

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2019¹ “POLONINY NATIONAL PARK”

State: **The Slovak Republic**
Name of the area: **National Park POLONINY (hereafter the “Poloniny NP”)**

Year and number of years since the award or renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas:
The Resolution CM/ResDip(2018)11 on the renewal of the European Diploma of the Protected Areas awarded to the Poloniny NP (Slovakia)² /hereafter “Resolution No (2018)11”³

Central authority concerned:

Name: Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic (MoE SR)
Division of Nature, Biodiversity and Landscape Protection
Address: Nám. Ľ. Štúra 1; 812 35 Bratislava 1, Slovak Republic
Tel: (+ 421 2) 5956 2211;
e-mail: jana.durkosova@enviro.gov.sk (contact person);
www: www.enviro.gov.sk

Authority responsible for its management:

Name: State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic (SNC SR)
Address: Tajovského 28B, 974 01 Banská Bystrica, Slovak Republic
Tel: +421 48 472 20 26
e-mail: eva.turcerova@sopsr.sk
www: www.sopsr.sk

1. Conditions:

Resolution CM/ResDip(2018)11 contains 3 conditions

Condition No. 1: By 31 December 2021, submit to the Secretariat of the Council of Europe a detailed report, covering the implementation of each of the 52 actions in the Poloniny National Park Action Plan (Appendix 6.6.17 of the Poloniny National Park Management Plan for 2017-2026)

Management Plan for the Poloniny National Park for 2017 – 2026 (hereafter „the Poloniny NP Management Plan“) adopted by the Government of the Slovak Republic on 7th July 2016 is being implemented, namely by the monitoring of populations of the beaver, the otter, the European bison, large carnivores, amphibians, and other species; practical management of habitats (mowing of mountain meadows called “poloniny”, cut fens, cutting of *Maculinea* habitats – coordinated by SNC SR as well as additional meadow management supported from Rural Development Programu – EU funds).

In the reported period the Government of the Slovak Republic adopted **amendments of the Act No 543/2002 Coll. on Nature and Landcape Protection and the Act No 326/2005 Coll. On Forests**. The legal processes were aimed, among others to **streamline processes** – namely of procedures of **sanitary logging in protected areas as well as of the appropriate assessment** of the forest management plans in light of their possible significant impacts on Natura 200 sites. This is very relevant for the Poloniny NP that is overlapping with Natura 2000. **Within national parks only close to nature forestry will be allowed.**

The above principles will be used in negotiations of the new forestry management plans within the Poloniny NP. In July 2019, the SNC SR – Poloniny National park Administration initiated a **consulting meeting regarding forest management in the Poloniny NP for next years**. This meeting with participation of representatives from the Ministry of Environment SR, the Ministry of Land Use and Rural Development SR.

¹ reported period 1st September 2018 – 31th August 2019

² adopted at the 1321th meeting of the Committee of Ministers on 4 July 2018, valid by 18 September 2028

³ Originally resolution No (1998)26, resolution No (2003)2, No (2008)3 and resolution No (2012)19, respectively

Internet : <http://www.coe.int/cm>

In 2019, the **process of forest management plan renewal for the Forest Management Units Starina and Sobrance for decade 2020-2029 started**. This process is under supervision of the Regional Forestry Government Office in Prešov and it should be finished next year. The SNC SR – Poloniny NP Administration has submitted their requirements to be included into the preparing forest management plans, including the principles which are specified in the Poloniny NP Management Plan.

SNC SR also started **negotiations with non-state owners and users** of the forest land in order to implement the close to nature forestry in their forest stands. This should be compensated on the base of agreement between the SNC SR and these subjects (via contracts in accordance to § 61d of Act. No 543/2002 Coll.).

Condition No. 2: By 31 December 2023, initiate the revision of management and action plans for the Poloniny National Park so that they can be approved (by government resolution, if necessary) before they are due to be implemented on 1 January 2028;

The **revision of the Poloniny NP Management and Action Plans** will be initiated in a due period. Implementation of this Plan is evaluated as part of the annual plan of SNC SR. Based on its results for the first 5 years, the new draft plan would be prepared by 2022.

