



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

2025

**FOR THE PERIOD
DECEMBER 1. 2024 - NOVEMBER 30. 2025**



IPLYTARNÓC FOSSILS NATURE CONSERVATION AREA- HUNGARY – ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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: baczur.janos@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. But it also refers to the remarks on the pages 108-114 of the [COMPILATION OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE 2024 ANNUAL REPORTS, T-PVS/DE\(2025\)5](#).

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 geological / palaeontological research have been [uploaded to the website of the IFEDPA](#), the digitized footprinted surfaces [are uploaded to the internet](#), and are available on the [website of the IFEDPA](#) as an open database. An annual, continuous geological field training program has been introduced for students of ELTE University, aimed at researching the fossil layers of the site.

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 Borokás 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. We display some of the fossil donations from local residents at the exit of the gift shop, and this year we were also enriched with donations of petrified wood. According to an approved project, new interpretative tools will be available in the reception building within 2 years.

Thanks to the [RiWild Interreg SKHU/1902/1.1/037 project](#) the previously worn-out excavation hall II of the geotrail was successfully renovated, the building fits better into its natural environment. Minor renovation of the buildings, including the visitor center, took place throughout the year, and the rehabilitation of the reservoirs around the visitor center is planned for next year.

Monitoring the conditions of the fossil resources is a constant activity, in the petrified wood protective cellar, the plank material of the roof structure was treated with a mold inhibitor.

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 stakeholders of the transnational Novohrad-Nógrád UNESCO Global Geopark (NNUGGp). Part of the active cooperation is that the Bukk National Park Directorate (BNPD) has a Memorandum of Understanding (MU) with the Geopark to delegate the Hungarian representative (who is the former head of IFEDPA, currently a part-time employee) of the Slovak-Hungarian Geopark to the Coordination Committee of the European Geoparks Network (EGN CC).

One of the flagship geosites of the NNUGGp is the IFEDPA. The fact that the Geopark has a European Diploma-holding site within its boundary bears a good point. In order for the BNPD to officially be included in the top management of the geopark, the establishment of the transnational Neograd Geopark EGTC is in progress, which has reached its final stage and is awaiting approval by the government bodies of both countries. The BNPD, through its delegated representative of the EGN CC, is actively involved in the preparation of the geopark revalidation documents, the UNESCO revalidation will take place next year.

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 IFEDPA Visitor Center, as the main entrance to the UNESCO geopark, successfully participated in the 2025 Venice Biennale exhibition "[Deep Surface: Polyfunctional architecture to enhance the experience of UNESCO Designated Sites](#)".

To honor and celebrate the 10th anniversary of the UNESCO Global Geoparks the [BNPD introduced a huge discount on the entrance fee for geopark residents](#) to visit the geological trail of the site.

The IFEDPA website, like in the case of the Geodiversity day, maintains a close partnership, [linking the sharing news and programs](#). One of the thematic, special guided winter tours [crosses the state border and leads to a nearby geosite on the Slovak side](#) to promote the interconnectedness of the NNUGGp.

The [GUIDE@HAND smart phone application](#) is available for downloading in the reception building. It contains several study-trails and geolocalities of the NNUGGp.

INTERREG projects promoted 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 homepage and 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 as usual, by caring for the plantation of formerly acacia covered 4 hectares. The enhancement of the spreading of indigenous tree species and suppressing of exotic species, including the elimination of invasive plants 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. The local TETT Foundation NGO also provides support to these efforts. Driven, chase hunting is prohibited, in the interest of sensitive game management the game is shot from ambush and stalking, a game cooling container is available for the temporary storage of killed game, and the rooms of the research house occasionally serve as accommodation for member hunters of the national parks.

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.

The Racka sheep case:

In 2024, we managed to acquire two female sheep and planned to reintroduce the Racka sheep herd. Unfortunately, in the spring, the foot-and-mouth disease (FMD - a highly contagious viral disease affecting cloven-hoofed animals) epidemic broke out in Hungary, and due to strict animal health regulations, we had to slaughter them at the beginning of April this year. Their replacement will be possible after the epidemic situation is fully resolved. However, the structures of the fenced agricultural area of the livestock farming need to be renovated. We plan to purchase new animals in the spring of 2026. According to the plans, we would expand the population to a maximum of 5-6 individuals, which would graze on the fenced meadow, close to the entrance of the geological educational trail, presenting the protected ancient breeds of livestock farming heritage as an added value.

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:

In this regard, we are still looking for other sources to support the underground installation of the overhead electrical line between the Ipolytarnóc village and the IFEDPA reception building transformer station, but we consider this important not only from a landscape protection perspective, but also from an endangered bird protection perspective.

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:

This recommendation was implemented within the framework of the RiWild INTERREG project two years ago. The animated documentary has since been continuously shown during guided tours on the geological trail (with Slovak or English subtitles) and has been positively received based on the feedback. The interpretive film [is available here](#).

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:

This recommendation was also fulfilled. The exhibition in the Ancient Pine Visitor Centre presents a film about EDPA wildlife management, which visually suggests the connection between contemporary mammal tracks and fossil tracks of the past. The interactive touch wall uses playful, new animations to connect the present animals with the wildlife of the paleohabitat. The RiWild INTERREG project also targeted such developments in the Rock Park and Miocene forest sections, introducing new signs and placing interactive interpretive panels linking the present to the past between the Visitor Centre and the entrance to 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:

This recommendation was also fulfilled. 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. In order to further emphasize and acknowledge the importance of structured monitoring of visitor satisfaction in our work, there is an [opening slide on our website](#) to encourage feedback.(Járt már nálunk? Véleményére várunk / Have you visited us before? We look forward to your feedback.)

