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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**

41<sup>st</sup> meeting  
Strasbourg, 29 November – 3 December 2021

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**New complaint: 2021/3**

**Alleged unsustainable logging within the  
Retezat National Park  
(Romania)**

**- REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT -**

*Document prepared by  
the Retezat National Park Administration*

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Contează pentru viitor!

## REGIA NAȚIONALĂ A PĂDURILOR – ROMSILVA ADMINISTRAȚIA PARCULUI NAȚIONAL RETEZAT

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Nr. 1102 din 20.07.2021

**To:**

Antonia Oprisan, Ministry of Environment  
Ursula Sticker, Secretary of Bern Convention  
Anne Burill, EC – EU Focal point to the Bern Convention

**Ref:**

Complaint from a private citizen – increasing logging in Retezat National Park

General considerations:

Retezat National Park (RNP) is managed by Retezat National Park Administration (RNPA), legally represented by Zoran Acimov as Director, based on a contract signed in 2004 and renewed in 2014 with the central public authority for the environment in Romania – the Ministry of Environment (MoE). The first edition of the management plan for this protected natural area was developed and approved by MoE in 2003, then it was partially revised in 2011. At present, the second edition of the management plan of the Retezat National Park and the overlapping two Natura 2000 sites, adapted to the new European requirements, is under development and it will be available (and approved) by the end of the year.

Romanian legislation, transposing also IUCN principles, has established since 2003 an internal zoning system for all national/natural parks in Romania, and Retezat National Park is no exception to the law. That internal zoning system is based mainly on the potential effects of human activities on natural capital, and clearly defines which activities are allowed/prohibited in the four internal areas of the park.

**Retezat NP internal zoning system has been the same since 2003** and includes the following four areas defined by law: Strict Protection Zone (SPZ) – under total protection; Integral Protection Zone (IPZ) – where a high level of protection regime is applied; Sustainable Conservation Zone (SCZ) – having a medium protection level (**where logging is permitted to some extent**); Sustainable Development Zone (SDZ) – very small in size, the only one in which some construction works are allowed.

Regarding the complaint from a private citizen about the allegedly increasing logging in Retezat National Park we make the following clarifications:

- Subject area - White River Valley (Valea Raului Alb, in Romanian) - is located partially in Retezat National Park (the upper sector), the rest of the valley (the longer sector), being located outside the park, in the Natura 2000 site ROSCI0236 Strei Hateg, which is administrated by National Agency for Protected Natural Areas;

- **That upper part of White River Valley is included since 2003 in the Sustainable Conservation Zone (SCZ) of Retezat NP;**
- Referring to logging activities inside SCZ areas, Romanian law (Government Emergency Ordinance no. 57/2007, approved by Law no. 49/2011), in Article 22, paragraph (8), point j, clearly stipulates that certain logging activities may take place there;
- The complainant has mentioned in the text that proves for logging activities were attached; we don't know what those evidence are, so that we can answer punctually and clearly to the accusations brought against us. However, the park administration does not deny the existence of logging activities in SCZ, but only specifies that **they are legal by the law** and comply with the technical rules in force;
- The logging activities mentioned in the complaint were the subject of several controls carried out by the competent authorities in Romania, who reacted to a petition which the complainant had sent to several state institutions;
- As a result, two controls were made by National Environmental Guard (NEG): one made by the County Branch of NEG, and the second one made by controllers from other counties – Arad County and Bihor County – sent by NEG, probably to avoid the possibility of subjectivism;
- Both control teams reached the same conclusion, which is recorded in both control reports: no illegal logging evidences were found and no sanctions were applied for matters related to the legality of logging; both official reports are attached to this response, but unfortunately we can't provide translation of those documents; the fine mentioned by the complainant, worth 3,000 lei, was applied by the Regional Forest Guard to the logging company for incorrect storage of the logged wood, in an area outside the Retezat NP.
- In the context of the above, we consider that the accusation made by the complainant regarding the complicity of the control bodies with the control entities is unfounded and biased.
- The personal accusation against the park director (Mr. Zoran Acimov) as being against conservation is risky, unfounded and biased, proving the complainant's (Mr. Calin Dejeu) lack of objectivity and professionalism, due to the following reasons:
  - The certification of White River is not pending due to the opposition of Retezat NP director; actually, no one from RNPA team is against conservation, all our efforts being oriented towards the highest possible conservation – at the moment we have obtained the approval from several owners to include, through the new edition of the park's management plan, more than 6,000 ha of forest and non-forest habitats in the Integral Protection Zone (IPZ) of Retezat NP;
  - The complainant seeks to impress European authorities by calling into question the name of European Wilderness Society (EWS), but puts forwards false arguments as to the status of certification of White River by it, which can be easily seen from the answer given by a high-ranking official - Deputy Chairman - of the mentioned society (document attached): "River 'Raul Alb' is partially inside and partially outside of Retezat NP. The river has been selected for audit by the European Wilderness Society. Due to the current epidemiological situation, all planned audits for the expansion of the European Wilderness Society are postponed to first half 2022. **We have not yet experienced any opposition from the National Park authority to audit Raul Alb as WILDRiver.**".

- The link provided by the complainant leads to a page that does not bring any evidence of the park director's opposition to the White River certification intention.
- As a legal administrator (executive structure) of several protected areas, RNPA applies the legislation in force and has limited possibilities to influence its elaboration. Logging activity is strictly regulated through forestry plans that are approved by MoE, so the use of the phrase "illegally approved" also shows complainant's limited knowledge regarding legal procedures and his permanent intention to challenge the legal provisions... even when he does not have pertinent or credible arguments. As far as we know, the Ministry of Environment has decided officially some time ago that all forestry plans must be subject to SEA Procedure.

Park director,  
Zoran Acimov

[Annex](#)- control reports (Romanian only)



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Man and  
the Biosphere  
Programme

