



COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Committee of Ministers
Comité des Ministres



EUROPEAN DIPLOMA HOLDING SITE

IPOLYTARNÓC FOSSILS NATURE CONSERVATION AREA

HUNGARY

ANNUAL REPORT

2023

**FOR THE PERIOD
DECEMBER 1. 2022 - NOVEMBER 30. 2023**



IPOLYTARNÓC FOSSILS NATURE CONSERVATION AREA- HUNGARY – ANNUAL REPORT 2023

This document follows the present regulations of the model plan for EDPA annual reports. (*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, amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2014)2 on 2 July 2014 at the 1204th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.*)

State/Country: H U N G A R Y

The Protected Area:

Name: Ipolytarnoc Fossils Nature Conservation Area
Postal address: H- 3138 Ipolytarnoc Pf.1. Hungary
Tel/Facsimile: +36 32 454 188
Person responsible: János Baczur
Email: baczurj@bnpi.hu
Internet: <http://osmaradvanyok.hu>

Year of the award/Year of the last renewal/ Year until the award is renewed: 1995/2020/2030

Central authority concerned:

Name: Department for Nature Conservation, Ministry of Agriculture
Address: H-1055 Budapest, Kossuth tér 11. Hungary
Tel.:+36 1 795 2399; Fax: -
Person responsible: András Schmidt (Head of Natura 2000 Unit)
Email: andras.schmidt@am.gov.hu; Mobil: +36 -30678-8764
Internet: www.kormany.hu/en/ministry-of-agriculture; www.termeszetvedelem.hu

Authority responsible for its management:

Name: Bükk National Park Directorate (BNPD)
Postal address: H - 3301 Eger Pf.116. Hungary
Tel: +36 36 411 581; Fax: +36 36 412 791
Person responsible: Ms. Kálmánné Rónai director
Email: titkarsag@bnpi.hu
Internet: <http://www.bnpi.hu>

0. Preface:

The European Diploma to the Ipolytarnóc Fossils (IFEDPA) was extended on 23 September 2020 by the Committee of Ministers until 11 September 2030, through the Resolution CM/ResDip(2020)9. This short annual report focuses on the implementation of the recommendations set in this new Resolution.

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.

The Resolutions on the reward and renewals of the European Diploma to the IFEDPA have never contained specified conditions. N/A

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. further explore the site's high potential for geological discoveries, especially palaeontological excavations. It would be of significant added value if further promotion of internationalisation of research activities took place by making the results of scientific research publicly available;

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

The newest publications on fossil footprints' research have been [uploaded to the website of the IFEDPA](#) experts from Italy and the ELTE University, Budapest started new research on fossil rhino footprints and carnivores this year. As part of the RiWild Interreg SKHU/1902/1.1/037 project a 3D laser scanning digitized the footprint surfaces of the excavated areas on the geotrail. Some of the end results [have already been uploaded to the internet](#), more will be available for the scientific community and laypeople as an open database, and it will be publicized after 2023.

2. take all appropriate measures to preserve and, if possible, exhibit the site's geological and palaeontological resources. By 2025, engage in a careful (ensuring maximum respect of geological and palaeontological features) renovation/replacement of buildings, primarily the exhibition halls along the geological trail. Additionally, renovate the visitors' centre and other visitors' facilities during the renewal period of ten years;

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

Excavations of fossil resources are sheltered or winter covered at the Lower Miocene stratotype section of the Borokas ravine. In situ exhibitions interpret the palaeontological finds. At the visitor center there is high-tech exhibition from some of the movable geological and fossil material.

Part of the ongoing [RiWild Interreg SKHU/1902/1.1/037 project](#) was the already finished reconstruction of the previously worn-out II. Excavation Hall of the geotrail. To protect the excavated palaeosurface with its fossil remains within the protective buildings industrial dehumidifiers were introduced. Small scale renovations of the buildings, including the visitor center are taking place throughout of the year and the repairmen of the reception building's exterior plaster started.

