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**BUREAU OF THE COMMITTEE
FOR THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
IN THE FIELD OF BIOLOGICAL AND LANDSCAPE DIVERSITY**

BU-DBP

Group of specialists - European Diploma

**Bieszczady Mountain National Park
(Poland)**

APPLICATION

Presented by the Polish Government

European Diploma Application

The Bieszczady Mountain National Park Poland

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Enclosed

Copies of documents stating the present protection status of the Bieszczady Mt National Park and translations of their most important passages

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European Diploma Application

Country: **Poland**

Name of the area: **The Bieszczady Mountain National Park**

Body responsible for its management:

The Bieszczady Mt National Park Administration Center

Ustrzyki Górne

38–715 Ustrzyki Górne

1. Type of the area:

The Bieszczady Mt National Park covers 270 km² of the easternmost part of the Carpathian range in Poland. The typical landscape are medium height mountains with gentle slopes. The area elevation ranges between 650 and 1346 m a.s.l. with six peaks rising above 1300 m. All the massives are built of the Carpathian flysh – paralell layers of sandstones and shales. Most of the area is covered by deciduous forest. Above 1150m a.s.l. there are grasslands which used to be exploited for grazing. Also the areas in lower zones of stream valleys are covered by meadows.

The climate is fairly continental with strong influence of the warm and dry winds from Southern Europe.

Before World War II the Bieszczady was relatively densely populated. The inhabitants lived by cattle and sheep grazing and forest exploitation. After the War, in order to cripple the Ukrainian underground army, Soviet and Polish communist authorities displaced almost all the native people from the Bieszczady. Most of the villages were burnt to the ground.

The present settlement within the Bieszczady National Park borders is limited to three small localities, which are inhabited mostly by the park employees. The total number of inhabitants equals to 130 (0.5 person/km²). Consequently the anthropogenic pressure is minimal.

Since 1992 the Bieszczady Mt National Park has been a part of the International Biosphere Reserve MaB *The East Carpathians* consisted of three units Polish, Slovak, and Ukrainian.

2. Description of geographical location

Geographical coordinates: 22°26' – 22°53' N; 49°00' – 49°14' E.

The Bieszczady Mts are the extreme north–western range of the Eastern Carpathians. On its southern and eastern edges the park is surrounded by the country border.

See enclosed maps

maps 1 and 2. Location of the Park

map 3. The Bieszczady Mountains, scale 1: 75 000.

3. Characteristics and scientific, aesthetic, cultural or recreational value justifying conservation.

a. Plant cover

The Bieszczady Mt NP is one of the few European mountain areas with relatively well preserved native flora nad fauna. The proportion of the forested area amounts to 80%

and in some places there are patches of primeval mountain forests. The distinctiveness of the plant cover has qualitative and quantitative reasons. The proportions of the most common mountain plant communities are much different from the Western Carpathians.

At the current stage the biocenotic and species diversity is very high. Natural, mostly forest plant communities predominate. Only a few per cent of the whole area are covered by seminatural plant communities which occur mostly in sites of former villages.

The vertical zonation in the Bieszczady has a unique character. Although mountain grassland zone is present, neither the upper forest spruce zone nor the dwarf pine zone occurs between it and the lower montane forest zone. This phenomenon is regarded as a result of the climatic conditions and anthropogenic pressure in the past ages. The uppermost areas are covered by specific meadow zone called "polonina", which because of floral and geobotanical reasons, cannot be considered an equivalent of the alpine meadow zone.

They are usually by 730 plant species have been recorded, of which 167 are mountain species and 29 are either endemics or species characteristic of East Carpathian flora. The proportion of synantropic plant species is relatively low and makes up only 10% of the total number of species, which gives local flora fairly natural character.

75 plant communities (15 forest, 60 non-forest) have been recorded in the BdPN so far. Several of them like *Pulmonario-Alnetum viridis*, *Aceri-Fagetum*, *Trollio-Centauretum*, *Nardetum carpaticum orientale*, *Poo-Deschampsietum*, *Vaccinietum pocuticum* are endemic.

b. Mammals and birds

Several species of mammals and birds that are recognized as rare or extinct in other parts of Europe inhabit the area of the Bieszczady Mts.

Native populations of large carnivorous mammals the wolf (*Canis lupus*), the bear (*Ursus arctos*), and the lynx (*Felis lynx*) are especially a precious part of the Bieszczady Mts wildlife. Thanks to their presence populations of large herbivorous mammals are exposed to natural selecting factors, therefore maintained in good condition.

The bulk of the park area is forested and uninhabited. These characteristics hold down the rate of exposure of wild animals to people. Consequently, not only the populations themselves but also the natural behaviour of the animals has been preserved. A very small contribution of livestock to the wild predators diet and their avoidance towards people prove their behaviour remains unchanged from what is regarded as natural.

