

Conseil de l'Europe

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DROITS DE L'HOMME DEMOCRATIE ETAT DE DROIT

60 ANS
2009

European Diploma for Protected Areas 50 years

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN
WILDLIFE AND NATURAL HABITATS

Strasbourg

1 December 2011



What is the European Diploma (ED) ?

- ★ awarded by a decision of the Committee of Ministers to natural or semi-natural areas of exceptional European interest for the conservation of biological, geological or landscape diversity which are adequately protected and managed in an exemplary way



What rules govern the ED ?

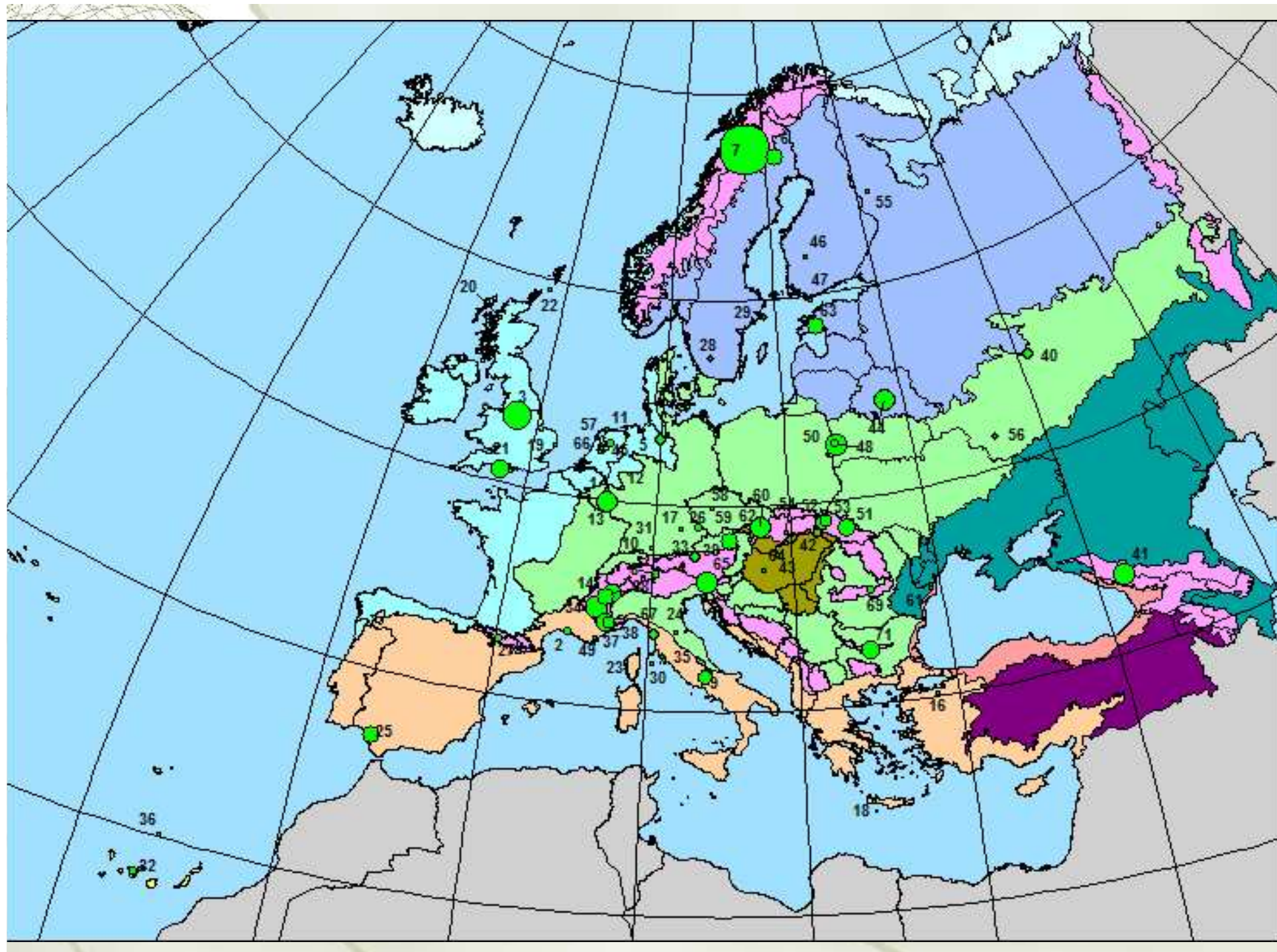
- ★ Resolution (65) 6: later revised to include the system of visits, abandon the categories, reorganize the criteria, emphasis on sustainable development
- ★ Resolution Resdip (2008) 1: responsible committee (Bern Convention) and periodicity put to 10 years



The Areas concerned ?

