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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,  
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***WORKSHOP 2 – GENERAL DEBATE***

**Implementation of the European Landscape Convention at the local level in Armenia**

**Mrs Naira SARKISIAN**

*Chief Specialist of the Urban Development and Spatial Planning, Division, Ministry of Urban  
Development, Armenia*

In Armenia, urban development policy reforms are consistently implemented in the area of regulation of the issues related to the settlement construction and spatial development that are closely interconnected with landscape issues. Over the last few years, a number of consistent steps have also been taken to address the disclosure of landscape problems.

According to the RA Law “On Urban Development”, the spatial development issues and the measures aimed at their solution are fixed in the national, regional, micro-regional and local planning documents, which are the basis of spatial development.

Spatial planning documents are elaborated in accordance with the provisions of the RA Government Decree N1920-N dated 29 December 2011. It is aimed at simplifying the processing and approval of functions of urban planning documentation in the communities of the Republic of Armenia by fixing the mechanisms ensuring the safe and normal development of settlements.

Together with the steps undertaken by the Government to implement the community enlargement policy, the process of elaborating community-based urban planning documents has also been adapted to the newly created community units and, accordingly develop micro-level (coherent spatial planning) documents for a range of community members up to 15,000. The document of micro-regional level can define the basic elements of the simplified general plan, the main directions of the community's spatial development.

The Decree of the Chairman of the State Committee for Urban Development of the Republic of Armenia No. 35-A of March 9, 2017, approved the “Programme for elaborating spatial planning documents and the schedule of implementation measures of micro-regional level”. Six priority spatial planning documents for communities of strategic significance of Tavush marz of Armenia, including 55 settlements, are being financed and are in the process of development in 2017. During 2018-2020 it is envisaged to elaborate combined planning documents for Syunik, Ararat, Aragatsotn, Armavir, Kotayk and Lori marzes of Armenia.

The purpose of the combined document is to ensure the requirements of the main provisions of territorial organisation aimed at the targeted use and sustainable development of the area under consideration, the preservation of natural and historical-cultural heritage, as well as the formation of a favourable spatial environment and other necessary conditions of life.

Their main result indicators are as follows:

- provision of satisfactory and secure conditions for a person’s lifestyle;
- proportionate development of territories, decentralisation of development trends;
- formation of a quality urban environment and its harmonisation with the natural environment in residential and non-residential areas;
- valuation and maintenance of natural and cultural heritage;
- regulation of land use for urban development and effective land management.

In fact, the targets of the landscape policy are the same as the objectives of spatial planning. According to the existing legislation, spatial planning frameworks already cover the content of landscape activities and can respond to the whole range of landscape issues in terms of acquiring knowledge, defining prospective goals and developing measures to achieve them.

In 2012, the Ministry of Urban Development developed and approved a “Project on the allocation of recreational, landscape, resort systems and territorial organisation in the central and immediate impact zones of Lake Sevan. Urban Development Charter, Urban Development and Landscape Standards”. This document was proposed to the communities of the regions and the constructors to serve as a methodological guide for the development of urban development documents in the coastal areas of the Lake Sevan.

At present, in accordance with the conceptual provisions of Sevan National Park reforms and development, implemented in the framework of Sevan Lake Coastal Development Programme, relevant proposals have been elaborated and submitted to the Government of the Republic of Armenia for implementation. The investment programmes in the central zone of Sevan National Park, the allocation of appropriate zones, regulation of the development of the lake coastal zone and the peninsula area are the focus of the Government's attention, amongst other investment projects. The main objective of the process is to create the preconditions necessary for a favourable environment and activation of tourism activities in the coastal areas of Lake Sevan, using the principles of spatial and landscape planning.

Significant work is being done in the Republic to preserve biological and landscape diversity. Within the framework of the United Nations Development Programme and the Global Ecological Foundation, the “Mainstreaming Sustainable Land and Forest Management in Mountain Landscapes of North-Eastern Armenia” project is envisaged to revise forestry management plans in the northern and north-eastern regions of Armenia by applying the landscape approach, and taking into account the various forest ecosystem services, high cost of biodiversity and carbon absorption capability. The target areas of the project are the Lori and Tavush marzes where 65% of Armenia's forest resources are located, which provide essential ecosystem services, including water provision (for urban use and food production), landslide control and carbon storage. The main cause of land and forest degradation in these marzes is the uncontrolled deforestation and overexploitation of forest resources. The project will promote an integrated approach towards fostering sustainable forest management, seeking to balance environmental management with development and community needs. Observation of landscape unity for the improvement of the forest landscapes comes from the Landscape Planning Strategy of RA.

In the framework of the “Local Economic and Infrastructure Development Programme”, a number of projects have been implemented in five selected regions of the country, where places with tourist orientation are located, including the projects “Establishment of tourist zone in the area near the Zorats Stones monument” in Syunik Marz and “Reconstruction of the road leading to Garni Stones Symphony or the Basalt Organ” in Kotayk Marz. The programme focuses on the improvement of municipal infrastructure quality and reliability and tourism development, as well as restoration and preservation of harmonious natural and cultural heritage, with the promotion of the economic life of the marzes.

I cannot ignore the drastic urbanisation of the cities that has become one of the most important challenges of the 21st century. In parallel to the rapid urbanisation in the world, anthropogenic pressure on natural and cultural landscapes increases. Armenia is also ranked among the countries with a high level of urbanisation. In order to avoid unfavourable impacts from economic developments on landscapes, special attention should be paid to the issues of urbanisation of landscape protection, management and planning issues, with the application of contemporary landscape planning methods.

Based on these considerations, the draft Law “On the development of the small centre of Yerevan” was elaborated. The main purpose of this draft Law is to create a legal framework for the development of the capital city's architecture, the architectural image of the small centre of Yerevan, the improvement of the aesthetic environment of the construction and the formation of healthy and attractive environment by fixing special and additional conditions deriving from the features of the spatial zone. In fact, the draft

Law is aimed at regulating the development of our country's most important urbanised landscape. Currently, the Government has submitted the draft law to the National Assembly for discussion.

As well as submitting information on legislative regulation, I would like to mention that theoretical or legal aspects of the work have been adequately completed. In this regard, they provide a sufficient basis for the implementation of priority and mid-term activities for the protection, management and planning of landscapes in the Republic of Armenia.