



**mouvement
écologique**

P R E S S R E L E A S E

400 trees lose their "arbre remarquable " status: less protection in urban areas - less funding for their maintenance!

A public procedure for the preliminary draft of regulations for "arbres remarquables" – outstanding trees– took place recently. The aim is to give special protection status to trees that are characterised by their particular growth habit, diameter, age, species or connection to a historical event or personality, among other things, and to provide financial aid for their care.

There was already such a list in 2018, which included 535 trees. This now had to be revised due to the Nature Conservation Act.

There was great astonishment when the new proposed list was reviewed and it was realised that only 100 of the previous 500-plus trees had made it onto the new list - meaning that some 400 trees had been "declassified" And only 145 additional trees were chosen to be added to the list.

Who is responsible for this, you may ask? Well, the Nature Agency, which reports to the Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Biodiversity, is responsible for compiling the list. Among other things, it commissioned its foresters to suggest trees for the list.

The second question is then: Did the creators of the list at the time make a mistake and include trees that were "not worth it"? Unfortunately, this is not the case. The Mouvement Écologique is aware of a letter from the forestry administration to its foresters that they should only propose 2-3 trees each for the list. **This means that the selection was based on a blanket quantity limit and not on purely technical criteria!**

The Mouvement Écologique finds this approach completely unjustifiable, especially in times of the biodiversity and climate crisis and the great importance of these trees. And we know that people have a special connection to such "arbres remarquables", which are often older trees.

Perhaps a few trees have died or been felled in the meantime, but hardly the 400 or so. And if this were the case, the problem would be even more serious. But the photos of the trees in the appendix that have lost their protected status clearly show that there must have been other reasons. Because these trees should never have disappeared from the list.

One may therefore wonder what the reasons are for this approach. Well: in the green zone, single trees, groups of trees and avenues have been better protected since 2022¹. But: within the construction perimeter, it is an advantage if trees are recognised as "arbres remarquables". Shouldn't there be too many troublemakers against construction projects in urban areas? Or did they want to accommodate certain owners? Or was the idea of saving money more to the fore, because the special asset is that owners of an "*arbre remarquable*" can benefit from reimbursement of up to 75 % of the costs of maintenance and conservation measures (compared to 50 % without the special status).² At a time when the government is focussing primarily on subsidies in dozens of areas, is the very modest funds that would be needed to maintain these trees supposed to be saved?

In other words, this extremely questionable message is being sent at a time when it is recognised how important it is for private individuals to participate in the greening of towns and villages. Just now, when it is recognised how important biodiversity is in the open countryside and it is known that biodiversity increases with the age of a (native) tree, the Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Biodiversity is sending this signal?

Exactly the opposite should have been the case: Not a limitation, but an expansion of the list would have been expected and necessary!

The Mouvement Ecologique has lodged a formal objection to this procedure and is calling on the Ministry to revise the list and renew the procedure.

Mouvement Ecologique

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¹ Grand-ducal regulation of 8 July 2022 modifying the grand-ducal regulation of 1 August 2018 establishing the protected biotopes, the habitats of common interest and the habitats of species of common interest [...].

² Art. 8 of the " Règlement grand-ducal modifié du 30 septembre 2019 concernant les aides pour l'amélioration de l'environnement naturel "

Appendix - Former "arbres remarquables" that no longer made it onto the list in the "avant-projet"

Oak tree in Grosbous (LUREF coordinates 65974 E | 98400 N)



Photo: Mouvement écologique

Horse chestnut tree in Reckingen an der Mess (LUREF coordinates 68421 E | 69760 N)



Photo: Google Street View

Lime tree in Heispelt (LUREF coordinates 59398 E | 102353 N)



Photo: Google Street View