Condition No. 3: Deploy adequate resources, both financial and human, in order to achieve a satisfactory outcome of the actions detailed in the Poloniny National Park Action Plan;

Since 2017 the Administration of the Poloniny NP has **15 employees** (comparing to 12 persons in 2014) and its activities are implemented based on the **annual plan (financed centrally) mainly from the state budget**. In February 2019 a new Envirostrategy 2030 was adopted by the Government of the SR containing 4 targets for the effective nature and landscape protection. One of them is to “revise state nature protection institutions”. **Increased competencies of SNC SR (mainly regarding the sanitary logging)** were subject to above mentioned amendment of the Act No 543/2002 Coll.

In 2019 the Ministry of Finances of the Slovak Republic approved additional financial allocation to implement international commitments (including the European Diploma for the Poloniny NP) and these resources were transferred to SNC SR.

In the reported period (as well as in the previous ones) **compensations from the state budget⁴ were paid** (based on the decision of the relevant district offices, nature protection bodies). These relate (i) to financial compensations for restriction of the common land use and (ii) to the compensation for damages caused by the selected protected animal species. Regarding the financial compensation there was one decision (within the reported period – **21 675 EUR**) paid for compensation of forests land of cca **203 ha in the Jarabá skala National Nature Reserve**. Regarding compensation for damages there were totally **44 decisions of the competent district offices (totally 53 125 EUR)** with respect to damages caused by the wolf (41 cases) and by the European bison (3 cases).

2. Recommendations

Resolution CM/ResDip(2018)11 contains 8 recommendations

Recommendation No. 1: By 2020, develop a prioritised plan for all land in State ownership to be reclassified as levels 3, 4 or 5; and demonstrate significant progress in reclassifying the level-3 forest as either level 4 (with exploitation by a silvicultural selection methodology) or as level 5 (no exploitation);

Within the Poloniny NP there are **21 small scale protected areas** (with total area 2 432,78 ha, e.g. **8,16 % of the NP territory**). 14 natural reserves (with total area 2 373,34 ha, e.g. **7,96 % of the NP territory**) are in the **5th level of protection** and majority (2 001,24 ha) is in the state ownership, remaining part (372,09 ha) is in non-state hands. Remaining **7 small scale protected areas (59,44 ha, e.g. 0.2 % of the NP territory)** are in the **4th level** of protection and smaller part (4.60 ha) is in state ownership and majority (54.84 ha) is in non-state hands.

⁴ § 61 and §§ 97-102 of the Act No 543/200 Coll. on Nature and Landscape Protection as amended

According to the amended Act No 543/2002 Coll., the **regime within these 2 levels of protection would be changed in favour of nature protection.**

Since 2017 the MoE also invested in land purchase⁵ of privately owned land in the Poloniny NP and in 2018 the MoE bought approximately 67 ha (184 885 EUR from the state budget). Further purchase depends on offers from the private owners and on available financial resources

In general, according to the Slovak legislation this is possible to fulfil this either by (i) zoning of the Poloniny NP or by (ii) establishing new small scale protected areas like natural reserves or natural monuments.

In 2019 the SNC SR and MoE SR continued in negotiations with land owners and users regarding to the **World Heritage (WH) Property**. On the base of those negotiations, a proposal for WH property boundary modification was prepared. It would be submitted for the approval of the Government of SR and after a legislative process may start to designate new nature reserves. These 2 new natural reserves are: the Veľký Bukovec NR with area 677,5299 ha (270,7811 ha in zone A with 5th level of protection and 406,7488 ha in zone B with 4th level of protection) and the Rydošová NR with area 88,1881 ha (56,1819 ha in zone A with 5th level of protection and 32,0062 ha in zone B with 4th level of protection). The area of the proposed NR Rydošová partly belongs to the Poloniny NP and partly to the neighbouring the Východné Karpaty Protected Landscape Area. Further details would be reported in the next annual report.

