Report on the Study Tour
of Technical Staff to Germany, Czech Republic, Austria and Hungary

Transboundary Joint Secretariat
for the Southern Caucasus

10 - 19 October 2009
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Glossary:

AM Armenia
AM MoNP Armenia Ministry of Nature Protection
AZ Azerbaijan
AZ MENR Azerbaijan Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources
BMA Biodiversity Management Agency of the AM MoNP
CC Country Coordinator (of the TJS)
CO Country Office (of the TJS)
CEPF Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
GE Georgia
GE MEPNR Georgia Ministry for Environment Protection and Natural Resources
NP National Park
RTL Regional Team Leader (of the TJS)
TBPA Transboundary Protected Area
TCB Transboundary Coordination Board
TJS Transboundary Joint Secretariat
TJSRO Transboundary Joint Secretariat Regional Office
SUMMARY

The Establishment of a Transboundary Secretariat (TJS) is part of the Caucasus Initiative of the Federal Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ). Being represented in three countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Armenia), the TJS contributes to the development of an eco-regional model in the Southern Caucasus. One of the means applied in reaching its objectives, the TJS - within the framework of its operational plan - carries out study tours to European countries focusing on various aspects of biodiversity conservation. This report concludes the study tour on transboundary cooperation of protected areas, which led the participants from Germany, via the Czech Republic and Austria to Hungary and back to the Caucasus.

A 10-day technical study tour was conducted in Germany, the Czech Republic, Austria and Hungary for eight delegates from the Southern Caucasus Region from October 11th until October 19th, 2009 in accordance with the plan of operations of the Transboundary Joint Secretariat. The main purpose of the study tour was to strengthen the professional knowledge and to widen the practical know-how of the participants and to introduce them to the legal and administrative framework of transboundary protected area cooperation and its practical implementation in selected and certified National Parks (NP) of Central Europe.

Planning and preparation of the training programme took place in all three countries, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia (selection of participants, feedback concerning the tentative programme, etc.), and in Austria (selection of training subjects, of institutions to be visited and of the respective venues, arrangement of translation, transportation, lodging and boarding, etc.) under the overall responsibility of Österreichische Bundesforste AG.

The visiting delegation was briefed upon its arrival at Grafenau on the geographical, political, social, economic and cultural framework conditions prevailing in Germany, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Austria in order to provide an appropriate technical background thus facilitating the understanding of conservation related subjects of the study tour.

In the framework of visits to seven national parks and a biosphere reserve, the delegation gained a first-hand insight into various natural conservation and landscape planning activities, ranging from the characteristics, role and importance of nature conservation over the structure, organisation and tasks of the respective administrations, to zonation and management planning, biodiversity conservation, land use planning, eco tourism, conservation of joint cultural heritage, protection, recreation and economic land use in the same areas under different premises and funding situations.

It was appreciated that the park representatives shared also the difficulties and obstacles of joint implementation, transboundary coordination and political dependencies, clarifying that cooperation must grow from the roots, with the conducive environments to be set on the highest levels.

The delegates’ interest, active participation and receptivity throughout the study tour ensured that the event has fully met its objectives, and that the insights gained are relevant and useful for the further implementation of the Eco-Regional Conservation Programme and the establishment and functioning of the Transboundary Joint Secretariat in the Southern Caucasus region. Unfortunately the three delegates from Azerbaijan as well as two Armenian delegates were not able to participate on short notice, so that only eight Georgian, Armenian and Regional representatives could benefit from the insights of the study tour.
1 BACKGROUND

1.1 Objectives of the Study Tour to the Transboundary Protected Areas

Study tours play an important role in achieving the objectives of the TJS as they help to ensure the long-term sustainability of the assistance, providing the institutions in the respective countries with ideas and approaches how to organize transboundary cooperation in conservation. Within the framework of the TJS project, this technical study tour to Germany, Austria, Czech Republic and Hungary comprising 13 participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia was scheduled to provide direct exposure for the participants to established and certified transboundary conservation management and its origins and perspectives.

Thus, three main contents were addressed through this study tour:

(i) Forms and structures of transboundary cooperation,
(ii) Administrative and political frameworks of different national park management arrangements and
(iii) Incorporation of stakeholders into management planning, zonation and transboundary cooperation.

1.2 Preparation of the Study Tour

The preparatory phase in Austria required a careful and workable concept so that the effectiveness of the study tour in achieving the objectives was assured. The preparatory phase of the programme took its shape both in the project region as well as in Austria and in the national parks to be visited. ÖBf was to prepare and organize a range of activities. These activities included aspects such as:

- Selection of training subjects, institutions and their venues,
- Selection of a multi-disciplinary team of lecturers and translators,
- Travel and timetable arrangements,
- Boarding and lodging,
- Care of tour participants and
- General organization, co-ordination and supervision of the study tour.

These aspects will not be discussed in detail, however be presented in Annex 1 (names of participants, timetable and programme). Decisive for the success of the study tour was the correct translation of the contents of discussions and presentations into the Russian language. This task has been carried out with the utmost diligence and endeavour by Ms Arpine Jenderedjian, a graduate of the master studies for protected area management at Klagenfurt University.

2 STAGES OF THE STUDY TOUR

In the afternoon of Friday 9th October 2009 the Armenian coordinator was informed that by order of the minister, due to urgent work to be delivered within the envisaged study tour week, the Armenian seconded expert and the Lake Arpi National Park director could not participate in the study tour. On Saturday morning the Azerbaijan project director and the national coordinator informed the Regional Team leader that the partaking of the Azeri members was also cancelled as the minister did not sign the necessary travel order, notwithstanding the fact that the participant list was submitted by the ministry itself two months before the onset of the tour. Therefore the original number of participants was reduced from 13 to finally 8 participants, three from Armenia, four from Georgia and the Regional Team leader.

After the arrival of the Armenian and Georgian delegation on Sunday (October 11th, 2009) morning at Munich Airport the group continued its journey to Grafenau by bus. The participants were briefed on the tour’s schedule and the proposed visiting sites. The presentation of the overall contents and framework of the study tour gave the delegations a first opportunity to clarify issues on both purpose and programme.

On Monday morning (October 12th, 2009) the group was received by Carol Ritchie at EUROPARC federation headquarters in Grafenau. In the afternoon an introductory visit was paid to the National Park Bayerischer Wald. The next day (Tuesday, 13th October, 2009) found the group visiting the core zone of National Park Bayerischer Wald as well as the National Park Šumava on the Czech side of the former iron curtain. On Wednesday, 14th October the tour left Germany and proceeded to Austria, where the national Park Thayatal was visited. The Czech partner park, Podyji was visited.
on Thursday, followed by the travel to the Neusiedler See region. On Friday the deputy director of the Hungarian National Park introduced the cooperation between the national Parks Neusiedler See/Seewinkel and Fertő-Hansag, supported by the former IUCN green belt specialist Alois Lang, who introduced the Austrian management of the public body National Park Neusiedler See /Seewinkel.

On Saturday The Hungarian Park was visited and its infrastructure and concepts were discussed. Having returned to Austria, on Sunday the National Park Donauauen was visited, depicting the challenges of visitor management and a lack of non-intervention areas in an urban environment. Sunday afternoon was used to reflect about the lessons and impressions of the study tour so far. Monday 19th October was spent in the Biosphere Reserve Wienerwald, discussing the opportunities and challenges of a more complex institutional and financial setting based on the two regions (Vienna and Lower Austria) in which the Biosphere Reserve is located. The participant left Vienna on Monday evening, reaching Georgia and Armenia on 20th October again. Figure 1 below depicts the route of the study tour.

Figure 1: Study Tour Route

2.1 Transboundary Cooperation – EUROPARC Federation

The EUROPARC Federation (www.europarc.org), known as the “Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe”, was founded in 1973. The aim of the organisation is to help protected areas fulfil their role as preservers of the natural beauty of Europe in all its variety, to encourage cooperation and exchange between their managers and staff and to promote their aims and work across Europe. The EUROPARC headquarters was opened in Grafenau in 1986. Today the headquarters are bound to shift to Regensburg and an additional office was established in Brussels in 2007. The EUROPARC Federation has 500 member organisations in 39 European countries. Together they are responsible for the management of hundreds of protected areas across the continent. EUROPARC provides them with a forum to share professional experience, collaborate on technical projects and progress common aims.

One of the aims of the EUROPARC Federation is to encourage and facilitate inter-regional cooperation on nature protection issues, with a particular emphasis on supporting transboundary cooperation and establishing new protected areas in border regions. The Federation promotes raising awareness on the common responsibility of border regions as well as values and benefits of transboundary cooperation between protected areas, thus providing for greater European integration in nature protection and translating the common European vision into practice.

EUROPARC’s efforts on meeting the demand for guidance on the promotion of best practice in transboundary cooperation in Europe focus on the ‘Transboundary Parks - Following Nature’s Design’ initiative. This is a special verification and certification system that aims to promote and facilitate transboundary cooperation between European protected areas.
There are three elements to the system: the unique EUROPARC Basic Standards for Transfrontier Cooperation, which protected areas strive to fulfil, an evaluation process carried out by external verifiers, and formal certification as a „EUROPARC Transboundary Area“ at the end of the process if enough basic categories are fulfilled.

Together the Basic Standards, the evaluation and certification process provide a unique support system for protected areas engaged in transboundary cooperation in Europe. The system sets the standard for transboundary cooperation, to which all TBPAs should aspire.

The Basic Standards Criteria are the centre of the evaluation process. They consist of nine Quality Criteria and five Fields of Work and define a range of practical and measurable activities that must be fulfilled in order for transboundary cooperation to be achieved and recognised. They foster an ecosystem perspective; champion the establishment of green corridors between habitats; promote cross-cultural interaction; support the social and economic well-being of local communities; and encourage parks to raise political support and to promote peace.

The Criteria are divided into four groups, Primary Criteria, Secondary Criteria, Primary Fields of Work and Secondary Fields of Work, and focus on actions which enable transboundary cooperation to function well in practice. These include the development of a common vision for the future of the transboundary area; the creation of official cooperation agreements and joint work plans; cooperation between staff of the areas on a number of levels; and the development of joint projects and funding arrangements for the transboundary work.

The Primary Criteria are indicators based on a common vision and fields of work for the protected areas as well as an official agreement between the parks and cooperation between the staff from each area.

The Secondary Criteria look at the establishment of guiding principles for the cooperation; the exchange of data; foreign language communication; ecological monitoring; and the basis of joint financing.

The Primary Fields of Work are indicators related to nature conservation, the main objective of a protected area, and the Secondary Fields of Work are indicators related to education and communication; recreation and sustainable tourism; research and monitoring; and mutual understanding and the promotion of peace.

