

EUROPARC FEDERATION



Verification report

for the

Bavarian Forest National Park / Germany &  
Šumava National Park / Czech Republic



application for the EUROPARC certificate:

“Transboundary Parks – Following Nature's Design”

**Date of verification visit: 20<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2009**

**Names of Verifiers: Arto Ahokumpu, Martin Šolar**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Lead Verifier  
Second Verifier

**Date: 10<sup>th</sup> August 2009**

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## **Part 1**

### **1. Introduction**

The Bavarian Forest National Park (BFNP) in Germany and the Šumava National Park (ŠNP) in Czech Republic are located in the heart of central Europe along the border in the area more widely known as the *Bohemian Forest*. BFNP was founded in 1969 and ŠNP 22 years later in 1991. Their co-operation started immediately after the Šumava NP was established. Co-operation was lively but informal in the 1990s. The official agreement, "Memorandum of common work and cooperation between Bavaria Forest NP and Šumava NP", was signed on 31.8.1999 between the environment ministries of Bavaria and the Czech Republic. Since then the co-operation has been developed under favourable conditions and in winter 2009 the parks applied for certification under the „Transboundary Park – Following Nature's Design" initiative. On 15<sup>th</sup> May 2009 EUROPARC confirmed the appointment of Arto Ahokumpu, Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services / Finland, as a lead verifier during the EUROPARC transboundary evaluation process. Martin Šolar from Triglav National Park / Slovenia was appointed to assist as second verifier having also been responsible for pre-evaluation desk study.

The verification visit took place from 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2009 (the programme as ANNEX 1).

### **2. Results of the desk evaluation**

#### **BASIC DETAILS OF THE PARTNER ORGANISATIONS / PROTECTED AREAS**

The Bavarian Forest National Park is less than half the size of the Šumava NP (24,226 ha / 68,064 ha) but the shape and form are similar and the parks have a fairly long common border. In the pure sense of the transboundary issue regarding nature conservation, ecological corridors and connectivity the applicants perfectly fit into the scheme for transboundary protected areas.

Both protected areas are national parks established on the basis of national legislation, and both parks have similar or even the same main management objectives, including:

- nature conservation;
- "non – intervention" management principles in the common core zone;
- research and monitoring;
- visitor management;
- education.

The Bavarian Forest and Šumava National Parks are both declared as national parks according to IUCN category II – *we must admit that this is a constant and proved issue in Bavarian Forest and it is the real issue in Šumava in last 5 years only.*

Both parks are Natura 2000 sites (SPA and SCI), the Bavarian Forest has received the European Diploma for protected areas, whilst the Šumava is the core and buffer zone of a biosphere reserve and Šumava is also Ramsar site.

The natural values and cultural landscapes are similar: spruce forests and mixed forest habitats, with many species listed in the annexes of the habitats and birds directives. Both parks have similar zoning systems with a common core zone foreseen where “non – intervention” management principles are in place.

In addition, as both parks authorities belong to state administrations, staff and funding capacity for transboundary cooperation is ensured. It is also important that both parks have fairly significant support from different NGOs on both sides.

## DETAILS OF THE COOPERATION

Cooperation started immediately after the Šumava National Park was established in 1991. The real basis and more detailed cooperation started on the basis of the Memorandum on the Cooperation between Šumava and Bavarian Forest National Parks and its amendment signed by the two ministries in 1999 and later in 2005.

*The “agreement” is written in German and Czech language only and it will be useful for the verification process to have an English translation. There is a need to get an answer feasible the memorandum is on lower level (for example on the level of local municipalities).*

The basic structure for the transboundary cooperation is good as a joint management / advisory board exists. Transboundary co-operation between the parks is in place at many levels, but there is no special coordinator for common transboundary activities. In addition, financial support is ensured, and if there are projects in place there are many more possibilities to carry out further work.

In both national park areas similar groups of stakeholders are involved in transboundary cooperation, including local communities, tourism sector, schools, NGOs.

It is clear that in the first decade of cooperation (since Šumava NP has been established) there were many spontaneous activities such as bilingual information facilities, student exchanges and ranger service cooperation. This was fine and welcome but was not really crucial for the basic standards of transboundary cooperation. After 1999 and especially after 2004 significant transboundary cooperation with the main issue of nature conservation has started. The really good atmosphere with many positive results happened fairly recently – it's possible that a successful project “Wild Heart of Europe” is behind this.

### Fields of work

Many fields of work are indicated at all levels – from conservation, to recreation and tourism, administration and management, education and communication and finally to society and economy.

*It would be good to see and to learn about and to further indicate in which field of work transboundary cooperation is really “story of success” and which of the fields are “just listed”.*

## Strengths

There are several positive results of transboundary cooperation which show the strengths and bring broad benefits for the transboundary area. These include Natura 2000 sites and their management, identical conservation concept and designating common wilderness area in the core zones of both parks, understanding of the importance of the cross border perspective of nature protection and research, joint work of rangers, junior ranger programmes and environmental education.

## Weaknesses

The main weaknesses / impediments for the cooperation are economic differences in the region, language barriers, different policies and laws and despite the basic assurance for the funding there is a significant difference in finances. Also we can say that the Šumava National Park after a long period of more than 10 years of very different nature conservation management objectives is now approaching the same model which has already existed in the Bavarian Forest for more than 30 years.

