



COUNCIL OF EUROPE

EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION

FIFTEENTH COUNCIL OF EUROPE MEETING OF THE WORKSHOPS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION

Sustainable Landscapes and Economy

On the inestimable natural and human value of the landscape

Urgup, Nevşehir, Turkey
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Distinguished Governor,
Distinguished President of the Council of Europe Conference on the European Landscape Convention,
Distinguished Executive Secretary of the European Landscape Convention,
Distinguished participants,

As Turkey, we are hosting the 15th Council of Europe meeting of the Workshops for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention and welcome to our workshop. As you all know, Turkey is a party to many international conservation and preservation conventions as is the case for the European Landscape Convention. And Turkey is doing its best in order to implement this Convention. Every year, we are making these workshops and this year it is a pleasure and honour for us to be a hosting this meeting in Turkey.

Actually, Turkey is an excellent and favourable venue for such kind of international organisations and it is an economical country from the perspective of transportation and the facilities and the accommodations, the hotels and our convention centres. We can easily organise such kind of meetings.

Very recently, we conducted a UN meeting in Antalya province and in the months to come we are going to organise an Organisation of Economic Corporation (ECO) meeting. This meetings are making contribution into organising this meetings in a more economic and productive manner but also it is making a contribution into Turkey's promotion and Turkey's development of its economic resources. And also it is facilitating and improving communication and exchange between cultures and countries. From twenty eight countries, we are hosting eighty participants, and I would like to say welcome to all of our international participants. I hope that Cappadocia Region, Ürgüp and Göreme is just the way you expected to be. I think you took a trip yesterday and your first comments were really inspiring for us and probably you looked through your window and in the morning maybe you saw the air balloons, hot air balloons, and people are travelling with them to see the landscape. On daily basis, there are more than a hundred hot air balloons flying and the daily economic value of this activity is around a hundred and fifty thousand or two hundred thousand US dollars. And people are just paying this money to watch the landscape. It means that landscape is money. If you preserve it and if you can present it to people in a preserved manner you can make money out of it. And therefore I kindly recommend you to watch the valuable landscape of Cappadocia and Ürgüp, if you have time to do so. Turkey has many landscape areas like Cappadocia and we have protection areas like the Bosphorus in İstanbul and in total 10% of the entire territory of the Republic of Turkey is actually a preservation and a landscape area. We have reached this figure within the last decade. And the last decade, as you know, was the one in which Turkey made a great progress in economic terms. On one hand we are taking steps towards a better economy and also developing your protected areas or the areas under protection. This shows us the importance attached by political leadership to conservation and preservation of the nature. Therefore, I would like to extend my gratitude to our government.

Turkey is playing an active role in preservation and protection of the Mediterranean Basin. We have a very long coastal line on the Aegean and the Mediterranean Region in Turkey. We are protecting 30% of this coastal line with regulations and we have closed those places against constructions and we are preserving these areas.

Especially, with Mediterranean countries, we are making the required exchange of knowledge and experience and we are open to deepen further in this cooperation. As a party to the Barcelona Agreement we are actively preserving and conserving the Mediterranean Sea.

On behalf of our government, we are the hosts here as the Directorate General for Nature Conservation and National Parks. We are protecting biodiversity, wildlife and caves and wetlands as landscape protection areas. These are sensitive areas and we are rendering this service to conserve and protect these areas.

All around Turkey, we have four thousand workers. And we carry out some scientific research in coordination with NGOs and universities. And we have three hundred and eighty university experts and

scholars who are working with us on part time basis. And Göreme Historical National Park which is in this region is among our 39 national parks in Turkey. During your visit and trips here, if you observe something to be improved, we will be very excited to hear your recommendations for improvement. As a conclusion, actually, this place is a heritage of the world, it does not belong to us only. It belongs to the entire humanity. So we will be very pleased to improve it, through your recommendations. And during our meeting here, we are going to make deliberations, we have the ministerial staff here who will be making active participation in this meetings and we are going to take home the messages from here and this is going to be an exchange of experience. And along with that, in such a world surrounded with tragedies, we would like to ensure that this workshop will bring us some good things and we hope that it is going to make contributions into emerging of the goodness.

As you know, landscape is about perception. Definitely there is an infrastructure behind it, but we need the eyes, we need the human beings to perceive it. On one hand, we are benefiting from these assets economically, but on the other hand we need to be talking about how we are going to preserve it, how we are going to protect it, which is the very theme, very objective of this meeting.

I would like to thank to our director Mrs. Gülhan ÇETİN SÖNMEZ and her staff, and Mrs. Serap KARGIN for their contribution into organising this meeting. They rendered a great service, exerted an extraordinary effort to organise this meeting. Mr. Ramazan DİKYAR, our regional director and all our staff, I would like to thank them. And also I would like to thank all distinguished people who accepted our proposal to organise this meeting in Turkey. And I hope that you will be very pleased at the end of this meeting.

To conclude, I would like to finish with a saying defining the relationship between human and landscape: “The one who sees beautiful, thinks beautifully. And the one who thinks beautifully enjoys the life.”

Thank you so much.