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

**(CO-DBP)**

**Group of specialists – European Diploma for Protected Areas**

28-29 January 2002  
Room 15, Palais de l'Europe, Strasbourg

**Carpathian Biosphere Reserve  
(Ukraine)**

**RENEWAL**

Expert report  
by Dr Mario F BROGGI (Switzerland)

*Document established by  
the Directorate of Culture and Natural and Cultural Heritage*

The European Diploma for Protected Areas, Category A, was awarded to the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve in 1997.

The Secretariat did not accompany the expert on his visit to the reserve.

Appendix I contains Resolution (97) 21, which was adopted when the European Diploma was awarded. Appendix II contains a draft resolution prepared by the secretariat for the purposes of renewal.

## **Introduction**

The European Diploma (Category A) was awarded to the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve by the Committee of Ministers on 30 September 1997. The appraisal had been carried out in September 1996 by Dr Jean-Pierre Ribaut and Dr Mario F. Broggi. It had been planned that an on-the-spot appraisal would be conducted between 17 and 21 June 2001 with a view to renewing the diploma for the first time.

## **Programme**

17.6.2001: Journey to Rakhiv. Short meeting with the Dean of the Faculty of Biology of the University of Ushgorod, Vitaly I. Nikolaichuk.

18.6.2001: Meeting with the Director, Dr F. D. Hamor, to discuss the progress made in organisation since 1996. Visit to the Ecology of the Mountains Museum; meeting with Mikhaylo O. Dakalyuk, head of the Rakhiv district. Trip along the banks of the Black Tisza to observe the damage caused by this year's floods.

19.6.2001: Trip to the virgin beech forest in Uholsko and study of the WSL monitoring programme being carried out in the biosphere reserve as part of a co-operation scheme.

20.6.2001: Journey to the Chornohirskiy massif (interrupted by fresh flooding).

21.6.2001: Return journey.

## **Brief overview of existing natural assets**

Some 38 000 ha of beech groves are protected in the Ukrainian Carpathians. They include the beech stands of the "Uholsko-Shyrokoluzhanskiy" massifs, which represent the largest closed virgin beech forests in Europe. Considerable natural assets are also to be found in the Rakhiv district, in particular the Chornohirskiy, Marmoroskiy, Svydovetskiy and Kuziyskiy massifs.

## **Territorial organisation**

When the first visit took place in 1996, the biosphere reserve covered 38 900 ha. In 1997, a presidential decree extended the reserve by 24 000 ha (bringing it to a total of 57 800 ha). In 2000, the Stushyjza section of the park, some 4 000 ha, was detached from the reserve when the Ushanski National Nature Park was set up. The biosphere reserve therefore now covers 53 400 ha. There are plans to extend it by a further 50 000 ha, in particular along the Romanian border. The detachment of the Stushyjza section, which is located at the intersection of three borders, those of Slovakia, Poland and Ukraine, should be seen as a wise decision, as the other core areas around Rakhiv are too far away from this region. The resulting reduction of natural assets therefore has little impact, as the main expanse of closed virgin forest is situated in the east of Transcarpathia.

## **Management of the region**

A new management plan is to enter into force on 1 September 2001. The core area will then cover 40% of the reserve's total area. In other words, the buffer and transition zones will be extended and the present core area will be maintained. It should be emphasised that the protection categories in Ukraine's national parks and biosphere reserve region do not correspond to international categories. The biosphere reserve has to meet stricter protection criteria than those set for national parks which are usually covered under IUCN category V and generally contain the basic elements of a traditional landscape. Hunting is prohibited in the biosphere reserve. This ban applies throughout the Rakhiv district for the period 2000-2002 to allow wild game stocks to build up again. However, bears are hunted illegally outside the reserve. The main parts of the reserve belong to the state and no privatisation is allowed. The grazing of livestock in the buffer zone is controlled (10 000 sheep and goats and 600 cattle, 5 sheep or goats per ha, 2 cattle per ha). Furthermore, some 350 ha are used for haymaking and 9.3 ha of land are cultivated.

## **The timber industry**

Logging in the biosphere reserve is controlled. No logging at all is permitted in the central zone, where, in particular, natural and virgin forests are to be found. In a few outlying areas, the reserve administration makes necessary supplies available to the public (for example, about 5 000 m<sup>3</sup> of firewood per year). However, large areas of woodland are cleared outside the reserve. Many scientists hold this clearing partly responsible for the widespread damage caused by the Tisza. Following the heavy rain of 18 June 2001, I personally saw the water level suddenly rise, bringing with it large quantities of humus and floating wood, whereas the side streams in densely wooded areas ran clear.

## **Ecotourism**

The severe economic recession has hampered plans for investment in ecotourism. Economic conditions have worsened since 1996. Nevertheless, a cultural activity centre is being built near the monument marking the geographical centre of Europe; it should be opened in 2002. Since our visit in 1996, construction of a museum on mountain ecosystems near the administration offices has been completed. There are plans to build other centres (for example, the reserve administration wants to build a boarding house in the Hoverla region and another centre at the reserve administration in Rakhiv) and a few ecological trails have been marked out. The information centre in the valley of narcissi – of which only the shell had been built in 1996 – will soon be completed. At present, accommodation available in the private sector amounts to 36 houses, each offering beds for between 3 and 5 people. The logistic infrastructure has not yet reached western standards; it is the only real weakness that was noted when visiting the region. Another wish would be that a guidebook on the reserve be published in several languages.