## BRIEF OVERVIEW ON THE BASIC STANDARDS CRITERIA BASED ON SELF ASSESSMENT FORM

### 1. Primary Criteria

#### 1.1 Vision

Criteria not fulfilled.

It is clear that the both parties share a vision which is guiding their cooperation – day to day activities and in particular project based work. However, the vision in the written form has not been submitted and it is in self assessments form a few times mentioned that the “vision document is preparation.

*It would be very good to see at least drafts during the mission.*

#### 1.2 Fields of Work

Criteria fulfilled.

There are plenty of documents made available including the minutes of the meetings of common projects and others. However, there seem not to be a formulated manner of preparing common fields of work e.g. annual planning of hands on or strategic steps to be taken. There is clear evidence of a lot of activities between the protected areas, although mostly related to projects. The staff is committed to working together.

#### 1.3 Official Agreement

Criteria fulfilled

*It would be good to have an operational agreement adopted at lower level – for example national park boards where more stakeholders are involved.*

#### 1.4 Staff

Criteria fulfilled

Transboundary focal points in both parks are identified. Other staff members with different fields of work for transboundary cooperation are identified including the management, ranger service, information and education, science and research. Both parks work together intensively based on joint activities / projects and there are also direct contacts of the directors too.

*As far it was possible to see from the documents there is no staff actually working to maintain the transboundary cooperation though, e.g. on the work description.*

## **2. Secondary Criteria**

### **2.1 Guiding Rules for Cooperation**

*Criteria fulfilled*

Even though there are no written “rules” of cooperation, adequate measures and mechanisms are in place and there is mutual understanding of the goals, the level and the content of the cooperation.

### **2.2 Exchange of Data**

*Criteria fulfilled*

There is adequate data exchange between both applicants. However there are still many open fields of work where this issue might be significantly improved.

### **2.3 Foreign Language Communication**

*Criteria partly fulfilled*

Language barriers are identified as one of the main impediments. Communication takes place in English or with translation between German and Czech. A very good example is a ranger handbook written in both German and Czech languages.

### **2.4 Ecological Monitoring**

*Criteria fulfilled*

Comprehensive ecological monitoring is in place (animals and plants).

### **2.5 Basis of Financing**

*Criteria fulfilled*

It became obvious that transboundary cooperation is part of the “everyday business” of both parks thus the budget is secured for maintaining the essential active cooperation. However, for major steps, there is an additional need for project funding.

*It would be good if long term financing be secured with a clear decision made that transboundary cooperation is included in the annual work plans in both parks.*

### **3. Primary Field of Work**

#### **3.1 Nature and Landscape Conservation**

*Criteria fulfilled*

The parks have similar zoning systems and in the last five years we can say that the management objectives in the zones are very similar. With the designation of the common "wilderness zone" this criteria is very successfully fulfilled.

### **4. Secondary Fields of Work**

#### **4.1. Education and Communication**

*Criteria fulfilled*

Many good examples are in place. The rangers are playing an important role while their tasks are turned from policing to helping and facilitating.

#### **4.2 Recreation and Sustainable Tourism**

*Criteria partly fulfilled*

There are a number of significant achievements in relation to recreational facilities and material produced to promote sustainable tourism. However, there are neither common plans nor risk analyses to secure sustainable development relating to growing needs for recreation and tourism. There is also no common advertisement / marketing of the transboundary region.

#### **4.3 Research and Monitoring**

*Criteria fulfilled*

The research and monitoring in relation to biological issues as well as to visitor management is in place in both protected areas.

#### **4.4 Mutual Understanding and the Promotion of Peace**

*Criteria fulfilled*

The applicants and all stakeholders are keen to fade the national border away in terms of conservation as well as cultural and educational exchange.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The applicants are well enough prepared to be verified in the field. Some more detailed explanations will be needed especially concerning the "vision" document, structure (in both protected areas) for transboundary cooperation, implementation of the transboundary agreement on the local policy level, identification of priority fields of work and how the language barrier is foreseen to be decreased.

## **Part 2**

### **3. Results of the mission**

#### **3.1 Context**

The mission was extremely well organised by the applicants. We had an opportunity to meet protected area staff members, local policy makers, business partners and NGO representatives on both sides. We also had a good possibility to observe visitor services and nature conservation actions in the field. The initial desk study formed a good backbone for the successful evaluation and all critical issues were handled thoroughly during the field trip. The signing of the Vision 2020 declaration at the beginning of our final discussion complemented our basic finding: the co-operation between two applicant parks is at a mature stage.

History ties these parks firmly together. In the late 1980s and during the years when the iron curtain collapsed the existence of the Bavarian Forest National Park influenced the establishment of the Šumava National Park in the Czech Republic. Later on in the 1990s reciprocally the bigger size and longer border of the Šumava National Park encouraged and influenced the enlargement of the Bavarian Forest National Park in Germany. After a period of long discussions the Šumava National Park applied the same management principles in the bordering core zone area from 2004 (non-intervention). All these aspects are now somehow integrated under the umbrella of "Europe's Wild Heart". That works as a symbol for the jointly managed wilderness area.

