



STATE CONSERVATION REPORT

(in compliance with Paragraph 169 of the *Operational Guidelines*)

Durmitor National Park (Montenegro) (N 100bis)

1. Executive Summary of the report

Durmitor National Park was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1980, on the basis of natural criteria (ii), (iii), and (iv). At the 44th extended session, the World Heritage Committee adopted a decision 39COM7B.62 with a list of recommendations focused on sustainable development of the touristic infrastructure; consulting with UNESCO regarding alterations in borders of the property; providing updates on existing projects that could have or have negative impacts on the "Durmitor National Park" and implementation of all mission recommendations.

In 2020, the Government of Montenegro terminated the process of expansion of ski infrastructure developments in the property, and the focus shifted to projects of reconstruction of the existing ski infrastructure. The possibility of amendments in the Special Purpose Spatial Plan on the section of tourism infrastructure development will be considered after the adoption of the Revised Protection Study for the National Park that proposes returning of the borders of the National Park before their modification in 2013, so as possible new zonation, and definition of a buffer zone. The Draft Study will be finalized by the end of 2022 and will be sent to the World Heritage Committee in the coming months.

Conducted monitoring of the Tara River showed the presence of Hucho hucho (Danube Salmon) in two measuring localities out of six. The locality where Hucho hucho is detected is located in the "Durmitor National Park" ("Rafting"), where the river is defined as clear, cold and calm.

The State Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina did not contact Montenegro regarding the updated EIA for the Hydroelectric power plant project (HPP) "Buk Bijela", thus no activities were undertaken in line with Advice Note.

The management body of "Durmitor National Park" has defined a few major threats on the property such as development of touristic infrastructure, wildfires, increased number of tourists and other common pressures in the protected areas.

Implementation of two projects could have potential negative impact: 1) line route for construction of transmission line 400 kV Lastva Grbaljska-Pljevlja, will pass through III protection zone in location Durđevića Tara, and will replace the existing 110 kV transmission line route, and 2) HPP "Komarnica" on potential extension of the National Park. The evaluation procedure of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Elaborate for HPP "Komarnica" is ongoing.

2. Response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee

In the decision 39COM7B.62, the World Heritage Committee recalls on the previous decision 43 COM 7B.19; welcomes that the State Party has started implementing the recommendations of the 2018 mission but also requests to implement all mission recommendations; requests the State Party to further consult with the World Heritage Centre and IUCN before enacting any revision of the boundaries and buffer zone of the National Park, recalls that an expansion of ski infrastructure developments would constitute an ascertained danger to the OUV, welcomes the State Party's decision to suspend all plans for a potential expansion of ski zones; express concerns that Spatial Plan for "Durmitor National Park" still foresee the possibility of expanding ski areas and infrastructures; requests not to pursue with the construction of tourism infrastructure inside the property; express concern about the negative impact of constructing the Bar-Boljare motorway on Tara River and requests from the State Party to confirm the status of key species contributing to OUV.

In response to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee, the Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning, and Urbanism of Montenegro, in close cooperation with all relevant entities presents the results regarding the implementation of the recommendations given by the World Heritage Committee.

- **Implementation of the recommendations concerning: sustainable tourism development, ski center development and amendments to the Spatial Plan for "Durmitor National Park"**

In line with the report (17.06.2020) of the joint World Heritage Center-IUCN Advisory Mission the Government of Montenegro has ended the process of an expansion of ski infrastructure developments in the World Heritage property "Durmitor National Park". The expansion of the ski infrastructure was in accordance with the Law on the Budget of Montenegro for 2018, as part of the program for the improvement of the tourist offer which included a construction of a six-seater cable car and 4 km of ski slopes in the existing ski center "Savin Kuk".

In its further planning, the Ministry of Economic Development and Tourism will more focus on the development of the projects that include reconstruction or adaptation of the existing ski infrastructures. The World Heritage Committee will be informed about the mentioned projects before their adaptation.

Moreover, the Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism – Directorate for Spatial Planning and Information Systems, will proceed with possible amendments to the Special Purpose Spatial Plan for the Durmitor area in the part of tourism infrastructure developments after the adaptation of the Revised Protection Study of the "Durmitor National Park", with proposed change in protection zones and delineation of the National Park's boundary.

- **Revision of the National Park's boundary, protected zones and buffer zone and State Party consultation with the World Heritage Centre and IUCN**

At the beginning of 2022, the Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning, and Urbanism – Directorate for Nature Protection, in line with article 28 of the Nature Protection Law ("Official Journal of Montenegro, № 54/16 and 18/19) has initiated the revision of the Protection Study (Study). The Study presents the base for the preparation of the Special Purpose Spatial Plan and proposes changes in the boundaries, defines protection zones and buffer zone, but also describes spatial distribution of the most important habitats and species and provides other important information. Due to the early establishment of the National Park in 1952, the Protection Study was missing, so its boundaries, protection zones and the buffer zone were delineated in the Special Purpose Spatial Plan for the Durmitor area.

EPA is in charge of preparation of the Study which is expected to be drafted by the end of the 2022. The Study will suggest a return of the National Park's boundaries which were valid before they change in 2013. The excluded parts of the National Park will be included again as the III protection zone.

Moreover, the Study foresees the establishment of the buffer zone for the "Durmitor National Park" existing in the current Spatial Plan, whose main goal is to protect the property from anthropogenic

pressures. Ecological and visual aspects together with all existing international designations and national parks in the vicinity were taken into account in the process of defining the buffer zone. The Draft version of the Study includes the total area of the property, the registered size of the property in 1980 and amended size area from 2005 will be submitted to the UNESCO mission in the upcoming months. The digital form of the proposed border of the National Park will be also submitted.

