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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

32nd meeting
Strasbourg, 27-30 November 2012

**DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE RENEWAL OF THE EUROPEAN
DIPLOMA TO THE
NATIONAL PARK BELOVEZHSKAYA PUSHCHA
(REPUBLIC OF BELARUS)**

*Document prepared by the Directorate of Democratic
Governance, Culture and Diversity*

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**Draft resolution CM/ResDip(2012) ...
on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to the National Park
Belovezhskaya Pushcha (Republic of Belarus)**

(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on ... 2012 at the ... meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)

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

Having regard to Resolution (65) 6 instituting the European Diploma for certain protected landscapes, reserves and natural features, as amended by Resolution CM/ResDip (2008)1 on the Regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution(97)23 awarding the European Diploma to the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park and Resolution DIP(2002)4 on the renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas awarded to the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park;

Taking into consideration the expert's report presented at the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma of Protected Areas on 9-10 February 2012;

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

Renews the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded to the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park until 30 September 2018;

Attaches the following 2 conditions to the renewal:

1. the implementation of the new conservation law in the National Park, including the implementation on the ground of the relevant conservation management attached to the new zonations, is completed within a period of 3 years.
2. any development with possible negative effects on the National Park and its integrity, including the buffer zones, should be subject to an environmental impact assessment and the National Park authorities should be duly consulted.

Attaches the following 10 recommendations to the renewal:

1. continue the shift from economically to more ecologically driven management by reducing the forestry activities in the regulated zones and special habitats in other parts, excluding from logging parcels with old trees in all zones (including the buffer ones); data on harvested wood volumes are to be presented in the annual reports;
2. ensure that the National Park authorities have the responsibility for the management of (a) the zones of special significance for specific habitats outside strict protected areas, (b) the buffer zones and (c) game zones into the boundaries of the National Park;
3. start discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture to compensate an agricultural area of 2000 ha recently excluded from the NP, by including supplementary abandoned agricultural areas elsewhere -also in the buffer zones- and by promoting a gradual extension of

agricultural activities leading to semi-natural habitats (hayfields and low intensity grazed meadows with only moderate use of fertilisers);

4. increase budgets for both applied ecological research and nature conservation activities in view of the principles of sustainable management present or to be included in the management plan; special attention is needed for hydrological restoration of all bog and marsh ecosystems surrounding the forest, including water and soil quality in river valleys and semi-natural traditional or abandoned farmland, with special attention to improve the ecological function of the buffer zone;
5. reconsider the management of large herbivores in view of reducing the winter food supply to prevent abnormal high population densities (overpopulation), rather than reducing excess numbers by continued or increased hunting practices motivated by and aiming to alleviate possible damage to forestry and agriculture; continue research on genetic aspects of Bison populations, applying the results to further investigate the restoration of transboundary migration corridor with Poland;
6. carry out an environmental impact assessment concerning the mass tourism in the heart of the national park, including a reappraisal of the boundaries, location and zoning of "Father Frost's Manor", the effects of traffic, pollution etc. and taking into account the increased accessibility of the NP;
7. monitor and evaluate the ecological side-effects caused by the new bypass road and the consequences of the expected regional economic investments, the increasing agro-touristic development and the additional recreation initiatives in the outskirts of the national park; also monitor the efficiency of the established fauna passages;
8. intensify the monitoring and evaluation of actual activities such as agriculture (drainage, water quality, use of chemicals), forestry (logging, removal of dead wood, bark beetle effects) and hunting (introduced species, hunting bag statistics), including neighbouring zones outside the NP, in order to adjust the Management plan where needed, or to substantiate environmental impact assessments;
9. consider a specific adaptation of the prohibition of all activities in the strictly protected zones concerning the control of alien species, thus enabling the felling of old *Quercus rubra* trees and seedlings that disturb the natural forest ecosystems (cf. WHC resolution);
10. prepare a new detailed topographic map (1/50000) of the NP and surroundings, indicating the functional zoning (with the buffer zones, game areas, checkpoints, educative trails etc.) and including the location of the bypass road (with legend in different languages).