#### **3.2 Observations on the strengths and weaknesses of the application**

##### **3.2.1 Strengths**

- joint ecological monitoring and research programmes
- exchange of data, e.g. joint Natura habitat database and shared wildlife monitoring data
- joint wilderness core zone "Europe's Wild Heart" with harmonised management principles
- both parks are relatively well financed, which secure continuity to the co-operation; on the other hand success in acquiring projects has offered possibilities to deepen and widen the scope of joint activities
- joint development of Ranger services and pioneer work in developing and applying the EUROPARC Junior Ranger Programme
- totally almost 100 people participating into the co-operation
- long history of the co-operation resulting in "institutional memory"; good balance of veterans and newcomers among the staff
- long lasting educational and cultural co-operation; also local societies involved
- new cross-border trails complement the good network of visitor facilities
- the parks have identified their role as a bridge constructor in the frame of the long lasting chain of living and livelihoods in the border region.



### 3.2.2 Weaknesses

- concrete and exhaustive mid-term plan is missing as a single paper
- some shortages in documentation; e.g. Guiding Rules for Co-operation is not documented
- on the one hand “Europe’s Wild Heart” forms an identity for the core area. However, in the promotion of the area, many other brands or slogans are also used. This leads to the confusing situation, where the transboundary national park area does not have an unambiguous brand and symbol.
- web and e-communication tools are not developed and not used in joint information and marketing of the area
- no sustainable tourism development strategy for the whole region
- visitor surveys and socio-economic studies are not harmonised or integrated

### **3.3 Fulfilment of the basic standards criteria and verification of the key points**

#### **1. Primary Criteria**

##### **1.1 Vision**

*The Criteria are fulfilled and verification is in hand*

Visionary elements have been included in many documents (official agreements, minutes of meetings etc.) during the long term co-operation, making reference to having a common core zone area and the application of common principles in practical management. Further these documents include the intention to develop monitoring procedures, visitor facilities, brochures and other informational material, cultural activities and joint projects in order to integrate protected areas more firmly together. However, in the pre-evaluation it was noticed, that even though there are visionary elements in place, a coherent, ambitious and future-oriented vision statement as a single document was missing.

Discussions on both sides during the mission confirmed that key players in co-operation shared joint long term goals and objectives for the future work. The most important stakeholders (e.g. local mayors) also were clearly aware of these objectives and supported practical actions towards attaining these goals. During the mission, verifiers encouraged the personnel to put the vision on paper in order to fully fulfil this criterion. And it was amazing, how efficiently this recommendation was put in practice within two days; using SMSs and e-mails the draft vision was produced before the final concluding discussions took place. The directors of both parks signed Šumava – Bavarian Forest National Parks’ Vision 2020 statement on 23rd August 2009. The new vision is in Annex 2.

##### **1.2 Fields of Work**

*The criteria are fulfilled and verification is in hand*

In general our findings were positive. Fields of work are handled in official agreements and there are many examples of joint projects (list of running and planned projects as Annex 3), which covers conservation activities, rangers' co-operation, youth programmes, development of visitor facilities and services as well as research and monitoring. The personnel on both sides were well aware of the conditions and decision procedures of the partner park, which is a precondition for successful collaboration. It was noticed that the co-operation is now at a deep stage and the fields of work (especially the practical actions) are determined mainly at department/sector level. This is a good and practical approach, but in order to get an overall picture of the whole spectrum of co-operation a comprehensive mid-term plan might be necessary. Our recommendation is that the vision formulation process should continue through drawing up a mid-term plan covering all the fields of work, which are relevant in order to achieve the ambitious vision (*Recommendation 1*).

### 1.3 Official Agreement

*The Criteria are fulfilled and verification is in hand*

The main official bilateral agreement was signed at ministerial level in 1999 (Ministry of Environment of Bavaria and Czech Republic: Memorandum of common work and cooperation between Bavarian Forest National Park and Šumava National Park - 31.8. 1999). In addition one amendment and one new memorandum at the same level were signed in 2005 and 2009. The most relevant for the nature conservation and for the transboundary cooperation between two parks in the field of primary field of work is the amendment from 2005.

These agreements give a good political backbone especially as regards nature conservation activities. However, the verifiers were concerned that there should also be stronger stakeholder involvement and official commitment to adopt these ministerial level agreements at regional level. We recommend to consider if this kind of medium level agreement (e.g. between the Boards of the Parks) could give advantages for the parks to implement the long term vision and the mid-term plan (*Recommendation 2*).

### 1.4 Staff

*The Criteria are fulfilled and verification is in hand*

Both parks officially nominated a member of permanent staff to promote and facilitate transfrontier co-operation and to act as a local focal point. At the moment the co-operation is specialist driven, which results in the fact that the co-operative approach is deeply integrated into the daily management of both parks. Good example of smooth collaboration is the development of ranger services, which include joint training events, shared practical bilingual handbook and informing the partner organisation of daily activities taken place close to the border. Another good example is deep collaboration in research and monitoring programmes. Directors and heads of departments (management teams) have a joint meeting at least once a year and the directors have the possibility of participating in the board meetings of the partner park. Even though the co-operation is specialist driven, it was noted that

the staff is participating at all levels in the joint activities and we estimated that in total almost 100 people are participating in the co-operation.

