and Switzerland and other stakeholders. Another objective of the Round Table was to reduce documented disturbances in the shallow water zones by common accord and harmonised practices for both states.

The Wollmatinger Ried is a refuge area for avifauna sensitive to disturbances, particularly during the moulting season. Increasing numbers of ferruginous ducks (*Aythya nyroca*), one of the threatened species, are coming to the area north of the Reichenau “dyke road” for the moulting season. Few studies on this topic have been conducted, so it should be documented and all potential disturbances eliminated (fishing, watersport).

The observation platform and the access path in the Ermatinger Becken were completely renewed in Winter 2014/15 and are now again available for visiting groups and also for monitoring and survey purposes. The total costs amounting to € 110,000 were supported by the Freiburg Government Headquarters.

EDPA visibility

The European Diploma together with its logo are displayed on flyers, maps, in the exhibition of the NABU Nature Reserve Centre Wollmatinger Ried and on all 22 boards along the information trail Wollmatinger Ried. The guides present to the public the European Diploma and its importance in all their tours.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing the recommendations and to encourage the authorities to strengthen further efforts to harmonise the protection measures by co-operation between Germany and Switzerland and by continuing the Round Table negotiations. The Group to request the authorities to report on the management of problems caused by roads and industrial constructions built directly next to the border of the Nature Reserve.

24. GREECE - CRETAN WHITE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2009)3 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 October 2009 attaches three recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Cretan White Mountains National Park.

Analysis by A. Rainho, member of the Group

The implementation of the three recommendations is in progress.

The Draft Presidential decree that included the extensive boundaries and zonation of the national park proposed by the Specific Environmental Study of Lefka Ori was revised by staff of the Management Body of the National Park, examined by the Ministry's service and will be sent for approval and signature to the President of Greece.

Other remarks

During 2015, several measures were taken to raise the awareness of the National Park as an EDPA. The logo of the EDPA was placed on the information sign at the entrance to the NP and on all the signs along the central path, and is also in the home page of the official website of Samaria NP Management Body. The EDPA is presented to the students and other participants in the environmental education program that the Management Body implements and was included in the book about the Gorge of Samaria that was reissued in 2015, in the chapter "Protection and Management of Samaria National Park".

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing the recommendations and to ask for a follow up on the signature of the Presidential Decree on the extension of the boundaries of the National Park. The Group to welcome the measures taken to raise the awareness of the National Park as an EDPA.

25. HUNGARY -IPOLYTARNÓC PROTECTED AREA

The Resolution CM/ResDip(2010)15 on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to the Ipolytarnóc Protected Area adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 September 2010 at the 1091st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) attaches 5 recommendations.

Analysis by R. Érdiné Dr.Szekere, Member of the Group

Renewal of the Diploma to Ipolytarnoc Fossils: 11 September 2020.

General observations

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing all the recommendations.

Remarks

Last year the Group of the experts asked for reporting in 2015 on the results of replacement of the exotic trees with the indigenous species, and on the geotourism in the area. Forestry activity went on covering some 10 hectares, where the former invasive acacia forest was transferred. The balance between open spaces and wooded areas on the western side of the conservation area was kept.

Beside this, sheep grazing and hay cutting activities are also responsible for the mosaic-like structure of open spaces with forested areas at the buffer zone of the Fossils. In the border zone tree thinning on forest edges also maintains the mixed vegetation cover of the landscape.

The site took an active role in the management of the Slovak-Hungarian transborder Novohrad-Nógrád Geopark, in order to preserve and interpret the natural assets of the region and became a focal, multilingual information point for geotourism.

The personnel enlargement is a positive development: 4 permanent staff member's positions (including 2 rangers) were created in the site.

EDPA visibility

Interpretation panels, website links, brochures and posters depicted the new logo and publicized the establishment of the European Diploma. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Diploma, a broader use of the European Diploma logo was decided.

A presentation was given by the Hungarian EDPA delegation attending the WORKSHOP "Protected Areas in Europe: the next 50 years" in the Regional Park of Migliarino.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing all the recommendations.

26. HUNGARY-SZÉNÁS HILL PROTECTED AREA

Resolution CM/ResDip(2010)16 on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to the Szénás Hills Protected Area adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 September 2010, attaches 8 recommendations.

Renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to the Szénás Hills Protected Area (Hungary): 11 September 2020;

Analysis by R. Érdiné Dr. Szekeres, Member of the Group

General observations

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing all the recommendations.

Remarks

2015 was a special year for the Szénás Hills Protected Area. They celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Szénás Hills's foundation and the 50th anniversary of the European Diploma for Protected Areas.

The Danube-Ipoly National Park Directorate and the Pilis Forest Company are working together in the conversion of alien Black pine forests, the reduction of game populations, the visitor management, guarding and monitoring. Main result is: conservation of habitats, Black pine stand conversion – 200 m³.

Monitoring is also an important activity : monitoring of the whole population of endemic plant species *Linum dolomiticum*, monitoring of Black pine succession, monitoring of game population.

The importance of the fence enclosing the protected area must be mentioned; the maintaining of the fence is part of the agreement of cooperation between two state-owned organisations, the Duna-Ipoly Nationalpark Directorate and the Pilis Forest Company. 200 000 HUF were allocated for this purpose in 2015.

As for the management of last year's freezing rain, ice and strong wind have caused serious natural damages: numberless amount of trees were broken and fell down, and approximately 30-40 % of the fence around the Szénás Hills Protected Area have been damaged. Restoration of damaged fence parts has started in 2015 and has not been finished yet. More than 10 million HUF were dedicated to repair the damaged fence.

Co-operation with volunteers (schools, non-governmental organisations, local governments, scouts) were continued, as well as with the local residents, police and civil guards.

Rangers and the environmental educator regularly guide groups in the field to raise awareness of the natural assets. In 2015 more innovative programmes and thematic guided tours were developed. The environmental educator gave a weekly lecture on nature conservation for local school children. The number of participants in official guided tours, nature conservation courses and volunteer activities was higher in 2015 than in the previous year.

A lot of volunteers and students did conservation jobs (cutting invasive tree species, planting of deciduous tree plants).

EDPA visibility

Duna Ipoly national park directorate has an annual programme booklet. It used the logo on the front page with the *Linum dolomiticum*'s photo. Numerous articles in several local and national magazines and seasonal printed newsletter were issued. A brochure about the Hungarian European Diploma Protected Areas was reprinted.

A thematic lecture and workshop were held in the „Danube-Ipoly National Park Club” for the 50th anniversary of the Diploma.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing all the recommendations.

27. HUNGARY -THE VOLCANIC PHENOMENA OF THE TIHANY PENINSULA

Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)15 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 June 2012 attaches 10 recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to the volcanic phenomena of the Tihany Peninsula (Hungary)

Renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the volcanic phenomena of the Tihany Peninsula until 28 May 2018.

Analysis by R. Érdiné Dr.Szekeres, Member of the Group

General observations

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing all the 10 recommendations. The present report covers also the developments in 2014, for which the annual report was not submitted.

Remarks

A new brochure was issued about the three European Diploma awarded area in Hungary and guided tours were announced for the public. A new publication was prepared for the European Diploma 50-year anniversary in Hungarian and English.

The European Union subsidies on a state-tender to finance the forcing back of invasive weed species, such as the *Ailanthus altissima* and *Eleagnus angustifolia* L. The project has been finished with significant results. It is important to note that the reed beds of the protected area were cleaned from the invasive species.

EDPA visibility

The logo for the European Diploma is used on the welcome boards, in the field and on the website. The EDPA logo is also regularly displayed in publications and websites: www.bfnp.hu, www.geopark.hu, www.levendulahaz.hu

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing all recommendations.

28. IRELAND - THE BURREN REGION

General observations

Resolution Resolution CM/ResDip(2013)3 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 10 July 2013 attaches two conditions and six recommendations to the award of the European Diploma.

Analysis by H.Berglund, Member of the Group

The recommendations attached to the EDPA-nomination were the following, which have almost entirely been fulfilled.

1. to encourage the participation of more farmers in the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme; the number of BLP clients for 2015 is 160 over 15,000ha. Annual spend in 2015 is circa €1m to participating farmers. BLP work is currently focusing primarily on the completion of technical and administrative checks on all 2015 plans. All contracted works are on schedule.
2. to plan subsequent steps in the second phase of European Union funding of the BurrenLIFE project through the Burren Farming for Conservation Programme; see Condition 1 above.
3. to stimulate the further development of the Burren Community Charter; the BLP, the Burren Connect Project, the Burren IFA, the Burrenbeo Trust, the Heritage Council, Clare County Council and Galway

County Council all continue to work together in developing and implementing the Burren Community Charter.

