

Strasbourg, 18 December 2002  
[diplome/docs/2003/de05e\_03]

**PE-S-DE (2003) 5**  
abridged version

**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**

20-21 January 2003  
Room 2, Palais de l'Europe, Strasbourg

**Poloniny National Park  
(Slovakia)**

**RENEWAL**

Expert report by  
Mr Charles Zimmer (Luxembourg)

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

The European Diploma for protected areas was awarded to the Poloniny National Park (Slovakia) for the first time in 1998. This is the first renewal.

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

Appendix III reproduces Resolution (98) 26 concerning the award of the Diploma. In Appendix IV the Secretariat presents a draft resolution for possible renewal.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **Introduction**

### **THE NATIONAL CONTEXT**

In 1993 Slovakia became an independent state with its own legislation, including in the environmental and nature protection field:

128 / 1991 *Law on the setting up of the National environment fund,*

453 / 1992 *Law on the creation of the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic,*

287 / 1994 *Law on nature and landscape protection.*

Slovakia has ratified most of the international conventions on nature protection.

At present the country is bringing its legislation into line with that of the European Union, including the "Birds" and "Habitats" directives.

The Ministry of the Environment has several agencies to carry out its work in the area of nature protection: the Slovakian environment agency, the Slovakian environment inspectorate, the National conservatory for nature protection whose tasks include the management of national parks and other protected areas.

At regional level the central authorities are represented by the regional and district offices competent for numerous sectors, including regional planning, agriculture, forests and hunting. The municipalities enjoy wide-ranging autonomy and also take action on environmental matters on their territory. Slovakia has adequate legal and administrative instruments covering management of the natural environment.

### **THE PROTECTED AREAS**

Slovakia has set up a substantial network of protected areas, national parks, protected regional rural ensembles (bio-corridors), protected habitats, nature reserves and national monuments, as well as buffer zones around protected areas.

The country has set up 7 national parks with a total surface area of 243,000 hectares; 3 new national parks are envisaged.

The levels of protection within national parks depend on the zones they comprise. The territory of a national park is classified as having level 3 protection, the buffer zone is level 2, while the nature reserves within a park have level 5 protection. Nature protection in a national park is all relative and defined by the protection level granted to the different zones concerned. In fact Slovak national parks are closer to the concept of regional or nature parks. That means that the national parks of Slovakia tolerate a number of activities considered compatible with conservation of the natural environment: agriculture, silviculture, tourism, hunting.

### **THE POLONINY NATIONAL PARK**

This national park was set up in 1977, initially as the *Východné Karpaty protected landscape area*, covering a territory of 96,910 ha; its eastern part (40,601 ha) was incorporated into the East Carpathians MaB Reserve in 1993.

In 1997 part of that territory was reclassified, becoming the *Poloniny National Park* with a surface area of 29,805 ha surrounded by a 10,973 ha buffer zone (mainly the sections lying in the farming valleys around the villages of Runina, Jalová, Topolá, Prislóp, Ruský Potok, Kolbasov, Uličské Krivé, Ulič, Zboj, Nová Sedlica), making a total 40,778 ha.

Within the National Park there are 19 strictly protected sites, 6 national reserves and 13 nature reserves covering a total surface area of 1,898 ha, ie 6.4% of the National Park.

Since 1999 the National Park has formed part of what has become the *East Carpathians Biosphere Reserve (MaB)* encompassing the adjacent territories of Poland (*Bieszczady National Park, Cislansko-Wetlinski landscape park, San Valley landscape park*), Ukraine (*Nadsians'ki regional park, Uzhans'ki national nature park*) and Slovakia (*Poloniny national park*).

In 1998 the European Diploma was awarded to the Park by Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Resolution (98) 26 for a five-year period, to be renewed in 2003.

### **Visit to the National Park**

The park visit took place from 24 to 27 May, following on from the visit to the Bieszczady national park in Poland. The expert was accompanied throughout the visit by Mr Peter Straka of the Slovak Ministry of the Environment. With his perfect knowledge of the Park (and of English) Mr Straka made the expert's task considerably easier; Mr Miroslav Bural, manager of the National Park, and Mr Marian Gic, forestry engineer and deputy director, were available for consultation in the park offices and on the terrain throughout the visit.

