

# COUNCIL OF EUROPE

---

# CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

AS THIS DOCUMENT WILL NOT BE  
DISTRIBUTED DURING THE MEETING  
PLEASE BRING THIS COPY

Luxembourg, 2 February 1982

SN-ZP (81) 27



COE150938

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR THE CONSERVATION  
OF NATURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Committee of experts - protected areas

Germano-luxembourgeois nature park

On-the-spot appraisal

by

Mr Theo Hunziker  
(Switzerland)

73 833  
09 3

### Background

The Germano-Luxembourg Nature Park, which received the European Diploma (category C) in 1973, came into being as a result of a treaty between Germany and Luxembourg in 1965. The Diploma was renewed for the first time in 1978 (see Appendix).

The European Diploma will expire in 1982. Under the regulations governing award of the Diploma (Committee of Ministers Resolution (73) 4 of 19 January 1973), renewal of the Diploma is subject to an on-the-spot appraisal by an independent expert, in the presence of a representative of the Council of Europe Secretariat.

The Secretary General wrote to the expert on 22 July 1981 instructing him to carry out this appraisal, and in particular:

- a. to examine the present state of the park and determine whether it had remained stable, improved or deteriorated since the award or since the date of the previous renewal;
- b. to analyse the state of conservation of flora, fauna and landscape (increase or decrease in species);
- c. to study the impact of the general public on the flora, fauna and landscape, and to propose ways of improving the situation;
- d. to examine the budget allocated to management of the park.

The expert visited the site on 8 and 9 September 1981 with Mr P Baum, from the Secretariat. The following took part in the on-the-spot appraisal and in the ensuing discussions:

- on the Luxembourg side: Mr Marcel Decker and Mr N Koenig (Administration des eaux et forets); Mr G Theis (Ministere du Tourisme).
- on the German side: Mr K Schubach (Staatssekretar a D), Richard Meyer (Bürgermeister), Mr P Goebel (Forstamtsrat).

The expert's report is based:

- on the appraisal and on the various discussions;
- on Professor A Noirfalise's report when the Diploma was first renewed (SN-R-DP (78) 2);
- on documents since supplied by the authorities responsible for the Germano-Luxembourg Nature Park.

#### 1. Present situation. Any changes since the diploma was first renewed

To facilitate comparison with Professor Noirfalise's expert report (1977), we shall refer to his conclusions below.

##### a. Protection of woodlands

For the purposes of the assessment it is assumed that the woodland areas of the park should be kept in a state as close as possible to nature, which is to say:

- in the case of broad-leaved woodland, a structural change from coppice to open forest is acceptable, but no introduction of coniferous species is permitted;
- in the case of exclusively coniferous woodland, broad-leaved species should be introduced in such a way as to obtain a balance between the two types.

The survey showed that these principles are respected only to a very limited extent (particularly on the Luxembourg side). For example many old oak coppices (Eichen-Schälwälder) have been systematically transformed into open coniferous woodland. There have been attempts to introduce foreign coniferous species. This course of action is explained by reference to short-term problems (private forest, existence of numerous small plots, sale of timber). And yet, when we look at the forestry situation and the timber market from the European and world-wide point of view, and in the light of developments in the energy sector, it is to be expected that woodland, particularly broad-leaved woodland, will soon take on far greater importance than it has today. Would it not be better to opt systematically at this stage for a type of woodland which will meet future needs, above all in a nature park?

b. Protection of rural landscape

On this point Professor Noirfalise's findings are still largely valid today.

However, trends such as abandonment of cultivated land, reforestation by conifers and other misuses of rural areas (second homes) have increased. Special attention should certainly be paid to this problem, as to the problem of woodland referred to under (a).

c. Protection of streams

There is nothing new to add to Professor Noirfalise's report, apart from the noteworthy fact that there are regular surveys of fish species and population. It may be mentioned in passing that similar surveys of landscape protection would be very useful.

d. The limits of growth in leisure amenities

There is no doubt that this is the park's major handicap. On the one hand the continual increase in tourist facilities (eg second homes, camp sites, swimming pools, game enclosures) is obvious. On the other hand the authorities are making visible efforts to reduce this for example by limiting camp sites to the most suitable places and by attempting to integrate them better into the environment (plantations around camp sites and camouflage painting of isolated caravans). The authorities are now clearly determined to direct development in line with the three principles expressed by Professor Noirfalise:

- "No residence in durable materials may be put up outside the boundaries of the built-in area laid down for each village in regional or municipal plans. Exceptions are few and of long standing ; every projected new building - even within villages - requires a permit;

- After an initial experiment on the German side which proved to be merely real-estate speculation on the part of the promoter, the summer holiday camp scheme has been abandoned;
- camp sites and recreational areas will hereafter be confined to villages or their immediate vicinity and there will be no more of them along the streams or in the open country. Specific measures have been adopted to that effect in Luxembourg, where camp sites are particularly numerous and heavily frequented (40 sites within the park boundaries). Although the German section is larger, there are only 16 camp sites in it (8 run by public authorities), and no plans to increase their number."

The park also has a large number of educational trails.

