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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

40th meeting
Strasbourg, 1-4 December 2020

REPORT

**ON THE SPOT EXPERT APPRAISAL OF THE
GERMANO-LUXEMBOURG NATURE PARK**

17-19 Septembre 2019

*Document prepared
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1. INTRODUCTION

The Germano-Luxembourg Nature Park (GLNP) was formally established in April 1964. In reply to the joint request made by the two countries, the Council of Europe awarded it the European Diploma, category C (“Protected Landscapes”), in 1973. The award was granted following an on-the spot appraisal visit by Mr Alfred H. Hoffmann, who recommended the award “recognising the value of an international nature park in the heart of Western Europe” (Council of Europe document CE/Nat (72) 17). This award was subsequently renewed in 1978, 1983, 1988, 1993, 1998, 2003, 2008 and 2012.

The Park is 50 km long and 20 km wide at its widest point, extends along both sides of the border between the two countries at altitudes between 150 and 550 m asl. The border is formed by the River Our in the north and by the River Sure in the south.

The administrative situation of the award holding area was the following at the end of the last century (document PE-S-DE (98) 53 of the Council of Europe): the day-to-day management and trans-frontier co-ordination was carried out by a private association, the "Verein Deutsch-Luxemburgischer Naturpark" whose head office was in Irrel and which was alternately chaired by a German and a Luxembourg representative. An intergovernmental committee, comprising the Minister for the Environment of the Rhineland-Palatinate Land and the Luxembourg Water and Forestry Directorate, was in place in order to regulate legal matters arising from the international border. The Luxembourg Act on nature parks of 10 August 1993 gave Luxembourg the legal means of setting up natural parks.

Further details on the history of the Park as well as on its features and its administration and management and, in particular, recent changes in the regional context can be found in document PE-S-DE (2008) 08 of the Council of Europe, which appears to be the last visit report, and as well in annex 2 of this report.

The situation has changed insofar as the nature parks on each side of the border have evolved within their own contexts. While on the German side the Nature Park Südeifel still coincides with the original area of the Germano-Luxemburg Nature Park, on the other side, the two nature parks (Our Nature Park and Mëllerdall Nature Park) now in place cover areas following the limits of the communities participating in the nature parks instead of natural geomorphological limits as originally.

The detailed programme of the visit with names and affiliations of people who contributed to the visit, are to be found in annex 1. I would like to thank all the people I met during my visit for their highly valuable contributions. In particular, I thank Ms Daniel Torgau for the perfect organisation of the appraisal and Mr Paul Kremer who managed to show me in a very short time many different facets of the landscape of the GLNP and who also provided me with many very interesting bits of information on the context of the site and its history of nearly half a century.

2. EUROPEAN INTEREST

As no document seems to be available showing the motivation of the applicants to ask for the European Diploma, I have to rely upon the report on the on-the-spot appraisal carried out for the award, which tells us that the Council of Europe awarded the European Diploma, category C (“Protected Landscapes”) “recognising the value of an international nature park in the heart of Western Europe” (Council of Europe document CE/Nat (72) 17).

3. APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONDITIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS RENEWAL

The resolution on the last renewal of the EDPA adopted by the Committee of Ministers in 2012 (Res.CM/ResDip(2012)14), taking into consideration the expert’s report presented at the meeting of the Group of Specialists on the EDPA in March 2008, which renewed the Diploma until 25 October 2018, attached three conditions and five recommendations to the renewal.

Conditions

- *at the initiative of the States concerned, resume the work of the intergovernmental committee as soon as possible;*
- *engage in an in-depth analysis of the mission, the medium-term objectives and future structure of the Germano-Luxembourg Nature Park;*
- *define specifications and a road map for the drawing-up of a global management plan for the Germano-Luxembourg Nature Park incorporating those of the nature parks on its territory; prepare the management plan before the next renewal of the European Diploma falls due and ensure the funding required for its implementation;*

Condition 1 has not been fulfilled insofar as the Intergovernmental Committee has not formally resumed its work. However, contacts do exist and meetings are taking place at the governmental level - not least during my visit in September 2019.

Condition 2 has not strictly been fulfilled as there is no in-depth analysis of the mission, the objectives and the structure of the GLNP. However, the development and implementation of common objectives take place on a regular basis through cross border co-ordination and cross border workshops.

