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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas

Council of Europe, Palais, Room 14
2-3 March 2023

MEETING REPORT

*Document prepared by
the Secretariat of the Bern Convention*

The Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas met on 2 and 3 March 2023 in Strasbourg. The Standing Committee/Bureau is invited to:

- Take note of the meeting report of the Group of Specialists;
- Consider forwarding the draft Resolutions renewing the Diploma to seven areas (see document T-PVS/DE(2023)10_rev) to the Committee of Ministers for formal adoption;
- Take note of the on-the-spot appraisal visits (see document T-PVS/DE(2022)13) to be carried out in 2023.
- Thank the outgoing members of the Group of Specialists from Finland, Greece and Spain.

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1. OPENING OF THE MEETING

The meeting was opened on Thursday 2 March 2023 by the Chair of the Group of Specialists, Mr Jan Plesnik (Czech Republic). For the first in-person meeting of the Group of Specialists since 2020, he welcomed the participants and thanked all contributors to the European Diploma: the members of the Group, the independent experts, the Secretariat, the site managers and other stakeholders.

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The Group adopted the draft agenda with one amendment proposed by the Secretariat (see Annex 1).

3. GENERAL INFORMATION ON ACTIVITIES PRESENTING AN INTEREST FOR THE WORK OF THE GROUP OF SPECIALISTS

3.a Short presentation of the report of the meeting of the group in 2022 and of the activities undertaken during the last year

The Chair briefly wrapped up the outcomes and conclusions of the 2022 meeting of the Group of Specialists.

3.b Follow up by the Secretariat on the conclusions of the 2022 meeting of the Group of Specialists

The Secretariat recalled that in 2022 the Group of Specialists supported the idea to make use of online meetings with area managers in preparation of any on-the-spot appraisals. Three out of the seven on-the-spot appraisals visits conducted in 2022 used virtual methods for the preparation of the on-site visits.

The Secretariat reported that a combined on-the-spot appraisal visit to two Diploma holding areas in Sweden had to be postponed, but that the preparation for conducting the visits in August 2023 was well advanced.

The Secretariat also informed the Group of Specialists that it followed up bilaterally with several areas identified in 2022 as requiring special attention. Further details could be found under item 5b of the meeting report.

The Secretariat further informed the Group of Specialists of the resolutions adopted by the Committee of Ministers in March 2022 to cease the Russian Federation membership to the Council of Europe and to suspend all technical cooperation with the authorities of Belarus as a result of the country's active participation in the Russian Federation's military aggression against Ukraine. The possible implications of these decisions on the European Diploma were still under discussion.

Finally, the Secretariat recalled that, as part of the communication strategy for raising the profile of the European Diploma, the exhibition prepared for the 40th anniversary of the Bern Convention had been transformed into a virtual exhibition. The launch of the virtual exhibition was still on hold until the possible implications of the above referred to resolutions of the Committee of Ministers on the European Diploma were clarified.

The members of the Group of Specialists took note of the information provided. Recalling the establishment of the pool of independent experts providing pro bono intellectual services, the Group of Specialists mandated the Secretariat to seek the independent experts' agreement to share their contact details to allow for a more direct communication among them. The Group of Specialists also supported the possibility to associate senior independent experts with more junior experts for future on-the-spot appraisal visits, and to invite all the independent experts of the pool to the annual meeting of the Group of Specialists, pending the availability of financial resources.

4. RESULTS OF THE ADVISORY VISITS, DISCUSSION AND PROPOSALS TO THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

4.a Camargue National Reserve (France)

The independent expert, Mr Pierre Galland, presented the outcomes of his on-the-spot appraisal visit to the Camargue National Reserve to the members of the Group of Specialists (report [T-PVS/DE\(2023\)01](#)). Based on his findings, he suggested the renewal of the European Diploma of the Camargue National Reserve for an additional period of 10 years.

The members of the Group of Specialists thanked the independent expert for his presentation and endorsed a draft resolution attaching eleven recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma of the Camargue National Reserve as reflected in the document [T-PVS/DE\(2023\)10_rev](#).

4.b Maremma Regional Park (Italy)

The independent expert, Ms Blanca Ramos Losada, presented the outcomes of her on-the-spot appraisal visit to the Maremma Regional Park to the members of the Group of Specialists (report [T-PVS/DE\(2023\)02](#)). Based on her findings, she suggested the renewal of the European Diploma of the Maremma Regional Park for an additional period of 10 year.