## **Research and sustainable development**

An invitation to join in scientific co-operation, made following the 1997 recommendations, has been taken up by Switzerland. A co-operation agreement between the biosphere reserve and the Federal Institute for Research on Forests, Snow and Landscapes (WSL) entered into force in 2000. This led to an exchange of guest scientists and participation in joint projects. A major international conference on research on virgin forests is planned for 2003.

In the White Tisza region, a sustainable development schedule has been drawn up and the Principality of Liechtenstein has offered its co-operation. No agreement has been signed as yet. A group of experts from Liechtenstein has visited the region and a Ukrainian delegation has been to the Principality to discuss co-operation projects in the fields of agriculture and tourism.

In the border region with Romania, the idea is taking shape of setting up a joint Ukrainian-Romanian biosphere reserve called “Maramoroskiy (Hutsul) Alps”. This reserve would cover some 40 000 ha in Romania and 50 000 ha in Ukraine. Romania should already have obtained EU support under the Phare Credo programme. Ukraine is looking for a European partner under the Tacis programme.

## **Conclusions**

The Ukrainian authorities are invited to meet the following conditions and examine the proposals made below:

- sufficient means should be available to ensure that the reserve functions properly and measures should be taken to prevent negative influences affecting the status of the reserve and the surrounding area.

Other recommendations:

- extend the status of the present biosphere reserve to a model region for sustainable development, according to Unesco's definition of the term, while guaranteeing that the present core area is maintained. This model region could be the Rakhiv district, where natural assets abound;
- undertake a review of the protection categories in the region in order to make them compatible at international level;
- give consideration to the transborder project to set up the "Hutsul Alps" biosphere reserve with Romania;
- encourage further international co-operation projects in the area of nature and landscape conservation and sustainable development.

*Final remarks*

I wish to thank the reserve's administration and its director, Dr Fedir Hamor, for the management work they have carried out on the spot despite extremely unfavourable economic conditions. In view of the worldwide importance of the existing assets, this major task deserves full support at both national and international level. I therefore have no hesitation in recommending an extension of this European Diploma.

Birmensdorf (Zurich), 13 August 2001

Signed Mario F. Broggi

Expert's address: PD Dr Mario F. Broggi, Director of the Swiss Federal Research Institute on Forests, Snow and Landscapes (WSL), Zircherstrasse 111, CH-8903 Birmensdorf.

**APPENDIX I****RESOLUTION (97) 21****ON THE AWARD OF THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA  
TO THE CARPATHIAN BIOSPHERE RESERVE (UKRAINE)**

*(adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 30 September 1997  
at the 602<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.a of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Having regard to Resolution (65) 6 instituting the European Diploma;

Having regard to the proposals of the Bureau of the Committee for the activities of the Council of Europe in the field of biological and landscape diversity (BU-DBP);

Having noted the agreement of the Government of Ukraine;

Having deliberated,

Solemnly awards the European Diploma in category A, to the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve in accordance with the regulations for the European Diploma (Resolution (91) 16);

Places the said area under the auspices of the Council of Europe until 30 September 2002;

Attaches to the award the following conditions, that:

1. sufficient resources (material and financial) be provided to permit the proper functioning of the reserve and the pursuit of scientific research;
2. any privatisation measures taken have no negative impact on the status of the reserve and its surrounding areas;
3. hunting be prohibited in the reserve;

Attaches to the award the following recommendations, that:

1. a development and management plan be drawn up for the six core areas making up the reserve and their surroundings;
2. public education and information efforts (open-air museum) be stepped up;
3. the innovation that the biosphere reserve represents in buffer zones and settled areas be extended to model regions with a view to putting sustainable development into practice. The Rakhiv district is particularly suited to serve as a model region;
4. interconnection of the various protected sites be promoted in the eastern part through the creation of suitable corridors;
5. institutions involved in environmental research, and particularly in research on virgin forests be invited to make their wealth of experience known, including at international level. To this end it is proposed that joint research programmes involving Western and Central European research institutions be conducted on a more regular basis;
6. international co-operation on nature and landscape protection and sustainable development be promoted within the Carpathians themselves;
7. the management of the different areas of the reserve be co-ordinated.

## **APPENDIX II**

### **Draft resolution on the renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas to the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine)**

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.a. of the Statute of the Council of Europe;

Having regard to Resolution (65) 6 instituting the European Diploma for Protected Areas,

Having regard to Resolution (97) 21 awarding the European Diploma for Protected Areas to the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine);

Taking into consideration the expert's report submitted to the Group of Specialists for the European Diploma for Protected Areas at its meeting on 28 and 29 January 2002;

Having regard to the proposals of the Committee for the Activities of the Council of Europe in the field of Biological and Landscape Diversity (CO-DBP);

Renews the European Diploma awarded to the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine) until 30 September 2007;

Attaches to the renewal the following condition, that:

- sufficient means be made available to the reserve to ensure its proper functioning and measures be taken to prevent negative influences affecting the status of the reserve and the surrounding area.

Attaches to the renewal the following recommendations, that:

- the status of the present biosphere reserve be extended to a model region for sustainable development, according to Unesco's definition of the term, while guaranteeing that the present core area is maintained. This model region could be the Rakhiv district, where natural assets abound;
- a review of the protection categories in the region be undertaken in order to make them compatible at international level;
- consideration be given to the transborder project to set up the "Hutsul Alps" biosphere reserve with Romania;
- further international co-operation projects be encouraged in the area of nature and landscape conservation and sustainable development.