4. to stimulate further development of sustainable ecotourism and practice in the Burren Region; the Burrenbeo Trust continues to place emphasis on sustainable ecotourism and promotes the Burren as a “learning landscape”. The Learning Landscape Symposium took place in July 2014 and brought together leading national and international specialists on how best to use the Burren as a learning resource through different principles and practice in place-based learning. This included keynote speakers, workshops and fieldtrips to investigate ways to use local resources to make learning a richer, more exciting and rewarding educational experience. This all took place in the Burren, the ultimate ‘outdoor classroom’.

5. to discourage mass tourism in the Burren Region which does not accord with the principles of sustainable development; The Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark (which covers much of the EDPA area) has an executive board comprising a manager, geologist, tourism co-ordinator and communications co-ordinator. This in turn is led by a steering committee representing Clare County Council, Geological Survey of Ireland, Failte Ireland, Office of Public Works, National Parks and Wildlife Service, National Monuments Service, Heritage Council, NUIG, UCD, Burren Ecotourism Network, Burren IFA and Burrenbeo Trust. The Geopark works with local communities and groups to develop work programmes, - such as educational programmes and trails. The Geopark has also forged a special relationship with the Burren Ecotourism Network. Both are working closely together to develop the Geopark as a world class, accredited sustainable tourism destination. The Geopark’s work programme in the development of the Geopark as a sustainable tourism destination, in balancing conservation and tourism, in training and educational programmes and in developing policy is being funded to 2017 by EU LIFE.

6. to encourage volunteers to participate in the sustainable management of the Burren Region; the Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers is a voluntary community that has been active in 2015 and works towards the sustainable management of the Burren by addressing key conservation issues and needs in the region. The Burrenbeo Conservation Volunteers was born out of a need for hands-on conservation workers. In a region of decreasing rural population key conservation issues such as scrub encroachment and the rebuilding of stone walls are becoming harder to tackle and the conservation volunteers provide a very important resource to address this.

Issues identified

The many actors in the Burren EDPA can be considered both a strength and a constraint. It is essential that the progress is continuously followed, and the complicated financial issues in a park like this, also merits close attention. The extensive training and educational programmes in the EDPA also tend to secure the visibility of the EDPA-branding.

EDPA visibility

In several ways the visibility in the park has been improved, and continues to be so, since many of the actions and recommendations focus on outreaching programmes.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing all the conditions and recommendations. The Group to note that many actors are involved in the management and financing of the park, which merits scrutinising in the years to come. The Group to highlight that simplifying the management planning might be a long-term goal.

29. ITALY - ABRUZZO, LAZIO AND MOLISE NATIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)10 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 June 2012 attaches two conditions and eight recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park.

Analysis by B. Petrucci, member of the Group, and M. Colantoni

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress made in the implementation of all the conditions and recommendations.

Issues

The adoption of the park management plan and the definition of contiguous areas are still in slow progress.

Regarding the tuberculosis problem, all three regions involved in the park have undertaken actions to improve animal health management.

Other remarks

The Ministry of Health has produced a special ordinance for diseases management such as tuberculosis and - for the first time - has introduced in the National Prevention Plan 2014-2018 the implementation of a wildlife health surveillance plan.

The Ministry of the Environment has granted funds to the Italian national parks to improve the wildlife and flora management. The Park has received 123.000 €.

Five ancient beech forests in the National Park are part of the transnational World Heritage serial nomination "Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and other regions of Europe". The nomination dossier for inscription into the World Heritage List was submitted to the UNESCO on 2016.

The Park uses the logo of the Diploma on its website, on signs located on the main roads to the entrance of the Park, in the Pescasseroli Visitors Centre and it is creating a link between the Park website and Diploma website.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing the recommendations.

The Group to strongly ask to step up efforts towards the adoption of the management plan of the park and the definition of contiguous areas. The Group to ask to report on the progress thereof in 2016.

The Group to express concern over the decline of the Marsican brown bear (*Ursus arctos marsicanus*) classified as strictly protected under Appendix II to the Bern Convention. The Group to request the authorities to monitor its population. The Group to ask the authorities to report on the measures taken to protect the Marsican brown bear, particularly sanitary measures.

30. ITALY– GRAN PARADISO NATIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2011)3 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 6 July 2011 attaches one condition and seven recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Gran Paradiso National Park.

Analysis by the Secretariat

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing the condition and the recommendations.

Remarks

In 2015, the Group asked the authorities to report on the staffing development and the official adoption of the management plan.

In 2015, the park's management plan, expected by 2012, was pending to the review and final approval by the Council of the park and regional authorities.

A scientific advisory council to provide input from the scientific community regarding the management of the park has not been established yet.

An increase in the park's funding from the state budget was recorded. There were no changes in the park's staff.

To safeguard natural and landscape assets in town planning, two phyto-pedo purifiers for high altitudes were installed and proved to be efficient against environment improvement indicators.

Some species from the EU Habitats Directive, such as the *Gypaetus barbatus*, the *Canis lupus*, the *Muscardinus avellanarius* and the *Salmo marmoratus*, were closely monitored.

EDPA visibility

The EDPA logo is used on the website, leaflets, the park's newsletter and letterheads. The park intends to increase the use of the EDPA logo in its previous printed materials.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing the condition and the recommendations, particularly the cooperation with the "twinned" Diploma area Vanoise National Park (France). The Group to request further updates on the adoption of the management plan and the setting up of a scientific advisory council.

31. ITALY - MONTECRISTO ISLAND NATURE RESERVE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)16 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 2 July 2008 attaches nine recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Montecristo Island Nature Reserve.

Analysis by M. Colantoni

The annual report informs on the progress in implementing the recommendations.

All the information about the reserve is stored in an Information System, used for the management activities.

The *Ailanthus* has been almost totally eradicated thanks to the Project LIFE "Montecristo2010".

Fences to preserve natural vegetation from goats were built (Life project).

The wild goat population amount is quite stable and shows a good resilience.

The boundaries were fixed and a remote surveillance system was settled by the Coast Guard.

In 2016 the Nature Reserve predict to be able to set some photovoltaic panels and a little wind mill, so that the diesel generator will be used only in case of emergency.

The National Park's Management Plan was adopted in 2010.

Other information

The European Diploma's logo is exposed near the landing site of Montecristo Island Natural Reserve, along the Island's paths and in every official communication.

The island is part of Biosphere Reserve under periodic review.

Issues

The reserve has recorded a strong decline in funding for management activities.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing all the recommendations.

The Group to recommend keeping the financial difficulties under observation.

32. ITALY - MAREMMA REGIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)9 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 June 2012 attaches seven recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Maremma Regional Park.

Analysis by M. Colantoni

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing most of the recommendations.

Other remarks

The park participated in 2015 and will continue to take part in 2016 in various festivals, educational events and tourist itineraries, which should help to increase its visibility and its economic condition. However there is no information about the use of the logo or other EDPA visibility information.

The park communicates about three active archeological areas and a new area.

The park communicates about the increase of the beach in the area of Marina di Alberese, thanks to the works done during these last years against the coastal erosion.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing the recommendations.

The Group to encourage the actions to create the park trademark, increase the visibility and remediate to the economic difficulties.

The group to ask for EDPA visibility information (use of EDPA logo).

The Group to ask more information about the extension of the Park and the related “studies to fill in the format of request for the Environment Ministry”.

33. ITALY - MARITIME ALPS NATURE PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)20 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 June 2012 attaches two conditions and four recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Maritime Alps Nature Park.

Analysis by M. Colantoni

Conditions and recommendations were apparently fulfilled.

Other remarks

With regards to the co-operation with the Mercantour National Park (France) for the establishment of a transboundary protected area, a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) - the "European Park Maritime Alps" - was created in May 2013 to operate in the territory of France and Italy. The European Park has been promoting the nomination of the site to the UNESCO World Heritage list and it has finalised its 2015-2020 action plan.

The European Diploma logo is inserted in the Park website (www.parcocalpimarittime.it) and in the cross-border portal (www.marittimemercantour.eu). The websites have a link to the European Diploma page on the website of the Council of Europe. Furthermore the logo is currently being used in several publications printed in various languages.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the fulfillment of the conditions and recommendations.

The Group to ask for an update on the state of the nomination of the transboundary UNESCO World Heritage Site.

34. ITALY - REGIONAL PARK OF MIGLIARINO, SAN ROSSORE AND MASSACIUCCOLI

Resolution CM/ResDip(2010)3 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 September 2010 attaches ten recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Regional Park of Migliarino, San Rossore and Massaciuccoli.

Analysis by B. Petrucci, member of the Group, and M. Colantoni

The 2015 annual report provides information on the progress made in the implementation of all the recommendations.

The managing body is able to ensure the conservation of the natural heritage part of the park, according to the recommendations, and to overcome some objective local difficulties.

A complex study on the groundwater system has been concluded. This has allowed to 1) report on problems with the brackish water, 2) fix – in order to manage this resource - the basic elements to assess the granting of new water wells 3) establish specific technical requirements to drill wells and to pump water.

To keep under control the deer and the wild boar population, the Park has decided to mandate an outside company to directly carry out management activities (capture and slaughter). An agreement with the managing authorities of the largest army base (900 ha) enables the elimination of deers in the area.

