

**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)¹*

Appendix 5: Model plan for annual reports

Annual report for the year 2019

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: ROMANIA

Name of the area: DANUBE DELTA BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Year and number of years since the award or renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas:
2010 - 9 years since the last renewal

Central authority concerned:

Name: Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests
Address: 12, Libertatii Blvd, Sector 5, Bucharest, 040129
Tel: 004021 408 9642
Fax: 004021 408 9615
e-mail:
www: www.mmediu.ro

Authority responsible for its management:

Name: Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority
Address: 34A, Portului Street, Tulcea, Tulcea County, 820243
Tel: 0040240 518945
Fax: 0040240 518975
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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.

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. the process of co-ordinating the ecological management of the delta system with the three countries concerned (Moldova, Romania and Ukraine) should be continued and strengthened and the possibility of establishing a cross-border protected area should be considered in the framework of the trilateral agreement signed by the three countries concerned, under the auspices of the Council of Europe;

Under the Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova 2007-2013, the three countries implemented in common the following projects:

- Consolidation of the nature protected area network for biodiversity protection and sustainable development in the Danube Delta and Lower Prut river region (PAN Nature)
- Inventory, assessment and remediation of anthropogenic sources of pollution in the Lower Danube Region of Ukraine, Romania and the Republic of Moldova

As a result of the implementation of the PAN Nature Project, in 2018 the International Co-ordinating Council of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme has declared the first biosphere reserve in the Republic of Moldova, the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve. Having in view the existing transboundary biosphere reserve between Romania and Ukraine, the Danube Delta Transboundary Biosphere Reserve consisting of the Romanian Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve and the Ukrainian Danube Biosphere Reserve, The Romanian Parliament initiated the discussions for the establishment of a trilateral biosphere reserve between the three countries, Danube Delta – Lower Prut. The decision factors from Romania will analyze the possibilities to modify the Agreement for the creation and management of a cross-border protected area between Moldova, Romania and Ukraine in the Danube Delta and the lower River Prut nature protected area, signed in Bucharest on 5th June 2000 by the Minister of Environment and Territorial Planning of the Republic of Moldova, the Minister of Waters, Forests and Environmental Protection of Romania and the Minister of the Environment and Natural Resources of Ukraine in view to start the cooperation of the three countries to declare the trilateral protected area and to define new common policies in the field of environment protection, culture, education, research and a common management to apply these in the three biosphere reserves. In 2019 started a new international project between the three Countries, lead by Rewilding Europe, a Cambridge Conservation Initiative, under the Endangered Landscape Programme. The Project Restoring the Danube Delta, Europe's largest wetland Ukraine, Romania & Moldova will be implemented during the period 2019-2024.

2. the possibility of reactivating the co-operation between other European Diploma sites which are deltas (Camargue National Reserve (France) and Doñana National Park (Spain)) should be explored;

In October 2016 was signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority (Romania) and the Joint Union for the Management of the Natural Regional Park of Camargue (France) on the cooperation in the protected areas. In 2017 a student from France developed a study tour in Danube Delta and Camargue. The cooperation continued in 2018 with the visit of the Romanian team to Camargue for the 10th Camargue Festival celebrating 40 years of Natural Regional Park of Camargue, in May. In June 2018, a team from Camargue visited Danube Delta in view to identify new fields of cooperation and to promote common projects. In June 2019 a mixed team from Natural Regional Park of Camargue and local communities representatives visited the Danube Delta in view to develop new collaborations between local communities from France and Sulina town from Romania, inside the Danube Delta. The French partner also analyzed the possibility to develop a new collaboration between two high schools from France and Romania, from the protected areas, specialized in agriculture.

3. the monitoring of the ecological services and of the socio-economic activities carried out on the reserve (fishing, hunting, shipping, agriculture, forestry, logging, tourism) should be strengthened in relation with the carrying capacity of the natural ecosystems and the value of the reserve; special attention should be paid to the shipping activities (movement of boats and speeding) as well as to illegal fishing and hunting.

The integrated monitoring programme of the reserve includes monitoring of the ecological services and of the socio-economic activities carried out on the reserve (fishing, hunting, shipping, agriculture, forestry, logging, tourism). The rules for navigation inside the reserve are stipulated in the Governmental Decision no. 538/2015. In 2018 Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority purchased a radar to detect the boats that exceed the legal speed on channels inside the reserve, according to the Governmental decision no. 538/2015.

4. potential external threats should be continually monitored, especially the likely adverse transboundary impact on the ecosystem of the whole delta of the works related to the Bystroe canal in the Ukrainian sector;

The integrated monitoring programme of the reserve includes as well the monitoring of the aspects on the impact of the transport activities from the Chilia channel, as a consequence of the functioning of the navigation channel Danube – Black Sea (Bystroe), built on the Ukrainian side of the Danube Delta.

