

COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF NATURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Working Party on Flora, Fauna
and Landscapes

EUROPEAN DIPLOMA

German-Luxembourg Natural Park

Subject proposed by the
Federal Republic of Germany and Luxembourg
for the award of the European Diploma

17.333
03.3/58.1

Secretariat Note

The application of the German-Luxembourg Natural Park was presented jointly by the Federal Republic of Germany (1) and the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg (2) in the category "Protected Landscape".

Replies to the Questionnaire are given in the following pages. Photographs and maps are in the possession of the Secretariat.

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- (1) Letter of 17 December 1969, from the Bundesminister für Ernährung Landwirtschaft und Forsten.
 - (2) Letter of 26 February 1970, from the Director of Political Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Name of site Deutsch-Luxemburgischer Naturpark
 German-Luxembourg Natural Park

Name and Address of the organisation responsible for its management

Vereinigung Deutsch-Luxemburgischer Naturpark
D 5521 Echternacherbrück

Federal Republic of Germany

Country Federal Republic of Germany

Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg

(a) Type of Landscape

The northern part of the natural park forms part of the great mountain chain of devonian schist. In the south we find "Luxembourg sandstone" of the tertiary period.

The accidented nature of the relief, the vast perspectives of the uplands, the valleys with their strange shaped rocks and the wooded slopes constitute the charm of the landscape.

(b) Characteristics and justification for conservation

Apart from the beauty of the region and its many natural sites, the Luxembourg/German park has a wealth of historic interest, country mansions and castles and other historical features.

Examples are the ruins of the fortified castle of Vianden, the Roman mosaics of Diekirch, the Roman villa at Bollendorf, the menhir (a pagan sanctuary) at the "Niederburg" and the celebrated "Fraubillen" cross.

Remains from Roman times are scattered throughout the territory.

The largest pumping station in Europe, near Vianden, comprising a lake several km long in the Our valley and two other reservoirs higher up on Mont St. Nicolas, with a capacity of 6 million cubic metres, makes a first-class tourist attraction.

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Flora and fauna are extremely varied. Because of the diversity of the terrain and climatic factors, there is a vast range of phytosociological associations.

A special feature is the presence of mediterranean plant species. Thirty-two different orchids occur on the warm, dry skeletal soils in the southern part of the park, protected by conservation measures.

There are red deer, roebuck and wildboar and numerous species of birds. These include rare birds of prey, water-ouzels, teal and garganey, kingfishers and heron.

Within the walls of the old castle of Bollendorf the visitor may admire a falcon-house with numbers of hawk-beaked birds kept in impeccable condition.

The natural park is very interesting to geologists, too. The abundance of geological formations attracts their attention, while the chalky subsoil features excavations and important deposits.

(c) European interest of the application

This is the first project in western Europe for joint conservation and management of an extensive area of the countryside regardless of the intervening frontier. Those co-operating to this end include departments of national government, local authorities and private organisations in the two countries.

This Ardennes-Eifel area has maintained its cultural unity for more than a thousand years, despite the frontiers. And it is through the influence of this common civilisation that friends of nature and of the countryside in the Federal Republic of Germany and in the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg pooled their efforts to establish a natural park and organise it jointly.

The legal basis for the Luxembourg/German natural park was laid down in a treaty between the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg and Land Rheinland-Pfalz.

Instruments of ratification were exchanged on 15 October 1965, which is the date when the first international natural park in Europe can be said to have been born. This natural park is also the first bilateral one to be jointly administered. It covers an area of 720 sq.km on either side of the Our and the Sûre, with 58 towns and villages and 54,000 inhabitants.

The creation in the heart of Europe of the Luxembourg/German natural park has demonstrated that international co-operation is possible in the field of protection of the countryside, to the greater good of the inhabitants of large conurbations seeking recreation.

Conservation of nature and of the landscape, although the declared purpose of this combined effort, was not the only one.

There is a feeling on both sides that the frontier is no longer a dividing line but is beginning to be the focus of activities. People are reminded of their common past and come together in their belief in a shared European destiny.

Truly the establishment of the Luxembourg/German natural park represents a step in the direction of a United Europe.

At a time when difficulties are impeding integration of the European Community, this direct contact between peoples separated by a frontier merits our attention. May it provide fresh stimulus to European unity.

(d) Description of geographical position, and/or sketch or tracing on map (scale 1:50,000 or approximately)

Ordnance map 1:50,000

(e) Photographs

4 photographs, 18 x 24, black and white

(f) Conservation measures taken so far

The founders of the natural park set themselves soon after the war to preserving the privileged nature of the land on either side of the Our and the Sûre and to promoting its use as a recreation zone.

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Their task was rendered easier by the fact that the territory forms a single unit geologically, geographically, historically and culturally.

The association for the "parc naturel germano-luxembourgeois" defined its object in paragraph 2 of its Rules as being to maintain, protect and develop the countryside on identical lines on either side of the Our and the Sûre.

The Luxembourg part of the park is protected by the law of 29.7.1965 on the conservation of nature and natural resources.

On the German side, the "Conservation Order" of 1964 precludes any changes which might spoil the beauty of the landscape or be detrimental to conservation and the enjoyment of nature.

The German association "Verein Naturpark Südeifel" and the Luxembourg section of the European group for the Ardennes-Eifel together see to the administration of the Luxembourg/German natural park, headed by a single joint committee, with the chairmanship alternating between a Luxembourg national and a German for a year each.

All promotion and publicity is carried out jointly. In this way a map was published for the whole of the park, and a coloured folder in German, French, Dutch and English is in its third edition.

When the development plan worked out for the landscape in both parts of the park is realised, this frontier territory will be even more attractive to nature lovers.

The plan provides for extending the network of sign-posted walks, installing open-air swimming pools, ornamental lakes and ponds, and providing parking and camping facilities. Great care has been taken over the whole project, which will improve the appearance of certain landscapes.

During the last few years two international footbridges have been built across the Sûre at Weilerbach and Tintesmühle, the construction being financed by the two countries. Plans and estimates for four more bridges and a ferry have been drawn up, to be carried out in the near future, thus facilitating the frontier crossing.

Paths for cars and pedestrians starting from and returning to the same car-park have been laid down on both sides of the frontier. A system of observation towers and shelters makes it possible to see the countryside and to detect forest fires at the start.

A documentary film on the Luxembourg/German natural park will have its premiere as part of the celebrations of European Nature Conservation Year.

(g) References to published descriptions

Tourist map scale 1 : 50,000
Four maps scale 1 : 25,000

Guidebook: "Ferschweiler Plateau und seine Rangebiete", 1967

"Naturpark Südeifel" in the series "Die schöne Eifel", 1961

"Entwicklungsprogramm Naturpark Südeifel" Dr. DIEDRICH, 1960

"Landschaftspflegeplan für den deutschen Teil" 1967

"Landschaftspflegeplan für den luxemburgischen Teil" 1969