
Resolution CM/ResDip(2021)1 on the renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas awarded to the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve (Netherlands)

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7 July 2021
at the 1409th 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 Res(65)6 instituting the European Diploma for certain protected landscapes, reserves and natural features, as amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1 on the revised regulations for the European Diploma for Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution Res(99)18 on the award of the European Diploma to the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve (Netherlands);

Having regard to Resolution CM/ResDip(2009)6 on the renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas awarded to the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve (Netherlands);

Taking into consideration the expert's report presented at the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas on 5 and 6 March 2019 and the discussions at the subsequent meetings of the Group of Specialists on 18 and 19 March 2020 and 24 February 2021;

Having regard to the proposals of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention;

Noting that holding the European Diploma implies maintenance of the area as one of exceptional European interest, continuance of exemplary management and compliance with the provisions of Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1, especially with regard to the obligations to report annually and to give appropriate visibility to the European Diploma;

Renews the European Diploma for Protected Areas awarded to the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve, until 9 September 2029;

Attaches the following condition to the renewal:

the development and use of Lelystad Airport should not jeopardise any of the Natura 2000 targets or the quality of the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve;

Attaches the following nine recommendations to the renewal:

1. closely monitor the effect of increasing flight activity at Lelystad Airport on birds, the achievement of the Natura 2000 goals, and the recreational interest and general tranquillity of the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve core area and buffer zones;
2. preserve the European interest and exemplary management of the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve by ensuring appropriate management of the water dynamics, large herbivore dynamics and the grazing regime in order to achieve the Natura 2000 management goals;
3. envisage further extension of the reserve by creating a wide corridor to the Horsterwold, which would contribute to natural population dynamics and ecosystem management;

4. maintain and further strengthen co-operation between the management authorities, the surrounding municipalities and the province in order to limit any impact on the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve when reviewing urbanisation and zoning plans, and ensure sufficient buffer zones around the core area of the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve;
5. in co-operation with stakeholders at all levels (representatives of the local and regional authorities, managing authorities, scientists, non-governmental organisations and civil society associations), design a transparent and widely acceptable mechanism to control the populations of large herbivore mammals; continue to raise awareness and inform the public at large about the objectives of such a mechanism, its direct effect on animal welfare and its long-term effect on the biodiversity of the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve ;
6. following the integration of the peripheral zones – Hollandse Hout, Oostvaardersveld, Kotterbos and Oostvaardersbos – into the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve, finalise their management plans and ensure that they are consistent with the management of the core area of the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve;
7. monitor the increase in numbers and the impact of visitors to avoid any negative effects either on the quality of the recreational experience or on the natural treasures of the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve; take remedial measures if the results indicate negative effects on the intrinsic value of the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve;
8. continue to reflect on the creation of the Nieuw Land National Park, encompassing the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve, and consider applying for the European Diploma for this national park;
9. give more visibility to the European Diploma logo and raise awareness about its aims and objectives on the website of the De Oostvaardersplassen Nature Reserve, through social media, flyers, brochures and information panels in visitors' centres and in the field.