Other remarks

The Park has given information on the importance of the European Diploma of Protected Areas in the workshop "Protected areas in Europe: the next 50 years".

The European Diploma logo is used on all publications and promotional material.

With regards to the proposal for extension and renaming of the UNESCO MAB biosphere reserve “Selva Pisana” into “Selva Costiere di Toscana”, the Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves (IACBR) approved in February 2016 the nomination form pending the implementation of specific recommendations.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress made in the implementation of all the recommendations.

For 2016, the Group to recommend keeping under observation the ground-water salinity problems, technical requirements related drilling wells and pumping, as well as control of deer and wild boar population.

35. ITALY - SASSO FRATINO INTEGRAL NATURE RESERVE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2010)12 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 September 2010 attaches eight recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Sasso Fratino Integral Nature Reserve.

Analysis by M. Colantoni

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing all the recommendations.

Other remarks

In Italy, on August 7 2015, was approved a Law which forecasts the reorganization of the State Forestry Corps.

The Reserve is part of the transnational World Heritage serial nomination “Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and other regions of Europe”. The nomination dossier for inscription into the World Heritage List was submitted to the UNESCO in 2016.

The European Diploma logo is used on: information boards located in different points of the Nature Reserve; a poster for the 50th anniversary of the European Diploma of Protected Areas in Forestry Museum “Carlo Siemoni”; a book about the 50th Anniversary of foundation of Integral Reserve of Sasso Fratino. Furthermore a specific book is dedicated to European Diploma of Protected Areas. This book can be downloaded for free at www.wildlifevideo.it

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress made in the implementation of all the recommendations.

The Group to recommend keeping under observation the management of the area in relation to **the** reorganisation of the State Forestry Corps.

36. NETHERLANDS - BOSCHPLAAT NATURE RESERVE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2010)9 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 September 2010 attaches five recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Boschplaat Nature Reserve.

Analysis by J.W. Sneep, Chair of the Group

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing all the recommendations.

Remarks

Additional funding was available this year to monitor the most characteristic breeding birds of this nature reserve. Funding for this will be included as a standard item in the budget in the coming years.

The objectives related to dynamic coastal management in the western part of the reserve were achieved. A special brochure about dynamic coastal and dune management was developed. To begin the discussion about the new site management plan, a “learning and hands-on day” is being organised for island residents this autumn.

According to the 2015 monitoring report, large surfaces of cockle beds in the southern part of the Boschplaat reserve (mudflats) are densely populated now.

In 2015, the Boschplaat became the second area in Europe to be officially recognised as a Dark Sky Park.

The logo for the European Diploma is used on the welcome boards and on the website.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing the recommendations.

37. NETHERLANDS - DE OOSTVAARDERSPLASSEN NATURE RESERVE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2009)6 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 October 2009 attaches two conditions and six recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve.

Analysis by J.W. Sneep, Chair of the Group

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing the conditions and all the recommendations.

Remarks

As far as the development of Lelystad airport is concerned, at this moment no final decision has been decided about the flight paths of the aircrafts. The expansion of the airport itself will take place. Concerning the proposed routes for ascending and descending aircrafts, the final routes will most likely remain away from the nature reserve, mainly to avoid disturbance and the risk of mid-air collisions with birds.

The contacts between the municipalities of Lelystad, Almere and the province of Flevoland and Staatsbosbeheer at several levels have been intensified, also because of the fact there is a wish to give the Oostvaardersplassen and its surrounding woodlands the status of National Park.

Last year both centres started to be used as a place where the public could meet with the manager of the reserve. There was an increase of staff members.

The Natura 2000 Management Plan has nearly gone through all the procedures. It is open now for the last round of comments. As soon as this round has ended the implementation can start.

As every year a new annual report was made about the previous year management (see website). The total number of visitors for the whole area is close to 1.000.000 visitors.

The logo for the European Diploma and information about the European Diploma is not used on the website and on relevant publications.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing the conditions and recommendations.

38. NETHERLANDS - DE WEERRIBBEN-DE WIEDEN NATURE RESERVE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2015)2 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 3 June 2015 attaches one condition and eight recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the National Park Weerribben-Wieden.

Analysis by J.W. Sneep, Chair of the Group

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing the condition and all the recommendations.

Remarks

The province of Overijssel is responsible for drafting the N2000 management plan. The management plan will be ready in 2016.

In 2015, a monitoring programme was carried out by the province of Overijssel. In 2016, monitoring will be carried out by the two TBO's (terrain managing organisations).

The monitoring of farming development, water management or anything similar in and around the Weerribben-Wieden is still going on.

An eel conservation plan has been draft together with professional fishermen.

There are no longer professional fishermen active in De Weerribben, although there is some angling in restricted places.

The designation of adjoining areas as extensions of, or buffer zones is in progress.

A new vision for the Wieden is in preparation.

Many sign boards in De Wieden have been updated with improved and more modern explanation.

New information boards have been placed, showing information about the European Diploma.

The logo for the European Diploma and some information about the European Diploma is used on the website.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing the condition and all the recommendations and to ask, in the 2016 annual report, updates on the implementation of the N2000 management plan.

39. NETHERLANDS - NAARDERMEER NATURE RESERVE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2009)7 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 October 2009 attaches one condition and four recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Naardermeer Nature Reserve.

Resolution ResDip (2004)12 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 5 May 2004, attaches 7 recommendations to the European Diploma awarded to the Naardermeer nature reserve.

Analysis by J.W. Sneep, Chair of the Group

The 2015 annual report informs on the implementation of the condition and recommendations of both above mentioned resolutions.

Remarks

The governmental budget-cuts from the past are to be compensated the next two years. This means that the province will get more money to complete the National Nature Network. It is likely that

Natuurmonumenten is supported and hopefully one of the biggest missing-links in the buffer zone will be in possession of Natuurmonumenten in 2016.

Since last year more and more ecological corridors are being developed. The connection to the Vecht river is under construction and the zone towards IJmeer and IJsselmeer is nearly ready. Also inside the contours of the Naardermeer itself several corridors are in preparation to take away the barrier formed by the railway.

Negotiations are currently carried out to purchase more farmlands in the surrounding of the nature reserve, and it is likely they will succeed.

In 2013 the actual widening of the A1 motorway started. Due to the widening of this motorway a few parts of different nature areas between Naarden and Amsterdam become more impacted and are compensated in acres elsewhere. A part of the Uitwatering in the north of the Naardermeer is relocated. Currently this new area is being developed into an eco-zone; wet grassland, shallow water banks and reed beds are part of the new zone.

LIFE programme “New LIFE for Dutch fens” is making progress. The restoration actions will start in November 2015. To improve the conditions for marsh birds and peat vegetation, young trees in old reed land and patches of forest are to be removed, as well as and the topsoil of underdeveloped wetland.

The logo for the European Diploma and information about the European Diploma is not used on the website and on relevant publications.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing the condition and recommendations. The Group to encourage the authorities to raise awareness about the Naardermeer Nature Reserve as an EDPA-holding area.

40. POLAND – BIALOWIEZA NATIONAL PARK

See the report of the meeting [T-PVS/DE(2016)04]

41. POLAND – BIESZCZADY NATIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)18 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 June 2012 attaches one condition and five recommendations to the renewal of the EDPA to the Bieszczady National Park.

Analysis by the Secretariat

In 2015, the Group asked to report on the final adoption on the MP (requested by 2014 – last extension in 2012).

Work is underway. The AP was to be approved by the Minister of the Environment by the end of 2015.

The Protection Plan for the years 2011-2031 was made and submitted to the Ministry of the Environment. Further work is underway on the preparation of the Regulation of the Minister of the Environment implementing this plan. On the basis of a draft plan for 20 years, the BNP administration prepares protection tasks for each year. It was expected that the three-years Action Plan for 2016-2018 would be approved by the Minister of the Environment by the end of 2015.

The BNP administration extended the total size of strictly protected areas in the park up to approximately 70% (from 63%). The enlargement is included in Action Plan for 2016-2018 years.

EDPA visibility

The park uses the European Diploma logo on the official website and on the information boards which have been installed in the park area since the last renewal.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing the conditions and recommendations, particularly with a view to adopt a management plan and extend the total size of strictly protected areas from 63% to 70% under the new AP for 2016-2018. The Group to request a copy of the management plan upon its adoption.

42. PORTUGAL - DESERTAS ISLANDS NATURE RESERVE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2014)1 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 02 July 2014 attaches two conditions and seven recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Selvagens Islands Nature Reserve.

Analysis by A. Rainho, member of the Group

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing all the conditions and recommendations. The actions and projects fulfilled during 2015 will greatly contribute to the fulfilment of the recommendations attached to the award.

Emphasis is given to the two ongoing LIFE+ projects whose actions involve both monitoring and recovery of valued species habitats.