The members of the Group of Specialists thanked the independent expert for her presentation and endorsed a draft resolution attaching seven recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma of the Maremma Regional Park as reflected in the document [T-PVS/DE\(2023\)10_rev](#).

4.c Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park (Italy)

The independent expert, Ms Blanca Ramos Losada, presented the outcomes of her on-the-spot appraisal visit to the Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park to the members of the Group of Specialists (report [T-PVS/DE\(2023\)03](#)). Based on her findings, she suggested the renewal of the European Diploma of the Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park for an additional period of 10 years.

The members of the Group of Specialists thanked the independent expert for her presentation and endorsed a draft resolution attaching one condition and seven recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma of the Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park as reflected in the document [T-PVS/DE\(2023\)10_rev](#).

4.d Hautes Fagnes Nature Reserve (Belgium)

The independent expert, Mr Peter Skoberne, presented the outcomes of his on-the-spot appraisal visit to the Hautes Fagnes Nature Reserve to the members of the Group of Specialists (report [T-PVS/DE\(2023\)05](#)). Based on his findings, he suggested the renewal of the European Diploma of the Hautes Fagnes Nature Reserve for an additional period of 10 years.

The members of the Group of Specialists thanked the independent expert for his presentation and endorsed a draft resolution attaching one condition and six recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma of the Hautes Fagnes Nature Reserve as reflected in the document [T-PVS/DE\(2023\)10_rev.](#)

4.e Retezat National Park (Romania)

The independent expert, Mr Peter Skoberne, presented the outcomes of his on-the-spot appraisal visit to the Retezat National Park to the members of the Group of Specialists (report [T-PVS/DE\(2023\)06](#)). Based on his findings, he suggested the renewal of the European Diploma of the Retezat National Park for an additional period of 10 years.

The members of the Group of Specialists thanked the independent expert for his presentation and endorsed a draft resolution attaching one condition and seven recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma of the Retezat National Park as reflected in the document [T-PVS/DE\(2023\)10_rev.](#)

4.f Piatra Craiului National Park (Romania)

The independent expert, Mr Peter Skoberne, presented the outcomes of his on-the-spot appraisal visit to the Piatra Craiului National Park to the members of the Group of Specialists (report [T-PVS/DE\(2023\)07](#)). Based on his findings, he suggested the renewal of the European Diploma of the Hautes Fagnes Nature Reserve for an additional period of 10 years.

The members of the Group of Specialists thanked the independent expert for his presentation and endorsed a draft resolution attaching seven recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma of the Piatra Craiului National Park as reflected in the document [T-PVS/DE\(2023\)10_rev.](#)

4.g Lüneburg Heath Nature Reserve (Germany)

The independent expert, Mr Maurice Hoffmann, presented the outcomes of his on-the-spot appraisal visit to the Lüneburg Heath Nature Reserve to the members of the Group of Specialists (report [T-PVS/DE\(2023\)08](#)). Based on his findings, he suggested the renewal of the European Diploma of the Lüneburg Heath Nature Reserve for an additional period of 10 years.

The members of the Group of Specialists thanked the independent expert for his presentation and endorsed a draft resolution attaching twelve recommendations to the renewal of the European Diploma of the Lüneburg Heath Nature Reserve as reflected in the document [T-PVS/DE\(2023\)10_rev.](#)

5. PRESENTATION OF THE REPORTING RESULTS BY THE SECRETARIAT AND THE GROUP OF SPECIALISTS

5.a Analysis of the annual reports

The Secretariat recalled the objectives of the annual report and the Group's mandate, which are defined by the Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1 on the revised regulations for the European Diploma for Protected Areas. It also highlighted that conditions and recommendations of each area had been integrated in the nominative reporting templates which were shared with area managers individually. This approach helps site manager to address key information and meet the reporting expectations and therefore will continue to be used in the future.

In 2022, the number of annual reports received decreased from 68 in 2021 to 60 out of the possible 67 areas considered for the 2022 reporting (73 areas awarded the Diploma less the four areas in Russian Federation and the two areas in Belarus). The Secretariat recalled the scoring system used for the European Diploma dashboard, which has been updated following the reception of the 2022 reports. The scoring system currently acknowledges the extent to which areas are meeting reporting obligations. The Secretariat informed the Group of Specialists that its suggestion to extend the reference period had been taken into consideration. The scores were now calculated over seven years. The Secretariat reported that the number of areas with red scores and the number of areas with orange scores remained both stable compared to last year.

