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EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION

CEP-CDPATEP

5th CONFERENCE OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE ON THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION

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GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR A COUNCIL OF EUROPE DATABASE ON THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION: EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE OBSERVATORY – DRAFT DECISION –

*Document of the Secretariat General
Cultural heritage, landscape and spatial planning Division
Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage*

The Conference is invited to approve the draft decision on the European Landscape Observatory and forward it to the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage and Landscape (CDPATEP) for adoption at its next meeting.

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Secretariat's note:

This document was drawn up by a working group consisting of the government delegates and Council of Europe experts mentioned below. The group met on two occasions (Paris, 9 January 2009 - CEP-CDPATEP (2009) COE/ELCDatabase 1 and Strasbourg, 6 March 2009 - CEP-CDPATEP (2009) COE/ELCDatabase 2). Some government delegates did not take part in the two meetings. The draft document was prepared following the meeting on 6 March 2009 and was co-ordinated by Mr Yves LUGINBÜHL as Council of Europe expert.

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Draft Decision of the Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage and Landscape (CDPATEP) on the European Landscape Convention Observatory

The Steering Committee of Cultural Heritage and Landscape (CDPATEP),

1. Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage;
2. Having regard to the European Landscape Convention (ETS No 176) adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 19 July 2000 and opened for signature by Council member states in Florence on 20 October 2000;
3. Considering that the convention makes an important contribution to the Council of Europe's objectives of promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law and seeking common solutions to the main problems facing European society today;
4. Underlining that, in taking account of regions' natural, cultural and landscape value, the Council of Europe seeks to protect Europeans' quality of life and well-being;
3. Referring to the provisions of Article 10.1 of the convention on monitoring its implementation; referring also to the provisions of Article 8 of the convention, concerning mutual assistance and exchange of information, under which the parties undertake to co-operate in order to enhance the effectiveness of measures taken and, in particular, exchange information on all matters covered by the provisions of the convention;
4. Considering that Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the guidelines for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention proposes that each party contribute to the setting up of a database to appear on the website of the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention, and pointing out that the recommendation mentions that the database would be a "toolbox" which would help provide mutual technical and scientific assistance through the collection and exchange of landscape experience and research, as provided for in the above-mentioned Article 8 of the European Landscape Convention concerning mutual assistance and exchange of information;
5. Adopts the document which appears in the Appendix of this decision.

Appendix

European Landscape Convention Observatory

Introduction

1. The European Landscape Convention represents a major contribution to the attainment of the goals of the Council of Europe, which are to promote democracy, human rights and rule of law and to seek common solutions to the major problems of Europe's society. Therefore, as required by Article 10.1 of the Convention on the monitoring of its implementation, and by the provisions in the terms of reference of the Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage and Landscape (CDPATEP) on monitoring of the cultural heritage and landscape conventions, it is expedient to have an information system established for documenting measures taken, experience gained and trials conducted in support of the Convention's implementation, under the aegis of the Council of Europe Conference on the European Landscape Convention, entitled "European Landscape Convention Observatory".

Article 8 of the Convention on mutual assistance and exchange of information provides that the Parties undertake to co-operate in order to enhance the effectiveness of measures taken and in particular to exchange information on all matters covered by the provisions of the Convention; accordingly, this European Landscape Convention Observatory will foster international co-operation in landscape matters.

2. A document presenting the landscape policies pursued in the Council of Europe member states, which sets out the essential facts concerning the status of landscape in those countries, is regularly produced by the Council of Europe Secretariat [*Document of the 5th Council of Europe Conference on the European Landscape Convention - CEP-CDPATEP (2009) 3Bil*].

3. Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the guidelines for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention proposes that each party contribute to the setting up of a database to appear on the website of the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention. It indicates that the database would be a "toolbox" helping to provide mutual technical and scientific assistance through the collection and exchange of landscape-related experience, experimentation and research work, as provided for in the aforementioned Article 8 of the Convention on mutual assistance and exchange of information. The European Landscape Convention Observatory will constitute that toolbox.

The creation of a European Landscape Convention Observatory requires that its objectives and implementation procedures be settled, that is:

- 1) its accessibility,
- 2) its form,
- 3) its content,
- 4) the languages used,
- 5) its interactive mode of operation,
- 6) the links established with existing networks,
- 7) its development in the medium term,

8) its implementation.

I. OBJECTIVES OF THE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Having regard to the prerequisites stipulated above, it is proposed to create within the Council of Europe an interactive information system aiding the implementation of the European Landscape Convention and conforming to the Convention's main articles:

- Article 1, definitions of the terms protection, management and planning;
- Article 6, specific measures:
 - C, Identification and assessment,
 - D, landscape quality objectives,
 - E, Implementation,
- Article 8: Mutual assistance and exchange of information;
- Article 10: Monitoring of the implementation of the Convention.