Condition 3 has not been fulfilled either, as there is no global management plan for the GLNP. However, with the adoption of detailed plans for all three nature parks and the numerous cross border activities and regular co-operation between them the overall aim of condition 3 is being reached; the added value of the drawing up of a global management plan for the GLNP incorporating those of the three nature parks is not evident, particularly when considering the work load. The fact that the two nature parks on the Luxembourg side have limits that do not follow the geomorphological limits of the original GLNP leads to an additional problem for which I could not hear of any overall solution during the interviews I had during my visit, although I was told that the management of the areas of the GLNP not covered by Our and Mëllerdall nature parks is dealt with in a project wise way by single nature parks activities or common activities.

Recommendations

- *maintain and step-up consultation and collaboration between the parties concerned by the Our and Sûre basins, focusing on relations between the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg and the Rhineland-Palatinate Land;*
- *pursue public awareness-raising and information activities;*
- *encourage the swift creation of the Müllerthal-Kleine Luxemburger Schweiz Nature Park and incorporate it as far as possible in the Germano-Luxembourg Nature Park;*
- *find a solution allowing aquatic fauna to pass or circumnavigate the obstacle of the Vianden hydroelectric dam;*
- *maintain vigilance with regard to leisure and sporting pursuits (camping, rock-climbing, canoeing, etc.)*

Recommendations 1, 2 and 5 are fulfilled thanks to the regular cross border co-operation between the three nature parks. With respect to recommendation 5, it can be noted that all sorts of sporting activities are well kept under control. The Mëllerdall nature park was created in 2016, thus fulfilling recommendation 3.

There is no feasible solution to the problem raised with **recommendation 4**; from what I was told, the problem may not be a real problem as fish populations on both sides of the Vianden hydroelectric dam seem to prosper so far.

4. CONSERVATION

Comparing the state of the landscape with descriptions from passed visits by experts, I had the impression that very little has changed in this site during the past decades. Some roads have recently been rebuilt due to destructions by heavy rainfalls. There is little erosion along the foot paths, even at places that obviously are highly frequented by tourist. The forests are well conserved as well, bearing in mind sanitary

interventions, notably also due to storms. The pastures and meadows have not severely been impacted although the interest of farmers in extensive grasslands is not as important as in the past. The banks of the Our and Sure are quite well protected and managed, and the water quality is apparently good.

5. MANAGEMENT

Management plans have been adopted and are being implemented within all three nature parks. There is an intensive regular co-ordination through cross border activities. In particular, different projects are being carried out that follow the aim of facilitating and promoting pedestrian access to the different parts of the GLNP. As an example, the joint INTERREG project “Barrier-free without borders” 2016-2020 is aimed at making different important sites accessible to all, including disabled people.

More details on management activities as well as on administrative features can be found in the annexed presentation (annex 2)

6. CONCLUSION

The three entities presently forming the Germano-Luxembourg Nature Park, the three nature parks Südeifel, Our and Mëllerdall, are well managed nature parks; they have developed nature park plans with broad public participation and the involvement of all relevant actors, experts and decision makers; these plans can be considered as forming the basis for the sustainable development of the Germano-Luxembourg Nature Park. Furthermore, the three nature parks have regular cross border activities. However, the territorial coverage on the Luxembourg side is not the same as it was when the GLNP was awarded the European Diploma. Also, the spirit is not the same as nearly half a century ago, when trans frontier co-operation was highlighted in a context where it deserved to be highlighted; cross border co-operation has become a normal issue. Under these circumstances, I feel that it would be anachronistic to continue to stick strictly to the conditions as they were formulated in 2008/2012. This leads me to propose the following recommendation.

Bearing in mind ongoing cross border projects (including e.g. the joint INTERREG project “Barrier-free without borders” 2016-2020), pursue and develop cross border co-operation and explore the best adapted form of trans-frontier co-ordination, including the formulation of common mid and long-term development objectives and the reactivating of an intergovernmental committee, as appropriate.

I recommend that the European Diploma is renewed for another then years and I propose the following **two recommendations** to be attached to the renewal:

1. Pursue and develop cross-border co-operation and collaboration and explore the best adapted form of trans-frontier co-ordination, including the formulation of common mid and long-term development objectives and the reactivating of an intergovernmental committee, as appropriate.
2. Anchor nature conservation management in the structure of the Zweckverband Naturpark Südeifel in a similar way to the practice and performance of tasks of Luxembourg nature parks.

