



COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE  
Committee of Ministers  
Comité des Ministres

# 2021.

## ANNUAL REPORT FOR SZÉNÁS HILLS PROTECTED AREA



**EUROPEAN DIPLOMA HOLDING SITE**

**1995**

**CATEGORY A**

**2021.**

**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)<sup>1</sup>*



**Appendix 5: Model plan for annual reports**

**Annual report for the year 2021**

Annual reports should describe the changes that have taken place since the previous year in dynamic terms of management and function and not be limited to basic data. Any new text or map introducing a change in the situation of the area should be attached to the annual report.

State: Hungary

Name of the area: Szénás Hills Protected Area

Year and number of years since the award or renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas:

**2020-2030**

**Central authority concerned:**

Name: Duna–Ipoly Nemzeti Park Igazgatóság (Danube–Ipoly National Park Directorate)

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**Authority responsible for its management:**

Name: Szénások Európa Diplomás Terület (Szénás Hills Protected Area)

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<sup>1</sup> As amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2014)2 on 2 July 2014 at the 1204th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.

**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.

*By 2022, replace the current five-year management plan (expired 2018) with a new and approved five-year plan:*

- *We have begun to arrange the updating of the nature conservation management plan. We don't see any unresolved difficulties and hope that we can replace the plan next year.*

**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. develop a long-term twenty-five-year management strategy by 2023, including the following aspects:

a. objectives for the relative cover of grasslands and woodlands, their ecotones and connectivity between them, and the natural ecological processes and other management measures required to meet them; this should be based on sound evidence of the ecological value of these broad habitats and the ecological requirements of their characteristic species;

b. enhanced understanding of the ecological requirements for particularly rare and endangered species; with strategies for appropriate species recovery programmes where necessary;

c. an assessment of the potential impact of climate change on priority habitats, species and related ecological processes, together with an adaptation plan where necessary;

d. an assessment of future land-use pressures, especially from recreation, tourism and urban development, and potential strategies for mitigating the negative impacts of these;

e. the need to determine and implement the range of management options and nature-based solutions necessary to meet the long-term challenges of maintaining the ecological interest of the Szénás Hills Protected Area, especially with regard to long-term ecological trends, including climate change;

- *In 2020, the new LIFE project "Conservation of endemic species and dry grassland habitats in the contact zone of Pannonian and Alpine bioregions" has been started. The Szénás Hills EDPA is one of the project sites. The following activities of this LIFE project contribute to the achievement of the recommendation.*
- *On the 16<sup>th</sup> of November we set up a scientific advisor committee for the conservation of *Linum dolomiticum*. On this event the participants agreed on potential research and intervention options for the whole project.*
- *Monitoring of the whole population and habitats of *Linum dolomiticum* was achieved this year. New research equipments were purchased: submeter GPS, meteosticks (USB), meteorological station (in the field). Thanks to the new tools, we could assess the locations of *Linum dolomiticum* samples much more precisely than before. The meteosticks and the meteo station provide data on microclimatic conditions.*
- *The population of *Linum dolomiticum* has been decreasing from 2010, unfortunately. The decrease is presumably caused by microclimatic factors. In the open dolomite grassland spots, the substance decreases drastically, there's no regrowth, but in the closed dolomite grassland spots substance stagnates or seedlings can be found.*
- *The researchers started a new comprehensive in-situ conservation experiment of *Linum dolomiticum* (from 2017). The seeding experiment proves, that open dolomite grassland spot's microclimate has unfavourable effects on *Linum dolomiticum*. The researchers try to revive old former habitat of the *Linum dolomiticum* (in situ conservation) with sowing and new sample squares were designated.*

2. continue the close co-operation by the Danube-Ipoly National Park Directorate, the Pilis Forest Company and the municipality of Pilisszentiván in the management of the protected area; ensure that nature conservation is the primary consideration in decisions affecting the protected area; and enhance co-operation between the managing authorities and the local municipalities by:

*Results of the annual agreement (2021) of cooperation between the Danube–Ipoly National Park Directorate and the Pilis Forest Company:*

- *Conservation of habitats: In 2021, we have continued the reconstruction works (black pine cut) close to the Devil-Rock in the area. (0.2 ha)*