The information system should permit the fulfilment of the following objectives:

- affording administrations and the public access to sources of essential facts and experiences of landscape protection, management and planning;
- acting as an “observatory” in order to analyse and forecast the advantages which a rapidly changing society can derive from taking care of the landscape;
- making it easier to monitor the development of landscape policies “in keeping” with the European Landscape Convention;
- maintaining and extending landscape co-operation networks, and fostering transnational co-operation;
- creating a landscape portal in order to disseminate information effectively, facilitate the organisation of interactive professional forums and data networks, and encourage people, especially youth, to take an interest in landscape;
- provide useful information for research and action.

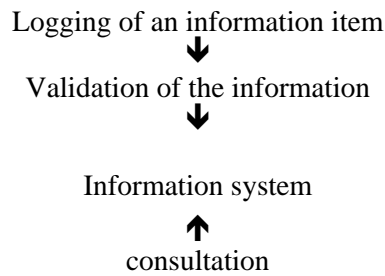
This information system will result in the establishment of a European Landscape Convention Observatory for handling certain subject areas of relevance to landscapes and their development.

II. ACCESSIBILITY OF THE INFORMATION SYSTEM

The principle of the European Landscape Convention Observatory's information system is founded on accessibility of the information to all publics; however, a distinction should be drawn between:

- entities providing input into the information system and the public consulting it,
- factual information (policies, official texts) as opposed to programmatic and problematic information.

The principle of input and consultation is applied as outlined below:



1. Entities contributing to the information system

- Council of Europe Secretariat, CDPATEP,
- Council of Europe official parties,
- Political authorities,
- Central, local and regional public authorities of the Council of Europe countries,
- General public, NGOs, all agents in the economic or social sectors,
- Educational and scientific bodies,

according to the validation procedures specified below.

2. Public consulting the information system

As a matter of principle, the information system is accessible to all types of public.

III. FORM OF THE INFORMATION SYSTEM

The information system of the European Landscape Convention Observatory is constituted by networked databases and a forum, linked in turn to national, regional or local and thematic websites, with entry-points marked by specific tabs.

- The advantage of such a system is to avoid constituting unduly voluminous databases and to allow distinct, separate management of each database;
- It also allows interconnection of the whole of the existing databases and networks with direct or indirect bearing on the question of landscapes.

This Internet network will be associated with a database containing “original” items which is specific to the European dimension of the Observatory, gathering together the data produced by the Council of Europe Secretariat.

An operator will be selected by the Council of Europe on the basis of a set of specifications itemising the tasks to be completed for the system’s construction and also its maintenance. Drawing up the specifications is one of the short-term objectives of the group of experts.

IV. CONTENT OF THE INFORMATION SYSTEM OF THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION OBSERVATORY

The observatory functions have the following components:

- one (or more) databases made up of:

- a compendium of the policies of the Parties to the Convention,
- a roundup of Council of Europe publications on landscape,
- a diary of Council of Europe landscape-related events;
- a record of experience or experimentation with landscape protection, management and planning actions, conducted in accordance with the principles of the European Landscape Convention or innovative where landscape is concerned;
- a discussion forum permitting exchanges and dialogues between the Parties to the Convention ;
- a thesaurus/glossary;
- a portal for accessing projects and initiatives sustained by all types of players and validated according to the procedure discussed below;

The diary section may be provided at other levels (regional, local): see below.

1. Database on the policies of the Parties to the European Landscape Convention

The database will be stocked with:

- a) Information on the landscape policies of the various states, derived from the work of the member states' representatives, gathered by means of the Secretariat's survey of Council of Europe Parties conducted by questionnaire;
- b) Information on sectoral policies with a landscape-related component (for example, agricultural policy embodying provisions for landscape enhancement or construction policy with provisions taking landscape into account) and also derived from the same survey;
- c) Information should be validated with regard to its precision and correctness. Several levels of validation can be specified:
 - the first, priority, level of validation is the national, regional or local level: the representatives of the Parties to the European Landscape Convention will satisfy themselves as to the validity of the information in relation to the corpus of landscape policies and other policies embodying a landscape dimension, whatever the levels where these policies are framed,
 - another level is that of the Council of Europe Secretariat which will verify the conformity of the information to the objectives of the database. It may be assisted by a group of experts which will provide support in testing the validity of the information.

Questions for debate:

Mode of operation of the information system: the Secretariat calls upon a small group of experts responsible for assisting it in laying down the operating procedures (reception of the information, consultation of experts, frequency of consultation, etc.),

- to ensure, in particular, an evolution of the information system allowing adaptation not only to the new technologies but also to innovations in the landscape sphere;
- to ensure that the implementation of the European Landscape Convention improves in the light of the experiences fuelling the database: the group of experts analyses these inputs and gives its views on what they contribute.

