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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

35th meeting
Strasbourg, 1-4 December 2015

**RECOMMENDATION NO. 181 (2015)
ON THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA FOR
PROTECTED AREAS**

*Document
prepared by
the Directorate of Democratic Governance*



Convention on the Conservation
of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

Recommendation No. 181 (2015) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 4 December 2015, on the Future of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

The Standing Committee to the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, acting under the terms of Article 14 of the Convention,

Having regard to the aims of the Convention to conserve wild flora and fauna and its natural habitats;

Thanking the Regional Park of Migliarino, San Rossore and Massaciuccoli, the Tuscany Region and Italian conservation authorities for the excellent organisation of the Workshop “Protected Areas in Europe: the next 50 years” held on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the European Diploma for Protected Areas;

Noting that the European Diploma for Protected Areas has proved to be an efficient instrument to protect exceptionally important sites in Europe for the last 50 years;

Highlighting the importance and the role of the European network of Diploma areas in preserving Europe’s natural and cultural heritage, and their contribution to the defence of environmental and ecological ideals;

Wishing to further develop the European Diploma as an instrument for the implementation of Article 4 of the Convention,

Recommends Contracting Parties to the Convention and invites Observer States to:

1. maintain the high natural values and exemplary management of the 74 Diploma-holding areas, taking into particular account the global change, and highlighting their role as model areas for best practice and sustainable management;
2. Promote in these areas innovative conservation tools to improve, where appropriate, their management;
3. Consider, particularly for States that have not yet submitted applications to the network, to make proposals for new or additional sites that could better represent the diversity of habitat types present in Europe; in this context, devote special attention to marine and freshwater ecosystems;
4. Take into account the appended guidance for the management of the European Diploma Areas.

Appendix to Recommendation No. 181 (2015)

GUIDANCE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF EUROPEAN DIPLOMA AREAS IN AN INTERCONNECTED ERA

1. Improve knowledge of European Diploma areas using and developing innovative monitoring techniques;
2. In areas designed for further development, use traditional knowledge, devise mechanisms for participatory management and strengthen co-operation with the private sector, promoting the green economy; encourage and catalyse local innovations and eco-friendly initiatives contributing to sustainability;
- 2.bis In areas where mass tourism occurs, support actions aiming at minimizing threats caused by growing human impact;
3. Develop modern communication tools to reduce pressure on the wildlife of European Diploma areas, improve public awareness, and reach the local community and the political level;
4. Incorporate a climate change mitigation and adaptation approach, preferably by nature-based solutions, into the adaptative management and strategic programme of work of European Diploma areas;
5. Improve internal and external connectivity in and around European Diploma areas, linking them to the surrounding area and other protected areas;
6. Develop appropriate capacities to address new challenges related to the threats linked to climate change, such as intensive flooding, drought, storm, erosion, wildland fires, rising sea levels, or biological invasions;
7. Address, in particular, the threat of invasive alien species, following the European Guidelines on Protected Areas and Invasive Alien Species; in this context use those areas as pilot areas for enhanced monitoring and “early detection and rapid eradication” programmes, as well as for general awareness on the risks for native biodiversity from invasive alien species;
8. Strengthen human, technical and financial capacities in European Diploma areas.