Ten out of the fourteen Basic Standards must be achieved before certification can be achieved: All four Primary Criteria, three out of five Secondary Criteria, all the criteria from the Primary Field of Work and two out of four Secondary Fields of Work must be fulfilled. The protected areas must also demonstrate how they involve local communities in the transboundary cooperation and how the socio-cultural differences of the cooperating parties are acknowledged and respected.

The EUROPARC Transboundary Steering and Evaluation Committee (STEC) is mandated by the EUROPARC Council to coordinate the EUROPARC Transboundary Work Programme. Decisions made by the STEC are formally endorsed by the EUROPARC Council. There are currently 15 certified EUROPARC transboundary areas. The target set in the EUROPARC Strategy (2008 – 2012) for the EUROPARC Transboundary Programme is to certify 12 TBPAs by 2012.

The TBPAs should form a network of best practice examples in transboundary cooperation and provide technical support to other European TBPAs. Figure 2 indicates that the study tour visited three of the eight certified transboundary regions covering six of fifteen transboundary areas.
The discussion after the presentation dealt mainly with the opportunities attached with a membership at EUROPARC. APA and Bioresources Agency are both considering the membership of individual parks as well as a collective membership of all parks via the agency. Discussions are still going on. Up to now the South Caucasus does not have any full members in the Federation.

EUROPARC is very interested in a spatial extension and has published a small article (see excerpt below) in its November 2009 newsletter.
EUROPARC were delighted to recently host a visit of protected area managers from Georgia and Armenia. This was part of a study tour arranged through the Austrian Federal Forests (ÖBF). The delegation visited protected areas in Germany, Austria, Czech Republic and Hungary to find out about transboundary co-operation. All the protected areas visited are EUROPARC certified transboundary parks. They visited EUROPARC to hear about our transboundary programme and the other work we do.

A stimulating morning in headquarters gave us the opportunity to discover more about the work of protected areas in their respective countries and some of the challenges faced. EUROPARC hopes to follow up the contacts made to help develop collaboration and exchange of experience between the parks of the Caucasus and the rest of Europe. The Georgian delegation were particularly pleased with the depiction of Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park on the front cover of our new ‘Living Parks’ book.

2.2 National Park Bayerischer Wald

Bavarian Forest National Park ([www.nationalpark-bayerischer-wald.de](http://www.nationalpark-bayerischer-wald.de)) extends along the border of the Czech Republic. As the first national park in Germany, it covers an area of 24,200 hectares. Its
highest elevations are Mt. Falkenstein, Mt. Rachel, and Mt. Lusen. Together, Bavarian Forest National Park and its Czech neighbour, Šumava National Park, form the largest forest preserve in central Europe, encompassing over 90,000 hectares.

In keeping with its philosophy of letting nature take its course, the park’s slogan is “Leaving nature to its own devices.”

A network of more than 300 kilometers of marked hiking trails; nearly 200 kilometers of cycling paths and roughly 80 kilometers of cross-country skiing trails enable visitors to experience the National Park in all its beauty in both summer and winter.

2.2.1 Administration and Management Planning

The national park administration is directly subordinated to the vice minister of the Ministry of Environment and Health of the State of Bavaria and employs about 400 people in various fields of expertise. The administration is divided into a coordination office, including a public relations section, six sections, namely Conservation, Education, Visitor management, Research, Park management and central administration and internal coordination.

From its 11 mio. Euro annual budget NP Bayerischer Wald spends eight million Euro for staff costs. The budget comes from the state directly and all income generated from e.g. parking fees and sanitary cuts go back to the treasury. Yet the income generated is made available for specific investments in the coming years based on proposals to be submitted to the ministry by the park administration. The NP administration uses these funds (up to 4 million Euros annually) as project budget with which e.g. visitor facilities and infrastructure are established. NP Bayerischer Wald has been founded in 1970 extended in 1997 to its current size.

2.2.2 Transboundary Activities

The transboundary activities of the National Park Bayerischer Wald are multifaceted and governed by two intergovernmental agreements between the environment ministries of Bavaria and Czech Republic and a project document (see Appendix 2) which details the transboundary cooperation in detail and illustrates the ideal framework for intensive collaboration. The most visible activity is the harmonization of the ranger services and the joint training and guidelines. Yet the staff met underlined that the most important success factor for transboundary cooperation are joint objectives and personal relations between specialists as only their initiative and ground work generates real results for the transboundary conservation. Still it is important that the cooperation has to be a director’s issue as well. The main activities are planned to be constantly shown on the joint project website www.wildheartofeurope.eu which is unfortunately not yet functional.

2.3 National Park Šumava

Šumava National Park (www.npsumava.cz) is situated in the Plzeň and South Bohemian Regions of the Czech Republic along the border with Germany (adjacent to National Park Bayerischer Wald) and Austria. They protect a sparsely populated area of the mountain range of the same name, the Šumava.

The Šumava Range is covered by the most extensive forest in Central Europe, whose natural composition was changed and today spruce plantations prevail in most of the area. In many places exotic spruce varieties were planted. These are not well adapted to the harsh local climate and are therefore susceptible to a range of elements, such as strong winds (e.g. in the 1980s or recently at the beginning of 2007) and bark beetle (Ips typographus). Numerous large plateaus with raised peat bogs, glacial lakes and remnants of primeval forests (e.g. Boubín) complete a mosaic of habitats which are little disturbed by human settlements as most of the predominantly German speaking inhabitants were expelled after World War II and the area became a part of the deserted zone along the Eastern block border.

Originally, a large Landscape Protected Area was declared on in 1963 covering most of the Šumava Range. In 1991 the most valuable part of the area was declared a National Park with the rest of the Landscape Protected Area serving as its buffer zone.

2.3.1 Management Planning
The National Park Šumava is an administration of the Czech ministry of Environment, directly subordinated to the vice minister. Its annual budget totals to 20 mio. Euro, mainly spent for maintenance of infrastructure/buildings and for the ~350 staff employed. Two thirds of this staff is working in forest management, including the 25 rangers that do the field patrolling and are part of the joint ranger programme that is harmonizing the profiles, training and also appearance of the park rangers on both sides of the border. Management planning is based on a 10 year period with annual budget allocations from the government. Whereas the recent years have seen comparatively generous allocations as expression of a green ministry it is feared that due to the economic crisis and a political change after elections the funding will be significantly reduced.

Figure 5: International Relations Specialist Michael Valenta explains the zonation of NP Šumava

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2.4 Nationalpark Thayatal

Thayatal national park ([www.np-thayatal.at](http://www.np-thayatal.at)) is the smallest and youngest Austrian National Park. It covers 1,330 hectares of which 1,260 hectares are nature zones and 70 hectares allow for management interference for the protection of ecosystems. The buffer zone comprises less than one hectare. The Thaya River constitutes the common border over 25 kilometres or about 10 kilometres as ‘the crow flies’.

2.4.1 Management Planning

The National Park Thayatal GmbH (limited liability company) considers itself as a service provider in the field of nature and environment protection. The shareholders of the company are the Republic of Austria represented by the Minister of Environment, and the Province of Lower Austria represented by its Governor.

The company is bound by a series of laws, the main one being the national park law, which also defines the participation of the local population and their involvement in the implementation. The main organ of the National Park is the general assembly that meets at least twice a year. It adopts the work programme of the national park administration, the budget, controls the exercise and approves transactions requiring authorization.
Thayatal national park has a management plan for the period of 2001 to 2010 which is ratified by the government of Lower Austria. Annual work plans, based on the management plan, outline the implementation of the management plan on a continuous basis.

The current management plan (in German only) can be downloaded at the following link: http://www.np-thayatal.at/SendFile.aspx?file=pages_file/en/39/Managementplan-Nationalpark-Thayatal.pdf

It is developed following the “Agreement on Common Objectives, Sources and Basic Principles of the Management in the NP Podyji-Thayatal”, which is attached as Appendix three, together with the bilateral agreement. Although the ownership of all the areas in the National Park is private the management is comparatively free to decide as the use and management rights are completely taken over by a long term lease contract between the government of lower Austria and the private land owners, who have received a compensation based on the values calculated by independent authorities.

2.4.2 Transboundary Activities

Figure 6: Location of Thayatal/Podyji NPs

Already the Mission Statement of the national parks confirms the strong transboundary cooperation.

‘The National Park Thayatal overcomes borders: it protects the unique valley landscape that unites Austria to the Czech Republic. It promotes the dynamic development of our regional habitat rich in fauna and flora and helps to experience nature.’

An agreement between the two countries regarding the joint management of the two national parks as well as the sharing of data and information was signed in the year 2002. With signing the agreement a commission was established, which discusses bilateral issues at least once a year. It is composed of one representative of the relevant Czech and Austrian ministries, one representative of the Province of Lower Austria and the district of Znojmo respectively, the chairmen of the two national park advisory boards and the directors of both parks. The cooperation is smooth although there is a distinct difference in the perception of tourism and visitor management. Thayatal actively encourages tourism as a source of income for the national park company as well as for the local economy, whereas Podyji as an administration of the environment ministry focuses on conservation.

Annex to the 11th Quarterly Report
efforts and does not actively seek for additional visitors. This is also caused by the higher pressure from the adjacent city of Znojmo which already puts a high pressure on the habitats on the Czech side of the national park.

Figure 7: NP Director Brunner in his introductory presentation of the NP Thayatal

2.5 National Park Podyji

The Národní Park Podyji (www.nppodyji.cz) extends over a river length of 45 kilometres between Vranov and Znojmo. It was established in 1991 as the smallest of the four national parks in the Czech Republic, measuring 6,276 hectares. The park is situated on the boundary to Austria which is marked by the Dyje/Thaya River along the 'European Green Belt'. The park is managed as an IUCN category II National Park.

The park administration is an allowance organization directly under the Ministry of Environment. The average annual budget volume amounts to €1.8 million with a staff complement of 47 people. The budget is made up of 22% revenue (mainly timber sales), 26% of subsidies (mainly EU and national grants) and 52% funds from the state budget through the Ministry of Environment.

2.5.1 Management Planning

At the time of establishment of the national park a park management zonation was created. The national park is dividend into three management zones:

- **Strictly natural zone**: includes the core territory of the national park, which is mainly the valley of the Dyje River and its tributaries. The habitat in this zone is almost undisturbed by man. Most of the zone I covers near-natural forest stands on the valley slopes such as rocky steppe, relict pinewoods, talus and ravine forest and fragments of sub-montane primeval forest. The nature in this zone is left to natural development and in the interests of nature; all human activity is forbidden here. Access to and movement in this zone is only possible on marked tourist trails. This zone makes up 42% of the area.