Following the request of the Group of Specialists to look into the possibility to assess the quality of the reporting, the Secretariat introduced in 2021 a scoring system whose implementation was lacking on criteria. In 2022 the scoring system was replaced by a traffic light system indicating whether the fulfilment of the conditions/recommendations attached to renewal of the Diploma was achieved, underway or not yet started.

As in previous years, members of the Group of Specialists had been involved in the assessment of the annual reports by using the assessment forms. The document [T-PVS/DE\(2023\)09](#) provided the conclusions of the Group for each Diploma holding area. The Group discussed key overall findings of their assessments and highlighted challenges and gaps in the implementation of the recommendations and fulfilment of the conditions attached to the European Diploma. The Group expressed concern regarding the construction of a new nuclear reactor in the vicinity of the Minsmere Nature Reserve (UK) and wind energy development projects in the Weltenburger Enge Nature Reserve (Germany).

Overall, the Group found annual reporting of a good quality, although it was highlighted that some of the reports included the same text as in previous years and lacked specific information to address the recommendations/conditions. Members of the Group welcomed the revised assessment form including the traffic light system but acknowledged that in lack of a common guidance, small differences were identified in how the system was used by the assessors.

The Group of Specialists welcomed the results of the 2022 annual reporting and thanked the managers of the Diploma holding areas for complying with the reporting obligation, as well as the members of the Group of Specialists and the Secretariat for their contribution to the analysis of the reports.

The Group of Specialists particularly thanked the Ukrainian authorities for complying with reporting requirements despite the on-going war.

The Group of Specialists invited area managers to improve the quality of their reports when possible, ensuring that all the elements included in the recommendations/conditions are fully addressed with sufficient level of detail.

The Group of Specialists instructed the Secretariat to elaborate a short methodological note on the usage of the assessment forms and to include in the 2023 assessment forms elements that could help assessing the progress in the fulfillment of the recommendations/conditions over the years. The Group also mandated the Secretariat to explore the possibility to amend the reporting template so as to give the area managers the capacity to self-assess the fulfilment of the recommendations/conditions.

5.b Follow up on the areas identified in 2022 as requiring particular attention

- Scandola Nature Reserve (France)

The Secretariat recalled that in 2020 the Group of Specialists recommended unanimously not to renew the Diploma to the Scandola Nature Reserve, due to the considerable lack of progress and minimal attempts of communication with the Secretariat and thus with the Group, despite several warnings by the Group over the past years.

This decision had a very positive impact. A significant public debate started and under the pressure of the public, the authorities took initial steps to improve the protection of the nature reserve.

While some progress on the ground could be noted, concrete actions were still missing.

For two years now, no annual report was submitted but the Secretariat continued to receive regular updates from NGOs. According to the information provided:

- No action to regulate the over frequentation of pleasure boats is taken;
- Boats neither respect the “quiet zones” around the osprey nests nor the speed limit;
- People continue disembarking on the beaches of the Nature Reserve;
- There is no surveillance and enforcement of the regulations;
- We are not aware of any progress on the extension of the Nature Reserve and the creation of the marine park.
- The managing authorities do not take the work and recommendations of the Scientific Committee into consideration;
- Regional authorities intend to develop the great pleasure in Corsica: mooring sites for large pleasure boats were identified.

The members of the Group of Specialists deplored the absence of annual report for the second year now and expressed their concern regarding the lack of commitment of the managing authorities to comply with the recommendations of the Group of Specialists to recover the European Diploma. They mandated the Secretariat to continue monitoring the evolvement of the situation in the area and to report back to the Group of Specialists in 2024.

- Doñana National Park (Spain)

The Secretariat recalled that in 2020, the Group of Specialists decided to postpone the renewal of the Diploma of the Doñana National Park and to await the outcomes of the legal proceedings engaged by the European Commission and on the findings of a reactive mission of UNESCO’s World Heritage Centre.