- *Monitoring the succession of the habitats, where we removed Black pine stands and planning the possible habitat reconstruction works (whole area 1200 ha)*
- *Monitoring of fenced sample areas – areas keeping big game out*  
*In the new LIFE programmes, we are planning to continue this type of researching work together with the Pilis Forest Company.*
- *Environmental education is supported by the Local Government of Pilisszentiván, too (according to the extended partnership between Pilis Forest Company, the Local Government and the Danube–Ipoly National Park Directorate, since 2016)*

a. establishing equivalent trilateral agreements of co-operation with Nagykovácsi and Piliscsaba;

- *We are planning to expand the cooperation with the other two settlements.*
- *A new partnership is in process between the Local Government of Nagykovácsi. (the draft contract has already been drawn up between the members.)*
- *We also want to connect Piliscsaba to the network next year.*

b. establishing more regular local forum meetings of officers and also the public;

- *Because of the Covid we had to avoid bigger events, we hope to be able to organize local forums next year.*

3. continue to pursue European Union funding to meet management objectives; ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of project delivery by including the employment costs of the appropriate project staff in the project bids and subsequent budgets;

- *The LIFE project will supplement our (Danube–Ipoly National Park Directorate) resources for a few years as long as it lasts.*
- *The tender will cover several habitat reconstruction interventions, restorations and research.*
- *At the beginning of 2022 we will start the renovation of the Nagy-Szénás educational trail in Nagykovácsi and the planning of a new educational trail booklet, too.*
- *We are employing 3 more colleagues on part time job in the new visitor centre, because the operation of the new building has generated many new tasks. In our view, seeing the extra tasks will require further expansion over time.*

4. where short-term European Union funding is supporting longer-term needs, secure an appropriate, predictable and sustainable budget to ensure stability of funding;

- *The searching for tender sources and the planning of interventions for the maintenance of the area are continuous.*

5. continue effective game management in line with previous commitments, to reduce populations of non-native mouflon and fallow deer to zero; establish a time line, funding and appropriate methods to achieve this eradication within ten years; and continue to manage native large mammal populations, based on effective monitoring by the Pilis Forest Company. Game management can be effective only with the continuous maintenance of the fence around the area and with a combination of control methods (for example, big game drives, shooting, trapping);

- *The game population management is part of the agreement of cooperation between the Danube–Ipoly National Park Directorate and the Pilis Forest Company (Agreement).*
- *The ASF (African Swine Fever) causes serious problems in the area. Due to this disease and COVID-19, all the driven hunts were cancelled again in the hunting season 2020-2021, unfortunately. It would be important to hold these hunts in order to manage the area.*
- *Monitoring of changes in number of large game population, resulted by the operation of game traps, is also part both of the Agreement and the new Life project.*
- *The fence enclosing the protected area must be maintained in good condition to prevent technical sport activities from encroaching upon it and also to raise the effectiveness of game population regulation. Maintaining of the fence is also part of the Agreement.*

6. continue the eradication of non-native tree species, especially the black pine and black locust; especially for the black pine, establish a time line to complete the clearance programme, with funding and appropriate methods to achieve the objective within ten years; and investigate with forest authorities where and how, in appropriate locations, black pine stands as well as other woodland areas might be restored to open grassland, considering appropriate techniques, costs and opportunities, and addressing the regulations which govern such open habitat restoration;

*See above.*

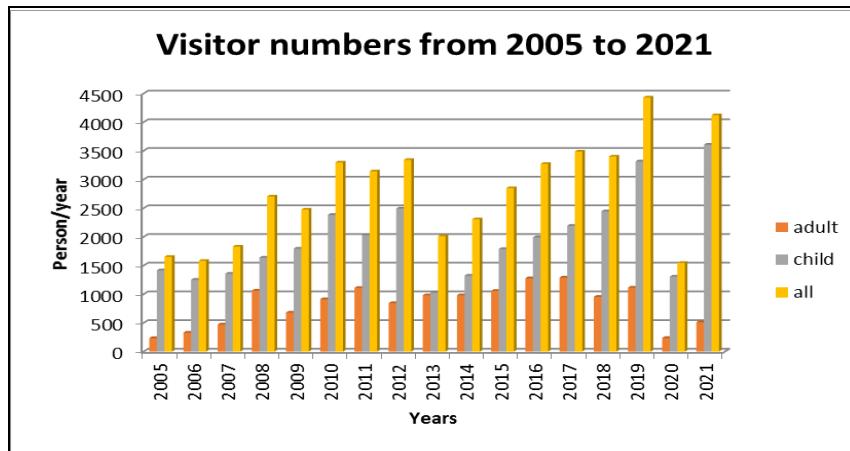
7. enhance the effectiveness of the buffer areas by the inclusion of appropriate regulations in land-use plans to limit inappropriate development; and investigate the practicality of regulating other activities (for example, fly tipping or the introduction of non-native species) in these areas;