- **Regulated natural zone**: includes a large proportion of the forest complex and the most valuable forest-free areas (heathlands and meadows). The aim of management in this area is to achieve a near-natural condition of the forest stands. The botanically unique forest-free localities must be maintained in the desired condition by professionally targeted management (grazing, cutting and other biotechnological interventions). The rules for visitor movement in this zone are the same as in the zone I. This zone makes up 38% of the area.

- **Fringe zone**: this mostly fringes zone II in the outer sections of the national park and is the most influenced by human activity. The marginal zone also covers the agricultural areas
around Lukov and Čížov villages and the fringes of the forest complex. These lands can be utilized, in a reasonable manner, for agriculture, forestry and tourism but the targets and interests of nature protection must always be in first place. This zone makes up 20% of the area.

A Buffer zone surrounds the national park to protect the territory of the park from civilisational effects from the surrounding area.

A target management zonation was decided in the Podyjí national park management plan, including a long term strategy regarding forest management with the aim to restore natural habitats in Zone II. Forest management plans are developed for a period of 10 years.

2.5.2 Transboundary Activities

Podyjí national park was established in 1991 after the fall of the iron curtain. In 1999, the Czech Republic and Republic of Austria signed an Agreement of Cooperation, in regards to the management of the Dyjie/Thaya river along the Podyjí park boundary. At the time it was already envisaged that a national park would be created on the southern bank of the river and consequently, Thayatal national park was gazetted in the year 2000.

An agreement between the two countries regarding the joint management of the two national parks as well as the sharing of data and information was signed in the year 2002.

Examples of transboundary cooperation between the two parks include the formation of several joint working groups, which meet regularly to discuss and decide upon management principles. Working groups include, forest management, game management, bark beetle monitoring, the control of invasive species, shrub control, exchange data and conduct joint research projects. The two parks have also established a joint working group to lobby for a sustainable water level management regime of Vranov dam situated further upstream. The unbalanced water, fluctuating several times per day, as well as the accumulation of dead wood are issues mentioned to be addressed within the working group. During the daily flood peaks, the flow rate increases from at least 1 m$^3$/sec. to 30-45 m$^3$/sec. A smaller storage lake above Znojmo is used for the treatment of drinking water for the 45,000 inhabitants of the town.

Furthermore, since the Czech Republic joined the Schengen zone in 2007, visitor infrastructure (hiking and biking trails) are connected in a transboundary trail network.
2.6 Nationalpark Neusiedler See - Seewinkel

The Neusiedler See-Seewinkel national park was founded in 1993. This national park is the first transboundary conservation area in Austria and the first Austrian national park that was recognised by the World Conservation Union IUCN. The transboundary conservation area now covers about 30,000 hectares. Already in 1990, research in the region aimed at a management plan for a future Neusiedler See - Seewinkel National Park. This was coordinated by the Working Group for a Neusiedler See General Concept and funded by federal and provincial budgets. Since 1994 monitoring programmes and research projects are funded by the national park.

2.6.1 Management Planning

The park covers parts of the territory of seven communes (Andau, Apetlon, Illmitz, Neusiedl/See, Podersdorf, Tadten and Weiden/See). About 9,000 hectares of the national park are on Austrian territory and are owned by about 1,200 local landowners. The national park has long-term lease contracts with landowners. Half of the area (about 4,500 ha) is a Nature Reserve Zone, which remains untouched by humans. The Conservation Zones are mainly cultural landscapes and require landscape conservation measures.

The areas are divided into six different areas: Apetlon - Lange Lacke (app. 1,750 ha), Illmitz-Hölle (app. 1,550 ha), Podersdorf-Karmazik (app. 160 ha), Sandeck-Neudegg (app. 460 ha), Waasen-Hanság (app. 140 ha) and Zitzmannsdorfer Wiesen (appr. 650 ha).

The park employs 27 permanent staff and about 40 contractors mainly to guide visitors. The work of the Neusiedler See-Seewinkel National Park Authority includes habitat management, public relations and visitor service. Research is outsourced to various institutes and organisations, as the national park itself does not employ any scientific personnel.

The national park administration is a public body, the members of the board of directors (7 members and 7 substitute members) are appointed by the provincial government of Burgenland. This
board makes all strategic decisions and appoints the Director of the National Park as well as the scientific director. Other authorities are the National Park Commission (with three representatives each from the federal and provincial levels and their respective deputies), the National Park Forum (made up of representatives of regional interest groups such as agriculture, land owners, tourism, nature conservation) and finally the Scientific Council (experts from various fields relevant to the National Park). Approval procedures are carried through by the provincial government of Burgenland, situated in Eisenstadt, and not by the National Park administration. The National Park is financed equally by the Land Burgenland and the Republic of Austria.

The management plans are produced by the NP administration and approved by the provincial government. They have 10 years duration with annual work plans based on the budgets applied and approved. Zonations do not vary much although there is flexibility for the activities in the core and management zones.

*Figure 9: Signboard at conservation zone at the eastern shore of Lake Neusiedl*

### 2.6.2 Transboundary Activities

Lake Neusiedl has a long cooperation history that has been continued during the past decades and has started even before the iron curtain was torn down. In the fields of ecology a habitat management based on the same methodology was introduced, stressing on the management of bird breeding areas as well as on a harmonized management of the fish fauna in the lake. Simultaneous bird counting activities and mutual support in designing and running visitor programmes enables a high profile ornithologist tourism that is supported by joint training of guides and the availability of bilingual information material.

With the success of the tourism activities also more intensive visitor management became necessary. Reducing individual traffic in the sensitive transboundary area was agreed upon, as well as an integrative tourism marketing, which, especially on the Austrian side, also included the description and listing of the Hungarian attractions. The most ambitious task was the joint development of the management plan for the World Heritage Site

### 2.7 National Park Fertő-Hansag

The Fertő-Hanság National Park is situated in North-western Hungary in Győr-Moson-Sopron County. It was created in 1991 and officially opened together with the connecting Austrian Neu-
siedler See National Park the same year. The park covers 23,588 hectares. Lake Fertő is the third largest lake in Central Europe and the westernmost of the great continental salt lakes of Eurasia. Because of the shallow level of water and the prevailing wind the size and shape of the lake changes very often. The area gives home to various kinds of birds, like the Great Egret, Purple Heron, Common Spoonbill and Greylag Goose. During the migration season different species of the Scolopacidae family appear. Rare birds include Red-breasted Goose, White-tailed Eagle and Hen Harrier. The lake is inhabited by Weatherfish, Northern pike and Ziege. On the meadows west of the lake, vegetation of rare plants like the Yellow Lady's Slipper, Fly orchid, the Hungarian Iris and Iris pumila and various butterfly species can be found, while the eastern pusztas areas are covered by Puccinellia peisonis, Aster tripolium, pannonicum and Suaeda maritima.

2.7.1 Management Planning and Transboundary Activities

In 1988 a bilateral National Park preparation committee was established to foster the creation of national parks in Austria and well as Hungary. Since the formation of the transboundary National Park and its common official opening in 1994, the most important decisions are met by both the Austrian and the Hungarian National Park Commissions. The daily cooperation between the two National Park Administration Centres in Sarród and Apetlon is marked by a friendly and positive atmosphere.

The Hungarian part of the Neusiedler See became a nature protection area in 1977. In 1979 it became a MAB Biosphere Reserve, in 1989 a RAMSAR site. In 1991, the southern part of the lake (except the public swimming area in Fertörakos/Kroisbach) covering a total area of about 6,500 hectares, was declared a National Park by the Hungarian government. In 1994, the government was able to buy large parts of the Hanság that were included in the national park area. This increased the total surface of the national park and together with the smaller protected areas along the river Rabnitz, the National Park covers about 23,500 hectares.

Figure 10: Bird watching on a watchtower of Fertő-Hanság NP

2.8 Nationalpark Donauauen

The Donauauen national park was gazetted in 1996 and stretches between the capitals Vienna and Bratislava. With over 9,300 hectares, the park protects the last remaining major wetland ecosystem in Central Europe. For a distance of just over 36 kilometres, the Danube flows freely and is the
lifeline of the national park. The dynamic rise and fall of water levels - sometimes up to seven meters - mean that the wetlands landscape is constantly recreated and reformed. In this way, the flow of the Danube creates habitats for a large number of plants and animals. The Donau-Auen National Park extends from Vienna all the way to the mouth of the March River (also called Morava) on the border to Slovakia. Thirty-eight kilometres long, at its widest point the Danube measures only around 4 km; the wetlands are only found directly on the Danube. To the north of the national park are the broad plains of the Marchfeld. To the south, the boundary is formed by the breakline of the Vienna Basin. The Lobau area has always been a popular recreational area, especially for the Viennese. Running through the national park are both the long-distance rambling trail 07 and the Danube Cycling Path, which comes from Passau and continues to Hungary via Hainburg.

Important hydraulic engineering projects within the framework of the Integrated River Engineering Project on the Danube will continue to characterise the national park and will play a decisive role in the long-term ecological quality of the wetlands. Given the rapid development of the Vienna-Bratislava region, the importance of the Donau-Auen National Park as the ecological backbone of the region is increasing. As a recreational area located near to major cities, it welcomes more than a million visitors per year. This means new challenges in guiding visitors, establishing visitor infrastructure and of course in wildlife management.

2.8.1 Management Planning

The national park is managed by the NP society, which has two members, the municipality of Vienna and the province of lower Austria. The NP society prepares the management plan that is executed by staff of the municipal forest administration of Vienna and by the ÖBf national park enterprise that manages the lower Austrian parts.

As mentioned above visitor management and guidance is one of the key activities in the park, the immense pressure threatens the IUCN II status as well as the lack of undisturbed areas which do not constitute large enough areas by now. The latest plans for management plan revisions target at more wilderness areas in the lower Austrian part, yet the overall plan is still to be finalised and approved by both governments.

Budgets are provided half by the federal government and by the province of lower Austria and Vienna according to their shares of the NP.

*Figure 11: Visitor management in Lobau area of NP Donau -Auen*
2.9 Biosphere Reserve Wienerwald

The Vienna Woods (Wienerwald) is a remarkable biodiversity hot spot in a central European context in the easternmost part of the Alps. It is located on the territories of the two federal states Lower Austria and Vienna.

Due to the impact of humans, the formerly almost entirely wooded area has become a mosaic of diverse landscape units characterised by different kinds of land use. More than 60% of the area is still covered by wood. Outstanding open-land landscape, different types of grasslands with meadows and pastures, arable farm land, vineyards as well as the richness of structural landscape elements were an important reason for the nomination as a Biosphere Reserve.