Other remarks

During 2015, all the events and lectures addressed to the public in general and target groups, as well as the website, facebook campaigns and new production of illustrated material, namely informative panels, used to raise awareness about the importance of the Desertas Islands Nature Reserve, were reinforced with the European Diploma logo.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing all the recommendations and to greet the commitment of the Regional Authority to update the Management Plan by the end of 2016. The Group to welcome the measures taken to raise awareness about the Nature Reserve as an EDPA-holding area.

43. PORTUGAL - SELVAGENS ISLANDS NATURE RESERVE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)4 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 June 2012 attaches one condition and six recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Selvagens Islands Nature Reserve.

Analysis by A. Rainho, member of the Group

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing the condition and all the recommendations. The actions and projects fulfilled during 2015 will greatly contribute to the fulfilment of the recommendations attached to the award.

Other remarks

During 2015, all the events and lectures addressed to the public in general and target groups, as well as the website, facebook campaigns and new production of illustrated material, namely informative panels, used to raise awareness about the importance of the Selvagens Islands Nature Reserve, were reinforced with the European Diploma logo.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing all the recommendations and welcomes the measures taken to raise awareness about the Nature Reserve as an EDPA-holding area.

44. ROMANIA - PIATRA CRAIULUI NATIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2011)2 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 6 July 2011 attaches one condition and six recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Piatra Craiului National Park.

Analysis by A. Rainho, member of the Group

Regarding the condition for the renewal of the European Diploma, the report informs that the Management Plan was approved in December 2013 by Governmental Decision (GD 1057/2013). In 2012, the Park Administration started the revision of the National Park's Management Plan.

The 2015 annual report further informs on the progress in implementing all the six recommendations, in line with what was developed during 2014. It also reports the conclusion of the document "Guidelines for new construction works within the PCNP on a sustainable development basis".

Other remarks

The EDPA logo was included in several publications, namely:

- Piatra Craiului National Park: guide of European and national protected species and habitats"
- Piatra Craiului National Park: thematic guide of the visitor trails
- 12 types of leaflets regarding the main elements (species and habitats of European interest) of the park
- one leaflet for the general presentation of the park

The logo is also displayed on 6 information boards located in the 4 information points at the main entrances of the park, on 18 information boards located on 4 thematic tourist trails, in a glass wall inside the visitor center and in all the park official papers.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing all the recommendations and the measures taken to raise awareness of the National Park as an EDPA-holding area.

45. ROMANIA - DANUBE DELTA BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2010)17 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 September 2010 attaches thirteen recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve.

Analysis by A. Rainho, member of the Group

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing all the recommendations. The work was well done. Emphasis is given to the approval of the Governmental Decisions (GD) regarding the rules of navigation inside the Reserve (GD 538/2015) and the Management Plan and the Regulations for the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (GD 763/2015).

Other remarks

In September 2015, the Management Authority organized an anniversary seminar, with international guests, to celebrate 50 years of European Diploma and 25 years of conservation and protection in Danube Delta. During the year 2015, all the official documents were marked with anniversary logo of the European Diploma and all the information materials produced were marked as well with the anniversary logo of the European Diploma (leaflets, bookmarks, cups, bags, T-shirts, etc).

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing all the recommendations and the measures taken to raise the awareness about the Biosphere Reserve as an EDPA.

46. RUSSIAN FEDERATION – KOSTOMUKSHA STRICT NATURE RESERVE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)13 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 June 2012 attaches two conditions and two recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma.

Analysis by R. Érdiné Dr. Szekeres, Member of the Group

General observations

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing all the recommendations.

Remarks:

Two conditions were attached to previous renewal concerning the preparation, or finalisation, a management plan for the Reserve for the next five years. In 2014 in the framework of the international project, in conjunction with the reserve "Friendship" a development tourism strategy was established.

The second condition is completely satisfied. After surveying the procedure in 2009, the whole area of the lake Kamennoe and the lake Minozero was fully integrated in the reserve.

Financial resources for the proper functioning of the reserve were found. Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation provides financial support. During the year 2013-2014, four tourist routes were fully or partially equipped. The building of the reserve, hosting the visitor centre, was completely renovated.

State policy in the sphere of optimization of water consumption recommendations, for the installation of water meters and flexible system of tariffs for water, has led to a reduction of 30% in the consumption of water from the lake Kamennoe, located in the reserve.

Research work was carried out in the framework of the scientific theme "The observations of phenomena and processes in the natural complex Kostomuksha Reserve and their study program" Chronicle of Nature". Finnish and Russian experts jointly carried out work on monitoring avifauna, flora and fauna of the islands of Lake Stone and places of former settlements along the banks of Lake Stone, and on identifying migration routes of forest reindeers (*Rangifer tarandus fennicus*). The experts also participated in the development of recommendations for the conservation of meadow associations.

In 2015, work started on the inventory of vascular plants and lichens, and revealed more than 30 new species. Monitoring studies and phenological observations continued for rare plants and animals. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation prepared and approved an application for the assignment of the status of a biosphere reserve.

EDPA visibility

No information.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing all conditions and recommendations. The Group to suggest a better use of the EDPA logo. The Group to request the authorities to report in 2016 on the implementation of the conditions and recommendations attached to the last renewal as per Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)13.

47. RUSSIAN FEDERATION – OKA NATIONAL BIOSPHERE RESERVE

The Resolution CM/ResDip(2010)2 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 61 September 2010 attaches 1 condition and 5 recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma.

Analysis by R. Érdiné Dr. Szekere, Member of the Group

General observations

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing most of the recommendations.

Remarks

Public awareness was developed through different actions. Historical sightseeing tours and thematic tours related to different domain of biology (botanical, hydro-biological, ornithological, mammological, etc.) were organised. The visitor center proposed several activities for local children which are good means to revive traditions. Children became familiar with the technology of modeling of traditional Russian toys. Exhibitions in the region, Ryazan and other cities of Russia were organised. Celebrations of ethno-ecological holidays, such as the Pancake week, Christmas, were organised with the participation of local population.

Currently, there are permanent photo exhibitions of children and employees of the Oka Reserve, an exhibition of club "Glinka". The exhibitions of drawings on birds is annually refreshed.

Sufficient resources were allocated, increasing the budget of the reserve. Laboratories of the reserve are equipped with the necessary materials: the laboratory ware is bought, microscopes are updated. This year two volumes of Proceedings of the reserve are published. The scientific conference devoted to the 80th anniversary of the reserve is carried out.

In the Lopata zone, the reserve should have been extended south-eastward as far as the river Pra in order to include some typical water meadow not yet represented in the reserve, a number of oxbows and a portion of the river Oka bank. In the Lopata zone the reserve is not extended south-eastward to include some typical water meadow because not all shareholders agreed to give up their shares and continue to use them as haying areas. Beside this the handover of the hay meadows to Oka National Reserve in the central forest section is not carried out. The work is underway.

Progress was made on environmental education and information. Every year about 9,000 people visit the Reserve and more than 500 excursions are organized to the ecological paths, the nursery of rare species of cranes, the bison nursery and to the Museum of Nature. In 2015 annual events (Birds Day, Cranes Day, etc.) were arranged. The newly opened Center of ecological information and education (Visit Center) hosts conferences with students, concerts, workshops with teachers and different other events (7 conferences and workshops were hosted in 2015). The Center also hosted the art exhibition and photo-exhibition of local artists devoted to Meshchera's nature, and the 80th anniversary of the Reserve.

The measures to regenerate desman habitat in the Oka plain have been continued and the impact of negative factors are also studied. As a result, the total of the reservoirs suitable for safe wintering desmans in this territory grew by 11.1 %. In proportion to this indicator, the number of a breeding livestock increases.

The collective monograph where are summed up the Reserve activities of the last 80 years (1935-2015) is published.

EDPA visibility

The European Diploma's logo is used in all the presentations about the reserve including on the anniversary celebrations. The logo is placed on many notices. The logo is displayed on the building of the reserve and in the director's office.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing most of the recommendations, to ask for further information in the 2016 report about participatory management of stakeholders and landowners. The Group to express concern that the management plan devised in 1997 has not been formally adopted. The Group to request the authorities, including the Ministry concerned, to clarify the rules of procedure related to the adoption of the management plan for the Oka National Biosphere Reserve.

48. RUSSIAN FEDERATION - TSENTRALNO-CHERNOZEMNY BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)12 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 June 2012 attaches 5 recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma.

Renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Tsentralno-Chernozemny Biosphere Reserve until 18 September 2018.

Analysis by R. Érdiné Dr.Szekeres, Member of the Group

General observations

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing all the recommendations.

Remarks

In 2015, mobile equipment for the monitoring of the steppe ecosystems were acquired and patrol financed from the budget of the Steppe project.

The creation of a buffer zone in Poima Psla and Zorinsky sections of the Zapovednik was carried on. The regulations about a buffer zone have been developed and the approval of some of the land users has been received. However some municipal authorities refused to approve a transitional zone of the reserve and therefore such a zone has not been formed on these two sites. In 2015 works have been continued on the expansion of the zapovednik's territory and the creation of biosphere range "Steppe" in Kursk area of 463 hectares. Public discussions and an environmental impact assessment of the planned economic activities were carried out.