Among the large plant eaters, the red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) is the most numerous. The density of its population has been estimated at 5–7 individuals/100 ha. The species make the bulk of the wolves diet and is an important factor in dynamics of the forest.

The European bison (*Bison bonasus*) was reintroduced to the Bieszczady in the end of the 1960s. The population has adapted itself successfully to the natural conditions of the park. There are also populations of roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*) and wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) and a few individuals of elk (*Alces alces*)

In vast grasslands used for the grazing or harvesting of hay, there are abundant feeding grounds for birds of prey, while the forest supports them with plenty of nesting places. These conditions enable the existence of some rare species of birds in the Bieszczady. There is likely to be a breeding territory of the Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*). Density of the Lesser Spotted Eagle population (*Aquila pomarina*) in the Park and its surroundings, is higher compared to other regions of Poland. So is the density of the Ural Owl (*Strix uralensis*). Some field records suggest that breeding of the Short Toed Eagle (*Circus gallicus*), the Eagle Owl (*Bubo bubo*), and the Rock Thrush (*Monticola saxatilis*) have taken place.

4. European interest justifying the application

270 km² of consistent scarcely populated and mostly forested area distinguishes the BdpN from among other mountain national parks in Europe. The park protects the largest in Europe complex of natural and primeval beech forests. It is inhabited by populations of species that are either extinct or rare and endangered in most of the area of Europe. The Bieszczady is also an important for protection of endemic species and communities.

Natural and demographic characteristics of the National Park (see above) bring a unique opportunity for further protection and development of large predator populations. At present, the Bieszczady has one of the most numerous wolf (*Canis lupus*) and brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) populations in Europe. These populations, and the population of the lynx (*Lynx lynx*) are completely natural as there has been no reintroduction of these species in the Bieszczady and its adjacent areas. Moreover, thanks to migrations, the gene flow between them and the small populations that occur in Central and Western Europe certainly exists. The good condition of these populations seems to be crucial for the future protection of genetic diversity in these species in Europe.

For the last few years a herd of Hucul horses (*Equus caballus* f. *huculensis*) has been bred in the park in order to maintain this typical of this area old rare breed.

The presence of the rarest species of birds of prey and the high density of some of the raptors species in the Bieszczady make it an important place in terms of protection of this group of birds especially eagles.

The natural characteristics of the Bieszczady Mountains as well as the history of the local population contributed to a succession towards a primary state. To achieve this goal as well as other protection goals, over 70 % of the park area has been recognized as strictly protected. Grazing and hay harvesting aimed at maintaining the present condition of the meadows, take place only on lowest parts of the slopes.

The Park covers the westernmost part of the East Carpathian endemic and subendemic plants ranges. The park protection regime provides a guarantee of effective conservation of the unique *polonina* meadow plant communities as well as an appropriate, protection-oriented management of the meadows in the valleys, which represent a wide range of succession stages. It is also a valuable site for studies of ecosystem dynamics, particularly of natural succession that has developed here as a consequence of the mass displacement of local people.

5. Ownership title

The whole area of the park belongs to the state.

6. Protection scheme

Measures taken to date and under consideration

In 1973 the Bieszczady National Park with an area of 5725 ha was created. In 1991 the park was expanded to the area 27 064 ha (see the enclosed documents). At the same time its area was divided into a strict protection zone (180 km²), and an active protection zone (90 km²).

In the strict protection zone no human activities and only authorized admission are allowed. This area is left for gradual evolution towards natural state which means either the climax deciduous forest or the natural mountain grassland in the uppermost spots.

The areas recognized as active protection zone are mostly meadows, grey alder forests covering former fields and meadows in the valleys, or patches of spruce treestands which were planted in the past. The first need conservation to be maintained in the present

succession stage whereas the latter are subject to active replacement of the treestands in order to accelerate the change to a more natural condition.

The character of protection (high proportion of strictly protected area) is determined by the need to create optimal conditions of development for the native populations of large mammals, which are considered particularly precious part of the Bieszczady nature.

In 1992, the International Biosphere Reserve Unesco MaB *The East Carpathians* was created. The Bieszczady National Park strict protection zone was recognized as the core area of the Polish part of the reserve. The areas within the park subject to active management are the buffer zone of the reserve. The other two units of the Polish part of the reserve i.e. the two landscape parks (total area 810 km²) surrounding the national park in the west and north make its vast transition zone.