The Wienerwald Biosphere Reserve (Biosphärenpark Wienerwald) is characterised by its proximity to the Vienna. This vicinity to a large city (about 1.7 million inhabitants) and to one of Austria’s most important economic and urban settlement areas, together with the fact that about 200,000 inhabitants live constantly in the biosphere reserve poses great challenges:

- the attractiveness as a residential area,
- the increase of building and the source for an increase off-road traffic,
- the increasing recreational use with various conflicts between different stakeholders and
- last but not least the intensifying, but rather more serious, the abandoning of traditional farming and land use.

With the 2002 Wienerwald Declaration, which was passed with regard to the Biosphere Reserve Wienerwald by the two Federal States of Lower Austria and Vienna, there is a comprehensive catalogue of objectives and activities for an integrative, sustainable regional development in region. It serves as an overall guideline for the development of the Biosphere Reserve Wienerwald into a pilot site for sustainability.

2.9.1 Management Planning

The process of drafting management plans for core areas, guidelines for meadow management, biomass production in the puffer and transition zone, open-land and hunting has been initiated early and involved all relevant interest groups. The management plan was approved by both governments in 2009 and is now implemented with the budgets provided by the two regional authorities.

In view of the large number of communities and districts and the high population density in the region, participation processes constitute a particular challenge. Successful participation models have been established during the planning process. In the ongoing process, a number of participatory bodies (“advisory forums”) have been set up in the following spheres:

- forest & forestry,
- open-land cultivated areas & agriculture and hunting.

In these advisory forums, the individual planning stages are periodically presented to and discussed and coordinated with all parties concerned. In addition, thematic guidelines for the development of the Biosphere Reserve were being elaborated.

As mentioned, one of the greatest challenges of the region is to maintain and further develop a sustainable agriculture. One aim is to make a name for themselves with particularly high quality products, innovative services and cooperation with partners. There are numerous examples for such initiatives:

The “Heubörse Wienerwald” (Wienerwald hay exchange) for example, acts as a successful agent between producers and purchasers of high-quality hay thus contributing to the conservation of meadows in the Wienerwald region.

The same goal, the conservation of meadows, pursues the “Wienerwald Wiesenmeisterschaft” (Wienerwald meadow championship). Owners and managers of meadows and pastures in the Wienerwald biosphere reserve are invited to announce their areas to the competition. Specialists evaluate the meadows and pastures as well as their management according to ecological and operational criteria. A jury selects the winners from the before-evaluated areas.

Local farmers and small businesses have pooled forces and created the “Vermarktungsgemeinschaft Wienerwald” (Wienerwald Marketing Association) to provide a platform for an improved marketing of regional quality products. Within the “Vermarktungsgemeinschaft Wienerwald” a new brand was created, the ”Wienerwald Weiderind” (Wienerwald beef).

More details about the Biosphere Reserve are attached in Appendix 5: Presentation of the Biosphere Reserve Director.
3 ASSESSMENT OF THE STUDY TOUR TO GERMANY

During the evaluation workshop in Purkersdorf the three main aspects of the study tour were discussed and it was checked how applicable of the central European solutions were for the Armenian and Georgian context.

3.1 Forms and structures of transboundary cooperation

The different mechanisms seen and in practice document, that it is beneficial to have formal agreements on top government level to provided a conducive environment for any ground activities. The
common strategies of adjacent PAs, like in Bayerischer Wald and Thayatal, have been felt to be desirable, yet not mandatory. The interviews and discussions with the PA and NP staff have indicated that even in the absence of or advance of a formal agreement technical cooperation is possible, easiest in the form on non intervention or active indifference to activities that might counteract programs on the other side of the border.

Only Thayatal/Podyjí and Neusiedler See have formal transboundary commissions, other collaboration is frequently organised in project form, where funds from the European Unions have gained more and more importance. As the European neighbourhood funds are reaching the Caucasus now, the experience and examples of the NPs visited can prove useful for further transboundary projects. A further information exchange, e.g., via the EUROPARC Federation could facilitate the identification, design and subsequent implementation of further transboundary projects.

3.2 Administrative and political frameworks of different national park management arrangements

Although the administrative and political frameworks differ as much as the ecosystem and management approaches the participants have identified some joint features that were striking:

All PAs visited practised biodiversity management plus local development. For this the governments spent sufficient money to compensate private owners, buying the rights to use the land. In all zones a compromise between compensation to stakeholders and prohibition was sought and found. This also allowed intensive management for biodiversity, especially in the cultural heritage areas and in the areas where pasture was the predominant land use. Only the national parks Bayerischer Wald and Šumava were predominantly going for a wilderness concept, but even this was adapted to react to the bark beetle threat for adjacent areas.
Pasture management even reached an extent that was seen critically by the participants as the ownership of large cattle and buffalo herds like in Fertő-Hanság and Neusiedler See bears the risk of sacrificing biodiversity to economic pressures. It was interesting and important to see, however, that marketing and branding of products of the National Parks is important to connect land use and tourism management.

Tourism management was handled in different ways, yet it was obvious that the touristic infrastructures have well developed and were better if kept in private hands. The associations of tourism service providers are key partners to generate value chains form the parks to the villages in and around the parks.

3.3 Incorporation of stakeholders into management planning, zonation and transboundary cooperation

The general approach to involve the regional population was demonstrated and exercised impressingly in all parks, although conflicts with the population accrued and had to be settled (e.g. Bayerischer Wald) in longer processes. The intensive interaction with the stakeholders and the compensation of the former land users were found to be a prerequisite to successful collaboration and sustainable development in the NP areas. Zonation and transboundary cooperation were mainly done on expert levels only; the communities were only involved in cases of extension (Bayerischer Wald) or at the time of establishment. As the compensations were covering all user rights in most cases the zonation was then done on the NP priorities only. Transboundary cooperation only plays a role in tourism development but even here the effects are not significant in the parks that have been visited.

3.4 Further remarks

The organization and contents of the study were generally evaluated as very positive, yet the discussion revealed some gaps that could not be closed in the week of the study tour. Some of these aspects may be covered in training events in the Caucasus, inviting the practitioners met on the tour to take more time to introduce their approaches. This refers mainly on the detail processes of management planning as these were difficult to grasp in the short time available, given the short time that was available per NP. A focus on one or two parks and their processes might be useful for a training in the Caucasus.

Discussions with the local communities were not foreseen but would have been appreciated. Future tours should have meetings with local stakeholders as well, not only the NP management staff.
The participants also stressed that an exposition to high alpine areas would be desirable, discussing element of the Alpenkonvention and the challenges of high mountain areas in more detail (skiing potential, avalanche, erosion, water, and mining).

The participants also highlighted that the political circumstances in CEE, especially the Schengen accord, eases transboundary cooperation for all countries inside Schengen area. This is far from Caucasian reality, where borders are not yet fully defined, demarcated and in some cases even disputed.

The participants expressed the idea to take up these issues in regional venues as and hen the transboundary cooperation in the Javakheti/lake Arpi region takes more shape.
Appendix 1: Programme of the Study and Training Tour

Programme of the Study and Training Tour
Within the KfW/ÖBf Project
Ecoregional Conservation Programme in the Southern Caucasus Region –
Establishment of a Transboundary Joint Secretariat (TJS)
to Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary
Status 20.10.2009 as implemented
11–20 October 2009

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Biosphärenpark Wienerwald

Gerfried KOCH
Director
Christian DIRY
Public Relations and Environmental Education
Sunday, 11th October 2009

05:55 h  Arrival Munich Airport of 5 GE-participants, Welcome by W. Suess

07:50 h  Arrival Munich Airport of 5 AM-participants, Welcome by W. Suess

08:30 – 11:00 h  Transfer to Hotel Passauer Hof, Grafenau, GE and AM part.

12:30 – 13:30 h  Lunch at the hotel

14:00 h – 18:00 h  Trip to Passau, information about lower Bavaria, city visit, pick-up of the Interpreter

19:00 – 22:00 h  General Introduction at the hotel (Mr. Suess)
                  Presentation of the programme

Monday, 12th October 2009

09.00 – 12:00 h  Visit to EURAPARC Grafenau
                   Introduction to EURAPARC, presentation by Mrs. Carol Ritchie, Director Europarc Federation, Europarc and Transboundary Protected Areas

12:00 – 12:30 h  Pick-up from EURAPARC and travel to Visitor’s Centre Neuschônau

12.30 – 13.30 h  Lunch at Nationalpark-Wirtshaus, Neuschônau

13:30 – 16:30 h  Visitor’s Centre Hans-Eisenmann-Haus
                   Introduction of "Transboundary Protected Areas Programmes" between National Parks Bayerischer Wald and Šumava and walkthrough canopy walk and the animal enclosure (Mrs. Hußlein)

Tuesday, 13th October 2009

08:00 – 09:00 h  Pick up from hotel and transfer to National Park Bayerischer Wald
                   Meeting Place Lusenparkplatz

09:00 – 12:30 h  Excursion to the Lusen-Area (Mr. Poehlmann)
                   Main topic: "Natural forest restoration in mountainous spruce forest after heavy bark beetle decay resp. after natural left windfall;" management and public relations of non-intervention areas

12:30 – 13:30 h  Lunch at Lusenschutzhau

13:00 – 18:00 h  Further trip to Buchwald (Bucina) National Park Šumava, CZ-border
                   Transboundary co-operation from the Czech perspective (Mr. Valenta)
                   Common and different approaches in visitor management and planning supervision

Wednesday, 14th October 2009

08:00 – 13:00 h  Pick up from hotel and transfer to Hotel-Pension Rudi, Pulkau, Check-in

13:30 – 15:00 h  Transfer to and lunch at Nationalpark Thayatal

15:00 – 19:00 h  National Park Thayatal (Mr. Brunner, Mr. Übl)
                   Excursion to the park area
                   History of cooperation
                   Mechanisms of cooperation
                   Management planning
                   Institutional setup
Thursday, 15th October 2009

08:00 – 09:00 h  Pick up from hotel and transfer to Visitor’s Centre of the Podyjí National Park Administration in Cizov-Znoimy/CZ

09:00 – 10.30 h  National Park Podyjí, (Mr. Rothröckl)
   Welcome
   Introduction to the Park – Basic information
   Cooperation with National Park Thayatal – General information incl. history of cooperation, mechanisms of cooperation, management planning and institutional setup
   Management of National Park, transboundary cooperation (forestry, landscape, Public use, PR)
   Visit of the exhibition in the Centre

12:00 – 13:00 h  Lunch at “U Svestku Pub”, Cizov

13:00 – 15:00 h  Field Excursion: Novy Hradek Ruin – Central part of the Podyjí NP

15:00 – 18:00 h  Travel to Illmitz, Neusiedler See and check-in at accommodation

19:00 – 22:00 h  Dinner at lake Neusiedl, Introduction to Park management and philosophy by Mr. Lang, NP Neusiedler See-Seewinkel

