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Présidence de la République tchèque
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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***

INTRODUCTION

Mrs Maguelonne DEJEANT-PONS

*Executive Secretary of the European Landscape Convention, Steering Committee for Culture,
Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP) of the Council of Europe*

Ministers, Chairs, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I also would like to express my sincere thanks to the Government of the Czech Republic and in particular to the Minister of the Environment of the Czech Republic, Mr Richard Brabec, and to Ambassador Emil Ruffer, Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the Council of Europe, for their proposal to host this 19th Council of Europe Meeting of the Workshops for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention in Brno.

I thank most sincerely the Minister of the Environment, the Minister of the Regional Development, the Rector of Mendel University in Brno, the Governor of the South Moravian Region, the Mayor of the Statutory City of Brno, the Deputy Ministers of the Environment, of the Agriculture, of the Regional Development, of Culture, and of the Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic, the Mayors, the Chairs of the Steering Committee on Culture, Heritage and Landscape and of the Council of Europe Conference on the European Landscape Convention and participants, for their presence in this event.

Many thanks in particular to Mr Vladislav Smrz, Deputy Minister of the Environment of the Czech Republic, Mr Vladimír Dolejský, Deputy Minister of the Environment of the Czech Republic, Mr Jiri Klapste, Director of the Department of General Landscape Protection, Mrs Júlia Tóbková, Senior

official, National Representative to the European Landscape Convention, Mr Jan Brojáč, Senior official at the Department of International Relations of the Ministry of the Environment, Mrs Alena Salasova, Professor at the Department of Landscape Planning of Lednice, and to their colleagues for their perfect co-operation with the Council of Europe in organising the event.

To date, a large number of Council of Europe member states have ratified the convention and two others have signed it. The convention plays a major part in implementing the Council of Europe's objectives, by including the territorial dimension of human rights and democracy in its priorities. It addresses the future of human beings and societies in relation to their living environment and the responsibility they have in terms of properly managing the relevant assets and resources.

The Meeting aims to present experiences of national policies adopted, or being developed, at local level. For the purposes of the European Landscape Convention, *landscape policy* means "an expression by the competent public authorities of general principles, strategies and guidelines that permit the taking of specific measures aimed at the protection, management and planning of landscapes".

Parties to the convention undertake:

- to recognise landscapes in law as an essential component of people's surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity;
- to establish and implement landscape policies aimed at landscape protection, management and planning, through the adoption of the specific measures (set out in Article 6 of the convention) ;
- to establish procedures for the participation of the general public, local and regional authorities, and other parties with an interest in the definition and implementation of the landscape policies;
- to integrate landscape into their regional and town planning policies and in their cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies, as well as in any other policies with possible direct or indirect impact on landscape.

The convention specifies that each Party implement it, according to its own division of powers, in conformity with its constitutional principles and administrative arrangements, and respecting the principle of subsidiarity.

We shall have an opportunity at four workshops entitled:

- "The implementation of the European Landscape Convention in the Czech Republic";
- "Instruments for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention at local level";
- "Experiences taking into account the landscape dimension at the local level";
- "Local democracy for the landscape: participation and commitment".

Landscape – whether urban or rural, outstanding, everyday or degraded – remains a highly political issue. While reflecting inhabitants' lifestyles, it also bears the mark of political choices to a large degree and on a long-term basis.

We should like this Meeting to offer a opportunity to consider visions of how the consideration of the landscape at local level can be promoted and improved in future, both for current populations and for those yet to come.

Thank you very much for your attention.