- *Regulations must be worked out for horse riding paths in the area; also a mountain bike trail should be designated so as to avoid the fenced and strictly protected area;*
  - *There is a new initiative called « Pilis Bike trail network » which is a good opportunity to divert bike traffic from the most sensitive area. Consultations with the project decision-makers are ongoing.*
- *The protected landscape status of the two areas adjoining the special protection area, which were also the subject of the diploma application, should be maintained to keep them functioning properly as buffer zones; construction in these areas should not be allowed;*
  - *Where there is a buffer zone, no building permit can be issued in zone C. (Neither above the ground nor below)*
- *Urbanisation pressure must be handled properly; any new development plans of Nagykovács, Pilisszentiván and Piliscsaba should be examined carefully;*
  - *Consultations with the settlements on the development plans are ongoing.*
  - *Negotiations are ahead.*
  - *These areas can only serve recreational purposes.*

8. continue the effective management of visitor access for a range of user groups, including enhancing provision away from sensitive areas, such as horse-riding trails and mountain bike routes, where this can relieve pressure on the protected area.

- *One third of our programmes (guided tours, nature trail walks, big events) were cancelled due to COVID-19 this year again, because we could not open the visitor center until May 1st, unfortunately. (We had to close the centre on November in 2020.)*
- *We have reached the number of visitors before the epidemic, but we expect an increase next year.*
- *We had a very busy year from May, because the new visitor centre has opened. We held many new programmes: family events, summer camp for children, nature birthday party, etc. We were very popular with school groups, too*
- *We tried to organize outdoor programmes and series of lectures for the local children (primary school, nursery school) as soon as it was possible this year.*
- *Our rangers and the environmental educator regularly guides groups in the field to interpret the natural assets. We joined the International Arbor and Bird Day (10/05/2021) and the International Bird Watching Day (02/10/2021).*
- *Large-scale events were held in 2021. We organized:*
  - *Linum dolomiticum hikes in May,*
  - *Firebugs and Bats' night tours in June,*
  - *Night Forest event in June*
  - *Linum flax summer camp in August,*
  - *'Bug tours' in September (based on the biggest insect in Europe, the bush-cricket (Saga pedo).*
  - *bird banding programmes regularly*
  - *and the Treasures of the autumn forest' (15/10/2021) event.*
- *Stricter ranger action during the Linum dolomiticum bloom to protect the habitat. The action was successful.*  
*(The rangers locked the crossing gates on the fence, only the guided tour members were allowed to enter during the weekends.)*
- *A new Hungarian forest school rating system has been introduced in the national parks, in which the visitor center participates as a training place. this is a whole new opportunity for us.*
- *Field exercises were held for university students (several weeks).*
- *2 new exhibitions in Pilisszentiván (archeology, mining), we are planning the cooperation from the point of view of ecotourism (joint program package).*

- *We renewed the partnership with the alternative school in Pilisszentiván. We have a new one with a nursery school in Pilisszentiván.*
- *In September a field exercise was held for university students.*
- *Number of visitors in 2021: adult 625, children 3397, all 4022*



**1. diagram: Visitor numbers from 2005 to 2021**

e. **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.

*No changes*

f. **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*

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

- *Managing some team building days of different groups (mainly company groups) in the zone C. In these occasions cutting of Black pine, planting of deciduous tree plants or maintenance of wooden equipment of the nature trails was accomplished.*
- *The local NGO-s help our works (regular patrolling, habitat reconstruction works). The New Acropolis Association (NAA) and the Forest Guards Foundation (FGF) were the most active partners.*
  - *The NNA members help in the habitat reconstruction work, regularly.*
  - *The FGF placed nest-boxes and bird feeders into the forest (next to our nature trail).*
- *We have some volunteers helping us regularly in the environmental education works.*
- *Every year, we have "trainees" from universities and high schools. It's a good opportunity for them to learn, but at the same time, they help our work, too.*
- *We have promoted the area several times in Hungarian public media and other local media.*