5. the usefulness of banning hunting, or of managing hunting on a demonstrably sustainable basis, on the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, especially in the most sensitive areas, should be studied;

According to the Law 82/1993 for the establishment of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve the hunting activity on the protected area's territory was banned starting with 2013. During the years 2018 and 2019 the hunting activity was allowed for concerned authorities in view to monitor the spread of the disease like African swine fever.

6. a system for better management of natural fisheries resources should be explored for the benefit of the local people, in order to reduce the categories and number of intermediary actors/stakeholders; the fish resources should be managed by the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority;

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority managed the fish resources on the reserve's territory, based on the Management Plan and Regulations approved by the Governmental Decision no. 763/2015. The local population has the right of exclusiveness at the renewable natural resources use through traditional economic activities.

7. information concerning access of boats to vulnerable parts of the reserve should be made readily available to the public;

All the necessary information related to the economic activities allowed on the protected area's territory are posted on the web page: www.ddbra.ro.

8. the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority should continue to bring technical and financial assistance to the local populations, municipalities and private operators in different fields (land planning, water supplies, sewage treatment) and assist with information on organizing and developing activities compatible with the aims of the reserve, such as ecotourism, bird watching and handicrafts;

Under the financial period 2007-2013, Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority supported the local communities to access funds for different projects for local development. For the financial period 2014-2020 there are several financial programmes supporting different kind of activities and stakeholders and beneficiaries from inside the reserve. Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority supports local communities in accessing the funds.

9. the restoration programme of the existing buildings should be continued, using traditional materials and natural local products; the cultural value of the reserve, especially the different ethnic roots of the populations, should be enhanced with the engineering and technical input of specialised institutes;

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority surveys the ways that the objectives presented by the implementation on the Building Regulation in Reserve are followed.

10. an external review and assessment of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve's Conservation Strategy (for example, priorities, management objectives, operational objectives and financial requirement) should be organised in 2010, ten years after its declaration, with the support of international expertise;

In September 2015 Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve organized an international meeting for an external review and assessment of the Conservation Strategy. Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority has in view in the next years to improve its legal framework and the strategies for the conservation of the Danube Delta's biodiversity and ecosystems. A project financed by the EU will have as result a new Management Plan for the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve.

11. the necessary funding should be provided in order to improve the capacities/performance of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority; a feasibility study on the creation of a financial mechanism should be undertaken so that all commercial activities and uses (not only tourist activities) contribute to the financing of the reserve;

The legal framework foresees measures for economic-social development of the Danube Delta area. Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority improves its budget with funds from taxes, fees, permits and authorizations issuing, but also by implementing projects with international funds (from EU mainly).

12. the adoption of the legal framework (master plan, Law on the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, Law on the Protected Areas) should be accelerated;

Based on the Management Plan, Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority proposed every year new legal documents to be adopted by the Government, in view to support its activity for nature conservation and protection and sustainable development in the area.

The Law 82/1993 regarding the establishment of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve was modified several times during the period 2010 – 2019. The Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority is subordinated to the central public authority for environmental protection – The Ministry of Environment (2010 and 2011 – Ministry of Environment and Forests, 2012 and 2013 - Ministry of Environment and Climate Changes, 2014 and 2015 – Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests, 2016 – 2019 first part – Ministry of Environment and now again Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests). In 2017 Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority was moved under the authority of the General Secretariat of the Government. In 2018 was moved back under the authority of the Ministry of Environment. In 2019 the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Waters and Forests became the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests.

The Law 317/2009 approved with changes the Emergency Ordinance 23/2008 on fisheries and aquaculture, as result, the fish resource from Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve is managed by Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority. The Emergency Ordinance 23/2008 on fisheries and aquaculture was also modified many times until now, one of the changes is clarifying the use of the fish and agricultural polders inside the reserve.

The Governmental Emergency Order no. 127/2010 for the adoption of some measures foreseen for the economic-social development of the area “Danube Delta” was approved in 2013 by the Law No. 216/2013. The Law 216/2013 has made changes as well to the Law no 82/1993 to support DDBRA in its activity.

The Law 136/2011 modify and completes the Law 82/1993 regarding the establishment of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve and establish the Administrative Advisory Council for the first time and the Scientific Council. By the Law 136/2011, the local population has the right of exclusiveness at the renewable natural resources use through traditional economic activities.

The Governmental Decision 1217/2012 approved the organization and functioning regulations and the organizational structure of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority. This document approves the organizational chart and the number of jobs. The legal document was also modified several times, the number of jobs changing from 173 in 2010 to 133 in 2013 and to 171 from 2015.