ANNEX 1**Programme Tour Expert Group with Mr Olivier Biber
within the framework of the European Diploma for the German-Luxembourg Nature Park****17 September 2019 - Arrival** (Station City of Luxembourg)**18 September 2019 - 1st day of the trip**

- 9.00 Meeting point Nature Park Center Ernzen, Ferschweilerstraße 50, D-54668 ores
- Presentation of the German-Luxembourg Nature Park and cross-border cooperation
 - Presentation of the Nature Park South Eifel
 - Presentation of current cross-border projects, like e.g. "Accessibility without borders"
- Questions and exchange
- 10.30 Presentation of the Devil's Gorge Nature Park Centre and Dinopark in Ernzen
- 12.30 Lunch at the Nature Park Centre, Ernzen (regional brand EIFEL)
- 13.30 Hike through the Devil's Gorge and presentation of the cross-border project NaturWanderPark delux and / or "Accessibility without borders"
- 14.30 Continue to Beaufort (Luxembourg)
- 15.00 Visit of the office of the Mëllerdall Nature & Geopark 8, rue de l'auberge, L-6315 Beaufort
- Presentation Mëllerdall Nature & Geopark
 - Presentation and excursion to the INTERREG VA project "Pierre Sèche dry-stone walls".
 - Presentation and excursion on the subject of orchards (cross-border with Nature Park South Eifel)
- 19.00 Dinner at the Gudde Kascht, 20 Rue Henerecht, 6370 Haller, Luxemburg
German-Luxembourg Nature Park Talks

19 September 2019 - 2nd day of the trip

- 9.00 Meeting point CUBE 521, 1-3, Driicht, L-9764 Marnach
Presentation Nature Park Our and current projects
- 10.00 Participation in the press conference for the Festival "NIGHT Light & more"
(it's developed from the INTERREG Europe project Night Light to reduce light pollution)

- 11.00 Snack bar
- 12.00 More presentations of the Our Nature Park, e.g. "Null-Kilometer-Teller
- 13.00 Summary of results and questions
- 14.00 Transfer to the train station City of Luxembourg (departure 15:39)

Names and affiliations of the people who have contributed to the visit:

- Dr. Joachim Streit: Landrat des Eifelkreises Bitburg-Prüm, Vorsitzender der Vereinigung Deutsch-Luxemburgischer Naturpark Andreas Kruppert: Mayor Arzfeld, Bürgermeister Verbandsgemeinde Arzfeld
- Moritz Petry: Mayor Südeifel, Bürgermeister Verbandsgemeinde Südeifel
- Michael Holstein: Mayor Trier-Land, Bürgermeister Verbandsgemeinde Trier-Land
- Karl-Georg Freundt
- Olaf Böhmer: Forester, Forstamt Neuerburg
- Paul Kremer: President Luxembourg section EVEA (Europäische Vereinigung für Eifel und Ardennen)
- Francis Reuter
- Camille Eilenbecker: Member Luxembourg section EVEA (Europäische Vereinigung für Eifel und Ardennen)
- Henri Brimer
- Yves Wengler: Mayor Echternach
- Hans-Michael Bröhl, Vorsitzender des vereins Naturpark Südeifel
- Juliette Mathieu: Ministère de l'Énergie et de l'Aménagement du Territoire
- Mette Zillich: Umweltministerium RLP
- Matthias Schneider: Umweltministerium RLP
- Claude Origer: Ministère de l'Environnement, du Climat et du Développement durable
- Camille Hoffmann: Mayor Beaufort; Board of the Mëllerdall NP
- Françoise Bonert: Ministère de l'Agriculture, de la Viticulture et du Développement rural L ; Board of the Mëllerdall NP
- Ben Scheuer: Board of the Mëllerdall NP
- Romain Osweiler: Mayor Rosport-Mompach; Board of the Mëllerdall NP
- Emile Eicher: President Board of Our NP
- Petra Kneesch: Associate Director of the Our NP
- Claude Petit: Director of the Mëllerdall NP
- Daniela Torgau: Director Zweckverband Naturpark Südeifel
- Francine Keiser: Board of the Our NP
- Christian Kayser: Director of the Our NP

- Bruno Zwank: Director Felsenland_Südeifel Tourismus GmbH
- Bastian Mikis: Head of ecological department of the Möllerdall NP
- Natassja Mich: Associate Director of the Möllerdall NP
- Sascha Wernicke: Head of the Natura 2000 Department/ Our NP

ANNEX 2:

Features of the GLNP and administrative details

PowerPoint presentation: <https://mycloud.coe.int/s/4CCk5nEf4tmg43Y>