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Wachau
Welterbe seit 2000

WELTERBEGEMEINDEN WACHAU

A-3620 Spitz, Schlossgasse 3
T +43 (0) 27 13-300 00-0
F +43 (0) 27 13-300 00-40
office@wachau-dunkelsteinerwald.at
www.weltkulturerbe-wachau.at

ZVR-Zahl: 686289920
IBAN: AT16 2022 8003 0032 0991
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ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2022

Spitz / 12.12.2022 / 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: A-3109 St. Pölten, Austria, Landhausplatz 1, Building 16
Tel.: +43-2742-9005-15278
Fax: +43-2742-9005-15220
e-mail: post.ru5@noel.gv.at
www: www.noel.gv.at, www.naturland-noe.at

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
Address: A-3620 Spitz, Austria, Schlossgasse 3
Tel.: +43-2713-30000-0
Fax: +43-2713-30000-40
e-mail: office@wachau-dunkelsteinerwald.at
www: www.weltkulturerbe-wachau.at

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:

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**
*The Wachau Protected Landscape (www.weltkulturerbe-wachau.at/en/) as well as the Naturpark Jauerling-Wachau (www.naturpark-jauerling.at) both implemented long-term management plans as well as an institutional framework. Moreover, since last year, the regions Wachau - Dunkelsteinerwald - Jauerling have become a **KLAR!-Region** (climate change adaptation region) which enables further funding for climate change related projects and awareness raising.*
- 3. ensure the implementation and updating of the management plan in a participatory way;**
The evaluation of the current management plan (implemented in 2017) is set for 2023 within various workshops and stakeholder meetings.
- 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;**
The terrace vineyards and dry stone walls are constantly maintained by the winemakers. The traditional craftsmanship of dry stone walling was inscribed on the list of intangible cultural heritage in Austria in 2021. To raise the awareness, this year a pilot-project with the four UNESCO-schools of the region (in the cities Krems and Melk) was initiated. One-day excursions to the heritage region were organized for several senior classes. Among cycling through the cultural landscape with a professional guide, they could attend a workshop for dry stone wall building and also learn about the current challenges of a world heritage site through discussions and role plays. Due to the great impact and positive feedback this project could have been turned into a two-years LEADER-project, starting next summer semester.
- 6. continue efforts to preserve the apricot orchards;**
No changes to report.
- 7. develop an integral approach to tourist management;**
Together with the partners of the tourism office a new guide for hiking along the famous trail "Welterbesteig Wachau" was published, focusing on the main attributes of the UNESCO-World Heritage OUV (outstanding universal value).
- 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.**
No changes to report.

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 island Pritzenau (42 ha) became nature conservation area in October 2022.
In the new side arm a fish monitoring took place and reproduction of the Danube fish species was documented.*

The restoration of autochthonous alluvial forests has also been continued. Until now 5600 Black Poplar and more than 1000 other native trees were planted in the region and 35.000 of neophytes like Robinia pseudoacacia, Acer negundo and Ailanthus altissima were reduced. 53 breeding ponds for amphibia especially Bombina bombina and Triturus dobrogicus have been created within the last years. The LIFE+ Wilderness Wachau project will be finished by the end of the year 2022.

*This summer the grazing with sheep was successfully continued. About 15 ha nature grassland in the region was managed between end of June until September 2022. The grazing project will go on for the next two years.
Also, the Wachau Volunteer project will be continued.*

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.