## **2. Secondary Criteria**

### **2.1 Guiding Rules for Cooperation**

*The Criteria are fulfilled and verification is in hand*

The parks have a long common history dating back to the establishment of the Šumava National Park at the beginning of the 1990s. We noticed a well-developed “institutional memory” due to a nice combination of older and recently recruited staff members. It is good practice that newcomers have an opportunity to go to meet the staff of the partner organisation during their induction process. As mentioned earlier, it was clear that the key personnel were well aware of the partner park's working methods and decision making procedures. As the result of this the guiding rules for co-operation are well developed and in place, but there is no written document on this topic. Of course, this issue is partially handled in official agreements and minutes of meetings as well as on joint project documents. Even though we find the guiding rules well-developed we propose to draw a Guiding Rules Document in order to facilitate in a more formal way the achievement of the long term vision and the implementation of a mid-term plan (*Recommendation 3*).

### **2.2 Exchange of Data**

*The criteria are fulfilled and verification is in hand*

Permanent mutual data management and exchange of different kind of data is definitely one of the strong points of the co-operation. Official agreements form a firm backbone for the data exchange and the staff of both parks follow the established procedures in daily actions. One example of joint work was presented both in the field and at the office: Natura 2000 habitat mapping in the core area was implemented in a joint project and parallel work resulting in harmonised methods, joint interpretation of definitions and a joint database, which is in daily use in both parks. Another successful example of sharing data is the bilingual Ranger's handbook, which contains good basic data as well as regulations and management guidelines from both parks in a practical and useful form. An electronic version of the handbook is used in visitor centres. A third good example is the monitoring of wildlife, which is implemented jointly and thus the results are in use immediately by specialists on both sides of the border. Data exchange is a continuous process and, as one of the next steps in this field, the verifiers proposed to develop harmonised methods for visitor experience analysis and for socio-economic studies (see more on criterion 4.3. Research and Monitoring).

### **2.3 Foreign Language Communication**

*The criteria are fulfilled and verification is in hand*

Language barriers were identified as one of the main impediments in pre-evaluation forms. However, our general finding during the mission was quite positive: the use

of three languages, Czech, German and English were somehow in balance. The number of personnel which are able to speak the partner's language is bigger on the Šumava side than in Bavaria. On the other hand the Bavarian Forest National Park hired recently a Czech ranger, which helps daily co-operation remarkably. Good example of bilingual approach is Rangers' handbook as mentioned earlier. English is quite important in the daily communication and the overall estimation was that the importance of English will increase in the future, especially among the specialists. If the parks feel, that language barrier is a real impediment for the co-operation, it is recommended to handle it as a part of mid-term plan and make a strategy defining concrete actions how to improve the situation (*Recommendation 4*).

#### 2.4 **Ecological Monitoring**

*The criteria are fulfilled and verification is in hand*

Joint ecological monitoring is one of the strengths of the co-operation. One basis for the habitat monitoring of shared ecosystems is the joint Natura 2000 habitat database, which is a result of various joint projects. Another ongoing example is wildlife monitoring, which is really based on a transboundary approach. At the moment the projects are focused especially on tracking lynxes in the Bavarian Forest and Šumava National Parks (<http://www.luchserleben.de/project/>). The monitoring also covers roe deer and red deer migration in the border region as well as the ecological monitoring of capercaillies (and other grouse) which are in place separately on both sides using the same methods. Additionally the ecological monitoring of natural dynamics in forests is functioning on both sides.

#### 2.5 **Basis of Financing**

*The criteria are fulfilled and verification is in hand*

We gained the impression that the collaboration between the Bavarian Forest and Šumava NPs is deeply integrated into the daily activities of both of the parks and for many tasks the prevailing approach is "to do it jointly". From the financial point of view this means, that it is impossible to estimate exactly how much funding is allocated to the joint activities. However, it is clear that both parks are government organisations and have a relatively good financial situation as regards basic duties and thus we can judge, that the long term financial basis is secure. Annually the allocation is based on the negotiations between specialists and project agreements during the operational planning process for the following year. Both parks approve the financial commitments as a part of their normal finance procedures (bottom-up principle).

The Bavarian Forest and Šumava National Parks have also been very successful in fundraising from international programmes. There are a lot of examples of finished projects and Annex 3 shows on-going and planned project activities. It is worth mentioning that the projects cover exceptionally well all the main fields of work.

### **3. Primary Field of Work**

#### **3.1 Nature and Landscape Conservation**

*The criteria are fulfilled and verification is in hand*

The applicant parks have a complementary zonation system and management objectives particularly for the core zone area. The project "Europe's Wild Heart" is a good example of a mutual agreement on applying non-intervention management on both sides of the border aiming at IUCN management category 1B. This management approach has been valid for five years and it is clear that without the encouraging example from the Bavarian Forest National Park since the 1970s the approach would not have changed in the Šumava National Park after 2004. At the moment the size of the core area is almost 15,000 ha with 28 km of shared borderline and this will be expanded by up to 25,000 ha and 45 km of shared borderline by 2027. The transfrontier migration of species and natural evolutionary processes are uninhibited in this area. The parks have jointly implemented a number of transboundary nature conservation projects in the core area; e.g. peat bog restoration, Natura 2000 habitat mapping, applying joint bark beetle management and wild life monitoring. Additionally ecological aspects (e.g. important habitats for capercaillie) are exemplarily taken into account when planning new cross-border nature trails (Europe's Wild Heart trails).