- 24 May: meeting with the managers of the two Polish and Slovakian national parks and their deputies at Tylawa on the Polish-Slovakian border.

Transfer to Snina to the headquarters of the National Park and initial talks with the park management.

Meeting with the local and regional authorities, NGOs and the press (see list in appendix 2). The main topic of discussion was the new forestry development plan, which has done away with most of the forest classified as special function woodland (protection of the catchment area for the Starina dam reservoir and protection against soil erosion on slopes) and reclassified this forest as production woodland. The second discussion topic concerned the reserve classification of forest sites proposed to the forestry authorities, particularly by VLK, a forest protection association. The forestry authorities were severely criticised for declassifying special function woodland and not following up the proposals for forest reserve classification submitted by VLK. It was decided to resume discussion of these points during the field visit.

- 25 May: visit to several sites in the Park in connection with the previous day's discussion on the forest situation:

\*Gazdoran nature reserve (grassland with rare thermophilic species) on headland overlooking the Starina dam lake (507.8 m); presentations of the Park's management of old natural reaping meadow and the new forestry development plan (reclassification of forest protecting the Starina dam reservoir as production woodland).

\*Udava forest reserve, old beech and pine forest on the ridge forming the border between Poland and Slovakia. There is a proposal to extend this reserve, which is crossed by a footpath enabling tourists to walk between Slovakia and Poland.

\*Komurny: private forests on a steep slope cut in the classic manner by clear-cutting strips, causing substantial erosion and an accumulation of pebbly flysch and cut remnants at the bottom of the slope in the thalweg stream.

\* Visit to the Zbojsky valley in the south-east of the National Park. Hike through the forests on the Slovakian south-facing slope of Jaraba skala, in the Cirocha valley which feeds the Starina dam. Work to thin out young broad-leaf stands (hornbeam).

- 26 May: Discussion at the national park headquarters with the park management. Drive along the Park's south-eastern edge and visits to the numerous wooden churches and chapels in the surrounding villages. Visit to the new planned headquarters of the park authorities in Stakčín at the south entrance of the Park.

- 27 May: return to Poland and transfer to Kraków airport.

### **Discussion of the recommendations**

*1. Strengthen existing cooperation between Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine with a view to the official designation of a trilateral transfrontier biosphere reserve.*

In 1992 UNESCO designated the bilateral Polish and Czech biosphere reserve in the East Carpathians. In 1998 it was extended to Ukrainian territory to create the trilateral East Carpathians MaB Reserve.

The total surface area of the reserve is 213,000 ha, encompassing 3 national parks and 3 landscape parks at the intersection of the Polish, Slovakian and Ukrainian borders. The trilateral reserve was officially opened on 22-24 June 1999.

The joint management of the MaB Reserve is backed by finance from a foundation for the conservation of biodiversity in the East Carpathians (John and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation & World Bank GEF). Management is down to an executive committee steered by its governing board. The foundation's priority tasks are the joint management of the reserve, research, education, conservation of the natural and cultural heritage, tourism, local community participation and cooperation with NGOs. From 1996 onwards the

foundation launched a programme of small subsidies to NGOs, ranging from \$500 to \$5,000, and has committed a total of \$74,000 to date.

However, the Biosphere Reserve does not have its own legal status in the three countries concerned. Discussion on the signing of a trilateral agreement between the three governments, of Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine has not yet achieved results. The Slovakian park authorities consider that they have no problem in signing this agreement. It should be recommended therefore that the respective governments accelerate talks on the agreement, which will make for improved coordination in the management of the territory by the three Polish, Slovakian and Ukrainian authorities:

Recommendation: Conclude as soon as possible the Intergovernmental agreement between Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine with a view to creating a legal basis facilitating coordination of the management of the trilateral MaB reserve by the three national authorities concerned.

*2. Determine in the areas outside the fully protected area how coordination is to be achieved between the management of hunting and the objective of conserving the fauna of the National Park.*

Hunting in Slovakia is a traditional activity whose prerogatives are jealously guarded. Hunting is regulated by the Ministry of Agriculture and falls within the competence of the forestry authorities which demarcates either state-owned or private hunting districts and approves large game shooting plans. The National Park comprises 20 hunting districts (averaging 2,000 ha per district) rented for 9-year periods to hunting associations. Hunting can represent a sizeable source of income where tourism is concerned.