Friday, 16th October 2009

08:00 – 08:30 h  Pick up from hotel and transfer to National Park Neusiedlersee-Seewinkel, Illmitz

08:30 – 17:00 h  National Park Neusiedlersee-Seewinkel (Alois Lang)
   Introduction to the Park
   History of cooperation

9:30 – 11:00  Cooperation between Neusiedler See and Fertő-Hansag NP (Attila Fersch)
   Mechanisms of cooperation

13:00 – 18:00  Management planning, zonation and measures
   Institutional setup, tourism and visitor management

Saturday, 17th October 2009

08:00 – 09:00 h  Pick up from hotel and transfer to National Park Fertő Hanság Nemzeti Park in Fertőújlak, HU
   Fertő-Hansag National Park’s Center

09:00 – 09:15 h  Welcome and Introduction to the Center (Attila Fersch)

09:15 – 10:30 h  Visit the Eastern shores of Hungarian Part of Fertő / Neusiedler lake
   visit sodic pusta including management of the grasslands by traditional domestic animals, results of wetland biotope reconstruction like reconstructed soda lakes)

10:30 – 11:15 h  Visit the Czapody Istvan Visitor Center of the NP in Fertoujlak

11:15 – 12:30 h  Visit the place of amphibian-migration near Fertoboz

14:00 – 18:00 h  Travel to Vienna

Sunday, 18th October 2009

07:30 – 08:30 h  Pick up from hotel and transfer to Danube Channel Salztorbrücke 1010 Wien, Franz-Josefs-Kai

09:00 – 13:00 h  Guided visiting tour to Nationalpark Donau-Auen by National Park Boat (Pia Huber)
14:30 – 19:00 h Workshop/Discussion in ÖBf headquarters Purkersdorf: Application of results/findings to the situation in the Southern Caucasus Feedback/Discussion of tour result

Monday, 19th October 2009

08:00 – 08:30 h Pick-up from hotel and transfer to Österreichische Bundesforste AG, Natur-Aktiv-Zentrum, Irenental

08:30 – 12:30 h Österreichische Bundesforste AG and visit to Biosphere Reserve Wienerwald (Christian Diry / Gerfried Koch) Presentation of Biosphere Reserve Wienerwald and discussion of institutional and administrative challenges and solutions in an urban sprawl

19:00 – 20:00 h Transfer to Vienna Airport; GE- and AM-participants

22:30 h Flight to Tbilisi for GE-participants and Yerevan for AM-participants

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Appendix 2: Memoranda and collaboration documents for Transboundary Cooperation between the national park administrations of Šumava (Czech Republic) and Bavarian Forest (Germany)

The following three texts are unofficial TJS translation of the German document kindly forwarded by the respective national park administrations. The official documents are in German and Czech respectively.

Memorandum concerning cooperation between the national park administrations of Šumava (Czech Republic) and Bavarian Forest (Germany)

In one of the forest ecosystems in central Europe least influenced by human activity the National Parks Bohemian Forest - Šumava and Bavarian Forest - located on either side of the German-Czech state border - have been founded to protect a natural heritage of pan-European significance.

Herewith, both national park administrations resolve on
• Conscious of the constantly growing importance of transboundary protected areas - in a Europe which is becoming more closely integrated - to protect ecological diversity within the Czech-Bavarian border region as well as “bridges of communication” between people,
• Conscious of the direct neighbourly relationship and the close historical, cultural as well as natural-space ties of both regions,
• In an effort to protect the natural and cultural values of the “Green Roof of Europe” with the help of national park status,
• In acknowledgement of this meaning also through an active membership, and close collaboration in the framework, of EUROPARC-federation as the umbrella organization for European large scale protected areas,
• On the basis of a long standing cooperation,

this memorandum concerning the cooperation between the national park administrations of Šumava and Bavarian Forest

Both park administrations consider cooperation as a necessary and sustainable precondition to be able to realize the national park objectives.

This memorandum establishes the framework for concrete cooperation between the parks. The main points of the cooperation are:
1. The establishment of a joint board to agree on issues related to the transboundary park including regular assessments of joint activities
2. On a case by case basis, invitation of park administration representatives as experts to meetings of the national park board
3. Coordination and alignment of joint planning
4. Establishment of joint working groups for particular fields of work
5. Regular contacts between the parks’ executive teams
6. Elaboration of a staff exchange programme (e.g. study tours and work experience exchange, education programme, language courses, and the like)
7. Joint coordination of EU support programmes (e.g. PHARE-INTERREG)
Taking into account that the parks have been established for different lengths of time, the cooperation of both administrations concentrates on the following areas of operation:

**Nature Conservation**
- Improvement of the living conditions of characteristic species (in particular lynx, capercaillie, black grouse, otter) by means of coordinated management measures, projects and other activities including regulation measures, monitoring and exchange of information and publication of results.
- Coordination of management measures for red deer in the interests of conservation, and moreover to improve the conditions for natural forest regeneration, based on an agreement and joint programme.
- Establishment of a plot for permanent observation of the forest, providing both parties a long-term opportunity to monitor natural forest regeneration without any human impact, to exchange results in the framework of the joint project and to use those results to support the objectives of the parks.
- Continuation of joint forest management (gene pool spruce stands, bark beetle management, and the like), especially in the common border regions of both parks.

**Recreation, education, public relations**
- Opening the national parks to tourists serves especially the experience of untouched nature. To achieve that goal, joint projects (e.g. a system of hiking trails as far as legally allowed, events promoting the objectives of the national parks, national park information centres, multilingual information and publications or the like) are realized.
- In the field of environmental and forest education (youth exchange, participation on the “project youth-camp”, joint events for school classes from the border region), children and adolescents are the main target group in the park region.
- The highest priority is given to including the local population on both sides of the border. [The parks] will work towards public presentation of joint projects, events with regional outreach and joint informing and public relations.

**Research and monitoring**
Cooperation will focus mainly on jointly aligned research- and monitoring projects concentrating in following fields:
- Natural development of the forest
- Analysis related to protection, conservation and reintroduction of native flora and fauna
- Hydrology (especially relationships between the state of forest-ecosystems, water and protection)
- Data exchange as a basis for joint projects

Depending on process and after evaluation of the results of cooperation [the parties] may agree to enlarge, supplement and furthermore add new aspects to this memorandum upon mutual agreement.

Bayrisch Eisenstein, 31.08.1999

______________________________
Josef Miller                      Milos Kuzvart
Bavarian State Secretary         Minister of environment
for nutrition, agriculture and forest
Czech Republic
Memorandum between the Bavarian State Ministry of Environment and Health and the Czech Ministry of Environment Protection concerning linking trails within the common core area of the national parks Bavarian Forest and Šumava

Based upon the memorandum concerning cooperation between the national park administrations Šumava and Bavarian Forest dated 31.08.1999, the technical knowledge and expert statements on the Natura 2000-areas within the national parks Šumava and Bavarian Forest and the recommendations and requirements of the Council of Europe it is agreed on the following memorandum concerning new linking trails for hikers within the core areas of the national parks Bavarian Forest and Šumava:

New linking trails after joining Schengen
Along the shared national park boundary – at the same time state border – between Ferdinandsthal and Buchwald within the core areas of both national parks the following three additional, cross-border linking trails, exclusively for hikers, will be created:

- Siebensteinkopf – Moldauquelle/Pramen Vitavy
- Blaue Säulen – Pürstling/Modry Sloup
- Hirschbachschwelle – Mittagsberg/Modrava

Besides those three newly marked cross-border trails there should be another non-marked border crossing point in the area of Lackenberg. The cross-border trail Siebenkopfstein – Moldauquelle/Pramen Vitavy shall be open all year around. However, both sides confirm due to the necessary protection of the capercaillie that during winter times no cross-country ski runs will be established in this territory.

Due to the protection of endangered species, especially during the breeding and rearing season of the capercaillie, the use of the other additional two linking trails shall be allowed only between 15.07. and 15.11. of each year.

The use of already established marked trails shall continue without any changes. Likewise, with the exception of the so-called border track within the Bavarian Forest national park and taking account of the seasonal restrictions for hiking and cycling-trails in Šumava national park, the use of all other trails and tracks is set for the period 15.07 until 15.11 of the year. The use of the already established border-crossings Ferdinandsthal, Gsenget and Buchwald is permitted for walkers, cyclists and cross-countries skiers without any seasonal restriction.

Compensatory measures
In order to protect the capercallies living - but highly endangered- in the border area, ecological compensation measures for the new border crossings and trails within the common core area of both national parks shall be taken. Besides the removal of individual trails on the Czech side (e.g. Lusental and direction Rachelhaus) the use of the border-track shall be restricted to 15.08. until 15.11. of each year. This regulation will not come into force for the border track section between Rachel and Kleinem Spitzberg until 15.08.2011, since the afore-mentioned removal on the Czech side will not have been carried out until then. Furthermore the border-track section between Lusen and Kleinem Spitzberg shall remain open during the period 15.07. to 15.11. of each year, to make the use of the border crossing point Blaue Säulen – Pürstling/Modry Sloup in the mentioned period possible. The border-track will not be signposted. The driving of service and official vehicles within the common core area is restricted to a required minimum.

Additional measures and offers
In addition to the newly established linking trails, both national park administrations shall offer tours guided by a national park ranger or certified forest guide into territories of both national parks where access for the public is restricted.

Both sides agree to announce [these measures] to the local community and visitors through information campaigns and public relations activities. In particular the national parks’ rangers shall, in close cooperation, provide information on site and control compliance with the new regulations. Furthermore, both national park administrations shall prepare a suitable presentation about the subjects of protection and natural phenomena in this special, jointly protected core area.

To monitor the impact, especially of the new linking trails and the opening of the border-track, on the ecosystem and the Natura 2000 subjects of protection, in particular the capercaillie, both sides agree on establishing a long-term, interference-free monitoring within the core area.

Outlook
Both sides regard the agreement [reflected in this memorandum] as an important step towards the common project “Europe’s Wild Heart” and as a foundation for applying for a joint and transboundary European Diploma and EUROPARC certification as a “transboundary park”.

The minutes signed by both parties, attached as an annex, of the meeting on 20.03.2009 at the “Haus zur Wildnis” in Ludwigsthal are the foundation for adjusting the legal basis governing access rights in both national parks. Both state ministries shall start the procedure for adjusting the legal basis in order that the new regulations can come into force on 15.07.2009.