Recommendation No. 2: Encourage church, association and private landowners to reclassify their land as level 3 or 4, utilising a single-tree or group-selection sylvicultural system wherever appropriate;

The crucial change is the already mentioned legal obligation to apply in national parks only close to nature forestry – similar to the selective sylvicultural system (amendments will be in force since January 2020, so details would be provided in the next annual report).

The area of the Poloniny NP belongs to 7 forest management plan units. In two of them, forest management plans are valid till the end of 2019 and renewal started. The new forestry management plan has to be approved by the regional government authority and has to be in accordance with the Poloniny NP management plan because according to the national law⁶ there is an obligation to respect in the Poloniny NP Management plan in decisions of state bodies including decision on the forestry management plans.

As mentioned under the condition No.1 the SNC SR started negotiations with non-state owners and users of the forest land with expected signature of contracts.

Recommendation No. 3: Maintain the management of meadows outside the World Heritage Site, preferably by summer grazing by livestock or alternatively by cutting and removing the cut material from the site;

The above mentioned activities like maintaining of meadows by cattle grazing or maintaining the traditional livestock breeds are involved into the Poloniny NP Action Plan. **Mowing of fens (2,60 ha)** was financed from budget of the SNC SR as well as **cutting of mesophilic and humid meadows on area 20 ha.**

At the large scale maintaining of grassland was supported in the frame of **Rural Development Programme 2014-2020**, the precise data (coverage) are not available at this moment. This programme is co-financed from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

Recommendation No. 4: Liaise with appropriate stakeholders, especially those involved with sustainable tourism, to prepare an inventory of objects of cultural significance within the national park and support a prioritised programme of restoration of these culturally significant objects;

The inventory of 51 significant cultural sites/objects in the area of the Poloniny NP is available in the chapter 2.2.9 “Cultural Heritage and Religious Activities” of the Poloniny NP Management Plan. The **cooperation exists with the “Club of the Military History Beskydy”** which restored several military cemeteries in the area of the Poloniny NP as well as with a non-profit organization “**Carpathian wooden**

⁵ § 63 of the Act No 543/200 Coll. on Nature and Landscape Protection as amended

⁶ § 54. 5 of the Act No 543/200 Coll. on Nature and Landscape Protection as amended

churches” oriented at support of regional wooden churches maintenance. This cooperation continued also in the reported period.

Recommendation No. 5: Develop effective research and monitoring programmes which provide data helpful to the management of the national park’s resources;

As already mentioned, some research activities have already started – as part of research and monitoring programmes mentioned in the Poloniny NP Management plan or its Action Plan. They are **either carried out by the staff of the Poloniny NP** (monitoring of beaver, otter, amphibians, etc.) **or by external researchers** (who finance their activities by themselves).

During the reported period the following research and monitoring activities in the Poloniny NP were undertaken:

- Geological survey in the frame of elaborating PhD. thesis “Features of sediment density flows, their influence on reservoir properties of Cergowa Beds (Oligocene of the Dukla Tectonic Unit, Polish Outer Carpathians)
- Long-term Air Quality Monitoring in the frame of The European Monitoring and Evaluation Programme (EMEP) – station located in Starina
- Long-term Ecosystem Research carried out within LTER-Europe platform⁷
- Monitoring aimed on species of Community interest
- Monitoring of seminatural meadows species composition under the impact of different ways of management on permanent plots in the Poloniny NP
- Research of *Coleoptera*
- Research of soil arthropods
- Research of malacofauna
- Research of dragonflies (*Odonata*).

The following **new scientific articles** were published within the reported period:

Bombieri and col.: Brown bear attacks on humans: a worldwide perspective, Scientific Reports, 2019 (<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-019-44341-w>).

Jarčuška B.: Rovnokridlovce (*Orthoptera*) a modlivky (*Mantodea*) NP Poloniny. Poznámky k výskytu druhov / Orthopterans (*Orthoptera*) and mantids (*Mantodea*) of Poloniny National Park: notes on species occurrence, XLII. Východoslovenský tábor ochrancov prírody - Prehľad výsledkov odborných sekcií, Publisher: Štátna ochrana prírody SR, Banská Bystrica, pp. 40-44 (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334987990_ROVNOKRIDLOVCE_ORTHOPTERA_A_MODALIVKY_MANTODEA_NP_POLONINY_Poznamky_k_vyskytu_druhov_Orthopterans_Orthoptera_and_mantids_Mantodea_of_Poloniny_National_Park_notes_on_species_occurrence).