Annual kills are appreciably lower than the planned levels. This results in large ungulate populations, particularly deer, likely to cause substantial damage to forest stands. In 1995 the Institute of forestry research in Zwolen proposed a model for organising hunting activities in the East Carpathians MaB reserve, which was not accepted by the Ministry of Agriculture.

In the present situation, one solution would be to set up a permanent consultation group within the Park, made up of representatives of the forestry authorities, the park service and hunting associations, to strike a balance between hunting and nature conservation management. Certain methods of hunting are likely to substantially disturb other wildlife species; the number of beats for large game should therefore be restricted, together with the number of rifles and trackers taking part in such beats.

Recommendation: Set up a permanent consultation group, made up of representatives of the forestry authorities, the park service and, where applicable, hunting associations, in order to define a pattern of hunting management compatible with the imperatives of nature conservation on the territory of the National Park.

*Make beats in the Park subject to decision by the park service, as well as the species of game that may be hunted using this method, and the number of rifles and trackers allowed to participate.*

### **The large mammals**

Under the constraint of international commitments the protection of certain species is gradually becoming established.

At present the *bear* is partially protected. The Ministry of the Environment authorises the shooting of between 60 and 70 specimens a year in Slovakia. Hunting is banned inside the national parks. Poloniny has a bear population of 16-18 individuals.

The *lynx* (13-18 individuals) and *wildcat* (40 individuals) are classified as protected species. Although the *wolf* is also classified as a protected species, it continues to be hunted in Slovakia in winter, from 1 November to 15 January under Ministry of Agriculture regulations. The Park's wolf population is estimated at 10-12 individuals in 2 or 3 packs. The wolf is fully protected on the Polish side, and the same degree of protection should be applied in the Slovakian National Park.

The other species present in the park are: *otter*, *badger*, *elk* and *bison* (occasionally present).

As in the Polish national park of Bieszczady, where all hunting is banned, a hunting district on the Slovak side could be made a cynegetic reserve for large mammal conservation.

Recommendation: Give full protection to the wolf and ban the shooting of it throughout the territory of the National Park.

*Consider the designation of a hunting district within the Park as a strict cynegetic reserve.*

*3. Draw up a development plan for the site, now the Poloniny National Park, on the basis of the MaB plan drawn up for the former Protected Landscape Area. A summary of this plan should be sent to the Council of Europe Secretariat for evaluation on the occasion of the five-year review of the Diploma.*

The park management plan is about to be completed on the basis of new ministry instructions and its introduction is scheduled for the end of 2002. The new plan will lay down the definitive zoning of the Park: protected nature reserves (protection level 5), the central core area (protection level 3) and the buffer zone (protection level 2).

This recommendation is to be maintained when the Diploma is renewed.

*4. Make available to the new National Park sufficient human and financial resources to ensure implementation of the initial measures corresponding to the new legal status of the site.*

The national park authorities headquarters, previously in Humene, 25 km south of the Park has been temporarily transferred to Snina. It is planned to install the park service definitively in Stakčín, a small village at the entrance to the Park.

There have been no major changes in the management of the National Park since the European Diploma was awarded. The service comprises a six-strong team responsible not only for managing the National Park but also for surveillance of the peripheral areas, including the outer buffer zone of 10,973 ha as well as the remainder of the former Východné Karpaty protected landscape area, making a total of some 80,000 ha. The Park has no warden service covering the territory; for this task there is nothing more than forestry wardens working for the state, municipalities and commercial forestry concerns.

The funding allocated to the Park has undergone little in the way of adjustment in line with the recommendations made when the Diploma was awarded.

The appropriations allocated to the Park are 30-40% lower than the amount estimated necessary.

Consequently, the recommendation to make sufficient human and financial resources available to the Park should be maintained.