2. Database on experimental landscape protection, management or planning

It will concern experiments in landscape protection, management and planning carried out by member states, local and regional authorities or NGOs according to the principles of the European Landscape Convention or according to innovative methods not necessarily identified with the European Landscape Convention but conducive to improvement or enrichment of the methods. The pinpointing of these experiments will be left to the initiative of all publics so as to allow their protagonists all possible scope for expression.

Questions for debate:

- method of selection and validation: on the basis of the proposals by the group of experts and the Secretariat, the CDPATEP will determine the conditions for selecting and validating the experiments fed into the dedicated database. Criteria on their evaluation should feature among these conditions.
- there could be a choice between constituting a special-purpose database or setting up an Internet link with the server whereby access to a given experiment can be secured from its commissioning or executing agency.

3. Discussion forum

- a) The discussion forum is intended for the Parties. It will allow information to be provided on an interactive website concerning activities or studies on landscape and experiments with landscape protection, management and planning, exchanges of information and forms of transfrontier co-operation, that is any subject relating to landscapes within or outside Europe.
- b) Designed on an interactive pattern, the discussion forum will be consultable by all publics. The running of the forum rests with the Secretariat assisted by the group of experts under arrangements to be considered when the specifications for setting up the information system are established. Activities in this connection may include thematic discussions with reference to current concerns, and acute landscape issues.
- c) Any other kind of discussion forum is left to the initiative of the Parties, the political authorities at other levels or the other bodies and NGOs interested in landscape matters. The information system may set up links with these other forums.
- d) Utilisation of the informational and speculative material delivered by the contributors to the forum will be handled by the group of experts, which will make analyses of this material and produce synopses of it for posting on the site. Study of utilisation practices will be part of the questions considered in making out the specifications of the information system.

4. Thesaurus/glossary

- a) To aid communication and comprehension of the terms used in the information from the various member states which goes towards the completion of the databases, a thesaurus/glossary will be compiled with reference to the terms defined in the European Landscape Convention, viz.:

- Term equivalent to “landscape” in each country and definition(s) of the term according to the scientific publications of the country concerned,
 - Landscape policy,
 - Landscape quality goal,
 - Landscape protection,
 - Landscape management,
 - Landscape planning,
 - And any other term that may appear relevant (eg landscape atlas = *catàleg de paisatge*).
- b) Others terms may be added to the above depending on the significance attached to them by the national correspondents. The latter will need to verify the validity of the information they deliver and will be able to consult the specialists of their countries.
- c) Links will be established with the thesauruses of the HEREIN and ECLAS databases.
- d) The organisation of the thesaurus will be founded mainly on keywords drawn from the words and phrases of the European Landscape Convention.
- e) Management of the thesaurus is ensured by another group of experts than the one assisting with the running of the information system but the groups will be in contact under arrangements discussed when the specifications of the information system are worked out.

Question for debate:

The language question is the main problematic point here, as the thesaurus/glossary will be unusable unless the original language of the terms is adhered to, at least where the actual terms are concerned. However, the clarification of the terms in the national language may possibly require the use of other terms also in that national language.

- 5. Portal for accessing databases, open to projects and initiatives identified in conjunction with the Parties and associated with the implementation of the Convention**
- a) Miscellaneous information on landscape protection, management and planning which may be directly entered in the database by public authorities and the public according to the criteria to be proposed by the Secretariat and the experts’ working group;
- b) Council of Europe publications;
- reference texts (of the European Landscape Convention, explanatory report and sundry recommendations, particularly for the implementation of the convention, conference reports, etc.);
 - records and communications of the meetings of Council of Europe workshops on the implementation of the European Landscape Convention;
 - records and communications of the Council of Europe national seminars on the implementation of the European Landscape Convention;

- c) News about the Council of Europe Landscape Prize: candidates, winners, winning entries;
- d) Chart of signatures and ratifications of the European Landscape Convention ;
- e) Bibliographies of non-Council of Europe publications: *link to external sites*:
 - scientific publications,
 - publications of research reports,
 - books on various topics, particularly landscape painting;
- f) Institutions specialising in the study, protection, management and planning of landscapes and especially in the implementation of the European Landscape Convention: *link to external websites*;
- g) Identification and mapping of landscapes placed under special protection status (protected landscapes, part of the UNESCO World Heritage, etc.): *link to external websites*;
- h) Scientific laboratories specialising in landscape research: *link to external websites*;
- i) Transfrontier experiences: *link to external websites*;
- j) Photographic landscape observatories: *link to external websites*.

