



**Chairmanship of the Czech Republic**  
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**Présidence de la République tchèque**  
Conseil de l'Europe  
Mai – Novembre 2017



**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***

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***WELCOME SPEECH***

**Mr Vladislav SMRŽ**

*Deputy Minister of the Environment of the Czech Republic, on behalf of*

**Mr Richard BRABEC**

*Minister of the Environment of the Czech Republic*

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour to welcome you today at this Meeting. I would also like to thank the Secretary of the European Landscape Convention, Mrs Maguelonne Déjeant-Pons, for her collaboration for the event. You have two days filled with interesting presentations, but you will also have the opportunity to experience directly the beauty of our country.

The European Landscape Convention is of particular importance to the Czech Republic. The landscape of the Czech territory has been formed by centuries of human activity. The economic activity and the development of human settlements have imprinted the land with a face that retained very little of the original unbridled nature. The rich history of the Czech nation has given rise to many layers of landscape structures which today exist side by side and form the environment in which the inhabitants of the Czech

Republic live. Less than 2% of the Czech landscape is currently left without human intervention. The rest is more or less transformed by human activity. This gives us a tremendous responsibility not only to protect our natural and cultural heritage, but also to manage our landscapes in order to contribute to improving the quality of life of its inhabitants. I hope that during this session we will be able to show at least a small example of our modest achievements in this field.

The European Landscape Convention understands the management of landscapes as a shared responsibility of the State and its organs, experts, owners, administrators and users, as well as individual citizens. Only complementary and interrelated activities should be considered for comprehensive landscape management, both at national, regional and local level.

This Meeting has chosen one specific topic. In the next two days, we will address the question of how the application of democratic principles in the context of landscape management at local level contributes to the enhancement of the landscape values, and hence the quality of life for the local inhabitants.

I strongly believe that the concern of each of us about our immediate surroundings is one of the important conditions for good landscape management. Truly high quality landscapes cannot be created without the active co-operation of local authorities and all relevant stakeholders. I therefore look forward to inspiring contributions to this debate. I hope that this meeting will inspire you further in your work, and that we will work together intensively on the topic of further development of our landscape values.