The rules of the management and protection are determined by:

- The National Nature Protection Law of Oct 16, 1991
- The Council of Ministers Decree of August 4, 1973 (official act of funding the Bieszczady National Park)
- The Bieszczady National Park Statute
- The The Council of Ministers Decree of January 25, 1991 (official act of expansion of the BdNP)
- MaB Diploma (official statement of the biosphere reserve status)
- complex plan for protection based on detailed inventory and research (under preparation)

Execution of the protection rules

Public admission to the park is controlled. Hiking is allowed only along marked tourist trails. The visitors who depart for a hike are obligated to buy admission tickets. Each ticket is accompanied by an extract of the most important Park regulations.

The protection against illegal procedures such as poaching, camping or hiking in prohibited areas is performed by the field administration. The park is subdivided into a few forestries. The staff of each one (approx 3–4 people) is responsible for regular patrolling of the area. In the summertime the field administration is supported by volunteers in the places most frequently visited by tourists.

7. Planning and management plan

A. Management of the park

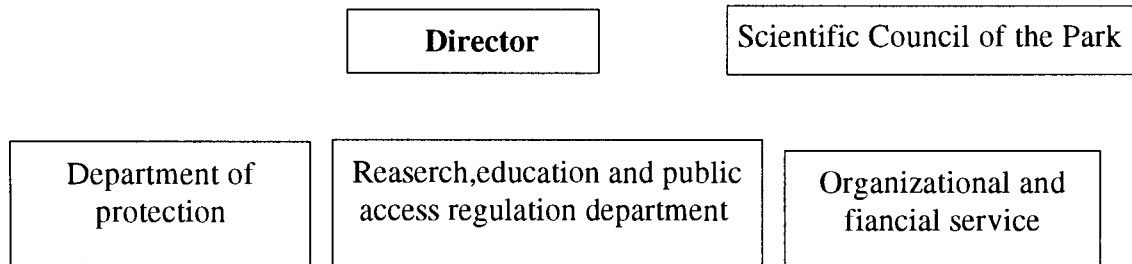
The park director is responsible for final decisions concerning the Park management. The director is advised by an independent scientific council. (The council members are representatives of various scientific institutions and they can't be employees of the park.) The council is only a consultative body and its resolutions can be rejected by the director. The council assembles 4–5 times a year.

The main activities of the park staff are:

- prevention of destroying nature and poaching
- organizing public access and ecological education in the park
- research and inventory
- organizational coordination of the protection plan
- cooperation with scientists carrying out research or inventory programmes in the park

- coordination of international research/monitoring programmes
- administrative service

B. Structure of the park administration



C. Provision of the information to the public.

The main forms of informational activity of the park are:

- cooperation with local schools, aimed at providing their students with different forms of ecological education
- professional training offered to biology teachers
- cooperation with the local student ecological club
- training for volunteer nature guards
- provision of printed materials on park nature,
- guided tours offered to visitors,
- a nature interpretation path with a detailed guide book,
- the park museum exhibitions

The park has one main information centre in Ustrzyki Dolne, which is also a museum of Bieszczady nature, and a few minor ones open only in summer.

E. The plan for protection

The complex plan for protection, being prepared at present, is based on a detailed study of various aspects of protection and management. It consists of the following subplans:

- land – surveying
- land classification review and modernization
- air photography analysis
- a plan for protection of inanimate nature
- a plan for protection of the plant cover
- a plan for protection of rare plant species
- a plan for forest management
- a plan for protection of fauna,
- a plan for protection of aquatic ecosystems
- a plan for restoring the huculski horse (regarded as a local breed of the domestic horse)
- a plan for protection of the aesthetic features of the landscape
- a plan for protection of the cultural heritage
- a plan for public access and education
- a plan for spatial management of the park and its buffer zone.

The final synthesis of the subplans will be used as a tool in the preparation of annual action plans for the Park.

The work on the plan preparation is going to be completed at the end of 1995

Jacek Wajda & Stanisław Kucharzyk

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PICTURES SHOWING TYPICAL ASPECTS OF THE PARK NATURE
(Numbers are written in the overleaf of each picture) (photo Anotni Derwich)

Picture 1

Zonation of the plant cover

The lowest and the uppermost areas are covered by meadows. The two zones are separated from each other by the zone of low montane forest.

Picture 2

Predominating type of forest – beach treestands (in autumn)

Picture 3

Beach forest. The picture shows the natural interspersing of fir and patches of planted spruce.

Picture 4

Beach trees on the timberline.

Picture 5

Beach forest. Young and equal age of the trees is an evidence of intensive forest exploitation in the past

Picture 6

Bear foot print in a beach forest

Picture 7

Ruins of an old narrow guage. The line was built before World War I and used for timber transportation until about 1934.

Picture 8

Clearing on the area of a planted spruce treestand. Because of the unnatural origin resulting in very poor condition of the spruce forests, they are subject to gradual replacement.

Picture 9

Succession of forest on meadows formerly used as pasture.

Picture 10

Succession of the grey alder in an area formerly occupied by a village.