As regards landscape conservation, the parks differ from each other: we can say that landscape conservation is in place in the Šumava National Park due to the fact that inside its Zone III (fringe zone) there are villages and agricultural land. The park is officially involved in the "landscape planning system" and the park authority plays an important (leading) role in the process of "master plan". Something similar is not in place on the Bavarian side due to the fact that there are no villages and "open" landscapes (agricultural land) in the park. In spite of the differences in the mandate of the parks the involvement of local authorities for discussions on landscape conservation was common to both parks.

### **4. Secondary Fields of Work**

#### **4.1. Education and Communication**

*The criteria are fulfilled and verification is in hand*

The parks have jointly agreed on a common identity (Europe's Wild Heart) and the key messages have also been jointly defined (wilderness, non-intervention management and let nature be nature). It was noticeable that the mayors we met and the representatives of NGOs were aware of these messages and committed to delivering the same message.

The parks' rangers have a big role in identity building. Close co-operation among the rangers started in 2001, and included joint training, events, patrolling, compiling bilingual ranger handbook etc. One important part of the co-operation has been turning the approach from policing to helping and facilitating customers on both sides. Additionally, the two parks have been pioneers in developing and implementing EUROPARC's Junior Ranger Programme.

We could see a lot of good examples of publications where information from the brother / sister park were presented, such as through park newspapers ("Unser Wilder Wald" / "Šumava"), as well as slide shows and exhibitions in visitor centres. Some environmental education programmes are planned and implemented together. One important part of the co-operation has been cultural exchange. The area is well known from its glass industry heritage. One good example of the transboundary cultural co-operation is the roving exhibition "Glass Arch", a greenish shiny, five-metre-long boat lying at anchor. It consists of 480 connected glass panels and is kept by an oaken hand. At the moment, after several years of moving between different locations within the National Parks' Region the Arch is situated near Mt. Lusen, between „Teufelsloch" and "Himmelsleiter", close to the Czech border, where one of the new transboundary Europe's Wild Heart trails starts.

The role of the internet in communication seems to be surprisingly low, especially regarding transboundary information. It is possible to reach people from the region using traditional communication tools but the area also has the potential to become a popular wilderness destination of European importance. It is not possible to achieve this position without putting resources into the web and e-communication tools. We recommend shifting a part of the communication budget into the use of electronic media and for the promotion of wilderness Europe-wide (*Recommendation 5*).

#### 4.2. Recreation and Sustainable Tourism

*The Criteria are fulfilled and verification is in hand*

Visitor facilities are well developed in both parks. From the very beginning one of the main aims has been to offer information to visitors regarding recreational opportunities in the neighbouring park. Transboundary public transport is also under development. The enlargement of Schengen area made border-crossing simpler and three new transboundary trails were opened in July 2009. At present regular visitors have good opportunities to enjoy natural and cultural heritage on both sides of the border.

If we examine tourism as a business, the overall picture is a bit different. The Bavarian Forest National Park has run a partnership programme with hotels and other businesses since 2005 and at the moment it has some 50 partners. Šumava National Park is now trying to apply the same principles, but the project is only in its starting phase. Some hotels from both sides have started marketing co-operation without the involvement of the parks. Even though significant co-operation between the parks, tourism business and local municipalities was visible, it was clear that a comprehensive sustainable tourism development strategy (STDS) is missing. Our recommendation is to start the process aiming at compiling such a plan and using the destination management approach as a basic framework (*Recommendation 6*). During the mission we heard that the parks consider applying PAN Parks certification for the area. The principles of PAN Parks require a STDS as well as a system of local partnerships with the private sector. EUROPARC has the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, a programme that also includes these elements. It would be advisable to use one of these programmes as a guiding instrument for developing a tourism strategy for the whole transboundary region.

#### 4.3. Research and Monitoring

*The criteria are fulfilled and verification is in hand*

Joint ecological research and monitoring are one of the strong points of the co-operation as mentioned earlier (e.g. wild life monitoring, habitat mapping etc.). The collaboration includes monitoring of visitor disturbance along the new cross-border nature trails. Universities from both sides are integrated into the work. During the mission we noticed that even though both parks have well-developed visitor surveys and systematic socio-economic research programmes, the methods are not harmonised and thus the results are not compatible. We recommend developing these topics jointly in order to gain a better overall picture on visitor profiles, visitor satisfaction and the economic importance of the parks' activities (*Recommendation 7*). This kind of harmonisation would support a destination management approach and is closely related to STDS preparation (see previous section).

#### 4.4 Mutual Understanding and the Promotion of Peace

*The criteria are fulfilled and verification is in hand*

Co-operation started unofficially immediately after the collapse of the iron curtain. In the beginning this work was characterised by enthusiasm, spontaneity and perhaps even "romance". This formed a good basis for the official agreement of 1999 and in particular for its implementation during the following decade. The railway station at Železná ruda / Bayerisch Eisenstein located right on the German-Czech border is a good example of information points where the parks have their information together with general tourism information for the border region as well as good background historical information dating back to the Second World War. That very place was also the venue for signing the first official agreement on the parks' co-operation in 1999.