6. News spot

This will function at three levels:

- A diary of events organised or sponsored by the Council of Europe Secretariat concerning the European Landscape Convention (colloquies, workshops, seminars and exhibitions in progress or announced);
- A diary of events organised by the other Parties and other local and regional authorities; these will be tagged with a link to the relevant websites;
- A diary of events concerned by the proceedings of the thematic forum and tagged with a link to the relevant websites.

V. LANGUAGES USED IN THE DATABASES

- a) The languages used at the Council of Europe are English and French. These will be the languages used for the databases, but the information coming from a State Party will also appear in the national language.
- b) For the forum hosting discussion between the Parties, the languages used will be English and French together with the language of the country or community concerned.

- c) For the other discussion forums hyperlinked with the information system, the initiative of having translation into the Council of Europe official languages carried out rests with those in charge of the forums.
- d) A link is established with the thesaurus/glossary.

Questions for debate:

- Who translates the system's information entries?
- Who provides financing for translation?
- Is the whole entry translated, or only an abstract?

VI. LINKS WITH EXISTING NETWORKS

Prime links will be established with intergovernmental or non-governmental networks and databases.

The databases of the Council of Europe, HEREIN and CEMAT, the governments and the LE:NOTRE website of ECLAS or of certain NGOs will be given pride of place.

- a) The principle of the link is founded on the central theme covered by the network, institution or NGO;
- b) The institutional or NGO networks are the following:

Council of Europe:

- HEREIN: link under the heading of protection (heritage database);
- CEMAT: themes to be determined according to an instruction of the Conference;

Parties:

- Other links with the institutions of the Parties (ministries especially).

Non-governmental organisations:

- ECLAS: link to the thesaurus principally, and training matters;
- NGOs: links provided with the NGOs holding observer status with the Council of Europe in respect of the European Landscape Convention; the link will operate at the level of the Secretariat.

VII. MEDIUM-TERM DEVELOPMENT

- a) The information system will be put into effect starting with the preparation of a study specifying its architecture and proposing answers to the outstanding questions that will have been debated at the Conference of the European Landscape Convention in March 2009.

- b) Data collection might begin by inquiry among the correspondents of the Parties about national policies, then compilation of the database on national or regional policies.
- c) Work on the other databases, the glossary and the discussion forum will be spread out over progressive stages in collaboration with the technical operators. A timetable of these stages might be proposed together with the set of specifications for the information system. A trial model should be set up for testing and validation. These stages should lead to the creation of the European Landscape Convention Observatory whose acronym will be OCEP in French and ELCO in English.
- d) In future, links may be established with other NGOs according to the state of progress with implementation of the European Landscape Convention and the subject areas covered by these NGOs.

VIII. ACTUATION

- a) The creation of the information system requires the development of a user-friendly technical and ergonomic model comprising tabs for access to the various databases and the other sections, in particular the discussion forum and the glossary/thesaurus. It should allow the incorporation of all forms of documents relating to the landscapes issue, such as maps, photographs, sketches, graphs and possibly 3D representations, etc. The system should be accessible to visually challenged persons, as already appears possible now with the development of new technologies.
- b) Actuation will begin by laying down the specifications of the information system, to which the present group of experts will contribute, assisting the Council of Europe Secretariat and the CDPATEP. This group might work in collaboration with the technical operator and form the agency looking after the validation and quality control of the data or leading the discussion forum. The choice of the group of experts rests with the Council of Europe Secretariat.

Appendix

Complementary synoptic explanatory table

Definitions	National measures	European Co-operation	Exchange of experiences	Status and connections		
	General measures	Specific measures	Examples of good practice	Evaluation of landscapes – cartography maps	Status of ratification,	
Landscape	Legislation – recognition of landscapes in law	Awareness-raising	International policies and programmes	Ministry responsibilities	Landscape Information system	contact person
Landscape policy	establish and implement landscape policies	Training and Education	Mutual assistance and exchange of information	NGO's participation	Protected landscapes: Natural heritage Cultural heritage	Connection addresses
Landscape quality objectives	participation of the general public	Identification and assessment	Transfrontier landscapes	Research institutions	Outstanding landscapes	Register of workshops
Landscape protection	Integration landscape into regional and town planning	Landscape quality objectives	Monitoring of the implementation of the Convention	Education institutions	Photo presentation landscape	List of national web sites
Landscape management	Integration landscape into cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and econom. policies	Implementation – to introduce instruments aimed prot., manag, planning	Landscape Award of the Council of Europe	National Landscape Award – presentation of national projects	Exhibitions on landscape projects	International discussion forum
Landscape planning				International cooperation	Publication on ELC and it's implement.	