Picture 11

A road side cross in a valley formerly occupied by a village.

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Photographs are available at the Secretariat.

Appendices 1 – 4

Translations of the most important passages of documents stating the present protection status of the Bieszczady Mountain National Park

Appendix 1

National Nature Protection Law of Oct 1, 1991

(Dz. U.RP. No 114 poz 492)

(superior to other nature protection legal acts)

extracts

(definition of a national park)

article 14.1. A national park covers a protected area (of at least 1000 ha), representing unique scientific, natural, social, cultural and educational values. All elements of nature and landscape are protected in national parks.

article 14.2. All actions aimed at nature protection are superior to other activities in national parks.

article 14.3. The main goals of a national park are to achieve full knowledge of its nature, to conserve its entire ecosystems as well as conditions determining their dynamics, and recreating deformed and vanished elements of native nature.

article 14.7. National parks are created on the strength of The Council of Ministers decree.

article 14.8. The Statute of a national park is granted by the Minister of Nature Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry.

article 15. National park activities and needs are covered by the state budget.

Appendix 2

The Council of Ministers Decree of August 4, 1973
(Dz. U. PRL. nr 31, poz 288)
(official act of the foundation of the Bieszczady National Park)

On the basis of art. 14 of the Nature Protection Law of Apr 7, 1949 the following dispositions are given

1. The Bieszczady National Park has been founded, with an area of 5725 ha situated in Rzeszów district.
3.
 - 3.1. The park is managed by the director designated by the Minister of Forestry and Wood Industry.
 - 3.3. The director is responsible for all activities performed by the Park administration and for the state property in the park area.
4. The Bieszczady National Park Council is a consultative body supporting the director. The council members are designated by the Minister of Forestry and Wood Industry.
5. In the park area all activities (their character, scale and way they are performed) must fit the nature protection goals and needs.
6. The park area is subdivided into two types of reserves: strict protection reserves and active protection reserves. Village areas and farming grounds aren't incorporated into reserves.
8. Areas within active protection reserves can be granted the status of strict protection as their condition achieves a natural state.

Appendix 3

The Council of Ministers Decree of Jan 25, 1991

(Dz. U. RP. 11, poz 39)

modifying the Decree of August 4, 1973

extracts

On the basis of article 14 of the National Nature Protection Law of Apr 7 the following dispositions are given.

1. Increase the park area to 27 064.41 ha.
3. The Park is a state budget unit subordinate to the Minister of Environmental Protection Natural Resources and Forestry, who designates the park Director.
15. Public access to the Park is regulated by the directors decisions in consultation with the park scientific council.

Appendix 4

The Bieszczady National Park Statute

introduced Jul 9, 1992

1. General statements:

The national Park functions are determined by

1. 1. The National Nature Protection Law of Oct 16, 1991 (Dz. U.RP. No 114 poz 492).
1. 2. The Council of Ministers Decree of August 4, 1973 (Dz. U. PRL. nr 31, poz 288)
modified by the Council of Ministers Decree of Jan 25, 1991 (Dz. U. RP. 11, poz 39).
1. 3. This statute.

2. The park is supervised by the Minister of Nature Protection, Natural Resources and Forestry assisted by the State Board of National Parks.

5. Goals of the park

- 5.1. Assessment of current conditions of nature, determination of needs and further strategies for the protection of park nature and landscape.
- 5.2. Performing actions aimed at protection of nature with consideration for ethnic and cultural values of the park.
- 5.3. Organizing research and education on park nature.
- 5.4. Organizing public access and tourism services in the park, with consideration for protection needs. Management of the park real estate
- 5.6. Prevention of vandalism
- 5.7. Running economic activities which enable other park activities.

8. Duties of the park administration (selection)

- 8.1. Creating annual and long-term plans for nature protection, research plans and financial plans, as well as making reports of performed actions.
- 8.2. Participation in creating regional spatial management plans for the area the park belongs to.
- 8.3. Organising and supervising all practical protection actions
- 8.4. Supervising protection of old architecture and other historical remnants.
- 8.5. Creating public access rules, determining fees for entrance and tourism facilities.
- 8.6. Running tourism services in the park
- 8.7. Scientific activities run by the park include
 - research in the field of environment and landscape protection,
 - monitoring of nature conditions and forecasting their changes .
 - studies in the field of technical, economical and organizational conditions of environment and nature protection
- 8.8. Providing society with publications on park nature

15. Economy of the park is determined by the rules of the state budget.

16.

1. Park activities are based on action plans and financial plans, which are prepared annually by the director.
2. The plans can be applied after approval of the director of State Board of National Parks.



Mapa 1. Położenie BdPN na tle Polski

Mapa 2.
Granice BdNP na tle pogranicza
polsko-ukraińsko-słowackiego.

