



Aree protette
Alpi Marittime



COUNCIL CONSEIL
OF EUROPE DE L'EUROPE
Committee of Ministers
Comité des Ministres

ENTE GESTIONE AREE PROTETTE DELLE ALPI MARITTIME
ANNUAL REPORT 2022/2023

Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1
on the revised regulations for the European Diploma for Protected Areas

(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008 at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers'
Deputies)¹

¹ As amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2014)2 on 2 July 2014 at the 1204th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.
Internet : <http://www.coe.int/cm>

ENTE GESTIONE AREE PROTETTE DELLE ALPI MARITTIME

Annual report for the year 2021/2022

Annual reports should describe the changes that have taken place since the previous year in dynamic terms of management and function and not be limited to basic data. Any new text or map introducing a change in the situation of the area should be attached to the annual report.

State: ITALY

Name of the area: ENTE GESTIONE AREE PROTETTE ALPI MARITTIME

Year and number of years since the award or renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas:

Parco Alpi Marittime was awarded the European Diploma with Parc National du Mercantour in 1993. Parco Alpi Marittime had its Diploma renewed in 2008. The verifier's visit took place on 27 and 28 June 2017. Il Diploma the European Diploma was renewed in 2018.

Central authority concerned:

Name: Ministero dell'ambiente e della sicurezza energetica
Direzione generale Patrimonio naturalistico e Mare

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Authority responsible for its management:

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Ente di gestione Aree Protette delle Alpi Marittime

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1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

Secure an adequate annual budget and ensure a reasonable increase in the management and administration staff to be able to carry out all the necessary work related to maintenance, conservation and sustainable tourism.

In the year 2023 the allocation of regional funds for the ordinary management of the organisation amounted to € 589.000 with an increase of € 44.000 compared to 2022. Regarding personnel, the allocation for the year 2023 was € 2.866.664 with an increase of approximately € 130.000 compared to the year 2022. The Authority's current staffing plan is 59 as per the attached table. The organisation of the authority is shown in the annex.

The second half of 2022 and the whole of 2023 represented a period of decisive change for the organisation and staff: there was a turnover of personnel in relation to vacant positions that led to the hiring of 16 new employees, which entailed (and still entails) a major redefinition of the organisation's macrostructure and the reorganisation of offices. The presence of young people, although limited, is clearly on the increase compared to previous years, thanks to the entry of new recruits into the organisation's workforce, which has triggered an important generational change: the age group with the highest number of employees continues to be the 55-60 year-olds, but the group of young workers (aged between 28 and 40) occupies a significant portion of the workforce (about 17%).

Besides the ordinary management the Park Authority continued the implementation of actions of several European, National and Regional projects.

In the first half of 2023, the final activities of the RECOVALX Project, financed under the ALCOTRA 2014/2020 Programme, were implemented. Specifically, the following activities were carried out:

- Installation of a new radio link that not only covers the entire territory of the Protected Areas, but also allows cross-border radio links with the staff of the Parc national du Mercantour
- Creation of a customised cross-border stand for the EGTC European Park Alpi Marittime Mercantour, also with customised equipment
- Revision of the description of itineraries and their translations on the Geotrek platform "destination.marittimemercantour.it", focusing on the hiking offer of the Aree Protette delle Alpi Marittime and the Parc du Mercantour
- Production of the emotive audiovisual "10 minutes of the Park", with images and data on the Alpi Marittime Mercantour EGTC and the Protected Areas.

In October 2023, 4 new projects were launched, financed within the framework of the INTERREG VI-A Alcotra Italy-France 2021/2027 Programme, lasting three years, in which the Protected Areas are partners.

Specifically, these are the following projects:

- "ACLIMO - Climate and water: synergies for the future between Alpine parks" with the aim of analysing the effects of climate change on habitats and species and sensitive to water resources, raising awareness of adaptation and supporting agricultural activities, in particular herding activities, through the transition;
- "BiodivTourAlps - Biodiversity and tourism: synergies for the future among alpine parks" with the aim of testing new approaches to reconcile visitor reception and the real need to preserve fragile natural habitats by improving knowledge, management and awareness of human-nature interactions;
- "COGNITIOFORT - Raising awareness of the cross-border fortified heritage and structuring the cultural offer", aimed at enhancing the cultural/touristic value of fortifications, barracks and military infrastructures in Alpine territories;
- "RivierALP: Cycling and walking between the Alps and the sea", aimed at revitalising the socio-economic fabric of the cross-border territory through a proposal focused on innovating tourist fruition.