This can help increase visitor satisfaction. Visitors' ratings, comments and thoughts shared on social media platforms and the internet are monitored and consulted by staff, and they try to respond to any issues that arise. Fortunately, most of the comments are very positive.

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 Bükk National Park authorities rather than the Ipolytarnóc management);

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

The BNPD headquarters is a major stakeholder in the NNUGGp and the BNPD has been involved in the development and supervision of the Geopark at all levels. It is a member of the government council of the National Committee of Hungarian Geoparks, has participated in international geopark meetings, and has been a leading partner in INTERREG projects targeting cross-border geopark developments. This year, further steps have been taken to strengthen and recognize the active role of the BNPD within the NNUGGp, with the establishment of a new management organization, the transnational Neograd Geopark EGTC, in progress and reaching its final stage. The planned headquarters of the geopark governing body will be in [Baglyaskő \(Salgótarján\), which is managed by the BNPD](#). The BNPD collaborates with various domestic and international researchers and institutions, in addition to the Visegrad Group's and other UNESCO Global Geoparks.

It maintains close ties with the local TETT Foundation NGO, which has been involved in the maintenance of IFEDPA 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 completed RiWild INTERREG SKHU/1902/1.1/037 project has made parts of the 3D scanned paleosurface [available to the public as an open database](#). All new scientific publications have been [uploaded to the Website](#) to encourage self-learning. There are several university and EGN-GGN collaborations for fieldwork and further research, the results of which will be part of an open database for citizen science. There is frequent email correspondence regarding consultations on fossils with interested parties from different backgrounds.

To demonstrate the effectiveness of geoheritage dissemination, which is highly valued by the inhabitants of the geopark, some local residents periodically bring and donate rocks and fossils (this year petrified wood fragments) that they have found or inherited themselves. We display some of these rocks in our visitor center, indicating their source and donor, to further promote knowledge about geoheritage and encourage local participation in its preservation.

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 visible everywhere in and around the venue, including on the road signs leading to IFEDPA. All the press conferences, brochures and other publications distributed, even the contracts with the TETT Foundation, mention the European Diploma, promoting this prestigious title well. All the new interactive panels contain the European Diploma symbol. The website includes a link to the [official website of the COE EDPA](#). In order to raise public awareness, [news on the EDPA developments](#) are uploaded to the website of the area. The IFEDPA actively participated in the [60th anniversary meeting of the European Diploma](#), held in Granada in 2025. The IFEDPA representative gave a presentation on Hungarian EDPAs at the UNESCO National MAB meeting in Budapest, highlighting the importance of the European Diploma, especially for the preservation of geological heritage.

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.

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BNPD provides leadership and expert support work from the headquarters to the field. BNPD currently has a permanent local staff of 6 (two left this year) and employs a further 12 people through annual contracts with the local NGO TETT.

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.

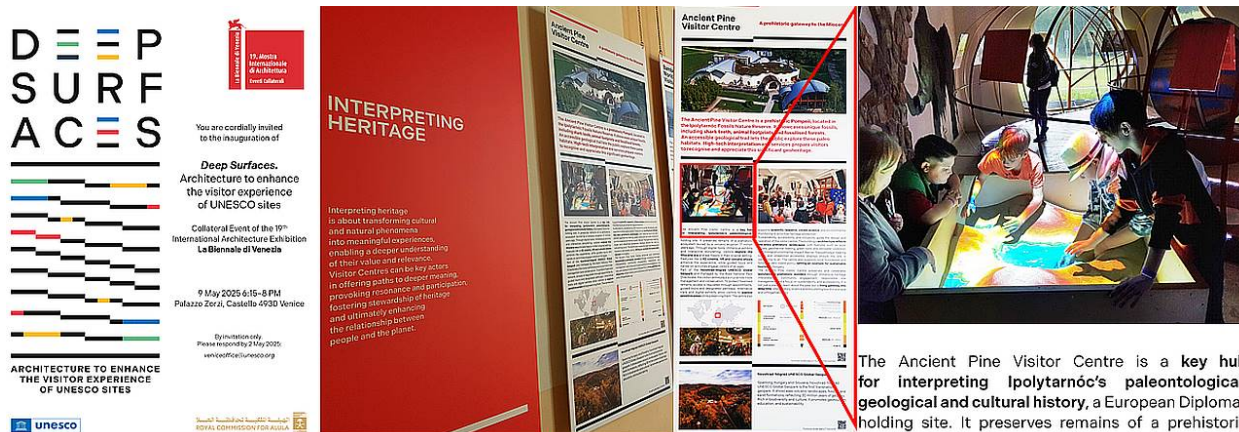
Despite the economic crisis and other difficulties, such as the decline in visitor numbers, the site remains one of the main geotourism centers and heritage conservation sites in the region. IFEDPA has a stable place on the Tentative List of World Heritage Sites in Hungary, it is the flagship of the NNUGGp, where the importance of the European Diploma is also duly highlighted.



Visitors at the European Diploma logo sign on Mother Earth Day 2025



The Hungarian EDPA representatives attended the 60th anniversary Granada meeting



The IFEDPA poster at the UNESCO Visitor Centers' Exhibition of the Venice Biennale promoted the European Diploma