The overall impression is that the limits of the park's capacity to absorb tourist and lesiure facilities have been reached, if not exceeded. This is particularly serious as the park has been awarded a diploma.

Stricter standards should be applied to this in the future.

## 2. Geology, fauna, flora and culture (specifically history)

In view of the detailed research which has already been done on this subject, we will refrain here from adding anything further.

We should nevertheless point out the very great interest shown by both the Luxembourg and German authorities in surveys of flora and fauna, in educating young people and adults about nature and environmental protection and in maintaining historic monuments and to some extent sites.

We may mention some samples:

- the exemplary survey of flora and fauna in the park itself by Forstrat Göbel;
- diggings beside the Echternach lake. This is the site of one of the largest Roman agricultural estates north of the Alps, in existence from 50BC to 405AD.
- restoration of a 2nd century AD Roman temple near Ernzen;
- Beaufort Castle has been bought by the state and will be restored;
- restoration of Prümzurlay Castle is in progress;
- a forest trail and refuge have been established near Ernzen and are used annually by about 6,000 school pupils and university students;
- a young people's forest camp near Irrel is already fully booked for 1982.

## 3. Facilities and improvements

On-site appraisal and examination of the documents show that tourist and lesiure facilities, divided in Professor Noirfalise's 1977 report into "heavy" and "light", have reached a level which in our view cannot be exceeded, if we are still to be able to talk of nature protection for recreational purposes, or more simply landscape for relaxation. An obvious attempt has been made to exploit the landscape exclusively for the purposes of tourism and recreation.

In fact in many respects there have been outstanding successes, for example in the construction of bridges and footpaths alongside the streams. Similarly the environmental information facilities provided for young people up to university level and the creation of jobs for the unemployed in restoring historic monuments deserve praise.

Nonetheless it is your expert's opinion that all the tourist and recreational facilities have reached the limit of what the park can support, if they have not indeed exceeded it.

Here particular attention should be given to the unfortunate development of the Hosingen game park, whose existence, unacceptable in a nature park, particularly one which has received a diploma, has already been criticised by Professor Noirfalise. Half the forest area of 150 hectares has been cleared or substantially damaged. The area is a jungle of approved and unapproved constructions, such as a swimming pool, skating rink, dolphinarium (but with no dolphin at present), all erected on the pretence of "development". Construction of 250 holiday homes is planned. Three projects are currently under discussion.

There is, however, a trend on both the Luxembourg and the German side to encourage recreation and leisure facilities on the outskirts of certain localities by means of well planned leisure development schemes, which are consequently well integrated without being subject to excessive restrictions.

We may note the following examples:

- the leisure centre south of Echternach

Over the past ten years a reservoir has been created in a natural depression, forming a lake of some 1.5 to 20 metres deep ("Echternach lake"). While the original plan was for a recreational site as close to nature as possible, the way in which it has been put into practice has more in common with an amusement park. The desire to avoid mass tourism is there: it explains the banning of motor and sailing boats. But their place has been taken by pedal boats and surfers. It is also planned to build an hotel. In the long term this will surely bring about the opposite effect to what is hoped for.

There are plans to build the E 42 Luxembourg-Trier express highway through this region. On this subject we have a few specific proposals to make about the protection of the landscape and these will be found in section 6 (conclusions and proposals).

- Small reservoir and camp site near Weiswampach (Luxembourg)

The camp site was planned in such a way as to optimise its integration into the landscape. Plans to build a holiday village of 240 chalets have been abandoned.

The overall impression is that the authorities on both the Luxembourg and the German side are becoming increasingly aware that the existing leisure facilities have already reached the acceptable limit for a nature park and that improvement in qualitative terms should now replace development in quantitative terms.

A few revealing figures:

- 1964: 29 campsites
- 1978: 53 camp sites (see also Appendix)
- inhabitants: 36,000
- campers: 20,000 = 57% of whom 20% are Dutch and Belgians permanently camped in the park
- research is in progress to determine the park's maximum capacity in terms of camp sites and other facilities.

#### 4 and 5 Legislative basis and regulations and financial resources

From the legal point of view, no significant changes have taken place since the last expert's report.

The on-site assessment, though brief, and study of the documents give the impression that the park's managers are trying to keep tourist development under control. But since the existing legislation appears to give guidelines which are not applicable everywhere with the full force one might wish, the political pressure of the developers concerned is stronger - once again, even here - than the efforts of the nature protection lobbies.

The financial situation is satisfactory. The Forestry and Tourist Boards, central government and local authorities, as well as the park support associations supply funds. For example the Südeifel Park Association has raised a sum of around 4.25 million DM which has been invested in the park from the time of its creation until 1980 (see budgetary details in the Appendix).

#### 6. Conclusions and proposals

6.1 The overall judgement is based on the principle that the existence of a nature park on both sides of a frontier is in itself a good thing and for this reason will always deserve the encouragement of the Council of Europe in particular. In addition to this is the fact that the park authorities are carrying out excellent work in certain areas, such as surveys of fauna and flora, restoration of historic sites and education of young people, in particular, in environmental protection.