The Steppe Project is financed by international organizations UNDP and GEF as well as by Federal Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of RF programme "Improving the coverage and management efficiency of protected areas in the steppe biome of Russia". Only 4 zapovedniks throughout Russia have been chosen as pilot territories for this project.

10 million rubles were allocated for the acquisition of automotive vehicles, including a new fire truck.

In 2015 the actions for the reintroduction of steppe marmots (*Marmota bobac*) on a pasture of the Streletsky site of the TsChZ were continued according to the Steppe project.

The banner referring to the 50th anniversary of the European Diploma and the list of actions planned for the celebration of the Anniversary were published on the Reserve website. The ecological poster which was developed by the Council of Europe for each natural wildlife reserve was printed and widespread on libraries of the city of Kursk. In Kursk region the competition for posters devoted to the 50th anniversary of the European Diploma was announced.

EDPA visibility

The logo of the Diploma of the Council of Europe is constantly used in the territory of the central part of the Reserve (on a facade of an office building, in the Museum of Nature and in the Ekologo-information center) and on the official Reserve website (<http://zapoved-kursk.ru/o-zapovednike/novosti-2015/50-let-evropejskomu-diplomu.html>;<http://zapoved-kursk.ru/o-zapovednike/konvencii/european-diploma.html>).

The logo will also be placed in the book of the Tsentral'no-Chernozemny Reserve which will be published at the end of 2015.

Suggested action:

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing all recommendations.

49. SLOVAK REPUBLIC - DOBROČSKÝ NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)11 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 June 2012 attaches one condition and two recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Dobročský National Nature Reserve.

Analysis by A. Rainho, member of the Group

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing the condition and all the recommendations. Following what was reported in 2014, during 2015 management of the reserve was in line with the management plan. In buffer zone B there was only one activity, concerning an intervention

on calamity timber. In the surrounding forest stands, outside of the protected area, prescribed rehabilitation and educational interventions were carried out in accordance with the valid Forest Management Plan.

Other remarks

The Protected Landscape Area Poľana organised at the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the European Diploma for the Protected Areas - on May 19th, 2015 – a special excursion to the Dobročský prales NNR for 30 pupils from primary school Jánošovka from Čierny Balog. It also prepared a field trip for a group of 6 adults and 2 children.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing the condition and recommendations and also to welcome the work for the special excursion to the Dobročský prales NNR on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the EDPA.

50. SLOVAK REPUBLIC - POLONINY NATIONAL PARK

See the report of the meeting [T-PVS/DE(2016)04]

51. SLOVENIA - TRIGLAV NATIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2009)8 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 October 2009 attaches two conditions and ten recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Triglav National Park.

Analysis by A. Rainho, member of the Group

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing the condition and all the recommendations.

During 2015 the TNP Council adopted a proposal of Management Plan. The document was sent to the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning and will now follows the normal procedure leading to the adoption of the Government Decree.

Very good progress has been made during 2015, particularly in reducing discharges of waste water (the period for solving the problem will be extended but the actions are ongoing) and reducing the conflicts between humans and great predators (by buying and donating electrical fences to farms facing major losses and developing awareness campaigns). The work on the brand testifying the quality of local products is also ongoing. Also during 2015 the EEAGrants project “Comprehensive Introduction of Environmentally Friendly Mobility in Triglav National Park for the Preservation and Real Experiencing of Nature” started, focusing on problems related to traffic and transportation inside the park.

Other remarks

During 2015, the European Diploma was mentioned and its logo was included in all important events and documents of the Park. In the presentations of the TNP to the general and expert public, the EDPA is mentioned as a milestone in the history of the TNP and Diploma’s logo is included into the presentations.

The 11th Meeting of the Bern Convention Group of Experts on Invasive Alien Species was held in TNP in June 2015.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing the conditions and all the recommendations. The Group to ask for report in 2016 on the adoption of the Governmental Decree concerning the Park Management Plan.

52. SPAIN - DOÑANA NATIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2010)13 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 September 2010 attaches two conditions and seven recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Doñana National Park.

Analysis by A. Rainho, member of the Group

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing the conditions and most of the recommendations.

As in 2014, the report clarifies that currently the Government of Andalusia is not responsible for water management in the Guadalquivir basin (contrary to what is stated in condition 2).

The "Special Plan for the management of irrigated areas located north of the forest crown of Doñana" and the "Accompanying Measures program" were approved by the Governing Council (Government Decree 178/2014 of 16 December) and are currently in implementation.

The authorities responsible for water management in the area of Doñana begun drafting a second planning cycle (2015-2021) of the Hydrological Plan of the Guadalquivir River basin, due to be approved by the end of 2015. The Management Authority of DNP sent the proposals made by the World Heritage Committee, to be integrated in this new planning cycle.

The Participation Council of Doñana reported favorably the "Doñana Natural Space Management Plan" in October 2015 and its approval is expected within the first quarter of 2016.

Other remarks

It is also worth noticing that an extension of approximately 14,000 hectares in the Doñana Natural Park is being processed, extending peripheral protection of the National Park. In July 2015 Doñana has been included in the IUCN Green List, rewarding the proper management of this natural space.

No information on the existence of measures taken to raise the awareness of the Natural Park as an EDPA.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the good progress in implementing the conditions and recommendations. The Group to ask for the 2016 report to include information on the (1) adoption of the Governmental Decree concerning the Park Management Plan; (2) adequacy of the second planning cycle (2015-2021) of the Hydrological Plan of the Guadalquivir River basin and (3) the evaluation of the Hydrological Plan.

53. SPAIN - ORDESA AND MONTE PERDIDO NATIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)13 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 2 July 2008 attaches five recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park.

Analysis by A. Rainho, member of the Group

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing all the recommendations. The actions and projects fulfilled during 2015 will greatly contribute to the fulfilment of the recommendations attached to the award.

The Master Plan of Use and Management of the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park was approved (Decree 49/2015) and is now into force.

Other remarks

During 2015 the logo of the EDPA was included in the OMPNP page of the National Parks Network and in the general brochure of the Park which is distributed for free at the information points and the Park

Visitor Centers. It is also displayed in several boards including the one at the entrance of the OMPNP at Ordesa Valley.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing all the recommendations and the measures taken to raise awareness about the National Park as an EDPA.

54. SWEDEN - BULLERÖ AND LÅNGVIKSSKÄR NATURE RESERVES

Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)15 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 2 July 2008 attaches 4 recommendations to the renewal of the EDPA.

Analysis by H. Berglund, member of the Group

General observations

1. The management plans for the two nature reserves have not yet been updated.
2. Talks with the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency about establishing the area as a national park will might restart during the year.
3. The proliferation of toxic algae in the archipelago is being assessed on a regular basis.
4. The sources of disturbances in the reserves and the bird sanctuaries are being supervised.

The efforts to limit the mink population have increased.

Issues identified

The management plan must be updated, but the process of establishing the area as a new NP is interfering with this. This process is at the moment weighing in the scales, and close attention must be payed to the outcome! If indeed it will start, it could strengthen the status of the area considerably, increase the EDPA, and would mean a substantially higher interest level from the public and others. The management of the EDPA is also difficult since there has been a slight controversy between the former managing party, and the newly assigned.

EDPA visibility

If the plans for National Park status are initiated, the EDPA-status should be emphasized. I consider this area a white spot on the EDPA-map.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing all the recommendations.

The Group to closely monitor the management of the area. The Group to request the authorities to report on the progress in the adoption of the management plan.

55. SWEDEN - MUDDUS NATIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)2 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 June 2012 attaches 7 recommendations to the renewal of the EDPA.

Analysis by H. Berglund, member of the Group

General observations

The recommendations attached to the nomination were as follows:

1. *Provide sufficient financial and human resources, including field staff, to the "Laponiatjuottjudus" (management board) in order to implement the new management plan and ensure a smooth transition from former the county management structure to the new board; and provide as soon as possible an English translation of the new Management Plan;*

Today Laponiatjuottjudus has seven employees and two project workers. Laponiatjuottjudus as an organization is now better equipped to implement the management plan since we now consist of a wide-ranging of competence within the field staff. The transition to the new organization is doing well because there are regular meetings where all parties attend.

Management Plan was translated into English in 2014 and is available on http://laponia.nu/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Laponia-forvaltningsplan-eng-web-150327_2.pdf.

2. Continue the predators' inventories and use the results in order to help conserving the exceptional predator populations while allowing the Sami population to continue their traditional reindeer herding activities;

Laponiatjuottjudus is not a Government authority. In the management task concerning the predators' inventories in Laponia we are continuously working with the Sami communities and Norrbotten County Administrative Board (CAB).