*5. Pay particular attention to the management of the poloniny, the subalpine grasslands of the Park, notably in the context of the concerted management of this habitat with the competent Polish authorities.*

The subalpine grasslands known as poloniny cover the ridges separating Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine. They cover a large surface area and are still used and conserved by traditional grazing. They account for a small area in Slovakia and are maintained by mowing, whereas in Poland they are kept open and left over to feeding by roaming deer and bison. *Considering that this constitutes management of the poloniny, this recommendation seems superfluous and may be dropped.*

*6. Draw up a strategy and specific development plan defining the different categories of forest (national reserves, protective or special function forests, productive forests) and their management, taking account of the maintenance or restoration of natural associations and habitats.*

*7. Increase the area of the forest reserves and other forests returning towards primeval forest.*

*8. Restore the forests that were clear-cut and integrate, as far as possible, the forests that had been collectivised and are now of "unsettled ownership" into the public domain of the National Park.*

The forestry authorities went against these recommendations when drawing up the new development plans from 2000 onwards. Special function woodland (providing protection for the Starina dam reservoir) has been reclassified as production woodland by the forestry authorities in keeping with the Ministry of Agriculture policy of preferring economic development to committing budget expenditure to protection of the National Park's forests. Along the same lines, Slovakia has continued to hand back woodland of undetermined status to private owners, indirectly encouraging clear-cutting, which is disastrous for soil protection on the steep slopes, exacerbating erosion of flysch soil and creating conditions for high water downstream.

The forests (27,000 ha) cover around 80% of the National Park and are a key element in its management. The recent changes in forest management endanger the integrity of the Park.

The decisions taken by the forestry authorities also go against the technical report submitted to the Ministry of the Environment, an interim report drawn up as part of a CE-ISPA contract for the funding of a project to protect the waters of the Starina dam reservoir. This dam, built in 1987, holds back 60 million m<sup>3</sup> of water, providing the population of east Slovakia with drinking water. The report, when analysing pollution risks, points to erosion, landslides and forestry management as major risks of reservoir pollution. It stresses the need to regard the basin's forests as fulfilling a function of public and social interest, and first and foremost their role in protecting the region's water resources.

Given the dangers of erosion, wood-cutting should use techniques that protect ground vegetation and equipment that limits damage to forest soil. Cuts in timber production and additional cost from using less radical silvicultural techniques would have to be compensated for under forestry or environmental legislation.

Not only have recommendations 6, 7 and 8 not been followed by the Slovakian authorities responsible, but the action taken by the authorities has actually gone against them. Consequently, *these recommendations are to be maintained in terms of their content and will have to be made legally binding as **conditions** to be fulfilled for European Diploma renewal.* Slovakia's forestry legislation (Law 100/1997 on forest planning and forestry administration, Revised Law 61/1977 on forests) contains all the necessary provisions for forest protection and management compatible with the aims of the National Park.

*Conditions:*

*1- Cancel the classification of forest categories established by the forestry plans of 2000 and restore the special function woodland, particularly the woodland intended to protect the waters of the Starina reservoir catchment area, to its previous extent.*

*2- Increase the number of forest reserves and their surface area on the basis of either the data available in the forest inventories and the maps of forest associations or the proposals submitted by the National Park service and the VLK association.*

*3- Prohibit clear-cutting throughout the National Park and ensure that forests are cut and regenerated using selection cutting, thus maintaining forest cover and ground cover.*

*4- Introduce a policy of purchasing private forests, making a priority of special function woodland or forest areas that could be incorporated into the protection woodland.*

**9. Pay particular attention to the ecosystems of the watercourses and especially their fish and invertebrate fauna**

As a whole, the watercourses and the numerous streams draining the steep slopes have retained a natural bed and abundant river vegetation. At the worst, a degree of organic pollution and dumped waste is visible on the beds of streams where they pass through villages. A project on the limnology of East Carpathians watercourses is currently under way. Several Slovakian research institutes are working on the project, which began in the National Park.

Recommendation 9 may be withdrawn.

**10. Pursue and develop the collaboration with the Polish and Ukrainian authorities of the MaB Reserve, especially in the field of research**

This collaboration exists, particularly in the form of joint projects carried out by the Foundation for the conservation of biodiversity in the East Carpathians, which comprises officials from the three countries.

This recommendation may be dropped.

**11. Encourage the participation of the local nature conservation NGOs in the management of the Park**

Collaboration between the park authorities and the NGOs is very real; one association, VLK (Lesoochránárske zoskupenie), is directly involved in the efforts to conserve the Park's forests and the setting up of new forest reserves.

