

SECRETARIAT GENERAL

DIRECTORATE GENERAL II - DEMOCRACY

Democratic Governance Directorate



Please quote: EFG/IO

Strasbourg, 12 December 2013

Dear Ms Klais,

The Secretariat of the Bern Convention at the Council of Europe has been informed about the development plans of the Austrian Federal Forests (Österreichische Bundesforste), aiming at the construction of a large wind turbines park in Northern Austria. The construction plans concern an area situated in the close vicinity of two National Parks which hold the European Diploma for Protected Areas of the Council of Europe, namely Thayatal and Podyji National Parks, respectively in Austria and the Czech Republic.

The range and location of the construction plans raise concerns over their possible negative impact on threatened species and habitats of the two European Diploma holding areas, including wildlife in the migration corridors of the parks.

We therefore would like to remind the Austrian authorities that the possible effects of these development plans have to be carefully studied through an Environmental Impact Assessment. In addition, we would like to raise your attention to the recently finalised [“Analysis of the effects of wind farms on birds, and best practice guidance on integrated planning and impact assessment”](#), prepared by BirdLife International on behalf of the Bern Convention.

With respect of the European Diploma awarded to the two National Parks and the possible adverse impact of the construction plans, the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas will examine the issue at its next meeting (21 March 2014, Strasbourg). In accordance with the regulation of the European Diploma for Protected Areas, an exceptional on-the-spot appraisal can be decided, aiming to assess the impact of the planned wind turbines on the qualities of the areas for which they have been awarded the Diploma.

Ms Simone KLAIS
Focal Point to the Bern Convention
Amt der Wiener Landesregierung
Magistratsabteilung (MA) 22
Umweltschutz
Dresdner Straße 45, A-1200 WIEN
Austria

We invite the Austrian authorities to inform the Secretariat of the Bern Convention on the steps undertaken for the assessment of the impact of the wind turbine construction plans on biodiversity in the area and on the further development of the project.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Eladio Fernández-Galiano', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eladio Fernández-Galiano
Head of the Democratic Initiatives Department

CC: Helmut Salek, p.A. Bürgerinitiative Thayatal
Robert Brunner, Geschäftsführer, Nationalpark Thayatal GmbH
Tomáš Rothröckl, Director, Podyji National Park Administration