3. Establish a centralized research database linked to a GIS for the whole Laponia area and make the results of the research widely available for scientist and visitors;

Laponiatjuottjudus GIS system is under construction. This is mainly due to that we are not granted access to existing systems used by the former county management (CAB). However the work to develop and build up a Laponia GIS has increased during the autumn of 2015 since Laponiatjuottjudus now has one employee that has the experience and knowledge of working with these systems. This is a long-term work in progress that will continue during 2016.

4. Continue the monitoring of the fire areas including the natural regeneration processes and design a programme to monitor the effects of climatic change;

In 2013 the Norrbotten County Administrative Board (CAB) summarized the studies, which have been conducted in the forest fire area, into a report. Muddus/Muttos ecology and fire history is well documented and it is a common important task for the future to continue and encourage the research in the area. It is important to encourage people to visit the park and also give the visitors a broad range of information about the whole Muddus/Muttos area, including the value of forest fires for the biodiversity. During 2015 we have initiated the work of building a new visitor entrance. This is a work in progress and will continue during 2016.

During 2015 we have been cooperating with a company that produce maps in order to produce a map over the Muddus/Muttos area that also includes Sjaunja/Sjávnja nature reserve. We are now happy to announce that the new map over Muddus/Muttos National Park and Sjaunja/Sjávnja nature reserve is available to purchase. This map also shows where the forest fire in 2006 took place.

In Sweden the County Administration Board (CAB) is coordinating the different surveys and follow-ups of the national environmental objectives and the EU Birds and Habitats Directives that the Swedish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) is responsible for. These surveys and follow-ups of species- and habitats of interest indicate changes over time in both vegetation and animal species that possibly could be associated to climate change. Laponiatjuottjudus has an exchange with the Norrbotten CAB and we take part of the information and reports every year.

5. Assess the visitor flows and their impact both within and outside the park (ecological and economic impact);

With the new visitor entrance in the National Park we believe that we better can canalise and also monitor the effect visitors have on the area. During 2015 we have been using three visitor counters in Muddus/Muttos and we intend to continue using visitor counters at strategic places in the National Park.

6. Consider linking the Sarek and Padjelanta National Parks with the Muddus National Park and other conservation areas so that the Laponia World Heritage Site becomes a single European Diploma site;

This is a question for the board to consider on how to approach this question.

7. Reflect on the use of the different national and international designations for the area; organize a workshop with the relevant international organizations (e.g. Council of Europe, World Heritage Convention, Ramsar Convention, and National Park Service) with a view to harmonizing the reporting and monitoring requirements and the respective perimeters.

Laponiatjuottjudus is positive to discuss and exchange information with people who possess relevant expertise in the different matters. We are also positive to organize an international workshop. Although to organize a workshop of that magnitude is a financial question and hence we have an important task to prioritize this.

Issues identified

As with several of the action points, the cooperation between the Laponiatjuottjudus and the CAB of Norrbotten is essential for the success of the protection of the natural and cultural values of the EDPA. Must be closely followed! And the potential problem of one authority granting funding, another acting and not completely focusing on the same targets must be followed.

EDPA visibility

Quite a few initiatives and actions involving the EDPA-logo started. One problem identified by the managers is that the EDPA-logo is drowned in the flood of marks, logos etc. in these parks!

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing all the recommendations.

To Group to request the authorities to monitor declining species in the area, such as large carnivores. The linkage to management and/or climate change must be established to be able to buffer within the management plans.

56. SWEDEN - SAREK AND PADJELANTA NATIONAL PARKS

Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)3 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 June 2012 attaches 7 recommendations to the renewal of the EDPA.

Analysis by H. Berglund, member of the Group

General observations

The recommendations attached to the nomination were declared as follows. Note the similarity with the Muddus NP, which also would gain from a common ED-nomination!

1. Provide sufficient financial and human resources, including field staff, to the "Laponiatjuottjudus" (management board) in order to implement the new Management Plan and ensure a smooth transition from former the County management structure to the new board; and provide as soon as possible an English translation of the new Management Plan;

Today Laponiatjuottjudus has seven employees and two project workers. Laponiatjuottjudus as an organization is now better equipped to implement the Management Plan since we now consist of a wide-ranging of competence within the field staff. The transition to the new organization is doing well because there are regular meetings where all parties attend.

Management Plan was translated into English in 2014 and is available on http://laponia.nu/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Laponia-forvaltningsplan-eng-web-150327_2.pdf.

2. Continue the predators' inventories and use the results in order to help conserving the exceptional predator populations while allowing the Sami population to continue their traditional reindeer herding activities;

Laponiatjuottjudus is not a Government authority. In the management task concerning the predators' inventories in Lapponia we are continuously working with the Sami communities and Norrbotten County Administrative Board (CAB).

Last year's project concerning the wolverine, with the aim of improving the predators' inventories by collecting feces and also the use of traditional knowledge from the locals, has in 2015 been assembled into a publication. The project was funded by the Sami Parliament.

3. Establish a centralized research database linked to a GIS for the whole Lapponia area and make the results of the research widely available for scientist and visitors;

Laponiatjuottjudus GIS system is under construction. This is mainly due to that we are not granted access to existing systems used by the former County management (CAB). However the work to develop and build up a Lapponia GIS has increased during the autumn of 2015 since Laponiatjuottjudus now has one employee that has the experience and knowledge of working with these systems. This is a work in progress that will continue during 2016.

4. Closely monitor the use of snowmobile, motor boats and other off-road vehicles, particularly in view of controlling illegal hunting and fishing;

Controls and authority in Sarek/Badjelánnda is handled by the police and the Norrbotten County Administrative Board. Laponiatjuottjudus is cooperating with the authorities and we are working to maintain that visitors and inhabitants in the parks are following existing laws and regulations. We provide accessible information on our website about the regulations for the National Parks and we also have contact with the local inhabitants as well as local tourist organizations.

5. Set up a system for estimating the number of visitors, their profile and distribution over the year and initiate a research programme on the long term impact of the different human activities (e.g. reindeer herding, fishing and tourism) on the landscape, and design a programme to monitor the effects of the climatic change;

Laponiatjuottjudus is continuously working with the question concerning the number of visitors in the National Parks. In 2015 we have used visitor counters in a strategic place in Sarek. This is an ongoing work and we plan to increase the numbers of visitor counters on strategic places in the parks in the following years. For Padjelanta/Badjelánnda we collect statistics of the number of visitors from the tourist cabins situated in the park.

In the spring 2015 we also cooperated with the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) who conducted an investigation in questionnaire form concerning the status of the paths during the winter season. Laponiatjuottjudus was placing the questionnaires in visitor cabins throughout the park for the visitors to answer.

The impact of the different human activities on the landscape is an important question. Laponiatjuottjudus work with the reindeer herding communities in matters of concern. We also work with the Norrbotten County Administrative Board and towards tourist companies in matters of permissions and tourist activities. During 2015 we have initiated a project and a field study in Sarek and Padjelanta/Badjelánnda concerning the knowledge of how, when and where the indigenous Sámi people in the National Parks have fished and still fishes for their household requirements. This study is looking at fishing from different aspects (e.g. biological, historical and cultural) and we also study the biology of fish in different waters in the Lapponia WH area.

In Sweden the County Administration Board (CAB) is coordinating the different surveys and follow-ups of the national environmental objectives and the EU Birds and Habitats Directives that the Swedish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) is responsible for. These surveys and follow-ups of species- and habitats of interest indicate changes over time in both vegetation and animal species that possibly could be associated to climate change. Laponiatjuottjudus has an exchange with the Norrbotten CAB and we take part of the information and reports every year.

6. Build and equip as soon as possible the Visitor information centre in Stora Sjöfallet for the Lapponia WH site and provide specific information on the different National Parks; establish a network of smaller information points at strategic entrances into the Parks and communicate about the different categories of international designations;

The Naturum Laponia visitor information center in Stora Sjöfallet was officially opened in the autumn of 2014 and it consists of a large building including an exhibition area, a café and an auditorium. Outside there are traditional Sámi buildings. Laponiatjuottjudus obligation is to maintain the buildings and manage activities in the visitor center. Since Stora Sjöfallet/Stuor Muorkke National Park is adjacent to Sarek and Padjelanta/Badjelánnda National Parks the visitor center possesses information for all three National

Parks and also gives the visitor information about the entire Laponia world heritage site (WH). Our experience during this first year that the visitor center has been open is that it gives the visitors crucial information about how to behave in the protected areas and in the entire WH site. The visitor center plays an important role as a fixture before and after visiting the parks.

Smaller information points at strategic entrances into the parks (nodes) have already been installed in 2014 in Porjus, Gällivare and Jokkmokk. In 2015 a node adjacent to Sarek and Padjelanta/Badjelánnda National Parks was installed in Kvikkjokk. All these nodes contain information about the WH site, including the National Parks.

7. Consider linking the Sarek and Padjelanta National Parks with the Muddus National Park and other conservation areas so that the Laponia World Heritage Site becomes a single European Diploma site;

This is a question for the board to consider on how to approach this question.

