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WELTERBEGEMEINDEN WACHAU

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ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2024

Spitz / 15.12.2024 / IH

State: Austria

Name of the area: Wachau

Year and number of years since the award or renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas:
Awarded 1994, last renewal: 2019

Central authority concerned:

Name: Land Niederösterreich Federal Government of Lower Austria), Department of Nature Protection (RU5),
Dipl.-Ing. Brigitta Mirwald
Address: Landhausplatz 1, Building 16, 3109 St. Pölten, Austria
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Authority responsible for its management:

Name: The Chairman of Welterbegemeinden Wachau Association (World Heritage Municipalities Wachau Association): Dr. Andreas Nunzer, MA
Manager of Welterbegemeinden Wachau: Ingeborg Hödl, MA
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Bundesministerium
Kunst, Kultur,
öffentlicher Dienst und Sport

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Gemeinsame Agrarpolitik Österreich

Conditions:

Condition #1: Abandon definitively the scheme to build a dam on the Danube at Dürnstein, as well as a similar scheme within and immediately downstream from the area covered by the diploma:

No changes to the previous year: There are no plans of constructing a dam or a power plant on the Danube in the Wachau. The free-flowing Danube is not only condition number one for holding the European Diploma but is also one of the most important attributes of the outstanding universal value (OUV) of the Wachau World Heritage.

Recommendations:

1. guarantee a sustainable budget for the managing authorities to ensure that the management plan can be fully implemented without relying on financial resources from projects;
No changes to the previous years.

2. encourage the setting up of a long-term institutional management framework for the Wachau Protected Landscape and Jauerling-Wachau Naturpark
No changes to the previous year. Long-term institutional management framework is implemented.

3. ensure the implementation and updating of the management plan in a participatory way;
Since May 2024 we have started the process of updating the management plan. For each action area stakeholders were invited to workshops and discuss future topics and actions.

4. continue the good practice of a global approach to forestry and wild-game management (including co-operation with managing authorities in bordering administrative entities);
No changes to report.

5. continue the good practice of maintenance and reconstruction of terrace vineyards;
Due to heavy precipitation events this summer a lot more investment in maintenance and reconstruction of drystone-walls had to be done. On December 5, 2024, the Art of Dry Stone Constructions was put on UNESCO's International Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, including Austria.

6. continue efforts to preserve the apricot orchards;
No changes to report.

7. develop an integral approach to tourist management;
No changes to the previous year.

8. explore optimal solutions for preserving the appearance of the landscape (colors of the protection nets and barriers against rockslides, light pollution and Christmas tree plantations);
No changes to report.

9. use the European Diploma logo more regularly on publications and appropriate infrastructure, promote the European Diploma more actively, encourage partners and stakeholders to use the European Diploma logo.

This year the UNESCO-Cultural Landscape Wachau celebrated the 30th anniversary of the European Diploma Award. To raise awareness for this award a festive evening event with speeches of high-profile political representatives was held within the Wachauforum (an event held every two years).

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.

The project to fight neophytes is in the second year. It is funded by the biodiversity fund of the Republic of Austria and runs until the end of 2025. Especially Ailanthus altissima and Robinia pseudoacacia around dry grassland areas get reduced. Up until December 2024 we removed over 15 thousand trees of gods and black locusts.

The grazing with sheep was continued. In 2024, two flocks of sheep with over 200 sheep were in operation. A total of approximately 20 hectares of dry grassland were grazed between June and October. Another 10 hectares were mowed. A total of 30 individual sites in the Wachau are being managed.

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 changes.

Other information:

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

No changes.