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**EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION**  
**– Florence Convention –**

***FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE CONTRACTING AND  
SIGNATORY STATES TO THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION***

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**Theme 3**

**Awareness-raising, training and education**

*by*

*Mr Bas PEDROLI  
“Landscape Europe” Coordinating manager*

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## 1. Landscape, a growing concern

History of art shows that landscape has been a beloved subject of pictorial study since the renaissance. But the awareness that landscape is something that needs care has only recently developed. The self-evidence of the landscapes as depicted by painters until the 20<sup>th</sup> century has given way to a growing public concern for the quality of our European landscapes that do not develop any more in a self-evident way. How can this concern be transformed into activities contributing to a responsible planning and management of landscapes?

Following the philosopher Habermas, the concept of landscape includes several layers of reality.

- The *true* landscape as object can be described and quantified in a cognitive and scientific way. It is the domain of geographers and landscape ecologists, integrating a wide range of natural sciences, and of civil engineers using this objective knowledge to guide their construction and management activities in landscape.

- The *right* landscape is the inter-subjective landscape on which we have opinions and to which we can attribute values. It is beautiful or degraded, depending on the criteria as agreed upon within specific groups related to the landscape. In fact the word landscape in its German (*Landschaft*) or Dutch (*landschap*) expression refers to the organisation of a group of inhabitants. The right landscape is the domain of action groups and NGO's, but also of politicians. It is studied by social scientists and forms the arena for those developing the social constructions that determine the future of the landscapes.

- The *real* landscape is the subjective landscape with which we have a personal connection, and which always plays a role on the background when speaking about landscape. It is the landscape of our youth or holidays, or the landscape for which we are ready to invest our spare time in practical involvement. It is described by painters and historical geographers, but is also the basis for our personal behaviour in landscape and for the artistic design of landscape architects.

Awareness raising primarily concerns the third dimension of landscape, the real landscape, which has long been neglected in science and policy. The European Landscape Convention addresses explicitly this dimension, taking objective and inter-subjective concepts as starting points. Training and education in landscape appraisal and operations should consequently address all three dimensions.

## 2. The power of examples

Many examples already exist where local communities have taken initiative to organise landscape management. Region-specific products of agriculture and local traditions appear to enhance the identification of inhabitants with their landscape. Visitor's centres and promotion campaigns attract tourists and thus enhance the economic basis for landscape development. But most effective is still the involvement of citizens in the operations of maintenance and transformation of landscape. Increasingly, these citizens will have an urban style of life and feel responsibility for the development of landscape in a non-conventional way, since the traditional agricultural basis of landscape formation has over large parts of Europe lost its effectiveness.

In awareness-raising, attention for the effects of landscape degradation should always be accompanied by examples of how landscapes can develop their identity as living landscapes with region-specific values, carried by local communities. The Landscape Award should play an important role in identifying such examples. But also exchange of experiences and ideas between landscape initiatives, for example by setting up a web site of active landscape groups, would enhance the success of campaigns for informing and educating the public. It would be desirable to develop a well-illustrated handbook on landscape management in Europe, on the basis of examples of successful initiatives for landscape management.

### 3. Basic information needed

Knowledge management and availability of basic data (including an efficient clearing house function) are not only a prerequisite for awareness-raising, but also crucial for education and training in landscape appraisal and operations. Only based on good information is it possible to develop methodology for landscape typology, management and planning. Special attention should be devoted to methodology that allows for European compatibility and at the same time encourages local diversification. In many countries methodology development has already started and it would be good to co-ordinate these developments as far as possible under the umbrella of the European Landscape Convention, to allow common objectives of education and training to be defined.

### 4. Training and education

On the basis of co-ordinated information on landscapes, programmes for multidisciplinary and specialist training are to be developed for those expected to be active in the field of landscape. Although some training programmes may be available already for this purpose, exchange of experiences between the different countries and between the different levels of scale (national, regional, local) may strongly improve the effectiveness of such programmes. Both governmental and non-governmental organisations should have a function, starting from the already existing programmes. Especially environmental education programmes may be adapted to specifically include landscape values, and practical landscape management weekends for the local public may serve as good examples already. But also existing academic curricula and courses on technical level should be adopted for landscape management and planning. There exists a large need for good handbooks for such curricula and courses. Some international courses are available already with NGO's and universities, where students follow lectures and visit landscape initiatives in several countries.

### 5. The European Landscape Convention, a paradox?

The Landscape Convention seems to be characterised by the inherent paradox of providing common European guidelines for a diversified management of European landscapes. It is a challenge for those concerned with the future of the European landscapes, to bypass this paradox by strongly encouraging facilitation from above and by enhancing involvement from bottom-up:

- base targets for landscape development on natural processes: know your *true* landscape;
- develop awareness that landscape identity is and should be a reflection of current cultural processes: discuss the *right* landscape in the local community;
- achieve quality in the landscape by public involvement: act in your own *real* landscape on the basis of co-ordinated personal concern.