Another good example of good personal level co-operation is the integration of ranger systems within the last 8 years. This has resulted not only in better working practices and joint materials but also a lot of unofficial contacts and friendships across the border. It was also noticeable how well and identically the personnel from both of the parks recognised the long joint history and culture as one of the main characteristics of the region. The parks have identified their role as a bridge builder in the frame of the long lasting chain of living and livelihoods in this border region.

### 4. Conclusions

- All four **Primary Criteria** are fulfilled. Verifying documents are in hand.
- All five **Secondary Criteria** are fulfilled. Verifying documents are in hand.
- The criteria of the **Primary Field of Work** are fulfilled. Verifying documents are in hand.
- Criteria of all four **Secondary Fields of Work** are fulfilled. Verifying documents are in hand.

## Overall Conclusion:

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**The two applicant Parks: Bavarian Forest National Park (GER) and Šumava National Park (CZ) successfully meet the requirements of the EUROPARC Basic Standards for Transfrontier Cooperation, and therefore also for the EUROPARC certificate “Transboundary Parks - Following Nature’s Design”.**

## 5. Recommendations

### Summary on recommendations

The following is a summary of recommendations of which justification is presented above. The recommendations are not crucial in order to complete the certification process; they can rather be characterized as logical next steps when deepening the co-operation in the future.

#### Recommendation 1:

The vision formulation process should continue with a **mid-term plan** drawn up covering all the fields of work relevant in order to achieve the ambitious vision.

#### Recommendation 2:

It is recommended to consider drawing up a **medium level official agreement** (e.g. between the boards of the parks), which could lead to stronger stakeholder involvement and official commitment to adopt and implement ministerial level agreements at regional level.

#### Recommendation 3:

It is recommended to draw up a **guiding rules document** in order to facilitate the more formal way the achievement of the long term vision and the implementation of mid-term plan.

#### Recommendation 4:

If the parks feel, that a language barrier is a real impediment to co-operation as indicated in their pre-evaluation report, it is recommended to handle it as part of the mid-term plan and to draw up a **special strategy for tackling the language barrier**.

#### Recommendation 5:

It is recommended to intensify the use of the **internet** in communication and shift a part of the communication budget into the use of **e-communication tools** in order to promote the parks' wilderness Europe-wide.



Recommendation 6:

It is recommended to start a participatory process heading towards compiling a ***comprehensive sustainable tourism development strategy (STDS)*** for the whole national park region.

Recommendation 7:

It is recommended to ***harmonise visitor surveys and socio-economic research methods*** in order to get a better overall picture on visitor profiles, visitor satisfaction and the economic importance of the parks' activities for the surrounding society.

## 6. Annexes

ANNEX 1	TB verification mission: Bavarian Forest National Park (Germany) & Šumava National Park (Czech Republic). List of locations, themes and participants which have been met during the mission.
ANNEX 2	Šumava – Bavarian Forest Parks' Vision 2020
ANNEX 3	Interreg Projects (Operating Programme Czech Republic - Bavaria- Aim 3; Disposal Fund)

## **TB verification mission: Bavarian Forest National Park (Germany) & Šumava National Park (Czech Republic)**

### **List of locations, themes and participants during the mission**

#### **Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> of July:**

##### **Location 1: Kellermann Hotel, Grafenau – Bavarian Forest**

Theme: Unofficial introduction meeting, technical details of the programme

- Hans Kiener, BF NP, Head of nature conservation and visitor management department
- Karl Friedrich Sinner, BF NP, Director

#### **Tuesday, 21st of July:**

##### **Location 2: Open air museum, Finsterau – Bavarian Forest**

Theme: Introduction meeting, History of cooperation – milestones, management objectives, forestry, environmental education, tourism, etc.

- Hans Kiener, BF NP, Head of nature conservation and visitor management department
- Britta Baums, BF NP, Environmental education and regional development department
- Joseph Wanninger, BF NP, Head of environmental education and regional development department
- Franz Barsl, BF NP, Head of forest management department
- Lukas Laux, BF NP, Environmental education and regional development department
- Josef Štemberk, SU NP, Project manager
- Desislava Parvanova, DBU scholarship holder, observer
- Michal Valenta, SU NP, Office of director, Division for Legal and International affairs
- Iveta Štefanova, SU NP, Office of director, Deputy director
- Kathrin Jahncke, BF NP, language support
- Zdenka Křenova, SU NP, Head of Research and Nature conservation department, Deputy director

##### **Location 3: “Non – intervention” zone, Schwarzbachklause – Bavarian Forest**

Theme: “Bark beetles breeding”, Nature conservation, Monitoring, Wildlife management, Forestry, Access

- Hans Kiener, BF NP, Head of nature conservation and visitor management department
- Britta Baums, BF NP, Environmental education and regional development department
- Franz Barsl, BF NP, Head of Forest management department
- Josef Štemberk, SU NP, Project manager
- Desislava Parvanova, DBU scholarship holder, observer

- Michal Valenta, SU NP, Office of director, Division for Legal and International affairs
- Iveta Štefanova, SU NP, Office of director, Deputy director
- Kathrin Jahncke, BF NP, language support
- Zdenka Krenova, SU NP, Head of Research and Nature conservation department, Deputy director
- Karl Heinz Engelmayer, BF NP, Nature conservation and visitor management department