- ★ To date 71 Diplomas awarded in 25 Member States and 1 non Member State (Belarus)
- ★ Ranging from practically virgin forest to landscapes largely shaped and populated by human beings
- ★ Widely different size and variety of habitats





Group of specialists for the ED

- ✦ examines the candidatures and decides whether or not to carry out an on-site expert appraisal.
- ✦ examines the reports drafted by independent experts and the annual reports submitted by the authorities responsible for diploma-holding areas
- ✦ makes proposals regarding the issues to be discussed at the seminars of managers of diploma-holding areas



The advantages of the ED

- ★ It is a distinction which managers of the areas concerned can apply for on their own initiative through their governments
- ★ It is a unifying instrument recognised all over Europe and for all types of protected areas
- ★ It is an effective way of preserving Europe's most outstanding sites due to the fact that it is not awarded on a definitive basis and its unique supervisory mechanism



Other related Networks

- ✦ The Emerald Network is an ecological network made up of “Areas of Special Conservation Interest”. It was set up under the Bern Convention on a similar basis as the Natura 2000 Network.
- ✦ The Pan-European Ecological Network (PEEN) established in the framework of the Pan-European Strategy, aims to ensure that a full range of ecosystems, habitats, species and landscapes of European importance is conserved.
- ✦ The Diploma Areas represent an important contribution to Ecological Networks acting as examples of well managed core areas

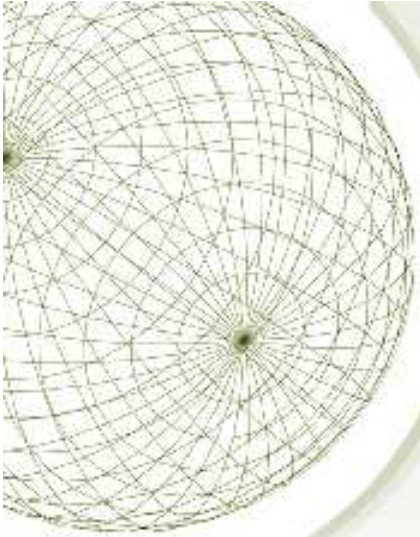


Future prospects of the ED

The ED has a solid conservation and monitoring work behind it but it needs to evolve for the following reasons:

- ✦ the ED has not developed to the same extent in all MS of the CoE.
- ✦ the geographical distribution of the ED sites is not homogeneous, implying that the concentration probably does not adequately reflect the distribution of the environmental heritage values.
- ✦ in the past 50 years the challenges have changed, new concepts have been developed (e.g. ecosystem services)
- ✦ working methods need to be reviewed and further streamlined wherever possible.
- ✦ the Secretariat of the CoE has been reorganised and the activities relating to the Bern Convention have been assigned to the DG Democracy





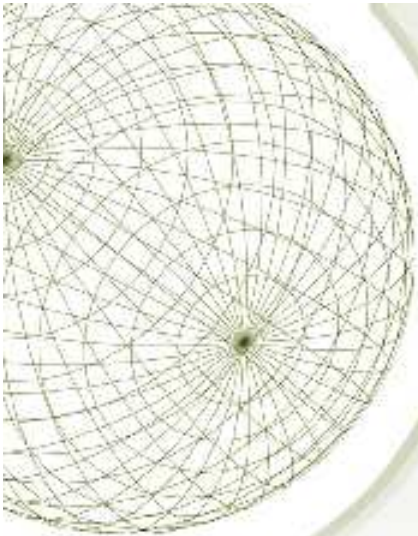
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Suggestions for the future





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Extension of the network

✦ Candidatures from countries which do not yet have any diploma-holding areas should be encouraged and the cover of the network according to the European Biogeographical Regions better organised

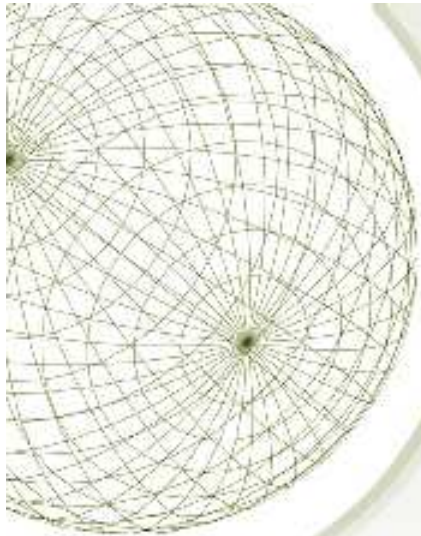


Adaptation to new concepts/ challenges and possible modification of the criteria

The criteria for accepting candidate and for renewing existing Diploma sites might be modified so as for example to:

- ✦ take into account the criterion of the ecological continuity between the protected space and its environment
- ✦ stress the concept of “ecosystem services” and “place identity” (European Landscape Convention)
- ✦ to support the Decade of Biodiversity implementation of the strategic plan 2011-2020





