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Sustainable Landscapes and Economy

On the inestimable natural and human value of the landscape

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On behalf of the Secretariat of the Council of Europe, I wish again to thank most sincerely the authorities of Turkey, the Governor of the Region of Cappadocia, Mr Ahmet Özyanik, General Director of Nature Conservation and National Parks at Turkey's Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, Mr Ramazan Dikyar, Head of Department of Vulnerable Areas, Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, Ms Gülhan Çetin Sönmez, Chief of Landscape Conservation Division, Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, and Ms Serap Kargin, landscape architect in that Division, for their splendid welcome and their much appreciated co-operation.

Thank you very much to those participants who have presented excellent papers and addresses, each further evidence of the importance of the landscape, viewed from the environmental, cultural, social and economic angles.

The necessary relationship between landscape and the economy seems to be an inexhaustible subject, since it ultimately concerns human beings' perception of their environment and the relationship which they have with it.

While the "relative" value of parts of territories "of very high landscape quality" seems to be soaring as such spaces become rarer, the "absolute" value of the tangible and intangible landscape remains,

and will remain, “inestimable”, precisely because – paradoxically – the very impossibility of measuring it makes it impossible to place a value on it.

The far-reaching changes, sometimes even upheavals, being experienced by our societies and our landscapes lead us to invent new economic models conducive to sustainable development, viability and the “sustainable attractiveness” of territories, which we do for the good of the societies living there now and in the future. New economies are emerging, economies now described as “positive”, “circular”, “co-operative”, “functional”, “horizontal”, “contributive”, “green”, “purple”, “blue”, “open source”, “symbiotic”, or “alternative”.

Landscape, which is the result of the use populations make of their territory, reflects a society’s mind-sets and ways of life. In its turn, it inspires and gives rise to lifestyles and ways of life. It might be said to reflect a civilisation’s “art of life”.

Landscape quite definitely provides many “services” in terms of health, well-being, recreation and tourism, but it offers much more than that: it tells the story of the Earth and humankind, and it shapes the human mind, which draws inspiration and energy from it.

As it shapes peoples’ behaviour, mood and spirit, landscape seems to be a vital factor in the economy, a true driving force which should not be ignored. Inspiration is drawn from it by the arts (literature, drawing, painting, photography, music and the cinema), and the agricultural, food, recreation, tourism, construction and housing sectors, in particular, very much depend on it. Landscape quality very often determines the success of social and economic initiatives, both public and private.

It is therefore vital for those policies likely to have a direct or indirect effect on the landscape, including economic policies, to take care of this capital, with other policies also being particularly concerned, amongst them those on regional planning, town planning, culture, the environment, agriculture, social affairs, health, education, transport, infrastructure, energy and advertising.

Careful landscape management, based on participation, could prefigure an “orange” landscape economy... Landscape appears to be an investment which is both “profitable” and creates jobs, many of them innovative, attentive to territories’ rich assets and able to reveal their values.

Work on implementing the Convention continues from several different angles:

- *legal recognition of the landscape as an essential part of the environment in which populations live, an expression of the diversity of their common cultural and natural heritage, and the foundation of their identity*, through application of Appendix 2 – “Suggested text for the practical implementation of the European Landscape Convention at national level, for use as guidance for public authorities when implementing the European Landscape Convention” – to Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the guidelines for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention;
- *devising and implementation of landscape policies with a view to the protection, management and development of landscapes through the adoption of special measures (awareness raising, training and education, identification and qualification, production of landscape quality objectives, implementation of landscape policies)*, through implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the guidelines for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention;
- *promotion of education in schools which relates, within the subjects concerned, to the values attached to landscape and the issues relevant to its protection, management and development*, through implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)8 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on promoting landscape awareness through education;

- *putting in place of procedures for participation by the public, by local and regional authorities and by other stakeholders in the devising and implementation of landscape policies, through implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the guidelines for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention;*
- *inclusion of landscape in regional and town planning policies, in cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies and in those other policies which may have a direct or indirect effect on landscape, through implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the guidelines for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention;*
- *development of transfrontier co-operation at local and regional levels and production and implementation of joint landscape enhancement programmes;*
- *promotion of European co-operation, mutual assistance and information exchange through use of the European Landscape Convention Information System of the Council of Europe and its glossary, and co-operation to develop that information system, through implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)4 on the European Landscape Convention Information System of the Council of Europe and its glossary;*
- *recognition of practical initiatives setting an example for the realisation of landscape quality objectives on the territory of the Parties to the Convention, presented in the context of the “Council of Europe Landscape Award Alliance” through implementation of Resolution CM/Res(2008)3 on the rules governing the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe.*

The Convention demands a responsible and forward-looking attitude on the part of all stakeholders whose decisions affect landscape quality, so it has consequences in many fields of both policy and action, public and private alike.