This would help the lack of visibility within the parks mentioned above!

8. Reflect on the use of the different national and international designations for the area; organize a workshop with the relevant international organizations (e.g. Council of Europe, World Heritage Convention, Ramsar Convention, and National Park Service) with a view to harmonizing the reporting and monitoring requirements and the respective perimeters.

Laponiatjuottjudus is positive to discuss and exchange information with people who possess relevant expertise in the different matters. We are also positive to organize an international workshop. Although to organize a workshop of that magnitude is a financial question and hence we have an important task to prioritize this.

Issues identified

Concluding remarks on both Muddus and Sarek/Padjelanta EDPAs – low visibility still, need for cooperation esp. between the Laponiatjuottjudus and the CAB, and monitoring of important biodiversity is essential.

EDPA visibility

See above! Problems for the management with two EDPA's within one management. Also problematic with the plethora of logos and initiatives present in their material, and on their posters.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing all the recommendations. The Group to encourage the authorities to raise the awareness about the National Parks as EDPA-holding areas.

57. SWEDEN - STORE MOSSE NATIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)14 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 2 July 2008 attaches 5 recommendations to the renewal of the EDPA.

Analysis by H. Berglund, member of the Group

General observations

1. *Hydrological survey and completion of management plan:* The hydrological survey takes place every two year and was conducted according to plan during 2015.

Work with management plan has been ongoing during the year and was along with new and updated regulations decided by the Swedish EPA in November 2015.

The task with the new, improved and modern management is therefore concluded. Now the work starts to fulfill all that I stated in the plan.

2. *Changing inflow of water to Lakes Häradsösjön and Kävsjön*: No changes in inflow have been recorded during 2015 but the situation is not favorable for the birdlife or the habitats in or around the lakes. The new management plan includes better management actions for the water flow in and out of the lakes. We are planning to start work on these management actions during 2016.

3. *Monitor the situation of bark beetles (Ips typographus)*: The bark beetles are not a problem in the park or in the surrounding forests any more. No actions have been undertaken other than a constant readiness for new storms or bark beetle (or other insects) infestations.

4. *Promote scientific research*: We actively cooperate with universities in Sweden and Europe but the interest from their part is sometimes low. There are different scientific research programs running in the park.

We have limited resources to conduct scientific research on our own so cooperation with other organizations is desirable. Store Mosse are part of the nationwide research projected conducted by the SEPA but it so far only covers certain habitats in the park.

5. *Pursue the work on extending the protected area*: All remaining issues regarding land ownership are now completed. All land within the park is now state owned. But that only solves problem within the park. Work with appointing the adjacent Långö Mosse and previous Lake Svanasjön as nature reserve is still undergoing. The land within that nature reserve is the same hydrological system as the National park.

Issues identified

The implementation of the delayed management plan must be monitored. Financing has become a severe problem, the fluctuating amounts of money from the central government creating uncertainties in the management.

EDPA visibility

The Park management has not made the EDPA visible referring to:

1. We did not receive the correct logo until November 2015.
2. Many organizations are involved in the management of the national park and almost all of them wish to have their logo on our websites and/or signs.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing all the recommendations. The Group to encourage the authorities to raise the awareness about the National Parks as EDPA-holding areas.

58. SWITZERLAND – SWISS NATIONAL PARK (SNP)

Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)6 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 June 2012 attaches 6 recommendations to the renewal of the EDPA.

Analysis by H. Berglund, member of the Group

General observations

2.1. Reservat da Biosfera Val Müstair Parc Naziunal

The biosphere reserve buffer zone in the Engadine, to the north of the SNP, demanded by UNESCO, is a political project that cannot be implemented by the administrative body of the National Park. Procedure is consequently drawn-out. The original request, that the necessary adaptations should be completed by 2013, proved to be unrealistic within the framework of the basic requirements of the Swiss democratic system.

In 2015 a cooperation agreement between the five partners (municipalities of Val Müstair, Scuol, Zernez and S-chanf, and the SNP) for a joint UNESCO Biosphere Reserve was put to the vote in the four municipalities: voters in Val Müstair and Scuol were in favour of adopting the agreement, whereas Zernez and S-chanf rejected the proposal. The fundamental demands laid down by UNESCO for the establishment of a buffer zone surrounding the core zone within Swiss territory (= SNP) cannot therefore be fulfilled. 80% of the voting population in Scuol, which is a newly formed municipality, accepted the proposed agreement (which - even though this was of no political relevance - resulted in there being considerable support for the project throughout the Engadine region); consequently the biosphere reserve committee decided that the project should be put forward to UNESCO with the three remaining partners (Val Müstair, Scuol and Zernez). For all pending projects, UNESCO has allowed the deadline for the submission of documents to be extended to 2016. Whether the biosphere reserve can be definitively secured in spite of territorial demands not being fulfilled remains to be seen. At the end of the day it is a question of what UNESCO considers to be more important: strict adherence to the original conditions, or the acknowledgement of the challenges and obstacles of grass roots democratic processes. We hope that the second option will prevail, especially as the eventual development of the biosphere reserve in accordance with the original demands in the course of time cannot be excluded.

2.2. Human resources and “100-year SNP” jubilee

The SNP 100-year jubilee was a resounding success, insofar as organisation was concerned as well as public awareness and funding. This 3.5 Mio CHF project closed with a profit of CHF 58,000.

2.3. Communication concerning large predators

Being a scientist who has previously spent many years on the subject of the lynx, the writer is concerned that the ground for large predators in the SNP (and the surrounding area) must be carefully prepared. As early as 1997 we took a step in this direction with the setting up of an ongoing permanent exhibition entitled “Uors in Engiadina/Auf den Spuren der Bären” in the Schmelzra Museum in S-charl (on the eastern boundary of the SNP). In 2009 an edition of our National Park magazine “Cratschla” was dedicated to the theme of the lynx. Needless to say every opportunity is taken to inform the public about large predators. However we have no direct involvement with these creatures, since for many years their occurrence within the park and its surrounding area has only been migratory. Relations with the cantonal Office for Hunting and Fishing are excellent, with a positive outcome at various levels.

2.4. Impact of the Pass dal Fuorn road

The main Pass dal Fuorn road cuts through the heart of the SNP, which is problematic; traffic noise is not compatible with our total protection reserve, and the question of safety in parking areas is increasingly worrying. Due to the fact that the road is a through road (providing access to the Val Müstair and onward to South Tyrol) it is difficult to find a solution concerning emissions. The SNP administration has no competence in the matter. Requests to reduce the current permitted speed limit of 80 km/h have no chance of being accepted, neither by the authorities concerned nor by the local population. Noise measurements show that it is mainly vehicles travelling at excessive speeds that cause the greatest noise emissions. For this reason we continually turn to the cantonal police with requests for speed limit enforcement; they carry out speed controls as frequently as possible, depending on the availability of personnel. Additional traffic signs close to the parking areas (where walkers get in and out of their cars) have improved the safety situation there. An overall concept, which would also cover safety issues, will only become feasible once plans for building alterations in the area of the privately owned Hotel Parc Naziunal II Fuorn (that lies in the midst of the SNP) have been implemented. Since no building permit has been granted up till now, any further steps are currently blocked.

2.5. Collaboration with Stelvio National Park

Over the years the collaboration established between our two parks has been intensified and works satisfactorily. The occurrence of a cross-border epidemic of chamois blindness in 2015 also gave rise to close collaboration with the Stelvio National Park. The ibex population was relatively lightly affected, whereas the disease caused an increase in mortality amongst the chamois population. A close watch is

being kept on the situation collaboratively by both parks. We do not expect there to be any long-term effects on the chamois population.

2.6. SNP Extension

The enlargement of the SNP (e.g. biosphere reserve core zone) has for many years been a prime concern for the two persons in authority named at the beginning of this document. In the year 2000 the Macun plateau and lakes (3.6 km²) were successfully integrated into the Park. At present any further increase in surface area is politically unlikely. Though the SNP is greatly appreciated by the local population – not merely for its ecological benefits, but rather more for the economic advantages it brings – the idea of any further enlargement is not generally accepted by the population concerned.

Issues identified

The MAB-process of the EDPA must be followed, and the political/public establishment is of course a concern.

Continuation of monitoring the large carnivores is of interest.

The safety of the visiting tourist is definitely an issue of concern – the safety of the tourists and the impact of noise on the experience of the EDPA is apparently still unsatisfactory.

The economic reality of a PA is always of interest to follow, and here it would be of great interest to continue the mapping of the value for the local communities with this EDPA.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing all the recommendations.

59. TURKEY - KUŞCENNETI NATIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2011)6 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 6 July 2011 attaches four conditions and three recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma.

Analysis by the Secretariat

The 2015 annual report informs on the good progress in implementing the recommendations.

Remarks

In 2015, the Group asked the authorities to report on the evaluation of the wetland management plan for 2011-2015 and on the adoption of the MP for the next period.