#### **Location 4: Border point, Bučina – SU NP**

Theme: Information points, visitor management, history of cooperation, design

- Hans Kiener, BF NP, Head of nature conservation and visitor management department
- Josef Štemberk, SU NP, Project manager
- Michal Valenta, SU NP, Office of director, Division for Legal and International affairs
- Iveta Štefanova, SU NP, Office of director, Deputy director
- Kathrin Jahncke, BF NP, language support
- Zdenka Krenova, SU NP, Head of Research and Nature conservation department, Deputy director
- Maria Husslein, BF NP, Nature conservation and visitor management department

#### **Location 5: Open air museum, Finsterau – BF**

Theme: Visitor management, involvement of the local communities, tourism development, discussion with two mayors

- Max Gibis, Mayor of the municipality Mauth - BF
- Vaclav Vostradovsky, Mayor of the municipality Kvilda – SU
- Hans Kiener, BF NP, Head of nature conservation and visitor management department
- Kathrin Jahncke, BF NP, language support
- Zdenka Krenova, SU NP, Head of research and nature conservation department, Deputy director
- Maria Husslein, BF NP, Nature conservation and visitor management department

### **Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> of July**

#### **Location 6: BF NP Headquarters, Grafenau – BF**

Theme: Ecological monitoring, research, data exchange

- Hans Kiener, BF NP, Head of nature conservation and visitor management department
- Marco Heuerich, BF NP, Research department
- Kathrin Jahncke, BF NP, language support

#### **Location 7: Mount Lusen – BF**

Theme: Ranger service, Visitor management

- Hans Kiener, BF NP, Head of nature conservation and visitor management department
- Sepp Eberhardt, BF NP, Head of the ranger service
- Kathrin Jahncke, BF NP, language support

**Location 8: Information centre Haus zur Wildnis – BF**

Theme: Environmental education, visitor management

- Hans Kiener, BF NP, Head of nature conservation and visitor management department
- Kathrin Jahncke, BF NP, language support

**Location 9: Železna ruda – information point – SU**

Theme: Visitor management, discussion about transboundary cooperation basic standards and criteria – vision, agreement, primary and secondary criteria

- Hans Kiener, BF NP, Head of nature conservation and visitor management department
- Kathrin Jahncke, BF NP, language support
- Michal Valenta, SU NP, Office of director, Division for Legal and International affairs
- Michal Palka, SU NP, Office of director, Head of Division for Legal and International affairs
- Zdenka Krenova, SU NP, Head of Research and Nature conservation department, Deputy director

**Location 10: Srni – SU**

Theme: Tourism, involvement of private businesses

- Vaclav Sklenar, Srni hotel director
- Michal Valenta, SU NP, Office of director, Division for Legal and International affairs
- Michal Palka, SU NP, Office of director, Head of Division for Legal and International affairs
- Zdenka Krenova, SU NP, Head of Research and Nature conservation department, Deputy director
- Josef Štemberk, SU NP, Project manager

**Location 11: Information point Rokyta - SU**

Theme: Visitor management

- Michal Valenta, SU NP, Office of director, Division for Legal and International affairs
- Zdenka Krenova, SU NP, Head of Research and Nature conservation department, Deputy director

**Location 12: Trijezerni slat (peat bog) – SU**

Theme: Nature conservation, visitor management

- Michal Valenta, SU NP, Office of director, Division for Legal and International affairs
- Zdenka Krenova, SU NP, Head of Research and Nature conservation department, Deputy director

**Location 13: Rokitzke slate, Schachtenfilz - SU**

Theme: Nature conservation, Monitoring, Renaturation, Access

- Michal Valenta, SU NP, Office of director, Division for Legal and International affairs
- Zdenka Krenova, SU NP, Head of Research and Nature conservation department, Deputy director

**Location 14: Hotel Inn, Kvilda – SU**

Theme: Transboundary cooperation basic standards and criteria, Cooperation with municipalities, Projects

- František Krejčí, SU NP, Director
- Michal Valenta, SU NP, Office of director, Division for Legal and International affairs
- Zdenka Krenova, SU NP, Head of Research and Nature conservation department, Deputy director

### **Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> of July**

#### **Location 15: Černa hora, Prameny Vltavy (Vltava spring) - SU**

Theme: Zoning, "Bark beetles breeding", Nature conservation, Monitoring, Wildlife management, Forestry, Visitor management, Ranger service

- František Krejčí, SU NP, Director
- Michal Valenta, SU NP, Office of director, Division for Legal and International affairs

#### **Location 16: SU NP Headquarters Vimperk - SU**

Theme: Transboundary cooperation basic standards and criteria, Cooperation with municipalities, projects

- František Krejčí, SU NP, Director
- Michal Valenta, SU NP, Office of director, Division for Legal and International affairs
- Iveta Štefanova, SU NP, Office of director, Deputy director

#### **Location 17: Local municipality of Kvilda – SU**

Theme: Landscape planning, Development, Cooperation with municipalities

- Vaclav Vostradovsky, Mayor of the municipality Kvilda
- Vaclav Hrebek, Municipality Kvilda council member
- Tomáš Hlavaty, SU NP, Landscape planning officer
- Michal Valenta, SU NP, Office of director, Division for Legal and International affairs
- Zdenka Krenova, SU NP, Head of Research and Nature conservation department, Deputy director