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Visibility

- ✦ Enhance the profile of the ED both at Council of Europe level (website, updating brochures) and national and local level.
- ✦ Make more visible and update the link between the Diploma data base and the EUNIS information system of the EEA





Institutional and financial measures

- ◆ The ED should receive increased political and financial support from governments and where appropriate from other interested donors; areas holding the Diploma should be provided with financial and human resources commensurate with the commitment that governments enter into on submitting applications



ED's as models for conservation and sustainable development

- ★ ED's are reference territories for the long term study of population and habitat changes, good managerial practice in the framework of sustainable development;
- ★ all protected areas and other “more ordinary” natural areas should benefit from the knowledge and skills of those responsible for areas holding the ED;
- ★ The results obtained should provide richer input to the work carried out in other Bern Convention groups of experts;
- ★ Bern Convention meetings should be more frequently organised in the Diploma areas

ED's could make a contribution to the construction of a system of protected areas concerning aim 11 of the Nagoya strategy;



Cooperation with others Conventions/Programmes

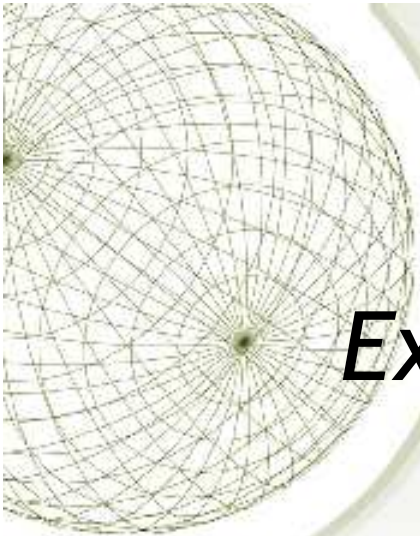
- ★ Strengthen the synergies between the Group of Experts responsible for Protected Areas and Ecological Networks and with other Council of Europe conventions and European instruments (European Landscape Convention, Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, Directives UE / Natura 2000);
- ★ Ensure better co-ordination with the other awards/forms of recognition granted to areas holding the ED (Ramsar, World Heritage, MAB, Barcelona, ...).



Reporting system and better management of the documents

- ★ The different and new objectives should be reflected in the annual reporting. Some topics could have more space: the relationship with the network (Natura 2000 and Emerald, above all); the landscape dimension; the public participation; the evaluation of ecosystem services;
- ★ The report might become biennial;
- ★ The possibility should be explored of creating a dedicated system for the management of the different documents in close cooperation with the EEA.





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Extracts from the ED's Data Base



Possible recommendations:

- ★ **RECOMMENDATION 1:** *the protection of biological, landscape and cultural diversity should remain the priority aim of the EDPAs ;*
- ★ **RECOMMENDATION 2:** *the criteria might be reviewed, and modified where required according to new concepts/challenges (ecosystem services, ...);*
- ★ **RECOMMENDATION 3:** *EDPA's should be encouraged to demonstrate to both their local communities and national governments the sustainable use of biodiversity resources;*
- ★ **RECOMMENDATION 4:** *Explore the possibility of meetings of the Bern Convention, and its associated working groups, being held in, and hosted by EDPAs;*



Possible recommendations:

- ★ **RECOMMENDATION 5:** *Planning needs to start in 2012 for events - conferences and/or seminars - which will celebrate the golden jubilee (50th anniversary) of the EDPA network.*
- ★ **RECOMMENDATION 6:** *The links between the ECHR and the EDPA should be made explicit in the regulations governing the award and renewal of the EDPA.*
- ★ **RECOMMENDATION 7:** *Discussions should be held with officials of other conventions so as to explore where synergies exist, and, as appropriate, bilateral or multilateral agreements might be entered into which benefit all parties to such arrangements.*
- ★ **RECOMMENDATION 8:** *based on the latest ED's Data Base update, the Group of Specialists should develop a strategy for expanding the network of EDPAs so the network truly demonstrates the best of European biological, landscape and cultural diversity;*



Possible recommendations:

- ★ **RECOMMENDATION 9:** *Explore with the Contracting Parties of the Bern Convention the possibility of financial support of the EDPA, perhaps targeted to meeting the cost of processing new applications and renewals.*
- ★ **RECOMMENDATION 10:** *Consider the possibility either of establishing, or encouraging another body to establish, a foundation which could receive governmental, organisational, individual or charitable funds and which would support the work on the EDPA network.*
- ★ **RECOMMENDATION 11:** *The Secretariat and Group of Specialists might, by 2015, have devised a reporting scheme and trialled it with a sample of EDPAs. This revised reporting system should aim at simplicity for the managers of EDPAs, at providing useful information for mid-term reviews and for renewals, and may be made less regularly than annually.*