Status of key species in the Tara River, contributing to OUV, including the status of the Danube Salmon, and any other downstream impacts precipitating inside the property

The construction works of the section Smokovac – Mateševo (41 km) of the Bar-Boljare motorway were finished in July 2022, and the section was opened for use.

Tara river is regularly monitored by the Institute for Hydrometeorology and Seismology regularly. In 2022 monitoring was conducted on six localities: Veruša, Trebaljevo, Okruglaš, Mojkovac – under the bridge, “Rafting” and Šćepan polje. Locality “Rafting” is located within the border of “Durmitor National Park” and results showed that the water was extremely clear, cold and calm, and among detected species were Hucho hucho (known as Danube Salmon) and Thymallus thymallus. The dominated specie was Thymallus thymallus (18 individuals out of a total of 20). Hucho hucho was also detected in locality Okruglaš.

Among other species detected in the Tara River were: Salmo labrax, Cottus gobio and Squalius cephalus.

- **Updated EIA - Hydroelectric power plant project “Buk Bijela”**

Up to date, Montenegro did not receive any request from the State Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina on updating the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), in line with IUCN’s Advice Note on Environmental Assessment to the World Heritage Centre.

3. Other current conservation issues with a negative impact on the property’s Outstanding Universal Value

For the purpose of this conservation report, Public Enterprise for the National Park of Montenegro has identified several threats/pressures with a negative impact on the property’s Outstanding Universal Value, that in majority cases coincides with the general threats present in other protected areas.

Among threats/ pressures preasures are: development of touristic infrastructure, wildfires and increased number of the tourists that results in disturbance of animals, picking and damaging of protected, endemic and rare plant species and mushrooms.

Flora and Vegetation

As a consequence of less grazing and mowing, there is a risk of pasture meadows becoming overgrown. These pasture meadows have been identified as a potential Natura habitat type 6520.

The heath vegetation, especially blueberry, is under pressure from irregular picking. This vegetation belongs to habitat type 4060. Due to lack of data, it is not possible to define the amount of the harvested medical plant, forest fruit and mushrooms in a commercial purpose.

Forest

Abiotic pressure, represents the strongest pressure on the “Durmitor National Park“ and it impacts on 53% of the National Park’s surface. This pressure is mostly manifested through damage from wildfire, poor and shallow soil and drought, which causes trees to dry, snowstorms and windstorms. Biotic

pressure was determined to be dominant on 9% of the Park's surface, where a significant presence of pathogenic fungi and/or harmful insects was recorded.

Anthropogenic pressure is present in 24% of the surface, and it includes illegal logging and other illegal actions that lead to fires, tree damage, etc. It is estimated that 3% of trees are damaged, and the main cause is believed to be burning agricultural plots.

Fauna

The state of reptiles and amphibians is assessed as relatively stable, with the exception of populations of rare endangered species of water marmots that are threatened by the presence of non-native species in some lakes. Indigenous fish species in the Tara River are threatened by anthropogenic influences.

Based on a comparison of historical data and data obtained from recent research, anthropogenic influence as well as abiotic factors caused certain changes in the bird fauna. As a result of the increased human presence (tourism and forest exploitation) major changes happened to bird fauna. For instance, *Bucephala clangula* has not nested on the Durmitor Lakes for 50 years, in recent time there were no records of nesting of any waterfowl species on the Black Lake (Crno jezero).

Due to the exploitation of forests in the buffer zones of the "Durmitor National Park" and sanitary felling, the forest habitats, especially in the vicinity of Black Lake, changed their character.

Mammals

When it comes to the anthropogenic impact on the fauna of large mammals, one of the most significant impacts is hunting and poaching. Hunting in the hunting grounds overlapping the Park's buffer zones affects the ecology of large mammals because their activity areas include a unique territory within the buffer zone and the National Park area.

Also, to a certain extent, there is a negative impact from the use of snowmobiles in winter and other tourist activities in certain zones.

4. Potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) intended within the property, the buffer zone(s) and/or corridors or other areas with a possible negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, including authenticity and integrity

Montenegrin Electric Transmission System, Joint Stock Company Podgorica (CGES) implements activities on the construction of an electric power facility, transmission line (TL) 400 kV Lastva Grbaljska-Pljevlja, which is part of the project of connecting the electric power systems of Montenegro and Italy (Detailed Spatial Plan for the 400kV transmission line corridor with optical cable from Montenegro coast to Pljevlja and submarine cable 500kV with optical cable Italy-Montenegro).

According to the detailed spatial plan, the route of the TL 400 kV will pass through the "Durmitor National Park" and will replace the existing 110 kV transmission line route that goes through III protection zone in location Đurđevića Tara.

The planned construction of hydroelectric power plant "Komarnica" will have a potential negative impact on the part of the "Dragišnica and Komarnica" Nature Park proclaimed in 2017, which is also an area of potential extension of the National Park. However, the evaluation procedure of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Elaborate is still ongoing. EPA, by a decision from 30.03.2022. and supplementary decision from 08.04.2022. formed a commission for the evaluation of the EIA Elaborate for the construction of Hydroelectric power plant "Komarnica". The commission that evaluates the EIA Elaborate has the right to return twice EIA Elaborate on the amendments.

The Commission prepared the Report No.03-UIP-1618/47 dated 20.05.2022, with 87 remarks, suggestions, and comments. The Commission concluded that EIA Elaborate cannot be accepted until all

listed deficiencies are eliminated. Concerning the number of objections in the Report, the Commission set the deadline of 855 days from the date of receipt of the Commission's Report.

5. Public access to the state of conservation report

The State Party agrees that the report can be uploaded for public access on the World Heritage Centre's State of Conservation Information System.

6. Signature of the Authority



Ana Novaković Đurović
Minister

Ministry of Ecology, Spatial Planning and Urbanism