

**Resolution CM/ResDip(2020)1
on the revised regulations for the European Diploma for Protected Areas**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 23 September 2020
at the 1384th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)¹*

Appendix 5: Model plan for annual reports

Annual report for the year 2025

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: *Italy*

Name of the area: *Parco Regionale Gallipoli Cognato Piccole Dolomiti Lucane*

Year and number of years since the award or renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas:
2020 – year of renewal 2025

Central authority concerned:

Name: *Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio e del Mare*

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Authority responsible for its management:

Name: *ENTE PARCO GALLIPOLI COGNATO PICCOLE DOLOMITI LUCANE*

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¹ As amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2014)2 on 2 July 2014 at the 1204th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.
Internet : <http://www.coe.int/cm>

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.

1. the regional authorities should ensure by 2022 a substantial increase in the budget presently allocated directly to the park to enable enough means for a stable management and a long-term consolidation of what seems now to be a very efficient but vulnerable structure;

Regione Basilicata has confirmed for the period 2025-2026-2027 an extra budget of €100.000,00 per year, in addition to the annual consolidated contribution of € 450.000,00, ensured during the past years. With the additional budget of € 100.000, the Park hired in 2025 new personnel: a Veterinary Doctor, a park ranger also in charge of monitoring and two monitoring operators.

2. the regulations for the pre-park area are to be adopted by the regional government before the expiration of the first five years of the European Diploma (2025);

The Regulation of the Park and of the pre-park area has been approved by Regional Government with D.G.R. n. 202500381 the 30th September 2025 and adopted by the Park the 8th October 2025 with D.C.D. nr. 60/2025.

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. enhance the present management of the forest towards a greater natural character, with more diversity of ages of trees, as at present parts of the forest in the park are formed by trees of a similar age. It would also be advisable to leave on the ground – without removal – some trees that may have died as a result of wind or other natural or biological processes so as to favour saproxylic fauna;

*As explained in the 2024 report, the final and executive draft of the forest management plan received funding of €123.413,10 from the EAFRD - European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, measure 16.8. The new forest management plan was approved in spring 2025. For the Gallipoli Cognato Regional Forest, this essentially involves a revision of the initial Forest Management Plan. The wood of Campomaggiore (PZ) has also been included in the plan, this offshoot of the forest that has not been affected by any other planning. The final and executive plan, valid until 2031, includes targeted interventions on individual forest parcels aimed at achieving a different forest age structure by eliminating alien species (*Cupressus sempervirens* spp.) and increasing biodiversity by creating ecological islands and maintaining dead biomass. In the Forest Management Plan, the choice of management method is oriented towards the unconditional cultivation method. Even in the specific case of the Gallipoli Cognato Regional Forest, the renaturalization of forest systems represents one of the priority objectives for both the Turkey oak forest and conifer reforestation. The renaturalization process is not based on a model of naturalness identified in the "climax" community or, in any case, in a state considered original, natural, but rather on promoting the restoration of natural processes, that is, the mechanisms of self-regulation and self-perpetuation, and the increase in the resistance and resilience of the system. The Plan proposes leaving the stands to their natural evolution and creating the conditions for regeneration, rationalizing grazing, which represents a limiting factor.*

2. enhance the control of non-native trees, in particular conifers planted during the 1970s and re-forest, with indigenous trees, the relatively small areas affected;

Within the Gallipoli Cognato Regional Forest there are reforestations of conifers, of artificial origin, carried out over 40 years ago for the purpose of hydrogeological defence. In the Gallipoli Cognato regional forest, the areas interested by conifers involved both surfaces without arboreal vegetation (reforestation) and parts of arboreal topsoil with a low density (coniferations). The reforestations at present are relegated to small portions incorporated in the deciduous forest where renaturalization processes are in progress. The results of artificial implants differ from area to area and can be grouped into three types. For each of them, it is possible to carry out differentiated interventions.

The Gallipoli Cognato Piccole Dolomiti Lucane Regional Park, in collaboration with the University of Basilicata and University of Molise, has implemented the project "Actions for the Maintenance of Flora Biodiversity in Basilicata". The project is one of several actions implemented by the Basilicata Region (starting with the Natura 2000 Network Program) to implement EU and national legislation, through management tools suitable for the conservation of habitats and species present in community sites.