#### **Location 15: Border point, Bučina – SU**

Theme: Conclusion meeting

- Karl Friedrich Sinner, BF NP, Director
- František Krejčí, SU NP, Director
- Hans Kiener, BF NP, Head of nature conservation and visitor management department
- Kathrin Jahncke, BF NP, language support
- Michal Valenta, SU NP, Office of director, Division for Legal and International affairs
- Michal Palka, SU NP, Office of director, Head of Division for Legal and International affairs
- Zdenka Krenova, SU NP, Head of Research and Nature conservation department, Deputy director
- Iveta Štefanova, SU NP, Office of director, Deputy director

The National Parks Bavarian Forest and Šumava were established in a forest ecosystem of Central Europe with the least human impact in order to protect this unique nature heritage of Europe-wide importance. For a further enhancement of the long standing and successful cooperation of the two National Parks we agree on the following objectives:



**EUROPAS WILDES HERZ**  
Nationalpark Bayerischer Wald • Národní park Šumava  
**DIVOKÉ SRDCE EVROPY**

## Šumava – Bavarian Forest National Parks' Vision 2020

1. Šumava and Bavarian Forest National Parks pursue the aim to be officially the first and largest joint entity of two National Parks in Central Europe.
2. Achieve a joint core area of about 15,000 ha with harmonised management principles, information services and monitoring networks to officially become the first and largest trans-boundary wilderness area in Europe: Wild heart of Europe.
3. Regarding internationally acknowledged IUCN regulations and taking into consideration the differing conditions of the two protected areas, jointly aim at the key task of protecting the undisturbed course of natural processes, to be realised:
  - On the Czech side on 30% of the National Park area until 2010,
  - On the German side by a continuous and stepwise expansion of the "nature zone" to 75% of the National Park area until 2027.
4. Joint improvement of measures concerning restoration, conservation and management of wildlife in the Greater Bohemian Forest System.
5. Jointly increase the possibilities for experiencing wilderness, environmental education and research, which are key and priority issues in the National Park Management.
6. The Bavarian Forest and Šumava form a joint National Park region. They want to strengthen the local economic development by supporting sustainable and environmentally-sensitive tourism and at the same time ensure the ecological integrity of the protected areas. These objectives will be achieved by the following joint projects:
  - "Beastly Wild" tourism concept to promote and connect National Park communities in the Bavarian Forest and Šumava
  - "National Park Partners" - project to support and connect enterprises of the tourism industry on both sides of the border
  - Improvement and interconnection of public transport - development of a joint fare system for all National Park busses in the National Park region

**Karl Friedrich Sinner**  
Director of Bavarian Forest  
National Park

**Frantisek Krejci**  
Director of Šumava  
National Park



**Národní park  
Šumava**

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## Interreg Projects (Operating Programm Czech Republic - Bavaria- Aim 3; Disposal Fund)

Running projects					
Name of the project	Lead Partner	Partner	date of the application	approved	dissaving
Research of the lynx and roe-deer in the moutain ecosystem	NP Bavarian Forest	Šumava NP	01/03/2008	yes	2009-2011
Ranger's cooperation	NP Bavarian Forest	Šumava NP	2008	not	
Restoration of the info-panels	NP Bavarian Forest	Šumava NP	2008	not	
Jugendforum /Youth Forum (money are transfered to Junior Ranger)	Šumava NP	NP Bavarian Forest	9/2008	yes	2008
Green Sumava - drawing competition for children from both national parks	NP Bavarian Forest	Šumava NP	2009	yes	2009
Bikeway part III (Vysoke Lavky - Velký Bor)	Šumava NP	District Regen	12/2008	yes	2009-2011
Innovation of the Green Busses	Šumava NP	District Regen	12/2008	yes	2009-2012
National Park Guides	Šumava NP	NP Bavarian Forest	12/2009	not	
Painters of the Nature	Šumava NP	Association Bild-Werk Frauenau	12/2008	yes	2009
Chiropterans and development of their monitoring	Bavarian Forest Nature Park	Šumava NP	3/2008	yes	2009-2011
Enlargement of the services for visitors ( <i>biligual mobil exibition - will be used for e.g. fairs, restoration and innovation of 4 natural trails, building of the Zone of forest games on Czech side, bilingual pannels on the border, restoration of Bucina trail, improvement of language knowledge...</i> )	NP Bavarian Forest	Šumava NP	12/2008	yes	2009-2011
New conception of History Museum in St. Oswald- on Czech side: env. education materials, Env. education's exhibibions, Multimedial library-study room of env. educ.	NP Bavarian Forest	Šumava NP	2009	yes	2009-2012
Planning projects					
Film about both NP	NP Bavarian Forest	Šumava NP	autumn 2009		
New centre of environmental education - Karlov	Šumava NP	NP Bavarian Forest			
Project od env. Education for basic and secondary schools	Šumava NP	NP Bavarian Forest			
Research nad Training Centrum Kvilda	Šumava NP	NP Bavarian Forest	2010		
Bikeway part IV (Velký Bor - Srni)	Šumava NP	District Regen	autumn 2009		



July 22nd 2009, Iveta Stefanova