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**COUNCIL OF EUROPE
EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION**

***NINETEENTH COUNCIL OF EUROPE MEETING
OF THE WORKSHOPS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION***

*Organised under the auspices of the Czech Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers
of the Council of Europe*

“The implementation of the European Landscape Convention at local level: local democracy”

**Brno, Czech Republic,
5-6 September 2017
*Study visit, 7 September 2017***

WORKSHOP 2

Instruments for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention at local level

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In the decades to come Europe must face many challenges. Such challenges are:

- dealing with the expected energy crisis;
- compliance with the requirements on sustainability;
- changing climate;
- halting the loss in biological and landscape diversity;
- demographic change.

The citizens of Europe cannot combat directly, individually against these challenges.

As it mentioned in the Preamble of the European Landscape Convention, the developments in agriculture, forestry, industry, raw material extraction, energy, transport, infrastructure, tourism and recreation are accelerating changes in landscapes.

We are responsible for the changes in the landscape caused directly or indirectly by human activities. Us: the whole society, all decision-making tiers from individuals through local and regional authorities to the State. Everybody: citizens, experts, political leaders; individuals and institutions. Each decision can have some effect.

A major part of our objectives can be linked to the local level. In order to achieve the goals and fulfil the tasks laid down in the European Landscape Convention there is a need for a paradigm change in landscape policy. Parties should enable residents to regain control over the quality of their living environments.

In the general responsibility for the landscape, the State is subjected to a kind of primacy and priority. Primacy and priority because the state should create, correct and enforce of instruments for the protection, management and planning of landscape. It is directly and primarily task of the state to amend legislation to enable residents to regain control over the quality of their living environments. Moreover it is directly and primarily the responsibility of the State for what and how motivates all the stakeholders by non-legislative tools.

In order to halt the loss of landscape diversity, and the degradation of its quality, parties should integrate the international commitments on landscape approach defined in state-level landscape policy into local policies and put into practice at local level. On the one hand, because changes of landscapes can most clearly be recognised at local level: on the other, because that is the right place for the indispensable debate between the stakeholders. Therefore the local level is the tier at which the democratic process is most operational.

Parties should make residents really capable of influencing decisions which are taken at local level. Landscape plans, management plans, municipal master plans, inventories of local heritage, etc. with the processes of public participation are crucial instruments of the implementation of the European Landscape Convention. The proper information, consultation, discussion and participation contribute to resisting all types of process driven by the globalisation of commercial and financial transactions, therefore these are elementary components for preserving our European landscape heritage. Participating processes are the bases of authenticity and democracy and as intermediary tools strengthen local identity by reflecting local value-judgement and integrating local perception of landscape heritage.