The project follows the process of conserving flora biodiversity in Basilicata in four thematic areas or "MACRO-ACTIONS." Within the macro-action nr. 3 "Conservation actions", there is the activity of CONTROL OF EXOTIC AND INVASIVE FLORA SPECIES.

In 2025, through specific field studies, the forest plots designated for the collection of forest reproductive material were identified. The investigated plots were classified from a phytosociological perspective, with a detailed characterization of the phytocoenosis. From June to October, activities were carried out to collect the material required for genetic investigations. The species sampled within the Park area, in the Gallipoli Cognato Forest, were Quercus cerris and Quercus frainetto.

These represent the most important phases of the project, which will provide precise information on the state of the forests, which is essential for subsequent actions. In the Gallipoli Cognato Regional Park, pilot projects are planned for 2026 to control exotic plant species with renaturalization interventions and the development of a management protocol for the renaturalization of reforestation areas created with alien species.

3. enhance the repopulation of the park with new releases of the Italian hare *Lepus corsicanus*. The numbers of animals so far introduced do not ensure the long-term viability of the population due to inbreeding depression caused by the founder effect;

In 2025, the Mo.Le.C.O.L.E. project, "Monitoring Lepus and Capreolus: Long-distance Observation of the Park Environment," was completed. This project, funded by the European Union - NextGeneration EU as part of the National Biodiversity Future Center (NBFC) research program, aimed at monitoring the conservation status of the Italian roe deer and the Italian hare using new research techniques, including infrared thermography with goggles and drones, satellite telemetry, and camera trapping. Another objective of the project is to assess the potential impact of free-range cattle farming, with which they share the same habitats. Analysis of spatial and temporal activity patterns shows no impact from the presence of cattle in the hare's habitat, no any impact on food resources; the hare continues to use the same habitats, preferring for over 98% of the surface occupied by it is the 91M0 Pannonian-Balkan forests of Turkey oak and sessile oak, with lower percentages we find the 6210 semi-natural dry grassland formations wooded areas with small grasslands. These data are favorable and rule out the hypothesis of genetic depression.

Since 2009, the reinforcement activity made it possible to give stability to the wild population and to begin the process of expansion towards the territories of Calciano, Oliveto Lucano e Pietrapertosa.

In the hare's wildlife area, where breeding takes place, breeding pairs had been reinstated by the end of 2024 (after the EBHS epidemic that affected the farm). In 2025, five births were recorded and released into the SAC Gallipoli Forest.

4. monitor closely the effects of the introduction of the roe deer *Capreolus capreolus italicus* in the park, particularly in the forest. The low density of its only possible predators with the exception of man, the wolf, might lead to an explosion in numbers, which should be avoided;

In 2025, the monitoring activity of the Mo.Le.C.O.L.E. project, funded by Next Generation EU funds, included assessing the status of the Italian roe deer and the potential impact of free-range cattle farming. In addition to the use of camera traps, drones with thermal imaging cameras were used to achieve greater data collection effectiveness. The Italian roe deer was widely confirmed in all suitable areas of the protected territory of our Park. Compared to previous data, its presence was also confirmed in the westernmost area of the park, where the species was previously absent. The population is organized in small groups of 4-5 individuals. Throughout the Park, camera traps detected a range of between 19,663 ha and 13,165 ha (Minimum Convex Polygon, MCP, 100% and 95%, respectively) and an estimated density of 0.53 individuals/km² (Random Encounter Model).

The use of a drone in the Gallipoli Forest Reserve (SAC), a roe deer release area where the highest numbers are found, allowed us to detect the presence of roe deer with greater precision than traditional methods, while also achieving better results with less research effort.

Data processing was performed through distance sampling analysis using R software (R Core Team, 2024). The estimated density in the Gallipoli Forest Reserve was 2.13 individuals/km², with a standard error of 1.39 and a coefficient of variation of 0.5, demonstrating good estimation precision. However, the density remains low; no reports of damage to crops were received, nor were any habitat alterations attributable to roe deer observed. Monitoring confirmed the presence of three wolf packs, two of which have reproduced. Excrement

analysis revealed the presence of roe deer hair and claws in some cases (15%), with wild boar remaining the primary prey.

