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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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**EXTRACT FROM THE LIST OF DECISIONS AND ADOPTED TEXTS
ON THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA FOR PROTECTED AREAS,
AT THE 35TH MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
OF THE BERN CONVENTION**

*Document prepared by the Directorate
of Democratic Governance*

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4.6.2. European Diploma for Protected Areas

a. Report of the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas, follow-up of decisions, and adopted Resolutions

Relevant documents: T-PVS/DE (2015) 9 – Report of the meeting of the Group of Specialists on European Diploma for Protected Areas
T-PVS/DE (2015) 13 - Progress report on the Fulfilment of the Resolution of the Committee of Ministers (2012)19 on the European Diploma to the Poloniny National Park
T-PVS/DE (2015) 14 – Report of the visit of the Independent Expert to Poloniny National Park
T-PVS/DE (2015) 11 – Adopted resolutions concerning the European Diploma for Protected Areas in 2015

The Committee took note of the report of the meeting of the Group, including the proposals for future work, and greeted the outgoing Chair of the Group of Specialists, Mr. Peter Skoberne (Slovenia) for his support, excellent work, and dedication over the past years.

The Committee took note of the resolutions adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers for the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas to the Vashlovani Protected Areas (Georgia) and the renewal of the Diploma to the National Park Weerribben-Wieden (the Netherlands), and complimented the concerned parties for these important recognitions.

The Committee took further note of the Opinions adopted by the Group of Specialists following the exceptional on-the-spot appraisals to, respectively, the Podyji National Park (the Czech Republic) and Thayatal National Park (Austria), and to the Bayerischer Wald National Park (Germany), and called upon the national authorities of the three parties to take in due consideration the relevant recommendations made by the Group of Specialists.

Moreover, the Committee deeply assessed the situation of the Poloniny National Park (Slovak Republic) in light of the draft Resolution prepared in March 2015 by the Group of Specialists, proposing the withdrawal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas awarded to Park due to the non-fulfilment of the mandatory conditions agreed by the Committee of Ministers.

The Committee took note of the conclusions of the expert's report following the advisory mission to the Slovak component sites of the Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and the Ancient Beech Forests of Germany World Heritage Site, stressing that, despite the steps recently taken by the Slovak authorities, the management plan of Poloniny National Park is still pending and the delays in the implementation of the conditions and recommendations attached to the award of the Diploma have undermined compliance.

The Committee also considered the information personally submitted by the State Secretary of the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic on the recent measures undertaken to achieve full compliance, as well as on their preliminary results. The Committee highly appreciated the personal commitment of the State Secretary towards continuing to properly addressing the still pending issues, and to step-up efforts towards the adoption of the management plan for the area, foreseen to take place in April 2016.

In view of the above, and taking note of the declarations of support of a number of contracting parties, the Committee unanimously decided to grant a last stay to the Poloniny National Park in order to enable the authorities to finalise the process towards the adoption of the management plan and to achieve full compliance with the other conditions and recommendations attached to the Resolution renewing the Diploma. The Committee considered that the withdrawal of the European Diploma in such a delicate moment would rather undermine the positive ongoing process.

Finally, the Committee took note of the readiness of the Slovak authorities to report to the convention's institutional bodies, and gave mandate to the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma

for Protected Areas and to the Bureau to review the progress achieved by the authorities. The Bureau will then make recommendations as to the follow-up to be given to the draft Resolution proposing the withdrawal of the award at the 36th Standing Committee meeting, where needed.

b. Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

c. Workshop Protected Areas in Europe: the next 50 years: Pisa Declaration and draft recommendation

Relevant documents: Pisa Declaration
T-PVS (2015) 15 - Draft recommendation on the Future of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

The Committee welcomed the several events organized to mark the golden jubilee of the European Diploma for Protected Areas (EDPA), and warmly thanked the countries that organised national events in their Diploma holding areas.

The Committee took further note of the conclusions of the Workshop on “Protected Areas in Europe: the next 50 years” and thanked the Regional Park of Migliarino, San Rossore and Massaciuccoli, the Tuscany Region and Italian conservation authorities for the excellent organisation of the workshop. Moreover, the Committee welcomed and endorsed the Pisa Declaration, containing a vision for the future of the European Diploma for Protected Areas.

Finally, the Committee examined and adopted the following Recommendation:

- Recommendation No. 181 (2015) on the future of the European Diploma for Protected Areas.

Appendix 1: Recommendation No. 181 (2015) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 4 December 2015, on the Future of the European Diploma for Protected Areas



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.