The Governmental Decision 538/2015 approved the Rules on the access and movement of ships and boats on internal canals and lakes in the perimeter of Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve.

The Governmental Decision 763/2015 for approval of the Management Plan and the Regulations for Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve.

13. noting that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedure is in operation, the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority should continue to analyse carefully the requests for new wind farms in the neighbourhood of the reserve.

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority surveys carefully the development of wind farms in the reserve's neighborhood area.

- 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.

The number of jobs in the organizational chart changed from 173 in 2010 to 133 in 2013 and to 171 from 2015 to present. The number of employees varied from 113 in 2010 to 127 in 2019.

- 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.

There are no changes to the boundaries of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve.

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.

Danube Delta and its adjacent areas: Maritime Danube to Cotul Pisicii, Isaccea- Tulcea sector of the Danube flood plain, Sârăturile Murighiol - Plopu brackish lake, Razim- Sinoie lagoon complex, the coastal Black Sea from Chilia Branch to Midia Cape, the coastal marine waters up to 20 m depth were declared in 1990 as a biosphere reserve, with a total area of 580,000 ha. (<http://www.ddbra.ro/en/danube-delta-biosphere-reserve/danube-delta/location>)

In 1991, 312,440 ha from the Danube Delta were included on the List of the Natural World Heritage under UNESCO, the site no. 588. (https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/588/multiple=1&unique_number=695)

In 1991 Danube Delta and some adjacent areas were also included on the List of the Ramsar sites, with a total area of 647,000 ha, site no. 521.

(https://rsis.ramsar.org/RISapp/files/51415864/pictures/RO521_map1602.pdf)

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve was been awarded with the European Diploma for Protected Areas for the first time in 2000.

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve is also part of the Natura 2000 Network.

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority is managing all these Danube Delta sites, designated under the international Conventions (the biosphere reserve, the World Heritage site, the Ramsar site and the EDPA site).

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

The status of the environment in Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve is the subject of a continuously monitoring activity on the evolution of water, air and soil quality parameters, and on their influence on natural habitats and ecosystems. The Reports on the environment quality for every year from 2010 to present are available on the website www.ddbra.ro. There were no accidental pollution with major impact on environment. The general status of the environment inside the reserve is stable.

- 6.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes

There are no changes recorded in the structure of flora and in the vegetation cover. In some years we have to fight against the invasions of the *Limnoria dispar*.

- 6.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds

No changes were recorded in the evolution of the sedentary or migratory populations.

7. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

- 7.1. Cultural heritage

- 7.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage

There are no changes recorded.

- 7.2. Socio-economic context

- 7.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context

From data recorded in 2008, the population was around 15,091 inhabitants. In 2010 the total population decreased to 13,583 inhabitants and during the next years, until 2017 was around 12,300 inhabitants. In 2018 were recorded a number of 11,576 inhabitants, with permanent residence in the localities inside the reserve.

From socio-economic point of view, the main changes took place in the field of infrastructure development and especially those that support the tourism development, through building new accommodation facilities, pensions and hotels, restaurants, through developing transport facilities and continuing the works for water supply and sewerage system rehabilitation in several localities inside the reserve (Sulina, Sf. Gheorghe, Chilia Veche, etc.). The number of tourists increased, as well as the small means of transport used in tourism activities and for public transport.

The main renewable natural resources used are fish, reed and landscape.

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.)

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority has one visitor center in Tulcea and 6 others inside the reserve, in Sulina, Crisan, Chilia Veche, Murighiol, Gura Portitei and Sf. Gheorghe. From this, only the centers from Sulina, Crisan and Chilia Veche are receiving visitors. The others are closed to public, due to the lack of staff. The visitor centers are used by tourists for information and by the schools for their classes.

- 8.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behavior (number, distribution in time and space)

Based on the reports of the tourism private companies and on the records from the visitor centers, Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve was visited by tourists from Romania, the majority of them, and from abroad. The total number of visitors varied from more than 70,000 in 2010 and 2011, to around 60,000 in the period 2012-2014, and increased again in the next years to more than 90,000. The most visitors are coming during the summer.

8.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)

Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve was visited by several European Commissioners, by the representatives of the Government of Romania, by foreign ministers from the countries of the Danube basin and from EU countries, specialists and researchers from national and international institutes and universities.

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.)