The presence of this predator plays a key role in regulating the growth of the roe deer population. This year, the pack's reproduction was confirmed for the first time in the western area of the Park, with the weaning of three pups. This area has seen a greater presence of wild boars since last year, and of roe deer since this year.

5. consider carrying out studies on the effects of climate change on the flora and fauna of the park.

A general increase of temperatures, with consequences, for example, on the reduction of the snow cover duration in winter. Higher temperatures in summer, increasing frequencies of heat waves and of droughts and the overall reduction of the precipitation are threatening factors for the survival of forest ecosystems in general and specifically of deciduous forests. Closely linked threats, like increasing intensity and frequency of pests, new emerging diseases or exacerbation of the existing ones must be considered as important factors.

In collaboration with the University of Basilicata, funded by the Basilicata Region, the Park is conducting the study "Assessment of the Vulnerability of Plant Ecosystems to Climate Change in the Gallipoli Cognato Regional Park." The Climate Change Study aims to assess the vulnerability of forest vegetation in the Gallipoli Cognato Regional Park and its resilience to extreme climate events through multiscale and multitemporal investigations. The methodology will be based on the use of remotely sensed indices to assess satellite impacts by verifying signal evolution before, during, and after climate events. The main tree-ecological parameters will be used to validate and calibrate vegetation indices to assess the vitality and health of stands. The activities carried out in Task 1.1 allowed us to establish a preliminary framework for the structural and health conditions of the Park's main forest formations. The main forest areas representative of the Park's various forest formations were identified and delineated. During the site inspection, the accessibility of the sites, their structural homogeneity, and the presence of individuals belonging to the target species were verified. This phase allowed us to define a set of representative areas for the subsequent multi-scale analyses envisaged by the project. Once the areas were selected, a linear transect was drawn from the Basento River to the summit of Mount Croccia in the Municipality of Oliveto Lucano, which will serve as the operational base for the surveys.

The park's attention is also directed towards Lepidoptera. They are an ecological indicator particularly sensitive to climate change, both directly and indirectly, due to their close dependence on host plants. Rising temperatures, the increased frequency of extreme weather events, and changes in seasonal cycles directly influence their developmental stages (egg, larva, pupa, adult) and flight and reproduction periods.

In this context, a study project aimed at monitoring Lepidoptera was launched in September and will continue until 2027. The goal is to identify any changes in community composition, altitudinal or latitudinal shifts of species, and variations in annual phenology.

Climate change is significantly impacting the geographic distribution and seasonality of numerous disease-carrying arthropods, including ticks of the *Hyalomma* genus. Originally found in hot, arid areas of North Africa, the Middle East, and Western Asia, the presence of these ticks has been confirmed in Italy, including in the Park area, where their occasional presence has become stable.

Increasing average temperatures, reduced frost periods, and longer warm seasons create favorable conditions for the survival and development of *Hyalomma* in areas where they were previously absent. *Hyalomma* are particularly important from a health perspective because they can transmit pathogens. The presence of these ticks is now monitored through entomological surveillance programs, in collaboration with the Department of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Bari. To date, no zoonotic bacteria or viruses have been detected in the tick specimens sampled.

3. **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.

With Regional Council Resolution N. 581 of September 30, 2025, the Regulations for the Park and pre-park areas has been approved. With Resolution of the Park nr. 60/25, the Regulations were definitively adopted and come into force on October 8, 2025. We are the first Park Authority in Basilicata to approve a very important and fundamental planning and regulatory instrument that governs the procedures for carrying out activities permitted within the Gallipoli Cognato Piccole Dolomiti Lucane Regional Park. This instrument aims to protect the natural heritage, respecting the local natural, landscape, anthropological, historical, and cultural characteristics. The documentation relating to the Regulations can be consulted and downloaded from the Park's institutional portal www.parcogallipolicognato.it.

With the additional budget of € 100.000, the Park hired in 2025 new personnel: a Veterinary Doctor, a park ranger also in charge of monitoring and two monitoring operators.