3. further explore the possibilities of the site taking a central and active role in the integration in the Slovak-Hungarian trans-border Nógrád-Novohrad Geopark, in order to preserve and raise awareness about the natural assets of the region and to further develop the multilingual information point for geo-tourism;

Action taken by the site to comply with the new recommendation:

The BNPD is one of the main stakeholder of the transnational Novohrad-Nógrád UNESCO Global Geopark (NNUGGp) and had a very important active role in the UNESCO revalidation process of it, which took place last year. One of the main decisive geosites for the extension of the membership for another 4 years was the IFEDPA, The fact that the Geopark has a European Diploma-holding site within its boundary bears a good connotation.

As the main gateway to the NNUGGp, Ipolytarnoc promotes the geological heritage of the region and advocates its resources to the visitors during special events, like the usual [EGN Week at the turn of May](#) and provides exhibition place to the Geopark.

The EDPA website has a [connection sharing news and programs with the Geopark](#). One of the thematic special guided tours [crosses the state border and leads to a nearby geosite on the Slovak side](#) to promote the interconnectedness of the NNUGGp.

Part of the active cooperation is that the Bukk National Park Directorate (BNPD) has an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MU) with the Geopark to delegate the Hungarian representative (who is at present the former leader of Ipolytarnoc Fossils EDPA) of the Slovak-Hungarian Geopark to the Coordination Committee of the European Geoparks Network (EGN).

The GUIDE@HAND smart phone application is available for downloading in the reception building. It got further expanded and is available in Slovak and English languages as well in offline format, containing several study-trails and geolocalities of the NNUGGp.

Two INTERREG projects (GEOTOP and RiWild) which ends this year promote the geotourism of the NNUGGp, the BNPD as the lead partner adapted the common layout of the NNUGGp, the brochures and publications are available at the Visitor Center of the Site.

4. continue the gradual replacement of non-native tree species, in particular Robinia pseudoacacia and regionally non-native Pinus species with native deciduous tree species (for example, Quercus) by assisting the natural succession process through ecologically sensitive land management practices. Also take measures to control herbal invasive alien species such as Ambrosia artemisiifolia. Continue the control of game which is causing considerable damage to vegetation and protected animal species;

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

The native tree rehabilitation forestry activity continued, by replacing and caring for the afforestation of formerly acacia covered 4 hectares, which was already in progress. The enhancement of the spreading of indigenous tree species and suppressed exotic species, including the elimination of invasive plants, like the Ambrosia also continued along the trails and open spaces this year. In the meadows of the border zone and around the buildings on the geological trail the pine tree and acacia spreading have been further suppressed.

Sensitive game management is an ongoing activity throughout the year, the leader of the site is responsible for it with the assistance of the staff of the BNPD headquarters. Monitoring the African swine fever virus (ASFV) within the wild boar population is part of the activity. The local TETT Foundation NGO also endorses these efforts. There is a game-refrigerating container to temporarily store slain game.

5. maintain the balance between open spaces and wooded areas on the western side of the conservation area, close to the nearby settlement, to preserve the mosaic structure of the landscapes there. Maintain the use of the regional breed/landrace of Racka sheep because of its added value from a historical husbandry point of view, and also to increase structural diversity in the herb-dominated vegetation. For agropastoral reasons, maintaining hay-cutting by local farmers and/or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should be encouraged. Limiting management of open habitats to the use of sheep grazing alone would change the landscape into a mosaic of patches covered in woody and herbal plant communities (so-called woodland), which would not comply with earlier recommendations (2010);

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

At the buffer zone, close to the local settlement the meadows are leased to local farmers, grazing, hay cutting and bailing activities are ongoing. Tree thinning on forest edges has successfully maintained the mixed vegetation cover of the landscape. Clearings are also maintained as part of game management and along some parts of the state border, the mosaic-like structure of the landscape is well managed.

Of the two Racka sheep rams the elder sadly expired. This fact initiated changes with some budgeted calculations, to reestablish next year a small flock of 5-6 Racka sheep, grazing close to the trailhead of the geological study path as an added value to demonstrate the protected ancient breeds of the animal husbandry heritage.