But we cannot blind ourselves to the problems which affect forestry and farming in the park, as well as the danger of tourist and leisure development, which are intolerable in a park which has received the Diploma.

We are in principle in favour of renewing the Diploma, but only if the following proposals or conditions are implemented before the present Diploma expires, or if the two states undertake to do so in a positive manner within a certain period of time.

#### 6.2 Additional proposals (preconditions for renewal of the diploma)

6.2.1 Everything should be done to ensure the continuity of farming in the nature park, and it should be made possible for the form of farming to be as close to nature as possible (for example, guaranteeing the continuation of small farms, abandoning compulsory rationalisation and intensification, integrated protection of plants, traditional woodland management methods, and preservation or re-planting of hedges).

6.2.2 Forestry should be carried out in conditions as close to nature as possible. There should be no attempt to plant conifers only, even when replacing old oak coppices (Eichen-Schälwälder). Broad-leaved trees forming part of the canopy should be preserved, and broad-leaved species should be planted in areas which are at present planted exclusively with conifers.

6.2.3 Work to safeguard and maintain natural and cultural features worthy of protection (whether this covers the whole area or individual objects), must take priority over all forms of development. There should be a consistent policy for these objects to be either acquired or protected by contract, either by the two states, or by the park associations.

6.2.4 Facilities for educating young people in environmental protection should be developed.

6.2.5 Construction of new tourist and leisure facilities should be reduced to the minimum and limited to areas laid down by a restrictive land use plan. Exceptions to this should be tolerated only in cases of overriding public interest.

6.2.6 Tourist and leisure facilities and all building work should be permitted only on condition that they are wholly integrated into the landscape, as regards both siting and the choice of forms and colours. Existing structures should be altered to conform to these requirements.

6.2.7 The authorities should make every effort to acquire or compulsorily purchase or indeed eliminate, all constructions which do not satisfy the principles laid down in points 6.2.5 or 6.2.6 (badly designed structures or facilities in the park).

6.2.8 The Hosingen Game Park should be reduced to its original purposes and dimensions, that is to say all the additional buildings should be demolished. If the owners refuse, the state should buy them out. At the same time all the necessary measures should be taken to restore the original character of the landscape.

6.2.9 The E 42 Luxembourg-Trier express route which will cross the Echternach Leisure Centre region should, if the project goes ahead, respect the following conditions:

- it should not cut through the Haard Forest
- nor run alongside the lake
- nor cross the Tull Hill.

The alternatives should be examined and the decision should be taken to build either a tunnel or a cut-and-over construction.

#### Final conclusions

At the end of this appraisal, the expert would like to express his gratitude to all the people who have for years carried out outstanding work to safeguard the natural and cultural wealth of the park. He would also like to thank those who helped him by supplying precise information during the visit. Finally, he would like to express the hope that the park authorities, both in government and the private sector, will do everything to meet the conditions proposed under Item 6.2 (preconditions), so that the Council of Europe Diploma can be renewed within the desired period.

A P P E N D I XGermano-Luxembourg Nature Park: General details

(There follow a few details, mainly statistical; they were supplied on 16 September 1981 at the expert's request on his visit to the park, and some apply only to the German side of the park.)

1973 - European Diploma awarded

1978 - Diploma renewed

1975/1958 Südeifel Nature Park founded

17 April 1964 Government agreement at Clairvaux

15 October 1965 Exchange of instruments of ratification at Echternacherbrück

1 March 1967 Agreement to facilitate frontier traffic

1975 Installation of an international purification plant at Echternach

For decades Germany has supplied water to Luxembourg.

Number of inhabitants of the Südeifel Nature Park 27,400

Number of municipalities: approximately 70.

Overnight stays	1958	15,134
	1964	185,151
	1976	941,493
	1980	960,936

From the founding of the nature park until 1980, the Südeifel Nature Park Trust has invested the sum of 4,247,250.48 DM.

International foot-bridges over the Sûre and Our rivers running along the border have also been built at considerable expense.

Out of respect for the nature park, road and river projects have involved important landscaping measures.

Area

Südeifel Nature Park	42,610 ha
Luxembourg part	38,890 ha
Total	81,500 ha



Organisation of the Germano-Luxembourg Nature Park

Support for the park on the German side (Südeifel Nature Park)

"Verein Naturpark Südeifel e.V Irrel"

First President: Staatssekretär Konrad Schubach

Second President and chargé d'affaires: Bürgermeister Richard Meyer

Support on the Luxembourg side

"Association Eifel-Ardennes", Luxembourg section

President: Georges Wagner

The two associations are co-ordinated by a committee, chaired for a year by each of the two presidents in turn, day-to-day running being the responsibility of Bürgermeister Meyer.

The international treaty set up a government committee composed of four senior civil servants from the Rheinland-Pfalz and Luxembourg. It liaises between the two governments and the Germano-Luxembourg Nature Park Association.

The landscape protection orders of 15 March 1958 and 15 July 1964 lay down that the whole area of the Südeifel Nature Park, with the exception of villages, is covered by the protection of the landscape protection regulations.