Several other associations are participating in projects within the MaB reserve framework.

This recommendation has therefore been acted upon and needs no further mention.

**12. Envisage the drawing up of a development and architecture plan for the hamlets located within the National Park**

Tourism represents one of the possibilities for activities in the Park but remains under-developed at present. Each year the Park receives between 20,000 and 25,000 visitors from Slovakia or neighbouring countries, Poland and the Czech Republic. Growth in tourism in a fairly remote region will depend on the country's economic growth and its EU involvement at the time of accession for central European states. There is a

network of paths crossing the Park, including 2 transfrontier paths to Poland. There is an information centre in Nova Sedlica and a new interpreting centre is being set up in Statčín.

On the Park's territory there are still 10 villages with a population of 200-500 inhabitants with a mean age of over 60. All these hamlets suffered from Second world war fighting in 1944-45. There are still some typical small wooden churches and chapels. On the other hand the individual houses rebuilt after the war hardly enhance the rural landscape. In expectation of the development of high-quality tourism in the future, it would be expedient to plan for the rehabilitation of these villages with a view to a return to the traditional architecture of former times.

Condition: Envisage over time an architectural programme designed to encourage a return to constructing and restoring houses and buildings in the traditional regional style.

### **Conclusions**

The Poloniny National Park, like all Slovakia's national parks, does not benefit from sufficiently binding legislation permitting effective management by the responsible services. Much of the activity in the Poloniny Park concerns forestry and is governed by the water and forestry authorities, forestry concerns such as Ulic or cutting by private owners; the park service has no direct say in the forestry policy currently pursued.

The staff and funding available for the Park's management and work necessary to conserve it are inadequate, although the park service is determined in its efforts. The situation on the ground has not yet deteriorated to the point where the European Diploma might be suspended.

The Slovakian government has not only disregarded the recommendations on forest management set out in Resolution (98)26 but has pursued a policy actually going against them, in handing back woodland confiscated under the socialist regime to private owners rather than maintaining forestry management by the authorities through purchasing that woodland. Nearly all these forests, classified as protection forests, have been returned to intensive cutting, which is also contrary to the CE-ISPA technical report drawn up for the project to protect the waters of the Starina dam reservoir.

The Slovakian authorities will have to go back on certain decisions taken, particularly as regards forestry, that endanger the Park's future integrity and are likely to cause serious damage to the natural environment.

### **Conditions and recommendations with a view to the renewal of the European Diploma held by the Poloniny National Park**

#### **Conditions**

1- Cancel the classification of forest categories established by the forestry plans of 2000 and restore the special function woodland, particularly the woodland intended to protect the waters of the Starina reservoir catchment area, to its previous extent.

2- Increase the number of forest reserves and their surface area on the basis of either the data available in the forest inventories and the maps of forest associations or the proposals submitted by the National Park service and the VLK association.

3- Prohibit clear-cutting throughout the National Park and ensure that forests are cut and regenerated using selection cutting, thus maintaining forest cover and ground cover.

4- Introduce a policy of purchasing private forests, making a priority of special function woodland or forest areas that could be incorporated into the protection woodland.

#### **Recommendations**

1. Conclude as soon as possible the Intergovernmental agreement between Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine with a view to creating a legal basis facilitating coordination of the management of the trilateral MaB reserve by the three national authorities concerned.

2. Draw up a development plan for the site, now the Poloniny National Park, on the basis of the MaB plan drawn up for the former Protected Landscape Area. A summary of this plan should be sent to the Council of Europe Secretariat.

3. Make available to the new National Park sufficient human and financial resources to ensure implementation of the initial measures corresponding to the new legal status of the site.
4. Set up a permanent consultation group, made up of representatives of the forestry authorities, the park service and, where applicable, hunting associations, in order to define a pattern of hunting management compatible with the imperatives of nature conservation on the territory of the National Park.  
Make beats in the Park subject to decision by the park service, as well as the species of game that may be hunted using this method, and the number of rifles and trackers allowed to participate.
5. Give full protection to the wolf and ban the shooting of it throughout the territory of the National Park.
6. Consider the designation of a hunting district within the Park as a strict cynegetic reserve.
7. Envisage over time an architectural programme designed to encourage a return to constructing and restoring houses and buildings in the traditional regional style.