The [Judgment of the European Court of Justice](#) issued on 24 June 2021 states that Spanish authorities have failed to adopt appropriate measures to prevent the deterioration of the natural habitats and the habitats of species located within the protected areas of the Doñana region. It further states that overexploitation of the Almonte-Marismas aquifer has led to desiccation of the peridunal lagoons of Doñana National Park and, as a result, to the deterioration of the protected natural areas which depend on that aquifer, including several natural habitats and habitats of species protected by the Habitats Directive.

The [Report of the Joint WHC / IUCN / RAMSAR reactive monitoring mission](#) to Doñana National Park which took place from 25 to 28 February 2020 resulted in 15 recommendations inviting the Spanish authorities to inter alia ensure the accelerated and urgent closure of all illegal water wells, to implement the Special Management Plan of the Irrigation Zones and to ensure the recovery of the aquifers to good status by no later than 2027, to ensure that any new development projects are properly assessed, and to encourage sustainable agriculture practices.

In 2022, the Group of Specialists called on the relevant authorities to comply with condition No. 2 attached to the 2013 renewal of the European Diploma ([Resolution CM/ResDip\(2010\)13](#)) and to report to the Group on how they intend to address the ECJ judgement and the recommendations of the World Heritage Centre, IUCN and Ramsar Convention.

The Secretariat informed that no separate report on how the managing authorities intend to address the ECJ judgement and the recommendations of the World Heritage Centre, IUCN and Ramsar Convention requested by the Group of Specialists was received.

However, in the 2022 annual report a lot of emphasizes was given to the implementation of condition No. 2 of the last renewal. It could be noted that the authorities aimed to reverse the environmental degradation of this emblematic area and recover its ecological functioning. A range of short- and medium-term measures for water resource management, biodiversity conservation and restoration, coastal management, etc. were planned and significant resources were allocated to these measures.

The members of the Group of Specialists regretted that no dedicated report on how the authorities will address the ECJ judgement and implement the recommendations of the World Heritage Centre, IUCN and Ramsar Convention was received. They nevertheless acknowledged the information provided as part of the annual report and took note of the measures planned. The members of the Group of Specialists mandated the Secretariat to continue monitoring progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the World Heritage Centre, IUCN and Ramsar Convention and on the follow up given to the ECJ judgement.

- Weltenburger Enge Nature Reserve (Germany)

The Secretariat recalled that the Weltenburger Enge Nature Reserve had benefited from an extra-ordinary on-the-spot appraisal visit in 2021 and the Group of Specialists called on the managing authorities to implement without delay conditions and recommendations grounded on the findings of the extra-ordinary on-the-spot appraisal in addition to those attached to the renewal of the Diploma in 2018 ([Resolution CM/ResDip\(2018\)2](#)).

Despite the request of the Group of Specialists and the letter of the Secretariat addressed to the managing authorities to report on the implementation of both sets of conditions and recommendations, the annual report only focused on the conditions and recommendations of the 2018 renewal.

The most important information from the annual report was that the authorities completed the planned extension of Weltenburger Enge Nature Reserve by adjoining the Nature Reserve Hirschberg and Altmuehleiten to the already protected Danube gorge. By doing so the authorities were complying with the first recommendation and indirectly to the second condition attached to the 2018 renewal.

According to the annual report, the extension of the Nature Reserve will also ensure that the regulations within the new entity are harmonised and that the stricter rules of the former Weltenburger Nature Reserve now applied also to the added areas. As a result, several conditions and recommendations of the last renewal were complied with.

While the extension was definitively a positive step forward, it did not solve the concerns regarding the uncontrolled navigation on the Danube River. No information was provided on whether the navigation regulations were enforced by authorities and respected by ship owners.

The authorities applied for the formal extension of the European Diploma area to the "Weltenburger Enge, Hirschberg und Altmühlleiten" Nature Reserve.

The members of the Group of Specialists welcomed the expansion of the Nature Reserve and agreed to extend the European Diploma to the Weltenburger Enge, Hirschberg und Altmühlleiten Nature Reserve.

The members of the Group of Specialists regretted however not having received a detailed report on the fulfilment of the conditions and recommendations grounded on the findings of the extraordinary on-the-spot appraisal. They mandated the Secretariat to reiterate the request to the managing authorities to report on the implementation of the conditions and recommendations originating from the extra-ordinary on-the-spot appraisal visit and on the measures implemented to control the navigation on the Danube.