Jarošová J. and col.: Vlk dravý (*Canis lupus*) – ďalší rezervoár *Echinococcus multilocularis* na Slovensku / Grey wolf (*Canis lupus*) – reservoir of *Echinococcus multilocularis* in Slovakia, Infonet – Veterinárny odborný časopis, XXVI/2019:3:124-127.

Kunca V., Čiliak M., Lupták R.: Fruitbody production of *Hericium erinaceus* and its distribution in Slovakia, Czech mycology 2018: 70(2): pp 211–224

Matosiuk M, Śmietana W, Czajkowska M, et al. Genetic differentiation and asymmetric gene flow among Carpathian brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) populations—Implications for conservation of transboundary populations. Ecology and Evolution, 2019;00:1–11.

(<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ece3.4872>)

Štofík J., Bartušová Z.: Zmeny v populácii bobra vodného na trvalých monitorovacích plochách okresu Snina (severovýchod Slovenska) / Changes in Eurasian beaver (*Castor fiber*) population on permanent monitoring sites in District of Snina (north-eastern part of Slovakia), Ochrana prírody, Banská Bystrica, 33: 40-48, 2019

(https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335601450_ZMENY_V_POPULACII_BOBRA_VODNEHO_NA_TRVALYCH_MONITOROVACICH_PLOCHACH_OKRESU_SNINA_SEVEROVYCHOD_SLOVENSKA_Changes_in_Eurasian_beaver_Castor_fiber_population_on_permanent_monitoring_sites_in_District_of_)

⁷ <http://www.lter-europe.net/projects/eLTER>

In July 2018 the XLII. **East Slovakian Camp of Nature Conservationists** was organized and there were several working sections which conducted small scientific surveys. **Reports** from their work and some results from those surveys **were published in collection** “The Overview of Specialist Groups Results” (www.vstop.sk/images/documents/2018_zbornik.pdf).

Recommendation No. 6: Devise and implement with local stakeholders a tourism development strategy and a prioritised action plan so that the infrastructure facilities can be developed for the benefit of both the national park and the economic well-being of the people who live in the area;

Activities related to this recommendation undertaken by the municipalities, local companies and NGOs were supported in the past from the **Swiss financial mechanism** mainly via small grant program and also in the frame of the **Norwegian financial mechanism**. Their results were used in the reported period, too.

Also in the reported period the Slovak Environmental Agency motivated municipalities to increase their involvement in the **Village renewal programme** (traditional instrument supported annually from the state budget). In 2019 one project was supported in the frame of the Village renewal programme: Village of Topoľa – Ecoschoolroom of relaxation and cognition, First stage.

Additional activities related to tourism development were carried out by local NGOs, for instance as a part of the project “**Concept of development of the Snina district**” which was elaborated by Aegis Foundation in 2018.

It is necessary to mention that in the reported period the Prešov Self-Governing Region (PSGR) was involved as a **pilot region from Slovakia into the “Catching-up Regions Initiative”** It is a co-operative programme of the European Union (EU) and the World Bank for supporting of regions in the EU with lower level of development. The goal of this initiative in the PSGR is to support sufficient development and creation of working positions through the Action Plan for Development and Employment in PSGR. Within the frame of this initiative the experts of the World Bank elaborated a study report “Unlocking the Endogenous Tourism Potential of Poloniny National Park and the Snina District” on which cooperated also the SNC SR – Poloniny National Park Administration. This study analyses current situation in tourism development and it proposes measurements which to be taken to stimulate tourism in this region. The proposed activities should be supported in the frame of ENI Cross Border Cooperation Programme in next years.

See <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/eca/publication/slovakia-catching-up-regions>.