**Annexe I**

**List of reserves in Poloniny National Park**

Nr.	Name	Area in ha	Main vegetation association	Aim of protection
<b><i>National natural reserves:</i></b>				
1	<b>Havešová</b>	171,32	beech primeval forest	beech primeval forest
2	<b>Pľaša</b>	110,80	beech primeval forest	beech primeval forest and meadows called "Poloniny" with occurrence of rare East Carpathians species
3	<b>Riaba skala</b>	359,94	fir-beech or beech primeval forest	fir-beech primeval forest and meadows called "Poloniny" with occurrence of rare East Carpathians species
4	<b>Rožok</b>	67,15	beech primeval forest	beech primeval forest
5	<b>Stinská</b>	90,78	Beech forest	associations with occurrence of rare East Carpathians species
6	<b>Stužica</b>	761,49	fir-beech primeval forest	fir-beech primeval forest and meadows called "Poloniny" with occurrence of rare East Carpathians species
<b><i>Natural reserves:</i></b>				
7	<b>Bahno</b>	2,78	transitional bog	associations of transitional bog (meadow inclining to peat bog)
8	<b>Borsučiny</b>	83,72	beech primeval forest	beech primeval forest
9	<b>Bzaná</b>	15,46	meadows	associations with occurrence of rare thermophilic species
10	<b>Gazdoran</b>	17,30	meadows	associations with occurrence of rare thermophilic species
11	<b>Hlboké</b>	2,28	Beech forest	Acid beech stand in inversion
12	<b>Hrúnok</b>	4,60	beech-oak forest	associations with occurrence of rare species
13	<b>Pod Ruským</b>	11,14	meadows - wetland	associations with occurrence of rare species
14	<b>Ruské</b>	1,46	meadows	associations with occurrence of rare species
15	<b>Slatina pod Stinskou</b>	2,76	low moor	associations of low moor
16	<b>Stružnická dolina</b>	2,24	stand of speckled alder and European hazel	protection of rare species of plants
17	<b>Šípková</b>	156,32	beech primeval forest	associations with occurrence of rare East Carpathians species
18	<b>Udava</b>	52,09	fir-beech primeval forest	fir-beech primeval forest
19	<b>Uličská Ostrá</b>	25,24	beech and oak forest	forest association of Eastern Carpathians with inversion of vegetation
<b><i>Natural monument:</i></b>				
20	<b>Ulička</b>	7,24	riparian stand of speckled alder	fragment of river relief and association of riparian forest with occurrence of rare species
<b>Total:</b>				
		1946,11		

**Annexe II****Liste des participants à la réunion du 24 mai 2002**

Peter Straka	Ministry of environment Bratislava
Ing. Jozef Kulan	Regional government office Presov – Department agriculture and forestry
Ing. Milan Toth	Lesoprojekt Zwolen – State organisation for forest management planning
Ing. Hana Repkova	District government office Snina – Department of agriculture and forestry
Ing. Jan Hrabovein	Ulic – State enterprise for forestry and agriculture
RNDr. Marta Makarova	Regional government office Presov – department for environment
Ing. Hamara -	Regional government office Presov – department for environment
Ibg. Stefan Kopie	District government office Snina – Department for environment
Ing. Julius Burkovsky	Statna ochrana prirody SR Banska Bystrika – government org. for nature conservation
Mgr. Eva Medveiova	Statna ochrana prirody SR
Ing. Juraj Lukae	NGO Vik – Forest protection association
Rastislav Mieanik	NGO Vik
Ing. Miroslav Bural	Poloniny NP administration
Ing. Marian Gic	id.
Ing. Milan Piro	id.
Stefan Peola	id.