- Thayatal National Park (Austria)

The Secretariat recalled that the management plan of the Thayatal National Park was aiming to achieve a forest composition with native trees within a fix period. The regulation had been defined a 15-year period for management interventions in the core zone forest. In 2017 the regulation of the National Park Thayatal was updated extending the time frame for interventions to 31 years.

Upon the request of the Group of Specialists of last year, the Secretariat liaised with the managing authorities and requested an explanation for the extension of the intervention period and how the extension will be reflected into the management plan.

The managing authorities replied that they relied on natural development for the forest with low and medium naturalness. Therefore, a period of 15 years for possible intervention measures was chosen.

In 2014, just before the expiry of the 15-year deadline for forest conversion, the authorities commissioned a mapping of the level of naturalness of the forest vegetation.

The study revealed that the conversion of the forest with low naturalness was almost completed. The drought and the high temperatures of the past years have led to a natural conversion of non-natural forest. Only small remnants of non-natural tree species were still present.

According to the managing authorities, the aim of the extension of the intervention period was not to intervene, but to give nature as much time as possible for natural forest transformation. Regarding the management plans 2011-2020 and 2021-2030, they stipulated that interventions were only possible on non-native tree species.

The members of the Group of Specialists thanked the managing authorities of the Thayatal National Park and took note of the information provided.

- Krimml Waterfalls Natural Site (Austria)

The Secretariat informed the members of the Group of Specialists that it had been alerted that the regional government of Salzburg decided to take steps towards building retention basins and dams in the valleys of the Hohe Tauern National Park overlapping with the Diploma holding area and Natura 2000 sites. These infrastructures were aimed to prevent floods downstream in the future.

The Secretariat liaised with the managing authorities of the Krimml Waterfalls Natural Site to ensure that all necessary precautionary steps were taken to assess the environmental impact of the project and to ensure that the ecological integrity of the Diploma holding area, of the National Park and of the Natura 2000 site was secured.

In their reply, the managing authorities acknowledged that in order to prevent extensive damage caused by floods, different options were evaluated including the construction of dams and retention basins and they were strongly involved in the assessment of the options.

They confirmed that no concrete plans or locations existed for the time being and that any construction plans within the National Park and the overlapping Natura 2000 sites would be subject to an assessment of potential impacts on nature.

The members of the Group of Specialists thanked the managing authorities for the information provided and mandated the Secretariat to monitor the situation and to report back to the Group of Specialists in 2024.

- Bayerischer Wald National Park (Germany)

The Secretariat reported that the managing authorities of the Bayerischer Wald National Park further extended the national park by areas of around 695 hectares in 2022.

The Bavarian Forest National Park Administration had already implemented all recommendations and conditions attached to the last renewal of the European Diploma also for the newly added areas. The new areas were already considered and treated as part of the European Diploma site.

In compliance with condition No. 1 attached to the 2022 Resolution renewing the European Diploma ([Resolution CM/ResDip\(2022\)3](#)), the authorities applied for the extension of the Diploma to the new boundaries of the National Park.

The members of the Group of Specialists welcomed the further extension of the national park and agreed to extend the European Diploma to the new boundaries of the Bayerischer Wald National Park.

6. ON-THE-SPOT APPRAISAL VISITS IN 2023

The Secretariat referred to the document [T-PVS/DE\(2022\)13](#) which presented the state of play of the on-the-spot appraisal visits.

The Secretariat recalled that the validity of the Diploma of 11 areas had been exceptionally extended to 2024 due to the travel restriction resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Six on-the-spot appraisal visits out of the eleven had already been conducted in 2021 and 2022. Five areas had still to be visited in 2023 to end the backlog and resume the usual intervals of the advisory visits.

In addition to these five areas, two areas in Sweden whose on-the-spot appraisal had been postponed to 2023 were also included in the 2023 workplan. No extra-ordinary on-the-spot appraisal visits were planned for 2023.

The members of the Group of Specialists agreed with the suggestions of the Secretariat to end the backlog by carrying out on-the-spot appraisal visits to Peak District National Park (UK), Siebengebirge Nature Reserve (Germany), Kuşçenneti National Park (Türkiye), Seitsemien National Park (Finland), Ekenäs Archipelago National Park (Tammisaari) (Finland) and a combined visit to Muddus National Park and Sarek and Padjelanta National Parks (Sweden).

