

WELTERBEGEMEINDEN WACHAU

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ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2021

Spitz / 28.12.2021 / 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
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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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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 :

So far, any plans of constructing a dam or a power plant are definitely abandoned in the Wachau. Moreover, the free-flowing Danube in the Wachau is 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;**
The management staff as well as the core projects are financed by yearly contributions of the Republic of Austria, the responsible department of the Office of the Lower Austrian Federal Government and the membership fees of the Welterbegemeinden Wachau association.
- 2. encourage the setting up of a long-term institutional management framework for the Wachau Protected Landscape and Jauerling-Wachau Naturpark**
The Wachau Protected Landscape (www.weltkulturerbe-wachau.at/en/) as well as the Naturpark Jauerling (www.naturpark-jauerling.at) both have implemented a long-term institutional management framework.
- 3. ensure the implementation and updating of the management plan in a participatory way;**
The Management Plan for the Wachau World Heritage area was implemented in 2017. Events with participatory elements for updates and evaluation will be held - depending the current pandemic situation within 2022 or 2023 - in small workshop groups.
- 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 major changes to the previous year. The positive co-operation with these institutions is ongoing. A wildcat population was documented in the Wachau region. In autumn also reproduction was registered as young wildcats were photographed via outdoor cameras.
- 5. continue the good practice of maintenance and reconstruction of terrace vineyards;**
No changes to report.
- 6. continue efforts to preserve the apricot orchards;**
No changes to report.
- 7. develop an integral approach to tourist management;**
Since the ongoing Corona pandemic touristic campaigns in the regions focus on sustainable outdoor activities such as hiking and biking alongside the cultural landscape of the Danube.
- 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.**
The European Diploma logo is used on all relevant mailings, correspondence and public relations affairs as well as logo tags are installed in certain locations and on various official buildings (city halls, etc.).

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 construction work for the 1,6 km long new sidearm within the LIFE+Wilderness Wetland Wachau project (LIFE+ Auenwildnis Wachau) was finished in Mai 2021. A small Danube flood in summer helped creating more dynamic in the new side arm. In spring kingfisher already bred in the new steep bank of the side arm. The riparian forests of the island Pritzenau (40 ha) next to the side arm will become nature conservation areas in 2022.

The restoration of autochthonous alluvial forests has also been continued. Until now 5500 Black Poplar and 900 other native trees were planted in the region and 30.000 of neophytes like Robinia, Acer negundo and Ailanthus altissima were reduced. 50 breeding ponds for amphibia especially Bombina bombina and Triturus dobrogicus have been created within the last years, 7 ponds were realized this year in Rossatz next to the new side arm.

In summer 2021 we started the WACHAU Sheep-project to maintain dry grassland areas. About 12 ha nature grassland in the region was grazed by almost 100 sheep between July and September. The grazing project should be continued next summer.

Since the last years the groups of the Wachau volunteer project also help taking care of mowing and raking smaller and remote dry grassland areas.

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.