Recommendation No. 7: Maintain co-operation with the other nations which incorporate parts of the Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe World Heritage Site, as well as with Bieszczady National Park in Poland, the East Carpathian Biosphere Reserve and the two neighbouring Landscape Protected Areas – Východné Karpaty and Vihorlat;

The SNC SR - Poloniny NP Administration has good contacts with neighbouring protected areas in Slovakia and also in neighbouring countries.

In the frame of the **UNESCO World Heritage Property** “Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe” **there is a very close cooperation with neighbouring Vihorlat Protected Landscape Area (PLA) and also with Východné Karpaty PLA, because into the proposal of boundary modification there was included also the area of proposed Rydošová NR** (which partly belongs to this PLA). Issues of the all three protected areas are very similar and they all work together to solve them.

The SNC SR - Poloniny NP Administration has also contacts with **foreign partners**. One member of the staff took a part in the Workshop on Completing the Guideline on Zoning and Management of UNESCO World Natural Heritage Sites “Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe” organised by the Romanian National Forest Administration – Romsilva with the support of the Romanian Ministry of Waters and Forests, Austrian E.C.O. Institute of Ecology and WWF – Danube Carpathian Program. This workshop was held in Romanian town Sibiu in March 2019.

Representative of the SNC SR - Poloniny NP Administration participated in the **Joint Management Committee meeting for the World Heritage Property** “Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe”. It was organized in Romanian town Suceava in May 2019.

In June 2019 one important international study was organized - 6 employees of the Poloniny NP Administration visited **Central Balkan National Park in Bulgaria**. This Area is also a part of Biosphere Reserve as was awarded by the European Diploma and part of this NP also belongs to the serial WH property "Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe".

SNC SR – the Poloniny NP Administration has also a long term cooperation with partners within the **East Carpathians Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (Slovakia/Poland/Ukraine)**. The **trilateral agreement** concluded on 15th November 2013 is being implemented. The Steering Council of this biosphere reserve consists of administrations of the relevant national parks and protected landscape areas from Slovakia, Poland and Ukraine. Its role is to jointly manage and coordinate cross-border activities. In the reported period there was **an annual meeting of the Steering Council in Uzhgorod, Ukraine on 10th December 2018**.

Members of the staff of the SNC SR – Administration of the Poloniny NP participated in the **XXVII. International Conference “100 years of Nature Conservation in the Area of the Present-day South-Eastern Poland and Western Ukraine”** organised by the Bieszczady National Park Administration in the town of **Ustrzyki Dolne (Poland)** from 13th to 17th September 2018.

During the reported period the SNC SR - Poloniny NP Administration cooperated **with Polish partner – the Bieszczady National Park on the microproject “The Nature in Neighbourhood – Polish-Slovak Cooperation in the Field of Education, Promotion and Protection of Eastern Carpathians Nature”** implemented within the frame of the Transboundary Cooperation Program Interreg Poland-Slovakia (V-A PL-SK 2014-2020). Several activities were realized within this microproject like common meetings of teachers, guide workers or rangers aimed on environmental education, the joint study visit of Bavarian Forest National Park in Germany and Šumava National Park in Czech Republic, and so on. Meetings were organized on both, Slovak and Polish sides.

Recommendation No. 8: Continue the dialogue with local communities in order to build confidence and foster involvement in the diploma-holding area.

A dialogue between the SNC SR - Poloniny NP Administration and local communities **runs permanently**. There is a good cooperation with some **local communities**, for example with municipalities **and local schools**. Good examples of the cooperation with local municipalities are projects financed from **Swiss financial mechanism** and also **Norwegian financial mechanism**. Both projects were finished in the year 2017, local municipalities were involved as partners in both these projects.

As mentioned under recommendation No. 6 we cooperated also with PSGR in the frame of “Catching-Up Regions Initiative” during the reported period.

Site Management:

No changes of the environment since the last annual report. There were also no changes regarding to staff/finances.

3. Boundaries:

No change of the boundaries.

4. Other information:

Except for already mentioned information, there was no change in nature and culture heritage, education and scientific interests.

19 December 2019

Prepared by the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic (Marián Gič, Michaela Mrázová) in cooperation with the Department of Nature Protection of the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic (Jana Durkošová)