7. FOLLOW UP ON THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA

The Secretariat recalled that the exhibition prepared for the 40th anniversary of the Bern Convention transformed into a virtual exhibition had not been launched yet, following the decisions of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to exclude the Russian Federation from the Council of Europe and to freeze technical cooperation with Belarus since the exhibition displayed maps presenting the Russian Federation and Belarus respectively as Council of Europe member and observer States.

The Secretariat further informed the Group of Specialists that the European Diploma will celebrate its 60th anniversary in 2025. At this occasion the Secretariat was thinking of having a meeting of the managers of the Diploma holding area, to revise the webpages of the European Diploma and to have a communication campaign on the Diploma.

Members of the Group of Specialists welcomed the proposals. They suggested that the meeting of the managers of the Diploma holding areas focusses on transversal topics common to all Diploma holding areas such as climate change, the touristic pressure, the development of green energy infrastructures within or in the vicinity of Diploma holding areas.

The Secretariat also suggested that the meeting of the managers of the Diploma holding areas takes place back-to-back with the meeting of the Group of Specialists and is hosted by a Diploma holding area.

The members of the Group of Specialists took note of the delays in the launch of the virtual exhibition and mandated the Secretariat to elaborate a concept note for the celebration of the Diploma 60th anniversary to be discussed at the Group's meeting in 2024.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was raised.

9. DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The Secretariat, in liaison with the Chair, will notify members of the date of the next meeting in 2024.

10. CONCLUSIONS OF THE MEETING

The Chair thanked the representatives from Finland, Greece and Spain whose mandate as members of the Group of Specialists has come to an end for their dedicated work and their support to the European Diploma. The Chair also thanked the members of the Group of Specialists, the independent experts, the management authorities of the European Diploma holding areas and the Secretariat for their huge efforts throughout the year and lively discussions and declared the meeting closed.



ANNEXE 1 – AGENDA

		Documents	Expected results
Thursday 2nd March			
9.30	1. Opening of the meeting <i>Mr Jan Plesnik (Czech Republic), Chair of the Group of Specialists</i>		
	2. Adoption of the agenda	Meeting agenda T-PVS/Agenda(2023)02 For adoption	Members of the Group of Specialists are informed of the aims of the meeting and adopt the agenda.
	3. General information on activities presenting an interest for the work of the Group of Specialists		
	3.a Short presentation of the report of the meeting of the group in 2022 and of the activities undertaken during the last year <i>Mr Jan Plesnik (Czech Republic), Chair of the</i>	Report of the 2022 meeting of the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas T-PVS/DE(2022)12	The salient points of the 2022 meeting of the Group of Specialists are recalled.

	<i>Group of Specialists</i>	For information	
	<p>3.b Follow up by the Secretariat on the conclusions of the 2022 meeting of the Group of Specialists</p> <p><i>Presentation by the Secretariat</i></p>	<p>Extract from the list of decisions and adopted texts on the European Diploma for Protected Areas, at the 42nd meeting of the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention T-PVS/DE(2023)04</p> <p>List of resolutions renewing the Diploma adopted by the Committee of Ministers in 2022 CM/Del/Dec(2022)1440/9.1</p> <p>For information</p>	<p>Members of the Group of Specialists are informed of the follow up given to the outcomes and decisions of the 2022 meeting of the Group of Specialists.</p>
	4. Results of the advisory visits, discussion and proposals to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe		
	<p>4.a Camargue National Reserve (France)</p> <p><i>Presentation by Mr Pierre Galland</i></p> <p><i>Members of the Group of Specialists are invited to discuss the conclusions of the on-the-spot appraisal visit report and to exchange views on possible follow up.</i></p>	<p>Report on the assessment visit to the Camargue National Reserve T-PVS/DE(2023)01</p> <p>Draft resolution regarding the renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas awarded to the Camargue National Reserve T-PVS/DE(2023)10</p> <p>For discussion and decision</p>	<p>Members of the Group of Specialists agree on a draft resolution renewing the European Diploma to the Camargue National Reserve which will be sent to the Committee of Ministers for formal adoption.</p>

