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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

**Town of Spálené Poříčí, model of Sustainable Protection, Management and Planning of Landscape
- Can a community care for the landscape?**

Ing. Mrs Klára SALZMANN

PhD. Landscape architect, Representative of the International Federation of Landscape Architects Europe (IFLA-Europe), Czech Chamber of Architects, Committee on Landscape, Water and Biodiversity of the Council of Government for Sustainable Development, Czech Republic

Ing. Mr Pavel ČÍŽEK

Mayor of Spálené Poříčí, Czech Republic

Landscape is our total environment. It is the space for us to live, the air we breathe, the view which can bring us happiness. Often we just ignore it but, seriously – could the landscape surrounding our community be more beautiful, more cosy and attractive? So attractive that the people will not leave their homes and, on the contrary, it attracts others to move in? So that the tourists want to visit and feel at home here...and come back again...?

Until 1948, the Czech landscape developed gradually and positively, along with the neighbouring countries. However, 1948 and regime change brought the elimination of property ownership and the desire to have soviet *kolkhoz* monocultures (huge land unification). This, in effect, resulted in Czech and Moravian landscape mutilation, and serious damage. It is true that 70 years have passed since that time, but the wounds have not yet healed. In the aftermath of the 1989 revolution, the Land Consolidation Plan act arrived to neutralise the damage caused by the former communist regime.

The main part of the Land Consolidation Plan is the Plan of Common Facilities, aimed at the creation of areas that are of common good, such as roads, landscape design features, alleys, wetlands and fishponds. Seven years ago, the city of Spalene Porici had to create their Land Consolidation Plan. For a long time, the city had actively supported landscape care and therefore they decided to accept my offer to create the Landscape Renewal Plan in a more radical sense. Unfortunately, the Czech legislation lacks a general landscape plan.

The main task of this work is the formation of landscape renewal and care rules, in collaboration with local inhabitants and in accord with the European Landscape Convention. For the plan to succeed, the idea is that local inhabitants who dwell and work here will strive for the realisation of their plans and dreams. Prior to meeting with our colleagues, we started work on the landscape proposal plan. We met with locals to give them the opportunity to vocalise and present their own ideas concerning the plan. The goal of the plan was to create a document that anyone could read and understand.

The main part of the project was a systematic reconnaissance of the whole area (5,000 hectares) and an understanding of the land history. We organised field trips, as many locals wanted to learn about the landscape issues.



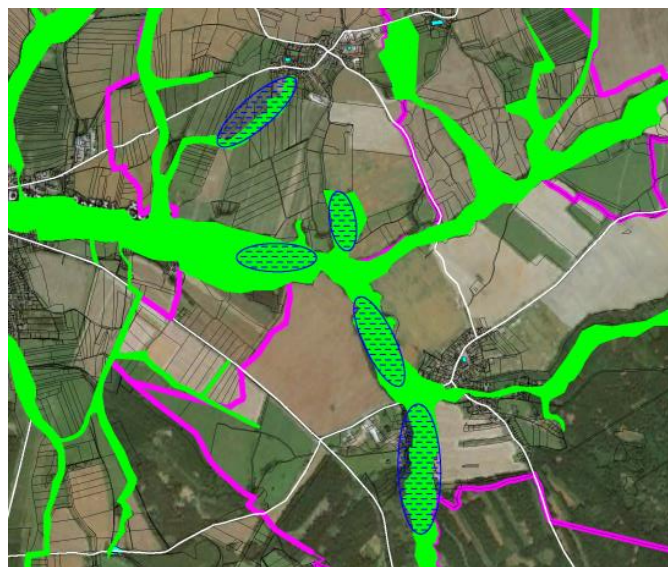
Landscape planning with local inhabitants

The project consists of five basic parts:

- Man in the landscape – habitation, accessibility, cycle and pedestrian trails, an atmosphere of relaxation, viewpoints. Defining the real needs of the local people, exploring the options of how the original historic roads could be utilised. Defining the pedestrian trails to avoid the existing highway network. The preservation and support of the main viewpoints. The planned installation of benches, rest areas, renovation of small sacred structures.
- Water retention in the landscape – nature-friendly renewal of water flows, preservation of wetlands, establishment of water swales, change of landscape use along rivers. River landscape definition, water spring area protection. Rain water management.
- Cultural heritage – historic roads, historic landscape structures, small sacred structures, etc. Learning about historical land development, extinct settlements and archaeological sites.
- Valuing Nature – a territorial system of ecological stability, NATURA areas, European-wide important sites, the important trees (excepting forest trees), wetlands and other valuable biotopes. Definition of local important areas and their value to local inhabitants.
- Landscape management – local energy sources, agriculture, forestry, mining, water, wind, wood, biomass.

These analyses became the basis for completion of the Spalene Porici land restructuring plan. The huge fields created after 1948 are frequently threatened by erosion and have now been subject to proper redistribution. This redistribution of the huge fields must respect the natural geomorphology, but at the same time should not omit other historical development elements, in particular the original historic roads. Another important element is the issue of water retention. This should occur in the spring and upper part of the water flows. Instead, the water often floods the lower parts of the territory and the mass of water can cause substantial damage. Therefore, the river landscape must be protected and grassed.

Historic road renewal will enable access to the landscape: cycle and hiking trails will be built.



Support of the river landscape



Historic roads in Spalene Porici

The Landscape plan was not placed on the back burner. At least a good part of it was incorporated in the Land Consolidation Plan. This plan became the basis for follow-up activities – for example, the renewal of the original historic road with cherry tree avenues connecting the cities of Blovice and Spalene Porici. These were created by the Toplandbrd NGO, in co-operation with local residents and students supported by the VIA Foundation. One of the attractions of this road is the Land Art construction of a brook crossing, to the Jewish cemetery near to city of Blovice.



Land Art ford crossing a brook near the Jewish cemetery, near Blovice