APPENDIX III

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

RESOLUTION (98) 26

**ON THE AWARD OF THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA TO THE POLONINY NATIONAL  
PARK (Slovakia)**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 18 September 1998  
at the 641<sup>st</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 Committee for the Activities of the Council of Europe in the field of Biological and Landscape Diversity (CO-DBP) ;

Having noted the agreement of the Government of the Slovak Republic;

After deliberation,

Solemnly awards the European Diploma, Category B, to the Poloniny National Park;

Places the aforesaid zone under the patronage of the Council of Europe until 18 September 2003;

Attaches the following recommendations to the award:

1. Strengthen existing co-operation between Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine with a view to the official designation of a trilateral transfrontier biosphere reserve;
2. Determine in the areas outside the fully protected area how co-ordination is to be achieved between the management of hunting and the objective of conserving the fauna of the National Park;
3. Draw up a development plan for the site, now the Poloniny National Park, on the basis of the MaB plan drawn up for the former Protected Landscape Area. A summary of this plan should be sent to the Council of Europe Secretariat for evaluation on the occasion of the five-year review of the Diploma;
4. Make available to the new National Park sufficient human and financial resources to ensure implementation of the initial measures corresponding to the new legal status of the site;
5. Pay particular attention to the management of the poloniny, the subalpine grasslands of the Park, notably in the context of the concerted management of this habitat with the competent Polish authorities;
6. Draw up a strategy and specific development plan defining the different categories of forest (national reserves, protective or special function forests, productive forests) and their management, taking account of the maintenance or restoration of natural associations and habitats;
7. Increase the area of the forest reserves and other forests returning towards primeval forest;
8. Restore the forests that were clear-cut and integrate, as far as possible, the forests that had been collectivised and are now of "unsettled ownership" into the public domain of the National Park;
9. Pay particular attention to the ecosystems of the watercourses and especially their fish and invertebrate fauna;
10. Pursue and develop the collaboration with the Polish and Ukrainian authorities of the MaB Reserve, especially in the field of research;
11. Encourage the participation of the local nature conservation NGOs in the management of the Park;
12. Envisage the drawing up of a development and architecture plan for the hamlets located within the National Park.

**APPENDIX IV**

**Draft resolution  
on the renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas  
to the Poloniny National Park (Slovakia)**

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 of Protected Areas, as amended by Resolution (98) 29 on the Regulations for the European Diploma of Protected Areas;

Having regard to Resolution (98) 26 awarding the European Diploma of Protected Areas to the Poloniny National Park (Slovakia);

Taking into consideration the expert's report presented at the meeting of the Group of Specialists - European Diploma of Protected Areas on 20 and 21 January 2003;

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 of Protected Areas to the Poloniny National Park (Slovakia) until 18 September 2008;

Attaches to the renewal the following conditions:

- 1- Cancel the classification of forest categories established by the forestry plans of 2000 and restore the special function woodland, particularly the woodland intended to protect the waters of the Starina reservoir catchment area, to its previous extent.
- 2- Increase the number of forest reserves and their surface area on the basis of either the data available in the forest inventories and the maps of forest associations or the proposals submitted by the National Park service and the VLK association.
- 3- Prohibit clear-cutting throughout the National Park and ensure that forests are cut and regenerated using selection cutting, thus maintaining forest cover and ground cover.
- 4- Introduce a policy of purchasing private forests, making a priority of special function woodland or forest areas that could be incorporated into the protection woodland.

Attaches to the renewal the following recommendations:

1. Conclude as soon as possible the Intergovernmental agreement between Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine with a view to creating a legal basis facilitating coordination of the management of the trilateral MaB reserve by the three national authorities concerned.
2. Draw up a development plan for the site, now the Poloniny National Park, on the basis of the MaB plan drawn up for the former Protected Landscape Area. A summary of this plan should be sent to the Council of Europe Secretariat.
3. Make available to the new National Park sufficient human and financial resources to ensure implementation of the initial measures corresponding to the new legal status of the site.
4. Set up a permanent consultation group, made up of representatives of the forestry authorities, the park service and, where applicable, hunting associations, in order to define a pattern of hunting management compatible with the imperatives of nature conservation on the territory of the National Park.  
Make beats in the Park subject to decision by the park service, as well as the species of game that may be hunted using this method, and the number of rifles and trackers allowed to participate.

5. Give full protection to the wolf and ban the shooting of it throughout the territory of the National Park.
6. Consider the designation of a hunting district within the Park as a strict cynegetic reserve.
7. Envisage over time an architectural programme designed to encourage a return to constructing and restoring houses and buildings in the traditional regional style.