	<p>4.b Maremma Regional Park (Italy)</p> <p><i>Presentation by Ms Blanca Ramos</i></p> <p><i>Members of the Group of Specialists are invited to discuss the conclusions of the on-the-spot appraisal visit report and to exchange views on possible follow up.</i></p>	<p>Report on the assessment visit to the Maremma Regional Park</p> <p>T-PVS/DE(2023)02</p> <p>Draft resolution regarding the renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas awarded to the Maremma Regional Park</p> <p>T-PVS/DE(2023)10</p> <p>For discussion and decision</p>	<p>Members of the Group of Specialists agree on a draft resolution renewing the European Diploma to the Maremma Regional Park which will be sent to the Committee of Ministers for formal adoption.</p>
	<p>4.c Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park (Italy)</p> <p><i>Presentation by Ms Blanca Ramos</i></p> <p><i>Members of the Group of Specialists are invited to discuss the conclusions of the on-the-spot appraisal visit report and to exchange views on possible follow up.</i></p>	<p>Report on the assessment visit to the Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park</p> <p>T-PVS/DE(2023)03</p> <p>Draft resolution regarding the renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas awarded to the Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park</p> <p>T-PVS/DE(2023)10</p> <p>For discussion and decision</p>	<p>Members of the Group of Specialists agree on a draft resolution renewing the European Diploma to the Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise National Park which will be sent to the Committee of Ministers for formal adoption.</p>
	<p>4.d Hautes Fagnes Nature Reserve (Belgium)</p> <p><i>Presentation by Mr Peter Skoberne</i></p> <p><i>Members of the Group of Specialists are invited to</i></p>	<p>Report on the assessment visit to the Hautes Fagnes Nature Reserve</p> <p>T-PVS/DE(2023)05</p>	<p>Members of the Group of Specialists agree on a draft resolution renewing the European Diploma to the Hautes Fagnes Nature Reserve which will be sent to the Committee of Ministers for formal adoption.</p>

	<p><i>discuss the conclusions of the on-the-spot appraisal visit report and to exchange views on possible follow up.</i></p>	<p>Draft resolution regarding the renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas awarded to the Hautes Fagnes Nature Reserve</p> <p>T-PVS/DE(2023)10</p> <p>For discussion and decision</p>	
	<p>4.e Retezat National Park (Romania)</p> <p><i>Presentation by Mr Peter Skoberne</i></p> <p><i>Members of the Group of Specialists are invited to discuss the conclusions of the on-the-spot appraisal visit report and to exchange views on possible follow up.</i></p>	<p>Report on the assessment visit to the Retezat National Park</p> <p>T-PVS/DE(2023)06</p> <p>Draft resolution regarding the renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas awarded to the Retezat National Park</p> <p>T-PVS/DE(2023)10</p> <p>For discussion and decision</p>	<p>Members of the Group of Specialists agree on a draft resolution renewing the European Diploma to the Retezat National Park which will be sent to the Committee of Ministers for formal adoption.</p>
	<p>4.f Piatra Craiului National Park (Romania)</p> <p><i>Presentation by Mr Peter Skoberne</i></p> <p><i>Members of the Group of Specialists are invited to discuss the conclusions of the on-the-spot appraisal visit report and to exchange views on possible follow up.</i></p>	<p>Report on the assessment visit to the Piatra Craiului National Park</p> <p>T-PVS/DE(2023)07</p> <p>Draft resolution regarding the renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas awarded to the Piatra Craiului National Park</p> <p>T-PVS/DE(2023)10</p>	<p>Members of the Group of Specialists agree on a draft resolution renewing the European Diploma to the Piatra Craiului National Park which will be sent to the Committee of Ministers for formal adoption.</p>