Since October, the Protected Areas have been collaborating with other bodies at cross-border level on the drafting of an Integrated Territorial Plan (PITER+) to be submitted in the year 2024 in the framework of a call for proposals financed by the VI-A Alcotra Italy-France 2021/2027 Programme, aimed at accompanying cross-border territories with common features and at developing integrated territorial strategies to face challenges that can be tackled more effectively at cross-border level.

During 2023 the actions connected to the LIFE18 NAT/IT/000972 LIFE WOLFALPS EU project continued. The Park Authority is the coordinating beneficiary of this project, which will end in September 2024. The project implements actions aimed at favouring the coexistence between the wolf (*Canis lupus*) and human activities in the Alpine environment, with important communication and awareness-raising actions for different targets. The project involves 20 partners from Italy, France, Austria and Slovenia and more than 100 supporters. The study area is the entire Alpine region.

The organisation also participated in the "EXPLORA" call issued by the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Cuneo, designed to stimulate the territory to experiment with new ways of enjoying outdoor spaces and create connections between local communities and people. Within the framework of this call for proposals, the organisation, by making its managed territories available, participated in three projects ("Bin'ntel bosc - Immersi nel bosco"; "Open"; "Il giardino delle diversità") that envisage the implementation of a set of actions dedicated to young people and people with different abilities aimed at enhancing the natural heritage of the organisation, allowing the younger generations to explore the beauty of the landscape while respecting its fragility.

In the course of 2023, the Authority, within the framework of Piedmont Region's Rural Development Plan 2014-2021, completed actions in the forests of the Pesio Valley hit hard by Storm Vaia. The Nature Plan of the Alpi Marittime Park and the two Management Plans for the Natura 2000 Sites Oasis of Crava Morozzo and Alpi Marittime have been financed and are being drafted. The project for the construction of a path for the disabled in the Ciciu del Villar Reserve, which was previously financed by the Local Development Plan of the LAG Tradizione delle Terre Occitane, has been finalised. Under the 2021-2027 ERDF Regional Programme, two projects were financed, one in the Marguareis Park and the other in the Alpi Marittime Park, which envisage work on the hydrogeological restoration (total amount of 1 million euro).

In 2023, the activities envisaged by the research project carried out in collaboration with three US universities (Amherst College, University of Virginia, University of Maryland) were developed, giving continuity to studies on the spread of fungal pathologies.

All these projects, together with other smaller ones financed under the Rural Development Plan, have enabled the authority to carry out actions for the conservation of habitats and species.

The activities of the Referral Centres that Piedmont Region has identified in the Protected Areas of the Maritime Alps continued in 2023.

PLANT BIODIVERSITY CENTRE

Monitoring and conservation activities of habitats and plant species were carried out by the Centre, also thanks to the help of the Germplasm Bank. The management of the 'Bicknell' Alpine Botanical Station, the 'Valderia' Alpine Botanical Garden and the 'Mattirolo' Phytoalimurgical Garden continued. The 'Prà da Smens' project was also further pursued to encourage the use of local seeds for environmental recovery, and the local eradication of some invasive exotic species that are particularly dangerous to native habitats was carried out.

LARGE CARNIVORES CENTRE

The Centre coordinated and carried out activities related to the project LIFE18 NAT/IT/000972 LIFE WOLFALPS EU. It has also supported the activities of Piedmont Region and all the Piedmont Protected Areas.

In 2023, new staff was hired to work specifically on the Centre's activities, namely 1 veterinarian (part-time 50%), 1 communicator (part-time 50%) and 1 conservation officer.

VULTURES AND BIRDS OF PREY CENTRE

The activities related to the monitoring of the lammergeier in the Piedmont area were followed through the Regional Observatory Network. The griffon vulture monitoring project continues.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. Explore the feasibility of officially recognising the two Maritime and Marguareis Nature Parks as one national park.