Every year a number of research permits are issued for institutes and universities, for different projects with objectives like:

- biodiversity and environmental factors monitoring
- strategies for the biodiversity conservation
- ecological recovery of the population of some species in decline
- invasive species and the elaboration of management precautionary measures
- elaboration of thematic maps
- harmonization of the economic and social interests with the objectives for biodiversity conservation
- scientific fishing for populations and for the assessment of living aquatic resources in order to establish the total allowable catch
- sustainable use of natural resources (fishing)
- marine and coastal engineering
- assessment of the archaeological potential
- morphosedimentology, erosion processes, climate change
- cartographic studies, spatial planning
- monitoring and ringing wild birds
- prevention and control of the diseases of animals transmissible to humans
- assessment of the status of habitats, flora and fauna species and monitoring

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
No. of permits	34	51	28	22	24	33	28	24	26

8.2.2. Scientific publications

No important scientific publication regarding the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve were produce.

Can be mentioned the publications produced under some implemented projects – DANUBEPARKS STEP2.0 - <http://www.danubeparks.org/mobile/?area=downloads>.

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

9.1. Changes in legislation or regulations

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9.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.)

Currently, regarding the fishing activity, the last concession contract has expired in 2018. The fishing activity is carried out only by the locals, professional fishermen, having in view that according to the law the local population has the right of exclusiveness at the renewable natural resources use through traditional economic activities. Regarding the reed resource, from the 12 zones allocated to reed harvesting, only three are granted to different companies. The interest for this resource has decreased year by year.

9.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve)

No changes occurred.

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

The process for restoring the stocks of pikes and sturgeons continued through action of launching nests of pike embryos spawn and respectively of production and populating with sturgeon sapling.

Inside the reserve were developed many civil works for improving the water circulation, to prevent silting of the lakes and streamlets in view to maintain the optimal hydrological regime, or for ecological restoration of some abandoned fish polders.

10.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime)

In very hot and dry summers some dry vegetation fires occurred. In some years, at the end of the summer, due to the high temperatures, and to the lack of rainfalls, the level of the Danube River is very low, affecting the water circulation inside the Danube Delta and some small channels and streamlets being silted or affected by eutrophication phenomena. Sometimes in spring some reed fires occurred, mostly produced by local population in view to recover the reed vegetation. Inside the reserve, during the very humid springs the level of the water high very much, and there are some localities inside the reserve where the protection dams do not meet the water level.

Starting with 2013 is in operation the TELVERDE phone number to warn Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority about extreme events inside the reserve (fires, flooding, mortalities, poaching, etc.)

10.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)

The visiting routes have not changed compared to the Management Plan. With financial support from EU, within a project, the Letea Forest protective fence was restored, in view to keep the cattle and wild horses outside the forest.

The information / signposting panels in the strictly protected areas and on some of the visiting routes have been restored as well. The visitors and local communities are informed using new warning panels about the visitor centers and the new rules inside the reserve.

10.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities)

Also with financial support from EU, was implemented a project for setting up a network of observers, especially for birdwatching.

10.1.5. Waste management

The Integrated system for waste management is under implementation.

10.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems

Inside the reserve the renewable energy system is not used at a large scale. Only some small solar panels are used by individuals.

10.2. Management

10.2.1. Administrative department: changes made

In the last 10 years Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority passed through many reorganization processes. The number of the staff was reduced from 171 persons to 133 persons, and finally was increased to 171. The organizational chart was also modified several times, new departments were established, especially the Direction Danube Delta Integrated Control Commissioner. For a short period of time, almost one year, Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority passed from the subordination of the Minister of Environment to that of the General Secretariat of the Government.

10.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made

In 2013 was established inside the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority the Direction Danube Delta Integrated Control Commissioner, with the main scope to fight against poaching, illegal fishing, activities in contravention of official protection. At present the direction has been transformed into commissariats distributed throughout the reservation.

10.2.3. Internal policing measures

The Governmental Decision 538/2015 approved the Rules on the access and movement of ships and boats on internal canals and lakes in the perimeter of Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve. In order to apply the provisions of the Governmental Decision 538/2015, the Authority is going to implement a system for monitoring the speeds of boats. The staff continue its mission to fight against poaching, illegal fishing, and any other activities in contravention of official protection.

10.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action

The control and survey activity is permanent, and the results are reported monthly. Many control actions take place annually, in strictly protected areas, in buffer zones and in economic zones, in fishing areas, reed harvesting zones, in camping areas, etc. The illegal fish tools, or the fish catch, or the boats used for fishing are confiscated and the persons are fined.

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

The award of the European Diploma for Protected Areas, as well as the other designations, influenced the funds allocated for the management of the protected area Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, by implementing projects with international and national partners, within some financing programs like South-East Europe Programme, Sectoral Operational Programme Environment 2007 – 2013, INTERREG IVB – Central Europe Programme 2007-2013, Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova, Interreg Danube Transnational Programme 2014-2020, Life Programme 2014-2020.