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EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION
CONVENTION EUROPÉENNE DU PAYSAGE



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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

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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 3

Calabria - Future local development scenarios aimed to innovation, creativity and well-being in relation to landscape conservation.

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Calabria Region has 834 km of coastline, 300 on the Tyrrhenian Sea and the rest on the Ionian side. It is a multifaceted system that gives rise to very different landscapes and contexts, ranging from rocky systems to sand, from the mountains falling into the sea to the long and deep beaches of the plains and the Ionian Sea. Along the Tyrrhenian coast, in particular, the continuity and welding of the many recently built urban centres has created a kind of linear, spontaneous city, where it is difficult to distinguish between one centre and another one. On the Ionian side, centres have lower density and are more distant from the sea, often alternating with rural agricultural areas.

Looking at the settlement system, Calabria is characterized by a weak urban structure, consisting of few towns and many small and medium urban centres, a settlement system without a top

organized structure at regional scale composed of many centres with relatively weak urban functions and influence at local level.

The coastal system represents for Calabria Region one of the macro-systems assessing its identity and structuring its territory, offering a mosaic of landscapes that are the evidence of morphological and ecological complexity and of the relationship between nature and urbanization:

- the existence of a simple structure on the Calabrian coast: few foothills connections and few structural connections between sea and mountain;
- the tendency to an organization based on linear and cemented coastline;
- the presence of both natural landscapes having great environmental value and archaeological and historical heritage, the latter dating back to the period of Magna Graecia located along the Ionian coast (archaeological sites of Locri Epizephiri, Crotona, Sibari) and to the Medieval period with a widespread presence of historic centres, castles and towers often fragmented in the territory dynamics and abandoned;
- the memory in the coastal area of landscapes with traditional crops, mainly citrus and bergamotti (the gardens), which developed in the mid-900 as a system for recovery of coasts: these landscapes are very important from an environmental and historical point of view;
- a not yet responsible tourism model based on the use of the territory, showing the lack of a comprehensive tourism strategy in Calabria.

In this framework, the rivers' network represents an intermediate system between the system of coastal and inland areas, a strict link between inhabited centres, environment and nature, penetration axis towards the inland areas. The Calabrian hydrographic network marks a "plurality of landscapes" which represent a mosaic of varied landscape figures and synthesis between the territorial characteristics and the natural and man-made processes. In these areas of sea-mountain penetration, characterised by the presence of a river or so-called "fiumara", we find a settlement heritage that preserves ancient urban and architectural systems.

In such contexts we find geomorphological, botanical, forestry and wildlife emergencies. In general, rivers and water courses are the main components of landscape systems and structuring ecosystems for different types of landscapes. The importance of such components – and of the whole context - emerges from a perceptive point of view as well.

Rivers play an important role in the socio-settlement and landscaping system of the Region. As Rossi Doria noted in the 1950s, and Lucio Gambi later (1961), the Calabrian river system constituted the frame connecting the various sub-regions in the Calabrian context. They were

made up of the Tyrrhenian and Ionian coastal bands, inland mountains and foothills. Each river or fiumara was a highly homogeneous and cohesive field that covered the various socio-environmental areas of the territory, creating a coherent and organic set in relation to eco-territorial and socio-economic aspects.

In this framework the River, Coast and Lake Contracts represent in the ongoing national and international debate a tool for ensuring the "resilience" of the territories against the impact of climate change on water resources and the related demand of careful management for adaptation.

In Calabria, the Regional and Urban Planning Department contributed to that debate through regulations and through policies and actions aimed at raising awareness and education for the "river" common good (river/stream, lake, coast). The Department proposed, through the voluntary instrument of River Contracts, the creation of local planning processes for adaptation, to be implemented with large public-private participation based on the principles of shared responsibility and co-design and efficient and sustainable adaptation measures, through launching pilot projects on Calabrian hydrographic basins / sub-basins with the support of scientific research.

Moreover, by tackling the implementation methodologies of soil protection policies and the enhancement of practices for negotiation and participation of local communities, River Contracts can be recognized as guiding tools to carry out shared actions that overcome the logic of structural passive defence and allow the implementation of risk prevention and management measures raising the level of population knowledge and awareness in relation to the degree of exposure to the country risk.

River Contracts are a Governmental voluntary tool for planning and management of river territories, where public and private entities work together on a shared action programme which they commit to implement by signing an agreement.

17 Regions officially adopted the River Contracts and the Environmental Law (Collegato Ambientale) included them in the Environment Code, as "voluntary strategic tools for strategic and negotiated planning aimed to protection, proper management of water resources and valorisation of river territories, as well as protection from hydraulic risk, contributing to local development".

Calabria Region is among the 13 Regions that adopted the National Charter on River Contracts (Milan 2010).

The Calabria Regional and Urban Planning Department identifies River Contracts as a benchmark to face together with local communities the challenge of combating climate change, pollution and drought, to address local and regional conflicts for access to water, to start dissemination and raise awareness on culture of water and landscape, with particular attention to

Calabrian coasts, rivers and "fiumare", water courses and river territories in general.

River Contracts (and also Lake and Coast) are voluntary (and therefore open) negotiated instruments aimed to a strategy that includes:

- protection and proper management of water resources
- valorisation of river territories, as well as protection of hydraulic risk
- hydraulic defence, protection against hydrogeological instability
- renaturation, landscapes enhancement, environmental valorisation
- strategy of inland areas and quality of life
- design of future local development scenarios aimed to innovation, creativity and well-being in relation to land and landscape conservation.