Since 2016, the two parks of the Alpi Marittime and Marguareis have been managed by the Alpi Marittime Protected Areas Management Body.

The Maritime Alps and Marguareis site is included in the National Framework Law on Protected Areas. Further contacts have been initiated with the Ministry of the Environment to achieve the establishment of a national protected area. This objective, referred to in the treaty between Italy and France (Quirinale Agreement), has been the focus of a series of official communications sent to the Ministry of the Environment. An official response is presently expected.

2. Explore the extent to which small, scattered reserves (Ciciu del Villar, Benevagienna, Crava Morozzo, Sorgenti del Belbo and Grotte di Bossea) which have very different characteristics, can be managed at a local level by municipal or provincial authorities.

The areas remain under the management of the authority to date. No new developments have taken place during 2023. We are waiting for the potential transition to a National Park in order to define the status of the various Reserves under management.

3. Ascertain that the amendment of the Law L.R.19 29/06/2009 does not jeopardise any of the park conservation regulations.

The Regional Law 19 of 29/06/2009 concerning the Piedmont Protected Areas System was not modified in 2023. The Regulations for the protected areas managed by the Authority are still in the process of being approved by Piedmont Region. The Nature Plan of the Alpi Marittime Park and the two Management Plans for the Natura 2000 Sites Crava Morozzo Oasis and Alpi Marittime have been financed and are currently being drafted. These instruments will strengthen the conservation and sustainable management of the protected areas.

4. Pursue the co-operation and the trans-boundary work with the Mercantour National Park and further explore the setting-up of an Alpi Marittime-Mercantour International Park, to be agreed between the authorities of Italy and France; continue working towards increasing integration.

The parks maintained a high level of cooperation. They jointly concluded the already mentioned Alcotra Recovalx project, whose funds enabled them to strengthen the common image of the Alpi Marittime and Mercantour Protected Areas, while the repair of the cross-border paths after Storm Alex recreated the conditions for cross-border enjoyment of the two protected areas. The construction of the new radio relay has increased the level of synergy between the two entities' surveillance personnel.

In the field of tourism, the Alpi Marittime Protected Areas and the Parc du Mercantour, when renewing their candidacy for the European Charter of Sustainable Tourism, undertook to draw up a joint strategy, and many of the actions included in the Action Plan are of a cross-border nature.

In October 2023, the staff of the two parks met in Sospel in the Parc national du Mercantour for two days of general exchange, with an analysis of the cross-border activities conducted together.

Work began on the implementation of the previously mentioned Quirinal Treaty within the Italy-France cross-border territory. On 31 October, the EGTC European Park Alpi Marittime Mercantour took part in a

meeting in Turin, where the territories represented had the opportunity to present the most urgent issues to be included in the agenda regarding climate change, connectivity, health and the European Park.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes have occurred since the date of the last Annual Report in relation to the areas covered by the European Diploma. It should be recalled that since July 2018, the Piedmont Region has assigned the management of several SACs, SCIs, SPAs of the Natura 2000 Network to the Authority. The total area managed exceeds 100,000 hectares.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No boundary changes have been made since the date of the last Annual Report. At end of 2023 the municipality of Roccaforte Mondovì made a request to include part of its territory within the Marguareis Park.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

With the aim of transferring the knowledge acquired in land management to sites where natural parks are still a very fragile reality, the Alpi Marittime Protected Areas, on the basis of the experience gained through the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism process, joined an international cooperation project to be developed between 2020-2024 linked to three islands (Santiago, Fogo, Sant'Antao) of the Cape Verde archipelago (Africa). The activities envisaged within the project are nearing completion, and in particular in 2023 the Authority's contribution focused on the creation of two visitor centres on the islands of Sant'Antao and Santiago.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Staff organigram
- Presentation Status of the project LIFE18 NAT/IT/000972 LIFE WOLFALPS EU
- Unified Programming Document
- Activity report for 2022
- European Charter of Sustainable Tourism – Strategy
- European Charter of Sustainable Tourism – Action Plan