Munch, 30.04.2009
Dr. Markus Söder
Bavarian State Minster of Environment and Health

Prague, 02.07.2009
Dr. Martin Bursik
Minster of Environment of the Czech Republic
Vision Document for the Common core area of the national parks Šumava and Bavarian Forest—"The Wild Heart of Europe"
(This document contains detail descriptions of the natural features. These have not been translated as they are not relevant for the subject of this report. The respective areas of description are indicated as [...] )

Vision

Magnificent wilderness areas for future generations

I. Introduction

In the course of history and as a result primarily of extensive usage and development, the central sections of the national parks Bavarian Forest and Šumava have developed into a unique central-European natural phenomenon. The area is characterized by natural habitats which provide living space for many unique flora and fauna. Among them, just to mention a few, are the capercaillie and the large birds of prey. The core area of both national parks, located on either side of the Czech-German state border, has a unique potential for the restoration of "a real wilderness" with an area of over 10 000ha (the required minimum surface for international certified areas with the highest qualitative protection category—e.g. according to PAN-park criteria).

The objective of the project "The Wild Heart of Europe" is to unify the management of both parks in order to conserve the natural assets of this unrivalled area. At the same time humans should have the opportunity to experience nature and to learn about it without influencing it.

II. Description of Area

Name: The Wild Heart of Europe

Main subject of protection:
[Description of the natural features of the territory]

Location:
[Description of the geographical location]

Area:
In national park Šumava overall 7 263 ha
Of which:
• current I. zone 1 905 ha
• current rest area 4 496 ha
• natural monument Maderfilze and Moldauquelle 3 736 ha

In national park Bavarian Forest overall 5 797 ha
Of which:
• current nature zone 5 571 ha
• current development zone 2a 47 ha
• current development zone 2b 2 ha
• current development zone 2c 177 ha
Overall 13 060 ha

Existing protection status:
National park Šumava
• Large zone I and II areas
• Core area of SPA and SCI bird sanctuary Šumava
• Significant Ramsar Site
• Former state protected area - today natural monument Maderfilze and Moldauquelle
• Rest area, now § 64
• Nature zone
• Area with special-management after hurricane Kyrill (Hischgespreng, Maderfilze und Schwarzberg)

National park Bavarian Forest
• Zoning: see above (nature zone 5 571 ha)
• Bird sanctuary according to Natura 2000 guidelines (SPA) on entire area
• FFH-area according to Natura 2000 guidelines (SAC) on entire area

Flora
[
]
Fauna
[
]

Forest description
[
]

Natura 2000 habitat types
The flora has been described in the framework of Natura 2000 mapping as follows:
[
]
Natura 2000-species, under the Wild Birds Directive

III. Management Principles

Most important management measures (only marked activities are allowed)
Forest habitats
1.1 Felling of insect-infested trees, wind-damaged and -uprooted trees
1.2 Planned wood harvest
1.3 Management of young forest stands
1.4 Underplanting of different tree species (promotion of natural tree composition)
1.5 Protection of young trees against browsing damage
1.6 Management of neobiota

Open habitats
2.1 Prevention of succession
2.2 Hand mowing
2.3 Mechanical mowing
2.4 Establishment of small openings
2.5 Regulated sheep pasture
2.6 Regulated cow pasture
2.7 Management of invasive species
Water balance

3.1 Closure of artificial drainage channels
3.2 Rehabilitation of original water courses
3.3 Extraction of potable water as before

Management of wildlife

4.1 Measures for wildlife management
4.2 Management of the killing and taking of animals
4.3 Protection of threatened species

Public access

5.1 The use of marked visitor trails and trails with limited, periodic access is allowed within set limits (elaborated on 15.07.2009)
5.2 Access to trails beyond those mentioned under 5.1 is only allowed in the framework of guided tours
5.3 Fishing sports
5.4 Water sports
5.5 Public local transport (bus transport)
5.6 Highly restricted traffic for service use (research, park rangers, etc.)
5.7 Operation of lodges is possible to the same extent

Miscellaneous

7.1 Removal of dispensable roads and other ecological nuisances to recreate natural conditions
7.2 Monitoring and research

Forest management in detail

• Interventions are allowed only in the border areas and in frequently visited tourist areas on small patches and seasonally strictly limited

Management of open land in detail

• No intervention or use in the de facto wilderness area at all
• Pushing back of natural succession at single sites (e.g. Schachten in the area of Falkenstein-Rachel) is only allowed at small-area

Water regime management in detail

• Temporally restricted measures to re-establish the natural water balance of malfunctioning moors are allowed
• Temporally restricted corrections of canalized and upgraded water courses used for timber rafting are allowed
• Revitalization of small water courses and runlets disturbed by forest road construction

Management of wildlife in detail
• No intervention or use in the de facto wilderness area at all
• Consistent protection and control of rest and reproduction areas of endangered species

Management of the area designated for public use in detail
• Roadways for new linking trails [should] bypass sensible habitats
• Sections with wet and peaty undersurface will be bridged with track-ways to protect them against damage caused by walkers
• Consistent enforcement of orders concerning trails for the protection of flora and fauna susceptible to disruption
• Enforcement of the order that requires dogs to be on a leash for the protection of capercaillie susceptible to disruption

Other management activities
• Consistent and rigorous enforcement of restrictions on vehicular traffic

IV. Education, Site Development and Public Relations

Site development of the area for the public
• Existing marked trails are maintained
• Organized tours with a certified guide are possible
• Exclusion of public transport in the de facto wilderness area

Educational offers
• International research- and education centre Kvilda
• Technical field trips
• Scientific publications and education programmes

Presentation
• Joint presentations at international fora
• Internet presence
• Publications in professional journals and magazines
• Production of TV documentaries

V. Monitoring
• Evaluation of ecosystem changes and management measures, quinquennial
• LTER (Long Term Ecological Research) and establishment of a joint LTER platform
• Research and monitoring of habitats and species especially relevant for Natura 2000
• Permanent observation plots for monitoring global climate change

Timetable for implementation

Spring 2008 Project start
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.03.2008</td>
<td>Draft agreement on the collaboration between the national park administrations Bavarian Forest and Šumava in order to elaborate a joint management for the core area of the national parks and to develop it after joining the Schengen Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.05.2008</td>
<td>Project presentation at the international conference COP 9 in Bonn, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2008</td>
<td>Development of management principles for the common core area of the Šumava and Bavarian Forest national parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.08.2008</td>
<td>Suspension of red deer hunting in the core area of Šumava national park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2008</td>
<td>Start of the project “Guided Wilderness Tours”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2008</td>
<td>Presentation of print layouts – logo, poster, leaflets</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2008</td>
<td>Presentation of the joint project at the EUROPARC 2008 conference in Brasov, Romania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2008</td>
<td>Start of the project “Educational and research centre Kvilda”</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 2008</td>
<td>Establishment of the joint LTSER platform Silva Gabreta to conduct long-term monitoring activities with a focus on the project “The Wild Heart of Europe”</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.12.2008</td>
<td>Presentation of the joint project at the Directorate-General Environment in Brussels</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.12.2008</td>
<td>Internal workshop of the Bavarian Forest national park – Implementation of the wilderness concept within the framework of national park management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2009</td>
<td>Evaluation and update of the joint projects of the Šumava and Bavarian Forest national parks at the annual meeting held within the framework of the memorandum</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 2009</td>
<td>Preparation of the project “Wilderness Guide” for the year 2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>25.-28.1.2009</td>
<td>International conference in Srní/Šumava national park on “Non-intervention – a suitable management approach guaranteeing the protection goals of Natura 2000”</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.03.2009</td>
<td>Internal workshop of the Bavarian Forest national park “Wilderness movement- how should we react?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.05.2009</td>
<td>Project presentation “The Wild Heart of Europe” within the framework of the first colloquium of the Academy of Nature and Industrial Culture East Bavaria-Bohemia, Neunburg v. Wald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.-28.05.2009</td>
<td>Conference on “Wilderness and large natural habitat area” within the framework of the Czech EC presidency: video presentation of the project “The Wild Heart of Europe”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.-30.05.2009</td>
<td>Presentation of the project “The Wild Heart of Europe” and excursion during the visits of Vance Martin, president of The WILD Foundation and Charlotte Baron, board member of The WILD Foundation in the Bavarian Forest and Šumava national parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05.07.2009</td>
<td>Presentation of the project “The Wild Heart of Europe” at the Franconia Day (themed “Franconia in Europe-Europe in Franconia”) in Bad Windsheim</td>
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<tr>
<td>08.07.2009</td>
<td>Internal workshop of the Šumava national park on wilderness in Kvilda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.-24.07.2009</td>
<td>Presentation of the project “The Wild Heart of Europe” within the framework of the EUROPARC foundation’s appraisal mission regarding transboundary certification</td>
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<tr>
<td>01.-05.2009</td>
<td>Presentation of the project “The Wild Heart of Europe” at the second European Congress “Conservation Biology (ECCB 2009)” in Prague</td>
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<tr>
<td>08.-12.09.2009</td>
<td>Presentation of the project “The Wild Heart of Europe” at the EUROPARC conference 2009 in Strömstad/Sweden</td>
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<tr>
<td>08.-10.10.2009</td>
<td>Conference on “Sustainable wild... Are wild habitats able to contribute to sustainable development?” at the Haus zur Wildnis in Ludwigsthal</td>
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</table>
06.-13.11.2009  Presentation of the project “The Wild Heart of Europe” at the 9th World Wilderness Congress- WILD 9 in Merida/Mexico

VII. Annexes
Maps
- Common core area with up-to-date visitor trail system and the planned new transboundary linking trails
- Core habitat of the capercaillie
- Habitat use of red deer
- Hunting and reproduction area of lynx
- Spread of mountain spruce forests and moors

List of joint projects
- Natura 2000 protection and management principles
- Predator-prey relationship in forest mountain ecosystems
- Trilateral project re-introduction of the ural owl
- Digital data collection of visitor infrastructure
- Ranger collaboration
- Project “National park partnership”
- Hunting territory of forest bats
- International research and education centre Kvilda
- Training courses and certification for wilderness guides
- Digital data collection and classification of the trail system, including renaturalisation plan
- Concept for a joint monitoring programme with uniform standards

Project staff
National park administration Bavarian Forest

Hans-Heinz Englmaier
Maria Hußlein
Hartmut Strunz
Appendix 3: Statement and collaboration document for Transboundary Cooperation between the national park administrations of Podyjí (Czech Republic) and Thayatal (Austria)

STATEMENT
CONCERNING COOPERATION BETWEEN THE THAYATAL NATIONAL PARK (REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA) AND NARODNI PARK PODYJI (CZECH REPUBLIC)

Preamble
The Federal Minister for the Environment, Youth and Family of the Republic of Austria and the Governor of the Province of Lower Austria on the one hand and the Minister for the Environment of the Czech Republic on the other hand,
given that already in 1991, on the Czech side of Thayatal between Frain and Znaim, the first National Park of Moravia was established due to its exceptionally diverse nature and in Autumn 1997, on the Austrian side, a contract establishing the Thayatal National Park was concluded between the Federal Authorities and the Province of Lower Austria for the protection of the unique nature area at Thaya-Durchbruchstal,
guided by the desire to protect the landscape of Thayatal on both sides of the border to the greatest extent possible,
reaffirm hereby their intention to cooperate in the protection, administration and development of their national parks and declare jointly
- to promote and sustain the development of both national parks as natural and scenic valuable nature reserves of national and international significance
- to safeguard, for these nature reserves, representative types of landscape, as well as animal and plant life including their habitat
- to ensure the use of these nature reserves for scientific purposes as well as for training and relaxation
- through cooperation amongst the authorities of the nature reserves, to contribute to a better understanding of the problems of the respective neighbouring countries and in this way serve as a model for cooperation between both regions in all areas.