6. replace the power line that runs between the village and the visitors' centre by an underground structure, respecting the current landscape and exhibitions;

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

The planned "Enjoy Park" project had a section for this but the dire economic situation of the region postponed it. We seek for other funds to sponsor undergrounding the power line between Ipolytarnóc village and the main parking plot of the IFEDPA, but not just for aesthetic landscape protection but also from endangered bird protection point of view.

7. explore the feasibility of a video presentation, or documentary film on the scientific, evidence-based process of palaeontological science (paleotaxonomy as well as paleoecology and ecosystem reconstruction/restoration). In particular, the palaeontological method which reconstructs whole animals based on "simple" footprints is astonishing and will interest the general public and scientists in other life sciences;

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

The extension of the RiWild INTERREG project created an option for such a kind of interpretative animation in the 2. Conservation Hall of the geological trail. The [preliminary animation, which is still under development is available here](#), the end result with English/Slovak subtitles will be projected as part of the guided geotour next year.

8. as is already done in the rock park, install more visual markers that make links between present and past (Miocene) ecosystems;

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

The exhibition in the Ancient Pine visitor center runs a movie about the EDPA's game management, which visually refers to the connection between the present mammal tracks and the fossil tracks of the past. The playful new animation of an interactive touch wall connects through sceneries the present animals to the beasts of the palaeohabitat. The RiWild INTERREG project targeted such kind of developments on the Rock park and the Miocene forest sections as well, new signs were introduced and interactive interpretative panels comparing the present with the past were emplaced between the Visitor center and the entrance of the geotrail.

9. improve documentation/reporting on the results of management measures through structured monitoring, as well as of public response (numbers of visitors, appreciation), etc;

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

The new BNPD visitor questionnaires, which have been circulated as printouts and [uploaded to the webpage of the site](#) to check on the quality of our services and give option to the visitors' opinions are under constant evaluation. To further emphasize and acknowledge the importance of structured monitoring of visitor satisfaction in our work, we created a [new opening slide to our homepage](#). It encourages visitor evaluation by asking for their opinion (Volt már nálunk? Véleményére várunk/ Have you ever been to us? We are awaiting your opinion) Reflections of the visitors shared on social media platforms and on the internet are followed and consulted by the staff. Some regional geotourism studies (which include the territory of the IFEDPA), concerning visitor services and appreciation were published, but they are not well detailed.

10. further enlarge local, regional and transnational public involvement and administrative co-operation, for example on the Novohrad - Nógrád transnational Geopark (to be undertaken by the Bükki National Park authorities rather than the Ipolytarnóc management);

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

The BNPD headquarters is one of the main stakeholders of the NNUGGp and in all kinds of levels the BNPD got involved with the developments and surveillance of the Geopark. It is on the governmental board of the [Hungarian National Commission for Geoparks](#), took part on [transnational geopark meetings](#), was a lead partner of INTERREG projects (Geotop and RiWild) targeting the developments the crossborder Geopark.

The BNPD through these projects worked with outside researchers like the Herman Otto Museum of Miskolc and the expert of the Natural History Museum of Budapest and the ELTE University for the Geopark. It established strong ties with the local TETT Foundation NGO, which has been taking part of the maintenance of Ipolytarnoc and other nearby geosites.

11. consider citizen science projects in order to strengthen involvement and engagement of non-scientific stakeholders;

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

The almost finished RiWild INTERREG SKHU/1902/1.1/037 project already made [available some parts of the 3D scanned palaeosurface](#) to the public as an open database, more to share will be expected next year. All of the new scientific papers have been uploaded to the Site's website. There are several university and EGN-GGN co-operations for field practices and further research, the results will be part of the open database for citizen science. Email correspondence concerning consultations on fossils is frequent with and for interested of different backgrounds.

Just to show the effectiveness of valued geoheritage propagation among geopark inhabitants some local residents from time to time bring in and donate stones they had found appealing during construction of their building sites. Some of these rocks with the source and donor indicated are exhibited in our visitor center, in order to further promote knowledge on the geoheritage and to encourage the local population's involvement in the preservation of it.