In 2025 the buildings that house the park offices has undergone energy efficiency improvements to serve the Park's offices and the guesthouse, including the installation of a 6kW photovoltaic system with storage on the building's roof. The goal is to reduce energy consumption and consequently reduce CO2 emissions. Furthermore, in 2025, an electric car was purchased to be used within the Park, in order to promote sustainable mobility.

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.

No changes on boundaries occurred since the last information about the Park has been submitted.

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.

In 2025, an action was carried out to improve the accessibility system and to create a network of greenways aimed at promoting integrated and sustainable tourism. The project included the development of the "Cycle Route of Beauty", a 70 km pathway through the repurposing of rural roads, connecting the main naturalistic and cultural sites within the park area.

Additionally, 60 e-bikes were purchased and charging stations and information totems were installed. The initiative also involved the creation of structures and activities dedicated to transformative tourism, supporting the sustainable enjoyment of the territory and the development of an integrated, low-impact transport network.

*In 2025, monitoring of the fish fauna in the main waterways of the park was carried out. The presence of species listed in Annexes II and IV of the Habitats Directive was detected, such as the bleak, *Sarmarutilus rubilio*, a species endemic to peninsular Italy and considered "Near Threatened" at a global level (IUCN, 2025), the southern bleak, *Alburnus albidus*, a species endemic to southern Italy and considered "Vulnerable" by the IUCN (IUCN; 2025), the Tiber barbel *Barbus tyberinus*, a species endemic to peninsular Italy and considered "Vulnerable" by the IUCN (IUCN; 2025). The presence of the eel *Anguilla anguilla*, was detected, considered "Critically Endangered" at a global level and in Italy (IUCN, 2025). In the Park its presence appears to be sporadic and no well-structured populations have been found.*

Within the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) 2025–2027, several actions have been launched:

- 1. Expanding the Wildlife Rescue Center: Expansion and improvement work has been undertaken on the areas designated for the Wildlife Rescue Center and the hare breeding facilities, aiming to increase available space and management efficiency. A new supply of veterinary equipment will further improve the center's operations.*
- 2. Spring Redevelopment: The project involves the construction of drainage systems, including drainage trenches and new watering troughs equipped with upwelling systems for wildlife, benefiting local ecosystems.*
- 3. Smart Connection: Initiatives are planned to increase cultural participation and promote environmental education among local communities, strengthening the connection between citizens and their natural heritage.*
- 4. Functional Restoration of Paths Networks: The initiative aims to restore territorial, ecological, and cultural functionality to the ancient sheep tracks, recognized as true green and blue infrastructures, capable of connecting natural, rural, and urban spaces. The goal is to enhance: historical heritage, biodiversity, soft mobility.*
- 5. Recovery of Dry Grasslands (Habitats in Annex I – Habitats Directive): A specific project is dedicated to the restoration of dry grasslands and native habitats of particular ecological importance. Planned actions include: elimination of invasive species, restoration of ecological functions, strengthening ecological connectivity, promotion of sustainable rural development through the creation of green infrastructure.*
- 6. Wildlife Monitoring (Habitats Directive – Annexes II and IV): Scientific monitoring is underway on several species of community interest to assess their conservation status and potential threats. The surveys concern: Lepidoptera (already described above), Bats, Wildcats.*

The following sections of the form should only be filled in if your area is in the year before a renewal of its European Diploma for Protected Areas, i.e. year 4 after the award of the European Diploma or year 9 after its renewal.

6. Natural heritage (general abiotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – State of conservation

- 6.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated
- 6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes
- 6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

- 7.1. Cultural heritage
 - 7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage
- 7.2. Socio-economic context
 - 7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context

8. Education and scientific interest

- 8.1. Visitors – Information policy
 - 8.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.)
 - 8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)
 - 8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)
- 8.2. Scientific research
 - 8.2.1. Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, etc.; identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention, etc.)
 - 8.2.2. Scientific publications

9. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)

- 9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations
- 9.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.)
- 9.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve)

10. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)

- 10.1. Improvements made
 - 10.1.1. Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna
 - 10.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime)
 - 10.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)
 - 10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities)
 - 10.1.5. Waste management
 - 10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems
- 10.2. Management
 - 10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made
 - 10.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made
 - 10.2.3. Internal policing measures
 - 10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action

11. Influence of the award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas

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