Article I
The Czech and the Austrian parties agree, within the framework of the respective national legal provisions, to carry out, harmonize and coordinate measures, especially in the following areas: the management of the nature reserve, visitor guidance and care of visitors, science and research, the supervision of the National Park and public relations work. These measures are to ensure that the protection of the Thayatal-Podyjí nature reserve and the animal and plant species found there as well as their habitats will be protected to the greatest extent possible.

For the execution of this agreement, joint guidelines and mutually agreed management plans would particularly be beneficial, as well as an exchange of information and public information work, which would also be useful tasks for the Podyjí and Thayatal national parks. The wishes of the local population should be taken into consideration as long as they are consistent with the principles of the national parks.

Both parties deem it beneficial that the national park administrations take appropriate measures such as conducting joint studies, regular consultations, exchange of experience and information, cooperation in the area of scientific research and public relations work and most of all jointly elaborate and implement management plans as well as conclude an agreement concerning the nature and area of cooperation.
A Working Group composed of 4 experts at the same level from the Czech Republic and the Republic of Austria is to be formed for the coordination of the work and the evaluation of its implementation. This group of experts will meet when necessary, but at least once a year, and may work out business rules of procedure. Minutes, which are to be taken at each expert meeting, will serve as a basis for joint cooperation for the following time period, upon their approval by both parties.

Article III

This statement is in German and Czech; both versions have legal validity.

On behalf of the Czech Republic
The Minister for the Environment of the Czech Republic
RNDr. Milos Kuzvart:

On behalf of Austria
The Federal Minister for the Environment, Youth and Family of the Republic of Austria
Dr. Martin Bartenstein:

The Governor of the Province of Lower Austria
Dr. Erwin Pröll:

Hardegg, 15 July 1999
AGREEMENT

on Common Objectives,
Sources and Basic Principles
of the Management in the NP Podyjí-Thayatal

13 November 2002

Hardegg / Zno-
jmo
Preamble

Transborder co-operation between the administrations of the Podyjí and Thayatal National Parks was established by the Declaration of joint co-operation for the protection of the Podyjí/Thayatal National Parks, which was signed by the government representatives from both countries on 15 July 1999 in Hardegg. This agreement was based on the principles of partnership and good neighbourly relationships.

The primary condition to ensure an effective protection of these areas is the establishment of common sources and basic principles for the management. To this end, both administrations decided to draw up this agreement, which outlines the common objectives and principles of the management of both national parks and remains within the scope of the national legal regulations.

The agreement is valid from the day it is signed to 31.12.2010. By mutual agreement, it may however be amended or modified in writing.
0. Introduction:

The breakthrough Thaya valley near Hardegg, between Vranov and Znojmo, is a natural gem of particular quality. The National Park Thayatal and the Narodni Park Podyjí guarantee the protection of this habitat. They are also an attraction for visitors and an important impulse for the development of the region. Transborder cooperation should help to reconcile the goals of both national parks and fulfil them together.

The border in the middle of the river separates states but not ecosystems. The National Parks Thayatal / Podyjí should therefore be protected and developed following the same objectives, with the same measures and under the same conditions on both sides. This requires comprehensive co-ordination from the beginning, but does not impede the administrative duties and responsibilities different by national laws and regulations.

The framework for the development of the National Parks Thayatal / Podyjí and their interrelations with the region in the next 10 years are the management plans, which build on joint basic principles. They define the development options for the next 10 years, fix the measures and outline how the area should evolve and how the national park administrations should jointly face the challenges of the future.

The general objectives of the national parks are:

- to preserve and develop the specificities of the habitat and promote biodiversity and self regulation;
- to eliminate or reduce the negative effects of historical and current anthropogenic interferences in particular in the forests and on the Thaya;
- to provide an opportunity for recreation and experiencing nature;
- to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of the national park region and the visitors to the national parks, and thus directly and indirectly improve the economic situation in the region;
- through research, to deepen the knowledge on ecosystemic connections and through monitoring, to control the impacts of the measures;
- to perform increasingly as a transborder protected area of European importance in future and to co-operate on the basis of good neighbourly relationships between two states.

Two principles:

The success of the national park rests on two pillars,

- the free development of nature
  - by securing dynamics largely unaffected by Man;
  - through comprehensive habitat protection;
  - by promoting species diversity.
the partnership between the local population and visitors, 
through proper and open relationships between all interest groups; 
through open discussions on the objectives of the national parks and the measures that lead up to these objectives; 
through various forms of high-quality information for the whole public.

Trait

The National Park Thayatal / Podyji and its environment feature

- the beauty and diversity of landscape;
- geological and geomorphological characteristics;
- an atmosphere of remoteness and nativeness;
- a large biodiversity;
- the witnesses of centuries of history;
- the close link of the local population to this habitat.

These characteristics are the framework and the challenges for the work of the national park administrations.

Institutionalising co-operation

Through the establishment of a joint commission for the resolution of bilateral issues and for the co-ordination of the measures, co-operation can be slowly improved. Information events should take place with the participation of other national park administrations.

1. Habitat Management

1.1 Forests

- **Common principles and objectives**
  The biodiversity of natural forest populations (particularly hardwood populations) and their ecological balance is promoted and conserved. Forests in the national park are subject to self regulation (except measures for forest protection and safety). The natural sequence has precedence.

In places where a natural retrogression takes too long or cannot be expected, the renaturation of forests can be initiated through specific measures also in terms of improving structure and texture.

There will be no interference in forests with native and indigenous trees. Non indigenous pure populations (douglas firs, spruce monocultures...) are modified. The interferences are limited in time. In Austria they end after a transition period of
maximum 15 years and thus follow the provisions for the National Park Thayatal. In the Czech Republic, interferences in the target zone I (currently zone I and parts of zone II) are possible until 2030.

1.2 Meadows and pastures (heathland)

Common principles and objectives
In the National Park, an undisturbed development of nature is planned in principle. Meadows are an exception. Here maintenance interferences are carried out on a continuing basis, which solely serve the purpose of nature protection, e.g. the conservation of the high biodiversity.

The fertilisation of meadows and the deployment of pesticides are prohibited. The mowing follows the guidelines of the yearly management plans.

Besides the conservation and promotion of rare types of meadows with their specific flora and fauna, meadows are also of particular importance as hunting grounds for birds of prey and owls, as grazing areas for game, as vital structure element for many animals and because of their scenic appeal to visitors.

Pastures are anthropogenic. They are in the management zone and are maintained as open land through grazing.

1.3 Dry grassland and forest steppes

Common principles and objectives
Dry grassland and steppes represent a particularly valuable habitat as open land in the National Park Thayatal / Podyjí. They must particularly be protected from being walked on.

In case of clear changes in these areas (e.g. significant decrease in biodiversity) the National Park administration may take measures.

1.4 Protection of species and habitat

Common principles and objectives
The National Park Thayatal / Podyjí features a high diversity in fauna, flora, habitats and natural processes. The reason for this can be found in its specific geology and geomorphology as well as its situation at the border between the pannonian and central European flora and fauna region.

Both national park administrations are responsible for the protection and the promotion of this habitat. As nature is capable of self regulation, the work of the national park administration focuses on management tasks and the protection from disturbances.
Species conservation in the National Park Thayatal should primarily result from habitat protection. Beside the measures mentioned in the chapter Habitat management, interferences in terms of habitat protection may occur in the following cases:

- as a protection from anthropogenic disturbances
- against species loss, conditioned by natural development
- as a protective measure for species nationally or internationally threatened or endangered (Red Lists)
- to protect species, which would find a suitable habitat in the National Park Thayatal but which, because of human interference, are not or only slightly represented.

Due to the limited size of the protected area, the implementation of appropriate measures requires a close cooperation between both national park administrations and the involvement of the respective national park hinterland.

Some animal species (e.g. large birds) need larger areas free from human interference. In order to guarantee the survival and reproduction of these species, i.e. to enable an in-migration of these species, transborder rest areas should be established.

1.5 Watercourses

**Common principles and objectives**
The aim of the watercourse management in the National Park Thayatal / Podyjí is a nature-orientated, natural development of aquatic habitats. In the medium term, general hydrological and structural conditions must be optimised, e.g. discharge, riverbank structures, debris discharge etc. Based on an evaluation of the situation, necessary improvement measures will be undertaken.

The discharge flow from the Vranov power station causes a particular problem. The negative effects of the discharge must be verified and reduced as much as possible. Based on the ecological model of the national park, measures are elaborated which approach the natural conditions in the Thaya.

The tributaries of the Thaya in the National Park are typical, close-to-nature watercourses and important habitats, for example for the fish otter. The structure of these watercourses must be preserved, the discharge conditions adjusted to the natural event. Strain on these watercourses from interferences outside the national parks are recorded and proposals for measures are elaborated.

All watercourse-related measures require the close co-operation of the Czech Republic and Austria.
1.6 Neophytes

**Common principles and objectives**
Because of an inadequate integration into the ecosystem, these young representatives of the ecosystem are more competitive than the already existing flora in some habitats. As the increase of neophytes is to be seen as very closely related to anthropogenic interferences, neophytes should be eliminated if possible and their propagation prevented.

1.7 Buildings and facilities

The construction and use of buildings in the National Park cause disturbances in the ecosystem. The construction of structures in the national park area can thus only be permitted if it is directly related to tasks and activities of the national park administrations. Exceptions are ruled by national laws. The number of existing buildings which do not serve the purpose of the national park should be gradually reduced.

Historical buildings or existing infrastructure facilities are not concerned by this.

2. Regulation of game stock

**Common principles and objectives**
In the long run, for the preservation and promotion of local animals and their habitats, and for the promotion of indigenous forest vegetation, a regulation of the game stock is necessary. Thereby the natural cycle of events without human interference and the interrelation between the region and the national park deserve particular attention.

