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**NATIONAL POLICIES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN
LANDSCAPE CONVENTION - General debate on legal and financial instruments:
challenges and opportunities in Armenia**

The aim of the European Landscape Convention is to promote the protection, management and planning of landscapes. All three policies – protection, planning and management of landscape – are mutually complimentary and are combined into integral activity, which provides the basis for comprehensive implementation of the landscape policy.

Landscape character is the result of the action and interaction of natural factors and human activities. Landscape is a dynamic mix of ingredients. Each large and small element changes and regenerates in response to the impacts caused by natural cycles, weather events, water and climate, and economic factors relating to agriculture, industry, energy, transport, settlement and tourism. Intensive social and economic processes and globalisation accelerate transformation of the landscape, making it more uniform.

As is stressed by the European Landscape Convention, there is a need to seek the right balance between management, planning and protection of landscape. The framework to achieve this balance must be to:

1. Define landscape in law. Legislation should provide the basis for all other activities in the realisation and implementation the European Landscape Convention.
2. Recognise the importance of all landscapes.
3. Promote sustainable development.
4. Enhance and protect the environment.
5. Increase public awareness about landscapes.
6. Improve land-use policies and development management practices.
7. Establish the current state of the landscape through baseline research.

The aim must be the sustainable management of change affecting landscape: which means continuing evolution of the landscape, and not its preservation or "freezing".

Where are we now in Slovenia?

The government of Slovenia signed the ELC in 2001 and ratified it in 2003. Since that time the ideas and principles of the ELC were implemented into the sector policies and strategic documents. Development, protection and management of landscapes are defined by documents in the field of spatial planning, nature conservation, protection of the cultural heritage and rural development.

Important for the execution of landscape planning and management are instruments based on sector's policies, strategies and national programmes:

- Spatial management Policy of Slovenia; Spatial development Strategy of Slovenia and Spatial Order,
- Strategy of Slovenian's development (economic development strategy),
- Environment protection Act and National Environmental Action Programme,

- Nature Conservation Act and Biodiversity Conservation Strategy of Slovenia; Natural 2000, Site Management Programme,
- Rural Development Programme,
- sectoral management plans and others.

Landscape issues and elements are included into spatial and sectorial documents in various ways. In Slovenia there are no enacted independent landscape documents, except for the landscape architecture plan at the operational level, and no independent financial landscape instruments.

Landscape planning in Slovenia is a constituent part of spatial planning. In this context landscape features and the identity of landscape areas are used as one of the criteria for locating activities in space. Landscape protection in Slovenia has developed in two different forms: as direct protection through nature reserves and as protection through special tools such as environmental impact assessments and spatial vulnerability analyses. Criteria for the evaluation of the landscapes are defined on the basis of morphological, structural and symbolic features and the assessment of their testamentary value.

Now we are in Slovenian landscape planning in front of the real dilemma: how to proceed. Should it swim with the stream and develop its own »landscape department« with similar mechanisms of control over events in physical space as do others departments, or should it return to the point from which landscape planning in Slovenia started? That means as a part of spatial planning.

A number of mechanisms fall under the competence of the agricultural sector, nature conservation and protection of the cultural heritage. The fact is that these mechanisms are not connected together. Because of that better systemic solutions for inter-ministerial coordination and comprehensive landscape management must be found. It is certainly necessary to establish a framework for coordination of different interests and needs.

The reality is that landscape can, and will continue, to accommodate many social, economic and environmental uses and functions, and as a society we have to accommodate many different perceptions of the landscape.

We believe that a spatial planning system would be the appropriate framework for this purpose.