12. continue to make good and systematic use of the logo and slogan of the European Diploma.

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

The European Diploma logo is exhibited everywhere within and in the surroundings of the site, including roadside panels leading to the IFEDPA. All of the circulated media information text, brochures and other publications, even the contracts with the TETT Foundation NGO mention the fact about the European Diploma, this prestigious title is well advertised. The new interactive panels all include the symbol of the European Diploma.

3. 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 BNPD provides leadership and specialists' expertise from the Headquarters to the Site. Due to economic problems caused by the pandemic and the Ukrainian-Russian war some restrictions, including staff downsizing were applied. The BNPD has a permanent local staff of 8 people now and by annual contracts with the local TETT NGO it also employs another 10 people right now. A senior, former staff member as a volunteer part time worker also contributes to the management of the site.

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.

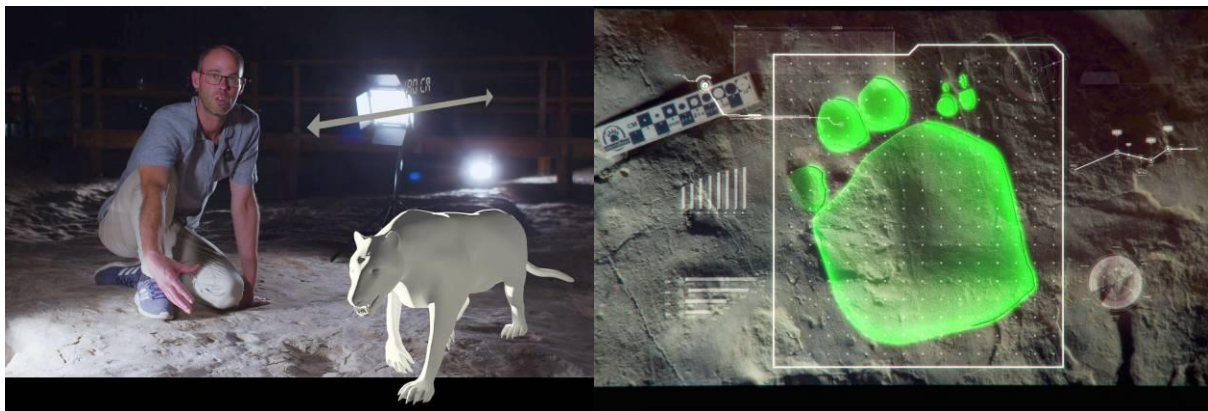
The IFEDPA has fixed boundaries, its core and buffer zones are well defined, there are no changes.

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.

Despite the economic depression and other difficulties the site remained one of the main geotourism centers and propagators in the region. The position of the IFEDPA is stable on the Tentative List of the World Heritage Sites in Hungary it is the flagship of the NNUGGp, within it the significance of the European Diploma is well recognized.



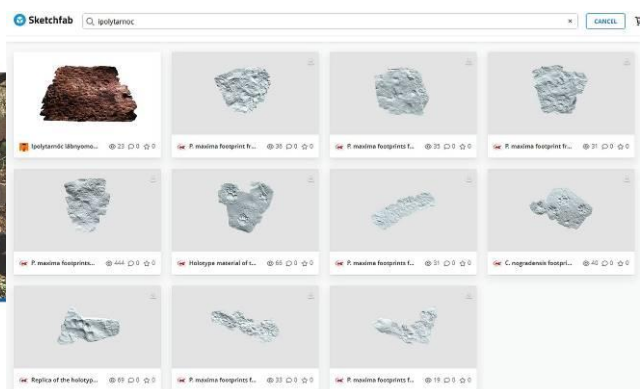
New interactive panel with the ED logo on linking plants of present and the Miocene past (Rec. 8.and 12) in the Miocene forest



The new video presentation on the process of reconstructing prehistoric animals based on their footprints (Rec. 7.)



Brochure on the rebuilding the 2.Hall (Rec.2.)



3D scanned fossil footprints open database on the web (Rec.11.)