In 2015, the wetland management plan for 2011-2015 was to be evaluated and the MP adopted. The Wetland Management Plan was to be revised by the end of 2015. The revision of water management plan is still in progress.

EDPA visibility

To mark the 50th anniversary of the EDPA, a ‘‘Bird House Contest’’ was held in collaboration with Şehit Mehmet Gönenç High school as part of Kuşçenneti Carnival at the end of May.

EDPA logos appear on printed materials and the EDPA flag is displayed in the visitor’s centre.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing the conditions and recommendations. The Group to reiterate its request to report on the evaluation of the wetland management plan for 2011-2015 and the adoption of the management plan for the next period.

60. UKRAINE – CARPATHIAN BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2012)1 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 June 2012 attaches seven recommendations to the renewal of the European diploma.

Analysis by the Secretariat

The 2015 annual report informs on the good progress in implementing the recommendations.

No report was submitted in 2014. The report for 2015 was received with a considerable delay.

With respect to recommendation 4, it is noted that the wolf (*Canis lupus*) is considered a game and “harmful wild” animal, pursuant to the national Hunting Regulations and Procedures (1996) and Order of the State Forestry Committee (1997). It is also noted that Ukraine ratified the Bern Convention with reservations, one of which concerns the selective regulation of the wolf population. At present, the regulation has no threshold. The authorities of the reserve consider that the wolf species require more protection, including by bringing the national legislation in line with international standards, and are devising an Action Plan on the Wolf.

EDPA visibility

CBR actively disseminates information about the European Diploma during all meetings and presentations, and in all reports and information booklets about the reserve. The European Diploma logo is used in presentations and in information materials.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing the recommendations. The Group to call upon the authorities to strengthen their efforts in wildlife management, including by devising and adopting an Action Plan on the Wolf, and reducing the poaching activities. The Group to encourage the authorities to submit their 2016 report well in advance before its meeting.

61. UNITED KINGDOM - BEINN EIGHE NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)12 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 2 July 2008 attaches seven recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Beinn Eighe National Nature Reserve.

Analysis by J.W. Sneep, Chair of the Group

The 2015 annual report informs on the good progress in implementing the recommendations.

Remarks

The new Reserve Plan has been completed, reviewed and will soon be a working document.

The native tree gene bank is being maintained. The deer cull forms now the main focus of management for the Reserve. Mink are routinely monitored during fieldwork.

Money has not become available for the project park facilities for hill-walkers in Glen Torridon.

The visitor centre has been refurbished and was officially opened on 9th May 2015. New wildlife viewing hide and refreshed trails are designed to provide high quality visitor experience.

The logo for the European Diploma is used on the welcome boards for the revised interpretation.

The European Diploma is promoted on the Beinn Eighe webpage of the National Nature Reserve website. The logo is displayed with a link to the EDPA webpage on the Council of Europe website.

Hazard auditing of all facilities is completed. Reports are completed and required actions undertaken. Information is also stored centrally within SNH. The fire plan is reviewed annually.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing the recommendations.

62. UNITED KINGDOM - FAIR ISLE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

Resolution CM/ResDip(2010)10 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 September 2010 attaches one condition and two recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Fair Isle National Scenic Area.

Analysis by J.W. Sneep, Chair of the Group

The 2015 annual detailed report informs on the good progress in implementing the condition and recommendations.

Remarks

The annual report highlights the significant acceleration in the process of designation of the area as Marine Protected Area (MPA). The annual report gives details about meetings, contacts, visits and support received from various and numerous stakeholders. After so many years of stagnation there has been spectacular progress during 2015. The key to this progress is the huge effort by the community and its partners to seek consensus with all major stakeholders and in particular the fishing industry.

The Fair Isle Marine Environment & Tourism Initiative (FIMETI) continues to publicise the MPA proposal through its website. It has also established a facebook presence. These communication media have proved to be effective at reaching a wider audience and achieving good positive responses.

Scottish Ministers have now approved that the proposed Development and Research Marine Protection Area status goes out to final public consultation. This is a major step forward in the case for Marine protected status. This is expected for March 2016.

There are several references on the Official Fair Isle website to the European Diploma status. The European protected area status plaque is displayed at the airport and the pier.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing the condition and all the recommendations, particularly the progress made in the monitoring of large carnivores over time.

63. UNITED KINGDOM - MINSMERE NATURE RESERVE

Resolution CM/ResDip(2009)9 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 October 2009 attaches seven recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Minsmere Nature Reserve.

Analysis by J.W. Sneep, Chair of the Group

The 2015 annual detailed report informs on the good progress in implementing all the recommendations.

Remarks

The control of the invasion of bracken using mechanical means is in good progress.

Lot of attention was paid on the issue of sea level rise and increased freshwater flooding of the grazing marches. Water levels in the main reedbed will continue to be maintained at the optima agreed in the management plan. Work on this scheme is due to start in November 2015.

All scheduled priority projects of the Reserve Management Plans were implemented.

The control and management of the piri-piri bur (*Acaena novae zelandiae*) is carried out.

Several information and education activities were developed. Over sixty schools participated in the reserve's formal education programme. Minsmere Nature Reserve is planning to host the "Conservation Generation" project: this project is aimed at year 10 students from local Secondary Schools who wish to pursue a career in conservation. Primary School Programmes have been reviewed and further developed being used to inform the RSPB's UK wide education programmes. The Minsmere Young Warders volunteer group is now established.

Special attention to the Europa Diploma Award will be given in planned publication materials in 2016.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing all the recommendations.

64. UNITED KINGDOM - PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK

Resolution CM/ResDip(2011)11 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 6 July 2011 attaches one condition and eleven recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Peak District National Park.

Analysis by J.W. Sneep, Chair of the Group

The 2015 annual detailed report informs on the good progress in implementing the condition and all the recommendations.

Remarks

Implementation of the National Park Management Plan (2012-2017) continues in good progress.

The Authority continues to work to safeguard key habitats through negotiation of agri-environment schemes. In addition a partnership project on grasslands has been initiated, identifying priority sites and reviewing options for their conservation.

The Moors for the Future Partnership (MFF) continues to co-ordinate major landscape scale delivery across moorland with an 11m pounds partnership with Natural England on agri-environment schemes: completion of EU funded MoorLIFE and in particular a successful successor programme MoorLIFE 2020 funded by EU LIFE for 16m euros.

A new partnership arrangement with the Woodland Trust has been agreed and includes the assessment and negotiation of agri-environment agreements to secure the management of ancient and semi-natural woodland sites in the National Park.

The implementation of the Cultural Heritage Strategy is successfully going on.

The Authority continues to champion the Peak District Environmental Quality Mark and has been providing advice on energy and water savings, waste management and renewable energy to land based business. The Authority continues to take a role in the Peak Leader Programme.

The Authority is working with other tourism partners to secure additional funding to enable a programme of sustainable tourism development that will expand the sustainable Peak District tourism product, especially in relation to rural cycle tourism and the development of the brand of the Peak District based on its environmental qualities.

The 50th anniversary of holding the European Diploma for Protected Areas was celebrated in 2015. The logo was added to the head of notepapers. The Council of Europe poster was displayed at the headquarters. Articles have been published in several magazines. A major celebration is planned in March 2016 with a record of achievements over the last 50 years.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing the condition and all the recommendations.

65. UNITED KINGDOM - PURBECK HERITAGE COAST

Resolution CM/ResDip(2009)10 adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 October 2009 attaches two conditions and eight recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma awarded to the Purbeck Heritage Coast.

Analysis by J.W. Sneep, Chair of the Group

The 2015 annual report informs on the progress in implementing the conditions and all the recommendations.

Remarks

The Wytch Farm oilfield is still being operated by Perenco. Negotiations between the operator and Minerals Planning Authority (Dorset County Council) continue.

Dorset County Council adopted a new minerals strategy in May 2014. This strategy aims at strengthening the policy for environmental protection, particularly for the designated area (Purbeck Heritage Coast and the Dorset area of Outstanding National Beauty). Dorset County Council has been developing a Minerals Plan.

Work on the inventory of Natural Areas is successfully going on.

Dorset County Council and partners continue to develop the potential of the park and ride site at Norden for greater use of sustainable transport options to access the Heritage Coast.

Ship-to-ship transfers in open water are now illegal. The compliance is enforced by the UK Maritime & Coastguard Agency.

The Ludworth Heritage Landscape Management Plan continues to be implemented.

The Wild Purbeck Nature Improvement Area Partnership continues to deliver its function. While the 3-years funded programme of biodiversity improvement was completed in March 2015, the Partnership is continuing with a renewed work programme.

The offshore wind farm project has been turned down by the UK Government. The main reason for the withdrawal was the negative visual impact especially on the Heritage Coasts of Purbeck and the Isle of Wight.

The European Diploma logo was promoted in an online article celebrating the Purbeck Heritage Coast's Diploma on the 50th anniversary.

Suggested action

The Group to welcome the progress in implementing all the conditions and recommendations.