A reintroduction of species is only carried out in exceptional cases, natural immigration can be facilitated by improving habitats. Demand oriented promotion and protection programmes for threatened species are possible.

Game stock regulation concerns only hoofed game, deer, roe deer and wild boars as well as possible geographically non-native game species within the legal provisions.

Game stock regulation is to be carried out in the national park via locally adapted regulation methods (primarily hide and driven hunt) taking into consideration development objectives. Regulation measures should be co-ordinated with abutting owners of the national park responsible for hunting. Game stock regulation is aligned with a species-related social structure (gender ratio, age structure) of the game population.

Feeding for diverting (game control) hoofed game is authorised within a space and time limit when it is necessary in order to avoid major damage on vegetation
caused by game. This also applies to the system to lure wild boar (putting out baits to facilitate the shooting).

3. Fishing

Common principles and objectives
The aim is to establish a fish population corresponding to the type of watercourse, which reproduces under the existing basic conditions and which is able to sustain itself. This is currently only possible through stocking measures. In improving water ecology, e.g. particularly through low water management, peaking wave reduction and structural measures (management of spawn location, by-pass channels for fish, etc.) these conditions should be improved. The stocking should be gradually abandoned after a temporary arrangement.

Fishing can be authorised under specific conditions, provided it complies with primary protection objectives. Angling is only possible to an extent that has no negative effects on the fish population and does not cause any sustainable damage to the habitat and the environment. The catch must concentrate on a few species only and be geared towards natural increase. This requires spatial and seasonal regulations in a preferably consistent fishing rule for both national parks.

4. Visitors infrastructure

4.1 Tracks

Common principles and objectives
All tracks marked with standardised signs in the national park are open to visitors and dedicated to their use. Some deviant regulations may exist following the respective national regulations in the Czech Republic and in Austria.

The national park administrations are responsible for the preparation and maintenance of the tracking network. Tracks are conceived in such a way that disturbances are minimised and consistent quality standards of the tracking network are reached according to the respective usage or user groups. Nature protection objectives take thereby priority over tourism ones. The same applies to the configuration of vantage points.

Co-ordinating national park hiking tracks with other regional hiking trails can improve the touristic offer in the region and influence the pressure of demand in the national park.

In the course of transborder hiking tracks, negotiations are underway with the responsible authorities about a simplification of personal control (“small border traffic”).
The tracking network maintained for forestry activities or for the care of meadows is not necessarily a network for visitors of the national park.

4.2 Visitor information and management

**Common principles and objectives**

The system of visitor management is one of the trademarks and is important for the image of the national parks. In the National Park Thayatal / Podyjí it is clearly and consistently conceived taking into consideration national regulations. On demand the inscription may also be in the other language, and even in English if need be.

The external visitor management programme, which draws visitors to the national park, will also point out the other part of the national park, i.e. the inter-national park.

Visitors receive information as complete as possible on the National Park Thayatal/Podyjí. The objective is to achieve a high quality of visitor information and to edit all important information in at least two languages.

Information material is designed jointly and reciprocally made available.

The visitors centres Cizov (existing) and Hardegg (planned) will co-ordinate offers so as to present visitors with complete and complementary information. Visitor information on-site will concentrate on an empirical and tactile perception. There, priority will be given to the quality of the presentation.

Guided tours will be increasingly proposed jointly in order to organise visits more efficiently. Offers will be adapted to age and interests.

Behaviour guidelines (rules, prohibitions) will be harmonised, thus making them clearer and more manageable.

4.3 Transport connections

**Common principles and objectives**

The accessibility of the National Park by public transport needs to be improved urgently in order to reduce the amount of private transport. Measures to channel traffic should be taken to avoid the negative impact of traffic on the local population.

This may be achieved through a better co-ordination of the offers in public transport, operating on Sundays and public holidays, attractive tariffs and the establishment of a bus line all around the national parks. Related measures call for a co-ordination with the regional interests.
The national park administrations will submit appropriate proposals in their respective areas to their respective carriers.

5. Marketing

**Common principles and objectives**

Marketing does not only consist in publications, mailings and events, but also contains the corporate design of the national park and its corporate identity.

Through mutual presence in the national park media, links between the national park websites and joint media activities and presentations, recognition of the national parks and information of the population should be improved.

6. Education and culture

**Common principles and objectives**

According to the criteria of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) a national park not only allows for an undisturbed development of nature but also provides recreation and education. National parks should be places where visitors may enjoy the beauties of a landscape and where nature can be experienced.

In a national park, education does not only mean acquiring knowledge. It also implies perceiving natural beauty and diversity, and awareness of ecological interrelations. A positive experience of nature should get the necessity of nature protection measures across and improve man’s relationship to nature.

In proposing guided tours and professional excursions, the national park administrations offer their visitors recreation and provide information on the national park.

Both national park administrations have concerted visitor programmes and services.

The existing visitors centre in Cízov and the future national park centre in Hardegg have taken a central position in the education field. In these two facilities information on both national parks is being provided in a modern and appealing way. They represent important contact points for visitors to the national parks.

Moreover other types of education are also proposed (presentations, visitor information on site, internet, publications, etc.). Joint events on relevant topics could increase the position of the National Park Thaytal/Podyji as transborder protected area of European importance.

Continuous training of staff and exchange of information at all administrative levels are top-ranking issues. In some cases, this is carried out in co-operation with both national park administrations.
7. Visitor management and national park supervision

Common principles and objectives
Visitor management is carried out as part of guided tours in the national park, in the national park centre or as individual personal information.

National park rangers/guards ensure that legal regulations are observed in the national park. They are further available as contact persons on the premises.

To ensure an effective intervention in case of accidents, an emergency plan will be elaborated in co-ordination with the responsible offices and authorities.

8. Research and monitoring

Common principles and objectives
Research in the National Parks Thayatal/Podyjí is first of all aimed at purpose and measure oriented. Other research activities are supported depending on the capacities available.

The objective is documenting the situation and monitoring changes following standard criteria. A fixed marketed sample network in both national parks forms the basis for investigations from which various recordings are then made. The evaluation must be possible separately according to each speciality.

The homogenous landscape on both sides of the Thaya calls for a joint transborder monitoring of the changes. When surveying the recent status the methodology should be concerted in order to obtain comparable results. The exchange of data and information is guaranteed.

9. Acceptance / Region

Common principles and objectives
Everyone should have the opportunity to introduce his/her ideas and suggestions. Participation in committee meetings is well established in both parts of the National Park Thayatal/Podyjí. The involvement of the local population should not be limited to committee/board meetings, but should be an independent process. This also applies to the representation of interests (hunting, fishing, agriculture, tourism,...).

Local activities and initiatives will be supported as much as possible, in return an involvement of the National Parks in local activities would be expected.

10. Subsidies
Common principles and objectives
Both National Parks Thayatal and Podyjí will support each other in claiming subsidies. Joint transborder projects stand a better chance of being granted funds.

Znojmo, 13. November 2002

______________________________ ____________________ ____________
Dir. Ing. Tomás Rothröckl Dir. DI Robert Brunner
Narodní Park Podyjí Nationalpark Thayatal
Appendix 4: Presentation on the NPs of Lake Neusiedl

... two states, one dynamic region

- EUREGIO
- MAB-Reserve
- RAMSAR-Site
- WORLD HERITAGE
- NATIONAL PARK

Diversity between the Alps and the Puszta
Cooperation since Decades

Hungary and Austria agreed to establish a joint National Park across the borders of two different political systems in 1988.

Today’s Zoning

Starting from 140 km², the National Park covers more than 300 km² today.
The Ecosystems

Joint Nature Zone in the southern part of the lake

Reedbeds and meadows work as a buffer between Nature Zone and agriculture
Salt ponds, less than half a meter deep, are home to breeding and migrating birds.

Soda steppes in the Seewinkel area represent the westernmost of their kind.
Managing the cultural heritage

Grazing activities along the soda ponds and along the lake

Visitor Management

Steering the visitor flow alongside the habitats
Visitor Management

Infrastructure for nature experience

Information & Education

Sarród
Fertőújlak
Ilmitz
Annex to the 11th Quarterly Report

Transboundary Joint Secretariat for the Southern Caucasus

- 36 -
Can the National Park be a player in tourism development?

Contributions in various ways:
- Reputation
- Additional target groups
- Infrastructure
- Special programmes
- Longer season
- Media reports
- Awareness raising
- Support for touristic partners

Shall the National Park be a player in touristic services?

Identifying the opposite:
- quick results
- mega events
... and all the consequences

Talking economy, not only ecology:
- longer touristic season
- wide spread valorization
- stable structure of guests
- higher income level
- interest in local products, culture
- high percentage of direct bookings
Protected areas strengthen the (transboundary) regional identity.

By spreading the income to many stakeholders, ecotourism does the same.

Steering the process:
Easy come, easy go?

„Gate to ...“.

One-day stopover.

No real destination.

Sharing the same interests for nature and economy:

Motivate the visitors to slow down,
to spend more time.
Appendix 5: Presentation of the Biosphere Reserve Wienerwald

Studytour 19.10.2009
Ecoregional Conservation Programme in the Southern Caucasus Region

Cultivated Landscape

A Landscape to Relax

Diversity of Life
Annex to the 11th Quarterly Report

Transboundary Joint Secretariat for the Southern Caucasus
Land use in the Biosphere Reserve Wienerwald

- Forest: 63%
- Grazed: 18%
- Settled: 7%
- Field (agriculture): 5%
- Hay: 2%
- Other: 5%

Geology

- Sandstone / Flysch Wienerwald:
  - extends over 80% of the total area
  - characterised by smooth surface shapes, moderate sloped ridges up to just 540 metres

- Limestone Wienerwald:
  - southeastern part
  - characterised by steep rocky slopes

Altitude

- Schöpfl: 893 m
- Danube: 170 m
Distribution of tree species

Buffer Zones - Open-land
- most valuable parts of the cultivated landscape, formed through agricultural use
- habitats for national and international important animal and plant species – Natura 2000 Areas
- no buffer zones in settlement areas
- agricultural land use is needed to reach the conservation aims
- no new legal restrictions in addition to existing
- measures are taken voluntarily (e.g. based on contracts)

Projects in cooperation with ÖBf Oesterreichische Bundesforste AG
- Environmental Education Activities
- Sustainable Wildlife Management
- Monitoring in Core Zones
- Beech Bark Beetle
- Autumn Crocuses – Poison in the Pasture
- Fungi & Beetles – Life in Deadwood
- Sustainable Forest Biomass Usage
- Management of ÖBf Meadows
- Ural Owl - Resettlement

Annex to the 11th Quarterly Report  Transboundary Joint Secretariat for the Southern Caucasus