		For discussion and decision	
	<p>4.g Lüneburg Heath Nature Reserve (Germany)</p> <p><i>Presentation by Mr Maurice Hoffmann</i></p> <p><i>Members of the Group of Specialists are invited to discuss the conclusions of the on-the-spot appraisal visit report and to exchange views on possible follow up.</i></p>	<p>Report on the assessment visit to the Lüneburg Heath Nature Reserve</p> <p>T-PVS/DE(2023)08</p> <p>Draft resolution regarding the renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas awarded to the Lüneburg Heath Nature Reserve</p> <p>T-PVS/DE(2023)10</p> <p>For discussion and decision</p>	<p>Members of the Group of Specialists agree on a draft resolution renewing the European Diploma to the Lüneburg Heath Nature Reserve which will be sent to the Committee of Ministers for formal adoption.</p>
	5. Presentation of the reporting results by the Secretariat and the Group of Specialists		
	<p>5.a Analysis of the annual reports</p> <p><i>Introduction by the Secretariat</i></p> <p><i>Members of the Group of Specialists are invited to share their comments on and discuss the outcomes of the annual reports and exchange views on possible follow up.</i></p>	<p>Compilation of the analysis of the annual reports</p> <p>T-PVS/DE(2023)09</p> <p>Link to the dashboard of the European Diploma for Protected Areas</p> <p>For discussion and decision</p>	<p>The compliance of the Diploma holding areas with the conditions and/or recommendations attached to the award/renewal of the European Diploma is assessed and possible areas at risk requiring a closer monitoring or even an exceptional on-the-spot appraisal visit are identified.</p>
	<p>5.b Follow up on the areas identified in 2022 as requiring particular attention:</p>	<p>Compilation of the analysis of the annual reports</p>	<p>Follow up on the monitoring of Diploma-holding areas requiring particular attention is agreed on.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scandola Nature Reserve (France) • Doñana National Park (Spain) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Judgment of the European Court of Justice of 24 June 2021 ➤ Report on the Joint WHC / IUCN / RAMSAR Reactive monitoring mission to Doñana National Park, Spain (25-28 February 2020) • Weltenburger Enge Nature Reserve (Germany) • Thayatal National Park (Austria) • Krimml Waterfalls Natural Site (Austria) <p><i>Members of the Group of Specialists are invited to exchange views on the situation of Diploma holding areas identified as requiring closer attention and to agree on follow up actions in the light of the 2022 annual reports and the information received by the Secretariat.</i></p>	<p>T-PVS/DE(2023)09</p> <p>For discussion and decision</p>	
	<p>6. On-the-spot appraisal visits in 2023</p> <p><i>Members of the Group of Specialists are invited to exchange views on the on-the-spot appraisal visits to be carried out in 2023</i></p>	<p>List of areas which could benefit from an on-the-spot appraisal visit in 2023</p> <p>T-PVS/DE(2022)13</p> <p>For discussion and decision</p>	<p>Diploma holding areas whose Diploma is due in 2023 and for which an-the-spot appraisal visit is to take place in 2022 are identified.</p>
	<p>7. Follow up on the communication strategy for the European Diploma</p> <p><i>Presentation by the Secretariat</i></p>	<p>Link to the virtual exhibition of the European Diploma for Protected Areas</p>	<p>Members of the Group of Specialists agree on priority actions for promoting the European Diploma.</p>

	<i>Members of the Group of Specialists are informed of the follow up given to the communication plan discussed last year and to provide insight on how to further elaborate on it.</i>	Link to the new webpage of the European Diploma Communication plan for the European Diploma T-PVS/DE(2021)03rev For information	
	9. Any other business		
	10. Date and place of the next meeting		
	11. Conclusions of the meeting		
12.00	<i>Friday 3rd March</i> End of the meeting		



ANNEXE 2 - LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

CHAIR OF THE GROUP OF SPECIALISTS	
Czech Republic	Mr Jan PLESNIK Advisor to Director Nature Conservation Agency

SPECIALISTS / SPECIALISTES	
Finland	Ms Tiina KANERVA Senior Advisor Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife Finland
Germany	Ms Stefanie STENZEL Biotope protection and management, protected areas Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN)
Greece	Mr Panayiotis G. DIMITRAKOPOULOS Department of Environment University of the Aegean
Spain	Mr Pep AMENGUAL Head of Research Service Conservation, Monitoring and Programmes of the Network Autonomous National Parks Organisation Ministry for Ecological Transition

CONSULTANTS	
Belgium	Mr Maurice HOFFMANN Research Institute for Nature & Forest
Slovenia	Mr Peter SKOBERNE Independent consultant
Spain	Ms Blanca RAMOS LOSADA Independent consultant
Switzerland	Mr Pierre GALLAND Consultant en Environnement et Développement

COUNCIL OF EUROPE SECRETARIAT

**Directorate of
Democratic Participation**

Mr Marc HORY
Project Manager

Bern Convention

Ms Nadia SAPORITO
Junior Project Officer

Ms Helena ORSULIC
Support Assistant